Nature, Purity, Ontology[1]

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ABSTRACT

Standard defences of preservationism, and of the intrinsic value of nature more generally, are vulnerable to at least three objections. The first of these comes from social constructivism, the second from the claim that it is incoherent to argue that nature is both 'other' and something with which we can feel unity, whilst the third links defences of nature to authoritarian objectivism and dangerously misanthropic normative dichotomies which set pure nature against impure humanity. I argue that all these objections may be answered by recasting the relationship between man and nature into a tripartite spectrum of ontological form between nature and artifact, with the key question being the extent to which nature has been humanised in accordance with certain modes of strongly instrumental rationality, these in turn being defined by reference to the split between abstract reason and natural feeling which was exacerbated by specific elements in the Enlightenment period. This new model may grant normative force by linking external nature to a broader conception of human psychological wellbeing than that offered by the quantitatively orientated models of human rationality and agency.

KEYWORDS

Nature, purity, reason, instrumentalism, ontology.

1. INTRODUCTION: THREE PROBLEMS IN DEFENDING NATURE AS NATURAL

Arguments for preservationism have long relied, covertly or overtly, on defences of nature as possessed of value in a state that is untouched or minimally touched by human influence, habitually partaking of either a man/nature or an artifact/

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nature distinction. Given the predominantly American setting of these arguments and the lack of European nature that might plausibly have untouched status, it is unsurprising that European and US green movements should frequently be at cross purposes.[2] However, with the rise of genetic engineering and ecosystem restoration, concern with defences of nature as natural, as the result of natural rather than artificial processes and/or as a framing context of otherness, must surely become more central to European concerns, and ontological issues in the debate over natural intrinsic value are now being highlighted in preservationism and green political theory.[3] Yet these strategies, especially when based on simple man/nature or artifact/nature dualisms, are vulnerable to three broad counters. I shall thus begin by noting these counter-arguments, assessing what dangers they really pose to preservationism and green political theory, and then draw on historical critique and pragmatic naturalism to reformulate an ontology of nature that may avoid the dangers and grant options for a theory of natural value that can transcend the US/European division.

i) The first objection to such ontological defences comes from the postmodernist claim that nature is socially constructed, and thus that all nature has been humanised or else that all culture is natural; Callicott's recent work is representative here. Callicott maintains that nature 'as free, wild and independent is gone', for 'nowhere is the earth and its community of life unaffected by man'. Accordingly, he argues, any idea 'of nature as Other, as a world existing apart from us and our artifice' must be dropped as being the product of a false 'dichotomy between man and nature'. Regarding any distinction between nature and artifact as being parasitic upon a division between man and nature, Callicott sees human works as natural too, thus claiming that 'Chicago is no less a phenomenon of nature than is the Great Barrier Reef'.[4] (In this repudiation of any clearly distinguishable place for the category of nature, Callicott resembles those Marxian influenced thinkers and social ecologists who have also generally repudiated the idea, insisting that humans are embedded in natural history just as nature is in human history.[5]) Abandoning any ontological distinguishing mark for nature as nature, Callicott revamps the Leopoldian land ethic in managerialist terms of ecosystem health and puts faith in technofixes from the 'new solar-electronic technologies' as inspiring 'further application of the systemic ideas they embody', so that society may 'rapidly evolve into a new, more sustainable, systemic configuration, not only technically but socially, politically and economically as well'.[6]

Callicott's statement that 'nowhere is the earth and its community of life unaffected by man' can be interpreted in several ways. If Callicott means that human influence has significantly physically altered *every* aspect of the earth, then the claim is probably false: it is unlikely that the planet's core has yet been altered by human activity. However, if he means that no areas remain which are 'true' wilderness in that they have not had some contact with human influence,

then for immediate policy purposes his case is more defensible.[7] But we should note the implication here. By maintaining that human interaction *as such* would disqualify areas from being given a distinct ontological status as natural under any man/nature or artifact/nature division, Callicott assumes that any such distinction must go 'all the way down': if the presence of wreckage in the deep seas or one time occupation by peoples whose ecological footprint was minimal are to be taken as being ontologically equivalent to Chicago, the assumption must be that the distinction can only work as an absolute duality, denying the possibility of a spectrum.[8] Callicott assumes that any man/nature or artifact/nature distinction must equate nature with purity from *any* sort of human contact, and as such, with a particular conception of purity. It is not *relative* purity, but a dualistic conception of *absolute* purity. If nature is to be contrasted to the human, and any natural area required to qualify as such by the absence of *anything* deriving from the human realm, then these dichotomous notions of man/nature and impurity/purity will cause considerable problems. If this dichotomy is maintained and the assumption made, contra Callicott, that humanity is separate from nature but that at least some nature still passes the test, one immediate political policy result would be that the scope for defending nature as natural would be radically reduced: only very small untouched portions of the globe, none of them in Europe, would be defensible as repositories of natural value, and the gap between wilderness defenders and European greens would become unbridgeable.

This notion of absolute purity within a simple duality is one which, for reasons given later, I shall call *dangerous* purity. For now we should note that Callicott extends his argument into refusing to countenance any claim of greater or lesser naturalness between cultures or their products. Not only does he assume that all human actions are natural, but also that all are *equally* natural, and this may not follow. There is an obvious, trivial sense in which all human behaviour must be, however distantly, the result of natural *capacities*, and in this sense it is true that all human acts are natural. But there is a further sense of the term 'natural' in which we refer to commonalities shared across species, as well as to instincts (e.g. the need for sustenance), sensory faculties (the five senses) and emotions (e.g. sorrow) which human beings will manifest in childhood and regardless of cultural upbringing. Capacities, such as literacy, language acquisition and the ability to use a computer, require particular forms of human social stimulation and training to be developed; instincts and emotions will indeed take different objects, according to environment, but they are not systematically generated through learning and exposure to a specifically human and humanised set of symbols and artifacts. There is a difference between *natural commonalities*, which we are born with, and our *human capacities*, which are developed through active exposure to the symbolic order of society.[9] There is a related distinction between immediate sensory acquaintance with the world – 'acquaintance-knowledge' or 'pure experience' – and the knowledge and symbolic apparatus

which we use to engage with that world ('knowledge-about', or 'the stock of truths' in William James' terms).[10] The possibility thus exists of mapping a distinction between nature and artifact which has its roots in the different elements of human *inner* nature and engagement with the world rather than by simply opposing man and nature as ontologically separate as such.

ii) The second problem is the apparent contradiction of regarding humans as both a part of and apart from nature. The difficulty of reconciling claims for our unity with nature to the view of nature as different, 'other' and significant is especially pervasive in deep ecology literature, and tends even to surface in accounts that attempt to gloss or avoid it. Thus Goodin's green theory of value cites both the 1983 German Green manifesto and the North American greens' *Ten Key Values* as indicating that 'we are *part* of nature, not on top of it', yet simultaneously insists that nature's independence is vital to its meaning and value as a context larger than ourselves.[11] Whilst Goodin partly gets around this problem (I think correctly) by contrasting interaction in which humanity will 'ride roughshod over other parts of nature' against human activity that allows 'nature to retain some real independence from humanity', some more sustained ontological treatment nonetheless seems required to ground Goodin's account, or any green political theory that attempts a similar resolution.[12]

However, direct attempts to take either horn of the unity with nature/difference from nature dilemma have serious problems. If we follow Callicott in obliterating any distinction, we must surely either follow Naess, Capra or Mathews in arguing for a new monistic metaphysics to be built from scratch,[13] or else acknowledge that objections to the ongoing instrumentalist transformation of nature must focus only on human use-values construed through market or Plan, thus cutting much ground from under any critique that is distinctly green. Alternatively, if nature is taken as wholly 'different' and open to corruption by any human influence, we return to the earlier purity/nature equation, and risk at best dividing the world into wholly humanised and wholly unhumanised areas, with the latter already at vanishing point. Accordingly, it seems that some flexible mapping is required which allows mixed options; in order to defend nature *as* natural, it must be distinguishable for argumentative purposes, but the green insistence on the place of humanity in nature must also be respected. The dilemma can only be resolved by producing an ontology that explains how humanity can consistently be seen as both a part of and apart from nature, whilst consistency with green thought requires rejecting the reduction of all values to strongly instrumental anthropocentric types. I attempt the beginnings of this task in sections 2 and 3.

iii) The third problem raised by preservationist and deep ecological defences of the worth of nature as nature is that such claims necessarily have objectivist, authoritarian, ahistoricist, elitist and/or misanthropic implications. I shall not deal here directly with the claim that objectivism is required, since it should

become clear that my position is not axiologically or epistemologically objectivist. On ahistoricism, I regard the objection that a preservationist fixation with retaining the present state of nature fails to take into account the history of human interactions with that nature as frequently well-founded, but do not regard the fact of previous interaction between humanity and nature in a given place as being one which *necessarily* alters the ontological status of the part of nature in question to a *significant* extent. As should become clear, it is the type and quality of interaction that is most significant, and so my nature/artifice distinction will be arranged on a spectrum rather than as a simple duality. The ontological position which I shall develop is thus critically informed by cultural history and bypasses the standard objection of ahistoricism.

On the complaints of authoritarianism and misanthropy, the first issue is empirical: what evidence is there? The answer, I think, is a certain amount, though not as much as critics sometimes imply. Bramwell's claim that Nazism was closely connected to ecologism is the most glaring instance, but traces of misanthropic authoritarianism can also be detected in British Ecology Party anti-immigration policies of the 1970s, Hardin's 'lifeboat ethic' and the notorious outburst of 'Miss Ann Thropy' in praise of the AIDS virus, whilst the British National Front also recently tried an ecological tack to restore their fortunes.[14] The real question, however, is whether there is any intimate *conceptual* link between green thought and authoritarianism.

If we accept that green thought is centrally characterised by a concern for nature, we should first note that the concept of 'nature' is immensely diffuse.[15] As such, any reading off of misanthropic or authoritarian tendencies from nature must deploy a suitable model of nature to give normative force, and in the examples given, two interpretations emerge. The 'lifeboat ethic' and the British Ecology Party examples both stem from 1970s survivalist tendencies; their emphasis is on the idea of nature as a realm of *limits*, laws which humanity transgresses at peril but is nonetheless violating. The claims over Nazism, AIDS and the National Front all feature a discourse which associates nature with *purity*. Both Nazism and the National Front used ideas of 'racial hygiene' and innate supremacy supposedly being 'polluted' by mingling with inferior types, whilst 'Miss Ann Thropy' rejoices in the AIDS virus as a remover of human 'pollution' from a planet that would otherwise be healthy and unsullied. Yet though these two readings of nature are distinct, there is linkage: if we ask, in the cases of the Ecology Party and Hardin, just *what* it is that constitutes the threat, we get the same answer, a sort of impurity. Since the numbers involved are minute, neo-Malthusian opposition to immigration makes no sense unless an additional assumption is made, that the migrants in question will somehow have a wildly disproportionate and unhealthy impact on the integrity of the 'social organism'. Similarly, the 'lifeboat ethic' assumes an implicit Social Darwinism in which the most defenceless must go to the wall, or else either worsen the global balance or infect others with their weakness. International capitalist relations are natural-

ised in the process; otherwise we might ask why it is that we should throw these people out of the lifeboat rather than the overweight businessman who keeps eating more than his equal share of the provisions. All the misanthropically authoritarian examples, then, seem to rely for their force on the equation of purity with nature.

We should note, however, that this is a particular conception of purity, one that I call *dangerous purity*. Dangerous purity is characterised by a radical dualism in which purity is absolute, a quality which is either present or absent without intermediate states. The idea has atavistic overtones, but it nonetheless can be seen as embedded in certain modernist conceptions, as we shall see. Alarming shifts towards overtly misanthropic positions occur, as in the examples noted, through positing a nature/man or nature/culture dualism and then overlaying a purity/pollution evaluation on top of this division, siding with the former part of the dichotomy and always assuming that one's own practices are natural and static, requiring protection from external change; all of the above examples can be seen to manifest this dualistic notion with its unpleasant implications of 'cleansing' through elimination of the impure. This is dangerous purity, and it is telling that such statements have tended to come from wilderness-orientated deep ecologists who insist on valuing nature as wholly untouched by humans. If dangerous purity is to be avoided but preservationism to be defended as at least part of the green programme, where geographically appropriate, it seems that some better means must be found to defend nature and its value without falling into troubled conceptual waters.

2. PURITY, REASON, NATURE, HISTORY: TOWARDS ONTOLOGICAL CLARITY

Greens, clearly, need an ontology which may defend nature as natural without collapsing back into claims of dangerous purity. I shall attempt to formulate this by bringing in a critical historical analysis of the type common to much environmental philosophy and green political theory. Before doing so, however, I must assert a key point: I believe that those thinkers who attempt to defend preservationist claims of intrinsic value without reference to any conceivable human experience are over-abstracting. It appears very curious to suppose that nature can be defended for its qualities without our ever being able to detect these qualities. What is important about experience of nature for most defenders of untrammelled areas is not that it has never been perceived by other human beings, a claim that (as noted) would be dangerous, highly limiting and divisive, but that the experiences which wilderness and other types of nature offer and which are being defended *should not be merely commodified or instrumentalised experiences*. As such, they should not have been transformed in accordance with the whims of market, modern technology or central plan, and accordingly, they

retain their own dynamic, independent of particular forms of human instrumental design. Since all possible human experience of nature is partly mediated by past experience and selective consciousness anyway, we may be able to define nature, and then defend nature experience, by reference to *the extent to which the natural areas have not been instrumentalised according to the dictates of particular types of anti-naturalistic instrumental rationality*. Accordingly, in what follows I shall argue (1) that some of the intellectual heritage of the West, instantiated in particular conceptions of rationality which are embodied in certain technologies and institutions, is anti-naturalistic both in terms of its internally divisive, antagonistically dualist model of the human agent and in its attitude to external nature, (2) that this 'maker's mark' may be seen as affecting the ontological status of items transformed by it, and (3), that nature may accordingly be *negatively* defined across a broadly tripartite spectrum, according to the extent to which the item or area remains untransformed, and especially untransformed in accordance with this type of anti-naturalistic rationality. Since our own human experience of nature is all that we can know, this tripartite spectrum of external nature is itself derived from William James' model of the human cognitive faculties in their perceptual operations of truth-seeking. With this clarification in place, let us move to the historical analysis.

Dichotomous divisions between nature and culture, wild and tame, human and animal, have been common throughout Western history, but I believe that a development significant for the ontology and valuing of nature may be traced to the origins of modernity in the Enlightenment, with the familiar triumvirate of Descartes, Bacon and Locke featuring as pioneers of the shift.

Attacks on the Enlightenment heritage are now so common in environmental philosophy that one must carefully distinguish wheat from chaff. Accordingly, I must clarify that I am not attacking the entire Enlightenment project, but my contention may be summarised as follows. Descartes, in his work on method, fixed the gap between subject and object as clearly and distinctly as could feasibly be done, and in doing so the gap between subjectivity and objectivity was in turn widened. The significance of Bacon, so far as nature is concerned, lies not only with his well-known usage of the language of sexual assault to describe the scientists' proper relationship to nature but also in his broadening of the gap between reason and feeling. For Bacon, moral and natural knowledge belong to separate spheres, and it is important to avoid the various 'idols' from human nature, affections or dogma which may cloud clear apprehension and empirical investigation. In particular, though the scientific quest is morally motivated by the need 'to make nature serve the business and conveniences of man', emotive and moral judgments must be kept out of scientific method itself – a prototype of the claim of scientific neutrality.[16] Observation, reason and method were the combined tools for investigation of nature. Locke, though disagreeing with Bacon on the extent of possible knowledge of the nature of substance, was nonetheless Baconian in the insistence on productionist enclo-

sure and agrarian reform which forms the backbone of the property doctrine in *Two Treatises of Government*, and his celebrated self-description as an underlabourer clearing away some of the rubbish that stands in the way of knowledge in the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* was in fact a jibe at the Scholastic rivals.

It is in Locke's work that we find for the first time the combination of factors that greens rage against today – capitalist private ownership, an acquisitive vision of human nature, maximised efficiency, expanded productivity, scientific optimism.[17] Here we can find the first systematic reduction of nature to mere economic means without recourse to the *qualitative* factors of working interaction that had previously impinged in peasant and craft traditions and which, taken alongside the fact that most humans lived in mixed communities with other species, helped to retain some sort of ethical constraint on moral praxis. Its significance, however, is twofold, concerning the primary inner commonalities between humans and nonhuman animals on the one side and a shift in perceptions of outer nature on the other. Firstly, both Cartesian repudiation of the senses and Baconian repudiation of the passions in the quest for true knowledge served to exaggerate human uniqueness and deny commonalities with the rest of nature. This is important in both its Prometheanism and its manifestation of denial, its mistrust and refusal of emotive connection. Once again, the ideal manifested in dangerous purity comes into play, this time in defining man as separate from nature through the purity of reason, a faculty seen as embattled against natural emotions. Midgley notes that the language of purification is typical of mechanistic science at the time, showing 'a new purifying zeal, a passion for disinfection', an impersonality that 'came to be seen as essential to science' and which was religious and political in inspiration, directed 'against what seemed like nature-worship' on the part of its adversaries, the schools of Scholasticism and natural magic.[18] Power is bought at the expense of emotive engagement with the object, and the embattled vision of the faculties of reason and feeling as opponents, already to some extent established in Western thought, is reinforced. Moreover the two are no longer conceptually linked, as they were for Plato, by any mediating force of *thymos*: though desires that were regarded as respectable – notably acquisitive desire, which motivated economically productive transformative labour in the Lockean scheme – could be harnessed, the default position between feeling and reason becomes one of opposition. The repudiation of inner feeling and commonality with the remainder of nature is thus exacerbated, and this links to the second point, the shift in attitude towards outer nature. This is most strikingly manifested in Bacon's well documented language: it is with the victory of the Baconian school that the image of nature moves from that of nurturing mother to that of the harlot.

The shift of image is striking, and we must ask why this image of negative femininity was chosen rather than that of, say, the witch or the nag; after all, Bacon had presided at witch-trials. The answer surely reinforces the emphasis on

purity of reason, along with repudiation of the senses and emotions shared with other animals. The figure of the harlot is not only one of danger and immorality but of temptation and impurity. Baconian truth can only be extracted from nature when she is 'under constraint and vexed', not in freedom. Both inner and outer nature must be restrained in the extreme in order to attain truths which maximise human power and economic improvement. The clarity and regularity of underlying patterns can only come to be perceived through a process of restraint and purgation. Nature in freedom, both in terms of nonhuman phenomena and the human senses and emotions is dangerous, unreliable, deceptive, dirty – in a word, impure.

If the cultural impact of this conception of pure reason and impure nature was indeed as I suggest, then it constitutes a radical anti-naturalistic break with preceding conceptions of scientific enquiry based on motivations of wonder, respect and intellectual aesthetics. By reference to a single faculty, reason, defined as quite separate from natural feeling, the scientist breaks free of connection to a relational order of natural items and can objectify them for instrumental purposes. This radical separation of subject and object, reinforced by inner separation of reason and feeling, purges felt quality in interaction with objects. 'The subject', notes Barrett, 'separates itself from the object in order to ensure its own mastery over it'; this is the statement of 'man's self-assertion in the face of nature' which 'in outline is the metaphysics that lies behind the technological era'.[19] It renders possible the feelingless application of technique in technological production, the starting point of those senses of disconnection which have gone under the various names of Marxian alienation, Durkheimian anomie, Weberian inner emptiness, Puritan life denial, each embedded in the processes and products of labour itself. It is this which, both in Locke's political philosophy and in its influence on our own times, enables the reduction of natural items to mere economic instrumentality appear not merely acceptable but of the very essence of rationality. There are thus three intertwined factors here – radicalised cleavages of subject and object as well as of reason and the passions, the reduction of nature's status and the radical instrumentalisation of objects through disengaged technical method – which are key elements of the Enlightenment project open to legitimate green critique. (It should be noted that there are many other components of the Enlightenment project, such as the emphasis on individual experience and democratic accountability in knowledge, as well as the expanding circle of moral concern across humanity, that it is surely important for greens to retain. Drawing the critical line here may enable greens to oppose *possessive* individualism and technocracy without sliding towards draconian, racist or sexist pre-Enlightenment forms of community).

If my theme of pure reason opposing natural impulses is correct here, then we would expect the new ethos to be manifested in rigorous proscriptive processes against vices of naturalistic excess and irrationality in Locke's England and Descartes' France, and this is indeed what we find. Just two years after the

Lockean-principled 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688 came the rise of 'Societies for the Reformation of Manners', groups dedicated to suppressing vice. In suitably Protestant manner, they were voluntary: for the first time, organised private initiative was deployed as a check on public corruption. These societies stand at the beginning of the family of voluntary reform movements which were later to have such an impact on British political life. They have been described as 'the most notable social change of their time', and their rallying point was the demand for greater social and sexual purity.[20] Such societies experienced a golden age over the following decade, often being far more effective and dedicated than officialdom in pursuing their tasks and targets.

In Catholic France, meanwhile, the confining of a different form of naturalistic enemy of reason was under way, this time through official and statist rather than voluntary agencies. As Foucault observes, the figures of the fool and the madman had been regular fixtures on the Renaissance streets; though existing on the margins of society, no movement for confining them occurred until the 17th century, with the founding of the Hopital Général in Paris in 1656. The rationale for the institution was moral and economic, not medical; the occupants were an amalgam of beggars, the poor, the insane, the indigent and idle, peasants driven from their land, unemployed soldiers and the sick, and they were to be set to economically productive work.[21] Within a year, 1% of the population of Paris were confined in this institution alone, many of them peasants, and here a striking social transformation takes place.

The image of the peasant fool, referred to in both England and France as a 'natural', a person minimally acculturated into social symbolic systems, had been a stock figure in French drama and literature; as one of the *idiotes*, a private person, he had stood in a marginal and boundaryline position in society. In the guise of the *villein* he directly opposed the figures of medieval courtly sophistication, represented as a figure of fun by the court and the rising merchant class; notable for his lack of refinement and vulgar, physically orientated humour, he was often a descendant of the figure of the 'wild man', a representative of 'free nature' in Baconian terms, of rough, naturalistic vitality which refused to be restrained. With the development of confinement, this figure is to be tamed by labour or else reduced to sheer animality conceived in terms of simple physical energy. He is enclosed, like Lockean land, in order to be made productive; alternatively, he is classified as a true madman, and thus not required to work. Instead, madmen were viewed and visited by the public at commercial rates as a spectacle. The fear of 'the beast within', which lurks in the background of Bacon's doctrine to expunge the passions in detached observation, becomes objectified, as Foucault observes, into an external beast.[22] Reason, regarded as a faculty at war with an inner emotional beast, had divorced itself from this connection, and the concession that only madmen did not labour emphasised that productive, initiative-bearing, transformative activity was now the mark of

humanity and reason. The marginal figure of the 'natural' who once dramatically counterpointed the pretensions of the court and commercial class with his vitality is confined, separated as an irrational impurity. The *villein* becomes, both ethically and etymologically, the villain – mad, bad and dangerous to know. Locke's words are appropriate: God gave the world 'to the use of the Industrious and Rational'; though the 'Woods and Forests' contain 'irrational untaught Inhabitants' who 'keep right by following Nature', we must remember how 'far the busie mind of man' can 'carry him to a Brutality below the level of Beasts, when he quits his reason, which places him almost equal to Angels'.[23]

These developments, of course, had further roots in the society of the time. In an England troubled by memories of civil war and possessed of growing population and a rising middle class, the placing of labour and a moral imperative towards scientifically maximised productionism into the central foreground of political theory was highly understandable. Emerging from these developments, growing industrialisation and rural depopulation further separated increasingly large quantities of the population from directly experienced dependency on the land and qualitatively charged interaction with it, and it is likely that capitalism, with its use-value/exchange-value conflation and expansionist dynamic, could never have arisen without this odd combination of influences.[24] At the same time, to argue that significant elements of our intellectual heritage may be regarded as dangerously anti-naturalistic and thus partly responsible for our situation now is not necessarily to believe in a historical 'scapegoat' who (presumably deliberately) '*made* things go wrong', as one critic alleges;[25] rather, it is to recognise that clarifying current issues requires a knowledge of their origins.

In the course of these historical developments, and increasingly in more recent times, the dichotomous division between man and external nature increasingly *became* real in that it acquired an experiential base, for the physical separation of town from areas of nature functioned to reinforce the segregation of humanity from nature. With technological development and the expansion of capitalist social relations, this enables nature to be made ever more other, more symbolically opposed to *rational* human economically productive activity (even whilst acting as its denied presupposition), and progressively more experientially reduced to a meaningless item for disconnected consumption.[26] Boundary lines, the areas of physical encounter with nature necessary for the chance to undercut this process experientially and intellectually, are progressively drawn ever more sharply, as with the Foucauldian example given, moving towards hyperseparation.[27]

Some Enlightenment developments, then, primarily focusing around rationality, productionism and a radicalised cleavage of subject and object, had potent anti-naturalistic effect in promoting embattled conceptions both of the human psyche and the relationship between humanity and the rest of the natural order, and are thus legitimate green targets. However, questions remain as to what ideas

fell by the wayside in the process, and the ontological significance of these findings. I shall close this section by focusing on a key conceptual shift, that in the concept of *culture*.

That so many today regard culture as intrinsically a consumer item (as in 'popular culture'), as being necessarily ontologically and/or axiologically *opposed* to nature in a dichotomous sense (rather than being merely distinguishable from it), or as being indistinguishable from nature (as in Callicott's case) marks the enormity of the historical shift we have noted. It is, in this sense, a fulcrum word. For culture, in its root etymological sense of *cultus*, had none of these implications. Kohák expresses the radical shift immaculately:

> No longer is it an expression of *cultus*... Rather, it becomes a consumer product, a part of the 'entertainment industry', subordinated together with all the being of the humans and of the society to the dynamics of production and consumption... The term and the concept of culture, however, have very different roots. Culture is a matter of cultivation, echoing the Latin *cultus*, the yielding of respect, honouring the sacredness of all that is. The man of culture is one who cultivates, who honours the nobility of being. The husbandman is a man of culture, as words like agriculture and silviculture remind us... His task... is not an arbitrary one, displacing nature. *Nature is his guide in the task of cultivation*. That is *cultus* – and in that sense, culture is not the contradiction of nature but rather the task of humans within it. (Kohák, 1984, pp.20, 91, emphasis added)

This shift partly came about through the fact that for Baconians, moral culture was vitally concerned with maximising productivity; what is more significant here, however, is the shift in orientation in the idea of working with nature. The idea of *being guided by nature*, and in doing so operating in ways that recognised commonality with it, is one which has a long Western tradition – as, for instance, in Greek and Renaissance ideas of being guided in sculpture by the lines already immanent in the marble, or the Pre-Raphaelite slogan of 'Truth to Nature' – and has equivalents in numerous non-Western cultures, but the notion was displaced by the Enlightenment developments outlined and its significance has been increasingly forgotten. Yet working in this manner necessarily requires emotive and aesthetic engagement with the object, the use of the despised passions in a discriminatory sense, thus *linking* those elements of human inner nature which we share with other creatures to the outer nature we are encountering. Sensory and emotive acceptance and engagement, in which both the passions and reason are called upon in an integrated manner, can thus be contrasted to repudiation of feeling and the drive to mastery through rational instrumental objectification. As such, instead of supposing that we must view man and nature dualistically, with only servitude or domination as our choice for modes of relationship, a third path of human action in the world opens up, in which we are bonded to nature through our interactions with it. Such an orientation resonates with the ethic of respectful use, but crucially, in the initial process of perceptual and practical encounter with natural items, it *begins* with engagement and openness to possibility rather than

an immediately instrumental motivation or orientation.[28] Culture, in this sense, is a mode of being and orientation to nature guided by both inner and outer nature, and is essentially concerned with connection rather than disengagement whilst lacking an expansionist dynamic; as such, artifacts produced under its aegis attempt to harmonise with nature rather than opposing it. The reason for this is that they are informed by an integrated human inner nature, in turn linked through cognitive respect to the outer nature that has been worked with. Similarly, goods produced under the Lockean-Baconian rationale of disconnection and solely quantitative productionism are produced under conditions of anti-naturalistic inner duality and the motivation of outer control. Artifacts are necessarily manifestations of human intent, certainly, but the *extent* to which they may be seen as *wholly separate from* or *opposed to* nature is dependent on the rationale, knowledge, social and productive conditions and cognitive orientation of the producer.[29] Each mode of orientation to production leaves its defining marks, and this duly leads us to the ontology of nature.

3. NATURE, CULTURE AND ARTIFACT: FROM PRAGMATIC NATURALISM TO AN ONTOLOGICAL SPECTRUM

In order for the historical critique just outlined to have ontological significance, we first require a philosophical context to frame it. Having stated that I regard appeals to values or entities outside possible human experience to be inappropriate, the time is now right to advance a more positive framework in which the critique of the radicalised feeling-reason and subject-object divisions, with their resultant instrumentalised objectification of nature, can be cashed out into ontological significance. The framework for this will be the combination of William James' radical empiricism and pragmatism, a combination I refer to as pragmatic naturalism.[30]

Space precludes giving an extended account of Jamesian radical empiricism here, but an outline is necessary. Given the radical cleavages of subject/object and feeling/reason outlined, James' radical empiricism has the advantage of being an attempt to banish the subject-object duality *as an epistemological starting point*, though not as a functional device, whilst simultaneously insisting on integrating the faculties rather than splitting reason from feeling. James argues that 'there is only one primal stuff or material in the world, a stuff of which everything is composed, and if we call that stuff "pure experience", then knowing can easily be explained as a particular sort of relation towards one another into which portions of pure experience may enter'; this relation is itself a part of pure experience rather than being additional to it, and within the relation 'one of its "terms" becomes the subject or bearer of the knowledge, the knower, the other becomes the object known'.[31] James is not here advancing an ontological thesis in the *traditional* substantialist sense of 'ontology', for he is clear that 'there is no *general* stuff of which experience at large is made' and accordingly

there are 'as many stuffs as there are "natures" in the things experienced', and his answer to the question of what any given portion of experience is comprised of is that it 'is made of *that*, of just what appears, of space, of intensity, of flatness, brownness, heaviness, or what not'.[32] Rather, the thesis is *predescriptively* ontological in the sense that experience is an ongoing unified flux of all the senses and is predescriptively *real*, and it is only from the data of this flux that we may subsequently make ontological claims in the traditional substantialist sense. Accordingly, 'experience' is a collective name for all such sensible natures, and so the question of the composition of experience is a pseudo-problem, experience being 'the summum genus of which everything must have been a part before we can speak of it at all'.[33] James thus tried to use immediate 'pure' experience as a non-dualistic precursor to the subject-object dichotomy, with pure experience temporally preceding the division of subject and object. Hence the 'instant field of the present is at all times what I call the "pure" experience', as yet only 'virtually or potentially either object or subject' but at the moment 'plain, unqualified actuality, a simple *that*' which 'is *there*, we *act* upon it'; this acting upon the experience then involves 'the doubling of it in retrospection into a state of mind and a reality intended thereby'.[34]

What, then, distinguishes 'pure experience' from everyday adult conscious experience in which we are aware of ourselves as distinct subjects? Here we may recall the earlier distinction between the unique human capacities for symbolic manipulation with our natural commonalities, the realm of the feelings and senses. On James' account, consciousness is selective, and we attend to and construct our reality according to what interests us (where 'interest', it should be noted, covers the full range of human faculties, including the aesthetic and ethical, and is not taken as reductively Darwinian or intrinsically acquisitive).[35] The structuring of this selective process is itself conditioned by past experience; subject and object are primordially unitary in the instant field of pure experience, but we tend to subliminally eliminate the jarring or irrelevant, to construct the impression of our environment which is most harmonious and efficacious to our psychological and physical needs. The larger and more abstract the quantity of learnt abstractions and analogues from previous experience, acquired in order to help us flourish in the world, the more our selective processes tend to separate us from the sensory immediacy of pure experience and draw us towards conceptual rigidity.[36] As such, 'only new born babes, or men in semi-coma from sleep, drugs, illnesses, or blows, may be assumed to have an experience pure in the literal sense of a *that* which is not yet any definite *what*'; the purity of pure experience is '*only a relative term*, meaning the proportional amount of unverbalised sensation which it still embodies'.[37]

Within everyday experience, then, there is a continuous interaction of immediate raw sensory experience with 'copies' from past experience and abstractions that we have learned and have been historically developed to help us flourish in the world. Within this process feeling and reason interact, but are

temporally distinguished in that it is feeling which guides our attention and movement. The sense of linkage to surrounding environment which exists before our subdivision into epistemic subject and object is dynamic, informed by previous conceptual knowledge, and basic to the structure of the reality we then analyse. As such, it involves evaluative elements usually called 'subjective', but this is a discriminatory sense rather than an anarchic caprice.[38] It is thus through the dynamic of feeling 'that we *cognise relations*, particularly by the cognitive feelings of tendency and transition' in experience, and accordingly it is the case that 'feeling *is* cognitive'.[39]

From the above account of radical empiricism's core, we should note the following consequences. Firstly, accepting the scheme as an epistemological basis and a model of human cognition gives us an account that implicitly repudiates the emphases on a radicalised subject-object divide, the purity of reason and (through James' insistence on the multiplicity and breadth of the human agent's interests) the privileging of instrumentalising and acquisitive motivations in interaction with environment – precisely those elements that the historical account deemed problematic about the Enlightenment – whilst simultaneously accepting the legitimacy of individual experience and enquiry. It yields a basic framework for criticising the alienating effects of modernity which greens condemn, as it repudiates the pervasive reason/passions divide. Secondly, we can reject appeals to inexperienceable entities on nature's behalf not merely as politically unhelpful, but also because human experience is all we can speak of – from which it does *not* follow that humans are all that ethically count. Thirdly, on this account there is indeed no *wholly unmediated* experience of nature or the world for a socialised, conscious human adult, but this is not to say that nature (for instance) is merely a social construct, for in moments of openness to the world, there will still be experiences which are richer and relatively more 'pure' than others. As such, whilst it is the case that our experience of nature is mediated by past social influence, it is not the case that all experiences of nature are equally 'socially constructed', since in moments of relatively pure sensory experience we may be closer to unmediated nature than at other times. Fourthly, the 'purity' of 'pure experience' is not purity in the dangerous sense, but a relative purity across a spectrum of experience, and so this account of the workings of human 'inner' cognitive nature lends itself easily to translation into an ontological spectrum of 'outer' nature.[40] Fifthly, the emphasis on receptivity and the cognitive role of feeling in James' account is clearly consonant with the older conception of culture as *cultus* and the ethic of respectful use noted in relation to Kohák's historical observations, though the issue of value is not one I will fully pursue here. With these points in mind, I move to the explicit ontological mapping.

James sees the human cognitive process as comprising three parts: the initial sensory flux, the relations obtaining between this and the mental 'copies' that we then work on, and our existing stock of abstract truths from culture and past

personal experience. These are the elements, James tells us in *Pragmatism*, that truth investigations must take account of, and amongst these parts, it is 'only the smallest and recentest fraction of the first two parts of reality that comes to us without the human touch, and that fraction has immediately to become humanised in the sense of being squared, assimilated, or in some way adapted, to the humanised mass already there'.[41] Let us now take these three parts alongside our historical critique as being the basis for an ontological spectrum of nature and artifact, arguing by analogy as we go and thinking in terms of human experience of nature whilst acknowledging that each stage may slip into the next.

i) The first part of reality is pure experience, sensory unity unmediated by abstract influence from the past. The senses in radical empiricism flow, press data in on us whether we will it or not, and we select from that data; they are a fluidic unity possessed of their own dynamic. Moments in which this is felt as most apparent would most obviously correlate to the experiences of unity with nature attested to by deep ecologists and wilderness defenders. In terms of our scheme, such experiences would correlate to the experiential peaks and senses of deep integration and calm which occur when we are closest to pure experience; indeed, James himself spoke for the worth of such experiences in a brief essay.[42] At this stage, there is mere sensation of the type we share with other animals and the instrumental operations of human consciousness and previous symbolic constructions have not yet entered the picture. This is thus nature as 'original, innate character', as 'uninterfered with', 'the thing we start from, the thing we have not yet "done anything about"'. It is a sense of nature consistent with our pragmatic bearings, since the contrast of the innate propensity with the realm of social constructions is kept alive, as Lewis observes, by 'the daily experience of men as practical, not speculative, beings'.[43] It is this sensory element, along with instinctual and emotive drives, that is the most primordially natural component in the human, associated with openness to novelty and spontaneity; as such, we can correlate this element of predescriptive 'inner' ontology to wilderness, to nature whose dynamics have not yet been severely edited and transformed in accordance with human design (though it may have been experienced before by other humans). Rainforests would also qualify, since large-scale indigenous human habitation within them has not operated to human*ise* them in accordance with transformative goals. As with inner adult experience, raw physical nature in this sense is small and decreasing in the modern world, but this need not undercut its significance: all that is undercut by placing it on an ontological spectrum in this way is the stumbling block between European greens and some American campaigners that it is mainly or only wilderness that counts as important for natural worth. We might instead graft on a green theory of value here which acknowledges the worth of such places as possessed of relative independence, whilst not seeing them as being the only nature that exists. Similarly, the presence of (some) human-occupied rainforest in this category need not entail our projecting dubious and possibly quasi-racist ideas of human

'wildlife' or an 'ecologically noble savage' upon such peoples, since there is no implication of collective essentialism here; rather, we can think of peoples minimally or harmoniously affecting their environments in such areas as being able to do so through standing in a position of 'epistemic privilege' in relation to those environments due to their direct acquaintance with them, whilst increases in transformative activity will push the area in question towards the second ontological category.[44]

ii) The second area on the spectrum is derived initially from the 'internal' relationship between the raw sensory experience and the mental 'copies'. The activity in this second stage of reality involves squaring the sensory input with previous associations of particular items that the senses inform us of. Such internalisation and acquired significance of association is based on our natural *capacity* to formalise mental copies, associating these with symbolic meanings and descriptive labels. This is how a second sense of nature as *settled character and identity* is built up, which in ordinary English usage is, as Lewis notes, 'by far the commonest native meaning' of the term 'nature' (in this case deriving from the Latin 'natura').[45] Here we should clarify further between symbolically gained associations derived from previous human experience and socialisation, and those associations from previous experience which are non-abstract, as might be attained by humans who have been adopted as infants by nonhuman animals. Here the acquired capacity for symbol manipulation which distinguishes the 'feral' biological human from the human with developed symbolic capacities may act as a marker between the human and the distinctively human, between human nature as 'untouched' and as 'settled character'. The contents of a 'feral' human's consciousness will be given by their interactions with objects like any socialised human, but such humans will use the non-verbal communication methods favoured by their adopters and differ from a socialised human in lacking the *extent* of abstract conceptualisation made possible by symbolic human language, and thus lack the learned conceptual techniques attained in linguistic socialisation.[46] Accordingly the settled character they attain will be different. A socialised human, however, will have internalised the symbolic past accretions of a human group, and thus taken in a set of past symbolic analogues derived from the processes of their social group's history rather than their own sensory experience. These analogues, the collective language, beliefs and 'stock of truths', will have been developed because they have functional uses – where 'functional' is interpreted in terms of the wide Jamesian range of human interests that exist and have existed – for human beings operating in a particular social and ecological environment. As such, in Jamesian terms they constitute ready-made ideas, estimates of reality, techniques and conceptual short-cuts to be used as instruments for purposeful action but which might also drape the fullness of reality and thus deaden our sensitivity to its flux.[47] These ready-made ideas, then, are conceptual instruments created for human purposes, products of human *design* rather than purely personal sets of experiential analogues developed from

interaction with the world. The interaction of sensations and mental copies in this case is thus *not* a relationship of the 'natural' with the 'human' but of the natural with the human*ised*; the beliefs originate from outside the agent rather than inside as a product of reflection on their own experiences. Though internalised through using natural capacities, and though it is 'of our nature' in the trivial sense to do so and the human who has internalised these is thus 'natural' in the secondary sense, *what* is internalised is partly artifactualised through having been produced by preceding instrumental rationality. Once internalised, as a socially acquired belief, the distinction becomes a matter of degree rather than kind, though the familiar fact that beliefs acquired through personal trial from scratch tend to possess more inner personal directness when reflected upon than those learnt at second hand confirms that the distinction exists.

Though it might seem peculiar to argue that socialised humans who are 'natural' in the secondary sense earlier defined should also have internalised artifactual constructions, the contradiction is apparent rather than real; it is the element of design and instrumentality from preceding human activities that gives it some artifacticity. Within this framework, the artifacticity level internalised within a socialised human agent is governed by two linked factors. The first is the extent to which the conceptual short-cut connects to and is reinforced or created by their personal direct experience so that they thus feel inner intimacy in relation to it. Artifacticity, as a product of conceptual thought and instrumental rationality, is primordially less temporally immediate than feeling. The second point is that the extent of artifacticity will depend partly on the extent to which the artifactual belief is *abstracted from* concrete experience, and the further the symbolic remove from the stimulus of direct sensory experience, the greater the extent of artifacticity.

We may now parallel this process into our ontology of 'external' nature as follows: *just as the relative purity of pure experience is proportional on a spectrum to the amount of unverbalised sensation embodied in it, as against the verbal instrumental short-cuts which define significance and purposes, so the extent of an item's 'naturalness' is in inverse proportion to the amount of abstract instrumentalisation which the item has undergone.* Thus, this second part of reality can be mapped onto borderlands, areas where human and nonhuman nature meet, but where nonhuman nature's dynamics are not wholly muted. Just as raw sensory experience interacts with past abstract copies which impact upon it and help edit it without (yet) wholly turning it into something else, so here we can place areas of nature that bear the marks of past human activity and still interact with humans now but have retained or regained their dynamic. Accordingly, this second ontological category would include such items as English hedgerows, national and local parks, organic farms, even informal gardens and city-country fingers, with gradations within this broad category to reflect the extent to which human instrumental design is absent and thus the dynamics are fluid, not pre-chosen and designed. Nature is thus present here,

crucially, to the extent that it has (a) not been transformed by human instrumental activity, or (b) retained its own dynamics in the face of such human activity. This second category, then, denotes physical borderlands but also the domain of culture as *cultus* within those boundaries.

Before moving on to the third category on the spectrum, we must take our bearings to link the proposed ontology with the historical critique given earlier. As noted, James' account of the three parts of reality is explicitly placed within the context of truth-investigations, and for Jamesian pragmatic naturalism, our abstract hypotheses *about* the reality we primordially gain from the senses can themselves be evaluated. A multiplicity of hypotheses can exist to explain any given phenomenon and thus be candidates for being the truth about that phenomenon, and our guidance in choosing *which* hypotheses should be that the truest fit is the richest fit – that is, the hypotheses which accounts for most of experience *and* best fits with existing requirements of consistency, coherence and human fulfilment across the range of interests. When one theory explains more of reality equally well as another that explains less of reality, or when two theories cover the same amount of ground but one beats another in terms of harmonising better with existing knowledge and/or intellectual aesthetics, we should in each instance take the richer option. With this guideline, we can contrast two different approaches to the interaction between experience and copies, nature and artifact, and given that human culture consists of continuous accretions of abstract 'knowledge-about' an experienced world, correlate these different approaches to the two notions of culture earlier noted, culture as *cultus*, in which nature functions as a guiding principle of development, as against the modernist Cartesian/Baconian/Lockean model, in which nature is an object of disengaged manipulation and consumption. Each may be classified in terms of an orientation to experienced nature, and I shall call these modes of orientation the *cultus* mode and the *policy* mode. *Cultus* has already been explained; the term *policy* is chosen because to operate with a policy is to perceive or act with a *projective* (rather than receptive) intention already in mind. The choice is also etymologically apt in that the root of policy, the Greek *polis*, denoted not merely a physical city-state set off from the countryside but a collection of *wills*, a political community in which power operated and was contested.

The felt qualities of experience under the *cultus* mode are, as already suggested, incorporative of integration and the embodying of respect. The artisans who work with nature in this manner feel linked to their work, integrated with it; as such, though they will make necessary instrumental use of nature and must of necessity recognise its being 'outside' their bodily locus, the process of psychophysical engagement with nature will breed a sense of unity with and respect for it, a sense in which modesty of construction is affirmed and unnecessary egoistic grandiosity or waste repudiated. Since inner and outer nature guide the process, nature itself must be respected, and encounters with parts of it may lead to expanded respect for fellow denizens.[48] By contrast, the

policy mode begins through a background assumption of separation and a motivation of instrumentalisation in which felt qualities of relationship are ruled out of court as 'sentimental' or 'irrational', at best as subjective 'consumer pleasures'. It is not merely a question of well documented estrangement in the process of production, but of the progressive transmission of this attitude across the experiential board. The policy mode functions by disconnecting subject from object and then focusing on objectified items as abstracted from context. Thus we see visitors to national parks who complain that squirrels will not stay still for camera shots; rather than acknowledge that the creature is *wild* in the sense of being *willed* and possessed of her own dynamic, the animal is categorised as a sort of defective consumer item and the possibility of genuine encounter ruled out from the beginning by adoption of the policy mode in cognition. This sense of disconnection and separation from the world is pervasive of modernity, a consequence of the loss of the reliance on feeling as a cognitive component in the creation of culture since the radicalisation of the subject-object divide. The touchstone of authentic truth is instead taken as being a set of abstract laws governing an alien realm of senseless matter in motion, without stimulating experiential qualities but nonetheless claiming *greater* validity, and in such a state of existential homelessness, only quantitative material accumulation can claim any objective basis as a guide for action. From such a comparison, it seems clear that it is the *cultus* mode which offers the richer option for experience, and hence for the widening of human satisfactions. If the model is accepted, there would thus be an easy harmony between green accounts of value and of ontology.

From this viewpoint, both the rise of the green movement and the inarticulate estrangement felt by many towards contemporary technology and work institutions derive from the same set of dynamics: a Lockean informing vision and the radical disruption of the sensory flux, dissolving care and feeling. Such developments were understandable at the time, motivated by the needs of a growing populace, yet their continuing expansion in the contemporary North, usually at the expense of the poorest in both North and South, is a dynamic of affluence; this lacks any such easy justification, and is creating ever greater instability and insecurity. Similarly, Baconian science's fruits have proved immensely valuable for many purposes, but the rash of technologically fuelled attendant discourses of intellectual ultra-specialisation may be creating a Tower of Babel. Since such technology and power relations enframe our lives, and since primordial reality (experience) is unitary rather than 'objectively' being split between separate subject and object, then the rationale embedded in the objects' conditions of production can and will be transmitted to the objects themselves; as these progressively inform consciousness and actions, the process of estrangement is ongoing, remaking the world in its own image. *The spirit and rationale which went into an item's production is thus relevant, and can inform that item's ontological status*.

iii) This takes us to the third area of our ontological spectrum, that of the artifactual. This correlates to the 'stock of truths' in James' account, which refers to the already existing truths about the world which we hold in our minds. Such truths are the results of completed investigations about experience; though revisable with new experience, they are completed items, humanised and ready for instrumental use in the world. As such, it is at this point that culture as *cultus* slides into true *artifacticity*, to finished products that are manifestations of human instrumental rationality and have their dynamics defined by this, rather than retaining a level of independence, for artifacts are *wholly* transformed and humanised. This category thus covers a wide area, from ploughshares at one end to cities at the other, but we can deploy our historical critique to distinguish further within the banding. Since, as argued, there is a difference of orientation between culture as *cultus* and as policy, which in turn impacts upon the products made under their aegis, so here we may distinguish artifacts originating from the *cultus* mode of orientation and production, which I shall call *cultus artifacts*, to those originating from policy, which I shall call *artificial*. *Cultus* artifacts, though finally defined by human purpose, are generated and produced through processes which embodied the spirit of utilising and respecting nature's own dynamics and possession of some independence, incorporating the domain of emotive care in the human process of production; the artificial, by contrast, is informed by a rationale of separation, objectification and the subjugation of nature's dynamics by feelingless application of abstract techniques. Thus *cultus* artifacts includes such things as Kelmscott Press books, locally produced architecture and artworks, some of the systemically orientated eco-friendly technologies identified by Callicott, and sustainable cities. The *artificial*, by contrast, implies inauthenticity, forcing against the grain, excessive abstraction without felt quality; the artificial is defined not merely by the fact that it subjugates nature's dynamics to human instrumentality, for all artifacts do this, but that it explicitly normatively intends to oppose and supplant them. The realm of the artificial would thus include factory assembly lines, agribusiness areas of total non-indigenous monoculturing, genetic manipulation technologies, and the postmodern megalopolis (which contra Callicott, probably includes Chicago). We might express the spectrum by means of a diagram, as follows:

Parts of Reality	**Ontology of Nature/Artifact**
Sensory flux	Untransformed Nature
Sensations and Mental 'Copies'	Borderline Places Culture as *Cultus*
Stock of Truths	Completed *Cultus* Artifacts Artificial

4 ONTOLOGY, NATURE AND HUMAN INTERESTS

Having suggested an ontological scheme to ground opposition to new deep technologies and link American and European green concerns, let us conclude by briefly linking the historicised ontology to considerations of political motivation and human fulfilment.

A majority of greens would surely agree that the current capitalist world order incorporates grotesque over-consumption in the North with the pillaging of the South's resources, and that despite ongoing ecological modernisation, these practices are ultimately unsustainable. Yet motivating public opinion towards Southern debt cancellation, sustainability, corporate accountability and social justice is a vast task, and in the North at least, doomsday scenarios and concern over far-off forests, however accurate, may not suffice to provide the necessary push; the experienced world itself is at present too strongly privatised and commodified. The political Achilles heel, as McKibben suggests, is more likely to lie in the low quality of life that often accompanies a high standard of living: estrangement and rootlessness, the lack of workplace influence, emotive engagement or coherence which is so prevalent in contemporary consumerist culture.[49] On this account, these phenomena derive *both* from possessive individualism and particular modes of orientation to the world, currently embodied in our artifacts but in principle changeable with changed practices, and a nature-based theory of value might connect the loss of coherence to the loss of nature as a framing human context. If these points are made and alternatives created, opportunities for motivating wider international political change may grow from a stronger experientially grounded basis. The pragmatic naturalist ontology of the type advanced fits with this, attacking the estranged modern ethos at its metaphysical root whilst implicitly proposing simpler and more respectful indigenous Western modes of working and organisation.

Now let us put the pieces together. If the essential problem with the Enlightenment perspectives which I have attacked is that their cleavage of feeling from reason is false and estranging, then we may plausibly defend nature as John Muir did, as a wider context in which the ills of this alienation may be alleviated through experience. This fits with our pragmatic bearings in that for James, as for Muir, the 'understanding of "human interests", of what is valu*able* for human enrichment, must be expanded not just in terms of long-range vs short range and conceivable vs actual, but in terms of a greatly extended notion of human interest or human welfare', a notion which thinks of the human agent as a many-sided agent rather than solely a consumer.[50]

Defining nature and the extent of naturalness of an area by inverse reference to the amount of it transformed through exposure to abstracted instrumentalisation, especially of the distorting, anti-natural Lockean-Baconian type, we reject dangerous purity and acknowledge that human experience is the unavoidable touchstone of ontological status, whilst enabling the establishment of an *onto-*

logical spectrum of naturalness in which nature can remain nature even with many humans living in it, as with the case of the Amazonian rainforest. This form of accounting would acknowledge the legitimacy of indigenous peoples using the resources of areas like the Amazon whilst placing the burden of ecological blame on the high-tech, high-consumption North rather than across some ill-defined 'humanity', thus enabling a resolution in principle of otherwise intractable problems concerning indigenous land use and preservation. In terms of local motivational strategies in the North, attention can at least initially be focused precisely on mixed spaces, on the local nature which talk of far-off forests can distract from, areas of interaction as well as segregated preservation. Making the spectrum relative and tripartite avoids misanthropic 'cleansing' tendencies whilst keeping the option of preservation on broadly Goodin-type grounds where appropriate, defending a nature-based theory of value in which nature is seen as the best framing context for human agency. The better these points are made, the greater the chances for green success.

NOTES

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[2] For disparities experienced in international meetings, see Norton, 1991, pp. 227–8.

[3] See, for example, Elliot 1997, Katz 1997, Lee 1999. Earlier instances advancing theories of natural value include Brennan 1988 and Goodin 1992.

[4] Callicott, 1994a, pp. 59–60, 64, my emphases. Callicott describes his perspective as 'reconstructive postmodernism' to differentiate it from European deconstructionism; see Callicott 1994b, pp. 185–7. See also Rothenberg 1993 and Graber 1995.

[5] For example, Barry 1995, Mellor 1992, Bookchin 1990.

[6] Callicott 1994a, p. 78.

[7] Though it may still be strongly disputed, as in Rolston, 1994.

[8] Ironically, elsewhere Callicott does implicitly acknowledge a spectrum when dealing with minimally humanised areas; see Callicott 1996, p. 153.

[9] The classic capacity which enables the transmission and development of other capacities is symbolic human language, which differs from other primate communication in the extent of conceptual abstraction enabled. For examples of humans whose development differed widely through being socialised by non-human animals, see Weston 1994, pp. 43–55.

[10] James used the former of each of these terms in his psychology, the latter in his philosophy. See respectively James 1918 and 1978a.

[11] Goodin 1992, p. 51, see also pp. 30–54; Achterberg 1994, p. 81.

[12] Goodin 1992, pp. 52–4.

[13] Naess, 1989; Capra, 1985; Mathews, 1991.

[14] See respectively Bramwell 1989, Dobson 1990, pp. 96–7, 64; Coates, 1993.
[15] For a clear etymological examination, see Lewis 1960.
[16] Bacon, 1960, pp. 25, 180.
[17] I have argued this extensively elsewhere; see Stephens, 1999.
[18] Midgley, 1994, pp. 79, 81.
[19] Barrett, 1978, p. 191.
[20] Bristow, 1977, p. 11.
[21] Foucault, 1997, pp. 46–57.
[22] Foucault, 1997, pp. 70, 72.
[23] Locke, 1988, 'Second Treatise', pp. 291, 184–5.
[24] See T.J. Jackson Lears, 1997. The etymology of the term *consumption* also supports the thesis that emergent capitalism and industrialism broke the organic link between Western man and nature. It is derived is from the French *consommer*, which originally meant *consummation*, a mapped ending point in a natural cyclical process; its meaning began to shift with the rise of merchants in the 16th and 17th centuries, eventually coming to its modern economic meaning of a private, disconnected act of usage.
[25] Bramwell, (1989), p. 16.
[26] See the analogous claims of self-validating reduction in Weston, 1996.
[27] The term *hyperseparation* here is indebted to Plumwood, 1993, pp. 41–68.
[28] The language of use-values here does not contradict the earlier attack on the radical instrumentalisation of nature and values; rather, the 'respectful use' criterion comes into play in explicitly instrumental activity. For the first clear outline on the ethic of respectful use of animals, see Routley and Routley 1980, pp. 179–80; on the significance of initial cognitive orientation, see Weston 1994 and 1996.
[29] My treatment here resembles the aesthetic socialism of William Morris and the critique of work alienation offered by the early Marx, but crucially differs from the latter in rejecting Marx's support for a historical dynamic of humanising nature through transformative industrial labour.
[30] I am indebted for this phrase to Thomas Martland, 1963.
[31] James 1912, p. 4.
[32] James 1912b, pp. 26–7. Its misinterpretation as a traditional ontological claim has been fuelled by the description of this element of the radical empiricism as 'neutral monism'. James himself did not use this term, which was coined by his anti-pragmatist opponent Russell. James did not deny the possible existence of inexperienceable things, but wanted to pragmatically exclude them from philosophical discourse.
[33] James 1978b, p. 95. The Gestalt psychology implications of Jamesian radical empiricism have been suggested as a precursor to the 'Ecosophy T' of Naess, but my treatment is less directly ethical. See McLaughlin 1993, pp. 191–96.
[34] James 1912, pp. 23–4.
[35] For James, the sense of 'interest' here is wide, engaged and interactive as given in the original Latin sense: '*inter-esse*, "to be in (or) among" it'. On the etymology, see Fromm 1980, p. 38.
[36] As James expresses it, the flux of pure experience 'no sooner comes than it tends to fill itself with emphases, and these salient parts become identified and fixed and abstract; so that experience now flows as if shot through with adjectives and nouns and prepositions and conjunctions'. James 1912, p. 94.
[37] James 1912, pp. 93–4, emphasis added.

[38] In *The Meaning of Truth* James clarifies that the 'pragmatist... has no objection to abstractions' but that 'he never ascribes to them a *higher* grade of reality', and in *Essays in Radical Empiricism* he shows despair at 'squaring and settling opinions unless Absolutists... will admit that all philosophies are hypotheses, to which *all* our faculties, *emotional as well as logical*, help us'. James 1978a, pp. 274–5; 1912, p. 279, emphases added.

[39] Frankenberry 1987, pp. 92–3.

[40] I use scare quotes here to indicate that initial pure experience is unitary, only subsequently being divided into subject and object for functional purposes of flourishing in the world. This also has the effect that subjectivity and objectivity may be seen as arranged on a spectrum, rather than being dichotomously opposed.

[41] James 1978a, p. 119.

[42] James argues that there is often 'a depth in those moments that constrains us to ascribe more reality to them than to all other experiences', that a 'vision of an inner significance in what, until then, we had realised only in the dead external way, often comes over a person suddenly', and notes that this 'sense of hidden meaning' not only appears indefinable in instrumental terms but frequently 'makes an epoch in his history' for the subject and 'starts upon us often from non-human natural things'. Life 'is always worth living' he opines, 'if one have such responsive sensibilities' as to enable the 'intense interest that life can assume when brought down to the... level of pure sensorial perception'. James 1929, pp. 9, 17–19.

[43] Lewis 1960, p. 45.

[44] On the concept of epistemic privilege and the worrying implications of the 'ecologically noble savage', see Buege 1996.

[45] Lewis, 1960, pp. 24–6.

[46] It should be noted that the human capacity for conceptual thought differs more in extent than in kind from other animals. For James, sensation differs from adult perception by the simplicity of its content; similarly, human conceptual thought differs from non-human by the complexity of its content. Non-human conceptual thought, such as being able to think of something needed that is not immediately present, occurs but without such higher levels of abstraction as are represented by explanatory statements, as Midgley notes. See Midgley 1980, pp. 228–32, 239–51.

[47] One might note Leopold's thoughts on childhood here. Reflecting that his 'earliest impressions of wildlife... retain a vivid sharpness of form, colour and atmosphere that half a century... has failed to obliterate or to improve upon', he wonders 'whether the process ordinarily referred to as growing up... is not actually a progressive dilution of the essentials by the trivialities of living', worrying that 'education, I fear, is learning to see one thing by going blind to another'. Leopold 1987, pp. 120, 158.

[48] The way in which this manner of relationship promoted both wider relationship with nature and disgust at its abuse is well illustrated by the autobiography of George Sturt, one of Britain's last traditional wheelwrights. See Sturt, 1934, especially pp. 23, 53–5.

[49] See his interview in Walljasper, 1996.

[50] Rosenthal and Buchholz 1996, p. 43.

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