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theTRUMPETER
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Where Philosophy and Culture Meet the Earth

Jerry DeMarco

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The Trumpeter's mission is to provide a diversity of perspectives on human/nature contexts. It encourages transdisciplinary reflections from scholarly and non-scholarly sources which use philosophy, literature, art, music, theatre, film, science and spiritual disciplines to present ways to realize deeper and more harmonious relationships between place, self, community and the natural world, deepening ecological consciousness, and practicing ways of life manifesting diverse forms of ecological wisdom (ecosophies).

ERRATA: In the Winter 1995 Issue, the final two sentences of Andrew Light's review of Baird Callicott's book *Earth's Insights* were printed by mistake. The editors regret the error.

IMPORTANT NOTICE FROM THE SENIOR EDITOR: This is the last issue that will be edited by David Rothenberg. He leaves the Trumpeter as main editor to work on a new journal *Terra Nova* (see inside back cover) sponsored by MIT Press. I thank David for his valuable assistance in improving the appearance of *The Trumpeter* and for freeing me to launch the new quarterly *The International Journal of Ecoforestry*. *The Trumpeter* will now continue under my primary editorial direction. Please send all correspondence to me at the LightStar address. Discussions are in progress regarding future editors and sponsors for this journal. Suggestions for future issues are welcome as are other forms of support. Please let us know how you like the new format and the content of recent issues. Thanks! *Alan*

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Editorial: City or Country?

David Rothenberg

From the deck of the Brooklyn Bridge, the sky appears framed by parallelograms of cable. The stretched grid of the multiple guylines places pulled rectangles across the sky. Round puffs of cloud, spread infinitely far to the horizon, many, many reproducing themselves like waterdrops far to the North, like the wide spread of the air in Maine over forests, islands, and lakes, here across the concrete and steel castle that rises on the lower tip of Manhattan. Today, miraculously, the horizon is not brown, there is no pollution to cry over, no haze to get lost in as one searches for Newark or the fog wall beyond the gates of Sandy Hook. The lattice of wires divides up the view, like a plan to sketch-by-numbers, to reduce to a proper scale. The bridge seems impervious, impractical—result of art, not engineering. There is no way to explain why it's like this. There is no reason it has survived.

One day they took out a parking lot and filled it in with green grass. This was part of the resolve against the rule over dilapidated spaces by the automobiles. People wanted a square of green, even though they would not be allowed to set foot on it, they clamored for a land of grass and hope, for respite from the march of concrete and steel. And the authorities listened: they unpaved the parking lot to give hope that paradise might come back to the city.

From the corner, a whisper, a comment, a judgment. *You only write of where you are. You are transfixed by your surroundings.* The endarkening of the afternoon prethunderous sky, the rustle of leaves on their last legs before the fall, the fervent buzz of trapped flies between windowpanes. *Right now this is all there is.* Memory? A faint shadow, an absent call.

You see it when you're lonely, the black holes within the city. Even as the sun is at just the exact angle to make the Bacardi U.S. Map billboard blaze as a harbinger of sunset, you may feel the resonance of the hollow. In the rush of traffic, in a scream at night, a person gasping for air or a cat leaping a final fence—Your dreams include misplaced items, the consequences of plans gone awry. A start and you awake to discover things are not as bad as they seem. Still, there's a cold sweat on the sheets and the wind has spread papers all across the floor. Daylight is several lifetimes away and it will be impossible to return to sleep.

Where to live? City or country? It all holds upon whether you want to be in the center of it all, or at the edges. Whether it is essential to surge through the throng of bustling human energy, or bask in the glint of light flickering leaves on late season trees. The sky, the air, the ground, the wind! Do you miss these things as the whirl of human ideas pulse through the sooty streets? There is no one place for you.

Sometimes the distance between the two places inspires the deepest of melancholia. Yesterday, walking slowly in the silent, frosted forest, a great emptiness of human upset. The woods are crazily quiet, with no place for these worries, these dangers, these fears of a human culture so far from the processes of nature as to be unable to know how we can fit into such a place after we have used it for centuries and now decided to leave it alone.

Then a rustling noise in the dead leaves and underbrush. The brown fields ahead seem to be moving. There is a gentle patter of wings and feet. One hundred wild turkeys are padding en masse through the trees, unruffled, unphased, together producing an amazing sound of stealthy motion through the staid forest. If I strain I can hear this sound—I could just as easily not know it's there. The flock soon strays away.

The loneliness of the place touches my core with sadness. I despair being unable to connect to the silence, overwhelmed by the unstoppable surge of nothingness manifest as information coursing through my mind as I try to flush it clean for the purification of thoughts. I cannot do it, as much as I want to fit in. This place serves me, I can visit the wilderness and detox the system. But how can I stay? I am hooked on culture, or at least tied to my image of the impossible but right place to live.

The sadness comes from feeling that the place I want is impossible, that America has no built landscape that relates to its surroundings in an honest way. We have civilization, on the one hand, with its progress toward "anywhere": the same brand names, the same foods, the same Post Roads with bigger and bigger malls, parking lots, places to buy things, one stop shopping as the highest goal. Then there are places to live, based upon the American Dream of a house and a yard, a private domain for everyone. We hide from the public, we seek escape. We cannot all live together like this.

There are exceptions, but they are often localized, expensive, museum pieces of how we wish we could live. Andrew Ross says New Yorkers are more ecologically sound than their suburban competitors because "they can walk everywhere instead of drive." But he forgets the vast areas of denuded and polluted land necessary to offer us New Yorkers fresh clementines and mangoes on every street corner. We are kept conveniently fed by virtue of the wastelands of the New Jersey swamps. And we pay for it.

This city polarizes thoughts of wilderness and civilization more than anywhere else I have been. What a shame so much of the discourse on the place of nature in society has come out of it! Still, the wild comes through. A human need not choose one extreme or the other. We can live in the betweenspaces of possibility. There is still reason to hope.

The Rapture of Discovering (How Wrong We Can Be)

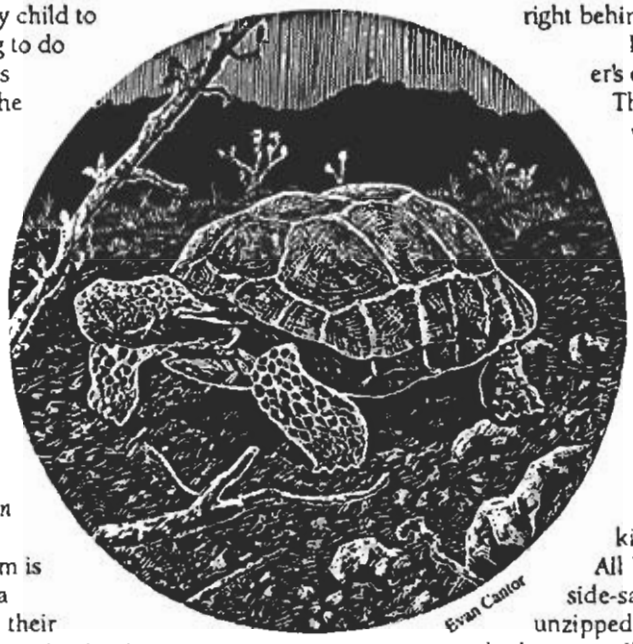
Un Ensayo en Tres Partes

Gary Paul Nabhan

Uno. I have a wish for the world: that every child would become a field naturalist when he or she grows up. This is no death wish, mind you. I am not trying to drive the last nail into the coffin of a career track already suffering from too few decent jobs to go around for the many eager beavers out there.

Oh, I've read the statistics. Of all the science careers, field biology pays the least, offers the fewest chances for long-term employment, and suffers the lowest prestige. On top of that, the field naturalists in the region where I live—the Stinking Hot Desert—garner even lower wages than those living elsewhere in North America. We get paid in sunsets whether we like them or not.

My reason for wanting every child to become a field naturalist has nothing to do with financial or professional rewards later in life, or for that matter, with the advancement of science. To the contrary, the natural science of ecology seems to me to be *the* field in which we will be most likely to fail to prove any hypothesis we attempt to test. And that's why I like it: I am constantly reminded how wrong we can be about how the world works.



That's half the problem: most of us need to be humbled more often, to recall that Nature is not only more complex than we think—it's more complex than we *can* think.

The other half of the problem is that a lot of kids grow up robbed of a chance to discover anything at all on their own. They are told at an early age that scientists in little white coats produce all the world's "facts" in sterilized laboratories. Trouble is, all those antiseptic facts taste far more bland than any wild fruit plucked right off the tree. And yet, "the general public" is constantly asked to consume and regurgitate them over and over again.

And so, I've had enough of the predigested pablum being marketed as meaty truths about the natural world. I wish to champion the subtle and often painful process of discovering, a phenomenon far different than the heroic act of discovery. By starting on the trail where discovering takes place, we seldom achieve any hard-fast truth about the world. Instead, we are inevitably reminded how little we know about that upon which each of our lives depends.

Dos. I started down this bewildering trail when I was quite young. It led me into my first failed field in biology: the human body. When I was three, I often wore corduroy pants with an elastic band gathering the waist. While out hiking with my older brother in the woods beyond our house, I sometimes found that I suddenly had to "tinkle." I would quickly dip my pants down in the front so that my plumbing would emerge far enough to do the trick. One day my older brother Norman—who wore regular blue jeans—asked me why I pulled my pants down to pee instead of opening my zipper. I told him, "I didn't know that's what the zipper was there for."

"Sure," he said. "Everyone's got their plumbing right behind their zippers."

I didn't immediately give my brother's explanation that much thought. Then, one afternoon, I went along with my mother to some social function of a women's auxilary which met at the local Lutheran church. Keep in mind that I grew up in a family with no sisters. I remember being dazzled by seeing so many different sizes and shapes of females in the same room. It was then I realized that every woman in the room had a zipper on her hip-whether wearing a skirt or a pair of stylish pedal-pushers, the rave of the mid-Fifties. I still had no idea what kind of plumbing women might have. All I could do was envision them riding side-saddle on toilet seats, pants or skirts unzipped, staring at the walls between two bathroom stalls. That was the first time I was dumbstruck by the mysteries of women. I continue to be bowled-over whenever I see a woman with a zipper on her hip or rear end, although I remain unsure how much of this awe I feel is based on a biologically imperfect understanding of womanhood.

I didn't tangibly learn how biologically wrong I could be until I was fourteen. That's when a girl from school invited me down into her basement to do "homework" one night while her parents were away at a PTA meeting. As we went downstairs, she made her amorous intentions known to me, first by complaining how hot their furnace was, then by tossing off her vest.

That's when I began to sneeze. My eyes began to water.

My voice dropped four octaves—the only reassuring sign that I might be reaching manhood as I reached toward her womanhood. Just before all our clothes molted off in would-be metamorphosis, I was struck with a sneezing attack so fierce that I had to excuse myself from her embrace, from the basement, and even from her household.

The next day in school, my eyes half-swollen shut, I caught a glimpse of my friend briskly walking the other way down a hallway to avoid me. I was crestfallen. I had been so close to achieving what was every teenage boy's wildest dream, and yet... Could I be allergic to girls? To love? To sex? There was no one to ask. Painfully, I had to find out on my own.

Fortunately, my mother again dragged me along to another one of her social functions, which is usually a fate worse than death for a teenage boy. And yet, it didn't phase me at all at the time. Nothing did. I had been a zombie for weeks since the night I had failed my homework assignment. Ironically, it was at a middle-aged women's tea party that I made the biological revelation which would redeem my life.

The hostess, I noticed, had a long-haired cat, almost identical to the one which my girlfriend's family kept locked up in their basement.

"Here kitty-kitty," I whispered. The cat came near to me. I sneezed. I picked up the pillow lying on the couch next to me—a likely place for a cat to lounge for hours on end. I sniffed the pillow. I sneezed again.

Spontaneously, I let out a war whoop, then sneezed again. I startled my mother and her friends in the next room, and their shaking hands tried to steady the tea sloshing in their cups. They craned their necks to stare at me through an open door. "Are you okay?" my mother blurted out, obviously embarrassed by my disruptive behavior.

"Yes! Am I okay? I'm okay! I'm only allergic to cats!" Tears came to my eyes. "I can't stay here though, or I'll keep on sneezing. If it's okay with you, I'll make it back home on my own."

"Well then, go on home, please," she urged. Her friends' eyebrows all tilted, sympathetic to mother's distress.

"I will," I said as I ran out the door. "Just as soon as I find out what's behind the zipper..."

Tres. Some of the most rapturous moments in natural history field studies come when we haven't a clue what we're really looking at. I recall the experience of a friend of mine, a successful commercial artist born and raised in Chicago, who decided to forsake her urban career and move to the desert when she fell in love with a mining engineer. Three days after their honeymoon, he was called out on emergency to inspect an accident, and she was left alone for more than a week in their ranch house out in the desert of the Lower Colorado River Valley.

After two days of reading magazines and watching birds come to the window sill, she decided to go out and explore the wildlands of their "backyard," which extended seamlessly into a Bureau of Land Management Primitive Area clear to the horizon. Her first discovery was a geode cracked in half—something her new husband had probably brought back to the yard, then forgotten about—which she mistook for a fossilized egg. Her second discovery—which reinforced the notion that the fossilized egg had recently "hatched"—was slowly sauntering across the desert pavement a few feet away.

Evan Cantor

It was some kind of reptile she had never seen nor heard of before. Its black and orange beaded skin glistened in the sun. It crawled along with a slow, somewhat primitive-looking gait. It had an ancient, knowing look in its eyes.

She gasped, realizing that this animal could be the first baby dinosaur to have hatched in a million of years! She did not know whether it would survive in such a different climate, but instantly vowed to follow it and study its behavior for as long as it lived. Running back to the house, she grabbed a canteen, a pair of binoculars, a journal and colored pencil set, and some trail food. Then she took off on foot, following the belatedly-born monster wherever it went.

As it plodded along through the desert, she drew a route map and kept a running account of where it went and what it ate. Whenever it stopped, she would take out her colored pencils, and sketch its posture as it lay sunning, trying to capture what the desert light was like reflecting off its beaded skin. When night fell, she went back to the ranch house, fixed herself a sandwich, then layed out a sleeping bag within thirty feet of the slumbering reptile.

Fortunately, the Gila Monster's home range was not that large, so her husband found her within a quarter mile of their back door a few days later. As she described what she had been doing, he first thought to correct her, to tell her that she had been watching a kind of beaded lizard that was characteristic of her newly-adopted desert home. And then, as he listened, he began to envy her; she had been immersed in the process of *discovering* a new life, an experience which had originally drawn him to the natural sciences twenty years before. Now, while he surveyed mining accidents and filed paperwork, his wife had been out exploring the world with freshly opened eyes.

We, as trained scientists, sorely need our eyes opened to the unexpected, for we too often carry in our heads theories, models and constructs which keep us from seeing the obvious. Our understanding of the natural world—however imperfect that understanding is and will continue to be—can only grow if we are willing to shed those old paradigms as reality rips them to shreds. Instead, most of us cling to our tattered covers, hoping that they will protect us from the perils that lie beyond our doorstep.

Once in a while, in my own field work, I find my head turned around, straining to take into account some clue which runs counter to everything I have assumed up until that moment. One such day of reckoning occurred a few years ago, when I went down into Sonora with my son Dusty to "prove" that lesser long-nosed bats were declining because of the over-harvesting of wild century plants.

These bats are known to migrate long distances to reach desert century plants when they are in flower, for they love to flock around the open flowers, sucking up their nectar. The same kind of century plant can be used to produce tequila-like *mescal bacanora*, the favored drink of rural dwellers in Sonora. Near sparsely populated Indian lands tucked in the barrancas of the Sierra Madre, century plant populations continue to be steadily harvested. From other areas that have suffered rapid population growth, I had heard reports that century plants had become too scarce to harvest and that bats were seldom seen anymore.

Based on some earlier fieldwork, I had estimated that a half million century plants were being harvested and roasted annually in the state of Sonora alone. But as Dusty and I interviewed more mescalero bootleggers, my estimates soared to a million or more. I grew depressed by what my calculations were telling me.

Fortunately, with ten year old Dusty along, riding shot-gun in the jeep, another view of the issue took shape. While I concentrated on the road, he would casually point out one agave after another, up above us on the cliffs and slopes. He made me realize that there were still a lot of century plants growing near Sonoran villages, too many to jibe with my calculations.

At one place, we pulled over to the side of the road, climbed up a rocky slope, and examined the plants. There was a ring of them, and in the center we could see the remains of an older one. It had probably reached maturity before being trimmed into a pineapple-like globe to ready it for roasting. It seemed as though the mescaleros had harvested the mother plant in a way which had allowed the persistence of her "pups" or "kids" the vegetative offshoots which emerge from beneath her skirts.

Thanks to Dusty's eagle eyes—which were unhampered by any doom-and-gloom scenario of agave endangerment, I was prompted to talk in greater depth with some older *mescaleros*.

"Of course we tend to the plants so that they will produce more," they told me. "If we didn't do that, we would lose the very resource which we love." One of the *mescaleros* pointed to his bottle of bootleg mescal, took a sip, and passed it over to me. I took a sip of the smokey elixir, and passed it around to the others present.

As I listened to them talk about their harvesting technique, I realized that they had an ancient tradition of an unconventional sort of pruning, described in ancient words surviving from the nearly-extinct Opata Indian language. As a mother plant reached maturity, they would notice a blush in her leaves, then would cut the soon-to-emerge flower stalk. The old *mescaleros* would not harvest the plant immediately, but would wait four to six months. The sugars which would have gone into the making of the stalk and its flowers now enriched the plant itself, so that it was pregnant with sweetness by the time of harvest.

What they called "castrating" the *quiote* or flower stalk was the same process scientists termed "disruption of apical dominance." This sort of pruning stimulated lateral shooting, so that a new generation of century plants was produced by the time the mnther was turned into a pineapple.

The old timers did not technically "kill" the plant, but instead let it sprout into a dozen others before they took their share of its bounty. I had been wrong in indicting traditional mescal-making as a threat to wild agaves and their attendant bats. It appears that the *mescaleros* knew more practical biology than I knew.

In the process of discovering the regenerative capacity of traditionally harvested mescal populations, I learned a larger lesson about my fellow human beings. I had better not "pre-judge" whether their actions ultimately damage the natural world until I have taken to the trail and seen with my own eyes whether any serious harm has been done.

The more we learn about traditional forms of wild plant management, the more we grow to respect the local ecological knowledge encoded in the idiomatic terms of folks such as Sonoran *mescaleros*. It is a knowledge which can serve to regenerate rather than deplete natural diversity. To be sure, there are also harvesting practices done on a scale and with an intensity that is out of synchrony with the regenerative capacity of mescal. Nevertheless, it is foolhardy for a visiting scientist to claim on the basis of a few spot checks that a mescal population is or is not regenerating itself. The plants live longer than we do, and have long been adapted to the unpredictable conditions of desert lands. We must curb our own tendencies to blindly rush to judgement. We are too often like the high-tech weather man with his stack of computerized satellite reports, who predicts an extended drought while it is raining outside his studio.

Of late, I have not made as many anatomical mistakes in assessing the human body, but I remain a novice at assessing the earthly body that is our home. My wish is that such mistakes will lead me down the trail where I will take more time to observe what is immediately before me. Hopefully, I will also retain some capacity for rapture, perhaps rapture of the same intensity I felt when I finally discovered what was "behind the zipper..."

Gary Paul Nabhan is a MacArthur Fellow and Science Advisor at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum in Tucson. His latest books are *The Geography of Childhood* (with Stephen Trimble) and *Desert Legends: Re-Storying the Sonoran Borderlands* (with Mark Klett).

Animal Encounters

Sabine Hrechdakian

As children, most of us develop a responsiveness toward animals that has all the characteristics of a relationship: curiosity, fear, wonder, desire, hate—it is sensory, tactile and emotional. That physical flirtation continues in adulthood and becomes the basis from which we learn to acquire information and knowledge. Animals often seem to me the only beings capable of igniting my imagination. I feel their presence suggestively, as a rustling at the edge of the woods, a leaping out of headlights, a dream of serpents growing enormous and shattering concrete. Without them the world would retreat into pantomime. Civilization and nature are not as neatly divided as we wish. On some occasions, I have been aware of this incongruity—I have sought out those gaps—let myself be spoken to by things I do not understand.

Did animals once understand what we said? I have tried to resurrect that conversation in my travels, in my approach, but there is so much to make up for. Most of the time I have felt awkward and foolish, naked to the unforgiving stare of an animal behind bars, or like a voyeur gawking at some wild tryst uninvited. After hours, or days of groping it is a gift to be rewarded by the sight of a coyote trotting through creosote, or a snowy owl perched on a field of ice. That fleeting shudder of recognition in those moments speaks perhaps of the silent covenant threading us together. It is not the passive stare at exotic animals on TV or the depraved sight of them in cages, but the accidental wonder of two paths crossed in time. It is a haunting and passionate game I play every time I find myself outdoors. A type of interspecies hide and seek.

Memory is a collaborative collection, a collective fiction of stories between human beings and the landscape, both animate and still, with which we share life. Thinking back to all the places I have lived—Beirut, Boston, New York and now rural New Hampshire—I string together loose images of my encounters with the wild. I don't mean only in wilderness, but the wild that grows in fissures of concrete, herds clouds across the sky, and nests in spires of stone.

Beirut

When I go back to the beginning, my memories of childhood in Lebanon are scarce. They are diluted as memory often flows, by trickle. It was mostly a landscape of colors and textures—the blue band of sea, bristling tree limbs, the grit of orange sand, stony hills—a living backdrop animated by snakes, cats, starfish and birds. There were frequent trips to the ocean, weekends in the mountains, Sunday picnics. But, like most children the landscape I knew best was in a contained perimeter around our house.

My family lived in an apartment perched on a hill on the outskirts of Beirut. It was surrounded by a grove of olive trees on one side, and an overgrown feral garden with a long swing hanging from a tree on the other. I spent hours in the olive grove watching ants march around their hill in the chalky soil. I brought them crumbs of bread every afternoon and sat mesmerized by their antics, watching as they heaved my offerings twice their size, and staggered down into invisible tunnels. My parents did not allow pets into their meticulous house, and so I developed an almost possessive attachment to the ants. My afternoon pilgrimages took the form of a feeding ritual and I believed that without my bread crumbs the colony might starve.

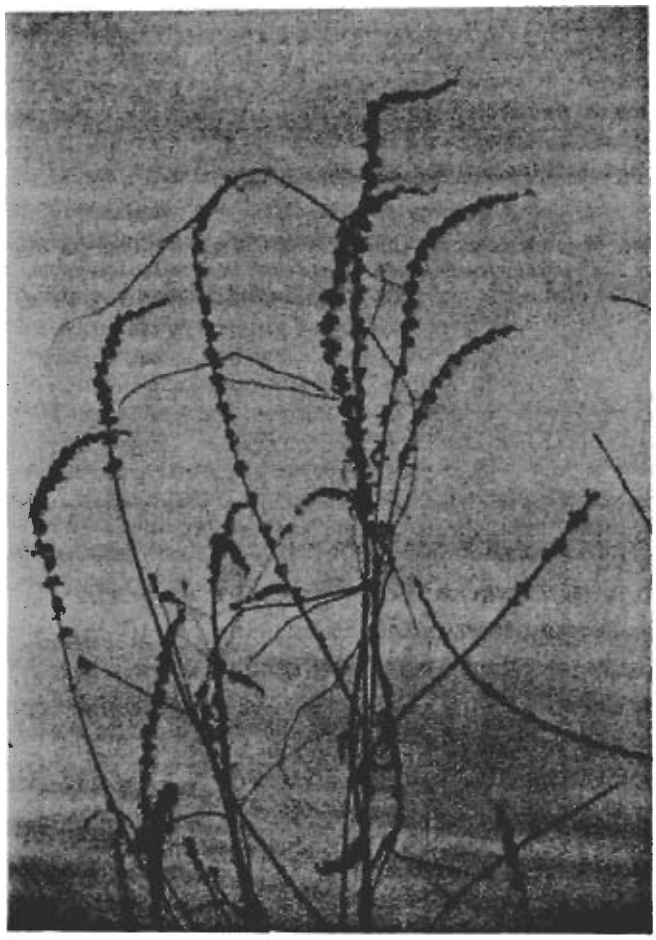
The garden with the swing was a jungle in comparison to the dry, almost desert like patch under the olive trees. No doubt if I went back I would find a paltry and meager lot of weeds, but to me then it was a fecund haven. Lying belly down in the soft grasses I found an assortment of frogs and garden snakes to play with, looping my hands around their cool and viscous bodies. I watched Praying Mantis, their forelegs clasped to their chests, poised quizzically on the tips of leaves. Birds which I cannot name congregated in the leafy canopy. Stray dogs would wander under the dappled shade of trees to escape the noonday sun. Swaying back and forth on the swing I felt the incessant hum and buzz of living things growing, crawling, and moving all around me.

Behind our apartment was an elevated rectangular garden belonging to the building next door. It was planted with palm, banana and fig trees, and swarming with stray cats skulking around, hissing with raised backs, or curled up on mangled tails. At night their plaintive howling drove me out of bed and onto the balcony shivering with curiosity. I was always involved in vain attempts to seduce them into domesticity, but my pleas went mostly unheeded (although my offerings of food were graciously accepted). Their defiant proliferation on a patch of ground between two walls of concrete was a testament to the unruly alliance between our two worlds.

The day my parents told us to pack our things after the war broke out, the sun was shining, everyone was calm, the geraniums had bloomed in the garden. We said good-bye to our neighbors and got into our car. I looked for a stray cat that had finally allowed me to adopt her, but to no avail, until the moment we were ready to leave, she appeared out of nowhere and jumped into my lap in the back seat. Looking at her rusty, spotted fur on my black skirt, feeling her warm breath on my palm, I was suddenly filled with regret. When I let her go, I knew I would never see her again. I was later told that we had a motorcade escort to the airport. I should think that I would have remembered the sirens and motorcycles, the soldiers and sleek cars, but all that comes to mind is the blue sky, the red geraniums and my cat.

Desert

In nine months of travel through the Southwest I crossed the animal path only a few times. It took weeks of walking down dry washes, over mesas and across the open palms of desert in search of the cougar, the fox and the owl. Even then I was given only clues to their presence. Scat full of berries, tracks in the mud, feathers stuck in the spines of Ocotillo, a tail caught by flashlight. Once, walking in the canyon country of Utah, I came to a fork in the trail and stood at the intersection wondering which direction to take. I sensed a small shape to my left and turned my head to find a gray fox standing motionless. I froze. We stared at each other for what felt like hours— I saw into his rich eyes, noticed the grayish tips on his coat, saw his flanks rise with each breath. I imagined his shape so often, had seen evidence of his passage everywhere and now he stood before me. He broke our gaze, turned his head, trotted over a jumble of rocks and disappeared. I had been waiting for this moment since my trip began in Texas and nearly wept. I took it as an omen and walked up the left trailhead.



Jerry DeMarco

On another occasion, climbing in the outback of Utah, I stopped to rest after a series of exhausting switch backs. It was early enough for the air to hold a hint of coolness. Desert Phlox, Indian Paintbrush and Manzanita were in bloom bursting in tufts of color from the sandstone walls. Leaning back, I caught sight of a cliff sparrow rising upwards in tight rhythmic circles. I must have been watching it for a few seconds when the canyon filled with sound, a rushing boom, and suddenly the sparrow vanished. I stared in disbelief at the empty space where the sparrow had been. A few switchbacks ahead of me my friend had also stopped to rest and followed a peregrine falcon rising on columns of air warmed by morning sun. When the falcon folded his wings and began his descent at 200mph towards the sparrow I did not even see his shadow. I only heard the sky split open.

There are some occasions in which the encounter is neither accidental, nor altogether willful. Although I played with snakes when I was young, I have always had a fear of bugs. Their complete otherness in purpose and body plan: segmented bodies, huge bulbous eyes, and alien habits inspires a horror completely disproportionate to their size. We tend to relate to elements in nature which reflect a human sensibility; large expressive eyes, tenderness towards young, long mobile fingers, mating for life. Why do the insects' draconian social orders, militaristic relationships and cannibalistic habits inspire *dread*? One might assume, as I did at first, that it is their difference which arouses revulsion, but perhaps the reverse is true: insects may be a repository of the worst fears we have about ourselves. We see in them what we don't want to recognize in ourselves; the capacity to inflict punishment, the lust for war, tyranny towards our own species. We see in nature only what we want to see in ourselves—the violent, biting and strange face of nature we turn away from.

Belgium

One night, when visiting my parents in Brussels, I left the window open to my room and the light on. When I came back a couple of hours later the walls were papered with a virtual taxonomic jungle of insects. There were hundreds of species of every imaginable variation. Their strange shapes, antennae and roving legs were outlined against the white walls. Some were painted in colors I had never seen before: iridescent, neon, translucent green. I froze in the doorway and my heart started to beat wildly, palms drained of blood, every cell in my body fluttered; I felt an almost nauseous revulsion.

But having overcome my fear of deep water by jumping into a bottomless quarry at night, I controlled my impulse to bolt. The insects' strange presence in my room felt like an invitation of sorts, so I reached into the room, running my hand against the wall until I found the light switch; took a deep breath, maybe several, and turned the light off. Suddenly the room and I were plunged into darkness. I wavered in the doorway and walked inside feeling their multi-legged presence clinging to the walls, fear raising itself on the surface of my skin, neck tingling. I ran towards my bed and jumped under the covers. Eventually, I calmed myself and summoned enough courage to uncover my face. Lying perfectly still in the darkness, I fell asleep in their alien company. When I woke up in the morning, the walls, of course, were bare and nothing remained of their visit but a coiled green insect's body on my pillow.

New York

When I lived in Brooklyn—industrial wasteland of abandoned warehouses, noxious factories, endless pounding trucks, and garish whores—I often wondered whether I had

become so numb from the abuses of living in the city that I was no longer touched by wild things. There was a bulging dump down my street teeming with gulls. I would close my eyes to hear ships throttling in the East River and the gull's raucous calls and picture myself by the ocean. At sunset the sky bloomed a nuclear orange over the leviathan metal bridge, and feral dogs hunted for trash in roving packs like wolves. Walking home from the subway at night down these sinister and deserted streets I felt alert to the presence of unforgiving wildness. These dogs instilled in me a sense of fear, not pity, and I walked with the same care as I had for grizzly in Montana. I saw my first owls and herons in Central Park. I went to the Jamaica Bay Refuge where ducks floated in bulrush swamps and the city glittered, rising out of cattails. Even in a place so consumed by the extravagances of culture the imprint of the wild left its mark.

New Hampshire

Two years ago I moved to rural New Hampshire, leaving behind the buzz and din of cities I had always called home. I now live in a small house, nestled between a cove of white pines at the end of a long dirt road. Out here I interact very little with people, and without their companionship I am tuned into what other life surrounds me. There is no husband to talk with, no children to hold, no TV to distract, no pets to covet—it is a bare existence. City friends ask: "Aren't you lonely, or scared out *there* all by yourself?" I explain that the red oak tree which drops acorns dribbling on the roof, the young maple's striated body and enormous fanning leaves, the towering white pines turning the ground into rusty duff, the chipmunk who lives under my stone steps and leaves middens of acorn strips in his wake, and the breath of wind which scrapes boughs and rattles windows and pipes all conspire to make me never feel alone. The lack of human company does not leave me bereft of life, but opens me to a wider circle of companionship.

Here, my house is littered with bones, skulls, antlers, feathers, nests and scat. The fire mantle, a long piece of pine sawed in half, is adorned with antlers I have found during my walks and travels. Each piece brings back the image of fallen bones uncovered by spring's first thaw and are clues to the mystery of the life that once held them. Next to the mantle is an enormous Cabeza de Vaca which an old roommate left as a gift. On my bookshelves are nests I have found toppled from trees, some woven with bits of plastic and metal, others made of feathers and straw. Bugs, butterflies, rocks from all of my travels are arranged on the window sills. Upstairs, where I immerse myself in baths, is my place for shells. In my room are more rocks, bones, corn, and wood, with one piece found by a friend in Mexico the shape of a bull.

I do not own clothes, sheets, or towels with the faces of animals stitched on them. No mugs of deer in trophy poses, sunset posters of the Arctic, or panda slippers. Having my house adorned with works of nature is the next best thing to living in a menagerie. It is what I feel the animal or place has given me as a token of our crossing paths. The crafted work of other creatures inspires me and keeps me from forgetting that my house is but another nest for my own bones.

Sabine Hrechdakian is the editor of *Whole Terrain*, a journal published annually by the environmental studies department at the Antioch/New England Graduate School. Despite her claimed isolation, she may be reached at <privbit@aol.com>.

Howard Nelson

The Fisher

In the chill Adirondack morning,
coming back from the waterfall, clear green water
tumbling among gray boulders,
and the washed-out footbridge,
I saw a fisher
cross the dam,
climb quickly through the rocks,
and slip away into the pines.
A human being who was as intensely attuned
and alive as the fisher
would be brilliant, or radiant, or would go insane.
A life of steep, cold places, of adrenaline
and hunger,
without compromise or sublimation.
He's expert
at slaughtering the porcupine.
Solitary, a pulse in fur,
he darts well
along logs and among boulders.
He paused on the dam,
climbed quickly up through the rocks....
Only a crazy person would try to imagine
that life,
yet many times, and not only in the cold
mountain morning,
I have wished I were half as alive as the fisher.

For Dian Fossey

She sat among dark lives on mountains,
among those who do not change.
To choose another species over one's own

isn't natural, or admirable, exactly—
but who doesn't have some flaw?
Hers was the size of the gap between human
and gorilla.

When she was on the TV show
with the famous, well-dressed comedian,
she was relaxed only when she spoke gorilla.

"*Naoom, m-nwowm, manauum-naomm, naoumm.*"
The gaze of the mountain gorilla simply rips
your soul open.
She's buried among gorillas.

It was a rage she was in.
It was a love she was in.
To give one's life to sit down among the animals
is a strange, great thing.

The Gorillas of Sleep

It isn't only
the fiery, wet times
when two people press and flow
into one another
in the sweetest, wildest ways,
but also these
sleeping times.
Two souls in a bed, drifting,
lying close, touching
or loosely entwined.
Like the black gorillas,
who cluster and loll
through the long afternoons
among green leaves
on the slopes of extinct volcanoes.
When we lie together like this
these long,dark, sleeping moments
we call nights,
we go back again to our home
in the forest.

Howard Nelson's poems are excerpted from his book of poems, *Gorilla Blessing*. The book is available from Falling Tree Press, R.D. #4, Box 121, Moravia, NY 13118 for $5. All profits are donated to the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund or the Adirondack Council.

Amahoro

Harold Linde

"RAISE YOUR RIGHT HAND," DIRECTED THE AMERICAN ambassador, "And repeat after me." We then swore to defend the Constitution against all enemies "foreign and domestic," with God as our witness. The ambassador pronounced us official Peace Corps volunteers. And so I became an ambassador of peace in the tiny, unheard-of Central African country called Rwanda.

When we finished taking our oath, I searched the crowd for the ambassador. I had been planning a rainforest education project for Rwandan secondary school students, and hoped that he would offer support. When I found the ambassador, he was discussing the latest NFL news. I waited for an opening. Eventually a gap appeared, and I slipped in. I probed for environmental appreciation. Had the ambassador ever visited the volcanoes where Rwanda's famous gorillas lived?

"I am here to bring democracy to Rwanda," he replied with authority, "I don't have time for sight-seeing."

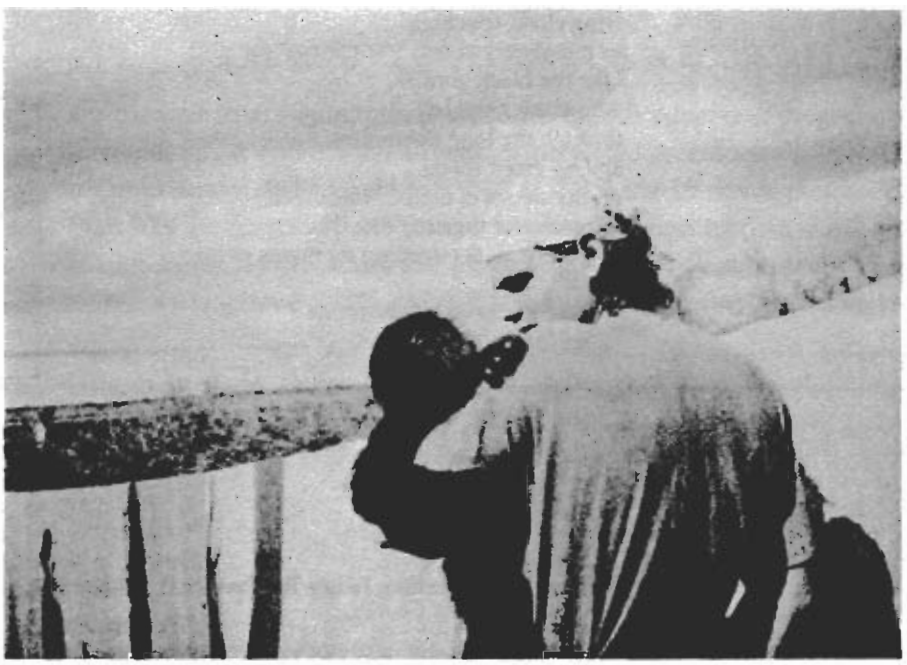
Fortunately, my ambassadorial duties were not so demanding.

A year later I was on my way to the *Parc des Volcans* (Park of the Volcanoes), home of Rwanda's mountain gorilla population. I stopped in the last town before the park to visit a friend, the resident gorilla veterinarian. We chatted a while, then I wandered into the backyard. There I found a tiny being exploring the lawn. She soon noticed me. After looking me over for a few moments, she scampered up to my feet. Her eyes found mine. She held up her black, furry arms. A baby gorilla wanted a hug.

Customs officials had discovered her in a cramped wicker basket headed for a plane's cargo hold. The smugglers had probably had to kill her parents in order to abduct her. The vet was a natural choice for the gorilla-orphan foster-parent. My friend named her "Amahoro"—*peace* in Kinyerwanda, the national language.

I picked up Amahoro and we nuzzled each other. Soon she was exploring my face with her smooth, black fingers. She brushed my eyebrows and poked in my ear. Her fingertips were cool and soft. I instinctively trusted her hands, even though she had spent most of her life in a rain forest. For a "wild" animal, Amahoro was gentle; she never once grabbed or pinched me. Her touch felt sensitive. A young but powerful intelligence guided her actions.

Amahoro's color captivated me. Her lips, nose, fur, and feet—every part of her, in fact—was pure black. I had never seen an undomesticated animal that was all-black before. Creatures in the wild are usually a shade of brown, green, or gray. Black doesn't camouflage easily in the forest, especially in the vivid greens of a montane rain-forest on an ancient African volcano. So Amahoro stood out. Her color broadcast: "I am special! Take notice of me!"



Harold Linde

As Amahoro ambled among the plants and flowers, she closely inspected each delectable looking blossom. She would touch one with the tip of her tongue, then moved on to find contemplate another. This wasn't a dog sniffing for a morsel of food; this was a creature that moved with *intention*.

I imagine Amahoro missed her holistic, functional family, a tightly-knit gorilla community called a "group." There were probably about ten members in Amahoro's group: a mature, gray-haired "silverback" male that led the group, his handful of wives, the young, and a submissive male or two. They gathered its food in a sustainable fashion, leaving most of the flora intact where they ate and slept to grow back. They were vegetarians, eating mainly wild celery and the heart of the giant lobelia plant. And they spent half as much time fulfilling basic

requirements like gathering food and building a nest as we humans do. This left them with plenty of time to groom each other, play with the young, wrestle, take naps, do the wild thing, and stare up at the passing clouds. If I came from a family like Amahoro's, I would have missed them tremendously.

I never met another gorilla during my service in Rwanda. Four days before I was scheduled to spend the weekend at the Rwanda's national gorilla research center, I was called to the phone while teaching an English class. Rebel forces had invaded the previous night and were pushing towards the capitol. A Peace Corps van had already been sent to collect me at my site. I had half an hour to pack.

I saw the ambassador one last time before I left Rwanda. I was sitting in an embassy conference room surrounded by a hundred other Ameri-cans. Once again the ambassador's travel plans differed from my own. He offered all non-essential American personnel the choice of voluntary evacuation. As the most rurally-based of the American community, Peace Corps volunteers didn't have the choice to stay.

I was evacuated from Rwanda six months before finishing my two-year commitment with the Peace Corps. My rainforest education project was never realized. A stack of ungraded midterm exams lay on my dining-room table when I walked out my front door. I never said good-bye to a single Rwandan friend, neighbor, or student.

The evacuation was over a year ago. Since then I've read that a mass grave was discovered in my town filled with the bodies of 88 students. I imagined my former students among the dead. Soon after this I saw bloated corpses floating down the Kagera river on television. I assumed my best Rwandan friend would be face-down in the water as well (He was an obvious Tutsi minority, so he would have been a primary target for the death squads in our town). Eventually my town was turned into the front lines. French paratroopers and U.N. peace-keepers took up positions there to halt the advancing rebel army. My house, with its spectacular view, is now probably a military command post.

But I still don't stick Rwanda in the hopeless category with Somalia and Bosnia. I don't believe Rwanda is the "Cambodia of the 90s" or "Hell on Earth" as the many magazines have called it. No matter how desperate or insane the situation gets in Rwanda, I know of one being in Rwanda who isn't involved.

I don't know if the ambassador ever found the time to visit the gorillas. I hope he did. Then he also would have experienced peace in Rwanda at least once before he left.

Jesse Bier

Don't Tell Me Trees Don't Talk

I tell her, they sigh
they positively breathe a sigh of relief or husky thanks.
"Who? The carrigana?" Yes, and the heretofore high
honeysuckle bushes. "Even the spruce wind-break, and our banks
of lilac." I remember from the time before.
I light out with any stick that's handy, or an old
long broom-handle, and whack the snow off them. It's a chore
that a sudden April blizzard bestows on Montana, rain turned cold
and heavy, wet snow prodigious in the trees and on the land.
Nothing can hold up under the sodden burden, withstand
the weight of white—thickening, thickening. Enough to crack these trees
weeping worse than any willow, curling to the ground,
pleading: Pity me, or: I can't bear it, and: I'll freeze
for sure, and split under this ice-skin. My back is bound
to break (they say), Our limbs are splayed.

I hurry out, my heart already pumping.
It's not the exercise. It's that pity, for this joke played
by one more late-acting winter. I smack hard, laden branches jumping
out and up, and free. I swear I hear the rest:
Me too, me too! *Save me.* For crying out loud,
get a move on.... But I'm doing my best,
flailing them up and away. (Of course they don't cry
out loud, but I hear them: whimpering, bough'd
over, all waiting their turn). "I'm coming, I'm coming," I say and whip
the tangled branches—walking on them—on the snow,
on clicking ice. I slash, pound, thwack, cut, clip,
pummel empty air sometimes, then slap an upper branch bending low.
I hear the soft boom of arboreal snow avalanching down
around me, and on *me*: hat and head white, ears frosted but tuned to that sound
I hear (helping the next and then the next and the next) as I go by,
sighing softly that resilient after-sigh
of release: for one more chance at unencumbered spring.
Oh you (they say), Oh man. Just the thing
to straighten my spine, coil back my limbs. Oh good! Now leave
like anything.... Ah, they sigh so.

"They don't sigh," she says. "You're putting me on.
Trees, brush and bushes don't make a sound."
"Oh yes, they do." "All right, they make sounds, I know:
wind does it, or birds, or squirrels. But not them, never *them.* Do you think so?"
she asks—and it's the asking part that tells me, she believes.

Jesse Bier teaches English at the University of Montana.

Sympathy or Subversion?

Callicott, Thoreau, and the New Physics

Paul van Ryzin

THE ECOLOGICAL CRISES WE FACE TODAY ARE LARGELY THE result of the set of fundamental beliefs that Western civilization shares as a whole. In the last two decades, environmentalists and scholars have undertaken the task of identifying, exposing, and challenging some of these basic ideas. Articulated variously as attacks against Christianity, modern science, and modern philosophy, at the heart of these critiques is an assumption about the central role of metaphysics in determining our attitudes toward and actions in the environment. Environmental philosopher J. Baird Callicott in a series of articles published in a variety of journals since 1985, argues that a radical and universal paradigm shift is upon us, the result of a recent revision of our metaphysical presuppositions in quantum physics and what he calls the "New Ecology." Callicott foresees a corresponding change in our system of values in the natural world, as the classical Cartesian paradigm is supplanted by the "organic," "ecological," or "systems" world view. (Callicott 1992: 142)

I argue here against Callicott's assertion that the classical set of assumptions which form the foundation for our world view has been undermined by these sciences. While it is true that the behavior of subatomic particles in certain experimental preparations cannot easily be explained by classical physics, there is nevertheless little consensus as to what these paradoxes imply about the fundamental nature of reality. And, although the science of ecology is thought by some to take a "holistic" (as opposed to a reductionistic) view of natural systems, its approach nevertheless does not constitute a challenge to the Cartesian paradigm, as I will show. Callicott's value theory, consequently, is seriously weakened, although perhaps not beyond salvation. I suggest that the only possible justification for his theory lies not in rational science, but in purely non-rational experience. On this basis, I recommend that the theory be grounded in the experience of what the 19th century naturalist Henry David Thoreau called "sympathy" with the natural world.

Like many philosophers in environmental ethics in recent years, Callicott frames his theory around the problem of intrinsic value for the natural world. Do natural entities have value in and of themselves, regardless of the presence of a valuing observer? Or, in other words, is value a real quality that exists objectively in nature, or is it wholly subjective, existing only in the human mind? In contrast to the views of the equally well-known environmental philosopher Holmes Rolston, Callicott argues firmly against the existence of objective value in nature. Rolston's position, according to Callicott is too difficult to defend. Rolston holds, fundamentally, that value would exist in the natural world despite the absence of all human consciousness from the universe. However, as Callicott shows in a recent article on Rolston's book, *Environmental Ethics*, those who take this approach base their argumentation on conventional naturalistic grounds, assuming (or at least not confronting) the metaphysical foundations of modern science. These, as Callicott writes, consist of the following:

> First, the fundamental Cartesian split between the *res extensa* and the *res cogitans*—between extension and thought, matter and mind, object and subject; second, the Galilean distinction between primary and secondary qualities...—the former objective properties of the extended things (objects), the latter dependent for their existence on thinking things (or subjects); and third, the Humean distinction between fact and value—which simply extends the object-subject and primary-secondary parsing of empirical qualities on to value qualities. (Callicott 1992: 136)

Thus, under this classical paradigm, "Value, like color, is observer dependent, subjective in nature. Objective nature, classically conceived, is in itself neither green nor good." The only way Rolston can continue to posit objective (i.e. intrinsic) value in nature is if he provides a "persuasive alternative to the integral set of Cartesian-Humean assumptions" which fundamentally hold nature to be value free. However, Callicott points out that those arguing for objective value in nature have consistently failed to do this. They neglect to challenge the classical assumption that the observer and the observed are independent entities, and thus these philosophers cannot get around the "logically and historically ancillary" dichotomy of fact and value to grant value an objective existence, independent of a conscious observer. (See also Callicott 1985: 272)

A New Paradigm for Physics?

Callicott repeatedly asserts that this modern scientific world view is obsolete. (See, e.g., Callicott 1992: 138) Indeed, his entire theory rests on this premise. He claims that quantum physics has undermined the fundamental assumptions of modern science by clouding the distinction between subject and object. The basis for this claim, Callicott explains, lies in the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle. In short, this principle holds that, because it is not possible to simultaneously measure the location and velocity of the subatomic particle to any desired degree of accuracy, the observer must make a choice between a precise "spatial" description of the particle at one instant, or an approximate spatial description of the particle with a definite velocity over time. As Callicott says, "one or the other, but not both of the properties [location or velocity] may be known definitely, or both may be known approximately." (Callicott 1985: 270) For Callicott then, the

observer has an active role in choosing the actual properties of the particle observed. Furthermore, Callicott claims, "its reality is thus in some sense constituted by the observer." It is in this sense that Callicott believes the new physics has overturned the Cartesian subject-object duality. It follows from this, then, that value is neither objective nor subjective, but "virtual." Callicott writes, "Inherent value is a virtual value in nature actualized upon interaction with consciousness." (Callicott 1985: 271)

Callicott goes on from here to justify his principle of "axiological complementarity" by assuming a "more speculative, and therefore more controversial" interpretation of quantum physics. However, this new interpretation turns out to be little more than a restatement of the view already articulated, which he considers to be the most conservative and well-established view. Consider his quote from Fritjof Capra:

> The human observer constitutes the final link in the chain of observational processes, and the properties of any atomic object can only be understood in terms of the object's interaction with the observer. This means that the classical ideal of an objective description of nature is no longer valid. The Cartesian partition between the I and the world, between the observer and the observed, cannot be made when dealing with atomic matter. In atomic physics we can never speak about nature without, at the same time, speaking about ourselves. (Callicott 1985: 272)

The implication, for Callicott and Capra, is that the observer and observed are intimately connected—thus, the world is, at its most fundamental level, an undifferentiated "one." Callicott then combines this "oneness," implied by physics (and complemented by ecology) with the historically normative claim that the ego is intrinsically valuable to get to his principle of "axiological complementarity." In effect, the principle says that if we are no longer able to affirm the existence of entities as wholly discrete from ourselves, and thus are unable to distinctly separate ourselves from the environment, then any value which is given to oneself is thereby also given to the natural world.

Sound farfetched? Robert Clifton and Marilyn Regehr describe Capra's claims about the metaphysical implications of quantum physics in even harsher terms. In the course of revealing the misconception in the same quote that Callicott uses to support his principle (above), Clifton and Regehr quote from Niels Bohr, father of the Copenhagen Interpretation:

> The notion of complementarity does in no way involve a departure from our position as detached observers of nature...the essentially new feature in the analysis of quantum phenomena is the introduction of a fundamental distinction between the measuring apparatus and the objects under investigation... (Clifton and Regehr 1990: 87)

The paradoxes encountered in certain experiments with subatomic phenomena do not, then, imply a subversion of the Cartesian paradigm. The fundamental assumptions of modern science remain intact.

Indeed, there is little consensus among quantum physicists regarding the metaphysical implications of the quantum paradoxes. Some do argue that the paradoxes imply an idealism inconsistent with classical physics and the Cartesian dualism, but this position is hardly paradigmatic, as Callicott claims. Albert Einstein, a significant contributor to early quantum mechanics, never relinquished faith in a deterministic model of ultimate reality. (March 1978: 234) And although his belief remained, until his death, based on little more than faith, it is nevertheless a faith still held among physicists today. David Bohm, for example, is one of the better known proponents of a "hidden-variable" theory for quantum mechanics, which is "realistic in the sense that it postulates an objective external world that has entities which possess properties..." (Clifton and Regehr 1990: 79) This hidden-variable theory assumes, in effect, that there is some as yet undetected factor which, if revealed, would explain subatomic phenomena in accordance with classical physics.

Clearly, there is not so much consensus among quantum physicists as Callicott would like us to believe. Regardless of whether adherence to a realist interpretation of reality is based on mere faith, the essential point here is that this faith yet abounds. As for the stubborn paradoxes of quantum mechanics, Robert March predicts that these will become less problematic in the future:

> ...time has a way of transforming the bizarre into the familiar, in science as well as in art. New generations of physicists have emerged, comfortable with the dualities of the quantum theory. Many suspect that the hidden message is not all *that* deep. It is simply that we should never have expected words born in the familiar world readily accessible to our senses, such as *particle* and *wave*, to perfectly describe the microcosm. The electron is what it is, and if the words we use to describe it seems full of paradox, *so much the worse for those words*. (March 1978: 235)

A New Paradigm for Ecology?

Callicott's representation of the "New Ecology" is also subject to debate. Alan Wittbecker shows this in his recent article, "Metaphysical Implications from Physics and Ecology." Wittbecker starts off by showing that the New Ecology, being quantitative and reductionistic, "rejects the ecosystem model that Callicott places at the center of his argument." (276) It is rather the old "ecology," the practical, prescientific knowledge of the interrelationships in the natural world, that embodies the holistic principle essential to Callicott's value theory. Wittbecker notes that the tradition of ecology to which Leopold and Naess adhere and from which Callicott draws his arguments "belongs to the old tradition and not to the modern science." Callicott must mean this old tradition of ecology when he states that the New Ecology and New Physics are "conceptually complementary and convergent." (Callicott 1986: 307)

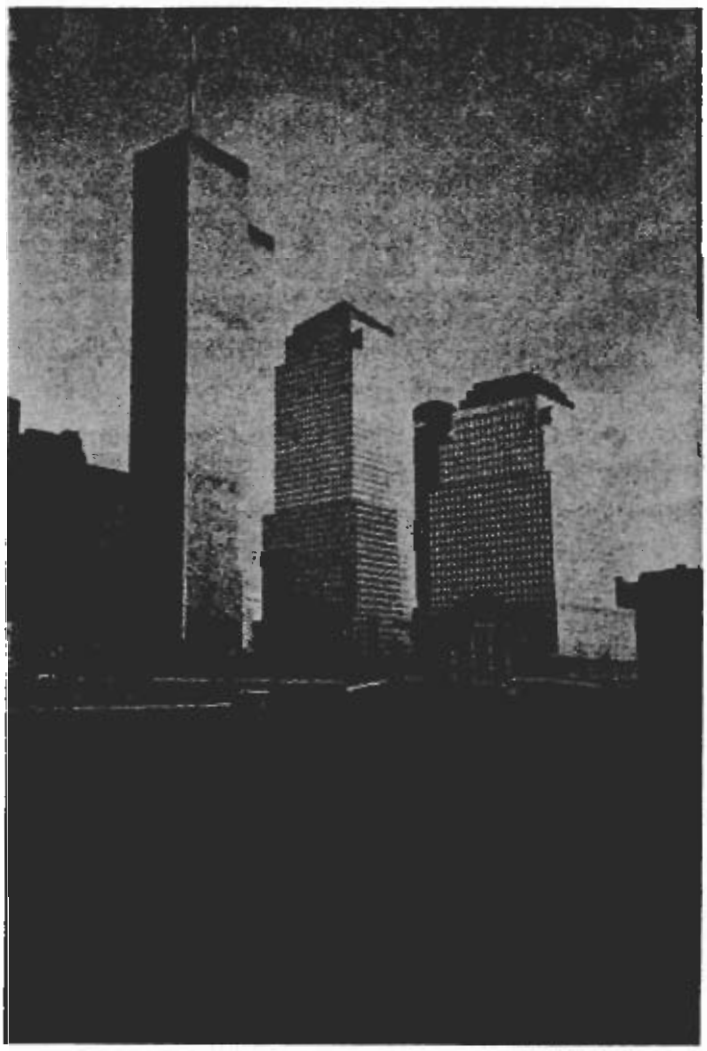
This rather superficial misrepresentation notwithstanding, Callicott further opens himself to attack in his characterization of ecology as implying an organic or holistic conception of reality. Callicott asserts that ecology, like quantum physics, implies a conception of reality in which the distinction between subject and object is blurred. An ecological description of the natural environment, he says (using Paul Shepard's terms), regards living organisms as "ontologically subordinate to 'events'

and/or 'flow patterns' and /or 'field patterns'" of energy. (Callicott 1986: 309) Physical entities, then, are less discrete objects than they are the sum of their relations. The implication that Callicott draws for metaphysics is the same: the self, both as body and mind (see Callicott 1986: 315) is seen to be coterminous with the total environment. Thus, in assuming one's own intrinsic worth, value is thereby conferred on the environment. Again, by denying the existence of discrete subjects and objects, he is attempts to overcome the fact-value dichotomy.

What Callicott is referring to here, according to Wittbecker, are biological field theories derived from physics and used to "account for the properties of wholeness and directedness" of certain natural systems. (Wittbecker 1990: 277) However, Wittbecker argues,

> ...relations are not prior to objects; they arise togeter...a specimen is more than the sum of its species' relationships to an environment; it is an intentional being that, with other members of the species, can create niches, as well as adapt to them.

Wittbecker notes that the Leopoldian tradition of ecology was limited in its use of these field theories and has ultimately rejected them. In the remainder of his paper, Wittbecker goes on to show that thermodynamic principles from physics have little theoretical value for understanding entities or populations at the macroscopic level. He also suggests that, although a number of ecologists do use holistic concepts "to describe the organizational levels of hierarchical systems," ecologists certainly do not grant prior ontological status to the numerous relations between wholes and parts in natural systems. Ecology clearly does not imply the subordination of individual organisms to "patterns, perturbations, or configurations" of energy, as Callicott suggests. (Callicott 1989: 310)



David Rothenberg

As Donald Worster points out in his book, *Nature's Economy*, mainstream ecology has rejected the holistic concepts of the Leopoldian tradition for three decades. He writes that, by the 1960s, "...the metabiological, idealizing tendencies of organicism [i.e. holism] had been firmly exorcised..." from most professional circles. He notes, however, that the moral emphasis of organicism, with its focus on the interdependence or oneness of all things, remained as an undercurrent among amateur naturalists and conservationists, despite its divorce from mainstream ecology. He writes, "As long as ecology was kept in lay hands, it could continue to teach the gospel of organic community, whether or not this was subject to empirical validation" (335). Thus, Callicott's pursuit of moral naturalism can be seen as the latest manifestation of this trend, begun as early as the Fifties. Worster, however, challenges a fundamental premise of these "moral naturalists." It is not the case, he states, that the interdependent nature of reality suggests a new ethical theory. Rather, the perceived need for an environmental ethic

> demands...a different perception of nature and a different kind of science. Thus the appeal based on scientific evidence follows rather than precedes the conviction of rightness, and the ultimate source of the moral impulse remains hidden in the human heart. (336)

Science as a Catalyst for Change

Clearly, the notion of the "oneness" of the universe is not necessarily implied either by the science of physics or ecology. Without this grounding in natural science, Callicott cannot justify his principle of axiological complementarity as a means to solving the problem of intrinsic value for nature. However, in places Callicott suggests that his theory is something more than an abstract philosophical treatise. To be sure, Callicott never *explicitly* states this. Yet, he occasionally implies that quantum physics and ecology might one day initiate a change in our perception of the natural world and our place in it. I hesitate to suggest that Callicott means that sometime in the future we will actually experience a change in consciousness in which we perceive ourselves and nature as an integrated whole, yet given what he claims (as well as what he does not claim), this seems to be the most plausible interpretation. In his 1986 article, "The Metaphysical Implications of Ecology," he relates a particular experience he had along the banks of the Mississippi River. The implications of his ecological training came to him in a flash, and he realized that the river was, in some sense, a part of himself. The polluted river caused him "a palpable pain" that was "not distinctly located in any of [his] extremities, nor was it like

a headache or nausea." (315) He implies that his scientific knowledge of ecology brought about this revelation of consciousness in which his circle of values expanded to include the Mississippi and, presumably, the total environment.

If Callicott is indeed suggesting that such an expansion of our consciousness is imminent, then the general idea behind his theory of axiological complementarity is nothing new. His theory can be seen as an answer to Christopher Stone's call for a new theory or myth that would "fit our growing body of knowledge of geophysics, biology, and the cosmos." (Van de Veer and Pierce 1986:92) First published in 1974, Stone's article, "Should Trees Have Standing?" included an appeal for a theory or myth that would offer a "radical new conception of man's relationship to the rest of nature" amounting to a change in our consciousness of the natural world. Such a change, he suggests, would involve the development of a sense of oneness with the universe. Mankind would be seen as a mere part in a complex and ordered system, rather than its most advanced and significant member. What is crucial for such a change in consciousness, Stone believes, is that the individual relinquish her or his "sense of separateness and specialness in the universe." (92) Although such a new theory would acknowledge or incorporate scientific knowledge of the universe, it would be "felt as well as intellectualized."

Is Callicott's "axiological complementarity" meant as a response to this appeal? His narrative of the Mississippi river experience seems to suggest that it is. However, in the same article, he includes an important disclaimer. Callicott asserts, apparently in contradiction to his prior statements, that "the multiplicity of particles and living organisms, at either level of organization, retain, ultimately, their peculiar, if ephemeral characters and identities." (Callicott 1986: 313) But, if physics and ecology imply this metaphysical view of reality as ultimately differentiated, then it is unclear how his principle of axiological complementarity will work, no matter how interconnected these discrete entities are shown to be. Callicott does seem to clear up the issue, although his claims seriously weaken his theory. Later in the article, he writes, "As one moves, in imagination, outwardly from the core of one's organism, it is impossible to find a clear demarcation between oneself and one's environment." (Callicott 1986: 313) The key phrase here is "in imagination." Clearly, Callicott is claiming that physics and ecology have the power to change our thinking about our place in the environment. Yet the change he envisions is here expressed only as a change in our rational, intellectual thought about the environment. He explicitly leaves out any mention of any experiential change, or a change in the non-rational, non-intellectual feelings toward, or perceptions of, the natural world. Rather, his line of argumentation is in the tradition of Leopold's "The Land Ethic." Leopold suggests that scientific, ecological knowledge of the environment would be a panacea for the present deficiency in our values for the natural world. What appears to be the unspoken premise of Callicott's argument, and what I would like to take issue with, is that in gaining this or any other body of formal knowledge, one's circle of values will necessarily expand to include the total environment.

I am not suggesting that ecological training in the tradition of Leopold—what some call holism or organicism—is of no use whatsoever in teaching individuals to value the natural world. On the contrary, such knowledge is necessary for the formation of a set of moral principles to guide human action. We need to know that exterminating large predators in a given area will have consequences for many other organisms in that system. I am asserting only that knowledge of interrelationships in a system, or an understanding of the quantum paradoxes, is not sufficient to compel the individual to actively accept a new set of values. These sciences do not, I have shown, consistently suggest a holistic conception of ultimate reality. And even if they did, such a conception would remain on an intellectual level—it would not be experienced or felt. Alan Watts, in his prefatory essay to D.T. Suzuki's book, *Mahayana Buddhism*, articulates this notion quite well. He writes,

> ...Western philosophy and science have arrived at theoretical points of view remarkably close to those of Mahayana Buddhism. But for the most part those viewpoints remain theoretical: there is no actual and corresponding change in the state of consciousness, and, as a result, the individual knows things without feeling them. In other words, the scientist of the 20th century knows in theory, from his study of ecology and biology, that he is an organism-environment field. But in practice he feels subjectively as if he were still in the 16th century, sensing himself as an organism merely in and confronting his environment. He has never felt the new identity which his theory suggests, and may even fear such an experience as some form of pathological and "regressive" mysticism. (xxv-xxvi)

Although he makes the same uncritical and inaccurate remarks about the metaphysical implications of quantum physics as do Callicott and Capra, his point is nevertheless well taken. Clifton and Regehr make the same observation in objecting to Capra's assertions quoted above: "...the physicist is far from experiencing the universe as a whole; rather, he or she finds certain terms in quantum mechanics referring to how (inanimately or otherwise) properties of a system come to be known." (87) Thus, even if physics or ecology did imply the "oneness" of the universe, this notion would at most be only logically and rationally conceived. Such a notion might plausibly complete Callicott's axiological complementarity as a philosophical argument, but is would have little import for the actual experience of intimacy with wild nature. Just such an experience of oneness or intimacy is essential if individuals are to consider the natural world as part of themselves. Only a theory that is "felt as well as intellectualized" would have influence on the way in which we value our environment.

Before I suggest a way in which Callicott's principle of axiological complementarity might be salvaged, I must confront one final assertion that he makes. In a recent article in the journal *Environmental Ethics*, Callicott explains how physics (and, presumably, ecology) will influence us in the future. "...I mean to suggest," he writes, "that the new physics might in the future play an architectonic role in our global thinking about nature (and human society), just as the old physics did in the past..." To support this claim, he notes that the mechanistic Newtonian paradigm in physics provided the conceptual analogue for the atomistic social theories of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke. Likewise, he calls Adam Smith the "Robert Boyle of the social sciences" (141), asserting that his theory of political economy was inspired by Boyle's gas laws. Callicott suggests that the con-

temporary revolution he sees in physics provides a new paradigm that will inspire a value theory more in line with an environmental ethic informed by ecology.

His argument here further reveals the basic problem that I pointed out above. Even if new value theories conceptually analogous to the new physics are forthcoming, it is still not evident how rational philosophical discourse will cause the expansion of consciousness that alone could induce us to value our environment as we do ourselves. While physics may be related historically to social thought, it is doubtful whether the science holds such sway in determining the manner of perceiving or experiencing the natural world in the individual. Moreover, Callicott is perhaps overambitious in asserting that metaphysical implications of physics bear a direct and causal relation to these other modes of thought. Whether Hobbes and Locke were so singly influenced by the Newtonian paradigm in physics is at least debatable.

Alternatives to a Science-Based Ethic

Callicott has sought justification for his theory in the natural sciences because they are seen as fundamental to the Western world view. These sciences unite the Western world under the same conceptual framework. Thus, if physics and ecology imply a metaphysical shift from Cartesian dualism to "holism" or "organicism," then it is a shift that is shared by all those cultures that adhere to the Western world view. However, I have shown that our modern scientific world view has not been overturned. Callicott cannot ground his principle, as a philosophical argument for value in nature, in physics and ecology. Nor is there much hope that the theoretical models used in these sciences to describe the world can effect the kind of change in consciousness that Stone calls for, and which alone would initiate a "revaluation" of our values. These models are only theoretical—the world is not actually experienced, even by scientists, as an integrated whole.

No doubt, there is something about Callicott's value theory that rings true. Indeed, it is eminently plausible that such experiences of "oneness" as he describes do occur. An experience of my own offers both proof and an example. Last January I visited my parents in Green Bay, Wisconsin, where they live on the Fox River. Nostalgia and cabin fever compelled me out into the icy air and sharp wind to walk along the bank of the river where I had spent much time as a child. Crunching along in the snow, I startled a group of a dozen mourning doves which were huddling together in the frozen reeds to escape the wind. They rose and scattered in a chorus of whistles. I thought little of it, and continued on my way. Just a few moments later, a blast of wind hit the trees, bringing the sound of a human voice to my ears. Purely out of reflex, I swung my head around to the barren snowscape behind me, and was surprised to find no one there. It was then, in a flash of insight, that I realized my connection to nature in a way I never had before. My animal self had turned me around at the sound of a voice, just as the doves had risen at the sound of my boots in the snow. My rational, thinking self had only later sought to provide an explanation for the sound. I saw that my reasoning mind is only a small part of what I consider to be "me." I realized that a great part of "me" is woven into the rich fabric of life which unites the mourning dove and all other beings. This was certainly not a great religious revelation, but it was a realization beyond rational thought—an experience deepened by emotion.

There can be no argument against my experience along the Fox—it was wholly subjective and personal in nature. This fact, however, does not make it any less real. Why, then, should we not ground Callicott's value theory in the experience of intimacy or "oneness" with nature?

I suggest that Callicott's theory, both as an argument for value in nature and as an answer to Stone's appeal, can be grounded in what Thoreau called "sympathy" with nature. In his essay, "Natural History of Massachusetts," he writes,

> The true man of science will know nature better by his finer organization; he will smell, taste, see, hear, feel, better than other men. His will be a deeper and finer experience. We do not learn by inference and deduction and the application of mathematics to philosophy, but by direct intercourse and sympathy. It is with science as with ethics—we cannot know truth by contrivance and method...(56)

The intimacy with nature of which Thoreau speaks is not the kind that can be learned in the laboratory or classroom. It is a sensibility that is beyond the theoretical constructs of formal science. Thoreau continues, "...the Baconian is as false as any other, and with all the helps of machinery and the arts, the most scientific will still be the healthiest and the friendliest man, and possess a more perfect Indian wisdom."

Thus, sympathy with nature transcends cultures at an even deeper level than the conceptual framework of the modern scientific world view. Based in experience, it is a sense of intimacy with, and belonging in, the natural order. Sympathy is the most direct, immediate, and authentic perception of nature. And, as Thoreau writes in "Walking," this communion with the greater order of the universe is the ultimate human experience:

> The highest we can attain to is not Knowledge, but Sympathy with Intelligence. I do not know that this higher knowledge amounts to anything more definite than a novel and grand surprise on a sudden revelation of the insufficiency of all that we called Knowledge before,—a discovery that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our philosophy. It is the light up of the mist by the sun. Man cannot know in any higher sense than this.

For Thoreau, the internal and external become one in an interaction that is unmediated by human concepts. The "oneness" he implies is not a scientific fact, it is an experienced reality. As Max Oelschlaeger says, Thoreau seeks the kind of experience that "restores organic qualities and reintegrates human consciousness with the cognizable world." (139) The experience of sympathy with nature is the only appropriate substitute for the notion of "oneness" that Callicott draws from physics and ecology. It effectively completes his principle of axiological complementarity. His argument thus becomes: 1) humans are justified in granting value to themselves; but, 2) humans are one with the natural world in the experience of sympathy with nature; therefore, 3) humans are justified in granting value to their environments. This argument, like Callicott's, escapes the traditionally problematic fact-value dichotomy by rejecting Cartesian dualism. We can thus justify

granting value to the environment. Value is actualized upon interaction with a conscious mind.

Thoreau and Eastern Religion

The type of experience that Thoreau describes has often been related to his exposure to Hindu religious doctrine. Umesh Patri suggests that, "His kinship with all objects of nature made him a kind of Vedantin who had no separate identity outside the world of nature." (129) Patri even suggests that Thoreau experienced enlightenment. Whether or not this is true, Thoreau's emphasis on experience nevertheless corresponds to the practice of meditation, which is central to most of the religious sects of the Far East. Indeed, Eastern religions have long been viewed as a valuable conceptual resource for the West in the search for alternative conceptions of the man-nature relationship. As early as 1972, Hwa Yol Jung called for the "cultivation of the aesthetic and reverential sensibility toward nature" in the tradition of Zen Buddhism as a solution to the environmental crises that have resulted from the dualistic Western world view. Thoreau's notion of sympathy can be seen as an integration of Eastern doctrine with Western culture. As such, it is perfectly suited to satisfy Stone's appeal for a new theory or myth for the West. The experience of sympathy with nature implies a new conception of the relation of humankind to nature. It implies a change in consciousness that seeks to escape the Western conceptual framework, and to experience nature without mediation by concepts or language.

Sympathy with Nature

The notion of sympathy with nature need not, however, be understood only as an enlightenment-like experience that can be attained only through strict discipline and training. Sympathy with nature is a wider experience than that which is achieved through study and meditation. It is rather a feeling one has for the natural environment with which one has interacted and now interacts. It is the sense, beginning in childhood, of being rooted in the land. I first experienced sympathy with nature among the trees and bugs of my own backyard. Indeed, its subsequent conversion to a parking lot has caused me a painful and personal sense of loss. It is as if I had lost a part of myself.

Individuals can actively seek the experience of sympathy with nature. The essential ingredient, of course, is frequent and/or prolonged personal contact with the natural world. This can perhaps be achieved as easily in a city park as in the deepest wilderness. The only obstacle to this "new myth" for the West, as far as I can see, is our enduring faith in reason, or rather our unwillingness to relinquish it. We cannot rely on mere scientific fact to change our feelings and values for the natural world. If, however, we can at least begin to acknowledge, and eventually to cultivate the sense of intimacy in our experience of nature, then we are well on the way to establishing a new relationship between humans and the environment that is beneficial to all the organisms of the earth.

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The Amazing Pencil Factory of Henry David Thoreau

Don Lago

All night long, Walden Pond was a sky glowing with stars, revealing, like a hole through the earth, that the silhouetted woods were but a thin line amidst infinity. As the sun and a breeze arose, Walden became a blue sky bearing clouds and trees and birds, where waves of sparkles blew across.

As the quiet sounds of morning were obliterated by the rumble of the Boston train, Walden became something else. To one man looking out the train windows at the water fleeting past, Walden was a mass of cubes and a column of numbers. He saw Walden Pond being stacked in a railroad car and a warehouse and a ship, off to the iceboxes of Boston and Savannah. He counted the cubes and the profit per cube, and he decided that Walden Pond had value.

Across the lake from the railroad track, another man looked out at the water. He too saw value in Walden Pond. This value could not be counted in cubes, or even in stars echoing from the night sky, but was the same as that derived from the perpetually asked and perpetually unanswered question of the worth of being alive.

He sat and allowed the flowing sparkles to flow into him, to dwell in him more lastingly than they could on the lake, to leave him at least subtly charged by their beauty, to let their beauty and not the clamorous rush of trains define his spirit.

"A lake," he would write, "is the landscape's most beautiful and expressive feature. It is earth's eye; looking into which the beholder measures the depth of his own nature. The fluvial trees next to the shore are the slender eyelashes which fringe it, and the wooded hills and cliffs around are its overhanging brows."

After a few hours, Henry set out for town. As he walked he socialized with trees and flowers and birds and the sky itself. When he reached his parents' house, his mother greeted him and prepared him a lunch of roast beef and apple pie. *I'm not going to mention this*, thought Henry as he sat down at the table. *In my book about living in the woods, I'm not going to mention all the times I went to my parents' for lunch.*

After lunch, Henry went into the workroom. He sat down at a table piled with tools and supplies. there were saws, vices, drills, and files. There were jars of glue and paint and graphite powder. There were stacks of wood, some of it raw and some of it neatly cut and rounded. The table and floor were littered with wood scraps, saw dust, and graphite dust. And there were boxes of the finished product: pencils, the Thoreau family business.

As Henry set to work, did he think about how his products would be used? Some of his pencils might be bought by schools and used to learn the words of great philosophers and writers. Yet some would be bought by businesses and used to calculate the value per cubic foot of Walden Pond. Some pencils might be bought by Boston sailing fleets and carried to Africa, where they would be used to tally the value of the lines of chained black men and women being prodded up the gangplank.

Would Henry, as he walked back to Walden Pond this evening, hearing in his pocket the clink of coins, feel contaminated by the society he had sought to escape, a society that measured in coins the value of everything, even the value of human freedom and human lives? "Whenever a man goes," he would write, "men will pursue and paw him with their dirty institutions."

To most people, the making of pencils might seem too innocent an act to require moral qualms, yet Henry was a man who thought in principles. Today he had chosen to sell part of his life in the same marketplace where slaves were exchanged. Pencil making, too, he would not mention in his book about life in the woods.

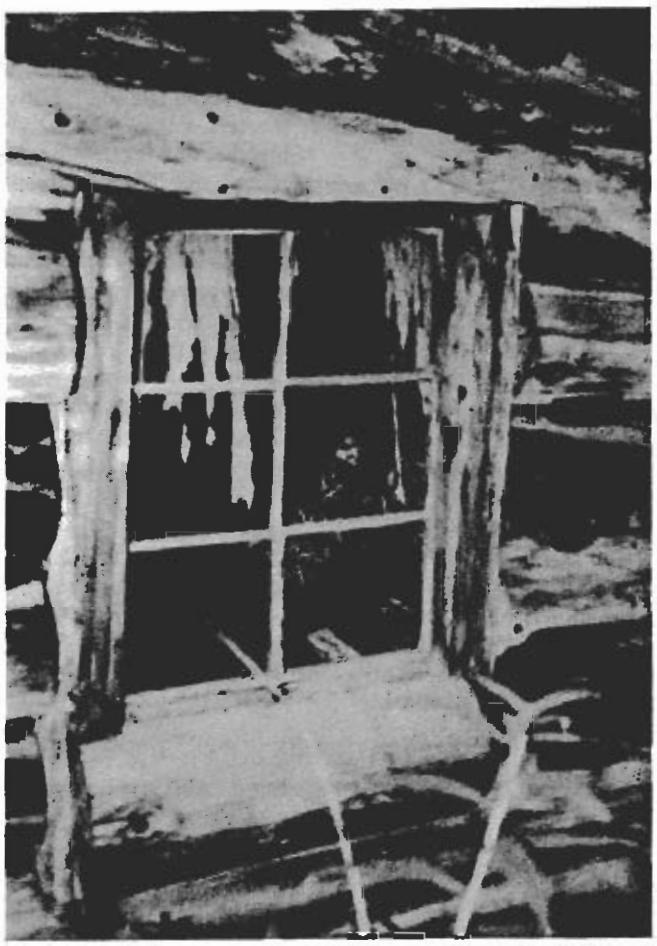
As he worked wood into pencil shape, perhaps Henry thought of how he had shaped wood into the form of his cabin. Henry had moved to Walden Pond to live with as few material needs as possible. though in a hundred years Henry would become one of the patron saints of environmentalism, he did not move to Walden out of concern for Earth's limited resources. Like most Americans in the mid-ninetieth century, with a vast frontier still unexplored, Henry seems never to have imagined that humans could fill up and use up the entire Earth. Henry moved to Walden out of concern for the limited resources of a human life.

He did not want to come to his time to die, and discover that he had not lived. It was mainly a question of refusing to have one's life consumed so one could consume and possess unnecessary things. It was mainly a question of gaining from the world a living that would not distort one's valuing of the world. Henry had decided that to participate in a society with cynical values was to be corrupted by cynicism. He did not want to gaze at a tree and see only five thousand pencils waiting to be cut out and sold for a penny apiece. He wanted to see the tree's own presence, life and beauty. He wanted to stand still long enough for the simple presence of the universe to resound in him. He wanted enough time and attention for the stars, clouds, lakes, trees, animals, and birds to disclose to him whatever beauty or wisdom they contained. From the nature whose nourishment of beauty he sought, he also set out to seek his livelihood, directly, unmediated by society, in hopes that his livelihood too would be sanctified with nature's beauty.

Yet he had to survive. People had to survive. For himself, making pencils was only an occasional source of incidental money. For his parents and siblings, it was the daily cost of sur-

vival. How sad that to maintain life, people had to give up so much living to do such odd things. No, in his book he would not mention pencil making, for it seemed an admission that his ideal life in the woods wasn't really possible, and though he might quietly admit this to himself, the ideal was too beautiful and important to spoil with the truth.

Yet he had discovered another truth, that he could take coins from society without society taking from him his perception of the world. As the sun rose over Walden Pond, as the morning train gave a timber merchant a glimpse and seen pencils, and the only profit he had seen was that of watching as closely as possible the slow flowing of light and shadow and shades of color, which disclosed the flowing of planets, suns, and things still larger.



Jerry DeMarco

Not pencils in trees, but trees in pencils was what Henry was seeing. As he picked up a piece of wood and fit it into a vice, he saw in the woodgrain the slow flowing of light and shadow and shades of color through the days and the seasons and the years; he saw in the exposed tree rings the morning showers of spring, the warm sun of summer afternoons, the rainbow leaves of autumn, the cold naked sleep of winter. He saw formless earth and water flowing into form, the slow, skillful unfolding of structure and beauty. He saw the lingering shadows of birds and squirrels and full moon moths. He saw life surviving, each form surviving in a way an unaccountable fate had assigned to it, surviving to manifest in Henry's eye, in an eye as large and clear as Walden Pond, the unaccountable value of being alive.

Many months later, Henry lay in his bed in his room in his parent's house, upstairs from the pencil factory. On the nightstand next to him flickered a candle, and next to the candle was a pile of paper filled with Henry's handwriting, on top of which lay a pencil.

He had left Walden Pond. He had sold his cabin to Emerson's gardener. He was living at his parents again, taking long walks in the countryside, making pencils, and writing *Walden*. It was strange to be writing a book extolling an ideal life in nature when he had already given it up. Not that he has given it up because it was a failure. He had given it up because he had discovered it was not necessary. He could live in town and make pencils and still preserve his vision.

Generations from now, people would read his book and admire his courage to live as simply as possible, uncorrupted by society, immersed in nature. Yet perhaps there was a greater courage and importance to the task of living in a cynical society without becoming cynical. By offering himself as a model for living too ideal to be but a fantasy for his readers, even if a fantasy earnestly pursued on weekends or vacations, perhaps he also cast a tinge of implausibility onto the rest of his ideal, his vision of the value of a lake in the woods. By idealizing himself, he may have given too quick an excuse for being dismissed by those who would assert that, realistically, after all, the value of Walden Pond and woods can be measured in cubic feet. Perhaps a model more valuable than that of Thoreau of Walden Pond is that of Henry of the Pencil Factory.

Henry reached for his papers and pencil. In the candlelight he saw the woodgrain of the pencil, the high tide mark of a planetary cycle of light and rain. He moved the pencil back and forth upon the tree-transformed paper, and onto the paper the pencil melted like a candle. Out of his pencil flowed what had been encapsulated within it. The slow flowing of light and shadow and shades of color through the days and seasons and years flowed out of his pencil, and, through words, became itself again. The morning showers of many springs fell again, through only black, the rainbow leaves of autumn lit up the page with their colors. The formless earth and water reenacted their emergence into form and beauty. Out of his pencil flowed not just shadows, but a singing, flying, crawling, feeling, colorful swarm of life.

Through Henry's hand the mute trees spoke of their unknown lives and declared their value. The trees declared themselves to be neither the lumberyard of nor a hiding place from a cynical society. The trees declared to a cynical society the higher standard of respect for all life in which it would be impossible to regard either trees or humans as more merchandise. Through Henry's eye, Walden Pond stared like a giant eye into the human heart, offering humans a mirror in which they might glimpse in their own faces the tide marks of flowing light and shadow and shades of color and planets and suns and things still larger.

Don Lago also lives in a cabin in the woods, beneath the San Francisco peaks near Flagstaff, Arizona (I wonder how often he goes home to mom for lunch?). He has published over forty essays, in places like *Astronomy*, *Earth*, and *Science Digest*.

A Weighty Sword

Jesse Wolf Hardin

"A finger pointing at the moon
is not the moon."

—Zen Proverb

ABEL WAS LIKE THE BLACK-TAILED RATTLESNAKE IN MOLT, HIS perfunctory habits half shed. He was neither what he had been, nor was he yet made new. His change was incomplete, awaiting the next phase of a life-long test. The old identity, the old skin hung half way off, rolled up around his head, making it difficult to see. Blinded by change, he could find his way to refuge by following the rush and gurgle of the poem. As she lit his stove for tea, Llyn watched him scoot behind the folding table, facing the heavy grey machine with a bowed head before tearing at its keys—One had to hurry, before the thoughts escaped like uncaged canaries into the great blue beyond.

Refusing to use a computer, he worked on an antique typewriter instead, with a steel body and an iron will. Without the ability to "block and move" or "cut and paste," one was forced to either complete a rough draft beforehand, or to trust the flow of dancing words as they swamped the eight-and-a-half by eleven stage. Trust in Spirit. His text was single-spaced, leaving no room for "reading between the lines." She smiled to see that he wrote the same way he played chess—by looking away from the board, by simply knowing which way the poem would fly, which direction the water would take in running off the sides of the rock.

If Abel was correct, there were certain people who made the decision, somewhere down the line, to protect themselves by *feeling less*. Abel, along with a growing number of other special souls, had decided differently. Why was it that some people never backed off from engagement with sensation and emotion, while those around them shut down? How, when their siblings and peers were exposed to similar influences, did a few stand out by how deeply they felt?

It could hurt just to pick up the pen—a weighty sword the writer feared would fail at its appointed task, fail to foil the enemies of truth and Spirit, fail to cut through the bullshit on both sides in time to salvage human and biological diversity, to *make clear the path*. No words could fairly represent Abel's feelings, dense and quaking, viscous and vital. He could feel in his bones the disappearance of wilderness and freedom, aspiring love and mortal hours. He would grip the pen at the hilt, and shake. The fear was that no one, not even those blessed by unseen spirits, could wield the heavy sword with the necessary speed.

The pace of the clacking keys caused Llyn to turn around again, expecting to see smoke billowing out of the carriage. He was obviously driven. He seemed to write under pressure, under the clock, under the gun. She flashed back on a story about the actor, Eddy Foy, on a tour of the saloons and theaters of the Old West. At one stop a drunk cowboy pulled a revolver out in the audience and pointed it at the trembling comedian. "Make me laugh, or die." In Abel's case, it seemed to be "Get it down right, or perish." He wasn't writing to chronicle the downfall of the insensitive System, but rather to help precipitate it. And there *was* a time line, a deadline for copy: the end of the Mayan calendar. Add to every other cause for angst, the terror of finishing the poem that could change the industrial human heart, the book that could initiate a voluntary human cure, the year that Mother Nature put an end to such things as the printing press.

"If I was a real primitivist, I'd write by hand, with a quill dipped in carbon black. Or on sheets of aspen bark with my own blood."

A tough standard.

Just as Llyn finished with the tea, she heard Abel wad up the second page and toss it into the basket. He was a firm believer in the artists' and poets' dictum, "when in doubt, leave it out." There was a difference between inspired writing and cleverness, and a magician would know the difference all too well.

Abel knew the full range of wordage, the glorious and dismal extremes of the written word, because he read everything. Abel was a print junkie, a compulsive reader of any script coming within range of his bespectacled eyes. In the world of herding words, clustered together passively in paragraphs and on pages, Abel was a highly evolved predator. Words tranquilly grazing on the sides of cereal boxes, could at any minute expect the stalk, the quick rush and pounce resulting in their complete consumption. Unlike the lions of Africa, able to bring down but one or two of a gathering antelope herd, so efficient was the voracious reader that not a single "word-abeast" escaped consumption. Not even the tiny stragglers at the bottom, such as the address of the company that printed the box. Not even the most wary lookouts posted at the top, like the hyper-observant "Open this end." He devoured the tawdry newspapers from front to back, skin to bone, tearing out interesting bites with the canines of his mind, grinding up its slanted facts with mental molars, digesting the scant content in search of substance and nutrition.

He gobbled the fine print on the vial of Dr. Bronner's peppermint soap. Once used by only the kinkiest counterculture types ("C'mon, man, you can even brush you teeth with it!"), it became in the seventies the hit of the "green consumer" and "yuppie" alike—the veritable Birkenstock of detergents, not

to mention a paragon of eclectic aphorisms. Every centimeter of space on its label was crammed with a bizarre amalgam of fact and fancy. It read as if a column of occult Christianity had jumped the fence to impregnate their neighbor "Dear Abbey." He studied its gospel while he washed the sacred dishes, recited its liturgy of purification as he received the blessings of his blue-tiled shower.

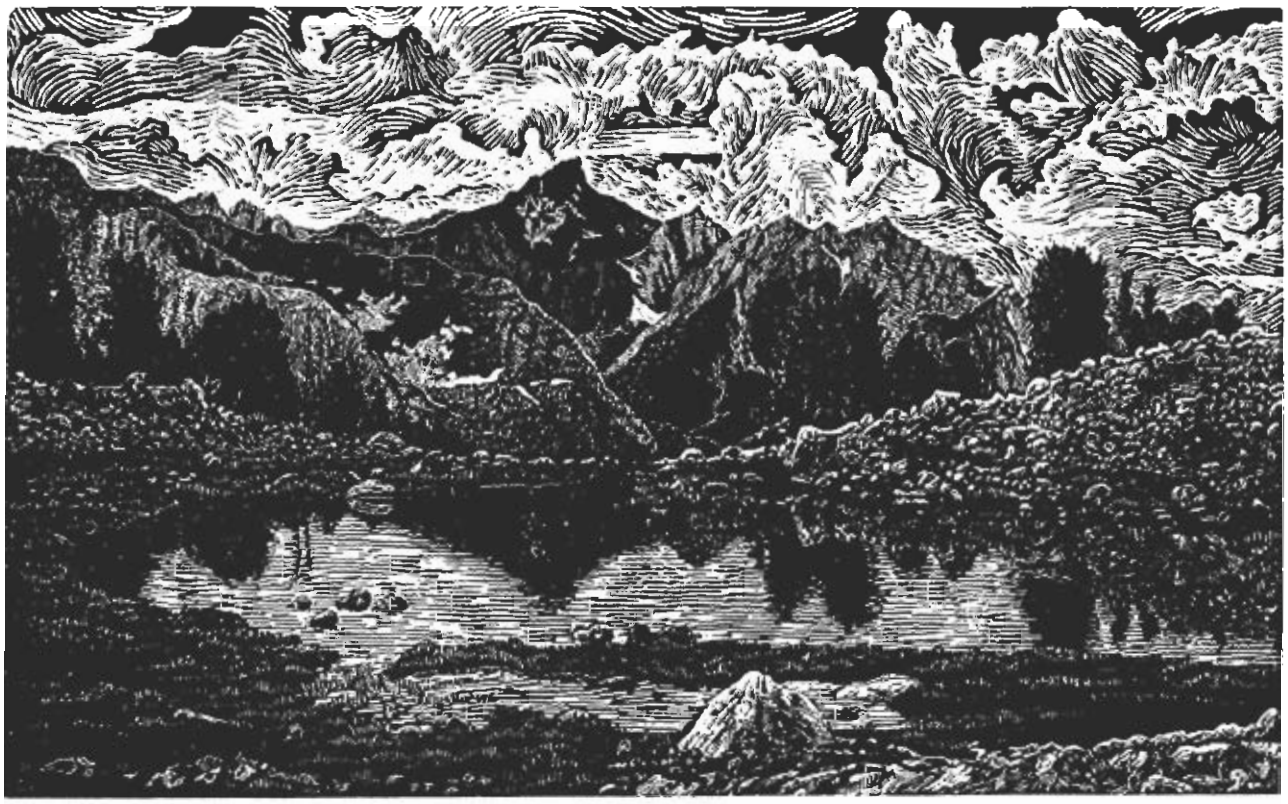
Passing billboards along the highway, Abel read every one, and remembered them to the point of being able to quote the rhetoric to the letter. "Check your fuel gauge! 3 miles, Juan Tabo Exit, Diesel, LectricCar Recharging, Clean Rest Rooms—*Dandy's Handy Station.*" "I Sue Drunk Drivers!, Call 273-2323, Rob Nod, Attorney At Law." "Vote Rodriguez For Sheriff, It's Time For A Change!" Abel could recite the daily horoscopes for astrological signs other than his own, the day's percentage drop on the New York exchange for stocks he had no investment in, and the latest defensive remark by a Japanese trade specialist on the inefficiency of American business managers.

He separated out each relevant point, looking at them from every conceivable perspective, every angle. Was it empirically true, measured by scientific standards? How would it be perceived by the target audience? To the American businessmen in question? To the cynical European community, envious Brazilian capitalists, bemused Fiji islanders? What were the calculable consequences they expected their remarks to provoke? What slant did the editor put on it, as seen in the placement of the story, the type size, use of patronizing quotation marks, and the exact wording of the headline? How might the skill level of the Japanese/American translator, or his/her personal bias affect the quote? What was left *out* of the story? Was the remark made by the head of a successful or failing enterprise? What interests was he invested in, or indentured to? Was it made to a pushy American reporter, or at a closed-door party for saki-swizzling stockholders? And what else did he say? Abel fed on words in order to understand the minds of the audience, as well as the intellects of the writers. Abel was a reader, and knew what readers wanted.

A "happy ending."

Someone else said the real human story was written in body fluids on the sheets, after giving birth to thankless children. Abel wondered if anyone would subscribe to the "Journal of Reality," and if they would pull issues of *Voluntary Economic Contraction*, *Population Reduction Quarterly*, or *The New Primitivism* off the bookshelves of life. He knew a percentage of people avoided any conscious admission, thought, nagging intuition, activity, music, or book that challenged the almost universally accepted doctrine of *more*—the belief that there would always be more food, more energy, more jobs, more toys, more solutions to any and all problems vexing adaptable humanity.

Abel wondered if anyone would stand in line for the premier of *Truth*, if not for the existence of well-lit emergency exits at the back of the theater. He was uncomfortable writing a book of truths that left an open door for readers to escape through, a door of denial, a way for them to continue believing the onus lay with the "other guy," not them. It was too easy to let the reader think it was all about another race, a different place, a separate reality, the mistakes and travails of a time past or as yet to come—acts for which they held no responsibility, scenes that affected other people's offspring, not theirs. Abel respected his readers too much to let them off the hook. He couldn't make the standard broad, democratic exemptions. There could be no "happy endings" in anything the magician wrote. Thanks to Gaia, thanks to Llyn, there would be lots of happiness, but there could be *no end.*



Evan Cantor

The proof of humanity's purpose, spiritual or evolutionary, could be found in its music, carved into wood and rock, recorded in locked diaries, and printed in *books*. Children's stories that took thousands of children on walks through the enchanted woods, that taught them to hang on to their delightful sense of wonder, their joy in simply being alive. Women's texts that held their hands and stroked their hair, books that listened in turn, words that gave them the strength to heal and go on. Books that bolstered the courage of the downtrodden and caused them to rise up, angry and proud. Books that made an old man laugh again.

Abel chuckled to himself, his mind stepping back to watch the words pass through, as entertained by them as any first reading of new ideas.

Llyn held both the steaming cups, absorbing the changing features on the face of the man she had come to love. She too felt the calling to write, but knew she had to live each experience before she could authentically portray it to others. If meaning was the first function of writing, then experience was the first quality. A good life was the prerequisite for a good story. Llyn came to Nature for that very purpose, among others— to experience the text/texture of the land. Land as literature. The fountainhead, the source.

Abel stopped and looked up over his wire rimmed glasses, feeling hypocritical for expounding on wildness while indoors, on an albeit primitive machine.

"I'm trying pontificate them into yodeling," he said, receiving his tea most graciously.

"You should write that down," she said, laughing. "It would make a good lead-in."

Why did everything needed to be written down, every avian word caught and put back in its birdhouse? Language could lead to a more directly experienced reality, or to abstraction, categorization and alienation. Like all paths, language led in two opposite directions.

Words, like sand paintings, were at the mercy of the winds. Books, even on laser disks, were destined to deteriorate back into the launching pad of silence. What lasted was the vital truth of life, which outlived both human understanding, and misunderstanding.

No description of it was ever complete, no picture could show all sides of it, no painting could fully capture its inner essence. The finest songs about it remained unfinished, incomplete sentences lost in exchanges across a future tribal fire The next beat of the complex rhythm was to be played out just beyond the range of acculturated ears. It could be alluded to, and one could compose poems that knew to look the way of the current, but long before the scribe first wet a pen, and long after the artist's honest lacquers had cracked with rot, the truth of life remained. It was what was, when the descriptions finally stopped. It was what sounded when one was quiet. The truth of life resided within everyone, with or without their recognition, and it could exist undiminished without them. But still the words kept coming, and coming, until Llyn's cool fingertips touched his feverish brow.

Instantly there were no thoughts, the mental field emptied of inhabitants until only a wistful breeze made its presence known. No words. No concepts. No clothes on their bodies. No adobe walls around them. No fractious neighbors tending dogs and jobs, grudges and vehicles. No city at all. No civilization. No measure of the passage of time, there in the eternity of a single touch.

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Looking for Home

Bioregionalism and the Reinhabitation of America

Dwight Barry

If you don't know where you are, you don't know who you are.

—Wallace Stegner

I WALKED DOWN MY STREET TODAY ON THE WAY TO THE BUS STOP; an ordinary street in an ordinary suburb of an ordinary college town. Rows of duplexes line each side of the road, varying in size, shape, paint jobs, and floor plans. These two family houses all are different enough to be almost individual, but these differences are largely subtle ones: the window arrangements, the door placements, the color of the building, the cars in the driveways, the locations of easy chairs, televisions, family portraits, couches, and bookcases. A few medium size oak trees dot the lawns of my street.

I know none of my neighbors; I rarely see any of my fellow residents talking with one another. Even though we share a common space, we are all strangers. As a result, I find myself in the ironic position of not feeling comfortable living in my own house, much less my own neighborhood. We are alienated from each other because, somehow, we are not connected to the larger place in which we live; perhaps we are uncomfortable because we do not expect to stay. We have no sense of our place—we have houses, but we have no homes.

The human and environmental crises of today's world are largely a factor of this lack of a sense of place. We have lost our sense of place primarily because we have little concept of our vital ties to the non-human world: we do not really *know* the completeness of our immersion in the processes and interactions that characterize the natural world. We can begin to recover our sense of place by trying to understand our local environments, which will perhaps lead to a more meaningful connection between ourselves and the places where we live. By the same token, if we can find our place and root ourselves there, we can learn more about the ecological processes of our locales, and therefore feel our sense of place more deeply.

The traditional view of an American history of frontier and expansion, still illustrated in the current wanderlust of a mobile and largely rootless people, has converted a once integral landscape into train stops and gas stations as we go on in our ways to somewhere else. In contrast, we Americans today have the ability to reinhabit the land; finding a place, feeling its air, living its seasons, and coming to know its connections to other places. This practice of reinhabitation—our third (and perhaps last) chance at living on this continent—is known as *bioregionalism*.

The environmentally impoverished, placeless view of life is a relatively recent occurrence in the human philosophical enterprise. It largely began with the Cartesian worldview of the mind as the primary and sole focus of existence—*cogito, ergo sum*—which, in effect, views humans (because of our minds) as the only object in the universe that is worthy of consideration. The rest of the world is nothing but a machine, operating something along the lines of a (Newtonian) clock: precise, orderly, deterministic, and controllable. In modern times, we perpetuate the human-nature dichotomy by believing ourselves to be apart from the rest of nature, mere consumers in a world that is no more than an actual and potential cornucopia of resources for our use.

The mechanistic paradigm foisted upon us by the scientific revolution of the Enlightenment was, interestingly enough, both challenged and confirmed by the publication of Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, and this dichotomy has existed well into the present. Some continue to see nature as a machine, and animals as nothing more than machines whose sole purpose is to stay alive long enough to reproduce. Through these views, the human-nature dichotomy persists in contemporary society.

In contrast, some see evolution as a lesson in humility for humanity. Human beings are, in the words of Aldo Leopold, "only fellow-voyagers with other creatures in the odyssey of evolution." Leopold's sentiment is important for the understanding of this second view, and he continues by clarifying this initial assertion. The poet Gary Snyder adds another important evolutionary perspective to the view expressed by Leopold:

> Two conditions—gravity and a livable temperature range between freezing and boiling [of water]—have given us fluids and flesh. The trees we climb and the ground we walk on have given us five fingers and toes. The [earth]... gave us far-seeing eyes, the streams and breezes gave us versatile tongues and whorly ears. The land gave us stride, and the lake a dive. The amazement gave us our kind of mind.[1]

The reality that we are just now beginning to understand is that nature is not as mechanical and hierarchical as we once believed, and that we humans have developed just like any other organism has upon the earth, constrained by the same forces as the rest of nature. We should be thankful for what we have, says Snyder, "and take nature's stricter lessons with some grace." Our belief of separation from nature is as illusory as it is dangerous, and to live on the earth without destroying it—and ourselves, in the process—will require a profound shift in our thought about how we fit in with the rest of nature.

It is now well known that the extent of our views and beliefs about nature determine the role of our species in the interactions with the rest of nature. Herein lies the explicit dan-

ger of assuming a human-nature dichotomy as a worldview: by acting as if our species is separate from the rest of nature, there is an implicit assumption that our vital needs are not really the same needs of the rest of nature. Of course, we all need water, food, rest, and so on, but by arbitrarily placing ourselves outside of nature we theoretically place ourselves outside of the constraints of the non-human world as well. For example, the concept of carrying capacity states that there are ecological limits of the total numbers of species and individuals that can live in a sustainable fashion within a given area or environment. While there are a great deal of scientific studies applying this concept to other animals, there have been few attempts to seriously and practically apply the concept to humanity, despite the clear indications that we are limited in much the same way as is any other animal. The view of humans as apart from nature is dangerous, because it ignores the processes and constraints upon which we are vitally and essentially dependent.

The practical results of such a shift in consciousness is what Aldo Leopold calls a "land ethic," which "changes the role of *Homo sapiens* from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow-members, and also respect for the community as such." Leopold argues that the role of a conqueror—in relation to both fellow humans and to the land—is ultimately self-defeating, "because it is implicit in such a role that the conqueror knows, *ex cathedra*, just what makes the community clock tick, and just what and who is valuable, and what and who is worthless, in community life. It always turns out that he knows neither, and this is why his conquests eventually defeat themselves." When we acknowledge that this assessment of human history is also valid for our relationship with the rest of nature, our perception of nature changes profoundly. We begin to want to know how to live with the land, not against it; we learn to live *sustainably*. Living bioregionally is the practical result of such a change in our perceptions of nature.

What does it mean to identify with our location? A possible meaning of a sense of place may be found by examining the etymologies of *bioregionalism*, *dwelling*, and *place*. It should be noted at the outset that a look at word roots and etymologies is not simply an academic exercise in determining the past meanings of current words. It is this, of course, but at the same time it is more. A study of the development of a word gives us a feel for the importance of meaning in human life throughout time. It is our language, after all, that defines—literally—our relationship with our world and our environment. By revealing the ways in which our ancestors viewed their world through language, we can more closely understand their relationship to the world, and, at the same time, learn from the implicit wisdom of these past relationships, whether they may be mistakes or triumphs.

The word *bioregionalism* first appeared sometime in the 1970s in the work of Peter Berg and Raymond Dasmann. From *bioregion*, the construction is a basic one, a compound of bio, from the Greek *bios*, meaning life and that which is alive or supports life, and region, from the Latin *regio*, meaning boundary, which is closely related to *regere*, to rule. The ancient meanings of these roots can be seen, perhaps, in the same way they are seen today; a bioregion is a bounded area consisting of a certain type of life, or, more specifically, habitat type. Bioregions are characterized by their interrelations; a habitat is what it is because of the interrelations within a region and its immediate vicinity: the weather, the landforms, the plants, the animals (including humans), and so on. They rarely have distinct boundaries, due to these interrelations, but the human mind has often separated them from each other according to the particular forms of life that characterize each particular area. A mountainous area may give way to desert, which in turn may give way to prairie; all have distinct forms of life which inhabit a particular place to a much greater degree than another, although there is some overlap. Much like a watershed, there is a fair amount of human constructed boundary-marking, although the basic concept of a life-zone (i.e., a bioregion) is well established in the ecological literature, especially in biogeography. In other words, there are more-or-less nonarbitrary criteria for deciding where it makes the most sense to "place" a boundary. This is neither anti- or pro-human; the benefit of focusing on all of the life forms (including humans) in a characterization of a bioregion is that it should allow for a more holistic understanding of natural processes as well as the constraints *and* encouragements to human living.

The relation of the Latin *regere* to *regio* adds a final component to the meaning of region, which when combined with Leopold's image of humanity as only a "fellow-voyager" in the evolutionary enterprise, leads to a view where "to rule" is interpreted as the benign management of a region. Therefore, *bioregionalism* is the living within and management of a particular area whose boundaries are based upon *all* of its inhabitants and set by the natural processes that create and set the limitations of living. This view, one may note, is directly opposed to the arbitrary political boundary decisions that characterize the modern world.

The philosophy behind bioregionalism is based upon the concept of *dwelling* in place. These two words are the keys to understanding the bioregional perspective; an examination of the verb *to dwell* reveals a profound and largely unknown meaning to our contemporary perspective, but it is in this lost meaning that bioregionalism finds its philosophical heart. In his essay "Building Dwelling Thinking," the German philosopher Martin Heidegger explores the various meanings and development of dwelling, asking "What, then does *Bauen*, building, *mean*?" He answers himself: "The Old English and High German word for building, *buan*, means to dwell. This signifies: to remain, to stay in a place.... The old word *bauen*, which says that man is insofar as he *dwells*, this word *bauen* however *also* means at the same time to cherish and protect, to preserve and care for.[2] The importance of this examination is readily apparent. Descartes' "I think, therefore I am" has been modified in a profound way: "I dwell, therefore I am." By putting our being and reason for existence back into nature by affirming that we *are* because we *dwell*, we are better able to see our species' relationship to the rest of the natural world, a view that is more compatible with our recent understandings of the workings of nature.

But the assessment is not quite finished, as Heidegger goes on to demonstrate further etymological relationships that expand and flesh out the concept of dwelling. The Old Saxon *wuon*, the Gothic *wunian*, like the old word *bauen*, mean to remain, to stay in a place. But the Gothic *wunian* says more distinctly how this remaining is experienced. *Wunian* means: to be at peace, to be brought to peace, to remain in peace. The word

for peace, *Friede*, means the free, *das Frye*, and *fry* means: preserved from harm and danger, preserved from something, safeguarded. To free really means to spare. The sparing itself consists not only in the fact that we do not harm the one whom we spare. Real sparing is something positive and takes place when we leave something beforehand in its own nature, when we return it specifically to its being . . . To dwell, to be set at peace, means to remain at peace within the free, the preserve, the free sphere that safeguards each thing in its nature. *The fundamental character of dwelling is in this sparing and preserving.*

Jerry DeMarco

In other words, *dwelling* assumes a practical philosophy of live and let live. This isn't a "hug-the-bunnies, kiss-the-ferns" type of mentality, but is instead is a realization that the integrity of a biological community—of which the dweller is a part of—is dependent upon the connections that characterize a healthy ecosystem. By living and letting live, which in practice allows each individual species to live out its biotic and evolutionary potential, a dweller preserves the ecological processes that perpetuate the healthy function of the land. A hunter may still take the deer for food and clothing—after all, one must take the lives of other organisms if one is to eat and survive (this is the "living" part of the philosophy)—but she or he does so with an eye to the entire ecological framework (this is the "let live" part of the philosophy).

A sense of *place* rounds out the bioregional view of dwelling. *Place* comes from the Latin word *platea*, which means area, derived from the Greek *platys*, which means broad. Both of these words also carry a connotation of "street," as well. So *place* once meant something like a "broad area" that had a human component—in ancient times, a street—and currently carries the meaning of (among other things) a location in which something is. While the word *place* does not have the profound impact of the etymology of the word *dwelling*, it still holds some wisdom in our understanding of the word today in its relation to bioregionalism, because, again, "our place is part of what we are." With a look back at the idea of dwelling, what is meant by *place* is: a location or area in which one *dwells*, a spiritual center, a place for a feeling of groundedness, a feeling of home, a safe haven. This sense of place goes further than dwelling, however, in that a sense of place comes largely from events and happenings that give a place a special meaning in one's consciousness, a process that Wallace Stegner calls "cumulative association." A place is not a place, he says, "until things that have happened in it are remembered in history..."[3] Stegner is mostly concerned with a place having some public history, some cultural association or monument that makes it a place, such as, for example, a viewing of "the quiet meadows and stone walls of Gettysburg" that can give a person a profound sense of the events that took place there. However, a place can be a place in the full sense of the word without having such public associations; one always remembers their childhood "hideout" or playground or neighborhood with a feeling that goes beyond mere remembrance.

Coming to consciousness is a large part of this sense of place. I grew up as a "Navy brat," a child whose family moved often due to the military—and later, the non-military career—obligations of his father. I have never lived in the same place for more than four years, until just recently, and, correspondingly, my sense of place has been profoundly affected. I have a deep, heartfelt need for a home, a center, a place of grounding in the world, but at the same time I am invested with an equal sense of wanderlust, perhaps instilled by the rootlessness of my childhood. In spite of this wanderlust and growing up "rootless," I still have a personal sense of what it means to have a place. From the years I spent in Louisiana, I remember a small grove of pine trees between my neighbor's house and the church that I always used to hide in as a child; the path behind Ms. Pauline's house which lead to the place where I could climb up onto her garage, and then step over onto my own roof; the field across the street where my friends and I would go to play football. Recalling these memories brings to mind far more than the words that I use to describe it; the memories are sensual, endowed with deep personal meaning and feeling, connections of sound and vision and touch. They have no public meaning, but I still have a sense of this place that transcends mere memory or location, and this place is, therefore, in the fullest sense a *place*. All of us have such memories—whether they be from childhood, our adult years, or both—and from these thoughts one can identify with the meaning of a *sense of place*.

So dwelling in place is the ultimate philosophical meaning behind living bioregionally. Dwelling in place allows a person a home and a spiritual center that is connected and interrelated intimately with the ecological associations that characterize a bioregion. One lives sustainably and meaningfully; a home can be maintained indefinitely because both personal sanity and environmental processes are implicitly preserved by dwelling in place, and dwelling in place allows one to have a full

sense of who they *are*.

While the philosophical basis for bioregionalism has been, I hope, made clear, there still remains the practical problem of answering the corresponding question, "what does it take to live bioregionally?" The architect Christian Norberg-Schultz believes that "the environment only becomes a meaningful *milieu* when it offers rich possibilities of identification" and that "only when space becomes *a system of meaning places*, does it become alive to us." Growing up in one place and living there throughout a person's life is one way in which such an association can be made, but most Americans seem to want to leave the

Jerry DeMarco

homes in which they grew up, to forge their own path and identity, and to find their own place.

To further complicate matters, many children grow up as I did, traveling and essentially rootless. A sense of place is easy to find for a child, however, as children usually know more about the area in which they live than adults. Children are always exploring, looking, and experiencing the places where they live; even though I moved often, it did not take me long to discover the "feel" of the places in which my family lived, and so I—like most children—found my sense of place quite easily. Once we become adults, however, something changes, and we gradually lose the ability to find our sense of place when we move to a new locale. Perhaps we do not have the "time" to explore and experience our new neighborhoods and regions. Perhaps we no longer have the openness and frankness of childhood that once allowed us to climb trees and fences, wade through ponds, encounter our neighbors (human or not), meet others easily, become friends quickly, and otherwise experience our place. Thus my current predicament arises—I have a house here in my suburban neighborhood, but I have no home. I have no sense of the place in which I live, and I believe that many people—in my own neighborhood, as well as all over this country—live in much the same state of mind that accompanies a lack of a place. Says Norberg-Schultz:

> the loss of...[our] places makes up a loss of "world." Modern man thus becomes "worldless," and thus loses his own identity, as well as the sense of community and participation. Existence is experienced as "meaningless," and man becomes "homeless" because he does not any longer belong to a meaningful totality. Moreover he becomes "careless," since he does not feel the urge to protect and cultivate a world any more.[4]

Ironically, those of us without a place are alive, but we have no real existence. Our actions are characterized by a profound lack of a sense of our vital connections to the rest of nature, and we are therefore blind to the significance of the damage we are incurring to the planet. We do not *dwell*.

What could lead us to live in such a manner that we can regain our sense of place? We must begin to live bioregionally, to live in such a manner so that we know the places and interactions that characterize our locales. By getting to know the environmental aspects of our region, we can acquire a deeper sense of home, a deeper knowledge of what makes our home and our existence what it is. We can, in effect, *reinhabit* and become *native* to our bioregions. So how can we get to know our local environments? Kirkpatrick Sale offers his vision of bioregionalism by pointing out that

> the crucial and perhaps only and all-encompassing task is to understand *place*, the immediate specific place where we live. The kinds of soils and rocks under our feet; the source of the waters we drink; the meaning of the different kinds of winds; the common insects, birds, mammals, plants, and trees; the particular cycles of the seasons; the times to plant and harvest and forage—these are the things that are necessary to know.[5]

In a similar vein, the novelist Jim Dodge offers his view of bioregionalism as encompassing "a decentralized, self-determined mode of social organization; a culture predicated upon biological integrities and acting in respectful accord; and a society which honors and abets the spiritual development of its members."[6] When one understands the basic ecological processes as well as the human cultures, economies, and histories that characterize a region, one can act and live in a manner that is compatible with the ecological flow: going with the current, living and letting live, and existing in a mentally and environmentally sustainable way of life. The human component is as important as the more encompassing biotic component; one is as much a part of a human community as a biotic community. Making the effort to know one's neighbors, one's fellow employees, and people who work in the places in which one shops frequently, leads to a greater and larger communal interrelationship. The human being is a social animal; the interrelationships that hold together

the larger biotic community are just as relevant to the human community.

There are many problems and complications that arise from trying to adopt—either practically or mentally—a bioregional perspective, both on a personal and a societal scale; for example, bioregionalism must answer to charges of utopianism or of overly romanticizing historical ways of living. Most bioregionalists acknowledge these criticisms as largely unfounded once the concepts of bioregionalism have been examined beyond a superficial glance. "The point is not to go back," says Jim Dodge, "but to take the best forward. Renewal, not some misty retreat into what was." Furthermore, a sense of the relation of the urban environment and its experiences to the rural will need to be more fully fleshed out. Bioregionalism must find the ways to safely and usefully integrate our technologies and living arrangements into the rest of the biotic community for it to succeed across a broad spectrum of peoples and beliefs. For the time being, suffice to say that it will take time and work before we all recognize that living bioregionally is neither utopian nor mere sentimentalism, but is, instead, a realistic and imaginative undertaking that provides a necessary, possible, and—it is hoped—desirable alternative to the current placelessness that characterizes modern society, the placelessness that is so dangerous to the continuation of life on our planet.

Indeed, all of the answers have not been found, nor have all of the questions even been asked, much less formulated. Bioregionalists are still experimenting, still trying to understand the myriad of meanings and associations that will, hopefully, eventually make it a worthwhile and workable alternative to our current predicament. The future is frightening, for we will have to deal with the consequences of the actions of the preceding generations, as well as our own. But the future is also promising, for what we are aiming for is nothing less than a meaningful existence for ourselves, our children, and our species. Only when we find our dwellings and our places, through awareness and an open mind, can we reinhabit our continent, and live meaningful, sustainable lives. Only then can we truly be at home.

Notes

[1]Gary Snyder, *The Practice of the Wild*. (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1990), p. 29.

[2]Martin Heidegger, "*Building Dwelling Thinking*." In *Poetry, Language, Thought*, translated by Albert Hofstadter. (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p.146.

[3]Wallace Stegner, *The Sense of Place*. (Madison: Wisconsin Humanities Committee, 1986), p. 4.

[4]Christian Norberg-Schultz, *Architecture: Meaning and Place*. (New York: Electra/Rizzoli), 1986, p. 12.

[5]Kirkpatrick Sale, *Dwellers in the Land*. (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1985), p. 42.

[6]Jim Dodge, "Living By Life: Some Bioregional Theory and Practice." In *The CoEvolution Quarterly*, No. 32, Winter 1981, pp. 6-12.

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Nature Invented

An Ethical Critique of Preservation and Restoration Ecology

Kevin Hiers

The mission of The Nature Conservancy is to preserve the plants, animals, and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive.

The Nature Conservancy's Apalachicola Bluffs and Ravines Preserve in North Florida's sandhill habitat seems an unlikely place for philosophy, but for me it was an ideal site for the practical implementation of the environmental ethic known as sustainable development. In a 1991 paper entitled "The Wilderness Idea Revisited: the Sustainable Development Alternative," J. Baird Callicott challenges the prevalent conception of environmental ethics by elucidating three dangerous presuppositions of preservation ecology. He argues that the current method of ecosystem protection, through the exclusion of long-term human presence, perpetuates an implicit dichotomy between humans and the rest of the natural world, while ethnocentrically ignoring the balance that indigenous peoples achieved within their ecosystems, and misunderstanding the change inherent to even stable ecosystems. My experience as an intern with the Nature Conservancy allowed me the opportunity both to review my work through the implementation of Callicott's perspective and to critique the practical application of his ethical alternative.

While careful to explain that his criticism is directed at wilderness philosophy and not ecosystems, Callicott questions the motivation for the exclusion of a human presence from the concept of wilderness. This first point of criticism expresses concern with civilization's antithetical relationship with its surrounding ecosystems. Many perceive wilderness as a place where humans do not remain and attempt to separate wilderness ecosystems from civilization. This perception reveals the conceptual bifurcation of *Homo sapiens* from the rest of nature. Such a dichotomy misrepresents the origin of our species and the processes by which humans evolved. Callicott maintains that, as products of evolution, "human works are as natural as those of beavers." By perceiving our consciousness and culture as separate from nature or as somehow unnatural prevents humanity from "symbiotically integrating with contemporaneous evolutionary phenomena" (Callicott, 241). Put simply, we cannot achieve balance *within* nature while perceiving ourselves *apart* from it.

The segregation of humanity from wilderness is presupposed by many of the goals for restoration ecology. Although the impetus for ecosystem restoration may be ecologically sound, the ultimate objective is to restore a *natural* or *wild* state of existence to the ecosystem which inevitably excludes humans. The exclusion of a human presence from this definition of natural or wild implies a pre-Darwinian ignorance of the reality that humans are fully a part of nature (Callicott, 240). This misconception is illustrated in the articulation of restoration goals for the Apalachicola Bluffs and Ravines Preserve (ABRP). The management plan for the preserve introduces its specific ecological program goals with this preface, "The longleaf pine/wiregrass system once covered the vast majority of the southeastern United States...but with human settlement the longleaf forests have declined by 98%." (Schwartz, 1) The statement implicitly points to human arrival as the cause of longleaf pine (*P. Palustris*) forest decline. In doing so, it identifies the fallacy of the human-nature dichotomy—the *settlement* or *presence* of humans did *not* cause the decline of forests, rather the *types* of interaction pursued in the southeast have contributed to habitat loss. This simple distinction between human presence and human activity is essential to Callicott's critique of current environmental efforts and the application of sustainable development as a viable ethical option.

The second problem of the prevailing ecological worldview is its conspicuous disregard for indigenous and aboriginal peoples' former presence within most ecosystems. Callicott cleverly refers to Roderick Nash's influence in sculpting this ethnocentric perspective "of wilderness in the contemporary American mind" through Nash's description of pre-European America as a "wilderness condition" of continental dimensions. Rarely, if ever, are native peoples taken into consideration when discussing the wilderness idea. However, William Cronon's *Changes in the Land* begins to rectify this exclusionary trend by describing the impacts of southern Native American fire use "in reshaping and manipulating the ecosystems" (48).

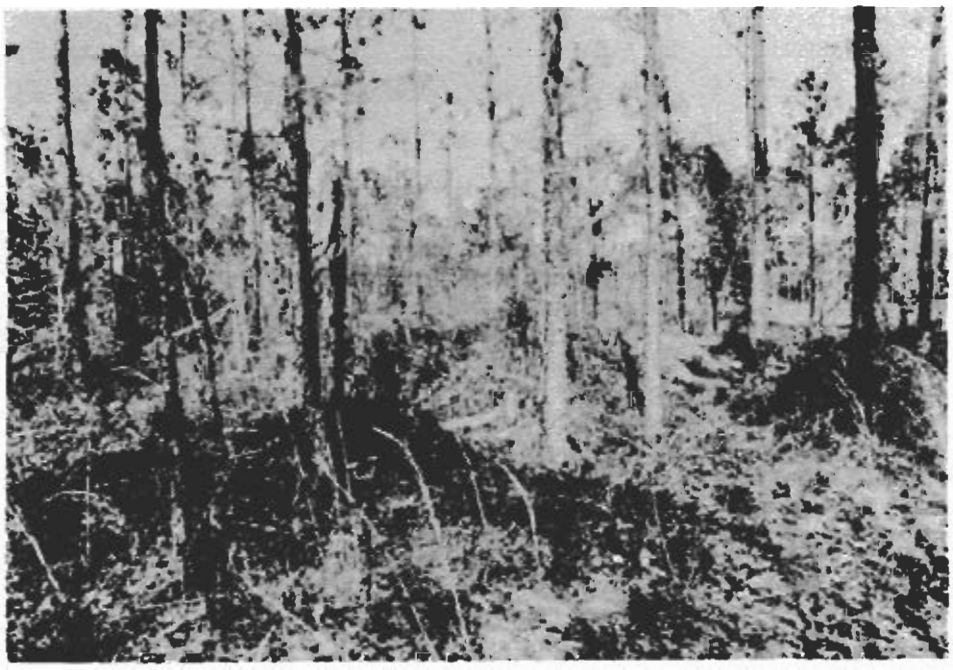
North Florida serves as an ideal illustration of Cronon's assertion. Longleaf pine/wiregrass, a subclimax forest community, evolved as a fire dependent ecosystem. With the highest frequency of lightning strikes in the world, Florida's natural habitats burned periodically, producing a thick understory with consistently young vegetation— ideal for wildlife. Understanding this relationship between fire and food abundance, Native Americans of the Miccosukee tribe for centuries periodically burned the land that is now ABRP. In fact, a Miccosukee regional trading community thrived near present day Blountstown, Florida, about 5 miles from ABRP. Through the evidence of artifacts, these inhabitants are known to have hunted and lived on the preserve; yet, they are not accounted for in the statement of preservation goals.

As mentioned above, the restoration goals implicate "human settlement" as the agent of habitat destruction. However, it is evident that not only did humans inhabit the preserve for centuries, but they also helped to sustain the sandhill habitat using the same management tools as implemented today.

Thus, the articulation of preservation goals not only mistakes human presence as the cause of habitat loss but also ethnocentrically ignores human settlements before European arrival.

Finally, preservation ecology, through its definition and the subsequent perception of the public, seems to ignore the perpetual and unavoidable change of ecosystems over time. To the belief that change will cease on preserved lands, Callicott responds that to "try to preserve in perpetuity...the ecological status quo ante is as unnatural as it is impossible" (240). Ecosystems cannot be isolated. Ecologist Eugene Odum reminds us that ecosystems are thermodynamically open, meaning that input determines output to a significant degree (542). These changes in input will result from both unrestrained human activities beyond preserve boundaries and the recruitment and constant influx of invading species through the preserve ecosystem.

Because ecosystem boundaries are often arbitrarily chosen, constant interaction between preserve systems and adjacent ecosystems will persist regardless of the degree of perceived isolation. The rare and diverse slope forests on ABRP, the primary reason for the Conservancy's acquisition of the property serve as a microcosm of this systemic interaction. These steephead ravines formed over the millennia from the gradual erosion of porous sands by quickly moving groundwater. During the last glaciation they served as an ideal habitat for retreating Appalachian plant species. The 70% slopes and the dense foliage of the ravines have continued to produce a subclimate similar in moisture and temperature to current Appalachian conditions. Though undisturbed by logging or imbalanced human contact, these refugia are affected by erosional degradation from poor management of the adjacent upland forests. In addition, fires from the upland habitat occasionally burn down the ravine slope creating a diverse ecotone between the slope forest and the longleaf pine prairies. The threatened loss of this valuable ecotone due to fire suppression and the physical destruction from erosion indicate the impossibility of isolating ecosystems as a means of perpetual habitat preservation.



Kevin Hiers

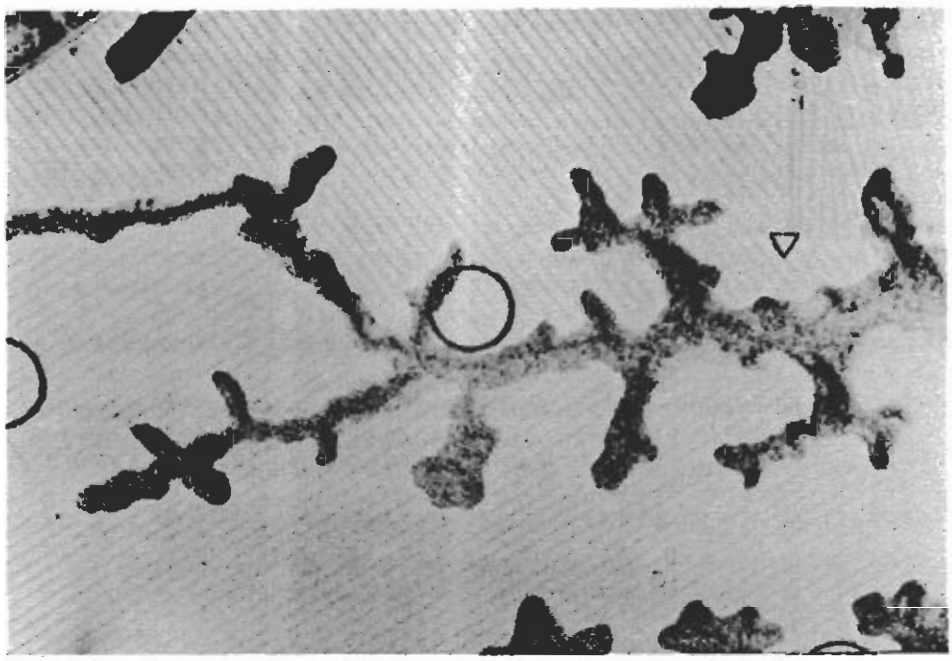
On small preserves, ecosystems will inevitably become overwhelmed by the destructive pressures of civilization. The borders of protected areas are known to exhibit visible indications of interaction with the "excluded" land beyond. Called the edge effect, this influence of human activities surrounding ABRP will eventually alter the preserve's ecology. The land use beyond ABRP is presently confined to the cultivation of sand pines (*P. clausa*) used for pulpwood. This species' thick foliage and high density prevent the diversity of groundcover vital for the health of sandhill habitat. Though the effect of such land management on ABRP is unknown, if maintained, this effective monoculture may restrict genotypic variation and migration of current plant and animal species on the preserve over time. Furthermore, through the edge effect, the introduction of exotic species (such as Japanese honeysuckle or fire ants) to the relatively small ABRP ecosystem will fundamentally alter species composition over time.

Furthermore, the fire ecology of the sandhill region also offers a unique illustration of current ethical inconsistencies. Because many of Florida's plant communities are dependent on periodic fire for perpetuation, without constant human presence in the form of prescribed burning, the "wilderness" would cease to exist. The presence of fire as an ecological condition is no longer possible without burning by humans. Formerly, huge conflagrations from lightning strikes would burn areas between river basins and maintain the subclimax longleaf pine/wiregrass habitat. Presently, active fire suppression by the Forest Service, and the existence of human firebreaks, such as roads, cities, and other habitat disturbances, prevent a continuous fuel bed from carrying such a regional fire. This small preserve does not contain the area required to maintain fire constancy. The upshot is that to exclude human presence from a conception of ABRP's wilderness would guarantee the end of longleaf pine prairies through forest succession to hardwood hummocks. From this perspective one can see both the dependency of small preserves on outside ecosystems and the important role of human activity in the wilderness idea.

Having challenged the preserve ethic, Callicott nevertheless acknowledges the need for large reserves to "help conserve biodiversity...and [to] permit migration of animals and gene flow between populations" (244). However, the purpose of critiquing restoration and preserve ecology is not simply to elucidate their biological impermanence, but rather to focus on the cultural context which jeopardizes the balance necessary for gradual ecosystem change. From this perspective it becomes clear that Callicott intends to affect the restoration of a balanced civilization rather than simply attack the symptom of our cancerous development. The ethical option of sustainable development attempts to produce a dramatic shift of the environmental

ethical paradigm from separation towards coexistence. Economic activity would be "confined to the periphery" of the substantial sanctuaries proposed by Callicott (244). As models of sustainable living, he offers many third-world examples and attempts to superimpose those lifestyles and worldviews onto those of the United States. Unfortunately, in his solution Callicott fails to emphasize problems of population and an imbalanced culture of consumption which has chosen to perceive itself as separate from nature.

To alter cultural perception and to obtain ecological sustainability, one must consider economic activity in both present and future contexts. Eco-nomic and cultural sentiments prevent the implementation of Callicott's perspective in the short-run. My experiences on ABRP included the observation of a small town, economically dependent on timber, and of its resistance to the kind of change called for by Callicott. The uncertainty of economic stability and few employment options in the region leave many people poor and resentful of any suggested environmental change. Economically hurt by the protection of the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker, most locals will not plant longleaf pine for fear of attracting the bird and the regulations which accompany it. Furthermore, survival in Liberty County, where ABRP is located, depends on pulp wood and this nation's ever-increasing demand for paper. Callicott's previous writings on environmental ethics emphasize "practicability" as a criteria for ethical evaluation. According to his own conception, this ideal should be "desirable [and] eminently livable" (Callicott, 421). To regulate more land and further restrict the scope of economic activity in Liberty County, Florida, is currently neither desirable or practical for struggling families. These same circumstances exist throughout the nation and create problematic aspects to implementation of sustainable development in the short-run.



Yet, given its immediate impossibility, Callicott's ethical alternative cannot be disregarded as simply a quixotic vision. His criticisms of the prevailing ethical paradigm are cogent and of ecological significance, thus deserving consideration as an ultimate goal for civilization. With this understanding society must move towards sustainable development under its own volition. However, in the context of the ecological imbalance of modern civilization, preserve ecology is justified and should be pursued avidly as a necessary means of temporarily protecting habitat for the ultimate end of sustainable development. With Callicott's environmental ethic in mind, education and increased ecological awareness are necessary to effect meaningful change towards a balanced lifestyle.

Although the Nature Conservancy apparently epitomizes the current ethical paradigm of preservation and isolation, many of my projects this summer focused on educational processes designed to achieve a more sustainable relationship within ecosystems. In North Florida, the Conservancy genuinely exhibits an understanding of the need to alter local economics to consider both people and ecosystems. Regional land stewards and ABRP's preserve manager have incorporated projects to effect positive and gradual change towards sustainability. Part of my internship was devoted to the acquisition of data concerning the seedling survivability and growth of longleaf pine on sandhill habitat. Though longleaf pine thrived on the sandhills for centuries, many pulpwood plantation owners are hesitant to replant longleaf pine seedlings because of their relatively slow growth rate. However, the Conservancy data is meant to provide conclusive evidence that longleaf pine has a demonstrated physiological advantage in the xeric sandhill uplands and is thus equally as profitable as sand pine for plantation growth. If intended changes occur, the ecological advantages will include a more balanced interaction of indigenous species and the diverse groundcover not possible in sand pine plantations.

Aiding in this data collection were two elementary school teachers who were participating in an experiential graduate program through Florida State University. These teachers now have the knowledge and appreciation of balanced ecosystems needed to be taught in schools. My own efforts to increase access to the preserve through nature trails and the construction of an information center are designed to attract volunteers and promulgate accurate information concerning sandhill ecosystems. the Conservancy's active volunteer program experientially connects people to the preserve ecosystem.

In addition to aiding the Conservancy's efforts, I was able to participate in data collection of foraging patterns of red-cockaded woodpecker colonies in the Apalachicola National Forest. The Forest Service in conjunction with Tall Timbers Research Station, near Tallahassee, Florida, plans to monitor the effects of selective logging near these colonies to assess the impact on the bird. Both ecologists and timber interests hope cooperation will maximize both environmental and economic

concerns in the future. The result of this study may provide an avenue for reconciliation between timber and environmental interests in the region. This study is certainly an important first step towards the realization of a sustainable local economy. Working within the ethical framework of preserve ecology, all of these programs are designed as means to achieve fundamental change in the way local communities relate to the environment.

The marrow of Callicott's concern and criticism is in the apparent unsustainability of wilderness preservation as an ecological end within the context of modernity. We must perceive ourselves as inextricable components of ecosystems and restrain our activities by the limitations of the biosphere as a whole to ensure our own survival. Without significant changes in the way we live, the present system of numerous but relatively small preserves such as ABRP will be reduced to museums of temporary diversity, unsustainable and exposed to the encroachment of civilization.

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Conservation Stories

Anne Bell

I FIRST BECAME AWARE OF CONSERVATION STORIES WHILE SITTING with an old friend one afternoon, discussing the plight of the St. Lawrence beluga whale. My friend, an economics professor, was arguing that conservation efforts to save the species should and would be determined according to economic value. In essence, unless the beluga, or any other species for that matter, were "worth" saving, then conservationists should turn their attention elsewhere. Unsettled by his apparently callous stance, I felt initially that our disagreement must be of a semantic nature. He must believe, like I, that a value other than the purely economic was at stake. I would simply have to explain myself more clearly in order for us to reach some common ground. As the afternoon wore on, however, I realized that there was a fundamental and irreconcilable difference in our understandings of conservation that no amount of debate could smooth over. My largely intuitive and impassioned views failed to make the slightest impression on him. His logical, pragmatic arguments on the other hand shook my confidence considerably.

In retrospect, I realize that there was a valuable lesson to be learned from that encounter. Simply put, coming to terms with the meaning of conservation is a problem. Those who use the word interpret it from the perspective of widely varying stories about nature. Ultimately these stories determine the arguments, strategies and techniques that can be brought to bear in conservation. They also provide the framework within which its successes and failures are evaluated.

To refer to a particular approach to conservation as a "story" is to recognize that the facts and theories upon which it is based express a culturally and historically specific way of conceptualizing experience. It is to admit that no understanding of conservation is universally valid or "correctly" describes the situations that it is attempting to address. Indeed, to speak of conservation stories is to realize that even such commonplace and functional notions as "species extinction," "ecosystem integrity" or "habitat loss" are constructs issuing from a particular time and place, and as such represent arbitrary ways of interpreting natural phenomena.

In the broad sense then, conservation can perhaps best be understood, not as a universal concept floating about in a platonic realm of ideas, but rather as a "narrative field," which Donna Haraway describes as "a dynamic web of stories and possible meanings." Conservation thus escapes definitive definition as its meaning is continually transformed by the stories within its field. To attempt to define it is to ask—or demand—that the boundaries and possibilities of a particular story, of a particular way of experiencing the world, be accepted. To *redefine* it is to express one's dissatisfaction with prevailing accounts by introducing a new story. It is an act which alters the status of all the other stories in the field and as such constitutes a "strategy to break their power." This is why conservation stories matter. They provide the context for both understanding and action. They have consequences.

Neil Evernden writes that "when the story fails, when it no longer satisfies, the anxiety of individuals will be revealed again." For those of us who are anxious, who suspect like John Livingston, that "a depressingly large portion of the wildlife conservation effort has been entirely wasted," it is time to take a critical look at our stories. It is time to come to terms with the failure of existing cultural explanations and to undertake the difficult project of redefining the parameters and possibilities for what can count as conservation.

Wise Use and Preservation

The conservation story is rooted in the context of nineteenth century industrialism. It signalled a growing concern over the widespread and unrelenting exploitation of nature in the New World. Although it was initially formulated and defined in opposition to the dominant story of the "exploiters," its meaning was almost immediately contested within the conservation movement itself.

Two distinct and conflicting accounts of conservation began to take shape. One articulated an understanding of nature as "resource," its adherents equating conservation with the "wise use or planned development of resources." One of its most celebrated spokespersons, Gifford Pinchot, described in distinctly utilitarian terms the purpose of conservation: "to take every part of the land and its resources and put it to that use in which it will serve the most people." An alternative version of conservation rejected this utilitarian stance and advocated a vision of nature unaltered by humankind. It was indebted to the Romantic tradition, acknowledging the aesthetic and mystical qualities of nature, and its supporters became known as "preservationists."

Most conservationists today continue to resort to both resourcist and preservationist arguments in their defence of nature. On one hand, government and non-government groups alike give overwhelming support to the distinctly Pinchotian understanding of conservation as expressed in the *World Conservation Strategy*: "the management of human use of the biosphere so that it may yield the greatest sustainable benefit to present generations while maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of future generations."

On the other hand, many nature advocates question the conventional resourcist stance, since it presumes a human-centered agenda and fits squarely within the dominant economic paradigm. Instead, they have rallied around the notions of the

intrinsic value of nature and of the need to preserve intact some remnants of pristine wilderness. Motivated by a socially atypical attitude of respect for the components and structure of the natural world, they assert a radically different relationship with the nonhuman, as is evidenced by Livingston's definition of wildlife conservation:

> the preservation of wildlife forms and groups of forms in perpetuity, for their own sakes, irrespective of any connotation of present or future human use.[1]

Since resourcists and preservationists have dominated the conservation movement for the last century, it is here that my analysis of conservation stories will begin. The first question to consider is why they have had almost exclusive authority for so long.

The strength of the resourcist position is no mystery really, for it represents a view of nature which is completely compatible with the expansionist, exploitive project of modern society. Max Oelschlaeger explains that like industrialism it is based on an utilitarian philosophy which denies natural entities any "end or justification in and of themselves." All values are reduced to one, the one being perceived human benefit. The resourcist story thus removes any ethical obstacles to the continued exploitation of nature. Priorities can be quickly and pragmatically determined, as is evidenced, for example, in the rationale behind the following "Priority Requirement" of the *World Conservation Strategy*:

> Where agriculture can supply more food, more economically and on a sustainable basis, than can the utilization of wildlife, the conversion of habitat to farmland is rational.[2]

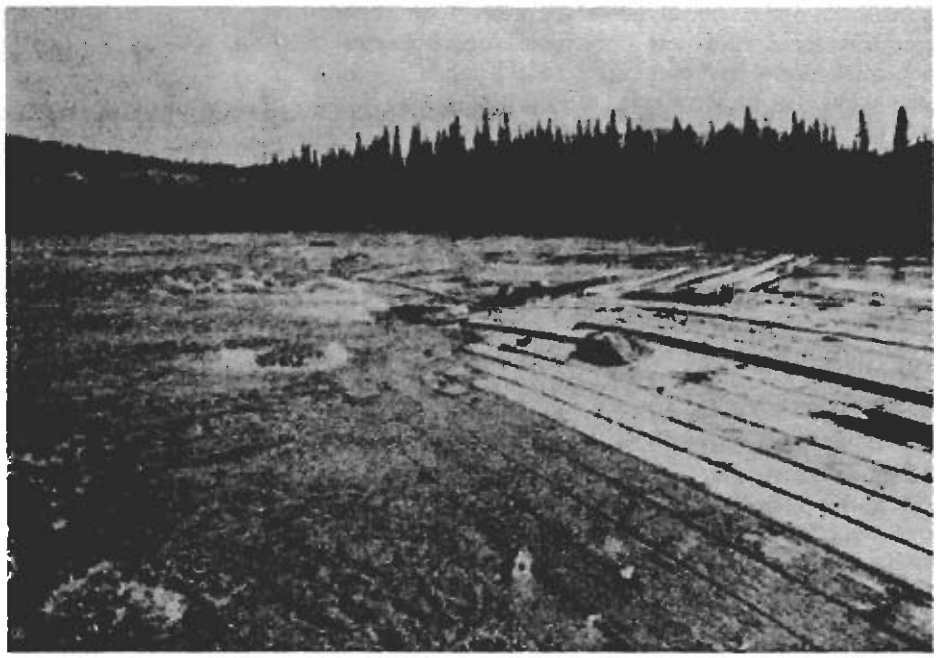
Resourcism typically lends itself to such rational decision-making at the expense of wild nature. No wonder Neil Evernden has called it "the Trojan horse of the industrial state."

Upon reflection, its links to industrialism are a little too obvious to take anyone by surprise. Perhaps we should entertain instead the possibility that the true Trojan horse might in fact be preservationism whose ties with the industrial paradigm are far more subtle.

It is no secret of course that preservationists have always made use of resourcist arguments in their defense of nature. Nash relates, for example, that the strategy to preserve Yellowstone was based on demonstrating its "uselessness" (i.e. its lack of resource value—society could afford to set it aside). Likewise, the Adirondack State Park was established primarily because its preservation was linked to commercial prosperity. Similar subterfuges are commonly resorted to by preservationists today.

Yet on a more fundamental level than that of mere strategic defense, the preservationist story can be shown to conform with rather than to contest the values of the modern industrial state. In his critique of the preservationist approach to conservation, Thomas Birch compares parks to prisons. He sees in preservation a "subtle strategy of 'cooptation' or appropriation" of wildness by the "imperial order." We make a place for wildness within the system and then we incarcerate wildness in that place. In his pessimistic (or realistic?) view, "there is, or will be soon, only a network of wilderness reservations in which wildness is locked up." Charles Bergman likewise alerts us to the ambiguous role of parks. He refers to them as "mere gestures," "trade-offs" of chunks of land for even larger chunks. What both writers are pointing out is that the preservation of nature paradoxically legitimates its continued exploitation. Parks appease consciences and defuse protest, and most significantly, they signal our tacit acceptance of business as usual—after all, that is what makes them necessary.

Lest either Birch or Bergman be suspected of paranoia, consider the following excerpt from *Ontario Provincial Parks: Planning and Management Policies*, regarding the need for a minimum size for wilderness parks in the province:



Jerry DeMarco

> It should be kept in mind that, over time as resource and recreational development in northern Ontario approaches the boundaries of Wilderness Parks, these parks will increasingly become 'islands' or refuges of plant and animal species and communities sensitive to such development.[3]

Thus their foreboding finds expression in a government policy statement.

The preservation story derives its meaning from development, for we would rather put boundaries around nature than limit our own consumptive activities. Every preservation victory is therefore bittersweet at best, adding as it does to the

already undeniable evidence that we cannot control ourselves as a society. It is no mere coincidence that, as Paul Shepard points out, America is home to "the world's most ferocious destroyers and yet the most fanatic preservers of wilderness parks and endangered species." The two positions are as necessary to each other as night is to day.

I do not wish to imply by this that the resourcist and preservationist stories are identical. In fact, I believe that they proceed from very different intuitions about nature and about humanity's place within nature. In the preservationist stance there is a recognition of the *quality* of experience that will forever defy the resourcist mindset. This is illustrated by Nash's anecdote about preservationist Bob Marshall: "When asked how many wilderness areas America needed, he replied 'how many Brahms symphonies do we need?'"[4] Although the question demanded a quantitative answer, by turning it upon itself Marshall was able to intimate a value lying beyond mere quantification and the satisfaction of needs. He was in essence asserting another story.

A radically different story? Perhaps not, for although the aesthetic (nature as art) argument appears to transcend the utilitarian bias, it rests comfortably within the limits prescribed by the status quo. Marshall, like many preservationists, was a great defender of wilderness for its psychological benefits—a "non-consumptive use" of nature in today's jargon, but a use nonetheless. The preservationist story generally lacks daring. Even though its supporters might believe, like David Ehrenfeld, that "existence is the only criterion of the value of the parts of Nature," or like John Muir, that snakes are "good for themselves," they have tailored their vision to suit more widely accepted stories.

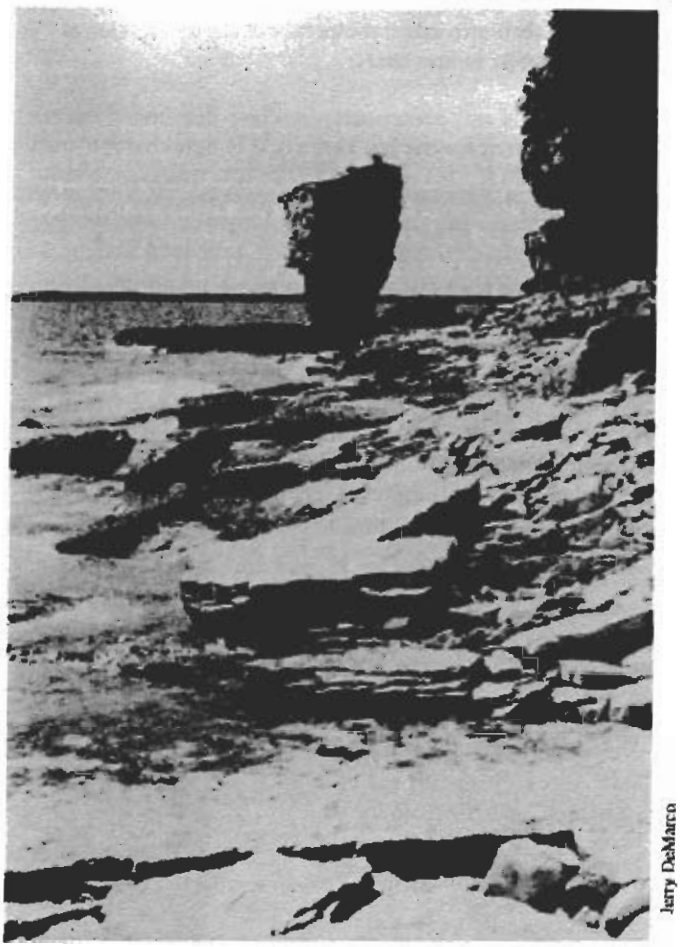
Privileged Knowledge

Given Western society's predilection for scientific accounts of reality, it should come as no surprise that conservation stories have relied heavily upon the life sciences. Just as scientists generally have been authorized to name what can count as nature for industrial peoples, so biologists and ecologists have been called upon to identify, explain and solve conservation problems. They have had a privileged role in defining the parameters of conservation debate and in determining what ought to merit society's concern. These special story-telling privileges have been granted, as Haraway explains, on the basis of science's unique claim to objectivity:

> A scientist "names" nature in written, public documents, which are endowed with the special, institutionally enforced quality of being perceived as objective and applicable beyond the cultures of the people who wrote those documents.[5]

The narrative dimension of science is rarely acknowledged. Scientific accounts of nature are considered to be *true*, that is to be accurate and unbiased depictions of an objective reality discernible by and yet independent of the perceiving mind. Indeed, they are endowed with an objective reality of their own. Mistaking the stories for that which they describe, we lose sight of the fact, for example, that biology is an analytical discourse, not the body itself. Their historical and cultural specificity are either denied or undetected by both the story-tellers and their audiences.

Conservationists, like society at large, have invested heavily in science because they believe it to be an objective and therefore reliable guide to action. It is a comforting illusion which appears to free us from our emotional, impressionable and ultimately untrustworthy selves. This faith is expressed, for example, in Bill Devall and George Sessions' call for "more



Jerry DeMarco

objective ecological criteria" in decision-making as they point to the need "to move away from policy decisions based on subjective criteria such as 'public opinion' to more objective criteria based upon sound ecological principles."[6]

To the extent that science is given privileged status, other forms of knowledge are discredited. Ramachandra Guha relates, for example, the story of an American biologist in India who declared that "only biologists have the competence to decide how the tropical landscape should be used."[7] To the detriment of indigenous peoples around the world, conservationists have bought wholeheartedly into "the ideologies of culture-free objective science," thereby casting in a dubious light any forms of knowledge other than their own.

The perspective provided by science is partial, a fact that we as conservationists seem most reluctant to admit or address. Perhaps, as products of our culture, we simply fail to see that science is indeed a story-telling practice, and *not* a means to irrefutable, universal truth. Whatever the reason, the

result of our unquestioning compliance has been limited understanding and the concentration of decision-making power in the hands of an expert elite.

Commenting on the cultural and historical specificity of primatology, Haraway remarks that the scientific way of looking at monkeys and apes has been "inconceivable to most men and women."[8] I cannot help but wonder how this fact is commonly interpreted by the scientific community. My suspicion is that those who fail to see through the eyes of science are regarded as ignorant and culturally inferior. There is a pernicious arrogance underlying our faith in the objectivity of science—as if it were a superior form of a priori knowledge just waiting to be revealed to the uneducated masses.

Objectivity and Control

Integral to the myth of scientific objectivity is the imagined split between humans and nature, subject and object, perceiver and perceived. The prevailing conservation stories have inherited this particular bias along with the rest of the humanist assumptions of Western science. Problems are defined in terms of *what* is to be protected, whether it be an endangered species or a unique and vulnerable ecosystem. Conservation work begins with attempts to understand the other, its habits, requirements, components and functions, so that a suitable strategy for protection or recovery can be developed. Nature is objectified so that conservationists can act upon it and thereby assume control. As Bergman points out, for instance,

> Our approach to the problem of endangered species has been a classic example of American pragmatism: Define a problem in terms that enable us to *do* something, and then invent a solution.[9]

Bergman provides a telling illustration of this dynamic in his discussion of the California condor. He recounts the struggle between two opposing groups of conservationists, the "interventionists" who on one hand feel that the only hope for the survival of the species is to capture all remaining specimens and breed them in captivity, and the "preservationists" who on the other hand believe that, come what may, the last wild condors should be left in the wild. It is a tale of two conflicting stories of conservation each vying for dominance, and each seeking to impose its own sets of values and beliefs. In the end, the condors are taken into captivity, or, as Bergman puts it, biology wins confirming "its right to define for us what a bird is." Upon what might that definition be based?—apparently upon the assumption that a condor in context is less meaningful than the perpetuation of its genes. Reflecting upon the significance of the event, Bergman insightfully remarks that

> No matter what happens with the captive breeding project, removing the last condors from the wild was a defeat for this vision of nature. No matter how successful the condors are in the zoos, even if they are someday released into the wild, capturing them was a failure for an America of wide spaces and slow time.

Success or failure in conservation depends not so much on the results of a particular strategy as on the story according to which they are evaluated.

Wilderness and Beyond

The idea of wilderness has always been a powerful motivating force in conservation. It fills our heads and hearts with nostalgia for the world as it once was, for life as it could have been, compelling us to seek out and protect what remains of untouched nature. As it is commonly understood in Western society, the idea of wilderness testifies to a perception of the wild as irremediably separate from humans and our undertakings. Perceiving wilderness is only possible to the extent that that split is acknowledged. Wanting to preserve wilderness hinges on valuing that split. Insofar as the idea of wilderness allows us both to conceive of and to justify maintaining a distance between ourselves and "pristine" nature, it is, ironically, as much a manifestation of our alienation from nature as is any industrial project or urban center. For that reason its place within the conservation movement is problematic and a source of contention.

Haraway states that "the experience of 'nature,' able to be perceived as free of human agency, is expensive and hinges on the exercise of institutional power." What she and others have helped to demonstrate is that the "distant dream space" of an "original and timeless nature" has been an integral part of the history of colonialism, that is, an element of the larger industrial/ technological story imposed by Europeans and their ancestors on the rest of the world.

In Africa, America, India and elsewhere, the legacy of the wilderness ideal has been the creation of parks, parks created to exclude by law all human habitation and subsistence activities, parks created by whites, for whites. Wilderness preservation has been and in fact still is part of a world-wide conservation strategy geared to producing services for consumption by foreign tourists, often at the expense of indigenous people who are dispossessed, marginalized and silenced. It has been a privileged, one-sided story, with both the narrators and the audience cocooned inside the dominant world-view. Insofar as that cocoon has remained intact, the story has gone uncontested.

Politics, says Haraway, requires more than one voice. This would explain why the sociopolitical dimension of wilderness preservation has been all but invisible to its advocates. They have mistaken their partial perspectives for the full story, the only worthwhile story—universal, inevitable, self-evident. Consequently, they have felt few qualms about imposing their views, and convinced as they are of the a-political, or more precisely meta-political, nature of their cause, they have taken on the special responsibility of defending the *true* value of nature—which luckily they consider themselves civilized enough to understand.

I don't know why I use the third person as I write about wilderness preservation. I have bought my share of acres of rain forest and I will continue to fight for the establishment of protected areas in Canada. In fact I would be unable to exclude "wilderness" from my understanding of conservation even if I wanted to. I am a product of my culture, middle class, urban and white, and the idea of wilderness—a landscape unmarred by roads, clearcuts, mines or hydro-electric dams—has meaning and value for me. And yet...

And yet, I see ample evidence why my views must evolve. I am beginning to understand why William Brown considers the concept of wilderness in Alaska "ethnocentric to the point of being insulting."[10] I am beginning to appreciate Guha's outrage when he accuses Americans of being the only people who can afford to drive 1,000 miles to enjoy nature in a park. What is our place in nature? What are the implications of our conservation stories? The long-silenced voices of the dispossessed are being heard at last, and they are forcing us to account for what we have learned to see. While their claims and testimony may be disturbing, they may also help to free us from certain conceptual shackles. The question is whether we are prepared to open ourselves to alternative understandings.

Notes

[1]Livingston (1981, p. 17).

[2]IUCN, section 7.

[3]Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (1978, section Wi.II, 1-2).

[4]Nash, p. 203.

[5]Ibid., p.79.

[6]Devall and Sessions (1984, p. 314).

[7]Guha (1989, p.75).

[8]Ibid., p.78.

[9]Bergman, p.9.

[10]Ibid, p.222.

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Initializing Idaho

John P. O'Grady

"Nothing is sole or whole that has not been rent."
—W.B Yeats

THERE ARE SEVERAL VERSIONS OF THIS STORY, BUT THE POINT OF each is the same: A colossal error was made. The Idaho we have is not the Idaho we should. We are haunted by images of a bigger, better place—a birthright we have somehow been denied, by someone we know not whom, for reasons unknown to us. So we lay blame. We are living in a diminished state; we harbor a bitterness.

In all versions of the story, the original survey party assigned to run the boundary between Idaho and Montana was supposed to demarcate a line along the crest of the Continental Divide. A favorite rendition has the supercilious surveyors proceeding somberly with their force along what they believe to be the Divide, until they encounter a river that cuts right across the range and their way. Whoops! So much for the Divide. A mistake has been made. These surveyors, these professionals, these Nineteenth Century men of science have laid their reputations on the line, planted their stakes, raised their monuments—along the wrong crest. The Bitterroots rather than the Continental Divide now mark, depending on where you stand, here from there, us from them. How to recover from such faulty discrimination?

Too late to redeem their work, and in utter despair, they abandon any further effort to lay political boundary over geographical flukiness; instead, they aim their transits due north and, ignoring whatever capriciousness the land might express, dash off the remainder of the distance to Canada as a straight line, then hot-foot it out of there back to Boise to collect their money before any government officials are the wiser and figure out that Idaho has, in fact, suffered a loss: Missoula, Butte, and a vast chunk of forsaken paradise all lying within the greater Columbia watershed. "It should have been ours!" Then, to add insult to injury, those who today live on the other side have the audacity to refer to it as "the Last Best Place."

Idaho's is a peculiar sense of loss, for a couple of reasons. One, the story is apocryphal. The historian has repeatedly reminded us that, when Congress cleaved Idaho and established the Montana Territory in 1864, the statute clearly fixed the boundary in the north as mainly along the crest of the Bitterroot Range, and further to the south along the Continental Divide. By the time the actual boundary survey was conducted—forty years later—the legend of the faulty survey had already sprung up. Narrative had blazed its own boundary long before the surveyors got around to marking theirs.

Another peculiarity about Idahoans' sense of territorial loss is that the object of loss is purely an abstraction. It occurred only in our minds. And, though peculiar, such loss is not uncommon; it's merely that old dissonance between "in here" and "out there." A remarkable object of human desire—a vast territory, say, or a lover, or a morality—is only ever located in our own minds. In the extended world, which sports a freedom known only to itself, that piece of Idaho we say was "lost" remains right where it's always been, just as rugged, just as forested, just as inaccessible as .... Well, what can one say? Leave, for once, the blank unfilled.

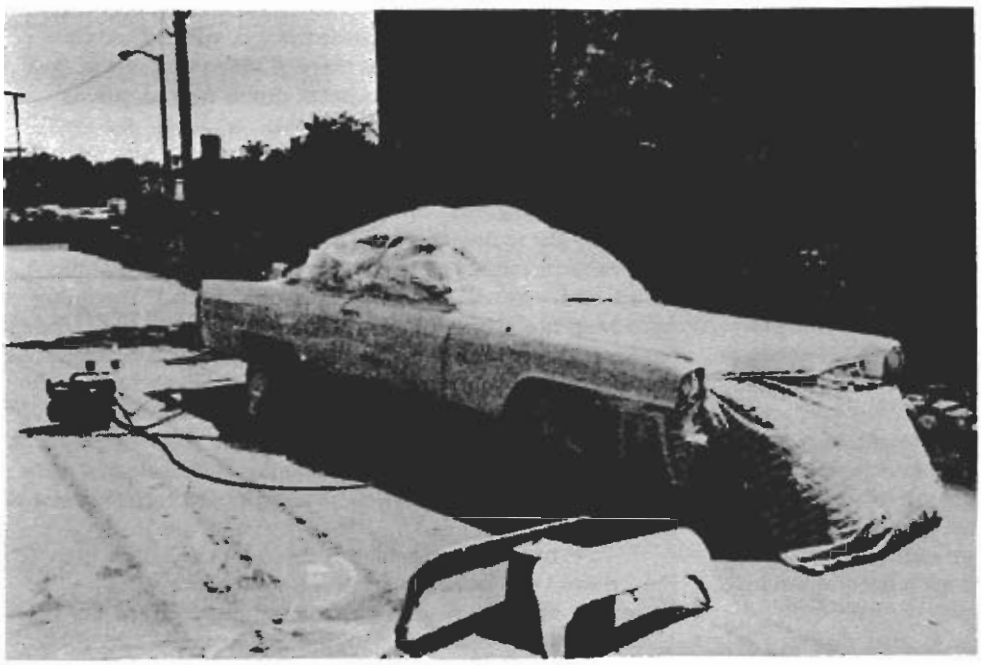
Indeed, tangible diminishments have been registered since the establishment of Idaho: salmon, grizzly bears, human cultures—just to invoke a few. In various ways, each of these bereavements might be traced back to a perennial urge among the citizens, a fervent belief that "You don't fit in." The indigenous peoples did not fit in with "America," so they were labeled "savages" and banished. Grizzlies didn't fit in because, well, they like to eat us. And salmon, much as we like to eat them, we prefer the cheap electricity and slackwater provided by our impoundments. We do, however, feel guilty about our share in all these losses, so we get nostalgic about them. But nostalgia, as Adrienne Rich has suggested, is just amnesia turned inside out.

When I first arrived in Idaho, I was without a map. I don't mean I was lacking a fine state highway chart, signed by the governor and printed in bright colors on paper so sharp it cracks apart when you try to unfold it. No, I'm talking about those interior maps, those phenomenal projections of direct experience upon the human heart, of one's own body moving through the particular places of the world—the only world you will ever truly *know*—with all of its weather and rocks and water and plants and animals: the multifarious beings of human existence. I've heard this attitude referred to as the geography of childhood, but to make it more concrete, just recall your own neighborhood when you were growing up: How as a child, in your playing, you knew every field, every alley, every patch of woods; the rocks had names, the trees were homes, the thickets were refuges, and everything moved. Afoot, you knew this world better than any driven adult; you had the ability to dissolve into it, you were as fluid as the wind in the trees. Pursued, you would take flight into this unchartable territory where the rules did not extend. This was called "out of bounds." Carry this style of consciousness into adulthood and you might call it "local knowledge."

The heart with which I entered Idaho had already been draped with the maps of my life's course through the mountains of California, the forests of Maine, and the streets of suburban North Jersey. Those particular maps—each in and of itself—would be of little use here, but the *process* of initializing the heart with a new understanding is what I needed to activate.

Each of us is born with the ability to acquire new maps of this kind, but so often that skill is allowed to palsy as we step down into adulthood and forget. To initialize the heart—as lovers would the tree—is not so much a mapping as a being mapped. The heart wears the world as it would a tattoo. And the world, how would it wear the human heart? There's no answer to that question, but one could know.

During my first days in Boise, I was occupied with the task of moving into a new apartment, always cause for loneliness. I was already missing the people and places I had left in California. As I was unpacking, there were several times—as when I came across a small box, given to me by my love, of redwood cones gathered in Muir Woods—that the weight of it all



Marie-Laure Hammond

was suddenly too much, taking me to the floor in tears. Reading the local newspaper also left me at a loss, for I discovered several unsettling issues confronting the community. The governor was eager to allow the Air Force to expand bombing practice across the unpeopled but not unloved rangelands of southern Idaho. A little further to the east the Federal Government had plans to expand a nuclear fuel dump. But most distressing of all was an initiative that would appear on the November ballot. Less an initiative (for that word would suggest positive connotations) than the sad fact that the community had made a mean-spirited proposition to itself.

Amid this loneliness and despair, I heard about a huge petroglyphed boulder called "Map Rock" down by the Snake River, a truck-sized block of basalt, smooth as paper on its south side, inscribed with innumerable lines and figures. This rock art, executed by people about whom we know very little, is at least nine thousand years old. It is said that the squiggles and doodles on this rock are an ancient "map" of the Snake River and its tributaries, meticulously chipped out by ancient cartographers to serve as a traveller's guide to the territory, much like our present-day "Welcome Center" at the state line.

But the Archaeologist suggests another story: That there is no story, or at least no story to which we are privy. It may look like a map to us, we who are the products of a culture that uses the map as an instrument of power and knowledge, but to those prehistoric people the Navajo call *Anasazi*, it meant something utterly and inutterably different. I prefer the archaeologist's story: it tumbles that boulder back out of bounds.

I decided to make my way there and see if, by consulting the stony wisdom of the "Ancient Ones," I might get myself oriented in this place. I'd like to report to you how I was able to find Map Rock, how I drove my car south from Boise across the Snake River Plateau, a vast tilted plain of scrub punctuated by the odd butte and shining field of wheat that in spreading lurches right to the brim of the canyon, where agro-industrial pastoralism suddenly drops away into the unreclaimed sagey-rabbitbrush abyss with all its undamned birds of prey. I'd like to report how this immense gash in the otherwise companionable earth conjures up the image of a cosmic axe being wielded then laid into the skull of the world. But, more prosaically, this canyon has been marked, so scientists say, by periodic cataclysms at the end of the last glaciation. Across ancient Lake Bonneville vast dams of ice would build then burst, build again then burst again, systole and diastole of cold catastrophe, unleashing the appalling freshets, the scouring surge of the world drawing lines upon itself.

Yes, this is what I would have liked to report, but that's not what happened. Instead, I got lost. I never found Map Rock. But let me tell you what I did find.

I stumbled upon the place where Idaho began, at least in a sense. As I ranged aimlessly across the Snake River Plateau, I aimed my car toward a singular low butte, some regrettably oversized Hershey Kiss of dark rock, all lop-sided from too much time under a desert sun. Nevertheless, in rising solitary from an otherwise unwrinkled plain, it insists upon its own individuality. It calls attention to itself, a gesture not without its risks. In this case, it is branded with a signpost, one of those brown ones the Department of the Interior uses to signify roadside attraction. "Initial Point." As I soon discover, this is the 1867 starting place for the official land survey of Idaho. It is easy to see why. This promontory offers a fetching view: 360 degrees and enough of the bare land that is southwestern Idaho to make you think that the fifteen dollars a mile the government paid to surveyor Peter Bell must have been easy money.

At that signpost, I turn off the paved highway down a dusty washboard that ends in the caldera of an old volcano. Not having encountered any traffic on the roads all morning, I

am surprised to see a pick-up parked at road's end. Fellow pilgrims, I presume, here to make a ritual scamper up this Plymouth Rock of Idaho, where one might "tie in" to the benchmark, tap the mysterious power of that first surveyor who carved our culture's insignia upon the land. It is as if the imagination itself were a shield volcano, and from this very spot the furious lavas of geography spilled forth to cover all of what we now call Idaho.

But my perception here has run astray.

The folks I find at the end of this road are not pilgrims. If anything, they are fugitives, from their workaday lives. Four middle-aged white men shooting rifles at the old volcanic earth: *crack crack crack*, each round raising from the slope a small cloud that takes to the air like a ghost, riding the wind for a moment, immune to further assault. Suburban boy and anti-gun liberal that I am, I feel like I have walked into a porno parlor; I try not to stare. I turn my back to the shooters to climb the vague trail, alone, to the top of the Point. An unsettling quiet descends. The shooters—they must be staring at me, wondering: "What the hell's he going up there for? Why doesn't he have a vehicle? Where's his gun?" For my own part—and maybe all of this is my part—I feel the prickling of a cross hair on the back of my neck.

No! Of course they aren't aiming at me—they probably haven't even noticed me. The prickling is but my own imagination extending a faulty line of survey out into the world. I am "projecting" my own irrational fears onto a portion of the unmapped world. Yes, I'm erecting a boundary between us, me and these men I've never met. Or have they erected it, defending now it with their arms? No matter—once it's up, each on his own side will perform his share to maintain it. I think of Robert Frost's line: "Men work together, whether they work together or apart."

On the summit of Initial Point, I find a monument commemorating this spot in history. The brass plaque riddled with bullet holes both unnerves and pleases me. I think again of those men with the guns, and I'm revisited by the old fear of the unchartable other. But at the same time, I feel this goofy shock of solidarity. The agency-installed tablet would insist that its reader remember the unmemorable deeds of bureaucrats. But the bullet holes tell another story. They are a revision provided by some nameless outlaw, the anarchist in each of us who says, "Don't fence me in."

• • •

The historian explains: "Generally speaking, boundary lines defined by natural features need no monuments to indicate their location; but those that are determined by imaginary lines must be perpetuated by marking."

• • •

A few weeks later I sign on for a backpacking trip with a local mountaineering club. I spend three days with three men I have never met before. We enjoy each other's company. We share a camp, cook and eat our meals together, take turns pumping lake water through a filter. We climb a mountain. We suffer a snowstorm and stand around stamping our feet to keep warm. We exchange stories. Backpacking trips like this, with their beautiful and spontaneous spirit of cooperation, are enough to encourage belief in a universal human harmony.

On the drive back to Boise, I ride with Ken, an engineer who works for the Idaho Transportation Department. A few years my junior, he's a native Idahoan and a graduate of the University. He speaks lovingly of his wife, who was his college sweetheart, and their two children. She is a volunteer teacher's aid. He is disappointed that his old knee injury acted up today; he had to limp most of the ten miles back to the trailhead. He worries that he's growing old. He says, "I don't know what I'd do if I couldn't get *out*." He speaks of his job. He tells me that the Transportation Department employs two people full time whose sole responsibility is to drive around the state in a van with a video camera mounted on the dashboard. They videotape the condition of the highways. They don't drive very fast. Sometimes they stop and take a look under a bridge. It all has something to do with the State's liability. With thousands of highway miles in Idaho, it takes them three years to cover all the territory. Then they start over again. Ken and I laugh about this work. It is from him that I first hear the legend of the faulty Idaho-Montana survey. He jokes that this survey set the tone for all government workers in Idaho. We laugh at this too. I like him. We seem to have a lot in common.

Then he inquires about me; he knows I just moved here. "What do you think of Idaho?" he asks like a proud parent, smiling. I say that I love it, except for the loneliness. And the politics.

"The politics?" he asks.

"Well, you know, this whole Proposition One thing. It really disturbs me."

"What do you mean, it *disturbs* you?" Suspicion in his voice. He's no longer smiling. Suddenly I'm standing on the brink of trouble—or worse. Prudence dictates, "Proceed with caution." Better yet, step back. But I am heedless, I leap.

"I think it's unconscionable for a society to demonize any of its people. What's the motivation for this? All I can see is meanness. It makes me very sad."

The snapping I hear is the planks in Ken's reason breaking, but I feel like I am the one plummeting. Or maybe we both are.

A fury of words are unleashed. Overwhelming. Nothing prepares one for this: Suddenly to be in the presence of something wild and dangerous. Anger knows no bounds. Try to keep the calm, but the berms are easily breached. Terror of drowning, from the inside out. Cataclysm of emotion sweeps up and away all in its path. Anger swells, fear spreads.

Ken is a nice guy, a fine human being; intelligent, upright, and companionable. He is a caring family man, and a great addition to any camp. He will fight to preserve human decency. He will defend the walls of righteousness. There is blood in his eye. He is driving very fast. The territory hurtles by. Fury pounds on the steering wheel with one of his fists: "That's the problem with all you damned Californians, coming up with here with all your—your—*tolerance*! For Christ's sake, IT JUST ISN'T NATURAL!"

• • •

1873. End of October. The original Idaho-Washington Boundary Survey. Not far from the Canadian border, amid

mountains and windfall forests, zero degree temperatures and snow. The survey force must yield. Wrote the surveyor in his field notes: "By this time we were thoroughly convinced that to have remained only a day or two longer in endeavoring to push the work to its completion would have been fatal." Presumably he was speaking about the men.

In an old U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin there is a photo of four men: the 1908 Idaho-Washington Boundary Re-survey party. Each of the men looks like a scraggly-bearded Henry David Thoreau at the end of his life. The men pose standing on a log they have felled. On either side of them is the dense, inscrutable forest. Behind them is the signature of their work, stretching as far as the eye permits: a corridor, fifty feet wide, through the dark and brooding woods. The caption under the photo reads: "A Vista Cut Along Boundary Line." This photo was taken right atop the boundary, no indication given as to which side might be Idaho and which Washington. As far as one can tell, the forest on either side is the same. Only the gash suggests a difference.

The historian suggests that the human sense of space consciousness was generally obscure during early frontier days, but as social institutions became established they served to contain space in the terms of longitude and latitude. The surveys and their maps were tools of these institutions. In deploying our highly specialized technologies, we did perhaps focus our sense of space consciousness, but at the same time we seem to have deployed a very different series of surveys, directed toward the human being, demarcating a more rigid sense of what it means to be a "self." We have mapped out innumerable pairs of territory in binary opposition, with names like: American/Foreigner, White/Non-White, Heterosexual/Homosexual, Male/Female—just to name a few. We have chained out, with elaborate precision, political boundaries not only for the land but for our own bodies, and for the very *lives* we inhabit. Talk about a registry of deeds!

Initializing Idaho. Initializing the self. The witness trees are blazed, the vista cuts are made. Given time, the wounds heal, the blazes on the trees are overgrown, the markers are toppled in the dark re-expression of the woods. Once again the extravagant life might be pursued, out of bounds. Until the next survey is extended.

John P. O'Grady is the author of *Pilgrims to the Wild* (University of Utah Press), a study of several American writers who have responded well to the wild. He is a professor of English at Boise State University in Idaho.

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Drue Fergison

Elephant Hunt

In the days before I knew
the sad dangers of snow
and how much the brightness of snow
could blind
we hiked up Mount Royal
in one Easter storm
hunting for elephants
trying so hard to believe it
that we made it true.

Buried branches and stones became
the outlines of trunk and legs
on the huge and patient beast—
My, he was silent and slow and white
as huge and patient and silent and white
I see now
as (was) your love for me
as slow as my own white-blinded awareness.

Our quiet playful game:
fantasy and emblem
of something else,
our silent secret in the snow.

Did you know before you ever invited
all of us who lived there
that no one else would go
but me?

I was blinded then
by the silence of the snow
but I see now its clear bright light
and hear its wild roar.

You were the elephant
and we are the snow—
the white elephant snow.

How to Love the Moon

You must look only at the moment
before turning away,
eyes stinging in iced air,
her pale brilliance
glowing far and small
on indigo
and perched
within reach
behind black, bare branches.

Can you hold her
longer than the smell
of crushed leaves?

The Tear

Now I've reclaimed my letter
back from you.
It's mine, again,
unplanned but true
and I am glad I didn't
make that photocopy,
glad for my bad memory
which had you bring
my missive along
for reference,
glad
at its open-hearted
empty envelope:
This only is changed.

I want to kiss the rough edges
of its lips
where your fingers ripped it open
and it is torn and lumped—
mountained peaks and valleys of
paper at its orifice
what a range
cascades of loss and pain.

(I wish you would rip me up
the way you did my envelope.
But then, I guess,
you did.)

I see the exact spot where
your slender index finger must have
entered the corner gap,
bending it
above my return address
to open it
and slice it through,
knifing it like a letter opener.

The mountained rip is largest here
at the beginning.
I would give anything to know
if this means eagerness or haste.

I wish this mountain could tell me
if you do love me
at least.

Drue Fergison is finishing a dissertation in musicology on Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* at Duke University. She lives in Paris and Durham, North Carolina.

Not Deep Apart

John Clark

Review of:

George Sessions, ed. *Deep Ecology for the 21st Century.* Boston: Shambhala 1995. 488pp. No index. $20 paperback.

Redefining Deep Ecology

George Sessions' new collection *Deep Ecology for the 21st Century* is essential reading for anyone interested in contemporary ecological thought. The inspiration for the book is made clear in the preface, and its general perspective is unquestionably the only one compatible with sanity at this point in the history of the earth. We desperately need an ecological orientation that will help guide us through this crisis of the earth. The articles collected in this work contribute to the formulation of that needed ecological perspective, and help address theoretically the key issue of the destruction of the diversity of the biosphere resulting from human activity.

This earth-centered focus is one of the most obvious strengths of the book. But it has many others, not the least of which is that the selections are much more readable than those found in most of the recent ecophilosophy and environmental ethics collections. In addition, the work contains many valuable articles that either have not been widely reprinted or are newly published. Furthermore, the book will be very useful for tracing the development of deep ecology over the decade since Devall and Sessions' *Deep Ecology: Living as if Nature Mattered* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith Books 1985) was published, and for examining the broad scope of inquiry that has emerged within the movement. George Sessions has made a major contribution as a historian and interpreter of ecological thought beginning with his groundbreaking work with the *Ecophilosophy* newsletter in the late 1970s and continuing through the present work. This collection is destined to become a basic text in contemporary ecophilosophy and fully deserves such a place in the literature.

On the other hand, the book has significant weaknesses in a number of areas. There is a lack of serious consideration of many of the challenges to deep ecology posed by ecofeminism, social ecology, socialist ecology and other contemporary ecophilosophies. There are only a few articles that probe deeply into the social, political and economic context of ecological issues. And, despite the inclusion of many good general discussions, there are few examples of carefully-developed philosophical analysis, and, perhaps surprisingly, few deep explorations of ecological spirituality, even though some deep ecologists have made important contributions in this area. It is also striking that the collection is very male, Western and (with one large Norwegian exception) Anglo-American. Perhaps this is inevitable, given the editor's definition of "deep ecology," and "the new environmentalism." However, much of the content of the work suggests that a much broader and perhaps deeper approach might have been taken.

Deep Ecology for the 21st Century reflects a development, diversification, and growing sophistication in the deep ecology literature, and this is a promising sign for ecophilosophy. I will therefore focus first on some of the excellent material in the collection that deserves a wide audience. The volume also unfortunately contains a number of rather uninspired and, to be honest, rather shallow contributions, about which I will have little to say. What does require some critical comment is the sectarianism from which much of the introductory material and several of the articles suffer, and which tends to perpetuate the *malaise* to which radical ecology has succumbed. I reserve most of my comments on this topic for the latter part of my review.

How Wide Is Deep Ecology?

It is significant that the first part of the book, "What is Deep Ecology?" begins with Thomas Berry's important essay on "The Viable Human." Berry is a significant figure in contemporary ecophilosophy not only because of his impressive grounding in both Western religious and philosophical traditions and in Asian thought, but also for his broadly synthesizing perspective on contemporary ecophilosophical themes. On the one hand, his outlook is uncompromisingly earth-centered (geocentric) and focuses on the present ecological crisis as a turning point in the history of the earth. On the other hand, his approach is also creation-centered and evolutionary, and focuses very strongly on the unique significance of the human phenomenon in the universe story. Berry is acutely aware of the forces that lead humanity into the path of destructiveness of the natural world. These he calls (after the most ancient enduring form of domination) "the four basic patriarchal oppressions" of "rulers over people, men over women, possessors over nonpossessors, and humans over nature." (p. 14) If these forms of domination can be overcome, the evolving, self-expressing universe will be allowed to "reflect on and celebrate itself in conscious self-awareness" and to "find a unique fulfillment" in the form of "the viable human." (p. 18) The inclusion of an article with such statements at the outset of this book should definitively dispel any suspicions of "anti-humanism" at the core of deep ecology—though certainly not all deep ecologists have followed Berry's truly deep exploration of the spiritual vocation of humanity in the earth and universe stories. Greater attention to Thomas Berry's account of these stories would do much to deepen deep ecology—or any other ecophilosophy.

In the next article, Fritjof Capra discusses the "New Paradigm" and makes some useful though familiar distinctions between the principles of deep ecology and those of the old "mechanistic worldview." Yet his discussion perpetuates certain problems endemic to the deep ecology literature. His sweeping generalizations about a "new vision" that accords with Eastern spiritual traditions, Christian mysticism and Native American traditions seems to reduce these complex, highly diverse and sometimes even mutually contradictory outlooks to an amorphous collection of "precursors" of a contemporary Western ecophilosophy. Ironically, the views mentioned are in a sense idealized by such an approach while they are in at the same time trivialized by not being taken on their own terms. Furthermore, Capra's rather unambiguous appropriation of systems theory for ecological thought gives inadequate attention to the reductionist, objectifying aspects of this perspective.

The Roots of Deep Ecology

The second part of the book focuses on "The Historical Roots of Deep Ecology." The opening article, Del Ivan Janik's "Environmental Consciousness in Modern Literature" is a very useful introduction to ecological themes in Lawrence, Huxley, Jeffers and Snyder. While the latter two writers have gotten much attention from contemporary ecologists, Janik makes a convincing case for reconsidering the ecological dimensions of the former ones also.

Another excellent choice for inclusion is the selection from Paul Shepard's *The Subversive Science*. This work, originally published in 1969, is still strikingly powerful in its radicality and profundity. If Shepard's presentation of the ecological perspective as a "way of seeing," a "wisdom," and as a "true *cultus*," (p. 139) or complete way of life, had been given more consideration over the past quarter-century, we might have developed a much more vigorous and transformative ecology movement than the one that actually exists. Another prophetic essay written in the same year was Gary Snyder's "Four Changes," reprinted here with a 1995 postscript. The essay is well worth rereading today for its uncompromising call for a break with the the dominant system of technology, production and consumption, and even more for its vision of "a new ecologically-sensitive, harmony-oriented wild-minded scientific-spiritual culture." (p. 147) The essentials of Snyder's ideas of reinhabitation and bioregional culture are all here.

Arne Naess's 1973 article in which he originally distinguished between "The Shallow and the Deep, Long-range Ecology Movements" is also usefully reprinted. While Naess has revised and interpreted more carefully some of the ideas in the article, it is still of considerable historical importance. It discusses the principle of "biospherical egalitarianism," later to reemerge as "biocentrism," concepts that were never subjected to adequate critical examination by deep ecologists before they were quietly superseded by "ecocentrism." In addition, the article's stress on "anti-class posture" and "local economy and decentralization" reminds us that the supposed opposition between deep and social ecology was never as clear as it later seemed, and that reasoned discussion of such issues as early as 1973 (actually, the article was based on a conference presentation in 1972) might have led to a mutually beneficial interaction, rather than to a "debate"that often trivialized and obscured issues that are still in need of exploration.

Most of the burden of uncovering the roots of deep ecology is borne by George Sessions' "Ecocentrism and the Anthropocentric Detour." It is perhaps unfair to stress the limitations of this essay, since any twenty-page "summary of the historical development of human/Nature views in Western culture, together with an account of the rise of environmentalism and ecophilosophy" will be (to say the least) selective. Sessions presents a concise summary of the traditional anthropocentric view, the rise of the modern "dominant paradigm," and various philosophical assaults on it from Spinoza to the present. In addition, much of the history of nineteenth and twentieth century (mainly American) environmentalism is usefully outlined. I would have liked to have seen a bit more historical contextualization of developments in the history of ideas, and contemporary ecophilosophy might not have been identified so closely with deep ecology. The discussion of ecological movements is also rather one-sided, with the Sierra Club getting adequate attention, for example, while the international Green Movement, in particular, and non-American developments in general, are neglected. Nevertheless, the article is reasonably comprehensive for an introductory essay.

Naess's Ecosophy

Part Three of the book deals with "Arne Naess on Deep Ecology and Ecosophy." Since the name of Arne Naess is almost synonymous with deep ecology, it is appropriate that one of the six sections of the book should be devoted to his work. On the other hand, Sessions' decision to take thirteen of the thirty-nine selections in the entire book from Naess does seem rather excessive, if the need for breadth and diversity within deep ecology defended by Naess himself is accepted. In any case, the Naess selections give us a good opportunity to see the strengths and weaknesses in Naess's approach: his imaginativeness and generosity of thought on the one hand; and his propensity to leave generalities and ambiguities undeveloped and untheorized on the other.

Certain questions concerning Naess's ecophilosophy emerge in Sessions' introductory remarks. He notes that some points from Naess's 1973 article were dropped in the "1984 Deep Ecology Platform," which is taken as definitive for the movement. [Despite Naess's continual tinkerings with the Platform—Every time he restates it he changes a few points here and there. Too bad for the dogmatists!] What is eliminated are not only some philosophically controversial points, such as the doctrine of internal relations and "biocentric egalitarianism," but also (as has been mentioned) proposals related to social change, such as decentralism, local autonomy, and "anti-class social posture." (p. 190) Sessions notes that the later principle is "not specifically an *ecological* issue," thus committing himself to the kind of split between ecological and social issues that he finds objectionable in others (as we will see in the second part of this discussion). Furthermore, he states that while biocentric egalitarianism is not considered a fundamental principle for deep ecologists, Naess holds that "all individuals, of whatever species, have the *same* right to to live." (p. 191) What is not clear is the implications of this "sameness" of right. Is it another way of stating "equal right," another way of saying "some vague kind of right" (which would mean little in practice other than a feeling

of "too bad!" as we step on some hapless "individual"), or does it have some other specific meaning? The stock answer concerning conflict between rights is that killing is justified for self-preservation or to fulfill "vital needs." Yet many moral theories would question whether any single individual could ever be morally justified in destroying *multitudes* of other individuals with an equal right to live, even on behalf of self-preservation or fulfilling vital needs. It seems that if moral consideration, with a "same" right to life, is recognized for members of all species, human beings will be put in a morally difficult position (to say the very least).

The articles in Part Three further clarify Naess's position, while leaving some important questions without clear answers. The first article is a biographical piece by Richard Langlais, "Living in the World: Mountain Humility, Great Humility." This brief tribute provides much insight into Naess's sensibilities, and transforms his almost-mythical mountain home Tvergastein into a more concrete reality. Somehow Naess's "Deepness of Questions and the Deep Ecology Movement" doesn't seem all that deep, but it certainly gives the impression that Arne Naess is a very good philosophy teacher—a wise and learned man who is capable of waking students up with a barrage of questioning, rather than immediately dispensing his own hard-earned truths.

Some critics of deep ecology will be shocked to find in Naess's previously unpublished "The Deep Ecology 'Eight Points' Revisited" that not only does the platform *not* imply any kind of "nature mysticism," but that it is not even essential that deep ecology supporters hold any kind of "all things hang together" principle. (pp. 214-15) A number of other important ideas are developed helpfully in this article.

In "Equality, Sameness, and Rights," Naess seeks to clarify his sketchy statements concerning rights of individual members of species. Unfortunately, some of the problems mentioned above seem to recur in the reformulation. He asserts that he acknowledges the "equal right" of various plant species "to live and blossom"—a right "that is the same for all." Yet he notes that when forced to choose, he "unhesitatingly and deliberately" steps on the *Salix herbacea* rather than "the small, more overwhelmingly beautiful and rarer *Gentiana nivalis*." (p. 223) Yet it would be hard to imagine what would indicate recognition of a greater right to life for one organism than another more than the decision to destroy one in preference to the other. Perhaps the entire language of rights should be dispensed with in ecological thought, or at least clearly be explained as a convenient translation of more ecological categories (good, value, telos, etc.) But if the language of rights is used in the way Naess does, it is difficult to see how a ranking of rights or right-bearers is not implied.

Naess's "Self-Realization: An Ecological Approach to Being in the World" develops some aspects of his basic concept of self-realization. I think that Naess is correct in seeing "environmental" (perhaps more accurately, "ecological") ontology as much more important than environmental ethics for the ecological movement. His comments are suggestive concerning the idea of the "ecological self." However, to define such a self as "that with which [a] person identifies" (p.227) raises important questions. Such a definition seems to make the ecological self dependent too much on subjective identification, as opposed to the sort of ontological identity that Naess is presumably seeking. The social ecological conception of the self as a unity-in-diversity within larger unities-in-diversity might be helpful here in exploring the *grounds* of identification. In addition, the ecofeminist critique of deep ecologists' conception of an expanded self, which asks whether an idealized "identification" too easily takes the place of the articulation of *concrete structures of relatedness*, requires a serious response, which is nowhere to be found in this volume. This is true despite the fact that some deep ecologists have done important work on the subject.

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Deep Trenches

Part Four, on "Deep Ecology and Ecofeminism, Social Ecology, The Greens, and the New Age" is the briefest and by far the weakest section of the book. Sessions' introduction (especially) and Warwick Fox's "The Deep Ecology-Ecofeminism Debate and Its Parallels" (to a much lesser degree) mount a rather sectarian defense of deep ecology against the attacks of various opponents. The view of Sessions, at least, seems to be that deep ecology is fundamentally beyond reproach and that any questions raised about its adequacy

result from either ignorance or malice on the part of critics. Since the question of sectarianism will be addressed in the second part of this discussion I will reserve most of my comments for it. However, this part of the book contains two other articles that deserve mention here.

Sessions' article on "Deep Ecology and the New Age Movement" is certainly correct in its general assessment of that movement. That movement is inherently non-ecological and even anti-ecological, and often moves in a technocratic direction and exalts human control of nature, as Sessions points out very well.. New Age thinkers do not usually claim a fundamentally ecological perspective, but in view of their eclecticism and occasional use of ecological concepts it is useful to show how far they are from ecological thinking. What is particularly welcome is Sessions' endorsement of Morris Berman's critique of certain "New Age cybernetic thinkers" who are often uncritically absorbed into the ecological camp without consideration of the residual mechanism of their views. What these views miss, despite their "holistic" aspects, is the organic and embodied nature of reality.

Unfortunately, Sessions' critique becomes rather muddled when he gets to the topic of the relationship between the New Age and social ecology. Bookchin, a severe *critic* of New Age thinking, appears as one of its *advocates*, and is depicted as characterizing social ecology "as a postmodern *ecological* worldview." (p. 303) The truth is that Bookchin has nothing but hostility for both New Age ideology and postmodernism. A cursory reading of Bookchin's essays from the 1960s would demonstrate the absurdity of the view that his concern was primarily "urban pollution," (p. 303) rather than the larger ecological context of various "environmental problems." And while Bookchin gives a glowing description of tribal cultures in *The Ecology of Freedom* (Palo Alto: Cheshire Books 1982), and finds admirable ecological sensibilities in many of them, Sessions would have him demeaning these societies by assimilating them into "first [i.e., non-human] nature." (p. 303)

In Defense of the Wild

The wild constitutes an inexorable challenge to the reigning civilization founded on control and domination. One of the great contributions of Gary Snyder is to have made the wild, in its various natural, cultural and spiritual aspects, a central concern for contemporary ecological thought. Part Five of the book, on "Wilderness, the Wild, and Conservation Biology" is one of its strongest sections. This is not surprising, considering the influence of figures like Thoreau and Snyder on deep ecology, and in view of the fact that deep ecologists have devoted much more theoretical attention (and related their practice much more) to wilderness than have other radical ecologists. It seems to me that this is one area in which social ecologists, ecofeminists and other ecophilosophers could benefit greatly from constructive dialogue with deep ecologists.

All the articles in this section are valuable and stimulating. Jack Turner's "In Wildness is the Preservation of the World" is a good introduction not only to what Thoreau meant by this dictum, but to the problem of maintaining wildness in the contemporary world, or even in contemporary wilderness. While many speak in vague terms of wilderness, Turner poses some disturbing questions: "How wild is our wilderness, and how wild is our experience there?" The crucial difference between concern for wilderness preservation and valuing the experience of wildness is at the heart of this article. Thomas Birch's "The Incarceration of Wildness: Wilder-ness Areas as Prisons" is not only one of the best articles in this book but one of the best ecological essays I have ever read. Birch challenges the ideological underpinnings of most ways of conceiving of wilderness and protecting it, and offers some brilliant reflections on the relation between wildness and otherness. He also includes practically suggestive ideas about how to return the wild to the center of our existence. Sessions' "Ecocentrism, Wilderness, and Global Ecosystem Protection" is one of his most important contributions to the collection. He presents good background material on the development of the wilderness preservation movement, discusses the grounding of wilderness protection (and expansion) in conservation biology, and, finally shows the practicality of seemingly radical proposals by Paul Shepherd, Arne Naess, Dave Foreman and others.

The fundamental nature of the issues raised in these articles cannot be overemphasized. They point to the two senses in which the wild is necessary for "the preservation of the world." It is essential biologically to the world as the complex, delicately interrelated biospheric web of life. And it is essential spiritually to the world as that realm of free, creative self-expression through which humanity makes its unique contribution to the diversity of nature.

I find the culmination of the book to be the next to last article, Gary Snyder's "The Rediscovery of Turtle Island." This essay does state strongly and eloquently some of the important truths about which Snyder often reminds us: "To restore the land one must live and work in place. The place will welcome whomever approaches it with respect and attention. To work in a place is to bond to a place: people who work together in a place become a community, and a community, in time, grows a culture. To restore the wild is to restore culture." (p. 462)

It is essential that we continue to ecophilosophize, debate ecological theory and tactics, speculate about the future of humanity and the earth, and imagine ecological utopias and ecological catastrophes. Yet unless we get down to that "real work" of restoring the land—of regenerating ourselves, our cultures and the earth—there will be little hope to sustain us, and little hope for the earth.

The Strip-Mining of Ideas?

One striking fact that emerges from *Deep Ecology in the 21st Century* is that Arne Naess and George Sessions seem to have quite different conceptions of deep ecology. Sessions tends to interpret it as a distinct ecophilosophy with certain doctrines that are definitive for it, which distinguish it sharply from competing theories. Naess, on the other hand, sees deep ecology as a rather broad movement encompassing a wide range of theoretical positions and even ecophilosophies, and always distinguishes carefully between the *deep ecology movement* and his own "Ecosophy T." If Sessions had applied Naess's wider conception of deep ecology in this work, it might have gained in diversity, and included stronger selections in certain areas.

Many ecofeminists, social ecologists, and others who take issue with certain positions that Sessions sees as basic to

deep ecology would, I believe, have little difficulty accepting all of the points of the deep ecology platform. Their complementary work might have at least received more recognition if not inclusion in this volume. To focus on this broader and more inclusive definition would help remind us that our various ecophilosophies have overlapping aspects, that they are in some ways complementary, and that our presumed goal is better ecological theory and practice rather than successful sectarian defense of the tenets our preferred ecophilosophy. A non-sectarian approach does not, of course, mean that we hesitate to express our philosophical views in the strongest of terms, nor that we refrain from careful critique of other views (even as we engage in equally careful self-critique of our own ideas and practice). Rather, it means that we avoid our natural tendency to fall into what I would call "the arrogance of humans with isms."

While the choice of selections in this collection shows some broadening in the concerns of deep ecology, there is at the same time a more limited conception of the field than the one that seemed to guide *Deep Ecology*. The earlier work included quite a lot of material that was not self-consciously labelled "deep ecology," but which was complementary to the concerns of deep ecologists. This included selections from social ecologists and ecofeminists such as Murray Bookchin and Carolyn Merchant. Admittedly, Sessions' increasingly oppositional viewpoint has developed largely in reaction to attacks on deep ecology by some social ecologists and ecofeminists—attacks that have often ranged from insensitive and unsympathetic to mean-spirited and unfair. Yet, the growing sectarianism reflected in such attacks and counterattacks has been detrimental to the general level of discussion in ecophilosophy and it is as unwelcome here as elsewhere.

Perhaps ecological thinkers should reflect a bit on the nature of *ecological scholarship*. Minimally, it implies seeing ideas in context. It means patiently looking at the whole of thought, and noting the connections. It also means seeing ideas as being in a process of development, and recognizing that development has more than one possible path. It means discovering how value (whether in nature or in theories and ideas) is widely dispersed, but yet can be seen to contribute to a larger, developing good. In short, ecological scholarship reflects the respect for the organic, and for unity-in-diversity exhibited by ecological thinking in general. Unfortunately, what we sometimes find instead is scholarship on the model not of ecology but of *mining*. Theorists work their way precariously through "passages" in order to extract "useful material" from them. When one ventures into this "inorganic" realm one is not concerned with the relationship of the material to its surroundings. It is not surprising that the charges and counter-charges of the contending ecologists so often revolve around claims that their ideas are taken out of context. In a sectarian dispute, debate tends to focus either on narrow details or on vague generalities, and possible commonalities and even honest disagreements recede into the background.

Anti-Social (Ecological) Behavior

The most disappointing aspect of this book is not the unfortunate omission of relevant material, but rather the fact that the editor often takes just such a sectarian and defensive approach. Throughout the book, Sessions dismisses questions about deep ecology raised by other ecophilosophies. This is clear as early as the preface, in which criticisms of deep ecology by social ecologists and ecofeminists are reduced to "misrepresentations" that "have resulted in considerable misunderstanding and confusion concerning what Deep Ecology actually is and what it stands for." (p. xiii) It is indeed true that there have been many misrepresentations. For example, while Bookchin has posed some challenging questions, he has also attributed to the movement as a whole views held by only a small minority of deep ecologists. He has also systematically refrained from recognizing the work of deep ecologists who have done the most sophisticated theoretical work or who have explored areas that he sees as important. Yet Bookchin's unsympathetic approach does not justify the parody of his views and social ecology in general presented in Sessions' commentary. In the discussion that follows, I will focus on the this depiction of social ecology by Sessions (and secondarily, by Warwick Fox), since I am most familiar with that theoretical orientation.

Sessions contends that "Bookchin holds that the science of ecology is, for the most part, irrelevant to humans and human society." (pp. 266-67) This statement is not merely incorrect, it is so far from reality as to be almost beyond belief. I am amazed that Sessions could have made hundreds of references to social ecology in his writings while remaining quite so oblivious to what it is about. In one of Bookchin's earliest (February, 1965) important essays, "Ecology and Revolutionary Thought," he introduced the idea that ecology has far-reaching implications for our conception of society and social change, a theme he has developed for almost three decades since that work. The thesis of the article was that the science of ecology "may yet restore and even transcend the liberatory estate of the traditional sciences and philosophies." I find his view of the guiding function and the emancipatory nature of ecology to be highly complementary to Thomas Berry's idea that ecological and cosmological studies might perform an educationally and culturally integrative role analogous to that of the lost liberal art tradition.

Sessions interprets social ecologists as being "concerned primarily with issues of human social justice," implying that somehow this means that they have no central concern for ecological problems. Yet social ecologists believe social and ecological problems to be entirely inseparable, since they hold a dialectical naturalist position that sees human beings *as nature* and social problems *as ecological problems*, as I will discuss further.

Elsewhere, Sessions complains that social ecologists "see ecological problems as essentially *political*." (p. 266) This statement is true, but it does not, as Sessions implies, mean that they see them as any less *ecological*. Any social ecologist must recognize that the destruction of biodiversity on a massive scale is a major *ecological* problem; indeed the problem of the destruction of natural diversity and the growing threat to planetary ecological dynamic balance has always been a central concern of social ecology. However, social ecologists point out that if we want to understand the *basis* for this eco-destruction, we would do well to investigate carefully the operation of the world economy, the policies of nation-states, the nature of Third World poverty, land tenure and economic inequality, the policies of the World Bank, international debt, and many other political and economic questions. It is encouraging that some biodiversity experts like Peter Raven are now presenting exactly such a socia

ecological analysis with a background of scientific sophistication available to few ecophilosophy theorists, and that a few selections in Sessions' own book address such issues.

Sessions misrepresents Bookchin's position badly when he claims that Bookchin proposes that humanity should "direct the Earth's evolutionary processes." (p. 268) Bookchin holds that human beings cannot "direct" (whether "rationally" or "irrationally") processes about which they can have only very limited knowledge. In *The Ecology of Freedom*, he states of these processes that "to assume that science commands this vast nexus of organic and inorganic relationships in all its details is worse than arrogance: it is sheer stupidity," and that "to assume that our knowledge of this complex, richly textured, and perpetually changing natural kaleidoscope of life-forms lends itself to a degree of 'mastery' that allows us free rein in manipulating the biosphere is sheer foolishness."

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Other depictions of Bookchin's ideas seem to reflect not so much a partisan interpretation as a lack of careful scholarship. For example, he claims that Bookchin has a "Marxist approach to environmental issues." (p. xxv) This is, to say the least, a rather serious error, since Bookchin has spent the last three decades presenting an extensive critique of the Marxist view of nature and of attempts to create a Marxist ecology! Indeed, he is scathing in his attacks on all Marxists, including even neo-Marxists and eco-socialists who are not so far in some ways from his own perspective. The coexistence of this explicit anti-Marxism and certain residual Marxist aspects of Bookchin's thought is a good topic for careful analysis. However, this would presuppose a careful study of varieties of Marxism and social ecology, and the ways in which they may overlap.

While Sessions mentions few social ecologists other than Bookchin, those he does recognize are also dismissed. For example, the challenging perspective of the Indian sociologist and historian Ramachandra Guha (a social ecologist in the broad sense) is reduced to "a rather narrow anthropocentric 'social justice' perspective." (p.xvi) Guha contends that Indian nature preserves are based on an elitist model, in view of the fact that they are designed to protect large mammals that are of interest to rich tourists, and because they are often created through displacement of peasants and domesticated animals. Guha expresses exactly the kinds of concerns that Western ecophilosophers need to hear (though Guha—who rather uncritically uses terms like "management" and "sustainability"—has much to learn from deep ecologists also). His analysis is especially enlightening to Western deep ecologists, social ecologists and ecofeminists who make "global" pronouncements relating to fundamental economic, political and cultural issues that have quite different implications depending on which part of the globe is affected.

The Good, the Bad, and the Real

Sessions seems to divide all world views into two categories: the good, ecocentric (or biocentric) ones, and the bad, anthropocentric ones. This division seems to work well as a description of certain philosophies, but the larger world seems a bit more complex than that. For example, many tribal societies, including some that have had quite admirably ecological ways of life, have had views of reality that can only be described as being in some ways anthropocentric. In their cosmologies, the entire order of nature is interpreted on the model of a large extended human family (not surprisingly, it is interpreted *tribally*). Such a view of the universe is very much in accord with ecological principles, since it views reality holistically, and indeed communally. It sees *relationship*, rather than *division*, as fundamental to the structure of the universe. Ecologists can only see such a worldview as exemplary and in many ways (especially *ethically* and *spiritually*) as vastly superior to the "dominant paradigm." But, all this makes it no less anthropocentric.

The Seneca cosmology might be taken as an example. In the Seneca cosmological myth, when the twin creators produce all the things in the world, one twin (Good Mind) creates good and useful plants and animals, while the other (Evil Mind) creates, for example, "poisonous plants and thorns upon bushes." The thorns are certainly bad neither from the viewpoint of the bushes nor from that of the universe. In this detail and in general, the myth is a projection of the social values of the tribe,

which are, in turn, a response to the tribe's bioregionally specific, balanced relationship to the natural world. What is inspiring in the Seneca view is not that it refrains from anthropocentric interpretations, but rather that these interpretations are part of a world-affirming sensibility that exhibits deep respect for nature.

Of course, if anthropocentrism means seeing no intrinsic (or inherent) value in nature outside humans, then such cultures have not been anthropocentric. But there is no valid way of limiting the meaning of the term "anthropocentrism" in this way, and there is no need to make such an attempt. We can analyze the dangers inherent in anthropocentrism without creating a dogma that any vestige of anthropocentrism entails all these dangers, and without creating an illusory ideal of complete transcendence of anthropocentrism.

Furthermore, we can quite easily imagine an anthropocentric society that is not exploitative of nature. Ecophilosophers often argue that although we should encourage everyone to recognize intrinsic value in nature, that we should also point out other values in the natural world, including its value for human survival and well-being, in order to help protect the biosphere from destruction. I trust that none of the questions I raise will be taken to imply in any way that ecological thought should give up the critique of anthropocentrism. Indeed, that critique is fundamental to any ecological outlook and must continually become deeper and more theoretically sophisticated. I am in complete agreement with Sessions that anthropocentric ideology is a major obstacle to ecological social transformation. Indeed, analysis of its dangers becomes even more relevant as modern neo-liberalism ("free" market ideology) disguises domination of humans and nature through the ideology of fair exchange between equals and a humanistic respect for the individual.

What I am arguing against is the attempt to establish a non-dialectical, causally privileged position for anthropocentrism in the generation of an exploitative standpoint of humanity toward nature. Anthropocentrism is not the root of all evil, and if the critique of anthropocentrism is to be effective, it must not reduce a complex conception to a simple malediction. Rather, it must remain open to the limits of the concept, it must explore the specific meaning of the phenomenon in various contexts and in relationship to other phenomena, and it must even—to use a dialectical, and I believe, quite ecological formulation—remain open to the truth of the concept while seeking to supersede it in a more comprehensive, holistic outlook.

Philosophic Diversity

The sectarian conflict that has plagued radical ecology has had a number of lamentable consequences. It has often retarded creative interaction and mutual investigation of the theoretical issues that divide ecophilosophers, as careful analysis and theoretical inquiry have been replaced by superficial polemic. In addition, the proponents of various ecophilosophies have sometimes hesitated to subject their own views to adequate critique as they focus their energies on defending their theories against the philosophical "competition." Finally, and most importantly, the preoccupation with sectarian disputes by some of the most thoughtful and engaged of contemporary ecological theorists has diverted energies from the central tasks for all committed ecologists.

These tasks include the theoretical analysis and critique of the institutions and ideologies that are destroying the integrity of the biosphere, and the creation of an imaginative philosophical vision of a regenerated ecological self, community and planet. *Deep Ecology in the 21st Century* contributes much to the pursuit of these goals. It will contribute even more as its ideas are related to the complementary insights of other ecophilosophies.

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Opportunity To Build

Amy Lee Knisley

Review Of:

Robert Mugerauer, *Interpretations on Behalf of Place: Environmental Displacements and Alternative Responses*. Albany: SUNY Press, 1994. 237 pp. $18.95 paperback.

ROBERT MUGERAUER ENVISIONS A FUTURE IN WHICH "DESIGNers, architects, and planners are working toward sensitivity to local place and genuine dwelling, [allowing] the harmonious relationships of the...building design to [its] historical, natural, and cultural environments" (183). He contrasts the rhythmic, weaving dynamic emergent from continental philosophy with the "*march* of reason which had triumphantly paraded, with scarcely a pause or obstacle, across the globe, down the royal road from ancient Greek logic and military formations, through modernity's renaissance and enlightenment with their scientific, mechanical and political conquests, to today's postmodern cybernetic and logistical technology" (10). Thus arrives a fundamental opposition in his book, between the so-called "continental" and "analytic" streams of western philosophy.

It is the conversation within continental thought that Mugerauer presents as a "dance;" he closes the first chapter by suggesting that we read his book as a "guide to the latest dance steps," and that we try it out to see how it suits us. We are invited, in language whose poetic boldness is not repeated throughout the book, to share in the life of this work with its author.

Upon first reading the opening chapter seems a bit too adventuresome. Can we really approach reading an admittedly theoretical work that focuses on some particularly dense and abstruse philosophy, with the end in view of applying it to the complex practices of architecture and planning, in the personally engaged, playful, dancing manner suggested? This reader had her doubts. However, upon completing the book and rereading the first chapter, I was able in hindsight to reconstruct my reading as the sort of experience the author hoped for. And perhaps this reconstructive understanding was exactly what Mugerauer expected.

The rest of part I "retraces the dance" and comprises four chapters, one each dedicated to Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Mircea Eliade and Martin Heidegger. Mugerauer casts Foucault and Derrida as thinkers who "elaborate self-critical strategies to continue to expose cultural misunderstandings and to utilize partial views and multiple excursions *without allowing these to become new foundations or grounding systems*" (12, emphasis added). Foucault's insights into power relations and how they are instrumental in our architectural decisions are especially intriguing. "Culture," in Mugerauer's reading of Foucault, "can be understood as the historical transformations and displacements of dominion" (16). Built structures create and manipulate spaces within which people live and work. The systems of inclusions and exclusions within those spaces exercise a certain power.

Mugerauer is clearly disturbed by modern architectural trends, finding in them a growing tendency to "displace subjects," or to make people feel uncomfortable and disoriented, alienated from each other and from the natural world. "Built space," which includes buildings, parks, roads and so forth, has become so technified and modular (broken into parts) that it *negates and overwhelms* natural environments, rather than *blending into and complementing* them. That such environmentally hostile built space doesn't serve people well is hardly surprising, on Mugerauer's view. He conceives of this historically; architecture and planning have not always and everywhere functioned to stifle human and environmental well-being, so we should unlearn some modern lessons and revive more seasoned ways of building, adapting them to current and future needs. Mugerauer's project is explicitly *constructive*. He is deeply sensitive to criticism directed at Derrida and other critics of the western philosophical mainstream: that they are as guilty of murder in the name of dissection as the analytic tradition they oppose, differing only in the method of execution.

The "deconstructive" work of continental thought debunks prevailing theoretic commitments to the knowability of the world, to the existence of a static and definable human nature, to the reality of concepts like "truth" and "justice." And it stops at that—indeed this is just the point of deconstruction—it reveals that there is no "there" there, that we've been operating under a comfortable illusion, and must submit to the liberating discomfort of seeing through it all. Beyond the liberation from traditional modes of thought (certainly no small feat), however, strict deconstruction offers little. Hence much deconstructive theory seems fashionably nihilistic and standoffish; too self-involved to deign any indication of *what to do*, now that we've seen through the lies of traditional metaphysics. Mugerauer clearly intends to advance his own project beyond the reach of such criticism.

Deconstructionist banishment of the quests for meaning and truth cannot be sustained; they return slinking through the back door or sauntering through the front. Mircea Eliade introduces a confidence into the dance/discourse; he has a vision of humanity's restoration to a fulfilled and unalienated state. Based on his work in the phenomenology of religions, Eliade broadly divides human life into two categories: sacred and profane. "Sacred" action and speech manifests relationship with a reality which transcends the vicissitudes of history, and to which *Homo Sapiens* has access by nature. As myth has been

driven from our social structures, access to the sacred has been severely diminished. I am reminded how Dostoevsky saw this clearly in 19th century Russia, evident in Father Paissy's advice to young Alyosha, as the latter prepares to depart the monastery:

> "Remember, young man, unceasingly," Father Paissy began directly, without any preamble, "that the science of this world, having united itself into a great force, has, especially in the past century, examined everything heavenly that has been bequeathed to us in sacred books, and, after hard analysis, the learned ones of this world have absolutely nothing left of what was once holy. But they have examined parts and missed the whole, and their blindness is even worthy of wonder."[1]

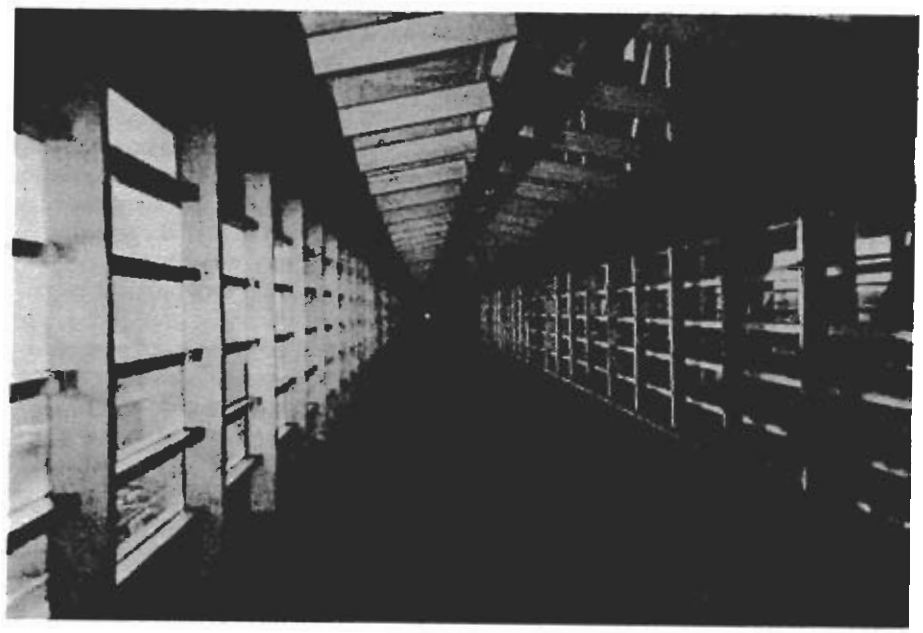
It is the tendency to *fragmentation*, to miss the whole in the parts, of modern life and its built space that Mugerauer targets as his constructive vision develops. In our quest to understand the *parts* of our world and how to manipulate them, we have lost a feel for the whole and for how to integrate ourselves into that whole. Eliade laments the death of myth and holds that "through mythic symbols, a culture is able to relate our lives to the structure of the cosmos" (58); hence the goal becomes a renewal of spiritual and religious sensibilities through our built space, thereby regaining a fundamental orientation as humans in the universe.

Such an approach to building a space for ourselves presumes that we inhabit a *divine* whole whose own nature is manifest, and into which we *must* integrate. A pleasing vision perhaps, but living and building such that we consistently invoke "the sacred" is hardly achievable on any scale in western culture. It rejects much modern secularity and technology, and Mugerauer recognizes the reactionary, antiprogressive character of such a route. Hence he turns to the more "centrist" and progressive Heidegger, who embraced technology in his own way, as the continental thinker most likely to help us understand how built space needs to change.

Like Eliade, Heidegger suggests that we moderns have obscured the world's nature, and our own, and proposed that "letting go of the metaphysical tradition and method, and the dictates of our own will, prepares us to give ourselves up to what must be questioned and thought. Such releasement enables us to become open to hidden meanings" (76). This is achieved through "originary thinking," which reveals the manner in which we humans, mortal animals equipped with sensitivity to the super-natural, *belong* in the universe. Humans provide the "sites or occasions where the four fundamental dimensions of reality—earth, heavens, mortals, and the divine—concretely gather together into a world" (68), and originary thought emerges from self-recognition as such a "site" or "occasion." Clearly this is highly abstract stuff, and again Mugerauer presses it into interpretive service, considering the example of rural Swiss dwellings, which "in their own place within the landscape and its congruent ways of life and language, are sites for the uniquely Swiss gathering together of the four dimensions of the world" (78).

Designs are intended to accommodate a specific, rural mode of living, in a specific sort of landscape, in stark contrast to the tract housing so common in the U.S. today, which presupposes a blank landscape across which to spread innumerable undifferentiated houses. Homes include a "corner set aside for the holy and the memory of the dead," (89), presenting an openness to the divine. The materials, stone or wood, are "given" and designs incorporate their natural virtues for building. Mugerauer's reflections upon materials are an important key to the rest of the book, which is devoted to instruction in built space that reveals Heideggerian originary thinking. He attributes the diversity of Swiss vernacular dwellings, in part, to the diversity of material causes.

> In one place, softwood is given; in another, hardwood. Each allows and limits what can be done if their nature is acknowledged and respected. Softwoods, commonly in the form of long tree trunks made into logs, seem to call for being laid lengthwise on the ground, so that a wall of stacked horizontal elements rises up. The dense, stronger hardwood stands upright and bears huge loads, even at angles. The tree itself shows this, the massive girth, height and load of its limb going off diagonally, even horizontally, from the trunk. The house made of such woods, not surprisingly, in response to its materials, displays upright forms and diagonal dynamics. (79)



David Rothenberg

Setting aside for a moment logistical difficulties entailed by any revolutionary social program, there is a fundamental philosophical vagueness here; and as Mugerauer has made philosophy central to his program, such vagueness ought be addressed. The trees and "surrounding contours," as aspects of land which "present themselves" to those modern, technologically advanced but enlightened humans who might use them, are

already on Mugerauer's view presented as materials, or as the opportunity for a building. That is, Mugerauer accedes to the rather Heideggerian notion that we technologize and humanize the world *just by being in it in the way that we are*, to the extent that softwoods seem to "call for being laid lengthwise," almost before they call for being trees!

A puzzle emerges—it is one thing to approach the making of built space such that one is sensitive to the natural environment, minimizing poor use of an opportunity to build; it is another to *distinguish* an *opportunity* for built space from a *non-opportunity*. The latter entails the ability to perceive a non-opportunity when one sees it. Within Mugerauer's vision, we find no instruction for perceiving the *absence* of the opportunity to build, apart from the tough logistics of, say, perpendicular cliffs or rushing rivers. Yet even those are suspect to being built upon, from the imposition of hydroelectric dams across mighty rivers, to the drilling and placement of bolts to establish rock-climbing routes on sheer rock faces. What is it like, as Heideggerian beings-in-the-world, to conceive of the trees as *trees*, rather than as future logs, and the contoured hillside as deep in the grips of its own "narrative," rather than as about to become part of our own? We certainly can and do incorporate "empty space" into our designs, but such space is nonetheless *part of* the design.

Mugerauer addresses the "world as reservoir" as an aspect of modern life, but his suggestion is not that we "make less" of the world, necessarily, but that we *allow the world to guide* us in our making of it. But perhaps we *should* be making less of the world. My query is really a matter of philosophy—on what grounds, in Mugerauer's vision, do I or any other potential maker of built space decline to conceive of a, any landscape, as the possibility for building materials and sites, however much my design is responsive to the natures of those materials? Is there no point at which this responsiveness requires that I *not* design? How do we reach than point, in this vision?

It may seem unimportant, in light of several possibilities: 1) most individuals clearly *are* capable of such perception (what visitor to the Cascade mountains in springtime would consider laying down a road?), 2) it isn't obviously important that such perception is really important for or required of humans, and 3) Mugerauer's book is about making built space that avoids environmental and human displacement, not about knowing when not to. #1 is an empirical matter, and although many folks do have a deep appreciation for wild, unbuilt nature, that is often paired with a remarkable tolerance for intrusions into such nature, and a far greater tendency to transform nature into culture by the imposition of building, than the reverse (the New Jersey Institute of Technology community was thoroughly astounded by the school's recent decision to dig up a parking lot and put in a lawn). It is easier for us to imagine what an open field might be like with a house or barn built on it, than what a landscape would be like were the farm taken away, or what it was like before the farm arose. But, turning to #2, is this capacity important for us? Does its absence warrant lament? Our proclivity for seeing in the world the *opportunity to build* is a double-edged gift. It allows us to flourish as a species, yet its unchecked implementation lies at the root of many localized ecological crises that currently plague us, and which may yet grow to global proportions (if they have not already, as some argue). If we have here a matter of degree, then the importance of setting limits upon that conceptual capacity is clear; and one way to set limits is to cultivate an opposing kind of perception, in the way that physical therapists attempt to offset overdevelopment of some muscle groups with the strengthening of others.

Our deep tendency to perceive *opportunity*, rather than its lack, in the world, belies a conceptual homocentricity that, given our mental and spiritual capacities, ought not limit us in the way and to the extent that it does. We are demonstrably capable, as individuals, of infusing our own points of view with other quite different ones, and in some cases of virtually abandoning our points of view altogether. The ability to do this at the level of encounters with the land seems to me invited by our own specific designation—*Sapiens*—presuming we deserve the title. #3, the issue is central to Mugerauer's project, because he recommends that we begin at the level of thought, and encourages a fundamental change in *how we create our world*. What better tonic to apply than a deep appreciation of opportunities for *not-making*, conceived of positively rather than negatively?

"Just when we feel we are more and more making the world the way we want it to be, just when we are attaining increasing power over the environment and ourselves through our techniques of engineering transformations in things, we also grapple with homelessness" (117). Of Mugerauer's many insights into the modern condition this is perhaps the most poignant, and it highlights the urgency of reviewing how we build. Our ability to "make a home" at any latitude, under the sea and in outer space, has left us dwelling everywhere and truly belonging nowhere, deeply displaced, and strangely homeless. Any innovative work that bends hermeneutical theory to the task of architectural practice is bound to leave a few unanswered questions in its wake.

Ecosophers may be hesitant, thinking architectural theory and 20th century continental philosophy too removed from their main concerns. But remember that nature and culture are locked in an intricate dance of the utmost importance—how we build culture has everything to do with how nature fares. Furthermore, Mugerauer's (perhaps overly-optimistic) intention to address architects and planners certainly avoids the charge of preaching merely to the converted, unhappily applicable to much environmental philosophy. And his commitment to applying philosophy, especially in an arena of such general importance, is most admirable. Consider how much of your experience of the world is mediated by built space, be it the car and roadway, the back porch, or the path through the woods. Mugerauer's *Interpretations* are timely and relevant, for us as individuals interested in living well, and as professionals interested in understanding and protecting the natural world.

Note

[1]Fyodor Dostoevsky. *The Brothers Karamazov*. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, tr. San Francisco: North Point Pr., 1990. The novel was completed in 1880.

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Criticizing the Critics

Steve Chase

Review of:

Charles T. Rubin, *The Green Crusade: Rethinking the Roots of Environmentalism*, New York: Free Press, 1994. 312 pp. Index. $22.95 hardcover.

Somewhere in *The Practice of the Wild*, Gary Snyder says that "books are our grandparents." The truth of this came home to me while reading Charles Rubin's critical survey of modern environmentalism's popularizers. In his book, Rubin takes a close look at such notable figures as Rachel Carson, Barry Commoner, Donella Meadows, E.F. Schumacher, Paul Ehrlich, Garrett Hardin, Arne Naess, and Paul Shepard. Over the last twenty five years, I've read all of these writers and learned from each of them. While I don't always agree with my grandparents, I owe them much. Each of them has affected my thinking. I have certainly not pulled my understanding of the ecological crisis out of thin air. According to Rubin, however, I have been sold a bill of goods based on faulty science, imagined apocalypse, and an utopian extremism that almost invariably gravitates toward global totalitarianism.

Rubin is a first-class debunker. He is looking for weakness, faulty logic, and, sometimes, sinister motives. As an old-fashioned conservative, he is wary of any conscious attempts at sweeping social change. He fears too much will be tossed into the bonfire of history when the general public is inflamed by exaggerated hopes and fears by talented promoters of a political or moral crusade for a better world. He thus sees the discredited Red Menace of Communism now giving way to an increasingly influential Green Menace. As such, Rubin's book takes it s place among a growing body of literature that seeks to wage intellectual warfare against the perceived environmentalist threat to individualism, scientific progress, limited democracy, private property, and free trade. While noting that the more radical environmentalists are still not in a position to implement their long range goals, he argues they have done a remarkable job of manufacturing a widespread public perception of a global environmental crisis—one that begs for emergency measures that lean towards ever greater governmental regulation and planning of our private lives and economies.

It might seem a bit hysterical to worry about the Green Menace in a year when the once marginalized wise use movement has come to power and is overseeing the systematic undermining of the legislative reforms won by the U.S. environmental movement over the last twenty-five years. Yet, it is important to remember that the Republi-cans only received 27% of the eligible electorate's votes in the recent Congressional election and most of these voters had no idea of the content of the Republicans' Contract for America. If recent polls are to be believed, the Green Menace of public opinion is still alive and well. Indeed, as Rubin points out, it is so strong that even environmentalism's critics have to bow down to it rhetorically. Rubin is not content with anti-environmental forces winning political power using the stacked deck of American democracy, he's out to win hearts and minds.

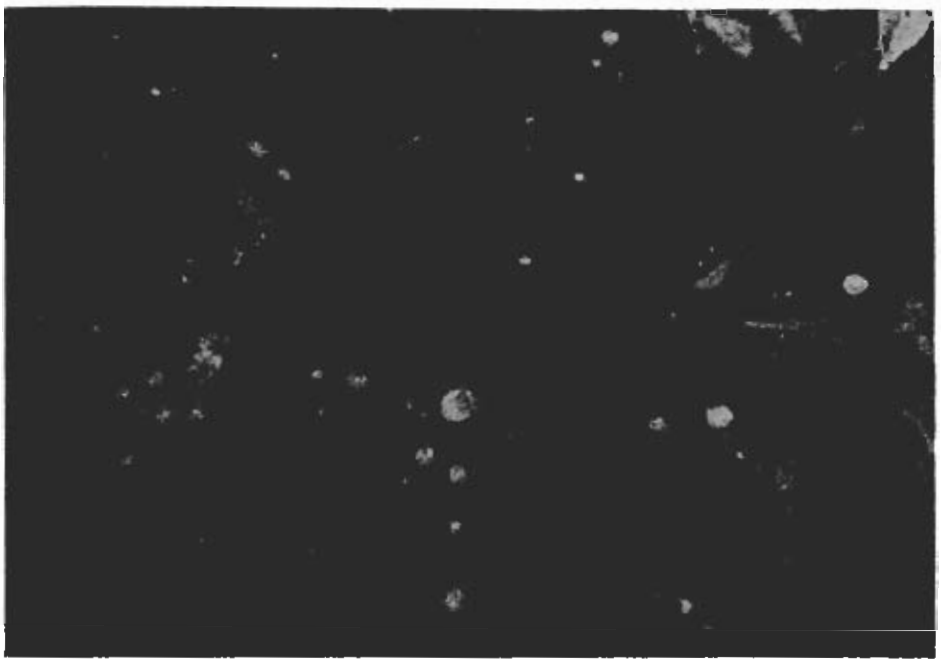
It would be wrong, however, to simply dismiss Rubin's book as unworthy of serious consideration, even with it s deeply conservative bias, its foregone conclusions, and its exaggerated paranoia of totalitarianism. At his worse, he is as guilty of the one-sided, propagandistic, and manipulative polemics that he says are the stock in trade of environmentalists. At his best, he raises some interesting criticisms of the conceptual frameworks used by many influential writers who have championed the cause of environmentalism. It is important, I think, to look critically at the intellectual tools we use to understand and affect the world. Taking the time to pay attention to the criticisms of a hostile debunker of our cause, particularly one as well-read and well-informed as Rubin, is not entirely wasted effort.

For one thing, reading Rubin complicates the all too easy good guy/bad guy, us vs. them, divisions consciously or unconsciously subscribed to by many environmentalists. Historian Stephen Fox is a good example. In his book on the American conservation movement, he uses a tired cowboy movie metaphor, without any apparent sense of irony, to describe environmentalists and their opposition. As he says: "Politics seldom lends itself to such simple morality plays. But environmental issues have usually come down to a stark alignment of white hats and black hats."

To his credit, Rubin does a reasonable job of calling this self-congratulatory assessment into question. He points out, for example, how many environmental proposals evidence the self-serving motives of a particular constituency—in this case the predominantly "upper middle-class membership" of some of the best funded environmental groups in the First World. He certainly makes palpable the horror Paul Ehrlich felt when surrounded by "too many people" so long ago on his way to a first class hotel in New Delhi and he intriguingly relates this to Ehrlich's tendency to make shocking, ultimately false, claims of imminent disaster due to overpopulation. He notes too how Garrett Hardin has advocated draconian measures of Third World population control to protect the possibility of an emotionally satisfying survival for First World nations—the very countries with access to Hardin s metaphorical lifeboat. As Hardin puts it, emotionally satisfying survival would allow those in the First World to "enjoy, if they wish, Cadillacs, symphony orchestras, wooded wilderness—and meat with their meals."

In contrast to Fox, however, Hardin is under no moral-

istic illusions. He readily admits his position is grounded in rank self-interest. While there are still reasonable concerns about the ethical legitimacy of his perceived self-interests and the means he suggests to achieve them, an open, clear-headed debate can at least be had. Indeed, the almost inevitable fights within a body politic over conflicting interests can be more adequately discussed and resolved in an atmosphere of such honesty. This is much less true when environmentalists obscure their own self-interests, claiming a presumed moral high ground, while, in fact, their interests simply conflict with the self-interests of others. This can lead, as Rubin rightly notes, to an unreflective zeal which runs rough shod over the legitimate rights of others.



Jerry DeMarco

While Rubin doesn't mention it, he could have easily used Eric Katz and Lauren Oechsli's 1993 *Environmental Ethics* article "Moving Beyond Anthro-pocentrism" as a text book case of such moral slight of hand. In their article, the authors pose the significant question, Can an environmentalist defend a policy of preservation in the Amazon rain forest without violating a basic sense of justice? As they note, Third World peasants are regularly told to forgo the benefits of economic development in order to protect rain forest ecosystems whose integrity are increasingly seen as essential to the future sustainability of the industrialized North. How can First World preservationists, the authors ask, claim the moral high ground in such a circumstance?

With striking candor, the Katz and Oechsli offer two possible ways for First World environmentalists to approach this complicated dilemma: 1) undertake the difficult task of pushing the industrialized world to stop impoverishing the Third World through neo-colonialism and "pay for the benefits we will gain from preservation" or 2) reframe the entire debate so that the economic welfare and justice concerns of Third World peoples are rendered "morally irrelevant." In an example of what passes for environmental pragmatism these days, Katz and Oechsli quickly reject the first option as "too optimistic" and spend the rest of their essay trying to harness a nonanthropocentric environmental ethic to the cause of preserving the Amazon rain forest at the expense of impoverished South Americans. Interestingly, they don't argue that their particular "nonanthropocentric instrumentalist" approach is morally right. They simply claim that it is useful in avoiding the otherwise "inescapable problems concerning utility and justice."

There is certainly truth in Rubin's claim that some environmentalists are little more than "nature aristocrats." Yet his critique is ultimately more subtle than this. Unlike many conservative critics of environmentalism, Rubin concedes that many, if not most, environmentalists are motivated by strong moral concerns towards other human beings and the natural world itself. His main argument is that the road to hell is paved with good intentions, particularly when most environmentalists are *a priori* apocalyptics and unreflective, but avid reformers.

The irritating thing is that Rubin assumes that by documenting the extreme rhetoric of some environmentalists he has somehow justified the cornucopian perspective held by the many unreflective and avid defenders of the industrial status quo. It is more than a bit disingenuous to be critical of the "bad science" that justifies catastrophist environmentalists and then uncritically embrace the "reputable science" that justifies a cornucopian propagandist such as Julian Simon. On what firm scientific basis, for example, can Simon repeatedly claim that if present trends continue the world will be "less crowded, less polluted, and more stable ecologically" by the time we hit the year 2000? Yet, Rubin quotes Simon approvingly throughout his book.

Still, even if it is irritating coming from Rubin, it probably behooves us to question the much vaunted predictive capability of doomsday computer simulations that have formed the basis of the Club of Rome s *Limits to Growth* report and its progeny. While Vaclav Smil's book *Global Ecology* provides a much more even-handed and thoughtful critique of the limited utility of computer modeling of such complex phenomena as global environmental change, Rubin makes some good points about uncritically accepting highly speculative scientific reports and methodologies that make sensational splashes in the mass media. As he points out, "the list of environmental crises that weren't could be a long one indeed."

Environmentalists, like most people, probably are too uncritical and gullible about the scientific validity of the information they receive that fits their preexisting biases and too dismissive of counter-evidence that challenges their cherished notions. Environmental scientists are not immune to this dynamic either. A little critical caution can go a long way in avoiding such theoretical problems. This is important because, as Rubin says, with faulty information we can easily end up doing too little or too much. Rubin is likely right too that the

spread of alarmist doomsday scenarios helps sets the stage for an acceptance of centralized global environmental management and bureaucratic social engineering as the only adequate solutions to our perceived problems. This is indeed a dangerous impulse. Rubin, however, apparently cannot imagine multinational corporations administering such a world and using national governments as little more than junior partners.

Rubin further stretches credibility when he cannot distinguish the social democratic perspective of Barry Commoner, or even the jeffersonian notions of grassroots democracy embraced by E.F. Schumacher, from the totalitarian designs of a dictator like Joseph Stalin. He is particularly wide of the mark in his chapter on deep ecology. It is hard, for example, to see creeping global totalitarianism in the bioregional vision embraced by most deep ecologists. Indeed, this vision is based, in no small part, on a philosophical rejection of the managerial and technocratic biases embedded in the underlying assumptions of mainstream environmentalism. In place of a reformed, globally managed industrialism, most deep ecologists support, as Rubin readily admits, a very different vision. They look toward the creation of a world of decentralized regions supporting green communities whose basic features "include small geographic size, population limited enough that members of the community can know on another, direct democracy, economic self-reliance, and small income and wealth differentials." Whether or not such a vision is realistic in the face of today s realities, it is hardly totalitarian in spirit.

Yet, here again, Rubin raises some tough questions that deserve attention, even if you can't take his main conclusions very seriously. He is particularly on the mark, I think, when he questions the realism of expecting that there will be little intercommunity conflict between regions. This is a big problem in the visionary thinking of most bioregionalists, from Gary Snyder to Murray Bookchin. It is a problem because the rise of even a few aggressive societies seeking to augment their communities' carrying capacity through military conquest threatens the entire bioregional project.

Andrew Bard Schmookler notes in *The Parable of the Tribes* that whenever a peaceful community is threatened by an aggressive neighbor it is faced with a very limited set of options—all of which profoundly transform the attacked community s chosen way of life. These choices include territorial withdrawal, destruction, assimilation, or imitation of the aggressor's power-maximizing innovations as a means of self-defense. The tragic irony here is that the very act of preparing for military self-defense can undermine egalitarian and sustainable cultures. In such a situation, the reign of power will once again begin to spread like a contagion and undermine the very foundations of bioregionalism.

Many deep ecology theorists ignore this problem or paper it over with wishful thinking about complete unity of purpose through an unspecified, worldwide paradigm shift. Rubin is right to ask the questions:

> If there is no global organization with the power to enforce peace among the bioregions (i.e., an organization that would not itself be bioregional), what will prevent ethnic, tribal, religious, or even national conflict from being as much of a problem in this new world, as it is in ours? Will the people of the future be without jealousy, self-love, honor, excessive pride, love of power, lust, fallibility, misperceptions?

I, for one, doubt it. Either another means of community defense must be developed—one that does not imitate the power-maximizing methods of aggressor communities—or the very vision of bioregionalism needs to be reformulated or abandoned.

Rubin, of course, has no interest in exploring such an alternative defensive capacity. His mission is to debunk all environmentalist visions, including bioregionalism. Yet, there may well be an answer to the puzzle Rubin points to, if we only take his criticism seriously and think about the problem more deeply. Indeed, in the face of this seemingly hopeless dilemma, many people throughout history have explored nonviolent approaches to controlling aggressive power. As nonviolent action theorist (and former research assistant to Arne Naess) Gene Sharp notes, "Not only does this technique lack the centralizing effects of political violence, but nonviolent action appears by its very nature to contribute to the diffusion of effective power throughout the society." If this is so, we might well find the answers we need amidst the theory and practice of Gandhian nonviolent action and the more recent strategic nonviolent perspectives on social revolution and national defense. Such social learning about nonviolent defense could potentially provide a way out of the escalating reign of power that would preclude or erode the viability of bioregional communities.

This then is the ultimate value of reading a book like Rubin's. While it would be folly to accept his conclusions about environmentalism, it is worthwhile to consider his often insightful questions and criticisms about our movement's weaknesses. We should probably make it a habit that, for every ten books we read on environmentalism, we read at least one from an anti-environmental perspective. Such a habit might help keep us honest and on target.

Steve Chase is one of the founding editors of South End Press. He lives in Cambridge, MA.

Give Hope a Chance

Theodore Steinberg

Review Of:

P. J. O'Rourke. *All The Trouble In The World: The Lighter Side of Overpopulation, Famine, Ecological Disaster, Ethnic Hatred, Plague, and Poverty.* New York: Atlantic Monthly, 1994. 341 pp. $22 hardcover.

IN THE BEGINNING THERE IS THE DUST JACKET. FRONT AND center is P. J. O'Rourke, all forty-odd years of him—sporting a wry smile and looking rather dapper in yellow suspenders—balancing a beach ball in the shape of the earth on his chest. He looks like a man without a worry in the world.

He doesn't just *look* it; he is it. "This is a moment of hope in history," he writes. Things have never been better. Mortality is down. Standards of living are up. Pollution is down. Opportunity is well nigh about to engulf us. "History is on a roll, a toot, a bender." Evidently, O'Rourke is from the onward and upward school of historical thought.

Taking us on a whirlwind tour of hell on earth, O'Rourke shows that not only are things not so bad, but that many of the things people on the left think *are* bad, are not. These people are mired in neurotic worridom and for no good reason. To help prove his point, he packs his bag and heads off to examine some of the earth's worst problems: famine in Somalia, strip mines in the Czech Republic, slums in Haiti, slums in Peru, overpopulation in Bangladesh, species extinction in the Amazon, pollution, plague, and the greenhouse effect, among other ills. And yet, despite all this gloom: Don't worry, be happy.

The real problem with the planet is that there are simply too many professional worriers around, people such as Al Gore, Paul Ehrlich, E. J. Hobsbawm, Ben Hamper, Frances FitzGerald, Henry Louis Gates, Kirkpatrick Sale, doomsayers all of them, telling us that there are serious environmental and social troubles out there. All of these people, we are supposed to believe, have elevators that don't go all the way to the top floor. Worse, they seem congenitally incapable of making a logical argument.

O'Rourke is the Bob Grant of political humor. He is crude. He is macho. Sometimes he is even funny. Mostly, however, he is annoying in his attempts to debunk people, many of whom have (or had) a much better grip on the world than he gives them credit for.

Consider his treatment of Thomas Malthus, the founding "father of modern worrying." Malthus's idea that population would increase more rapidly than the means of subsistence, he explains, while "brilliantly self-evident," was also simply wrong. "There happens to be no empirical evidence to support the Malthus theory." Tell that to Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, the renowned French social historian who painstaking showed how the Malthusian crisis played out in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Languedoc. Ironically, in the eighteenth century, just as Malthus was formulating his theory, this French society was liberating itself from the dilemma that bears his name. As Ladurie put it: Malthus "was born too late in a world too new."

Maybe O'Rourke dozed off during history class. Anyway, it is logical reasoning that is supposed to be his strong suit, debunker that he is. Yet there are so many logical problems with this book that you could drive a Mercedes 300 diesel sedan—O'Rourke's preferred vehicle for touring ex-communist nations—through the holes in the argument.

According to O'Rourke, Al Gore—a man he describes as having "the brains of a King Charles spaniel"—is so logically deprived that he assumes something to be true when in fact it requires proof. Thus Gore and others tell us over and over that there is something called a "global ecological crisis," yet the jury is still out on this matter.

In place of such faulty logic, O'Rourke offers the following trenchant analysis of the ecological consequences of modern development. Plain and simple, he admits, "man damages the environment." It is a simple fact. We might call this the "shit happens" argument. But environmental damage isn't nearly as bad as the ecowarriors say it is. The long-term effects of oil spills are not terrible. Nature recovers. Species extinction? Well, what species are we talking about here, asks O'Rourke. Surely we can live without some of them, "shower-curtain mold and windshield bugs," for instance.

But then O'Rourke enters the former Communist bloc and suddenly nature is not recovering as readily as elsewhere. It turns out things are not going so well. In the Czech Republic, for example, there are big problems with erosion. Almost half the nation's forests, he tells us, are damaged. Water quality is a disaster. But hold on a minute: I thought we weren't supposed to be worried about the environment.

Evidently capitalist pollution is far less worrisome than the erstwhile Communist variety, which makes no sense given that he has just spent the better part of a chapter trying to convince readers that they can rest easy on the matter of ecological degradation. If nature is resilient enough to recover its vitality in capitalist countries, presumably it can also do so in places where communism once ruled. Tens of millions of O'Rourkian brain cells, and this thought seems never to have crossed his mind.

Communists are miserable ecologists because they refuse to embrace the free market. And environmentalists too, he notes, are similarly reluctant. Yet "they might as well protest

against tablespoons and yardsticks. Price is just a measurement." The free market is not *just* anything. It is rather one of the most powerful and destructive forces in the history of the world (which is not to say that other social formations are not equally destructive). Nor is the free market a natural phenomenon, as he implies. Nor is it an example of "voluntary human behavior," as he also writes.

I cannot speak for O'Rourke, but nobody has ever called to inquire whether I was willing to engage in the free market. And for that matter, ask someone about to go out and rent an apartment whether they are voluntarily entering into a free market transaction. Are we really supposed to believe that they are participating in a completely voluntary behavior? Exactly what planet has O'Rourke zoomed in from?

Ultimately, O'Rourke is forced to conclude that there are indeed some problems in the world, but nothing a little economic growth can't fix. Allow the market to operate freely, give people the opportunity to make money, let economic growth proceed and you too can live like the North Vietnamese, who he claims are now falling over each other in their rush to embrace capitalism.

If the followers of Ho have gotten the message, then presumably even Al Gore should be able to figure out how to solve the planet's problems. And for those unable to do so, O'Rourke offers the following stunningly original advice: "To rid ourselves of all the trouble in the world we need to make money." What trouble? I thought trouble was some neurotic disorder that plagued people who worry too much.

Moreover, how chasing after the almighty dollar in an attempt to increase economic growth is going to solve ecological problems when, as O'Rourke himself notes, the very same economic growth (amassed during the industrial revolution) created most of these problems in the first place, defies any logical standard I know of.

So maybe there is something to worry about after all, which helps to explain why there are so many worriers around today. Which brings me to why O'Rourke himself is so *unworried* about things: Is he simply in a massive state of denial? Or, is he so wrapped up in his own narcissism that he is utterly incapable of empathizing or experiencing any genuine feelings of concern for others and for the world?

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Two Poems Of Hsü Hsüan (916-991)

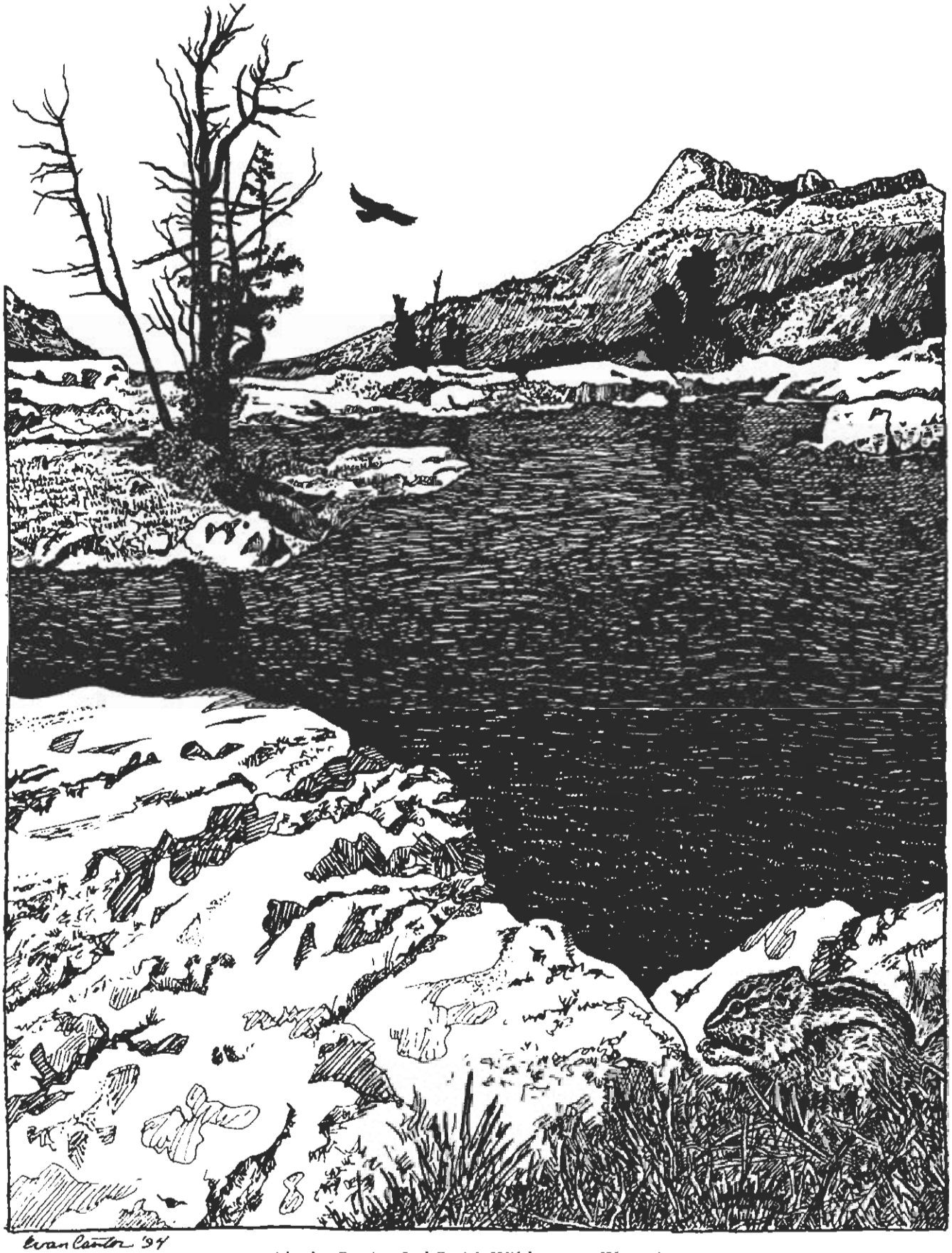
Once Again I Write about the River Gulls of Pai-Lu Island and Present the Poem to Master Chen

Riverside road slopes by the Pai-Lu isle;
Light gulls interlock their wings and fill the sandy shore.
I come out to see off my guest leaving for distant lands;
You heave a sigh by the waiting boat.
Wine-shop flags, fishing boats—neither conflicts;
Moon shadows, reed flowers remain in harmony.
Farewell feast and a song clear up all discord;
The company melts the heart; the birds are not alarmed.
Man in his life never knows the joy of water-birds;
We quietly use our useless names in ladies' chambers.
We walk hand in hand thinking of the same thing;
Away from riches and fame—how quiet it is!
Beyond the horizon a little danger may lurk;
After this I ought to grow a white moustache.
Sir, I beg you not to forget this place once you leave;
But long protect this fluttering, clean, white beauty.

Writing at the Northern Cove of the Fu-Kueie Mountains

This is truly a lonely mountain;
Dark precipice gathers a dim blue hue.
Why must there be so many rocks and streams?
They give the impression of a thousand cliffs.
Who could have guessed a place like this, so near?
Morning and evening the air is excellent.
Shadows on the pool tremble in light breeze,
Rain-washed sky freshens the light in the forest.
I stretch on this fragrant grass resting my chin on my hands;
There is enough here to make me forget worldly cares.
I cannot think of going back,
Let me at last live in quiet and peace.

From *Moments of Rising Mist: A Collection of Sung Landscape Poetry*, tr. Amitendranath Tagore (New York: Grossman, 1973). Reprinted by permission.



Alaska Basin, Jed Smith Wilderness, Wyoming