



Environment & Society



White Horse Press

Full citation:

Plumwood, Val, "Intentional Recognition and Rationality."
Environmental Values 7, no. 4, (1998): 397-421.
<http://www.environmentandsociety.org/node/5757>

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Intentional Recognition and Reductive Rationality: A Response to John Andrews

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ABSTRACT: Recognition of intentionality and the possibility of agency in nonhuman others is a prerequisite for a process of mutual adjustment and dialogue that could replace current reductive and dualistic human-centred theories. John Andrews' article in this issue of *Environmental Values* is criticised for misattributing to me the view that intentionality could be a sole criterion for moral worth – a view which I reject as unacceptably hierarchical and human-centred. To clarify my position, the values and limitations of different kinds of ranking are discussed; and the concept of intentionality is explored, with particular reference to apparently purposeful machines and to Dennett's theory of consciousness.

KEYWORDS: consciousness, dualism, moral extensionism, intentionality, panpsychism, ranking, reductionism

Science fiction stories abound with Terran characters who are unable to recognise the radically different forms mind takes when they visit the alien ecology of outerspace worlds. It seems to me that a more immediate Terran problem is that, under the influence of reductive, human-centred theories and culture, we are unable to recognise the radically and even not-so-radically different forms mind can take with other species right here on earth. And if we are insensitive to this potentiality for different kinds of minds here on earth, we will hardly be sensitive to it when it occurs in the environment of even more ecologically different and alien worlds. Is there any prospect for refining and/or recovering a concept of mind that allows for more recognition of the diversity and diffusion of forms and elements of mind among the earth's species? Or must we, like the sci-fi human, be compelled forever to wander a lonely universe bereft of other species-minds, a fate made doubly tragic to the extent that it is not the result of our own genuine uniqueness but of our own centric limitations and insistence on a reductive framework of self-enclosure ?

I have argued that we could avoid this self-made tragedy through a post-Cartesian reconstruction of mind that allows us to emphasise other marks of mind than the on/off concept of consciousness selected by Descartes precisely

Environmental Values 7 (1998): 397-421
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in order to effect the wholesale exclusion of nonhumans, and that this choice of a more generous framework is not only equally rational but more rational (Plumwood 1993a). A post-Cartesian reconstruction of mind that emphasises intentionality, for example, could enable us to extend our recognition of mindlike qualities much more widely into the world and give better recognition to radical difference. To garner the benefits of such a reconstruction we will need to apply some of the courage and daring of the sci-fi hero in the intellectual area, the courage to accept an older, more inclusive way to talk which we have been told is irrational, and the adventurousness to explore alternatives to the enormously well-entrenched human-centred paradigm of mind that treats it as unique to the human and views earth others in exclusively reductive terms.

Not only can we rationally choose a richer and more generous framework, there are many pressing reasons that make it more rational, especially in the higher order sense of ecological rationality,¹ now to do so. We philosophise from a time which shows all around us the disastrous effects of the desensitisation to nature that is part of the reductive narrative and the dominant human-centred rationality. These include the systematic failures of perception, responsiveness, adaptation and consideration in our relationship with nature which have amply demonstrated the need for rethinking and realignment of that reductive narrative and the relationships its monological rationality has made.² In this monological framework there is no possibility of negotiation or communication because the nonhuman other figures as a kind of rational nullity that cannot be considered as an agent, an independent centre of needs and originator of projects that may demand our respect and constrain our choices. Should we, in the context where we have the possibility of developing a more generous narrative and adaptive dialogical form of rationality that allows more sensitivity to the other, bend and strain our reasoning faculties to keep our options confined to the old reductive model, or should we turn them rather to help us move forward to a larger vision that is fully within our rational powers, to restructure our concepts of nature, reason and of the human so as to open ourselves to fuller kinds of recognition relationship and possibilities of moral imagination?

Adopting the intentional recognition stance is one of a number of counter-hegemonic practices of openness and recognition able to make us aware of agentic and dialogical potentialities of earth others. These are closed off to us in the reductive model that strips intentional qualities from out of nature and hands them back to us as 'our projections'. While the reductive stance aims to minimise the intentionality of earth others in order to allow for the greatest possible measure of exploitation (an explicit aim of much modernist science), the recognition stance aims for the greatest range of sensitivity to earth others, and in that sense to 'maximise' them, as a measure designed to counter the standpoint distortions of human-centred culture. The intentional recognition stance allows us to re-animate nature both as agent in our joint undertakings and as potentially communicative other: we can join a scientist like Humboldt in hearing basalt cones and pumice speak their past to the well-versed observer who stops to



listen.³ We can re-join the poets in hearing the voices of the pines playing with those of the wind, and agree with the forest-caretaker in thinking of these same pines as needing adequate rainfall and as liking to get their feet wet.⁴

Some of the minds we encounter are able to tell us basic ecological things long forgotten or grown oddly unfamiliar, things we need to know about ourselves. They include those of canny animals who gaze back, size you up and tell you who you are – a dangerous predator! – and where you get off. To stay alive and reproduce they have to – and to all but the most reduction-blinded observer patently do – think ahead, try to outsmart you, work out how to escape your reach, and fool you with successful attempts to distract your attention.⁵ The rich intentionality the reductive stance would deny to the world is the ground of the enchantment it retains in many indigenous cultures and in some of the past of our own, the butterfly wing-dust of wonder that modernity stole from us and replaced with the drive for power. Being able to conceive others in intentional terms is important to being open to them as possible communicative, narrative and ethical subjects. Recent ethical theorists have emphasised the importance of narrative for constituting the moral identity of actors and actions;⁶ legitimating intentional description of the non-human sphere is crucial to liberating the narrative moral imagination that ‘activates our capacity for thinking of possible narratives and act descriptions’ (Benhabib 1992: 129) and that can help us configure nature as a realm of others who are independent centres of value and need that demands from us an ethical response. Extending intentionality to the nonhuman is crucial for extending to them a narrative conception of ethics.

Human-centred and reductive models of the other structure out these alternatives, direct and reduce our perceptual possibilities. A hegemonic narrative that structures the world as a human monologue will leave us little chance to perceive the other as another narrative subject, potential communicative partner, and agent.⁷ Intentional description is essential to being able to represent agency, the view of the other as an originator of projects that demand our respect. Since recognition of the other’s agency is in turn central to any kind of negotiation or mutual adjustment process, it is important to cultivate the ability and the conceptual basis for such recognition.⁸ The stance of openness to the nature’s intentionality is important then for developing a whole range of alternatives to the dominant reductive and monological view which has so greatly impoverished our perception of and sensitivity to earth others. Acknowledging the legitimacy of intentional modes of description of the nonhuman world is also necessary if western philosophy is to avoid its implicit eurocentrism in dismissing as ‘primitive’ or less than rational the non-western cultures that often frame the world in thoroughly intentional and expressly narrative, communicative and agentic terms. But when we consider all these factors in our choice of frameworks, it is clear that adopting a stance that allows us to experience an intentionally rich world is not only just as rational as the reductive stance, (the position I argued for in Plumwood 1993a), it is in our present circumstances more rational.



INTENTIONAL PANPSYCHISM: MISREADINGS AND MISCONCEPTIONS

These are the fundamental issues at stake in the conflict between the approach to intentionality and mind/nature dualism I developed in *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature (FMN)* and John Andrews' critique of this approach and defence of traditional assumptions that nonhuman nature is without genuine, non-projected intentionality (*Environmental Values*, this issue). But these issues, complex as they are, are complicated further in Andrews' discussion by a number of serious misunderstandings and mis-readings of my projects and positions. On several issues, including that of dualism and the moral status of machines, Andrews has my position completely wrong, seemingly because he has overlooked large parts of my discussion. The result is that Andrews largely does battle with a fanciful and simplistic stereotype of his own fabrication, which might be an easy target but which bears very little relation to my views and what I have actually written.

Andrews' critique opens with a mis-statement of the major thesis he attributes to me : first, weak panpsychism, which I take (*FMN* 133) to be the thesis that elements of mind (or mindlike qualities)⁹ are widespread in nature and are not confined to the human sphere, is characterised by Andrews on p. 382 as the (completely different) thesis that 'each natural entity has its own distinctive mindlike properties'. This formulation incorrectly identifies weak panpsychism with the quite different thesis of incommensurability (see below), and in this formulation seems to carry the further absurd implication – one I do not state and would certainly reject – that each *individual* natural entity has its own distinctive kind of mind. I argue that weak panpsychism gives a more thorough rethinking of the Cartesian model than strong panpsychism. It revises the mind-body hyper-separation and polarisation of Cartesianism to conceive of mind in more 'diverse, continuous and graduated ways' (*FMN* 133) than in the Cartesian model of mind, in contrast to strong panpsychism, which expands the extent of one of the dualistic partners and holds that mind in a form close to the Cartesian conception of consciousness and experience permeates the natural world.¹⁰

Strong panpsychism tries to treat the world as permeated by mind still conceived according to the on/off Cartesian idea of consciousness (in which case it usually has to find an unacceptably centralised surrogate source for this mind). A further alternative commonly encountered these days revamps the old rationalist 'Great Chain of Being' through a neo-Cartesian mind meritocracy in which humans occupy the extreme end of a graduated experiential spectrum and exhibit mind's fullest and most complete expression. I make a case for rejecting both these approaches, the first on the ground of its tendency to re-centralisation, and the second on the grounds that it involves a moral extensionism which leaves unremedied many of the closure and hegemony problems of the Cartesian model.¹¹ A simple ranking along a single spectrum of 'consciousness' is unable



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to allow for the heterogeneity present in mind, or to represent adequately the different kinds of mindlike qualities and expressions we can discern in nature. It dictates an undesirably and unnecessarily hierarchical view of the world and our relations with other species, and tends to retain the dualistic break of Cartesianism but relocate it elsewhere. I argue that if we take the intentionality criterion of mind seriously, treating it as mark or indicator of the presence of elements of mind, we can find support for the thesis of weak panpsychism, and a route to representing heterogeneity and breaking down some hyper-separation aspects of mind/nature dualism. (I will call this fuller thesis intentional panpsychism).

I state (*FMN* 134) that intentionality provides a ‘ground of continuity ... and a basis for recognising heterogeneity’ in mind and nature. Andrews on p. 381 makes a very different set of claims for weak panpsychism, that it is intended to ‘ground an ecofeminist ethic’ and provide ‘for a genuine respect for nature’. Andrews strengthens these claims on p. 382 to the even stronger requirements that weak panpsychism must be capable of grounding, not only the extension of moral significance to all natural entities, but also the thesis of their *equal* moral significance he identifies with the doctrine of ‘biospherical egalitarianism’ – a position he also attributes to me. Andrews identifies biospheric egalitarianism both with the thesis that all natural entities whether human or non-human should have equal moral weight, and sometimes with the even stronger thesis of the impossibility of any moral hierarchy among natural entities. But these unlikely projects have no connection with the claims I make for or the purposes to which I put weak panpsychism or the intentional recognition stance, and Andrews’ assumptions about them show a major misunderstanding of my project and of its relationship both to feminism and to environmental ethics. (I discuss biospheric egalitarianism below in my section on ranking.) The project which situates my account of panpsychism and intentionality, which Andrews’ account has lost sight of, is that of post-Cartesian reconstruction of concepts of both mind and nature, aimed at throwing off the legacy of hyper-separation which affects contemporary forms of mind/body and human/nature dualism. I analysed this mechanist hyperseparation in chapter 4 as involving the stripping of intentional description from the material level of description and its concentration in a singular organ identified with the narrow, on/off concept of consciousness, leaving two hyperseparated orders of mind and body, or of mind and nature.

A project aimed at undoing this form of dualistic construction would have as one of its major aims the rapprochement and mingling of these orders hyperseparated in Cartesian thought; this gives rise in turn to two subsidiary projects which attempt to rebuild the severed bridge of mind/body continuity from both ends, as it were. The first project, which has been the focus of a number of philosophers, is that of rediscovering the ‘body in the mind’.¹² The second, the complementary project that concerns our discussion here, is that of rediscovering the elements of mind in the dualised contrast class of materiality, the body



and nature¹³. A further closely related post-Cartesian project is that of recovering a conception of ‘speaking matter’, suggested by feminist philosopher Luce Irigaray, among others.¹⁴ My version of this project aims at restoring the intentionality stripped from the material sphere in Cartesian construction, in the process locating ‘an alternative basis for a non-reductive account of continuity between mind and nature’ – alternative, that is, both to Cartesianism itself and to several less satisfactory attempts to rediscover the mindlike elements the Cartesian model ejects from nature. But it also involves taking more seriously the diversity of marks of the mental and of elements of mind that are so thoroughly singularised, denied and reduced in the Cartesian concentration on consciousness.

Despite claiming to address my work on intentionality and the issues in chapter 5 of *FMN*, Andrews’ discussion makes no attempt to come to grips with my account of intentional panpsychism in the context of the projects described above and outlined in that chapter. Instead Andrews attributes to me, and re-situates intentional panpsychism within, an entirely different set of projects of his own invention, which are alien to my own and for which there is no foundation in the text. It is little wonder then that in terms of these projects, intentional panpsychism appears to be a failure. But this is because they are the wrong projects, not because intentional panpsychism itself is a useless idea. The first of these mistaken projects Andrews supplies to motivate intentional panpsychism is that of providing a criterion of moral significance, and the second is that of providing a ground for equal moral significance. The difference between his projects and my projects is instructive and revealing about different options and directions for environmental ethics.

INTENTIONALITY AND MORAL SIGNIFICANCE

Andrews states that I identify intentionality with mind and that intentionality is intended to ‘ground an ethic of respect’. But first, I do not take mind to be simply identical with intentionality, as I indicate clearly on p. 131 of *FMN*: rather I want to take the complexity and diversity of criteria of mind seriously, as the Cartesian framework does not, as yielding ‘different places and ways to renegotiate mind/nature dualism’. My project is to explore the implications for a more graduated and continuous view of the distribution of elements of mind, starting by looking at just one mark, intentionality, from what I recognise explicitly as a *cluster* of criteria. Second, although I think being able to conceive the world intentionally is important for individuating and grasping it in terms that encourage respect, I do not think that the relevant ethical task in this context can be reduced to that of enunciating ethical criteria for ‘respect’ or consideration, as Andrews assumes. As I have argued (Plumwood 1996), respect is just one of the ethical concepts we would need to develop an adequate ethical response to the nonhuman



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world, and there are large parts of that moral task which it does not capture in any sufficiently specific, rich or useful way. These include for example developing narrative and communicative ethics and responses to the other, developing care and guardianship ethics, developing alternative conceptions of human virtue, and developing richer and less human-centred ways to individuate, configure and describe the world that 'make the most' of the non-human other. The intentional recognition stance is highly relevant to this further complex of ethical tasks (all discussed in *FMN*) which Andrews ignores.

Third, I would not understand the role intentionality can play in 'grounding an ethic' (a phrase I do not use in this connection) in anything like the same way Andrews does. Thus I do argue that the intentional stance (which as I understand it is the stance of openness to or recognising the intentionality of the world) has an important role to play in opening up certain possibilities for an ethical response to the nonhuman world that are closed off by the mechanistic stance. But this is not the same as taking that role to be that of 'grounding an ethic of respect' in Andrews' sense, for as he understands it that turns out to be the project of enunciating criteria for allocating degrees of moral worth or considerability for individuals within it. This is already a highly human-centred conception of what our ethical task might be, and begs many questions. Andrews goes on to interpret 'grounding an ethic' and 'providing for respect' as involving a project not only radically different from my own, but actually inconsistent with it. This is the project to substitute intentionality for the rationalist-inspired properties of rationality or consciousness as the criterion for what counts for more in an ethical and value rankings of species and beings. I would reject this project as misconceived on a number of grounds, and as essentially a successor project to rationalism, a position my work is strongly directed against. Since one of the main targets of my discussion is the over-valuation of reason in the idea that reason and other mental attributes like consciousness or mind are the sole or major source of value in human life, it would hardly be consistent for me to propose an idealist-rationalist criterion like intentionality or mentality as the criterion of moral worth for individual beings, which is what Andrews has me doing.

Andrews has simply ignored my project and substituted for it an entirely different rationalist-inspired project of his own devising.¹⁵ Andrews' project is not my project since to argue that we must be conceptually prepared to recognise the other's intentionality as a necessary condition for developing richer experiential, communicative and ethical frameworks and relationships, as I have done, is totally different from arguing for treating intentionality as *the criterion* of what counts for more in some scale of value between species. Andrews' equation of these completely different and indeed conflicting projects relies on a whole series of assumptions I would reject. I do not think, for example, that there could ever be a *single* criterion of moral worth, whether for humans or nonhumans. Even if such a singular criterion of selection were possible, I do not think that



mentality or intentionality could possibly play the role of supplying selection criteria for what beings are of moral significance or worth, nor indeed that they have any simple or linear connection to scales of moral superiority.

Andrews' project of trying to use intentionality as the criterion of the moral superiority of beings is misconceived for the reason that degrees of intentionality and consciousness are poorly correlated with degrees of value. We cannot plausibly claim that a greater degree of consciousness or a higher order level of intentionality corresponds to a greater degree of value in the human case. We do not become more respect-worthy humans by adding another layer of intentionality on top of the previous one, a higher-order level of thought, another thought about that thought, a wish about a thought – especially if that extra level or higher-order of thought involves thinking about how to deceive or to get the better of somebody else. And the teachings of Zen Buddhism, among other things, have helped many of us to see that certain kinds of compulsive or excessive consciousness can be a vice that can block peace, openness and receptivity to others. They may add intentional complexity, but as the case of deception shows, complexity is certainly not an unambiguous blessing or virtue, and is not to be equated simply with greater value or ethical superiority. But if we cannot make the claim that greater intentional complexity corresponds within the human group to greater moral worth, why should we be able to make a similar claim with respect to the superiority of humans as a group to non-humans as a group?

Even if we do grant that human minds are distinguished, for example, from those of nonhuman animals, primarily by capacities for a higher-order of intentionality in human mental life,¹⁶ it is entirely unclear how this can support the idea that nonhumans count for less. The most it could show is that certain kinds of higher-order moral capacities and complexities could not occur among some non-humans, but if these sorts of capacities have negative ethical potential as well as positive potential, we can draw no clear conclusions favourable to human moral supremacy from greater human intentional complexity, if indeed it exists. Although we may be able to argue that some kinds of ethical dilemmas and dimensions would be lacking in those kinds of beings who did not have certain kinds of higher-order intentionality, I think this can at most lead to further conclusions about ethical complexity. The factor of incommensurability (discussed in the next section) suggests the need for great caution in making any generalised mapping of intentional and ethical complexity onto the human/non-human distinction, and even more so for moral worth. Although intentionality cannot be a criterion of the moral superiority of beings, it has some bearing on the question of richness of moral relationships, but this bearing is obscured by Andrews' hegemonic definition of the ethical task as that of providing criteria for a moral hierarchy of value or respect.

There are several ways then in which Andrews' assumptions about 'grounding an ethic' smuggle in a hegemonic and reductive conception of the ethical task



and the relevance of intentionality to it. First, his discussion persistently conflates the use of intentionality as a criterion of individual moral worth (higher placement in a ranking of value or consideration) with something quite different, the importance of our openness to the non-human other's potential for intentionality, including their potential for communicative exchange and agency. It is not that their degree of intentionality acts as a criterion of their qualifications or deservingness for receiving moral consideration from us, as in Andrews' reading, but that willingness and ability to recognise the other as a potentially intentional being tells us whether we are open to potentially rich forms of interaction and relationship which have an ethical dimension. That is, it is not so much a question of whether THEY are good enough for ethically rich relationships, but of whether WE are ! Andrews' reading of environmental ethics assumes that it is a quest to discover which parts of nature are sufficiently 'well qualified', usually by being proved to be enough like us, to deserve some sort of extension (the leftovers) of our own ample feast of self-regard. This is a strongly human-centred conception of environmental ethics associated with moral extensionism and hegemonic conceptions of otherness.¹⁷ But it is not to this human-centred conception but to the second conception of the ethical task that I take intentionality, in the form of the intentional recognition stance, to be ethically relevant.

Intentional recognition is important ethically not as evidence of 'qualifications' but primarily because it is part of providing a counter-hegemonic alternative to the hegemonic stance of reductionism and closure, and because preparedness to adopt the intentional recognition stance reveals much about our own ability to develop ethical relationships. It is an important test for our moral capacities because innumerable examples from the history of racism and sexism show how significant expectations and prior stances of closure are for what we can experience and perceive about another who is conceived in hegemonic terms.¹⁸ Feminists have discussed the differences between the perspectives on the other associated with 'the arrogant eye' and its contrast, 'the loving eye' : whereas the arrogant eye seeks closure, to control, instrumentalise, and incorporate, the loving eye 'knows the independence of the other.... The loving eye does not have to simplify. It knows the complexity of the other as something that will forever present new things to be known'.¹⁹ If our dominant theories and reinforcing cultural experience lead us to stereotype earth others reductively as 'objects', non-intentional mechanisms with no potential to be communicative and narrative subjects, as lacking potential viewpoints, well-being, desires and projects of their own (all intentional concepts), then it is quite likely that we will be unable to recognise these characteristics in the nonhuman sphere even when we are presented with good examples of them. The stance of intentional recognition, as I would understand it, allows us to take account of the way our possibilities for interaction with and perception of the world are influenced by the postures we ourselves choose to adopt.²⁰



RANKING, DUALISM, AND HETEROGENEITY

The mistaken assumption that I mean intentionality to function as a qualification for moral worth in a valuational ranking order underlies a large part of the rest of Andrews' paper, including his claim that I need an argument to show *why* intentionality should be respected and how it's necessary and/or sufficient for respect (that's not the project), the idea that individuals would have to become 'bundles' of intentionalities (maybe in his project, but not in mine), and his 'dilemma' about basing this supposedly intentionally-based moral considerability on either difference or on continuity (that's not the project, and this is an invalid choice anyway, as I show below). But Andrews also raises a number of further issues of independent interest about ranking, hierarchy and incommensurability. Andrews represents my account of intentionality as the product of a generalised hostility to all rankings, moral boundaries, and 'hierarchies'. He seems to employ an extremely vague concept of dualism and a low redefinition of the concept of 'moral hierarchy', a term I take to indicate a linked chain of dualisms or other hegemonic distinctions involving compulsive ranking, redefined by Andrews to mean ranking simpliciter. This facilitates the slide his argument makes from opposition to dualism to opposition to all preferential ranking. But he has misunderstood the differences between dualism, boundaries and ranking, and is again mistaken about my project in relation to ranking and moral consideration.

My objection to dualism and moral extensionism does not derive from a generalised opposition to making any kind of ranking or judgement that something is better than something else, nor is it the belief that nothing should or ever could be ranked along an axis from simple to complex. It is specifically an objection to forms of ranking based on invariant positioning in an unnecessary valuational order of sacrifice, or on dualism and hegemonic otherness. These include assimilationist and moral extensionist forms which define or rank the other entirely in relation to the self as primary term and as centre (one of the leading features of hegemonic conceptions of otherness). As my account of dualism in chapter 2 of *FMN* and elsewhere makes clear, dualism involves setting up a polarity based on a hyper-separated and over-homogenised field for conceiving the other, and usually supplements this by a hegemonic conception of otherness. Opposition to dualism is not then as Andrews claims a generalised opposition to distinction, to the drawing of boundaries, or to all preferential choices or comparisons of degree.²¹ My analysis of the problems of dualism focuses on certain kinds of distinctions and ways to draw boundaries that deny important kinds of continuity or difference and which define or rank the other in hegemonic terms. Dualism is a precisely characterised logical concept which is not identical with moral hierarchy, contrary to Andrews' claims on p. 389.

Environmental philosophy has produced many examples of such hegemonic forms: they include especially extensionist positions which allocate moral



consideration to non-human beings entirely on the basis of their similarity to the human. Such claims are hegemonic for non-humans in the same way that assimilationist frameworks that allocate worth to individuals of another culture, for example an aboriginal culture, just on the basis of their similarity to the dominant (white) colonising culture are hegemonic.²² Such a schema based on sameness treats the other as of value just to the extent that they resemble the self as hegemonic centre, rather than as an independent centre with potential needs, excellences and claims to flourish of their own. A reversal scenario based on self-revulsion instead of self-love might treat the other as of worth just to the extent that they are different from the self, but this would be equally centric.²³ We can see immediately why the exclusive and exhaustive options Andrews offers on p. 387 of justifying respect for intentionality (the wrong project anyway) *either* via similarity *or* difference are false options. Basing assessments of the other's worth on either of these exclusively is a sure sign of a centrism which treats otherness as hegemonic, all comparisons and judgements turning on the centre. In a less hegemonic scenario for judgements of moral worth, both continuity and difference from self would be involved, and criteria independent of both considerations would be regularly invoked.

Many projects of moral extensionism in environmental philosophy are hegemonic in this way, either explicitly stating similarity to the human as the basis for moral worth, or implicitly appealing to this through selecting 'independent' criteria normally taken to define or characterise the human, such as as rationality, mentality, or consciousness, and then evaluating non-human beings along this single axis to arrive at a species meritocracy with humans (by no means accidentally) emerging at the top. Whereas the traditional rationalist hierarchy of the Great Chain of Being ranked creatures in broadly homogenised kinds according to alleged possession of rationality or proximity to the opposed order of materiality, the narrow neo-Cartesianism model which currently dominates environmental philosophy uses consciousness as its hegemonic 'sameness' axis of moral consideration. This transparently hegemonic conception that denies to others the potential for 'excellences of their own' creates several specific problems. The first is that it tends to produce generalised contextually invariant rankings which are pervasive, unnecessary and damaging, effecting various kinds of closure to the other's potentialities. The second is that it cannot allow adequately for incommensurability of abilities and difference in kinds of minds. This is a serious problem because recent evidence of elements of heterogeneity incommensurability in mind points to the scientific inadequacy of frameworks based on obsessive and singularistic human-centred rankings (Rogers 1997).

These two problems provide the context for the connection of intentionality with incommensurability. A simple spectrum or scalar concept like consciousness has the disadvantage that, in addition to obscurity, it has little capacity to recognise incommensurability or difference, and none at all if interpreted in terms of hegemonic otherness. Intentionality can allow us to take better account



of incommensurability because there is enough breadth, play and multiplicity in intentionality to allow us to use diverse, multiple and de-centred concepts that need not be ranked relative to each other for understanding both humans and more-than-humans as intentional beings. For example pheromone-based, sonar-based and pollen-based sensitivities²⁴ might appear as heterogeneous intentional capacities that cannot be treated as extensions of the paradigmatic human case, as narrow concepts like consciousness tend to be. In such a context difference can be represented in more de-centred ways : difference, or incommensurability in the evolutionary context, does not have to be represented cumulatively in terms of graduation along a single axis, incommensurability or difference-in-kind can be represented as well as difference-in-degree, and to that extent interspecies ranking can be de-emphasised. In short, we can allow for mind to take radically different forms, and thus allow for the incommensurability between the abilities of certain species and groups that is now increasingly attested by evolutionary theory and scientific study (Rogers 1997; Griffin 1992).

Now I do not make and do not need to make the absurdly strong claim that Andrews attributes to me (and then complains I have not established), that there are no differences in degree and complexity also available for discovery in this framework – of course there are, and my account of sameness and difference as equally important axes of consideration recognises that there are. What I have claimed is much different, that we have the basis here for a viable and rational interspecies option to the usual human-centred ways to think about mind. The theory choice approach I have outlined would situate our allegiance to a particular theory in the context of competing frameworks, which includes a choice between a narrowly human-centred Cartesian-based account of mind as consciousness that carries severe limitations for understanding other species, and a potentially de-centred but still largely undeveloped alternative of intentionality that can allow the concept of mind to take radically different forms. Its greater breadth offers a way to counter hegemonic and over-centralised concepts of mind and to avoid singularistic, unnecessary and over-determined rankings of broad categories of beings. I do not claim that it is *incompatible* with any and all possibility of ranking. I doubt if any schema could satisfy this last claim : there is no way to stop compulsive rankers ranking – even when doing so has very little justification or meaning.²⁵ But this raises larger questions about ‘biospheric egalitarianism’: why should we count it as a virtue of such an approach that it enables us to reduce or avoid ranking?

RANKING AND ‘BIOSPHERIC EGALITARIANISM’

Andrews is wrong then in thinking that my position is based on a simple-minded opposition to all ranking and moral boundaries; but is he perhaps right in thinking he detects in my views a whiff of equality or democracy, a commitment to some



biospheric egalitarianism, which he characterises as the thesis that ‘all natural entities whether human or non-human should have equal moral weight’? Well, yes, I do think that a sufficiently well qualified and carefully stated form of biospheric egalitarianism might be defensible, (although Andrews is wrong in thinking that it follows from opposition to dualism), but it cannot take the very simplistic form Andrews here assumes for it. We might note, first of all, that even in the human case there are lots of problems in characterising equality as allocating to all within the field the same moral weight, especially if we mean by this that we have to give exactly the same weight to each persons’ needs and interests in all our moral deliberations.²⁶ If this simplistic formula will not do to explicate equality for humans (except in some very limited contexts), it is hardly likely that it will explicate what is defensible in a larger and more complex notion like biospheric equality. Furthermore, the concept of equality is expressible both along the axis of sameness and along that of difference. Equality on the axis of the same yields scalar equality, while equality along the axis of difference yields the completely different concept of incommensurability or non-ranking. While Andrews focuses exclusively on the first concept, it is the second concept we need to give expression to what is valid in the idea of biospheric equality.

Andrews claims that such equality is implied by the rejection of moral hierarchy, equated with dualism. As I explicate dualism in chapter 2 of *FMN*, it includes much more than simple hierarchy in the low redefinition sense of valuing one item over another;²⁷ but Andrews again relies on conflating dualism and simple hierarchy for his inference that avoiding dualism implies valuing with the same moral weight, that is, he relies on the assumption that items are ranked in a scalar way as either superior/inferior or as equal to one another. Given the rather indirect relation of dualism to simple hierarchy (interpreted as valuation of one item over another), this is plainly a false choice. But it is a false choice and an invalid inference for another reason also, since the options of ranking as superior/inferior or as scalar equals leave out a critical further alternative, namely not ranking at all. Both ranking as scalar equals and ranking in a simple hierarchy are forms of ranking, and Andrews has failed to note that there are a number of contexts where ranking itself is unnecessary and either logically or morally problematic. One of the logical cases is the case of incommensurability between beings, where we can neither rank as equal nor rank in a hierarchy: between beings with very different and only intersecting capacities, ranking is not possible in any accurate or meaningful way. Consider the idea of ranking yourself in relation to a mountain, for example. Between categories of very different beings, many of whose capacities the ranker may not be in a position to know, insistence on ranking (on a scale of superior/inferior which includes the case of equality) is both poor methodology and symptomatic of an arrogant stance of closure which is impoverishing and limiting for both human self and non-human other.



Ranking itself is open to moral and political evaluation as an activity, and in the human case at least, is widely recognised as being often morally problematic, especially where it involves unnecessary and invariant, context-insensitive rankings of human beings by broad categorial types, for example by 'race', class or gender. Colonialist, racist and fascist thinking is especially notable for its invariant categorisations and obsessive type-rankings of superiority between human groups, often based on morally irrelevant characteristics. While we are usually prepared to find ethically acceptable the ranking of very specific characteristics and skills not closely tied to large judgements about individual or class worth or connected too directly with moral or social value, the more generalised a ranking is, and the more direct the connection made with moral significance, the more reason we have to suspect it of carrying unacceptable hegemonic agendas. For example we can compare ourselves with respect to susceptibility to heart disease or pneumonia, for these are not (at least not yet) indices of moral superiority, but an important element of democratic struggles is the attempt to arrange things so as to avoid large and invariant type-rankings of social or moral value, which are rightly seen as open to many kinds of abuse and distortion.²⁸

In contexts where scarcity means that ranking of individuals is unavoidable, for example in medical triage, we recognise its morally problematic character by seeing it as less than ideal and by setting up ethics committees who make triage decisions contextually, and by other means. We also recognise that a good, 'humane' medical system, if it cannot due to scarcity entirely avoid ranking, is one where the need for such rankings is kept to a minimum. Non-ranking, in the sense of avoiding or minimising ranking, is, I suggest, an important part of the content of human equality and respect, rather than the scalar kind of equality that assigns equal weight on some ethical scale in moral deliberations. Simone Weil writes 'Respect is due to the human being as such and it is not a matter of degree'.²⁹ But ranking on a scale as equal, to the extent that it opens up also the possibility of ranking as greater or lesser than, is 'a matter of degree', and thus cannot be the basis of this kind of respect. What is required here is not scalar equality but avoidance of ranking, or non-ranking, especially in the form of narratives and social arrangements which make ranking unnecessary.

Non-ranking, as the meta-ethical principle of minimising ranking and dealing with conflict and scarcity of resources cases contextually in ways that avoid invariant categories and type ranking between broad classes of beings,³⁰ is also applicable to interspecies ethics, comparisons and choices. Non-ranking is a much more plausible way to interpret the concept of biospheric egalitarianism than Andrews' way. Non-ranking extends the recognition of the morally problematic character of value-rankings between highly general categories of humans to similar rankings between broad species types, and holds that we should generally aim, in our philosophies, individual interactions and through our social arrangements, to avoid ranking and to minimise contexts in which we



have to adopt highly generalised value-rankings of ourselves as members of particular species. Non-ranking is another counter-hegemonic virtue, similar to and connected with the other counter-hegemonic virtues of openness, active invitation, attentiveness,³¹ and intentional recognition, and is like them important in encouraging the potential for communication and avoiding the arrogance and inevitable closure involved in making pervasive judgements of type value.

As in the human case, there are many interspecies contexts for which ranking can be avoided, can be structured out, is irrelevant, does not arise, and in which its introduction across species would be gratuitous, ugly, limiting and impoverishing, blinding us to certain possibilities of interaction and exchange with earth others.³² Even for conflict and scarcity cases, as Brian Luke points out, there are more context-sensitive ways to proceed than through the method of constructing general principles which designate classes of 'inferior' beings who are always available to be sacrificed to other 'superior' beings who must invariably count for more in some generalised scalar ranking of the moral universe.³³ The motivation for a ranking in terms of invariant species value draws much of its strength from the felt need to validate the use of nonhumans in human lives which, even at their most considerate, must deliver some destruction to members of other species. Western philosophy has traditionally validated human entitlements to use earth others in terms of a valuational order of rational hierarchy, which entitles 'more rational' humans to dominate and sacrifice nonhumans whose lives are supposedly cheaper. But there are better frameworks for thinking about the inevitable displacement of other embodied lives than those which derive from a superior positioning in a species value hierarchy invoked to validate our entitlement to displace others. A ranking system based on sacrifice of this kind is avoided, for example, in the world-narratives which figure nature in gift-exchange terms as an ethical system of reciprocity in which all benefit, participate and are ultimately themselves in turn consumed.³⁴ The seeming inevitability of sacrificial ranking Andrews' arguments assume rests on an unexamined suppression of important alternatives to this highly problematic 'Great Chain of Being' tradition.

MACHINES, 'AS IF' INTENTIONALITY AND THE 'AESTHETIC' STANCE

Just as the first part of Andrews' paper was based on mistaken assumptions about the place of intentionality in my ethical project, so the strictures on my 'happily accepting machines' in the last part of Andrews' paper are founded on a misreading of my remarks and neglect of my main discussion of machines. Andrews' continuing conflation of the concept of dualism with that of moral boundary and distinction (p. 391) also plays a background role in this misreading. My statement in the text (*FMN* 136) is that even machines may have some



intentional aspects, and I go on to agree with Donna Haraway that (despite the oppressive political uses to which machines are so often put in present political systems) we should try to avoid setting up an over-generalised dualistic opposition between the mechanical and organic spheres. Such dualistic oppositions, which construe the mechanical world in hyper-separated terms as alien, have appeared in a good deal of Romanticism and in some more recent environmentalism. But this point about avoiding dualism is a very long way from Andrews' claim on p. 390 that I recognise no moral boundaries between organic beings and machines and happily welcome machines as equals into the moral community. The hyper-separation and other features of the concept of dualism I explicate in *FMN* chapter 2 make dualism a very special kind of moral boundary which, as I have stressed, is not to be equated with simple difference or with boundaries per se.

Even in his references to chapter 5, Andrews has totally overlooked my discussions of Aristotle, autopoiesis and of the moral status of machines on pp. 138 and 210, which contradict all his claims about my analysis of machines. He also ignores the important qualification 'autonomous' which I indicate on p. 138, in the course of arguing for taking the autonomy of teleology into account in choosing individuation frameworks. These discussions point in quite the opposite direction from the one Andrews discerns. What I in fact argue, drawing on Aristotle's idea that the intentionality (or as Aristotle put it, using a more limited intentional concept, the *telos*) of an artefact like a bed is not its own (autonomous) but that of its maker (artefactual), is that the distinction between autonomous and artefactual teleologies is ethically significant for the way we discern the play of these intentionalities in the world.³⁵ So for example, discerning the difference between artefactual and autonomous intentionality is important because it can have a crucial bearing on responsibility and on how and to whom we should express satisfaction or dissatisfaction. If machines are annoying, oppressive or helpful to us, to whom should we direct such emotions as gratitude or anger? We need to understand the distinction between autonomous and artefactual intentionalities for sensible answers here, and this distinction, far from being esoteric as Dennett assumes, is very much part of everyday political and ethical sensitivity to our social and ecological context.³⁶

But, I suggest in my discussion, Aristotle's idea that the artefact expresses a non-autonomous or artefactual teleology traceable to its maker, in contrast to an autonomous one for the 'organic' case, is too simple. For our present times of bio-engineering especially, we need to be able to take account of the significance of mixed intentionalities which combine in one individual autonomous and artefactual forms of intentionality.³⁷ The cherry tree in the garden, as well as the biologically engineered organism, is an example of such a mixed intentionality; combined in the cherry tree are its own intentionality directed towards growth and flourishing, and also that of its human planter and nurturer directed in a different way towards good crops of fruit or flowers, each presupposing the



other. But humans can have this mixed intentionality too, especially when they have bio-engineered elements, just as machines may acquire 'runaway' characteristics that are not part of and may be in conflict with their artefactual intentionality. So although the distinction between autonomous and artefactual intentionality is significant, the simple dualistic picture Andrews draws of machine or artefactual intentionality (or the lack of it) is an excessively black and white picture; these boundaries are less polarised than he suggests, and this is part of what I mean by stressing that these distinctions and boundaries should not be seen in the dualistic terms of hyper-separation and radical exclusion.³⁸

In the last part of his paper, Andrews an agenda for putting the non-human sphere back into its traditional subordinate place: its apparent intentionality is merely a projection of our own, not to be taken seriously, as when we speak of the 'brooding mountain'. Now some forms of intentional attribution *are* more or less projections: for example, the locution clearly says more about us than about the mountain when, because of a change in *our* mood, the brooding mountain is transformed the next morning into a beckoning one. But not all nonhuman intentional attributions are of this purely 'projected' (often literary narrative) type: they can also be part of more veridical narratives which are sensitive to the states of the other instead of (or as well as in relational cases) to our own states – the observation that the mountain is preparing to erupt for example, is not dependent for its accuracy on the observer's state of mind, although it is equally intentional. The fact that we can draw such a distinction and do have a sense of the difference between more and less veridical attributions here shows that we cannot write off intentional attributions to nonhumans as universally of the 'projection' type.

Andrews also tries to put earth others back in their place as merely aesthetic adjuncts to human life, of inferior ethical importance (p. 394) always subject to being overridden by matters of real moral significance – that is, human ones. In the unarticulated metaphor of 'the aesthetic stance', nature is reduced to a temperamental beauty queen to be confined once more to the harem, kept at our indulgence and for our delectation, while we steer a separate rational enterprise on which she impinges, if at all, only as a nuisance and potential wrecker of our projects or limit on our ambitions. What we do in that rational sphere, and whether we destroy nature or leave it alone, depends entirely on our 'vital interests', and nothing else, certainly not on what any nonhuman being might need, want or purpose. For given Andrews' methodology no such concepts can be rationally articulated or justified, despite the generously inclusive nature of our everyday intentional parlance in attributing desires, agency and purposes to the more than human. The 'aesthetic' model Andrews appeals to is linked with an ethically monological metaphor, whose centric rationality would have only one party to the human-nature relationship represented in the domain of ethical consideration.



Andrews does not explain how the traditional 'aesthetic' metaphor will take account of the kinds of ecological relations revealed by the environmental crisis. How is 'merely aesthetic' status for the non-human, with its deliberate demotion of significance (p. 394), limitation of perspective to avoid any possibility of communicative or ethical status, and scenario of sacrifice to 'our vital needs', possibly compatible with acknowledging our ecological dependency on nature, the respects in which the carefully constructed web of non-human life sustains us and is vital to our lives, the respects in which we do not have an ecologically rational option to 'sacrifice it or leave it alone', the respects in which the health of nature is itself one of our vital needs? Whether harem queen or harem slave, how could such a contingent status do justice to the respects in which nature is to us much more like the mother nursing a young child, a dependent child who does not have the option of a rationality which treats her as an inessential but decorative adjunct to his life? Plainly the 'aesthetic' metaphor has the wrong features for our current situation and for an ecological stage of consciousness; its real agenda is the preservation of a failed model and an ecologically irrational reductionist tradition, the monological rationality which has brought us to our present pass.

The 'as if' strategy deriving from Dennett (1996) and Searle that Andrews goes on to appeal to in order to justify this reductive rationality is a strange animal, and there is a curious doublethink in the idea that the non-human world should be treated as if it had properties it does not 'really' have as part of a 'strategy' for prediction and control. The doublethink of the 'as if' convention has had one positive outcome anyway: it has allowed a wider recognition, in Dennett's case quite wide indeed, of the extent of intentionality in the non-human world (if not fully of its diversity) and of some of the advantages to be gained from 'recognising' it – or rather of the enormous predictive disability attendant on the naked reductive or Cartesian strategy of totally denying it. But in the Dennett-Searle 'as if' methodology, what is given with one hand is taken away with the other: this advantage is offset by a negative feature, for this liberation of recognition is only possible because it is accompanied by a refusal to take intentionality seriously in ethical terms and by the insertion of Dennett's version of 'the intentional stance' into an essentially monological ethical framework based on human-supremacism and minimising nonhuman intentional recognition in the interests of maximising the human share of the world. This means that rather than being a strategy for meeting the other, the 'pseudo-recognition' of the other as an 'as if' intentional being it permits becomes instead a strategy for domination in the form of prediction and control – the overly narrow objectives for rational theory construction Dennett's account adopts, in which narrowly self-interested projects oriented to control are the only concern, and other possibilities for a richer relationship are neglected.³⁹

Dennett's 'as if' version of the intentional stance has moved beyond reductive-Cartesian rationality and taken one important, if tentative and still



floundering step, towards recognising the extent of mind in the non-human sphere, but it insists on keeping a foothold still in the old reductive rationality and distancing from the implications of the new as merely another 'strategy'. The 'as if' strategy is fed by an essentially positivist methodology that insists that all that counts are 'the bare facts' and which ignores the way the philosophical and ethical frameworks that frame and legitimate our perceptions of the other influence what we will be able to experience and what kind of relationship we will be able to build. The fear of abandoning the terrain of reductionism and human supremacism that is lodged so deep in the traditions and self-identity of science lies behind Dennett's strange vacillation on the meaning of the intentional stance, and his insistence that any movement beyond the everyday Cartesian conviction that only humans have minds has to be rigorously 'proved'.⁴⁰ But you don't 'prove' a stance, you choose to adopt it!

Philosophy of mind needs to pluck up the courage for a further, more decisive step beyond the lingering Cartesianism of the 'as if' position, and abandon the claim that objectivity and rationality somehow require that we minimise our intentional recognition of the nonhuman world.⁴¹ The question of whether there is or is not 'someone there', someone we refuse to recognise in an adult pig or gorilla but do not refuse to recognise in a 5-day old human baby, is not a matter of 'proof' in the sense of being forced on us by some set of objective observations and singular structure of rationality, but at least in part a matter of making a choice about adopting a framework for ethical interaction.⁴² This is one of the important insights of the idea of 'the intentional stance' that is not being followed through. In the case of animals, for example, we must recognise how much our 'observations' are influenced by choices and stances about who or what we 'invite in' (as Dennett himself seems to recognise for the case of dogs), and who we deny and reduce, usually for reasons that have little to do with differences in animal minds and abilities and a lot to do with our own choices about which others to subsume under an instrumental and reductive rationality in order to free ourselves from ethical constraints in our treatment of them.

If the onus is placed on scientific methodology to legitimate the lingering resistance to inviting in the nonhuman, it is open to us to inquire further as to why the 'real' hypothesis for non-human intentionality and the alternative 'as if' hypothesis are not treated as on an equal footing from the perspective of scientific proof. Why should the onus of proof be assumed to lie with the 'real' hypothesis just for the non-human case, but never for the human?⁴³ An appeal to the principle of parsimony here is question-begging if it is not applied in an even handed way to both the human and non-human case.⁴⁴ There are of course many difficulties in applying parsimony principles to alternative hypotheses with very different consequence sets, (which it is reasonable to assume we have in the case of competing reductive and intentional frameworks), and this is only one of a number of reasons why we should consider parsimony a simplistic and highly problematic framework for theory selection. Another is that the parsimony



concept as invoked here will not do the advertised job of minimising our ‘theoretical assumptions’ about the world, (since it is entirely unclear how there are ‘more assumptions’ in the idea that nonhumans have minds than in the idea that they do not),⁴⁵ but rather does the undercover job of minimising our sensitivity and generosity towards the more-than-human sphere. This approach to framework selection follows the pattern of the monological model that is, as I have argued, in the present context ecologically irrational.

It is an alarming feature of the current ‘philosophy of mind’ approach to these problems of understanding nonhuman minds that the ethical and political choices and potentially hegemonic aspects of this account remain largely unexamined, and that it attempts increasingly to draw around itself the commanding robes of scientific singularism and detachment in its new guise of cognitive science. A philosophical account of the nonhuman mind so identified is adrift with no critical ethical compass to guide it except allegiance to the intuitions left over from a deeply human-centred, Cartesian past which are strongly embedded in the approach to nonhuman animals in dominant forms of science. To be sure, Dennett advises us to watch out for illusions, but provides no useful critical guidance about where these might lie or what we might do about them. Unless it develops better critical guidance, this kind of scientised ‘philosophy of mind’ cannot consider and try to guard against the obviously enormous potential for such accounts to harbour the typical illusions of human uniqueness and superiority to which our dominant culture is notoriously subject.

Our suspicions about the extent to which the ‘as if’ position does just this should initially be raised by the fact that his ‘as if’ account provides no independent grounds for deciding when ‘as if’ rather than real intentionality is present other than whether or not the subject is human. Other indications of hegemonic construction of nonhuman otherness in the ‘as if’ interpretation appear in Dennett’s conclusion that dogs emerge highest on the scale of mind because they have been ‘civilised’ by their long association with humans – a clear parallel to the colonising mindset and its hegemonic moral extensionism which values the other just to the extent that they resemble or reflect the self.⁴⁶ Surely we have sufficient evidence of the high levels of sensitivity of many species of nonhumans *towards one another* to understand the attempt to make the recognition of mind revolve around relationship to the human for the exercise in colonial thinking it is. If it is to avoid these kinds of distortions and their irrational monological outcomes, philosophy of mind needs to make better connections with critical environmental thought and adopt a systematic counter-hegemonic programme and posture on nonhuman intentionality.



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NOTES

The author teaches at the University of Montana, and in the Department of General Philosophy, University of Sydney.

¹ On ecological rationality see Plumwood 1998a.

² The distinction between monological and dialogical forms of rationality I am appealing to here turns on the distinction between forms of negation which treat otherness as independent presence or difference, the other as another centre with whom a dialogical encounter is appropriate, and those which define it entirely in relation to the primary term, for example as an absence of, relict of or an other-than-the-self. See Plumwood 1993a and 1993b.

³ Walls 1995: 86, quoting from von Humboldt's journals.

⁴ The de-intentionalisation of the more-than-human sphere has been an important element in the ancient western war between poetry and philosophy, and has contributed greatly to the disempowerment and irrelevance of the former.

⁵ The fact that all these locutions are in appropriate contexts quite 'natural' shows I think that at some level we already half-recognise nature as a sphere of intentional others, and must do so minimally to lead 'normal' lives. But we have been conned into denial and mistrust of these attributions by a superimposed pseudo-scientific theory that claims they are irrational.

⁶ See Gare 1998, Cheney 1989 and 1990, Warren 1990.

⁷ I am not claiming here that intentional recognition is sufficient for agency, as Andrews infers on p 393, but that it is necessary if the other is to be grasped in active terms that give purchase to critical, political, ethical and anti-hegemonic discourses, for example as an originator of projects that demand our respect – the sense in which agency is commonly used in political philosophy, (see, for example, Cohen 1996: 239). Andrews' sense of agency (p. 393) as the capacity for 'imposing one's desires and choices' on the world is so strong it would eliminate both most human and political agency, as well as being composed in the logical terms of mastery. See also Dennett's discussion of agency (1996 22-28), and Emily Martin's in Birke and Hubbard 1995.

⁸ See Birch 1993, Weston 1996 and 1998.

⁹ Andrews seemingly has not noticed that I have chosen my terminology with care to avoid the polarised on/off picture of mind I want to reject as part of rejecting the dualistic picture. Thus, contra Andrews, I would not be happy to say of such items as mountains that they 'have minds', or 'have mental states', the 'on' terminology Andrews has me using (p. 390), although I am willing to say that mountains express or exhibit elements of mind, or have mind-like qualities, the graduated claim. I think that the kind of intentionality we can justly attribute to mountains is too diffused into processes and aspects to sit comfortably with the highly polarised and individualised on/off terminology of 'having a mind'.

¹⁰ On p. 382 Andrews states correctly the leading thesis of the contrasting doctrine of strong panpsychism. I say nothing whatever about natural entities having 'mindlike properties that belong to them intrinsically and distinctively', whatever this may mean.

¹¹ On moral extensionism see Cuomo 1998.

¹² These include of course Johnson 1987.

¹³ Included here is Dennett's project of discovering 'the wisdom in the wing' (1996).

¹⁴ Irigaray 1985.



¹⁵ On Andrews' reading, (p. 391) I am 'explicitly committed to the view that any kind of intentionality deserves moral respect'. I make no such claims anywhere.

¹⁶ I do not make the claim Andrews attributes to me, that animals lack second-order cognitive or reflexive abilities. In fact I think there are very strong reasons to believe that they do have such abilities, evidenced for example by widespread deceptive and so-called 'imitative' avian behaviours (perhaps better understood as quotation, multi-lingual or cross-cultural behaviour). I simply tentatively agree with Dennett, that they may lack certain kinds of second or higher order desires, (such as the desire to be a better wombat), and to accept, with many qualifications, that a *greater* degree of complexity in orders and in the area of reflexivity may be a distinguishing feature of humans. My tentativeness is based on the possibility of providing alternative explanations for some of these apparent lacks, in terms of social organisation, for example, and on our high level of incompetence in understanding animal communication and our well-evidenced tendency to treat animals and other non-humans in hegemonic fashion as much simpler than they really are. My point is that even granting that feature for the sake of argument, no conclusions about relative moral worth can be drawn from it.

¹⁷ On human-centredness and hegemonic otherness see Plumwood 1996.

¹⁸ Perhaps one of the best sources of examples here is the role of 'external observation' in the history of racist and sexist science. See Harding 1993; Birke and Hubbard 1995.

¹⁹ Frye 1983: 72.

²⁰ Thus, as Anthony Weston has pointed out (1996), world reduction can become a self-validating process; when we adopt reductive approaches which deny the world's richness, depth and promise, we are inclined to go on to impoverish and reduce that world by our actions, and then appeal back to the resulting impoverishment to justify our original reduction and conviction that there is nothing of value there. Weston stresses that reversing this spiral requires more than just passive 'openness' or 'mindfulness' to the world's self-revelation, but that it involves an active 'invitation' and seeking of basis for richer interaction with the other. It involves venturing something of ourselves, and this is what an adequate interpretation of the intentional stance also requires.

²¹ I am not opposed to all boundary drawing and would agree that we sometimes need to draw some kinds of moral boundaries and distinctions: for example in some contexts the difference between creatures that care intensely for others (including those of their own kind) and those that do not is highly ethically salient. But boundaries are not the same as dualistic boundaries, fixed, immutable and polarised, and such ethical boundaries should be thought of as multiple, shifting and context-dependent.

²² Andrews bases an entire paragraph on the claim (p. 387) that I accuse Paul Taylor of this kind of assimilationism, but his reading is unfounded, since it is rationalism and not assimilationism that I discuss in relation to Taylor. See *FMN* 166, 167.

²³ For discussion of a real life advocate of such a reversal position see Plumwood 1998b.

²⁴ These count as intentional to the extent that they are sensitivities to something, involving a content.

²⁵ For example, Andrews has even found a way to rank humans and oak trees as choice-makers, although it seems to depend on the usual closure to non-human potential and grossly underestimates the diversity and intricacy of ways in which a tree's choices can be expressed in its mode of development and self-elaboration.

²⁶ Among other things, to give all equal weight would be to ignore particularistic claims and responsibilities, as well as obliterating the great variety of context dependent considerations that might need to go into decisions. See Friedman 1993.



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²⁷ Much depends on the concept of hierarchy here, which Andrews does not explicate. In one common but rather weak sense which I will call simple hierarchy, it implies value assignment which regularly assigns one item greater value than another. This is neither necessary nor sufficient for dualism: since dualism involves many more features than simple hierarchy, it is not sufficient. Since greater value rankings can be and usually are absorbed into other parts of the logic, especially into identities, and rarely appear as explicit assumptions, separate premisses expressing hierarchical assignments are not necessary either.

²⁸ For a very helpful discussion of ranking, generalism and context see Luke 1995; on contextual ethics see Warren 1990; Cheney 1989 and 1990.

²⁹ Quoted in Curthoys (1997: 13). However Curthoys, strongly committed to a form of human essentialism, mistakenly attributes this feature to an essential and invariant moral characteristic of humans themselves, instead of attributing it where it belongs, to the logical difference in the way ranking is involved.

³⁰ See Luke 1995; Smith 1997.

³¹ On attentiveness as a virtue see Ruddick 1989; Birch 1993.

³² Scientific arguments supporting this stance can be found in Rogers 1997. Beston (1926) provides a famous statement of incommensurability: 'they are not brethren ... not underlings ... they are other nations'.

³³ When we take account of particularistic relations and responsibilities to nonhumans also, we do not necessarily wind up with a universal ranking in which all humans always outweigh all nonhumans as Andrews assumes.

³⁴ For an account of some features of the gift-exchange framework, see Snyder 1990; Cheney 1990; Hyde 1979.

³⁵ However this significance should not be taken to be simply that of exclusion versus inclusion, as Andrews assumes.

³⁶ Dennett uses the terms 'indirect' and 'intrinsic' to mark what is essentially the same distinction, but seems unaware of its ancient origins since he remarks on the strangeness and novelty of the distinction. (Dennett 1996: 33-34).

³⁷ This is part of what is right in the post-modernist insight that 'nature' is often no simple other of purely autonomous intentionality.

³⁸ 'Pure' technology as the purely extensional device reflecting only its makers' purpose and agency may be as much the limiting case as 'pure nature'. If technology, as Winner 1986 argues, is not just neutral and passive, simply reflecting our artefactual intentionality, but can accumulate other agencies and designs which it contributes to our joint enterprises, monological rationality may not be safely applied even to the sphere of technology. On the agency of transport technology see Smith 1997. On the position of the cyborg in relation to the dualism of the machine and organic being, see Cuomo 1998: 82-86. Although I do not share Donna Haraway's apparent conviction that boundary breakdowns must invariably be liberatory, I do share her view that we should not be afraid of our kinship with machines. See Haraway 1991.

³⁹ Dennett 1996: 27.

⁴⁰ Dennett 1996: 6-7.

⁴¹ Dennett 1996: 7.

⁴² See Oxalis and Hickory 1999.

⁴³ For an attempted justification of this assumption see Dennett 1996: 7. Rogers 1997 is one scientist who has noted the Catch 22 set up this onus of proof demand produces in the typical experimental context.



⁴⁴As it is not, see Dennett 1996: 7.

⁴⁵In fact the 'as if' approach and the attempt to confine 'real' intentionality to the human have much of the methodological aspect of the ad hoc hypothesis, devised in the face of counter-indications to 'save' a strongly entrenched theory.

⁴⁶For a discussion of some similar kinds of hegemonic thinking and the rather striking parallels with colonial structure in relation to the role of dogs, see Plumwood 1997. Another example of hegemonic otherness is found in Dennett's treatment of difference (1996: 33), for example his claim that in the intentional stance 'we treat all intentional systems as just like us', a method that is surely as distorting and unnecessary for the non-human case as for the human, but which reveals the underlying and exclusive stress on sameness. In both the human and the nonhuman case, we have to take account not only of the other's similarity to us but also of their differences. In predicting the behaviour of a wasp, for example, we may need to know not only about the wasp's similar attachment to ours to raising its progeny, but also about its very dissimilar reproductive arrangements.

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