

3-5-2003

Dwellness: A Radical Notion of Wilderness

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Dwellness: A Radical Notion of Wilderness

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Philosophy
College of Arts and Sciences
University of South Florida

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Date of Approval:
March 5, 2003

Keywords: environment, environmentalism, environmental ethics, philosophy, wilderness

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Dedication

For my wife Jill and my daughter Riva – and for the world she will inherit.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank the faculty, staff, and students of the University of South Florida Department of Philosophy. My time there has been truly rewarding, enriching, and inspiring. I also extend special thanks to the department's graduate program assistant, Darlene Corcoran, for her patience and hard work that enabled me to complete my dissertation and defense. I would also note the contributions of various educators who I have learned from throughout my life. I am grateful to all of you.

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ABSTRACT

The contemporary concept of wilderness, which is central to environmental theory and activism, is both a help and a hindrance to government policy and to popular environmental beliefs. The Judeo-Christian religious tradition and Locke's property theory provides much of the western cultural and historical basis of humans' environmental attitudes that basically engender exploitation. I argue that a more precise interpretation of Genesis and of Locke reveals that both sources actually promote environmental stewardship while decrying ecological abuse. Next I analyze the history and shortcomings of various wilderness concepts. These shortcomings are all forms of an exclusionist mentality and result in some harmful theoretical and practical applications. Some of these applications include the separation of humans from nature, and the propensity of governments and the public to allow ecological degradation in non-wilderness areas. Yet there are beneficial aspects to wilderness that contribute to a deeper understanding of human nature and our place in the world. Wilderness helps us to remember our wild and primal aspects that provide a connection with nature. In light of the perils and power of wilderness I offer a new, radical, inclusive, and expansive notion of wilderness that I name "dwellness." Dwellness is a normative ethical position where all areas upon the earth ought to be viewed by people in the same way as wilderness areas

are currently viewed, but with some modifications. Unlike wilderness, dwellness includes humans within nature and also contains the idea of sustainable living practices. To support dwellness I turn to Martin Heidegger. By identifying the world as a place where we dwell and in which we belong, we come to a more profound understanding of Being, or existence, in general and of our own particular modes of being. By learning to look at the world in this new, yet old, way we may then understand how important and central is the world, a mode of Being, to the existence and maintenance of our Being. Finally, I answer some possible objections to dwellness. These objections revolve around problems of industrial pollution (waste), which, under dwellness, would have to be considered natural.

Introduction

When someone utters the word ‘wilderness’ listeners typically envision a pristine forested area that is relatively free of human activity except for the occasional hiker or camper. Others who hear ‘wilderness’ may also imagine a prairie, an ocean, an arctic tundra, or perhaps a desert. What these listeners typically do not envision is a city, a suburb, or a farm. Why is there such a distinction between what is and what is not wilderness?

One of the most important philosophical activities is to investigate assumptions and to question them. This work attempts, in part, to ferret out the assumptions that underlie the idea of wilderness and to show that the idea of wilderness is flawed. But this investigation will also show that the idea has merit. The idea of wilderness is in error because it excludes humans from nature. Many environmentalists desire this exclusion in hopes to preserve natural ecosystems from the ravages of human industry. While such a move is often well meaning and wise, it sets up various theoretical problems about how humans think of their world and their place in it. The exclusionist attitude is thus a paradox: by excluding humans, ecosystems may be saved from human destruction while at the same time humans feel that they are not part of nature. If people feel that they are not part of nature then it is virtually impossible for them to consider ideas such as preservation, saving whales, or living in harmony with nature. This exclusion leads to a host of other negative consequences that manifest in practical and theoretical ways. In an

attempt to solve this dilemma I then proffer a new idea whose basis is wilderness. My new idea, which I call 'dwellness', is inclusive rather than exclusive and forces one to reconsider where we draw boundaries within the world and within our minds.

Chapter One is a brief historical review of what I consider to be two important components of modern environmental thinking for the western world: the Judeo-Christian religious tradition and the private property theory of John Locke. Many environmentalists typically blame these two views for leading to negative effects upon peoples' thoughts about the natural world. From the Judeo-Christian view comes the idea that nature is evil and must be conquered. From John Locke comes the idea of a right to private property. Under this right one may purchase a parcel of the earth and do with it as one may please, even if that activity is environmentally destructive. I argue that these two views (the Judeo-Christian and the Lockean), in their original interpretations, actually promote positive and healthy human activity towards the environment. Later interpreters of the Torah and of Locke twisted the original intentions of these two perspectives to suit various political, economic, and social aims, many of which have led to current environmental problems. Both the Judeo-Christian tradition and Locke may actually be used as champions of environmental welfare and such an interpretation actually comes closer to the true and original intent of both Locke and the writer(s) of the Torah. This first chapter is not so much a genealogy as it is a starting point to correct thinking about wilderness. Just as Locke and the Torah are negatively and incorrectly interpreted by various environmentalists, so too is wilderness positively and yet incorrectly interpreted on many counts.

In Chapter Two I trace some of the more recent philosophical underpinnings for wilderness and show many of its negative consequences. By excluding humans from nature, proponents of wilderness, often unwittingly, encourage people to think of non-wilderness areas as not deserving of the same special consideration accorded to wilderness areas. Thus one may fall into a trap where it is justifiable to dump pesticides onto farming soil but the same action cannot be done at Yosemite, even if the wood borer insect ravishes thousand of acres of trees within the park. Wilderness attitudes also lead to the forced removal of indigenous peoples from officially designated wilderness areas. While preventing people from ravaging nature is indeed noble, removing the indigenous peoples is suspect because the areas from which they are removed are their traditional homelands where they have lived for hundreds if not thousands of years. Further, indigenous peoples typically live in such a way that their activities do not negatively impact the natural ecosystem upon which they depend for survival. Given this fact, removal of indigenous peoples is hardly justifiable. Another negative consequence of wilderness is what one author calls a “snap-shot” mentality. Governments set aside wilderness areas to be preserved and untouched by humans in an attempt to freeze the land in time. This creation of a museum piece, or a snapshot photo image of a wilderness area, ignores reality. Over time, all things change in some manner by whatever means, be it human or nonhuman activity. Thus the snapshot mentality is unrealistic and reduces a segment of nature to a pretty picture rather than seeing it as a living and dynamic entity. The snapshot mentality also reinforces the incorrect view that people are independent from, disconnected to, and disinterested with nature.

Chapter Three looks at what is positive and meaningful about the wilderness idea. Wilderness areas afford people the opportunity to engage with something that is not created by humans and with something that is “other” than human. In so doing, people may feel awe about nature and may also begin to feel connected with something that is larger than them. This possibility removes the human/nonhuman bifurcation. Wilderness areas also may help people to reconnect with the part of them that is wild. Such wildness is a quality of people and of nature. By tapping into their wildness, people may then also reconnect with the part of themselves that is more akin to wild nature. Again, this view may lead to a reconnection with nature as a whole. This reconnection is important because for at least the last two thousand years, our western mentality and learning has forced us to reject the wild, animalistic, and instinctual parts of ourselves instead of fostering a balance between the wild and the civilized components of humans. This unhealthy denial of our wild selves can then lead to negative manifestations such as war, rape, and burning and pillaging of all varieties, as well as environmental destruction at the hands of humans.

The wilderness idea also has tremendous influence upon radical ecology, so called because this view advocates a radical critique and change of the western anthropocentric, dualistic, and materialistic mindset that has dominated the west for centuries. This western mindset has led to the domination and subjugation of the natural world and also of people. The three main branches of radical ecology, although identifying different sources of domination, all agree that what is called “western civilization” must be radically altered to bring about a just, equitable, and environmentally sound world. Deep ecologists call for the removal of the anthropocentric dualistic view of reality (e.g.,

spirit/matter; mind/body) and instead propose a type of monism in which all of reality is a single unified whole. Humans must learn to “let things be” and to respect other life forms for their intrinsic worth. In so doing one may learn to identify with the nonhuman and to expand one’s notion of self into a greater Self.

Social ecologists argue that generalized anthropocentrism is not to blame for ecological problems. Rather, authoritarian social structures are responsible not only for the exploitation of nature but also for the exploitation and subjugation of those human groups who do not hold power positions within the established dominance hierarchy. Social ecologists see environmental destruction as a reflection of distorted social relations; they also recognize that human welfare is entwined with the welfare of the natural world.

Ecofeminists, the third branch of radical ecology, see environmental malaise as the outcome of a patriarchy that operates according to a “logic of domination.” According to this logic, what is defined as superior to something else may use what is inferior in any manner that the superior deems suitable. Patriarchy, the superior entity, renders femaleness, emotion, body, and nature as inferior. Thus, members of the patriarchy feel justified in subjugating women and nature. Patriarchy also feels justified in subjugating the “other” of patriarchy and forcing wild nature and wild women to conform to patriarchal categories. Ecofeminists advocate the dismantling of patriarchy as the only way of freeing humanity and nature from the negative consequences of the logic of domination.

Dwellness, my alternative to wilderness, is a radical and ethically normative concept because I argue that all areas of the Earth, not just officially designated

wilderness areas, ought to be regarded by humans in the same manner with which we currently view wilderness. The entire Earth, just like wilderness areas, ought to be viewed as special, perhaps sacred, and treated by humanity with care and consideration. To support dwellness I turn to the thought of Martin Heidegger. Chapter Four is a review of Heidegger's highly influential work *Being and Time*. Here he investigates the nature of humanity's being or existence and then moves to analyze the more general notion of Being itself. This review is important for it not only provides a background to understanding Heidegger's later works on specific topics within *Being and Time*, but also because Heidegger discusses why the world is important as a component of humanity's being. Further, Heidegger identifies care as a primary mode of humanity's being. Such ideas are integral for dwellness as it advocates a unity between humanity and the world. To properly live within the world we must learn to care for the world within which we dwell and upon which we depend for our survival and living.

Chapter Five looks at two of Heidegger's later writings that speak more directly to dwellness. The first essay, "Building Dwelling Thinking", inspired my creation of the term 'dwellness'. For Heidegger, 'to dwell' means much more than living in a house. The idea of dwelling extends to all places where humans live and conduct their activities. We arise from the earth, we live upon the earth, and thus the earth is our home and we belong here. The earth and our existence upon it are components of our way of Being. To understand ourselves and to also understand our ontology (i.e. our existence and our way of existing), we must come to understand our relationship to the world. I believe that this relationship will reveal humans' connection with all things and it will also reveal that we are part and parcel of nature. Heidegger's second essay, "The Question

Concerning Technology”, offers an analysis of how people predominantly view the world. This perspective, which Heidegger calls “enframing”, is one in which humanity sees the world as a standing reserve of material to be used and transformed by humans for a variety of purposes. While enframing is not necessarily wrong or immoral, it is not the only way of seeing the world and not the best way of relating to the place where we dwell. My reading of “enframing” is that of a dire warning about where we are and where we are going.

Chapter Six handles some of the possible objections to dwellness. Logically, dwellness would have to include pollution and certainly many would not accord the kind of consideration to pollution that they may accord to a forest. Underlying this opinion is a misunderstanding of the concept of ‘natural’ embodied by the statement “A forest is natural while pollution is not.” This statement is typical as it designates a false bifurcation: humans do not create what is natural; that which is created by humans is deemed to be unnatural or artificial. Such thinking ignores the fact that what is created by humans comes from nature-created raw materials. This thinking also reinforces the human/nature separation and ignores the fact that the creator of human-made things comes from nature. It is important to note that an erupting volcano spews large amounts of pollution into the air that often creates many devastating effects. Does this mean then that environmentalists should conduct a global campaign to rid the world of volcanoes? Clearly the problem is not *entirely* with humans or their activities as such but with the *way* humans conduct some of their activities. Why is it that beaver dams do not seem to negatively impact their ecosystem while human-made dams often have many detrimental environmental effects? For many perhaps unclear reasons, humans often do not conduct

their affairs in ways that are harmonious with the environment. I look at one possible solution to this problem in which by learning how ecosystems use and recycle resources, humans may then model their economic activity in a similar fashion and thus conduct some activities in ways that work with, rather than against, environmental processes.

Chapter One: Dominion and Domination

Anthropocentrism is a view in which humans, and thus their activities, are the primary concern of any course of action. In other words, humans are the ultimate ends of any means. Within the concept of anthropocentrism lie the views of dominion and domination. An anthropocentric position holds that nature exists to serve humans' needs. Thus, humans may use nature and exploit it as they see fit. Many thinkers believe this attitude to be wholly or partly the cause for the current ecological malaise. In this first chapter I will examine two alleged sources for the current domination attitude towards the environment: Judeo-Christian religion and the private property theory of John Locke. I chose these two subjects because they both greatly inform the American *raison d'etre* and hence the American view of the natural world and our relationship to it. In addition, many thinkers and environmentalists believe that Christianity and Lockean property theory are the roots of environmental problems. While such contentions certainly have merit, the original intent of Judeo-Christianity and Locke's property theory certainly do not champion environmental destruction and an attitude of "do what you will." On the contrary, they both clearly advocate stewardship and responsibility for the land.

Judeo-Christian Dominion

The Judeo-Christian ethic is a classic anthropocentric position. Over thirty years ago, Lynn White, Jr. (1967), in his classic article “The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis”, argued that the biblical notion (found in the Genesis account) of man having dominion over the earth is the cause of our current environmental crisis: “Hence we shall continue to have a worsening ecologic crisis until we reject the Christian Axiom that nature has no reason for existence save to serve man” (1207). The supposed Bible-sanctioned practice of dominion has since then come under much criticism.

In his article “In Defense of Dominion”, Lloyd Steffen (1992) argues that the Bible, especially the King James Version, has been grossly misinterpreted from the original Hebrew. In particular he argues that the ancient Hebrew notion of dominion is much different from the contemporary Biblical conception of dominion, a concept that is more properly labeled “domination.” He notes that there is a world of difference between the ideas of dominion and domination. Referring to the original Hebrew, Steffen states that *radah* (dominion) means to govern, rule and to have dominion:

The verb was employed to refer in a general way to the rule of kings over territory, masters over servants, and the rule of God either over land or in the midst of God’s enemies. Outside of Genesis, the verb is used only five other times, and in each context, something other than oppressive power relations is connoted. (64-65).

After quoting several passages from the Old Testament, Steffen further explicates *radah* and argues that it is linked “with a vision of just governance in which oppression is actually crushed” (65). Further, *radah* is also connected with *shalom* and safety. *Radah* is not a word that implies physical force and although one of its meanings is “to tread

down,” *radah* is used in contexts in which “justice, freedom from oppression, and even shalom are pronounced themes” (65).

Steffen points out that *radah* is a verb and so it implies action. As such, dominion is also an action but it is also an experience. As experience, dominion basically refers to special relationships between man and God and also between man and nature. As with any other ancient creation myth, the Genesis story attempts to explain human experiences and thus provides a prescientific account of the world’s origins. Genesis displays a Hebrew consciousness of “being in relation” and specifically addresses a concrete experience of a people in relation to a transcendent God. Steffen says, “Reflecting a fundamental aspect of the Hebrew self-understanding, dominion in Genesis expresses in the abstraction of language and concept of a particular people’s experience of being in relation to God and to God’s creation” (67). Finally, the experience of man’s relation to God and his creations is interpreted through human action in which dominion is then interpreted through a moral schema.

As an action, dominion points to the specific activity of obedience – “Dominion reflects rather than imposes a distinctive ontological status for human beings” (68). Dominion is not static but is an ongoing activity that results from man being made in the likeness of God. Dominion more accurately denotes the human capacity for understanding and performing dominion (*radah* as verb) than the conventional notion that humans were created with dominion thus establishing a human ontological status of superiority over nature (*radah* as noun) (68). In the original Hebrew *radah* is strictly a verb. The conventional mistake here is that, assuming an ontological hierarchy exists (in descending order – god, man, nature), such a hierarchy allows or implies an oppressive

dominant relationship of one over the other. Dominion as action does not identify God's image but identifies the consequence of being created in God's image. Steffen admits that the Genesis account presents a patriarchal and hierarchical mode of thought. However, Steffen argues, the primary hierarchy is between God and his creation, not between humanity and the descending order of being. Humans are unique because they are created in God's image but at the same time they are not ontologically separated from their status as creatures and created beings. Like the rest of creation, humans are dependent upon God. Humans possess God's image, which enables them to be conscious of their status as creatures accountable to a God who informs them of their responsibilities for assuming dominion. Thus, being human means understanding that all creation relies on God. Being human does not mean possessing superiority over the rest of creation. This self-consciousness is then not only a God-consciousness but it is also, of all things, an ecological consciousness. Again, dominion does not identify human superiority, but it identifies a mode of activity that brings to human consciousness a relationship with God and his creation (68).

In Genesis 2:20 Adam, in virtue of having dominion, is commanded simply by God to name the animals. Lynn White, Jr. argues that the very act of naming establishes dominion:

Man named all the animals, thus establishing his dominion over them. God planned all of this explicitly for man's benefit and rule: no item in the physical creation had any purposes save to serve man's purposes. And, although man's body is made of clay, he is not simply part of nature: he is made in God's image. (1205)

Adam is acting in accord with what Steffen calls the "command-obedience model of human action" (68-69). Steffen contrasts this model with the ancient Greek

“manipulation model” of human agency as put forth by Wallace I. Matson in his book *A New History of Philosophy*. Matson argues that in the Hebrew creation myth, “Yahweh’s power is purely magical: he does not fashion anything, he does nothing but issue commands” (6). Here, Yahweh does not directly create anything; he simply speaks and things are created. This command-obedience model is different than the Greek model. In Greek mythology the gods actively create the world. They do not issue commands but engage in activities of push, pull, and manipulation. This difference in myths explains “why science began in Greece and not in Palestine” (6). The Greek view encourages direct human agency and action while the Hebrew view encourages more of a command model for action.

According to Steffen, God acts in accordance with the command-obedience model when he issues imperatives that create the world. Likewise, Adam uses speech to perform his act of dominion – naming animals. Adam thus reflects God’s likeness. This form of dominion (animal naming) is a limited form of control and does not allow the direct manipulation of other beings or natural processes: “Although dominion activity is directed toward anthropocentric purposes, it issues in action that reveals no antagonism toward the rest of creation and offers no justification for predation” (69). Further, in Genesis 1:29, God imposes duties of procreation and subduing the Earth (another problematic phrase that I will address shortly) while also informing humans about the food supply for them as well as other creatures. What to eat is prescribed and limited. Here is a picture of responsible action. It is one that shows respect for God’s desire and for his creations. God’s desires limit the range of dominion activities and respect for his desires imposes responsibilities that no other being can freely accept (70).

Subdue the Earth

As mentioned earlier, the other problematic phrase in the Genesis account is “subduing the Earth” (1:28). The Hebrew word for subdue is *kabash*. *Radah* directly refers to the human relationship with animal life where *kabash* is specifically directed to the land or soil. In Genesis 2:15, Adam is said to be tilling and keeping the Garden. In this context, *kabash* simply refers to tilling the Earth. As Steffen says, “*Kabash* is an action directive: God commands humans to take responsibility for seeing to it that the Earth provides. Tilling the soil is how that is to be done” (72). One may also suppose that the Genesis author, to convince the Hebrews of the virtues of agriculture over those of nomadic herding, used such a directive. In any case, the notion of responsible action comes into play:

Although successful farming inevitably seeks to manage and even control the environment, and agricultural practices are invasive and can dislocate indigenous niches, thus affecting local habitat, this kind of “subduing of the Earth” as presented in the Genesis creation story neither shows nor endorses the destruction of the Earth. Adam’s activity is restricted to *keeping* the Garden, which is entrusted to his care, a notion that implies preservation and maintenance as well as managing and tending. Adam is to oversee and care for the Garden, to keep and till it, not only because it provides a food supply to ensure survival, but also because it is “pleasant to the sight” (Gen. 2:9). (Steffen, 73)

Adam’s activity of *kabash* is intended for both practical and aesthetic purposes: practical so that food is provided by the Earth; aesthetic so that the Earth provides pleasure. Genesis presents *kabash* as a complement to *radah* and thus *kabash* is not used as a suggestion for exploitation. Both terms, as used in the Genesis context, clearly imply an attitude of benevolence towards all of creation.

As a minor point, there exists a problem with the Genesis account of the Garden of Eden. The very notion of Eden implies a paradise where one does not need to work, or

at least work hard. Adam and Eve simply need to harvest (a form of work) what food they need. The plants grow wild and do not need the benefit of a farmer's efforts. However, the use of "Garden" suggests the deliberate human effort of raising plants. So why does God command Adam to till the earth within Eden? After Adam and Eve are expelled from the Garden, God tells them that their punishment for eating the fruit from the tree of knowledge is that they must work hard and till the earth to survive. But supposedly Adam was already tilling Eden's soil. Perhaps the Genesis author invented the post-Eden tilling punishment to explain why people must work so hard to survive. Steffen does not address this inconsistency but one could surmise that the Genesis author included God's command of tilling within Eden to encourage the author's audience to focus on farming, instead of herding, as the means to survival, growth, and prosperity. Based on archeological and anthropological theories regarding the Neolithic period, nomadic herding and a hunter-gatherer lifestyle does not provide the opportunity for material prosperity that is provided by a sedentary life of agriculture and animal domestication, although a hunter-gatherer lifestyle provides its own types of prosperity. By adopting the sedentary (that is, non-nomadic) lifestyle, a people can form a permanent town and create a surplus of food that in turn increases wealth. In any case, the inconsistency problems with the idea of Eden as a garden do little or nothing to undermine the original intent and meaning of dominion (*radah*) and subdue/tilling (*kabash*). Clearly, God's command is that humans' behavior towards the land and animals must be one of responsibility and stewardship, whether in or out of the garden.

Having now corrected the original meaning of "dominion" and "subdue", Steffen goes on to discuss the problems of interpretation. First, he clearly states that the scripture

to which he refers is derived from the original Hebrew Pentateuch. In contrast, most Biblical references in common literature come from the King James Version of the Bible. Steffen argues “that by translating the Hebrew word *radah* into the English word *dominion*, the authors of the King James Bible played on meaning appropriate to that English word in its particular historical and cultural context” (66, footnote 3). Further, *radah* was translated into “dominion” at a time of expansion and discovery, when the idea of conquest was taking on new meaning in the areas of science, politics, and the arts. One could easily envision New World explorers using the “dominion” interpretation to justify their activities of conquest. After all, God gave them the Earth and all its inhabitants to use as the explorers pleased. Further, Martin Luther’s translation of Genesis 1:28 uses the term “über alles” to denote the “lording” of human power over all living things upon the Earth (66, fn. 3). Such misinterpretation leads to negative consequences, specifically that of a “model of alienation” rather than an intimacy model as intended by the original meanings of ‘dominion’ and ‘subdue’:

Dominion establishes an ideal of human governance grounded in a relation of intimacy with God; and it imposes on human beings a responsibility for non-aggressive but ordered relations with fellow creatures . . . That human beings are shown exercising this control through a distinctive capability (speech), and even a distinctive power (reason), is not to be denied, but the control is shown to be non-intrusive, benevolent, and free of violence. (73)

Unfortunately, *radah* has been interpreted through an alienation model and has become a synonym for domination. Thus dominion is misidentified as the source and sanction for environmental disregard and abuses. A domination concept refers to human relations based on the assertion of power over other humans. Domination authorizes

exploitation and a hierarchy based on oppressive or predatory power. The Genesis account of *radah* does not authorize such a view (74-75).

In addition to interpretation difficulties there are also conceptual problems with blaming the Genesis account for environmental degradation. Lynn White, Jr., Ian McHague and others who have critiqued cultural religious assumptions have sought an explanation for environmental degradation within “Western value commitments” (Steffen, 75). Such authors have blamed Christianity for sanctioning environmental exploitation and indeed, as I have personally discovered, many Christian fundamentalists believe that attempts at environmental repair are worthless because “Christ is coming soon.” Steffen credits White and McHague with “forcing the Christian community to confront itself on the issue of environmental protection” (75). Yet, Steffen wonders if the critique of Christian values is misplaced: “Is dominion responsible for our modern ecologic woes because dominion sanctioned attitudes of domination that resulted in the exploitation of nature?” (75). Steffen continues by noting the complex nature of the historical roots of our ecological crisis:

Isolating a particular religious idea like dominion to provide a causal explanation for a broad cultural problem like environmental devastation overlooks the complicated interplay of cultural, social, economic, and political forces that have shaped attitudes toward nature and affected environmental abuse. The White-McHague thesis is challengeable on historical grounds. Environmental problems will occur wherever societies find themselves pressured to meet the demands of population growth and the need for economic development . . . An alternative explanation for our environmental crisis can be found in a complicated nexus of historically conditioned factors: urbanization, technological development, population growth, democratization, industrialization, increases in wealth, and claims to ownership of natural resources. Accusing a religious tradition, and one idea within that tradition, of causing an enormously complex cultural problem and of being the major impediment to its solution distorts the role of religious ideas in affecting behaviors. (76)

Steffen is not the only scholar to question the conclusions put forth by White. Biologist Richard Wright (1970) agrees with White that Christianity aided modern science and technology in its early development. But Wright insists that scientists, not Christianity, are responsible, through their activities and discoveries, for environmental destruction (852). Social scientist Lewis Moncrief (1970) emphasizes the impact of the democratic and the scientific/technological revolutions of the 18TH and 19TH centuries as causes of current environmental degradation (509-510). Rene Dubos (1970) argues that the pursuit of short-term economic self-interest is the cause for environmental degradation.

Additionally, Steffen notes that the White-McHague thesis assumes that a religious idea (dominion) has an irresistible effect on action. Thus, reinterpreting the idea in a positive manner should yield positive behavior. But such a phenomenon has never occurred and will never do so. The reason for this is that “understanding does not have an irresistible impact on action” (76). People may know the good, but they may refuse to do the good. The values behind environmental destruction are reflected in the real concrete activity of domination and not within the ideal of dominion. To confuse domination and dominion is more than a conceptual error; the confusion is also a refusal to acknowledge that the desire for power lies behind exploitation and this refusal ends in a rejection of responsibility for destructive attitudes. Misinterpreted religious ideals may be partly responsible for environmental harm but it is questionable if such ideals are wholly or even primarily responsible for environmental problems (76).

Despite these criticisms of White and the idea that the Judeo-Christian ethic is primarily responsible for environmental destruction, at the end of this debate there is

general agreement among scholars that the main problem with White is that his view is at worst simplistic as it ignores many other peripheral factors. But this oversight is forgivable when attempting to distill 2,500 years of humanity's adverse effects upon nature into a short essay. Further, Moncrief concedes that White is correct with respect to the notion that Judeo-Christianity is the *prima causa* of a cultural nexus of events and that the ultimate effect of this nexus is environmental degradation (509, 511). In his follow-up article "Continuing the Conversation", White asserts that he is aware that religion is not the sole cause of environmental destruction, that such destruction was widespread before the advent of Christianity, and that many non-Christian societies exhibit environmentally destructive practices (57-60). Nevertheless, in the final analysis a society is a product of individual beliefs about whom we are and how we ought to behave towards other people and towards nature. In other words, society is a product of its religion and values (56).

Jewish studies scholar Jeremy Cohen offers arguments that agree with Steffen's Genesis analysis. In his book *Be Fertile and Increase, Fill the Earth and Master It*, Cohen devotes an entire work that analyzes Genesis verse 1:28, part of which is the book's title. In its entirety the verse reads "God blessed them and God said to them, 'Be fertile and increase, fill the earth and master it; and rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and all the living things that creep on earth.'" Cohen emphatically argues that anthropocentric and androcentric interpretations – i.e., humans, in particular males, have absolute authority over the earth and may do with it as they please – of Genesis 1:28 are patently false and do not at all convey the intent and spirit of the verse. Thus Martin Luther, who espoused a domination view, and Lynn White, who accepted a Lutheran

interpretation and then criticized it, were both mistaken. Referring to White and others who offered arguments against Genesis, Cohen states:

Rarely, if ever, did premodern Jews and Christians construe this verse as a license for the selfish exploitation of the environment. Although most readers of Genesis casually assumed that God had fashioned the physical world for the benefit of human beings, Gen. 1:28 evoked relatively little concern with the issue of dominion over nature. (5)

Cohen notes that up through the Middle Ages, Jewish and Christian clerics were primarily concerned with the part of the verse that deals with human fertility and not with the portion that discusses dominion (13-15). This makes sense when one considers that until approximately 300 years ago human activity was simply not a threat to *global* environmental welfare (I emphasize the word ‘global’ because there are many examples of ancient peoples misusing the natural environment, but such abuse was simply not widespread. At least two factors account for this history: a relatively low human population and lack of modern technology). Such a threat only truly began with the rise of Industrialism.

Citing several authors and Rabbinical scholars, Cohen offers several positive interpretations of Genesis 1:28. The verse may imply human responsibility with the exercise of dominion being conditional upon human compliance with divine will. Others believe that the verse reflects the terminology and ideology of ancient Near Eastern kingship, which holds that human rule must entail concern for its subjects and that kingship without responsibility was unacceptable. The verse is also read as referring to a shepherd who cares for and tends his animals. *Kabash* is interpreted as “render productive,” obviously referring to agriculture and making the land productive for crops. Because this verb was used in reference to a holy land, it certainly did not imply wanton

destruction and exploitation. *Radah* may also be viewed as simply referring to a hierarchical relationship and not as a mandate to destroy. Finally, *kabash* and *radah*, as written within the context of Genesis, simply do not connote the exploitation or consumption of other creatures.

While *kabash* refers only to the land, *radah* evokes the image of a peaceful dominion, such as that of a benevolent monarch like Solomon. In the final analysis of Gen. 1:28, Cohen concludes by stating, “ According to Barr and J. Donald Hughes, the Bible blatantly lacks a spirit of ecological functionalism and technological inventiveness, which Greco-Roman civilization bequeathed to the Western tradition; biblical Israel, in fact, displayed more environmental sensitivity than its neighbors in the ancient Near East” (18). Indeed, unlike Christianity, Judaism has holidays, such as the Festival of the Trees, which do celebrate the Earth and nature.

In the end, it seems that despite whatever influence an erroneous Christian interpretation of the Hebrew Bible may have had upon human environmental behavior, there is simply no excuse or justification for the avarice and greed that results in environmental degradation. Nor can people entirely blame religious literature for negative actions towards the environment. While Christianity may have had a large influence upon the development of the American psyche, Christian Americans could certainly be compelled by their religious beliefs to act responsibly and lovingly to the Earth which is, at least for them, God’s creation.

Lockean Dominion

In addition to the Judeo-Christian tradition, environmentalists, wilderness proponents, and other such camps accuse John Locke of providing a theoretical impetus that supports environmental domination and destruction. Kathleen M. Squadrito (1979) argues that many scholars have misinterpreted Locke's view. Locke seems to present two different views on property ownership. On the one hand he argues for property rights and the accumulation of property, but on the other hand he argues for a form of social justice in which one should not possess so much property as to be of disadvantage to others. In addition, Locke asserts not only property rights but also the right to use land and animals for comfort and convenience. But Locke also stresses an attitude of responsible stewardship and duties towards all creation. While these views seem somewhat contradictory, Squadrito believes that his latter view (that one should not own too much property and one should respect all of creation) predominate Locke's views on property acquisition (255).

On the point of not owning too much property so as to be detrimental to others, Robert Nozick and Squadrito hold similar interpretations of Locke. Locke holds two conditions for property ownership: (1) one must obtain property through original acquisition (via mixing of labor with the object) and (2) one must then maintain that property. Nozick (1974) views the first condition as a Lockean "principle of justice in acquisition" (174). Such a view, according to Nozick, gives rise to many questions, one of which is why does mixing labor with an object make one an owner of the object? He surmises that the answer is "Perhaps because one owns one's labor, and so one comes to own a previously unowned thing that becomes permeated with what one owns" (174).

Further, the underlying assumption here is “that laboring on something improves it and makes it more valuable; and anyone is entitled to own a thing whose value he has created” (175). Nozick adds to this idea by noting, perhaps somewhat humorously, that many people view labor as unpleasant. But he also asks a very profound question – “Why should one’s entitlement extend to the whole object rather than just to the *added value* one’s labor has produced?” (175). This question bears great significance when applied to the issue of human domination of wilderness. For example, the American indigenous peoples were greatly baffled by the white man’s notion of land ownership. For the Native Americans, no one owned the land and no one *could* own land or any other natural resource. They believed that they were borrowing the land from their great-great grandchildren – a poetic idea that simply expresses a duty to provide a healthy environment for future generations of people. Nor could they understand the dividing of land into square plots of various sizes for purposes of land purchase and farming.

The real-world application of a Lockean notion of private ownership of natural resources seems to result in some rather negative consequences. Although Locke was writing for a specific audience who were attempting to gain independence from the English king, various power entities over time have used Locke to justify their land acquisition activities. One has to wonder if Locke’s theory is at all justifiable in the contemporary world.

At this juncture we need to consider another aspect of Locke’s proviso. When one acquires property, one must leave behind property that is “...enough and as good left in common for others” (*Second Treatise*, sect. 27). Locke included this proviso to ensure that the situation of others is not worsened by property acquisition. This condition can

actually negate the idea of private property, at least where wilderness is concerned. Nozick believes that if the number of unowned objects were limited, then it would be implausible to view the improvement of an object as giving full ownership to it. This idea exists because one's ownership of an object changes the situation of other potential property owners. One's liberty (to own an object) is erased when another gains ownership of the object. But this change of situation (loss of liberty) need not worsen their situation (depending upon the type and number of the object, a caveat not directly stated by Nozick). He then gives the example of owning one grain of sand. Clearly such ownership will not adversely impact other potential sand grain owners. But the "crucial point is whether appropriation of an unowned object worsens the situation of others" (175). Where wilderness is concerned, that is a crucial point indeed. In today's biocentric-thinking environmental scene, "others" refers to not only other humans, but to other life forms as well.

For Locke, the proviso of enough and as good for others is a necessary condition for permanent and unalienable property rights. Nozick notes that some argue that this proviso once held but that it no longer does so. But if the proviso no longer holds, then it never could have held to yield private property rights (176). Nozick illustrates this problem by noting that if a potential property owner cannot choose among property that is "enough and as good left to appropriate," then the previous appropriator's action is not allowed under Locke's proviso. This appropriator is now in a worse position because he cannot conduct permissible appropriation so the appropriator before this one is also in the wrong. And so it goes on down the line back to the original appropriator. Assuming that this example is correct, one may argue that private property rights can never exist

because at some point, a person will be made worse off in some way through another's property acquisition. Now Nozick puts conditions upon this argument by discussing "stringent" versus "weaker" requirements and also by noting a difference between *appropriation* (which leads to ownership) and *use* (which may or may not lead to ownership) (176). But the general idea (that eventually an appropriator will be made worse off) still holds and offers a compelling reexamination of the whole notion of private property.

Clearly the whole notion and justification of private property ownership plays into the hands of those who wish to dominate wilderness. Nozick notes that various arguments enter the scene to counter the idea "that because the proviso is violated no natural right to private property can arise by a Lockean process" (177). Some of these arguments are: increase in product by putting the means of production in the hands of those who can use them efficiently; encouragement of experimentation because one does not have to convince another entity of a new idea; and that private property enables people to decide on the types and patterns of risks to bear. These and other considerations link up with a Lockean theory to support the idea that property appropriation satisfies the intent of the "enough and as good" proviso. These considerations are not intended as a utilitarian justification of property (177).

Locke was a Christian and so he based some of his arguments for property rights upon Biblical scripture, specifically those portions of Genesis that were discussed above with regards to *radah*. In addition, "He is often referred to as one of the founders of the philosophical spirit which underlies modern Western industrial civilization. Historically, Christianity and capitalism have been regarded as ideologies responsible for our present

environmental crisis” (Squadrito, 255). Squadrito first looks at Locke’s argument for property rights and accumulation as written in the *Second Treatise on Government*. God, says Locke, commanded man “to subdue the Earth” and in so doing God “gave Authority so far to appropriate” (pars. 25 and 32). In the chapter “Of Property,” Locke gives the conditions that grant individuals the right to acquire private property:

Every Man has a *Property* in his own *Person*. This no Body has any Right to but himself. The *Labour* of his Body, and the *Work* of his Hands, we may say are properly his. Whatsoever then he removes out of the State that Nature hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his *Labour* with, and joyned to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his *Property*. It being by him removed from the common state Nature placed it in, hath by this *labour* something annexed to it, that excludes the common right of other Men. (par. 27)

In this passage, Locke makes clear that a person’s body is one’s first and primary private property. From the body follows the private properties of the body’s labor and hands. One then uses labor and hands to mix with the materials found in nature. This mixing of labor and material is typically called a value-added theory of acquisition. The resulting product of the mixing is now the person’s new private property and no other person may lay claim to it.

Locke further holds that property rights come from God’s decree that men subdue the Earth and have dominion over every living thing (Gen 1:28). Locke equates subduing with cultivating the Earth and that this concept is joined with having dominion (par. 25). Locke further states, “Human life, which requires Labour and Materials to work on, necessarily introduces *private Possessions*” (par. 32). Squadrito then notes that with regards to the Earth and nonhuman animals, man’s dominion is absolute, according to Locke. He does not seem to accord any rights to animals or the Earth. The right to the fruits of the Earth and to sustenance follows from the condition that people have property

rights in their own personhood. Animals do not have such rights because God did not grant such rights to them. Property rights, which also include life, liberty, and estate, were only given to humans (Squadrito, 256).

However, not unlike the Hebrew restrictions on *radah* and *kabash*, Locke establishes restrictions on the accumulation of property. In paragraph 27 of the *Second Treatise*, Locke gives four conditions for property accumulation. One is entitled to property if and only if the following conditions are met: (1) labor is mixed with an object; (2) the object was not owned by another; (3) there is enough of this kind of object left for others; and (4) that what is left for others is as good as what a person takes for one's self. The law of nature, which is a moral law issued by God, entitles man to property but the law also sets limits to that property (Squadrito, 256-257). The question arises as to how far God has given man property. Locke answers "To Enjoy. As much as any one can make use of to any advantage of life before it spoils; so much he may by his labour fix a Property in. Whatever is beyond this, is more than his share, and belongs to others" (par. 31).

Thus far, Locke's contentions do not seem to bode well for environmental well-being. But as Squadrito notes, Locke's ideas regarding property rights as put forth in the *Treatise* do not reflect his thought as a whole. Passages in the *Essay, Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, as well as passages in the *Second Treatise*, indicate that Locke does not favor environmental exploitation. According to Squadrito, Locke does not consider dominion and unlimited accumulation of property a virtue, but rather as the root of evil (258). Individual appropriation is not itself an evil, but Locke makes clear that possessing more than what one needs to the disadvantage of others is ethically wrong in

the sense of being “covetousness” and thus of being the root of all evil (Squadrito, 258-259; Locke, *Education*, par. 110). Locke adds that all injustice springs forth “from too great love of ourselves, and too little of others” (*Education*, par. 139). Squadrito believes that what “Locke is criticizing is the view of dominion as license to alienate, to destroy, abuse or otherwise exploit the environment for one’s own profit and pleasure” (259). As Locke states in the *Second Treatise*, the state of liberty “is *not a State of License*” (par. 6). Because humans are the property of God, they do not have the liberty to destroy themselves “or so much as any Creature” (except for subsistence and comfort) in their possession; for all people being the workmanship of “one Omnipotent, and infinitely wise Maker . . . sent into the World by his order and about his business, they are his Property” (par. 6) and share in one community of nature. As Squadrito states, in other words, man has been given a lease on life and nature, which remains God’s property because he made them (259).

Like the Hebrew notion of *radah*, Locke’s view of dominion is one of responsible stewardship. Looking at *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, Squadrito notes that Locke’s view of stewardship stresses humankind’s duties and obligations towards all creation. Locke does not interpret Genesis as granting man the absolute right to torture or abuse animals. Further, to spoil or waste any part of creation is a sin. Additionally, there exist passages in the *First Treatise of Government* that suggest Locke interprets dominion over animals in a limited way. Although God stated “Every living thing shall be Meat for you,” this decree does not include the abuse of animals except for self-preservation. Locke believes that Genesis demands respect for and the preservation of all forms of life. Squadrito holds that such an interpretation is not completely consistent with Locke’s

position on property rights in the *Second Treatise*, but that his Genesis interpretation is the prevalent position for Locke. Locke is clearly against oppression in any form and it is not justified on political or religious grounds. Locke also would not allow religion to justify practices that would be contrary to civil moral laws and the Law of Nature (Squadrito, 260-262).

Squadrito concludes that Locke did hold some economic values that tend to facilitate environmental destruction. But such destruction is clearly not Locke's intention. Further, Locke's social ideology is humanitarian and progressive. Squadrito argues that because "ecological balance is essential to the survival of God's creation, and human beings are commanded by God to preserve their own species, it is clear that Locke would not endorse behavior that tends to disrupt the ecological balance of the Earth" (262).

With regards to the ethical treatment of animals, Nozick offers an interesting view as represented by the statement "utilitarianism for animals, Kantianism for people" (*Anarchy*, 39). Although Nozick does not invoke Locke on this issue (and nowhere in his book does Nozick discuss Locke's views on the ethical treatment of animals and nature) Nozick clearly favors positive ethical treatment of nonhuman animals. He even argues that the extra benefits Americans receive from eating animals do not justify this activity and therefore we should not eat them (38). Nozick's position on this issue, therefore, at least somewhat agrees with Squadrito's interpretation of Locke with regards to respecting all of creation.

Nozick discusses animals to illustrate the notion of what he calls "moral side constraints" (35). He notes that a problem with some ethical theories, in particular

utilitarianism, is that they are goal directed and as such they allow, by way of the means to the goal or end, violations of others' rights. The classic example of this problem is the punishment of an innocent person to save a neighborhood from a vengeful rampage. The goal of saving the neighborhood is achieved via the harm done to an innocent and the violation of that person's right to not be harmed for something he or she did not do. A utilitarian, who believes in the ideas of *the greatest good for the greatest number* and of *maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain*, would say that such an act is justified because the health and welfare of the many were saved by the sacrifice of only one person. Such a position is clearly alarming to most people and so ethical theory needs to include constraints. These constraints are the rights that people hold. As Nozick states:

In contrast to incorporating rights into the end state to be achieved, one might place them as side constraints upon the action to be done: don't violate constraints *C*. The rights of others determine the constraints upon your actions. (A *goal-directed* view with constraints added would be: among those acts available to you that don't violate constraints *C*, act so as to maximize goal *G*. Here, the rights of others would constrain your goal-directed behavior. I do not mean to imply that the correct moral view includes mandatory goals that must be pursued, even within the constraints.) This view differs from one that tries to build the side constraints *C* into the goal *G*. The side-constraint view forbids you to violate these moral constraints in the pursuit of your goals; whereas the view whose objective is to minimize the violation of these rights allows you to violate the rights (the constraints) in order to lessen their total violation in the society. (29)

Nozick uses the case of nonhuman animals to illustrate constraints because these creatures are not typically considered appropriate to receive constraints. He asks questions such as if there are any limits on what humans may do to animals; do animals have the moral status of objects; and what entitles humans to use animals at all? (35)

Nozick believes that "animals count for something" and that some higher animals should at least be given some weight in people's deliberations about a course of action.

Although, as Nozick says, it is difficult to prove that animals count it is also difficult to prove that people count for something. He then offers the following example: suppose that a person knows that when he or she snaps his or her fingers, “10, 000 contented, unowned cows” die of pain and suffering or they die painlessly and instantly. Would it be morally appropriate to snap the fingers? Are there reasons why it would be morally wrong to do so (35-36)? Nozick goes on to discuss a variety of questions and examples that one may consider when attempting to make a decision about the cows. In sum, the human moral agent needs to decide where to draw a line between appropriate and inappropriate actions towards the cows and the reasons for the demarcation.

Nozick is not primarily concerned with the issue of ethical treatment of animals and he is only using that issue to discuss moral side-constraints. However, his animal example is very illuminating on how humans view, and thus act toward, nonhuman animals, which in turn expresses the dominator mentality that humans, in general, hold towards the Earth and its nonhuman inhabitants. Returning to the position of “utilitarianism for animals, Kantianism for people,” Nozick does not state that this position is his own opinion and he does not state that this position represents that of any other person. I wonder if Nozick formulated this position because it seems, generally speaking, to reflect the current public attitude towards the treatment of animals? I feel more certain that Nozick created this statement to illustrate problems with utilitarian and Kantian moral theories, which he indeed discusses after he renders a thorough explanation of the animal-treatment statement.

Earlier I noted that a utilitarian abides by the ideas of *greatest good for greatest number* and *maximize pleasure and minimize pain*. This statement is a crude rendering of

utilitarian moral theory as there are variants of utilitarianism such as rule and act utilitarianism and even the maximin (minimax) principle of decision theory. Like Nozick, I choose not to get into a lengthy discussion in which I discuss each variety of utilitarianism because they all have the same shortcomings: they are teleological (i.e., they focus only on the end or purpose of an action) and they only deal with the actions and consequences of morality and not with motives or intentions. However, Kant's ethical theories *do* deal with motives and intentions. Kantian morality, at least for Nozick's purposes, may be summed up by the dictum, "Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end" (*Anarchy*, 32). For Nozick, Kantian morality underlies the idea of moral side-constraints that in turn expresses the inviolability of people. So the statement "utilitarianism for animals, Kantianism for people" contains two meanings:

- (1) maximize the total happiness of all living beings;
 - (2) place stringent side constraints on what one may do to human beings. Human beings may not be used or sacrificed for the benefit of others; animals may be used or sacrificed for the benefit of other people or animals only if those benefits are greater than the loss inflicted.
- (39)

Under the above rule, animals will be used for the gain of other animals and persons, but people will never be used, against their will, for the gain of animals. Further, nothing may be inflicted upon people for the sake of animals (does this idea also include the nonimposition of penalties for violating laws against animal cruelty?) (40-41). Interestingly, this formulation is balanced in favor of humans. Those who believe that it is acceptable for humans to dominate nature often invoke utilitarian considerations to justify their position. Who among us would discount the pleasure we receive from our

automobiles or our coal-burning-produced electricity, despite the air pollution caused by these pleasures? Is the pleasure derived from eating animal flesh greater than the negative consequences of such an action (the consequences being the overgrazing of public lands, the spoiling of land and groundwater from the high concentration of meat-animal waste, the necessity of injecting animals with growth hormones and antibiotics, and the untold suffering and misery endured by the animals, to name only a few examples)? Nozick concludes his discussion of animals with the following:

But isn't utilitarianism at least adequate for animals? I think not. But if not only the animals' felt experiences are relevant, what else is? Here a tangle of questions arises. How much does an animal's life have to be respected once it's alive, and how can we decide this? Must one also introduce some notion of a nondegraded existence? Would it be all right to use genetic-engineering techniques to breed natural slaves who would be contented with their lots? Natural animals slaves? Was that the domestication of animals? Even for animals, utilitarianism won't do as the whole story, but the thicket of questions daunts us. (42)

For at least the last few thousand years, humans have become increasingly domineering over nature and wilderness. Unfortunately, this sense of domination has not followed the spirit and intent of Jewish law as written in *Genesis* nor has it followed the Lockean dictates of moderate and common-sensical use of nature and resources. Hebrew law and Locke are only two of many sources within western history that call for wise and compassionate use of natural resources. But such views seem to be widely ignored by many (as evidenced by history and current states of affair) and a variety of explanations exist to explain why the anthropocentric dominator model has prevailed over environmentally friendly approaches to living upon the earth. Domination in all of its negative connotations has been the foremost environmental ethic in our contemporary history.

Looking at both White's criticisms and the above analysis of *kabash* and *radah*, one could conclude that the problem is not with religion *per se* but with how humans interpret religion to suit whatever purpose. White and his critics, including Steffen and despite differing opinions, all seem to point at a similar problem: when a notion of divinity is removed from nature, radical negative change is often the result. By extension, science and technology, which invariably lead to some degree of negative impact upon the natural world, are possible because humans remove and distance themselves from nature. Is there a way to somehow put the divine, as it were, and we back into nature with the hope that such a perspective may lead people to treat the environment in a good manner? Both Judeo-Christianity and Locke espouse a form of stewardship towards nature and this idea does not include an idea of humans separated from the natural world.

Stewardship and care taking imply humans' positive and benevolent involvement and participation with nature. This very ancient notion is a major component of dwellness, which is an expansion of the idea of wilderness. Our conception of wilderness, which has been greatly shaped by Judeo-Christianity and Lockean property theory, is very basic to our environmental attitudes while at the same time 'wilderness' contains many troublesome assumptions. What follows in the next two chapters is the examination and questioning of the contemporary conception of wilderness, one that is informed and biased by history and culture.

Chapter Two: What is Wrong with Wilderness?

Wilderness as a concept, though well meaning, is highly problematic. The general intention behind wilderness is the denotation of a parcel of nature that is in some way special, that is relatively untouched by humans, and that ought to be left alone and not exploited. Protecting and preserving the last few remaining areas of nature that have not yet been radically altered by human activity is in general a wise course of action. But wilderness also has negative characteristics. Setting aside wilderness areas essentially separates humans from nature, both physically and conceptually, and establishes a mentality of “other”. This exclusionist tendency establishes or fixes what is not included in wilderness, namely, humans and their activities.

The Wilderness Act of 1964, within the section “Definition of Wilderness,” states that “. . . man himself is a visitor who does not remain.” Here is an intended separation of humans from nature. This separation is problematic on at least two counts: (a) if humans believe that they are separate from nature then they may not care for nature and how their actions affect it; (b) the definition is patently false because humans arise from and are a component of nature. In addition, humans depend upon nature to survive. Humans need air to breathe, they need water to drink, they need food to eat, and they need other resources to survive, thrive, and to realize their fullest potential as individuals and as a species of life.

However, the Wilderness Act definition is false for another reason. The definition states that wilderness “is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man . . . an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions . . .” The problem here is that protected areas are affected by human activity, albeit indirectly. Industrial activity sends pollution into the air, which is then blown by winds over protected areas, which then sends acid rain onto the wilderness zones. The acid rain kills trees and other flora and it also poisons lakes and rivers. Fish then consume the poison and are then eaten by other animals and so the poison is spread out into the animal population. Scientists have discovered DDT in the ice caps of both poles – two areas that have very little human population. Another poignant example is the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. The radioactive material that was thrown into the air by the explosion of the plant was then blown across Europe in dangerous amounts. The point here is that human activity has both a direct and an unintended indirect effect upon the environment. Thus, there are no wilderness areas that conform to the definition within the Wilderness Act.

Finally, unless otherwise stated, the term ‘wilderness’ refers specifically to the American conception of such. Although wilderness areas exist in many other countries, the American wilderness mentality has its own unique character that informs how its citizens conceive of wilderness. This distinction is important because it plays an important role in the formulation of both international and American environmental and wilderness policy.

The Received View of Wilderness

Michael P. Nelson (1999) refers to the American conception of wilderness as one that is “received” (366). Americans, he says, received their idea of wilderness from such people as John Muir, Theodore Roosevelt, Henry David Thoreau, Sigurd Olson, Aldo Leopold, and Bob Marshall. These people and many others represent the last approximately 150 years of wilderness advocacy. They all proffered a definition of wilderness that is much like the one stated in the Wilderness Act of 1964: wilderness is an area unaffected by humans and their activities; an area where, at most, humans are spectators and visitors; an area where environmental change occurs through natural environmental processes and not through human-induced ones. Ultimately, wilderness is viewed as something other than, and separate from, civilization. To Nelson, the above represents the “received” view or conception of wilderness (366-367).

Nelson then notes five “troubling puzzles, paradoxes, and dilemmas” that are presented by the “received,” or purist, idea of wilderness. The five problems with the purist view of wilderness are: it is not universalizable, it is ethnocentric, it is ecologically naïve, it separates humans from nature, and its referent is nonexistent. First, the received view is very much an American idea and thus not universalizable. As Nelson states:

Given the fact that the environmental problems we currently face are global in scope, it would seem that we would want a corresponding philosophy of conservation that would be universalizable. However, in much of the world, the application of this received American idea of wilderness makes little sense. In much of the developed world, such as Western Europe, there are no remotely untouched areas: and hence, these parts of the world would be left entirely out of this discussion, except as a negative model and antithesis to wilderness. (367)

Further, as Nelson notes, there exist in large areas of the world various indigenous peoples inhabiting what we might think should be designated wilderness areas. For

11,000 years humans have lived in the Alaskan Natak wilderness but according to the received view, this area would not qualify as wilderness because of the human population in that tract of land (367). This is merely one example of where the received notion cannot be applied globally.

Second, the received idea is ethnocentric which is probably the reason why the idea cannot be universalized. When European immigrants first began arriving in the New World, they mistakenly believed that they were viewing a vast pristine wilderness where there was little human influence. The fact that the European landscape differed greatly from that of the Western Hemisphere, and the fact that European disease wiped out approximately 90% of the indigenous population, both contributed to the immigrants' mistaken assumptions about the "New World." At the time of Columbus' arrival into the western half of the globe, there existed 40 to 80 million people throughout the hemisphere. Nelson states:

These inhabitants, like all forms of life, had modified their environment. Native Americans had actually managed their lands – primarily with fire. The composition of the forest had been altered, grasslands had been created, erosion was severe in certain areas, wildlife had been disrupted, and such things as roads, fields, earthworks, and settlements were already widely scattered. (367)

The so-called "wilderness" found by early European settlers was really a wilderness altered and created by humans. Thus, according to the purist or received definition of wilderness, America was really not a wilderness.

The third problem with the received view of wilderness is that it is ecologically naïve or, as Nelson states, "...not externally consistent. That is, it is at odds with certain aspects of theoretical ecology" (367). The received view sees nature as static and non-changing. Nelson believes that this image "follows from the now outdated view that

ecosystems remained in, and always strove toward, a stationary state, called a climax community, until and unless disturbed by some outside force” (367-368). Current ecological theory gives a very different perspective: ecosystems are in a constant state of flux. The usual condition of an ecosystem is to be constantly changing, whether or not humans cause the interference. But the notion of preserving wilderness suggests that wilderness be retained as a sort of “still-shot” not unlike a photograph. This romantic wilderness conception desires to maintain a frozen image of wilderness that has never been, nor ever will be, corrupted by human activity. The wilderness will remain pristine throughout time and will never change. To hold the still-shot mentality is an attempt to maintain the American landscape as it was prior to European expansion. The “still-shot” mentality results in a paradox:

The only way to fulfill the purist wilderness vision of changeless preservation would be by actively and intensely managing the tracts of land. However, such actions would not only violate the innately dynamic quality of nature, but would also violate the received view of wilderness as untrammelled. (368)

While Nelson gives a valid criticism, he overstates his case. He seems to be drawing out the logical implications of the received wilderness view and though his conclusions may be logical, they may or may not actually occur within the wilderness schema. I doubt that any proponent of preservation would not recognize the inherent nature of change that exists within ecosystems and, indeed, within all of existence. The preservationist desires only to set aside land in the hopes of keeping it from being unduly altered by human activity. In any case, the ecological naiveté of a wilderness idea certainly is internally inconsistent. This problem was reflected in early ecology where

the goal was to maintain the stability of ecosystems. Ecologists now agree that ecosystems are anything but stable; ecosystems are dynamic living systems.

Nelson's fourth problem with the received view is that it separates humans from nature. Indeed, this problem is one of the most important and obvious of the wilderness dilemmas. Such a view of separation sets up a modernist duality that humans and nature are two separate entities. This duality is dangerous because if one accepts that humans are not a part of nature then one has little motivation to care about environmental quality. As Nelson states, "Many naively believe that we humans exist over-and-against and apart from nature, that something qualitatively unique distinguishes our existence from that of lions, lilies, and lichens" (368). Nelson invokes evolutionary and ecological theory to argue that any boundary line between humans and nature is "blurry and tenuous at best" (368). Humans "are subject to the same evolutionary and ecological forces, rules, and laws as other living things" (368). In principle, human activities -- the good, the bad, and the ugly -- are just as natural as the activities of plants and animals.

Nelson's point here is interesting in that he is invoking what one may call the similarities argument. Many environmental theorists attempt to ground moral consideration for non-humans upon the similarities that exist between humans and non-humans. Typically, these similarities deal with qualities inherent within an entity. M.F. Smith (1991) argues in the opposite direction. He wants to remove any criteria or grounds for moral considerability because such concepts are part of the methods of *humanist* philosophy. He uses 'humanist' to refer to any ethical tradition that has human values at its center and he does concede that such ethical traditions have allowed some room for the moral considerations of non-humans. But humanism is problematic when

its methods “depend upon shared common features (even shared ‘otherness’)” which “reach the end of the road where the jungle begins” (152). Smith goes on to say that shared common features

...were never logically compelling in any case. They serve to only impose too rigid a structure upon our moral beliefs and values. If moral consideration is to be extended to non-humans this has to be done not on the contrived and spurious basis of shared properties, but on due recognition of our natural phenomena for their differences as well as their similarities, and the many and varied ways we can relate to them. (152)

Smith here is speaking of inherent qualities that may be inferred about an entity where Nelson spoke of common external influences and forces that work upon all earthbound creatures. Smith further argues that the jungle is something other than humanity and the jungle’s differences are its worth:

Perhaps the only long-term chance for the survival of the jungle lies in our coming to see it as being of intrinsic value on its own terms. The jungle offers us a chance to escape a world where all we see reflects ‘humanity’ back at us. The appropriateness of using ethical language in discussions of environmental concerns lies not in the similarity of the moral objects to ourselves, but in morality’s ability to express concerns about a wider community, a community not of equals, but of inter-relationships. What we need to do is to let the jungle into our moral considerations. (152)

Both Nelson and Smith give considerations to both similarities and differences that exist between humans and non-humans. However, one difference is clear: nonhumans typically do not engage in activities that are environmentally harmful. One may argue that humans, and thus their activities, are part of nature but this observation does not necessarily imply positive effects resulting from human behavior. Clear-cutting forests and ozone depletion are clearly negative results of human actions. Obviously the environmental impact of humans can be good or bad. While we are a part of nature “and we have an appropriate role or place in nature” (368) not all of our environmental

modifications are wise or permissible. On the other hand, some human environmental augmentation is good such as the rejuvenation of a burned-out and decrepit parcel of land or the diversifying effects of “Native Americans’ pyrotechnology” (368). So while recognizing that humans are a part of nature is important, one is compelled to recognize that not all human activity is good for nature. Indeed, one may ask if all nonhuman activity is good for nature. Such considerations may force us to reconsider how we think about nature and to create new definitions that are more realistic.

Nelson’s fifth problem with the received view is simply that wilderness does not exist and may have never existed since the rise of *Homo sapiens*. Throughout their history, humans have affected all areas of the Earth as well as wild animal and plant populations. Prehistoric man nearly hunted to extinction the woolly mammoth. In “Critias” (par. 111), Plato lamented the destruction of the Attican forest and noted how the lack of trees led to erosion and loss of water to the sea. Nomads in some near-east areas (e.g. Jordan, Syria, Lebanon) overgrazed a once verdant land and converted it to desert. By 1627, Europeans had hunted out the auroch and all but destroyed the European bison. Human environmental effects, both in the past and present, can be seen on the Earth’s surface, subsurface, atmosphere, and in its aquatic regions. Acid rain may fall anywhere, including wilderness areas. Rivers containing industrial effluents flow in and out of wilderness areas. Soil of almost any type in almost any geographic location is now packed with thousands of different chemicals that come from sources such as pesticides, fertilizers, and industrial activity, which in turn contaminate underground water supplies and aquifers. The oceanic fishing areas are almost depleted and fishermen now search for new food sources within deeper waters. The oceans have become a giant

trashcan due to the dumping of nuclear and chemical waste, not to mention the dumping of common garbage from cargo ships, military vessels, and passenger cruise ships.

Human impact, both direct and indirect, is seen and felt globally and universally. Thus, the purist or received notion of wilderness is both impractical and impossible (368).

Nelson's five dilemmas are purely conceptual but there are some practical implications of the received purist view. From a political perspective, a conservation policy centered on wilderness preservation seems to be a defensive and losing strategy. Wilderness areas are constantly under pressure from visitors, business interests, exotic species invasions, land developers, and other factors. Wilderness areas exist as small vulnerable islands "amidst a much larger sea of human-dominated landscapes" (368-369). Political reality shows that the burden-of-proof for wilderness designation lies with its advocates and not with those who would spoil the land. The received view sees only a shrinking number of wilderness areas and acceptance of the received view "permits only a defensive and backward-looking strategy" (369). The received view also leaves open a wide interpretation of wilderness. This problem may lead to abuse by the anti-wilderness crowd who only need to give convincing evidence that an area is not pristine. Preservation status can then be jeopardized and possibly forever lost (369).

Nelson asserts that wilderness areas are such for three reasons: recreational opportunities, unique conditions of solitude, and the absence of roads, the last being the most prevalent criterion. These three criteria are very problematic. First, relaxation and solitude are relative and tenuous conditions at best. A city would not qualify under these criteria but a forest would qualify. But what about a prairie that has little attractive recreational features? What if that prairie had an old road running through it? Further,

recreation and solitude can be found through a variety of methods and in a variety of places. A wilderness opponent merely has to show that an area has an ancient Native American dwelling, or an old logging road, or is disrupted by a civil service siren to disqualify an area for wilderness designation (369).

The second problem with the criteria of solitude, relaxation, and absence of roads is especially relevant to Africa and Australia. Wilderness areas there have been, and still are, used and inhabited by aboriginal humans. According to the received view, a wilderness area is unoccupied by humans. In the past, civilized whites felt that if any humans resided in such an area that these humans were, and perhaps still are, regarded as barbarians and must be removed. To regard these people as less than human was the mentality behind the attempted extermination of aboriginal peoples in both Australia and the United States. Removing them from an area is tantamount to cultural genocide, such as the removal of Native Americans to reservations (369). Clearly, a new wilderness concept needs to include particular human activities, especially those of indigenous peoples who have, for the most part, lived in an environmentally sustainable manner for thousands of years. The activities and lives of aboriginal peoples have been intertwined with the native flora and fauna for just as long (369).

Lastly, Nelson notes that the received view does not allow for possibility of rejuvenating and resurrecting wilderness. Under this aspect of the received view many countries, such as those in Western Europe, can never have a wilderness. Against the purist notion, wilderness has always been a matter of degree. Because of the dynamic character of ecosystems, specific areas can slide along a continuum according to their degrees of wildness, however that may be defined (369). One can travel to Wisconsin

and stand in the midst of vast forests that only 100 years ago were clear-cut. Left alone, and without human intervention, the forest was reborn. This is an example of “therapeutic nihilism” or the “do nothing” approach. Left to its devices, nature can heal and rejuvenate itself. Nelson suggests that an environmentally denuded area that is allowed to go wild could be classified as “in the process of becoming wilderness” (369).

So much for the purist views that wilderness cannot be re-created. As Nelson concludes,

Wilderness would better be conceived as a “process” and not as a “product.” Instead of looking backward, we could look toward “future nature.” When intrusive management regimes are halted, and evolutionary and ecological processes are allowed to determine speciation and ecosystem destination, then an area would be in the process of wilderness. (370)

J. Baird Callicott (1991) offers similar critiques of the received wilderness idea.

For him, conservation via wilderness preservation is simply not viable, especially on a global scale. Wilderness is conceptually flawed in three ways – it is dualistic, ethnocentric, and static. As an alternative, conservation via a particular notion of sustainable development is viable as well as imperative and necessary (235). First, the received concept perpetuates the Western metaphysical dichotomy between man and nature (Callicott purposely uses the term “man” instead of “human” because of the connotation and flavor associated with using “man” when referring to all humans). He sees the Wilderness Act of 1964 as indicative of this dichotomy and traces this dichotomy to the past presenting a genealogical argument. The man-nature dichotomy begins, philosophically, with the ancient Greeks, and religiously with the ancient Hebrews. Both camps saw man as unique and thus set apart from the rest of nature. The Greco-Roman philosophical tradition holds that among all other animals, man is uniquely rational. Within the Judeo-Christian religious tradition, only the creature of man is made in the

likeness and image of God (240). Later in history, philosophers such as Thomas Aquinas and Rene Descartes forever solidified the man/nature dichotomy from both a religious and scientific viewpoint. Further, the marvelous works of man, such as the Egyptian pyramids and the European Gothic cathedrals, as well as any other wonder of modern technology, “seemed to confirm the radical metaphysical rift between us and the brute creation” (240).

Since the dissemination of Darwin’s theory of evolution people have become more and more aware that man is a part of nature, according to Callicott. Humans are only one species among twenty to thirty million organic species. The natural works of species seem to help or harm the biotic communities of which they are a part. “Pursuing their own economic interests,” bees, nitrogen-fixing bacteria, and scavenger turkey vultures perform valuable services to the biotic community as a whole. Conversely, elephants, deer, cowbirds, and kudzu can be very destructive to their biotic communities. The same could be said for human works and activities. In principle, man’s works are as natural as those of any other creatures that modify their habitats and may even be beneficial to the biotic community, even if particular human activities are currently not beneficial (241).

One huge difference exists between man and animals: humans create culture and animals do not. Most animals seem to conduct their affairs from a hereditary or instinctual basis. If one states that man’s works are not natural, then it is implied that those works are a result of culture and not of instinct. Yet the cultural works of man are evolutionary phenomena not unlike nonhuman massive structures such as coral reefs or African termite mounds. Thus, man’s works are all natural and “therefore, it is logically

possible that they may be well attuned and symbiotically integrated with other contemporaneous evolutionary phenomena, with coral reefs and tropical forests, as well as the opposite” (241).

Callicott’s second criticism of the received idea is that it is ethnocentric.

European immigrants to the New World made a big mistake when they assumed that the land they saw was unspoiled (i.e. unaffected by man’s activities, except of course if one ignores the existence of aboriginals or denies that such people are fully human). In fact aboriginals, primarily through the strategic use of fire, actively managed most of North America. Further, native North Americans domesticated and cultivated a wide range of food and medicinal plants. Callicott argues that by 1492, the only true wilderness landmass was Antarctica and now that continent is the scene of continuous human activity. Apparently, European immigrants stumbled upon a man-made landscape that they thought was untrammelled wilderness simply because it looked nothing like the man-made landscapes in Europe (241).

Callicott’s third critique deals with a fourth dimension of nature that is ignored by the received idea – time:

Wilderness preservation, as the popular conservation alternative to destructive land use and development, suggests that, untrammelled by man, a wilderness will remain “stable,” in a steady state. However, nature is inherently dynamic; it is constantly changing and ultimately evolving. (242)

Callicott likens wilderness preservation to preserving “vignettes of primitive America” (242). This view harkens back to Nelson’s “still-shot” argument – namely, that the contemporary wilderness preservation mentality sees wilderness as frozen in time as if someone took a snapshot photo to preserve forever the physical status of the area. As

such, the area can become a museum piece to be gawked at by paying tourists. Such a view ignores reality: the only constant in the universe is that of continuous change and it is no different for wilderness. Further, the static notion of wilderness collapses under a paradox. To preserve the wilderness as it is, man must actively manage the wilderness and so a static condition is simply not possible.

To counter the “vignette” wilderness conception, Callicott introduces the idea of “healthy land” that accounts for time and dynamism. Healthy land is one that is dynamic, not static. It constantly undergoes change and can heal itself from inevitable nonhuman damage. A healthy land also includes humans living within the landscape in a harmonious manner. Callicott concludes his argument with the following:

If we conceive of wilderness as a static benchmark of pristine nature in reference to which all human modifications may be judged to be more or less degradations, then we can duck the hard intellectual job of specifying criteria for land health in four-dimensional, inherently dynamic landscapes long inhabited by *Homo sapiens* as well as by other species. The idea of healthy land maintaining itself is more sensitive to the dynamic quality of ecosystems than is the conventional idea of preserving vignettes of primitive America. Moreover, if the concept of land health replaces the popular, conventional idea of wilderness as a standard of conservation, then we might begin to envision ways of creatively reintegrating man and nature. (242)

Satan's Home and God's Temple

The received or purist view of wilderness is a formalized notion of wilderness. In this section I discuss other types of wilderness perspectives that are culturally embedded and which arise from historical development. William Cronon (1999) looks at a more colloquial notion of wilderness and, like Nelson, focuses on the American wilderness perspective. Cronon writes:

For many Americans wilderness stands as the last remaining place where civilization, that all too human disease, has not fully infected the earth. It is an island in the polluted sea of urban-industrial modernity, the one place we can turn for escape from our own too-muchness. Seen in this way, wilderness presents itself as the best antidote to our human selves, a refuge we must somehow recover if we hope to save the planet. As Henry David Thoreau once famously declared, “In Wildness is the preservation of the World.” (371)

Like Nelson, Cronon argues that wilderness is not as wild as people may believe and that much of what is considered to be wilderness is actually and profoundly a human creation. Indeed, wilderness – the idea, not the physical object – is the product of civilization and so could hardly be contaminated by other features of civilization. As such, wilderness becomes a psychological factor because “As we gaze into the mirror it holds up for us, we too easily imagine that what we behold is Nature when in fact we see the reflection of our own unexamined longings and desires” (371). Humans then mistakenly suppose that wilderness could be a solution to the “culture’s problematic relationships with the nonhuman world, for wilderness is itself no small part of the problem” (371).

Now Cronon does concede that physical wilderness is not an entirely human construct and he celebrates with others the beauty, power, and awesomeness of nature. To experience nature in a profound way prompts people to realize that they are experiencing something “Other” than themselves (371-372). However, up until the mid-19TH century, the “Other” of nature was basically viewed as evil. Western people viewed wilderness as deserted, savage, desolate, barren, and as a waste – these terms connoted negative feelings accompanied by emotions of bewilderment and terror (372).

A Christian perspective was largely responsible for such a negative view of wilderness and the above terms (i.e., ‘deserted’, ‘savage’) come directly from the King James Version of the Bible. Wilderness was a place where one existed on the fringes of

civilization and where one could be lost in moral confusion and despair. For forty years, Moses and his people wandered in the wilderness where they almost lost faith and abandoned their god. Christ spent forty days in the wilderness where Satan constantly tested him. God expelled Adam and Eve from Eden and they then entered a world of wilderness where redemption came only through labor and pain. These Biblical stories and many others present wilderness as a place that one only entered against one's will and always with fear and loathing. Any value within wilderness rested with the possibility that it could be reclaimed and fashioned for human ends. Wilderness could be converted into a garden or a city upon a hill, but in its raw state, wilderness had little or nothing to offer civilized men and women (372).

By the end of the 19TH century public feelings about wilderness had changed dramatically. Inspired by the Romantic Movement and poets such as Wordsworth and Thoreau, and later by naturalists such as John Muir, the public began to view wilderness as a holy and sacred creation of God. Forests and mountains became cathedrals and wilderness was equated with Eden. In 1864 the U.S. government deeded Yosemite to the state of California, making this area the nation's first wildland park. In 1872 Yellowstone became the first true national park. Where wilderness was once vilified, it was now becoming sanctified. Cronon notes a case involving a dam proposal for the Tuolumne River in the Hetch Hetchy Valley within Yosemite National Park. Opponents of the dam gained national attention by portraying the dam as vandalism and destruction rather than an improvement upon the wilderness. John Muir railed against the dam's defenders by writing that "Their arguments are curiously like those of the devil, devised for the destruction of the first garden – so much of the very best Eden fruit going to

waste; so much of the best Tuolumne water and Tuolumne scenery going to waste” (372-373). As Cronon states, “For Muir and the growing number of Americans who shared his views, Satan’s home had become God’s own temple” (373).

What factors led to this radical change in wilderness perspective? There were many reasons for this change but Cronon focuses on two general categories: the sublime and the frontier. As Cronon states:

Of the two, the sublime is the older and more pervasive cultural construct, being one of the most important expressions of that broad transatlantic movement we today label as romanticism; the frontier is more peculiarly American, though it too had its European antecedents and parallels. The two converged to remake wilderness in their own image, freighting it with moral values and cultural symbols that it carries to this day. Indeed, it is not too much to say that the modern environmental movement is itself a grandchild of romanticism and post-frontier ideology, which is why it is no accident that so much environmentalist discourse takes its bearings from the wilderness these intellectual movements helped create. Although wilderness may today seem to be just one environmental concern among many, it in fact serves as the foundation for a long list of other such concerns that on their face seem quite remote from it. That is why its influence is so pervasive and, potentially, so insidious. (373)

Cronon believes that the concept of wilderness gained wide influence because it was loaded with the core values of the very culture that created and then idealized wilderness. That is, wilderness became sacred (373). This view makes sense if one accepts that American culture is largely based upon Christian beliefs and values. One of the core features of such a view is that one must attain salvation, or reunion, with God. One can easily imagine a Christian frontier settler gazing upon the Rocky Mountains who suddenly is inspired and realizes that perhaps the mountain could help that person to reach God. Although Christ found Satan in the wilderness, Christ also found angels. One could also find both devils and angels in the wilderness where “... the boundaries between human and nonhuman, between natural and supernatural, had always seemed

less certain than elsewhere” (373). For one to escape into the wilderness for visions and salvation is to emulate Christ’s journey into the desert. One then risks the soul in the hopes of seeing God (373). But such a journey is not strictly within the scope of Christianity. The “vision quest” is a hallmark of Native Americans and many other indigenous and pre-Christian cultures. Perhaps the settlers who gazed upon the Rockies were feeling not so much a Christian mission as they were feeling a much older influence from an ancient time. The Christian view of salvation becomes then merely a recycling of millennia-old tradition and practice, a practice that humans often perform within a supposedly uncivilized nature.

Although a negative view of wilderness (Satan’s home) transformed into a positive view (God’s temple), the negative view still persists with many people, particularly religious fundamentalists. There are many fundamentalists and non-fundamentalists who believe that the best purpose of wilderness is to serve people and to provide us with the raw materials needed to live. In other words, wilderness is nothing more than a resource to be used as we see fit. The fact that such an attitude still exists seems to point to an ambivalence that many Americans have towards wilderness. The religious ambivalence of Satan’s home and God’s temple leads to a modern ambivalence of resource use and nature appreciation; this ambivalence is a tension between civilization and wilderness. Clearly Americans want to have both of these things.

Roderick Nash (1967) says:

The problem with this mutual affirmation of civilization and wilderness was that it worked only so long as roads and bread could be provided in other than wild places. It offered no help in cases involving the use of land in a single area like Hetch Hetchy Valley or Dinosaur National Monument that had both wilderness

and economic values. In these situation decisions *had* to be made, and if in favor of development, they were irrevocable as far as wilderness was concerned. (228)

Nash goes on to note that the American wilderness ambivalence leads to agonizing choices involving the sacrifice of one “good” for another. Wilderness contains both desirable and undesirable features. Looking at their history, Americans see wilderness as both an enemy and an asset. National pride comes from both possessing and destroying wilderness. The situation of the 19TH century American pioneer is ironic because pioneering success came from destroying the very wild setting that made pioneering possible (228). Not surprisingly, the era of the American pioneer is the same era that saw the culmination of religious and romantic wilderness perspectives, such as the sublime and the frontier views, which I discuss below. The end of this era would also mark the beginning of the wilderness preservation movement.

The Sublime

The word ‘sublime’ denotes a sense of wilderness where the supernatural lay just beneath the surface of the landscape. This denotation of ‘sublime’ is an 18TH century usage that bears little relation to today’s use of the term. Cronon writes:

In the theories of Edmund Burke, Immanuel Kant, William Gilpin, and others, sublime landscapes were those rare places on earth where one had more chance than elsewhere to glimpse the face of God. Romantics had a clear notion of where one could be most sure of having this experience. Although God, might, of course, choose to show Himself anywhere, He would most often be found in those vast, powerful landscapes where one could not help feeling insignificant and being reminded of one’s own mortality. (373)

For some thinkers, the sublime is different than the beautiful. In *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*, Kant writes that while both the beautiful and the

sublime are pleasant, the beautiful charms but the sublime “moves” (*Gemüt*). Referring to objects and to human types, Kant felt that the beautiful is adorned and ornamented but the sublime must be simple (47). In his later work *Critique of Judgment*, Kant would greatly extend the definitions and distinctions of the beautiful and the sublime.

Judgments in the experience of the beautiful deal with forms or the figures and shapes of objects (Crawford, 98-99). Kant gives examples of regarding and taking an immediate interest in the beautiful *figures* of wild flowers, birds, and insects (§42, p.141). This appreciation of form may exist for both nature and art. While an aesthetic experience of the beautiful involves form (as expressed in figure and shape), the sublime experience is characterized by formlessness – “the absence of definite perceivable boundaries or spatial or temporal limitations” (Crawford, 99). One could say that a judgment of the beautiful is more concrete while the sublime is more abstract. A good example of the sublime experience is one’s response to the vastness of the ocean or the starry heavens. Kant states:

The beautiful in nature is connected with the form of the object, which consists in having [definite] boundaries. The sublime, on the other hand, is to be found in a formless object, so far as in it or by occasion of its *boundlessness* is represented, and yet its totality is also present to thought (§23, p.82).

The sublime is formless because we cannot unify the object’s elements in a spatial or temporal manner within sense intuition. It is not that the starry heavens have no spatial relations or no unity, but rather that we have no sensible standards to fully apprehend them. The heavens are of such a magnitude that we are led beyond them to an idea that has no counterpart within our sense experience. The sensory intuition that perceives the heavens cannot unify with the intellect that comprehended a totality and formed an idea

of the spatially infinite (§25, p.86; Crawford, 99). With this analysis, Kant moves from definitions of the sublime as “*absolutely great*” (§25, p.86) and “*that in comparison with which everything else is small*” (§25, p.88) to “*the sublime is that, the mere ability to think which shows a faculty of the mind surpassing every standard of sense*” (§25, p.89). In other words, the sublime does not actually refer to an object but rather to “the state of mind produced by a certain representation with which the reflective judgment is occupied, and not the object, that is to be called sublime” (§25, p.89). Thus *sublime* is not properly a quality of objects but a particular state of mind produced by a type of judgment.

Although the beautiful and the sublime have their differences, they also have their commonalities. Both of them are based upon the idea of the supersensible. For Kant, all ideas are supersensible because no sensible (i.e. physical senses) intuition or set of sensible intuitions can empirically explain ideas. Thus, by definition, ideas are supersensible. Aesthetic ideas, such as the beautiful and the sublime, are supersensible in that they are an attempt to present something that is beyond the bounds of our sensory experience. Natural beauties aesthetically express the same idea – that of the idea of the supersensible in general. The sublime relates to the supersensible in two ways. First, although a feeling of pleasure marks the sublime, it is an idea and is thus supersensible in the sense that any idea is supersensible. Second, the sublime is an idea of a supersensible faculty of the mind that is more important, and has dominion over, the sensible faculties. The sublime is a mental faculty that surpasses any standard of sense and that has as its object the supersensible reality. An object that one may label as “sublime” leads one to the idea of the supersensible. Kant writes:

But this idea of the supersensible, which we can no further determine – so that we cannot know but only think nature as its presentation – is awakened in us by means of an object whose aesthetical appreciation strains the imagination to its utmost bounds ... (§29, pp.108-109)

A defining feature of a sublime landscape is the emotional level it evokes within a person. Often these emotional sentiments are tied in with religious belief. Throughout the 18TH, 19TH, and 20TH centuries the locations that qualified as sublime changed and expanded. At first, these sites seemed to correspond to Biblical stories. Thus, the sublime was easily found in chasms, mountaintops, waterfalls, thunderclouds, rainbows, and sunsets. Parks such as Yellowstone, Yosemite, Grand Canyon, Rainier, and Zion all fit into the above categories. A swamp did not qualify as a wilderness area until the 1940s with the establishment of the Everglades National Park and the Midwest American grasslands have yet to be designated as a park or an official ‘wilderness’ (Cronon, 373). The early Romantics who first began to celebrate the sublime wrote of it in terms of terror and fear rather than pleasure. Both Wordsworth and Thoreau described wilderness excursions as frightening and isolating (374). As Cronon states,

What Wordsworth described was nothing less than a religious experience, akin to that of the Old Testament prophets as they conversed with their wrathful God. The symbols he detected in this wilderness landscape were more supernatural than natural, and they inspired more awe and dismay than joy or pleasure. No mere mortal was meant to linger long in such a place ... (374)

Later 19TH century writers, such as John Muir, reflect a different perspective on wilderness. Instead of terrifying and isolating, wilderness is a place of religious ecstasy. Such a view reflects the taming of wilderness that began taking place in the 1800s. As wilderness became a symbol of God, it became more comfortable and sentimental. Settlers began to live within the wilderness midst and more and more tourists viewed the

landscapes. Yet such activities represent a domestication of the wilderness. Many viewed wilderness as sacred but because of domestication it evoked religious sentiments of a church rather than the feelings “of a grand cathedral or harsh desert retreat” (374). Muir’s wilderness descriptions are those of the domesticated sublime. Cronon notes that Wordsworth (awe-filled bewilderment), Thoreau (stern loneliness), and Muir (welcome ecstasy) differ in the way they show piety but they all see wilderness as a cathedral. As Cronon writes, “The sublime wilderness had ceased to be a place of satanic temptation and become instead a sacred temple, much as it continues to be for those who love it today” (375).

In sum, it seems that the negative perception of wilderness that began to change in the 18TH and 19TH centuries was, at least partially, the result of a Christian notion of a wrathful and vengeful god. The early Romantics show a transition from a negative perspective to one that is more positive. The wilderness may be a place of terror but now it is somewhat redeemable because the wilderness symbolizes God. Such a view certainly encourages an appreciation of wilderness but it surprisingly also sounds quite pagan, animistic, and pantheistic. Religious sentiments such as these are the earliest forms of religion that existed for millennia before the rise of Christianity and other monotheistic religions. Pre-Christian Europeans, such as the Celts and the Northern European tribes, are examples of peoples who held pagan notions of the wilderness. Today, Native Americans, Australian Aborigines, Lapps, and hundreds of other ancient indigenous and tribal peoples still maintain a spiritual view of wilderness. Not surprisingly, such groups, for the most part, maintain ecologically sustainable lifestyles and cultures (or at least they used to maintain such a lifestyle until they were

“modernized”). Hundreds of years later, the “new” religion of Christianity began to adopt similar spiritual ideas of wilderness. Perhaps such pagan notions never truly died but retreated under the surface level of consciousness only to be reborn with the expansion of the American frontier and the settlers’ encounters with a wilderness that was far different than any land they had ever known.

The Frontier

The American frontier settler who gazed upon a mountain and felt the presence of God was influenced by more than just religious upbringing. The American national myth of the frontier embodies the powerful romantic attraction of primitivism that dates at least as far back as Rousseau – the view “that the best antidote to the ills of an overly refined and civilized modern world was a return to simpler, more primitive living” (Cronon, 375). Cronon refers to Frederick Jackson Turner who wrote in 1893 an academic statement of the American frontier myth. European immigrants and American easterners, in moving westward,

shed the trappings of civilization, rediscovered their primitive racial energies, reinvented direct democratic institutions, and thereby reinfused themselves with a vigor, an independence, and a creativity that were the source of American democracy and national character. Seen in this way, wild country became a place not just of religious redemption but also of national renewal, the quintessential location for experiencing what it meant to be an American. (375)

Turner also added that the frontier was passing away. So from the very beginning of the frontier myth was the idea built-in that this crucible of American identity was temporary and would fade away. Those who celebrated the frontier were always looking backwards, mourning an older, simpler, and truer world that was almost gone. Such a

view depended upon wilderness and free land. Thus, the myth of the American frontier contained the seeds of wilderness preservation. Wild land was crucial for the making of a nation and so its remnants had to be preserved as monuments of the past. The national park movement occurred at the same time as the closing of the frontier so wilderness protection also became protection of America's most sacred myth of origin (375).

Rugged individualism is one of the core elements of the frontier myth. While Turner stressed communitarian ideas, arguing that people forced into primitive conditions will band together with neighbors to form communities and democratic institutions, other writers focused on individual freedom rather than democratic communities. An individual could escape the confines of civilized life and flee to the margins of settled land and society (Cronon, 375). This individualism was couched in terms of male power and freedom. The passing of the frontier was not only the loss of a way of life but was a loss of the heroic men who embodied that life. The cowboy, sheriff, and rancher symbolize strong, macho, male values – an archetype of the heroically masculine. The wilderness was the arena upon which the drama of the male heroic quest played out. The wilderness allowed a man to be a real man – the rugged individual he was meant to be before the emasculating and energy-sapping tendencies of feminine civilization. Curiously, men who felt this way, such as Theodore Roosevelt, came from elite backgrounds. They thus expressed a “peculiarly bourgeois form of anti-modernism” (376). The men who benefited the most from urban-industrial capitalism were those who attempted to escape its debilitating effects. They seemed to believe that if the frontier was fading, then at least they could have the wilderness experience and regeneration it offered only if the last remnants of the wilderness could be saved (376).

These same men were also those who had the financial means to enjoy wilderness. Cronon's point here is very telling in that such an attitude is quite evident today. As a friend once remarked, wilderness is for those who can afford it. Seemingly, those who came from wealthy families had the money and equipment to trek across the country and climb a mountain in Wyoming. The rest of us have had to work for basic amenities and the thought of a wilderness trip was not as likely a possibility. Thus wilderness becomes nothing more than a big playground for the rich. Those who cannot afford such a journey have to be content with discovering wilderness in the backyard or city park. But perhaps such people are better off because they discover that wilderness is much more than a grand mountain vista in the western U.S. The wealthy late-19th and early-20th century tourists brought the city with them to the wilderness. They established immense estates and ranches with all the comforts and amenities of city living. For these people, the wild was not a place for production and labor; it was a place for recreation. A wealthy person went to the wilderness as a consumer and not a producer, assuming they overlooked their hunting guides as servants and employees of the rich (376). Cronon's point here reminds me of a public TV series on camping where the host, after demonstrating how to secure a tent pitched in sand, breaks out a candle, a bottle of wine, and a garlic press to prepare for dinner.

As Cronon notes, the nostalgia for the fading frontier expresses an ambivalence, if not outright hostility, towards modern civilization. Wilderness was honest, free, and natural while cities and factories are confining, artificial and false (376). I would add that while such a view is understandable, it is highly problematic because one who holds such a view is drawing an arbitrary boundary. This boundary could then set up a mind-set

where one should preserve the wilderness but allow the cities to rot. Urban-industrial areas need as much care, if not more, as the wilderness to make them decent places in which to live, work, and play. Not everyone can, or should, live in a forest. Some prefer the attractions of the city but they should not be forced to live in miserable conditions. The establishment of a boundary between the wilderness and non-wilderness sets up a dichotomy that penalizes those who live in non-wilderness areas. If the urban is false and plastic, then surely those who live there are also false and plastic. Such a conclusion is simply not acceptable. Both the urban and non-urban have their merits and people ought to be able to enjoy the pleasures of both.

It was the wealthy elite, and not the rural resident, who shaped the modern wilderness view. The farmer may have a more difficult time viewing the wilderness as a playground as opposed to the wealthy Chief Executive Officer on vacation. Ironically, wilderness came to reflect the very civilization that wilderness devotees sought to escape. The farmer knows much about working the land and may then view unworked land as less than ideal. Elite tourists and sportsmen project their frontier fantasies onto the landscape and then recreate wilderness in their own image. The tension between country folk and city dwellers is well expressed in the mid-1970s film *Deliverance*. In the story, a group of wealthy Atlanta businessmen take a weekend hunting/camping excursion into a nearby Appalachian forest area. Apparently, these men were involved with the construction of a dam that will soon flood this forest area and force the removal of its human inhabitants. The men want to journey into the wilderness before it is forever lost. They hire a few locals as guides and car drivers and begin a canoe trip down the soon-to-be expanded river. The businessmen later encounter other locals who then commit rape

and murder upon some of the businessmen. The survivors make their way back to civilization only after doing some killing of their own. At the movie's end, both the businessmen (who have suffered violence) and the locals (who are about to lose their homes and way of life) have suffered greatly and are left with immense emotional scars. One of the last images is that of a church half-submerged in the rising river. Perhaps one message from this film is that mistreatment of the wilderness destroys both wilderness inhabitants and those who do the harm.

The frontier wilderness myth presents other ironies. One of these is the myth that the wilderness is virgin and uninhabited, an idea seen earlier in the discussion of the received view. The Native Americans who once called the frontier their home certainly felt differently. By removing the native inhabitants onto reservations, the perceived violence of the wilderness was removed. Tourists then mistakenly thought that they were gazing upon land in its pristine, original state well reflecting God's creation. Besides the removal of Indians, the disappearance of the frontier and the establishment of the national parks also removed any sort of violent or savage element from the wilderness. It became a place of reverie rather than one of revulsion and fear, but the original inhabitants were kept out by use of force and the government deemed the natives' prior life activities as illegal (376-377).

The removal of Indians to create an uninhabited wilderness reminds us just how contrived, constructed, and invented is the conception of wilderness. Cronon argues that there is nothing natural about wilderness:

It is entirely a creation of the culture that holds it dear, a product of the very history it seeks to deny. Indeed, one of the most striking proofs of the cultural invention of wilderness is its thoroughgoing erasure of the history from which it

sprang. In virtually all of its manifestations, wilderness represents a flight from history. (377)

People view wilderness in many manifestations: an Eden, a frontier, a place of heroism, the sacred, and the sublime. No matter how we view wilderness it offers the illusion that we can escape the kind of world in which our past has ensnared us (377).

The idea that wilderness represents an escape from history explains why the language associated with wilderness is often filled with spiritual and religious values that reflect human ideals that are greater than the physical world of nature. Cronon asserts, “Wilderness fulfills the old romantic project of secularizing Judeo-Christian values so as to make a new cathedral not in some petty human building but in God’s own creation, Nature itself” (377). The escape from history that is near the core of an idea of wilderness is also an escape from responsibility. This is an illusion that says we can wipe clean the slate of our past and return to some previous form of reality that existed before humans made their impressions upon the world.

The illusion or dream of a virgin and pristine wilderness is the fantasy of those who have never worked the land for survival. These same dreaming urbanites do not know nor understand how food got to their local market; nor do they know of the trees that died to be raw materials for houses and paper. Not surprisingly, those who are alienated from the land are the same ones who maintain a romantic model of wilderness, for a romantic model leaves no place from which humans can make a living from the land (378-379). Cronon sums up the wilderness illusion as follows:

Thus it is that wilderness serves as the unexamined foundation on which so many of the quasi-religious values of modern environmentalism rest. The critique of modernity that is one of environmentalism’s most important contributions to the moral and political discourse of our time more often than not appeals, explicitly or

implicitly, to wilderness as the standard against which to measure the failings of our human world. Wilderness is the natural, unfallen antithesis of an unnatural civilization that has lost its soul. It is a place of freedom in which we can recover the true selves we have lost to the corrupting influences of our artificial lives. Most of all, it is the ultimate landscape of authenticity. Combining the sacred grandeur of the sublime with the primitive simplicity of the frontier, it is the place where we can see the world as it really is, and so know ourselves as we really are – or ought to be. (377)

Pernicious Ethnocentrism

Nelson, Callicott, and Cronon all discussed the problem of separating humans from nature. They also noted how this separation leads to genocide and ethnocentrism. The notion that wilderness, virgin and unspoiled, is separate from humans can lead to some very disastrous consequences. One example is the earlier discussion about how some American Indian tribes are no longer permitted to hunt on their ancestral lands because these lands are now designated wilderness areas. This disruption of a culture's traditional way of life can actually lead to the destruction of that culture. Colin M. Turnbull tells of such a predicament in his classic book *The Mountain People*. Turnbull, an anthropologist, spent almost two years living among an African tribe known as the Ik (pronounced "eek"). Turnbull details the heartbreaking story of how the Ik, within the time-span of only one generation, were transformed from a healthy and vibrant culture to one of amorality and misery. How did this happen? For hundreds if not thousands of years the Ik roamed through a land area in northern Uganda near the Sudanese and Kenyan borders. Within this area exists the Kidepo valley – the Ik's traditional major hunting ground that provided the majority of their food in any given year. The Ugandan government declared this valley to be a national park and told the Ik that they were no longer permitted to hunt or gather food in the valley. Further, the government told the Ik

to become farmers (24). Not only did the Ik have to change immediately their traditional way of life but the land on which they could farm, which lay outside the valley, was terrible for farming as the soil was typically arid and hard. The Ik's farming land also suffered regular droughts that would often last two to three years. The valley was rather verdant but of course the Ik were not permitted to farm within the valley. Given these circumstances, the Ik were sentenced to a life of continual starvation. Thus their culture and morality deteriorated to only one concern: survival. Any other considerations, moral and otherwise, were eliminated if they did not directly contribute to the acquisition of food. Constant illness and premature death quickly reduced the Ik's numbers and so Turnbull concluded that the Ik would most likely disappear altogether within a short time.

Based upon information from tribal elders and upon comparisons with other hunter-gatherer tribes, Turnbull describes the pre-national park Ik as one would describe almost any other hunter-gatherer culture. The Ik were a cooperative culture and all resources were shared among the tribe's members. All the male Ik would work together to hunt and they were careful not to over-hunt an area of land – to do so was a grave sin and seemed to go against a divine command (25). Both men and women were equally important. The men may have had the more exciting task of hunting but the women's food gathering provided the bulk of the Ik's nourishment (26). The notion of 'family' included tribal members who were not related to one's immediate blood-family and an Ik would often form 'family' alliances with non-related tribal members (28). Turnbull surmises that because they make their living directly from nature, members of hunter-gatherer societies seem to be automatically imbued with a sense of connection to the

earth. So lastly, like any other hunter-gatherer society, the Ik felt that they were part of the land and that the land was part of them; to lose one would be to lose the other (29).

After the loss of their primary hunting ground, the Ik quickly transformed from a communal and sharing culture into one of extreme individualism focused solely upon survival. Because they were continually faced with the twin specters of starvation and death, noble virtues such as communal sharing and cooperation quickly disappeared. With limited food supplies, the act of sharing with others would increase one's probability of death. As a result, the very young, the old, and the sick were deemed as parasites and thus ignored by the otherwise, relatively speaking, healthy tribal members. In the game of survival there is simply no room for luxuries such as family, sentiment, and love (130-131). Based on this observation, Turnbull concludes that noble virtues do not seem to be inherent among humans and that they merely exist as extended survival tools when resources are relatively plentiful.

Where once the Ik shared with their fellows, they now prized the individual good above all else and demanded that each person get away with as much as he or she could. The Ik would thus commonly steal from one another and this was why their villages were built in such a way as to protect each Ik from other Ik (101). Further, when the Ik lost their freedom and valley, they also lost their love for the earth that now became ugly and harsh (256-259).

Turnbull concludes that all of humanity, with its focus on individuality over community, is headed down the same path as the Ik. He writes the following:

The Ik teach us that our much vaunted human values are not inherent in humanity at all, but are associated only with a particular form of survival called society, and that all, even society itself, are luxuries that can be dispensed with. That does not

make them any less desirable, and if man has any greatness it is surely in his ability to maintain these values, clinging to them to an often very bitter end, even shortening an already pitifully short life rather than sacrificing his humanity. But that too involves choice, and the Ik teach us that man can lose the will to make it. That is the point at which there is an end to truth, to goodness and to beauty; an end to the struggle for their achievement, which gives life to the individual while at the same time giving strength and meaning to society. The Ik have relinquished all luxury in the name of individual survival, and the result is that they live on as a people without life, without passion, beyond humanity. We pursue those trivial, idiotic techno-logical encumbrances and imagine *them* to be the luxuries that make life worth living, and all the time we are losing our potential for social rather than individual survival, for hating as well as loving, losing perhaps our last chance to enjoy life with all the passion that is our nature and being. (294-295)

The case of the Ik presents an extreme and horrible example of good environmental intentions gone wrong. Turnbull noted that Ik men would sit on a hillside and gaze out over their former hunting territory, wondering about those who ordained that animals should be preserved while people died. The demise of the Ik shows the result of ethnocentric thinking and government policy. In the cases of the Ik and of some American Indian tribes, the ethnocentrism occurs between indigenous peoples and the government who removed them from ancestral lands.

The ethnocentrism problem also occurs in a larger sense between nations and hemispheres. Asian Indian sociologist Ramachandra Guha (1999) observes that a common error occurs when the values of one culture are imposed on another culture. Because many environmental problems are international, one needs to be careful when applying American and western environmental values upon non-Western cultures. Although Guha specifically critiques the deep ecology movement, his criticisms are easily applicable to other environmental philosophies and are also certainly applicable to the western idea of wilderness. Briefly, deep ecology is an environmental philosophy

that poses “deep” questions about the normative and descriptive assumptions of modern society. Deep ecology contrasts with “shallow” environmentalism that seeks to alter destructive practices, such as industrial pollution, without altering the anthropocentric attitudes that underlie ecological problems.

In criticizing deep ecology Guha presents two main arguments. The first argument is that although Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess first formulated deep ecology, this movement is strictly an American idea. Further, radical environmentalism in other cultures is very different from the American version. The second argument is that putting deep ecology into practice worldwide could lead to some disastrous consequences. Guha then lists what he believes to be the three main tenets of deep ecology and then critiques each of these tenets (590).

According to Guha, the first tenet of deep ecology is the view that the environmental movement itself is anthropocentric and must shift to a biocentric perspective. To briefly restate, anthropocentrism is the view that humans (specifically male humans) and their projects are “the center of the universe” (590); biocentrism sees humans, who are not superior to other forms of life, as merely one part of a unified whole of reality. In addition, biocentrism holds that all things have intrinsic worth regardless of their value for humans. Deep ecologists criticize “shallow ecology” (establishment environmentalism) for casting arguments in anthropocentric terms (590). Examples of shallow ecology include recycling efforts and research into clean energy sources. Deep ecology primarily deals with the theoretical aspect of environmentalism while shallow ecology is concerned with the real-world application of environmentalism. Guha concludes his summation by stating “The anthropocentric-biocentric distinction is

accepted as axiomatic by deep ecologists, it structures their discourse, and much of the present discussion remains mired within it” (590).

The thrust of Guha’s critique of this first tenet of deep ecology is that the anthropocentric/biocentric distinction is not the primary issue of environmental problems. Further, deep ecologists point to anthropocentric thinking as the root cause for environmental woes – this reduction is patently false. Guha believes that the environmental movement’s transition from an anthropocentric focus to a biocentric focus is good and is already evident in some scientific and religious discourse. What he does not like are the radical conclusions of deep ecology, namely, “that intervention in nature should be guided primarily by the need to preserve biotic integrity rather than by the needs of humans” (591). Evidently, the anthropocentric/biocentric dichotomy gives little help in understanding the dynamics of environmental degradation. In Guha’s view the two fundamental environmental problems are (1) overconsumption by the industrialized world and by the Third World elite; and (2) increasing militarization both in a short-term sense (constant regional warfare) and in a long-term sense (arms race and chance of nuclear holocaust). Neither of these two problems has any “tangible connection to the anthropocentric/biocentric distinction” (591). The proximate causes for these two problems are (on a macro level) economic and political structures and (on a micro level) individual lifestyle choices. These causes simply cannot be reduced to an anthropocentric attitude towards nature. On the contrary, the grave threat to human survival posed by these two main problems clearly does not serve the best interests of humans (591). In other words, an anthropocentric position, which by definition is a

position that serves humans' interests, does not support the above two problems and it could not justify environmental destruction.

The second tenet of deep ecology, according to Guha, is the focus on the preservation of unspoiled wilderness and the restoration of degraded areas to a more pristine condition. Guha further believes that deep ecologists are obsessed with this goal to the exclusion and neglect of other issues on the environmental agenda. The preservationist goal is a result of three factors: (1) the result of the preservationist (radical) and utilitarian (reformist) dichotomy that has existed within America environmentalism since the turn of the 19th to the 20th centuries; (2) preservation is a moral imperative that flows from biocentrism, that is, plants, nonhuman animals, and nature itself have an intrinsic right to exist; (3) the scientific argument that preservation leads to stabilizing biological diversity to ensure a gene pool for future generations. On the basis of these arguments, some environmentalists have offered extremely radical solutions such as a 90% reduction in the human population to allow environmental restoration and cordoning off large portions of the globe from humans (590).

Guha sees the preservationist/utilitarian dichotomy as a separation of people and interests. But in Guha's native India, people and interests are intricately bound together. Guha notes this cultural difference and the harmful effects of American radical environmentalism upon a foreign nation:

Because India is a long settled and densely populated country in which agrarian populations have a finely balanced relationship with nature, the setting aside of wilderness areas has resulted in a direct transfer of resources from the poor to the rich. (591)

The designation and management of these reserves required the displacement of villages and the exclusion of peasants and livestock. The call for conservation came from two camps. One was a contingent of ex-hunters who were members of India's declining feudal elite. The second camp was a group of foreign representatives from international agencies such as the World Wildlife Fund and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources who sought to transplant an American-style national park system onto Indian soil. According to Guha, the needs of the local populace have not been taken into account and the preserve areas, like those in Africa, are maintained primarily for the benefit of wealthy tourists. The consequence of all this is that issues, which impinge directly upon the peasants, such as fuel, water shortages, soil erosion, and air and water pollution, have not been addressed by the environmental planners (591).

For Guha, the third tenet of deep ecology is that deep ecologists see themselves as the "leading edge" of the environmental movement. He says, "As the polarity of the shallow/deep and anthropocentric/biocentric distinction makes clear, they see themselves as the spiritual, philosophical, and political vanguard of American and world environmentalism" (590). But deep ecology is a limited radicalism, says Guha, within America, and that radical environmentalism is different in other parts of the world. Deep ecology is actually a radical trend within the wilderness preservation movement. For Americans national parks provide a "temporary antidote" to modern life. Wilderness areas are a special institution within industrialized society and offer visitors rest and reflection. Interest in wilderness areas simply became an integral part of both a

consumerist society and of a higher standard of living as people sought out new pleasures and amenities.

Because of this uniquely American view of wilderness, deep ecology “runs parallel to the consumer society without seriously questioning its ecological and socio-political basis” (592). For Guha, the error here is that wilderness protection is confused with environmental protection (592). This point directly addresses the problem of the American wilderness conception being exclusionist (by virtue of designating one area and not another as wilderness and also by separating humans from nature). It is pointless to protect wilderness if one is also not working to reduce industrial pollution, for example. As discussed earlier, the American confusion with wilderness and environmental protection is the result of a unique social history, one that is fraught with irony and paradox.

Guha contrasts American environmental views with those of Germany and India. The German Greens base their radicalism upon the thesis that modern industrial society must accept environmental limits to growth. Further, there exists a link between militarization, industrialization, and conquest and that Western economic growth has mainly resulted from economic and ecological exploitation of the Third Worlds. But like the deep ecologists, the German Greens call for a questioning and reevaluation of basic Western sociological and economic assumptions. The Greens argue that the expansionist Western model must yield to a model of renunciation and self-limitation in which spiritual and communal values play an important role in sustaining life. The Greens call for a revolution in cultural values that are different than those identified by American deep ecologists. For example, Greens advocate a “no growth” economy that is in stark

contrast to the American expansionist economy. Indian environmentalists find much company in the German Green philosophy because India has suffered greatly from the Western colonialism and industrialization that has exacted a heavy social and economic toll. Environmental battles in India are waged between the large rural subsistence group and the more powerful commercial-industrial sector. Peasants organize movements against deforestation, dams, large-trawler fish exporting operations, and industrial pollution that affect their farming and fishing communities (593).

There are two major differences between the American environmental movements and those of Germany and India. The first is that for groups such as poor peasants, women, and indigenous peoples, who suffer the most from environmental degradation, environmentalism is a question of survival, not one of enhancing the quality of life. The second difference is that these dispossessed groups offer solutions that address questions of equity as well as questions of economic and political redistribution. In all, their main concern is with the use of the environment and who should benefit from such use; their concern is not with protection per se. According to Guha, the American view is inferior to the German and Indian views because the latter perspectives are better for allowing the integration of ecological concerns with issues of livelihood and work. They also place more emphasis on social justice and equity on both a national and global scale. Their views are grounded on the belief that without major positive changes in social factors, environmental renewal has little hope of succeeding. Lastly, views such as the German and Indian environmental outlooks escape the wilderness preservation obsession that is so characteristic of American environmental and cultural history. As Guha says of Americans:

They possess a vast, beautiful, and sparsely populated continent and are also able to draw upon the natural resources of large portions of the globe by virtue of their economic and political dominance. In consequence, America can simultaneously enjoy the material benefits of an expanding economy and the aesthetic benefits of unspoiled nature. The two poles of “wilderness” and “civilization” mutually coexist in an internally coherent whole, and philosophers of both poles are assigned a prominent place in this culture. Paradoxically as it may seem, it is no accident that Star Wars technology and deep ecology both find their fullest expression in that leading sector of Western civilization, California. (592)

The Wilderness Paradox

The ethnocentric problem with wilderness thus presents a central paradox – it embodies a dualistic vision where humans are placed entirely outside the natural realm. If nature, for it to be true, must also be wild, then our presence within nature represents its fall. If nature, then, is a place where humans are not existent, then wilderness cannot be a solution to environmental problems and any other social issue one could name. Many, if not most, humans live within an industrial-urban civilization and at the same time pretend that their real homes lie within wilderness. Such erroneous thinking leads us to ignore our responsibility for the kinds of lives we actually lead. We inhabit civilization while holding ourselves aloof from its entanglements. We rely on the benefits, networks, and institutions of modern civilization while not recognizing how essential are these things to our being and how they make up, in part, who we are.

Cronon sums up with this statement:

To the extent that we celebrate wilderness as the measure with which we judge civilization, we reproduce the dualism that sets humanity and nature at opposite poles. We thereby leave ourselves little hope of discovering what an ethical, sustainable, *honorable* human place in nature might actually look like ... By imagining that our true home is in the wilderness, we forgive ourselves the homes we actually inhabit. In its flight from history, in its siren song of escape, in its reproduction of the dangerous dualism that sets human beings outside of nature --

in all of these ways, wilderness poses a serious threat to responsible environmentalism at the end of the twentieth century. (378)

Dualism seems to be the major problem with the label of ‘wilderness.’ Because wilderness is one of the core issues, if not *the* core issue, of environmental ethics, it serves as a sort of ideological underpinning for other environmental issues. And if the wilderness conception is problematic, then its virus spreads to the rest of environmentalism. For example, those who support biological diversity, a seemingly scientific topic, actually invoke the same fuzzy sacred values of wilderness and then contradict themselves by calling for ecosystem management. Here is a clear example of how the romantic ideology of wilderness directly conflicts with the very thing it encourages us to protect. The same problem occurs with endangered species. An animal such as the spotted owl becomes a vulnerable symbol of biological diversity while at the same time becoming a surrogate of wilderness itself. To gain legal standing, wilderness defenders often rely on a single endangered species. This approach deflates the full power of sacred land into a single organism whose habitat then becomes the focus of intense debate. Anti-environmental forces easily attack such approaches by simply calling for the relocation of the threatened species (Cronon, 378).

John Passmore’s classic critique, entitled “The Two-Worlds Argument” or alternatively “The Humpty Dumpty Argument”, provides further understanding of the dualism problem. Passmore defines this argument as follows:

Its basic point is that once we break up any system in a certain kind of way, it becomes quite impossible to put the pieces together again in a single situation: and yet, unless they can be so put together, the whole point of the breaking up is lost. (*Philosophical Reasoning*, 40)

Plato's theory of the forms is one of several examples from western philosophy that Passmore cites as indicative of the dualist paradox. According to Plato there exists two worlds: that of the forms and that of particulars. The forms are fixed, eternal, immutable entities that reside outside the material world. Particulars are those individual objects and things that populate the material world. Thus, one may observe many different chairs but there is only one form of "chair-ness." Presumably, the chair form is a sort of template for the creation of particular chairs. Another way to state this idea is that the chair upon which one sits is a reflection (or copy or cheap imitation) of the chair form. Particulars are not eternal and are always changing – arising and disappearing in some fashion. Thus, one cannot depend upon knowledge of particulars to yield any sort of true knowledge so that concerning particulars one can only have 'belief' or 'opinion.' Knowledge of the forms is the only true and correct knowledge (41). All sorts of questions concerning this theory immediately present themselves with the most obvious being exactly how the particular participates in (or reflects, copies, imitates) the form? An attempt to answer this question leads one to the Two-Worlds Argument.

To explain the Two-Worlds Argument, Passmore continues with the above example. Suppose that particulars have a here-and-now existence while forms have eternal existence. Throw into the mix that the particular participates in the form and that this participation is here-and-now. It follows that the form is thus here-and-now. In other words, a transitory event (particular) participates in an eternal event (form) and now this situation seems to be contradictory. This problem becomes even more acute when one asks who can be aware that a transitory event does participate in a form? Suppose there is a mind that belongs to the world of eternal objects and that this mind is called

‘God.’ Because this mind is eternal it cannot, by definition, have awareness that a particular participates in a form. Why? Because only an eternal mind can have perfect and true knowledge and not belief or opinion. Belief and opinion are a result of mortal imperfection and thus an eternal mind cannot have knowledge of transitory events. Conversely, a mind that is part of the changing world of particulars can never have perfect knowledge. This mind can only have knowledge in an imperfect manner and thus it cannot have knowledge of a form because such knowledge must be perfect. A form must be wholly known or not known at all. Therefore, no person – God or mortal – is ever in a position to be aware that any particular is related to any form. Yet it is essential that someone be aware of such a relationship “if the forms are to fill their theoretical role either as explanatory principles or as ideal standards. So the theory of forms leads to consequences which are incompatible with its *raison d’etre* as a theory” (42).

The wilderness conception exhibits the problems of the Two Worlds Argument. One hallmark of wilderness is preservation – humans attempt to preserve wilderness for eternity and to keep it in its original and pristine state. This is the “still-shot” mentality that aims at making wilderness into a picture postcard, forever frozen in time like a museum piece to be occasionally visited by its patrons. This view is problematic on two counts. First, humans must intervene and manage the wilderness to keep it in its original condition, whatever that may be. Thus the principles of preservation, nonviolation, and noninterference are violated. Second, wilderness, like any other aspect of existence, is subject to constant change with or without human intervention. Thus any attempt at preservation is futile and ridiculous. Clearly, the preservationist aspect of wilderness is a direct result of an incorrect perception of the true nature of reality. However, there exists

another type of preservation that prohibits exploitive and destructive industrial practices within wilderness areas. This preservation view does not suffer from the Two Worlds problem because environmentalists may achieve the view's goals without, for example, moving indigenous people from their homelands.

In addition to the dualistic problems laid out by Passmore, the American romantic wilderness conception also leads to other dualistic conundrums, particularly when applied to other countries. The classic example of this situation is the tropical rain forest problem. Most of the focus for this issue falls upon the Amazon, but rain forests in places such as Africa and Indonesia suffer as well from human destruction and development. Americans and Europeans see these forests as veritable Gardens of Eden. But First World environmentalists view rain forest protection as protection *from* the people who live in the forests. Those who seek to protect rain forests from native peoples risk reproducing the same type of tragedy that befell American Indians. First World (developed nations that are relatively materially wealthy such as the United States and the nations of Western Europe) notions of wilderness can lead to an unthinking and self-defeating form of cultural imperialism and paternalism. Third World nations face massive environmental and social problems but these problems are not likely to be solved by a cultural myth that encourages the preservation of a people-less landscape that never really existed in the first place (Cronon, 378-379).

The dualistic paradox of romantic wilderness logically leads to the absurd conclusion that if nature dies because humans enter it, then the only way to save nature is to kill ourselves. This conclusion not only ascribes greater power to humanity than we possess (nature has existed long before humans appeared and nature will continue long

after we are gone, assuming that the human species somehow disappears altogether), but such a conclusion leads to self-defeating despair. The current wilderness conception then sets up a negative psychological disposition that simply will not yield positive nor practical solutions or results. Unfortunately, radical ecologists and deep ecologists accept the premise that human activity inevitably destroys nature and, according to Cronon, they conclude that all facets of civilization are bad. Such groups seem to pine for a return to a hunter-gatherer lifestyle (an event that just may occur in the event of a global calamity) (379). Radical ecologists' call for a return to primitivism is a reflection of the frontier myth. A primitive must use his own sweat, blood, and wits to survive as an animal upon the land. The primitive is unfettered by the constraints of civilization and can live a natural and authentic life. As noted earlier, life on the frontier affords the same sort of lifestyle. Such a vision entails problematic consequences. The primary of these is that bad civilization is pitted against good wilderness and wilderness then becomes the focus of an epic struggle where all other human problems pale in comparison. The radical ecologist's agenda does not seem to include occupational health and safety, toxic waste exposure on non-wilderness lands, lead poisoning of poor inner-city children, famine, poverty, and any other issue of environmental justice. Placing too much stock in wilderness leads to other areas becoming less than natural and to humans becoming less than human. This conclusion can then give us permission to not care much about the suffering or fate of others (Cronon, 380).

Cronon believes that dualism, the paradox of wilderness, is the heart of the problem with wilderness and that it accounts for all of the erroneous thinking and negative consequences of an American wilderness conception. The dualism of human

and nonhuman ignores crucial differences between humans and the “complex cultural and historical reasons why different peoples may feel very differently about the meaning of wilderness” (380). All of the consequences that Cronon draws from the wilderness paradox – wilderness as recreation only to be enjoyed by the privileged, urban recreationists set against rural people who work the land, the idealization of so-called primitive peoples – are questions that imply conflicts between different groups of people. Worse, these oppositions become so simplistic that we easily overlook the subtleties and complexities that we need to understand. Cronon concludes:

But the most troubling cultural baggage that accompanies the celebration of wilderness has less to do with remote rain forests and peoples than with the ways we think about ourselves – we American environmentalists who quite rightly worry about the future of the earth and the threats we pose to the natural world. Idealizing a distant wilderness too often means not idealizing the environment in which we actually live, the landscape that for better or worse we call home. Most of our most serious environmental problems start right there, at home, and if we are to solve those problems, we need an environmental ethic that will tell us as much about *using* nature as about *not* using it. The wilderness dualism tends to cast any use as *ab*-use, and thereby denies us a middle ground in which responsible use and non-use might attain some kind of balanced, sustainable relationship. My own belief is that only by exploring this middle ground will we learn ways of imagining a better world for all of us: humans and nonhumans, rich people and poor, women and men, First Worlders and Third Worlders, white folks and people of color, consumers and producers – a world better for humanity in all of its diversity and for all the rest of nature too. The middle ground is where we actually live. It is where we – all of us, in our different places and ways – make our homes. (380-381)

Chapter Three: The Cash Value of Wilderness

Harold Fromm (1992) described the idea of natural goodness or natural beauty as “a post-Enlightenment invention that happened to require subduing the wilderness and becoming bourgeois to appreciate” (30). The same could be said of wilderness itself. Wilderness is not so much an ecological and geographical referent as it is a mental construct informed by societal perceptions and bias. Roderick Nash notices this problem when he says, “Civilization created wilderness,” and “Appreciation of wilderness began in the cities” (xiii). Nash quotes Luther Standing Bear discussing the Native American perception of nature:

We did not think of the great open plains, the beautiful rolling hills and the winding streams with tangled growth as “wild.” Only to the white man was nature a “wilderness” and ... the land “infested” with “wild” animals and savage people ... there was no wilderness; since nature was not dangerous but hospitable; not forbidding but friendly (xiii).

Despite its problems, the wilderness idea has merit because it is something other than us and other than civilization. In addition, wilderness is wild. The otherness and wildness of wilderness make it fascinating. Max Oelschlaeger (1991) points out that before the rise of agriculture and modern civilization ten thousand years ago, humans quite possibly lived in an intuitive manner where they were vitally aware of nature and the organic processes that created all life upon the earth. Although “modern people cannot go home again” (2), wild nature still presents opportunities for contemplative encounters and

reflection on transcendent ideas and meanings that are beyond those of modern life. Some believe that such experiences provide justification for wilderness preservation. Yet the idea of wilderness is more than a preservation justification or a basis of non-manmade aesthetic appreciation. The idea of wilderness represents a heightened awareness, on the part of the agrarian or Neolithic mind, of distinctions between nature and humankind. These distinctions became more apparent as farming and herding replaced hunting and gathering. The contemporary idea of wilderness is a *mélange* of philosophies ranging from resource conservation to deep ecology. As a continuum, wilderness is bounded on one end as a romantic anachronism and bounded on the other end as part of an evolutionary explanation of cosmology. All of these ideas and philosophies are different, competing, sometimes inconsistent and contradictory. Despite these problems, the idea of wilderness assumes a new importance in the light of current events as the almost total humanizing of the earth's landscape looms on the horizon (3).

The Other

The modern wilderness conception sets up humans and nature as an "other" respective to each other. The "other" then becomes an enemy and an adversary in which the two belligerents war against each other. Thomas H. Birch (1990) sums up this situation:

Problems arise when the other is understood in the usual Western, and imperialistic, manner: as the enemy. In this sense, mainstream Western culture views the oppositional opportunities that otherness affords as adversarial. It presupposes that opposition is fundamentally conflictive, rather than complementary, or communal, or Taoist, or ecosystemic. At best, others are to be "tolerated," which is close to pitying them for their unfortunate inferiority. The central presupposition is thus Hobbes: that we exist fundamentally in a state of

war with any and all others. This is perhaps the most central tenet of our guiding mythology, or legitimizing story, about the necessary manner of relationship with others. (7)

The “other” does not have to be an enemy and indeed, wilderness as “other” presents positive characteristics that make wilderness valuable. Oelschlaeger notes that the concept of wilderness as an ‘other’ is necessary to any grounded understanding of human beingness and articulation of individual identity. We can be what we are capable of being only if we also have some sense of what we are not” (pp.8-9). For Michael F. Smith (1991), the striking feature of the jungle is its otherness:

The wolves are wolves and have their own world-view, the law of the jungle. Perhaps the only long-term chance for the survival of the jungle lies in our coming to see it as being of intrinsic value on its own terms. The jungle offers us a chance to escape a world where all we see reflects ‘humanity’ back at us. The appropriateness of using ethical language in discussions of environmental concerns lies not in the similarity of the moral objects to ourselves, but in morality’s ability to express concerns about a wider community, a community not of equals, but of inter-relationships. What we need to do is to let the jungle into our moral considerations. If we have a passion for wilderness it will not be stemmed by the humanist who calls us unreasonable. If it is unreasonable to value rivers, if mountains are not morally considerable and deserts not intrinsically valuable to humanists, that is because they have too narrow a vision. Their eyes are closed. They have failed to grasp what the jungle is and what it can represent. (152)

Other thinkers reflect the theme of wilderness as “other” and see this view as an advantage rather than as a liability as argued by wilderness opponents. In their article “Refocusing Ecocentrism,” Ned Hettinger and Bill Throop state:

Humans also need to be able to confront, honor, and celebrate the “other.” In an increasingly secular society, “Nature” takes on the role of the other. Humans need to be able to feel small in comparison with something nonhuman that is of great value. Confronting the other helps humans to cultivate a proper sense of humility. Many people find the other powerfully in parts of nature that do not bend to our will and where the nonhuman carries on in relative autonomy, unfolding on its own. (13)

Beginning in the 19TH century, as discussed in the previous chapter, people began to view wilderness as a holy sanctuary instead of an adversary. But the adversarial perspective still exists today and in many cases it has mutated into a concept that, instead of waging war against nature, sees humans as apart from nature and wants to keep humans out of nature and “natural” places. Opponents of the modern (a.k.a., received, romantic) wilderness idea argue, in part, against the separation of nature and humans and essentially believe that both are a part of each other. Holmes Rolston III (1999) argues against Callicott’s criticisms of the received view and further supports the notion of nature as “other.” Rolston begins his argument for wilderness as “other” by noting the differences between human culture and wild nature:

Wilderness valued without humans perpetuates a false dichotomy, Callicott maintains. Going back to Cartesian and Greek philosophy and Christian theology, such a contrast between humans and wild nature is a metaphysical confusion that leads us astray and also is unscientific. But this is not so. One hardly needs metaphysics or theology to realize that there are critical differences between wild nature and human culture. Humans now superimpose cultures on the wild nature out of which they once emerged. There is nothing unscientific or nonDarwinian about the claim that innovations in human culture make it radically different from wild nature. (382-383)

Rolston’s first point to support his argument deals with information transmission. In wild nature information is transmitted via genes and chromosomes while cultural information is transmitted neurally through phenomena such as education, religion, crafts, and literature. Rolston notes that some higher animals do learn limited behaviors but that they do not form transmissible cultures. The essence of culture, Rolston argues, is that acquired information is transmitted to the next generation. Further, cultural information transfer occurs much faster than in wild nature and that information may overlap genetic

lines. A human develops within any one of thousands of different cultures, each with its own unique historical heritage, language, customs, and symbols. Animals are what they are by virtue of genetics, instincts, and environment, with no lifestyle options available to them. Humans have myriads of lifestyle options and each human makes daily decisions that affect his or her character. Wild nature simply has nothing that comes close to this phenomenon (383).

Rolston specifically argues against the claim that humans are a natural, wild, and evolving species that is not essentially different from any other species of life. He sees such opinions as poetry that may sound good but have disastrous consequences within environmental policy. For example, Callicott believes that man-made environmental changes are as natural as non-man-made environmental changes. Rolston vehemently disagrees with this view:

Wilderness advocates know better; they do not gloss over these differences. They appreciate and criticize human affairs, with insight into their radically different characters. Accordingly, they insist that there are intrinsic wild values that are not human values. These ought to be preserved for whatever they can contribute to human values, and also because they are valuable on their own, in and of themselves. Just because the human presence is so radically different, humans ought to draw back and let nature be. Humans can and should see outside their own sector, their species self-interest, and affirm nonanthropogenic, noncultural values. Only humans have conscience enough to do this. That is not confused metaphysical dichotomy; it is axiological truth. To think that human culture is nothing but natural system is not discriminating enough. It risks reductionism and primitivism. (383)

Rolston acknowledges that the “contrasts between nature and culture were not always as bold as they are now” (383). Culture evolved out of nature and early hunter-gatherer cultures did not produce environmental effects that were much different from the animals among which these people moved. But perhaps this was so because of lack of power as

well as a conscious decision on how to live. Rolston believes that any society we envision must be a sophisticated culture that is technologically advanced, globally oriented and respectful of human rights and biosphere values. This society will also learn to fit itself intelligently into natural processes. As for distinctions between wild nature and human culture, Rolston concludes: "There is no inherent flaw in our logic when we are discriminating about these radical discontinuities between culture and nature. The dichotomy charge is a half-truth, and, taken for the whole, becomes an untruth" (384).

Rolston's second point in how humans are other than wilderness deals with the meaning of 'natural.' He states:

On the meaning of "natural" at issue here, that of nature proceeding by evolutionary and ecological processes, any deliberated human agency, however well intended, is intention nevertheless and interrupts these spontaneous processes and is inevitably artificial, unnatural. (There is another meaning of "natural" by which even deliberated human actions break no laws of nature. Everything, better or worse, is natural in this sense, unless there is the supernatural). (384)

If it were true, as Rolston holds, that humans and their cultures arise from nature, then why would much of human activity be considered unnatural? Does it make sense to believe that a beaver's dam is natural but that the Aswan dam is unnatural? Perhaps the beaver's dam is more "environmentally friendly" than the Aswan, but 'natural' does not necessarily imply good. In many parts of the U.S., wild boars are decimating the land through their natural activity of rooting into the soil in search of food. Certainly the boars' activities are natural but these same activities cause environmental damage. For Rolston, the distinction between natural and unnatural turns on the notion of intention. Does a beaver not intend to build a dam? Does a boar not intend to root in the ground? We simply do not know if animals' activities are or are not a result of conscious decision-

making but does human intention make our activities any less natural? Are not human activities parts of our “evolutionary and ecological processes”? Further, like animals, are we not subject to environmental processes? Rolston’s assumptions here are highly questionable but perhaps humans could learn from the beaver how to conduct activities that work with, rather than against, ecosystems.

Wildness (not Wilderness) Value

The main feature of wilderness that makes it special is that it is wild – a feature that both entices and repels. Birch describes wildness as the “soul” of the other and that to confuse wildness with things that manifest wildness is to commit a categorical error

(9). Birch states:

By definition wildness is intractable to definition, is indefinite, and, although it is at the heart of finding utility values in the first place, wildness itself cannot plausibly be assigned any utility value because it spawns much, very much, that is useless, and much that is plain disutility . . . Wildness itself, to the mind of the law-bringing imperium, is lawless; it is the paradigm of the unintelligible, unrepentant, incorrigible outlaw. (8-9)

What is the other cannot essentially be identified if it is to remain as other.

Wildness “contradicts any finalization in identification” and because it is at the heart of

otherness it is also at the heart of any self or society because it is unidentifiable (11).

What is needed in western culture is a different story about otherness and wilderness that does not criminalize either of them (16-17). Society, or the imperium, must create wilderness preserves to preserve its own meaning, namely, a creator of law and order and the ultimate holder of power. By creating preserves, the imperium leaves enough otherness intact to “maintain a glance of the other” thereby justifying its enterprise of

bringing law and order to wild chaos. Some vestiges of wilderness must be kept at bay (19). The wild that is incarcerated can still speak to us. In getting to know wilderness, we see beneath its contrivance. When we see its real otherness we see beyond the imperium's utilitarian categories of value. We see an otherness that cannot be fully described and then the edifice of the imperium is called into question (19-20).

“Wildness as wilderness is incarcerated as sacred space” (23). The imperium cordons off sacred space, and labels it as “other”, and removes it from the center of our practical lives because sacred space is subversive. By consigning sacred space to a status of holy relic, the imperium must imprison wildness to demonstrate the empire's total triumph (23). Yet wilderness preservation as sacred space must be conceived and practiced as part of a strategy that aims to make all land into sacred space. Then humanity may move towards a conscious reinhabitation of wildness. Wilderness reserves are simply the largest and most pure entities within a continuum of sacred space that includes schoolyards, wild plots in suburban yards, flower boxes in urban windows, and other “margins” (24). In creating sacred space we may also create what Wendell Berry (1987) calls a “landscape of harmony ... democratic and free” (151).

The landscape of harmony includes various perceived degrees of wildness: a notion of ‘wild’ currently serves as a demarcation between wilderness and non-wilderness. Nettinger and Throop stipulate their definition of ‘wild’:

As we use the term, something is wild in a certain respect to the extent that it is *not humanized* in that respect. An entity is humanized in the degree to which it is influenced, altered or controlled by humans. While one person walking through the woods does little to diminish its wildness, leaving garbage, culling deer, or clear cutting do diminish wildness, although in different degrees. Do we tend to value wildness so defined? (12)

They think that we do and they go on to list a few examples where wildness, or at least the perception thereof, affects human behavior and attitude. These examples include a preference for picking raspberries from a local ravine instead of purchasing them at a market; and opting to not fish a river that has been stocked with trout. People seem to greatly value the nonhumanized and they also value the existence of something that is not significantly under human control. Humans feel surprise and awe at nature's spontaneity and they marvel in the mystery of nature and its workings. These are reasons why the ideas of planetary wilderness managers and total human control over rain tidal cycles, for example, are so highly objectionable to many humans (12-13). As Nettinger and Throop state, "People value being a part of a world not of their own making. Valuing the wild acknowledges that limits to human mastery and domination of the world are imperative" (13). This sense of non-control over natural processes is perhaps what makes humans feel insignificant and humble yet, at the same time, makes them feel part of something greater. Ironically, this same sense of non-control is also a major reason for environmental destruction. By way of partial opinion and explanation, the angst-ridden human ego attempts to gain control over nature in the hopes of removing threats of insecurity. In so doing, we have now threatened our security to a greater degree than nature ever could – a double irony. Instead of simply "going with the flow" of nature and its processes, we have tried to create our own flow and have failed miserably.

For Nettinger and Throop, the rapid loss of wildness is the fuel for environmental disputes and explains the increase in value of what little wildness remains. So wildness becomes "a significant value-enhancing property" and it accounts for a range of intuitions. As they state:

Of course, the nature that we value in virtue of its wildness is also valuable because it is complex, creative, fecund, diverse, beautiful, and so on. Why focus on wildness, rather than on biodiversity, as is currently fashionable (or on some other characteristic)? We believe that the emphasis on wildness is justified by the transformative and intensifying roles it plays in this nexus of values. These roles suggest that wildness is a kind of “root” value, that is, a significant source of these other values. (14)

Wildness is transformative because it can combine with a neutral or negative value and turn the whole into a positive value. One example is biodiversity. By itself this is not valuable because if it were, adding large numbers of biogenetically engineered organisms to a given ecosystem could increase ecosystem value. This notion seems unacceptable because people want *wild* biodiversity. Wildness transforms biodiversity into a significant value-bearing property thus wildness obviously informs and transforms our evaluation of things. Wildness also intensifies properties that are already positively valued. For example, wildness enhances beauty and aesthetic appreciation because, once again, we appreciate the nonhuman quality of wildness and the lack of human involvement makes something all the more amazing (14).

Wildness value depends upon other factors such as historical context. As discussed in the previous chapter, wildness was not always valued and indeed was abhorred; what was wild was ubiquitous and threatening. Wildness had little or no value because there was so much of it relative to human environments. So now, clear-cutting an old-growth forest has a much different meaning than the same action done thousands of years ago. Wildness also depends upon the object it characterizes. A vegetable garden left to go wild is less valuable than one under a gardener’s control because of the idea implicit in the term ‘vegetable garden.’ However, such a distinction is problematic because it seems arbitrary and it is difficult to pin down any sort of objective basis for

wildness. People can discriminate among contextualizations and descriptions but it is difficult to explain how they do it. Nettinger and Throop make the excellent point that “This difficulty applies to almost any theory of value, as the contextualization of value is pervasive” (15).

Lastly, Nettinger and Throop note that things have varying degrees of wildness. Note the difference in wildness among the following: an office building, a garden, a city park, and Yosemite. People seem to put more value on those things that possess a higher degree of wildness because humans value contact with nonhuman nature. Wildness should not privilege wilderness areas because one can recognize the intermediate degrees of wildness between, for example, a pasture and a park. Nettinger and Throop are also very clear and emphatic that wildness should not be equated with wilderness although wilderness manifests a high degree of wildness and as such would be strongly protected by an ecocentric view that is based on wildness value (17).

The saving grace of the Nettinger-Throop thesis is two-fold: first, there is the recognition that all areas have varying degrees of wildness; second, wildness focuses upon what is not made by humans. Wildness encourages us to locate the nonhuman “other” within nature and to celebrate the otherness and diversity of nature; indeed, the “other” of nature is wildness. But there is one glaring problem with the wildness value conception. Wildness depends upon the degree to which something is not humanized. Recall the wilderness opponents’ arguments that if a notion of wilderness depends upon a lack of human presence, then no place on earth can truly be called wilderness. Similarly, one could argue that if wildness depends upon a lack of human presence and influence, then no place on earth could truly be called wild in a pure sense.

There also exists a negative sense of wildness such as when one uses the term 'wild' to denote a criminal, for example. What is wild can be terrifying, uncontrollable, and harmful. Nash (1967) speaks of how our ancestors created various myths and fairy tales to describe their feelings of terror for the deep dark forests. These forests were populated with all manner of devious creatures that only desired to harm people (10-12). However in our modern era hardly anyone feels threatened by wild nature. Technology gives us the ability to completely dominate almost anything that is wild. Because of the destruction of wild places, and the resulting relatively small number of them, we now focus on what is good about the wild. Wildness now refers to freedom and a sense of unity with all of creation. As for wildness and wilderness, perhaps an orange grove is man-made but only to some extent: humans did not create orange trees. The context of an orange grove may not be as awesome as an old-growth forest but the mystery of existence still resides there.

Wilderness and Radical Ecology

In addition to providing a sense of other and a sense of humans' inherent wildness, wilderness, as a meaningful concept, holds great value for the environmental activist movement, particularly within the United States. As I will further discuss below, the fate of wilderness is a central locus for the activities and ideologies of various environmental movements. For these groups, the condition of wilderness is important not only for land health but also for what wilderness symbolizes – how humans treat wilderness reflects how humans treat other humans within society. For many

environmental groups, the domination and destruction of wilderness is an extension of humans dominating and destroying other humans.

The disappearance of the American frontier, as discussed in the first chapter, led many to become more aware of wilderness. This awareness in turn led to governmental policies that established the first national parks and wilderness areas. Thus wilderness preservation became America's first major environmental issue. In time, citizens began to rally around other environmental problems so that by the early 1970s there existed within the United States several different private environmental organizations and a government department of environmental protection – the Environmental Protection Agency or EPA.

The private environmental organizations may be roughly divided into two groups: radical ecology and reform environmentalists. Radical ecology primarily consists of three different environmental movements: deep ecology, social ecology, and ecofeminism. Radical ecologists seek to distinguish themselves from “reform environmentalists” who seek to reduce industrial pollution and use natural resources more wisely. However, the reformists do not call for alterations in the modern instrumentalist view of nature – the view that nature's *sole* value is that of providing all people's needs; that nature serves the needs of humans. Radical ecologists insist that major changes must occur in the instrumentalist view as well as in authoritarian political and socioeconomic arrangements. If changes do not take place, our modern society's attempt to gain wealth and security through the technological control of nature could result in ecological catastrophes resulting in the destruction of humankind and much of terrestrial nonhuman life. Some of these claims, rejected twenty years ago, are now being seriously considered

by many economists, scientists, and politicians who are conceding that ecological problems cannot be simply cured by tinkering with the attitudes and practices that created those ecological problems (Zimmerman 1994, 3).

As a central environmental issue, wilderness retains important meaning for radical ecologists, if for no other reason than wilderness is humans' point of origin and may contain a key to solving the environmental crisis. Because radical ecologists criticize the assumptions of modern industrial society, a closer examination of radical ecology (and its three main arms of deep ecology, social ecology, and ecofeminism) is important for revealing alternative perspectives of the reasons for ecological calamities.

The leading deep ecologist Arne Naess (1985, 256) contrasts deep ecology with "shallow" ecology which seeks to reform socioeconomic practices (such as curbing industrial pollution) without changing modern society's anthropocentric attitude, one that is held responsible for environmental malaise. Deep ecology is "deep" because it poses deep questions about the normative and descriptive premises of modernity. Examples of deep questions are: Do the norms of anthropocentric modernity provide a way of life that is truly satisfying? Can my well being be made or purchased at the expense of another, whether the other is human or nonhuman (Zimmerman, 1994, 20)? Naess (1986, 18) believes that in seeking answers to such questions, people will discover that modern norms not only promote environmental problems, but also are inconsistent with the norms of many philosophical and spiritual traditions. Although these traditions may have ultimate norms that conflict with one another, "few have an ultimate norm compatible with the view that people should devour the planet in an orgy of private gratification" (Zimmerman, 21).

To cure environmental woes, deep ecologists call for humans to attain a wider identification with nature. They argue that environmental problems result from an anthropocentric humanism that is central to the leading modern ideologies, including liberal capitalism and Marxism. In the attempt to free humans from material deprivation by way of controlling nature, modern societies overlook the fact that humans are a part of nature. Thus, attempts to control nature have led to attempts to control human behavior in ways that limit freedom and “self-realization.” Generally, deep ecologists call for a shift away from anthropocentric humanism towards an ecocentrism that is guided by the norm of self-realization for all beings (Zimmerman 1994, 2). Because modern people regard nature as radically other and separate from themselves, as deep ecologists claim, people see nature almost exclusively in instrumental terms. When people allow their sense of “self” to expand to include other people, plants, animals, and ecosystems, they achieve a wider sense of identity. Presumably, this wider identification allows people to spontaneously care for nonhuman entities instead of treating them as mere commodities or with indifference (9-10). Warwick Fox (1990) argues that deep ecology’s wider identification idea is linked to nondualism – the insight that there exists no ultimate divide between things. This norm of self-realization, achieved through non-dualistic wider identification, is what is distinctive about deep ecology.

The attainment of self-realization and nondualism is where wilderness plays a significant role. Many deep ecologists affirm that wilderness is needed for the self-realization of humanity as a creative, self-reflexive species. Further, without experiencing wild nature, people would have fewer opportunities to identify with nonhuman life and thus not develop a deep ecological attitude (Sessions 1993). One

point of commonality between wilderness and people (especially the poor) is that both nature and humans are being undermined by industrialization, social injustice, and, in the case of many developing nations, overpopulation. Because of this sort of identification, many third World peoples, especially women, are leading movements to protect wildlife habitats and tropical forests (Johns 1990).

Wilderness, and even non-wilderness areas such as parks, provides the location for an “intuition of identification with nonhuman beings” (Zimmerman 1994, 36) that in turn motivates a deep questioning of basic beliefs. Naess contends that interaction with nature helps one to see that nonhuman organisms, although different than humans, are not radically other. This insight occurred for Naess when he witnessed the suffering of an insect. Observing the activities of other organisms and seeing how they endure experiences similar to ours assists us to have a life-changing intuition about our relationship with nonhuman life (36-37). This intuition leads to a sense of wider identification with all of reality in which “one discovers that the self is not an ego encapsulated inside a skin bag, but is an event constituted by a complex network of relations” (Zimmerman, 40-41). Ultimately, a sense of wider identification is based on a realization of commonality:

Wider identification involves nondualistic experience, which reveals that there are no ultimate boundaries between self and other: all living beings are reciprocating, interrelated manifestations of the same cosmic Self. Wider identification elicits compassion for those with whom one identifies, without the need for moral imperatives and ethical duties. One cares for others just as one cares spontaneously for one’s own ego, one’s body, and one’s family. If “I” expand so as to embrace other beings, then “their” interests become “mine” as well; I care for them spontaneously, rather than because of some onerous moral duty. (47).

Zimmerman goes on to say that one endowed with ecological consciousness cares for nonhuman beings for the same reason that parents care for their children: not because of moral reflection but because the parents *identify* with the children. Strong emotional ties with family can expand to include other human groups and humanity in general. This “circle of concern” can grow to include the land as people become aware that their survival depends upon a healthy environment (47-48).

The role of wilderness as agent for humanity’s activity of wider identification is clearly an instrumentalist role. Other roles of this type include the appreciation of beauty as important for human well being and the idea that the human psyche needs wild nature. While these roles are important, deep ecologists stress that all life ought to be protected not only because of its instrumental value but also for its intrinsic worth (Zimmerman 1994, 35). Deep ecologists argue that nature should not be seen *only* in an instrumental sense; nature has intrinsic worth – values in their own right regardless of how nature and natural objects may aid humanity and serve humans’ needs. Like all values, humans assign intrinsic or inherent worth. Deep ecologists believe that we must place such values upon nature so that we may come to see nature as something other than a tool or resource to support our lives. Only by seeing nature as having its own non-instrumental value can we have a chance of saving nature from perpetual ruin. Primarily because wild species and ecosystems are inherently valuable, deep ecologists maintain that wild nature protection is needed despite the difficulties in establishing wilderness areas in the face of rapid human growth (Zimmerman, 165). Naess remarks that all life is bound together in “all-pervasive intimate relationships.” “Life” refers to humans and other organisms as well as landscapes, rivers, and ecosystems. Because life is defined so broadly, and

because all life forms have intrinsic worth, all things deserve respect and nothing should be regarded solely in instrumentalist terms. In addition, the richness and diversity that pervades all things not only contributes to humans' realization of life values, but this same richness and diversity is inherently valuable (1986, 14-15).

According to Zimmerman, social ecologists believe that ecological problems result not from anthropocentrism but from authoritarian social structures, especially those in capitalism and state socialism. The destruction of nature reflects distorted social relations within hierarchies in which the elite subjugate others while ransacking nature for prestige, profit, and control. Social ecologists maintain that humans are part of nature but are a self-conscious natural entity. As such, people would do better if they lived in small-scale, egalitarian, anarchistic societies which recognize that human welfare is inextricably bound up with the welfare of nature, upon which human life depends (1994, 2).

Despite differences over the primary causes of environmental destruction, deep ecology and social ecology agree on the following points:

... humans are part of nature; nature is self-generative, novelty –seeking, and inherently valuable; nature is too complex ever to be controlled by human intelligence; wilderness areas, lightly inhabited by humans, are needed to sustain a rich diversity of nonhuman life; a new ecological sensibility and spirituality is required to save the planet; modern economic systems are socially hierarchical and ecologically destructive; needed are decentralized, nonhierarchical, pluralistic, ecologically sustainable, bioregionally federated communities. (Zimmerman 1994, 152)

Social ecology's leading spokesperson, Murray Bookchin, contends that liberating humanity from social hierarchical structures will contribute to the flourishing of both humans and nature. Bookchin's claim that mistreatment of nature comes from

authoritarian, hierarchical social structures is for Zimmerman the most distinctive feature of Bookchin's version of social ecology. The reason that deep ecology's blame of anthropocentrism is not valid is because the problem is not with humanity in general but with specific social groups who are responsible for the maltreatment of nature (152). Bookchin believes that both humanity and nature must be released from repression and control so that they may realize their maximum potential of social and ecological diversity, respectively (Feb., 1986).

The issue of diversity is vital for the health of wilderness and ecosystems. Bookchin draws parallels between human diversity and nature's diversity. Instead of trying to control everything, humans should encourage the "natural spontaneity" that generates diversity needed for planetary health. Increasing diversity is a sign of healthy social and organic evolution (1982, 363). Ecological problems could serve as a "general interest" that transforms all people into citizens united in a movement that could recapture the democratic ideals of the French Revolution (Jan., 1986).

Presumably, for social ecologists, nature reflects the human social condition. Just as nature is abused at the hands of particular human groups, so too do these same groups mistreat humans in general. Nature and wilderness are important because they provide models for society. Bookchin claims that culture is an elaboration upon nature's associative and cooperative tendencies that are necessary for humans to realize freedom. And while ethics cannot be derived from nature, its quality of cooperative unity-in-diversity provides an example for nonhierarchical, tolerant, mutualistic social relations (1982, 317). If Bookchin's hope for a freed humanity and nature is realized, then perhaps all people will come to see the Earth as their home which Bookchin defines as

... a treasured place enhanced by tradition, the imprint of the past, long-gone generations to which we still belong, a personal remembrance of our origins and our individual development, the palpable stuff from which we have formed our biography, a loyalty to the land and community that surrounds it, a dedication to the preservation of its uniqueness and meaning for us. All of these sentiments have yet to be incorporated into the splendid work of the bioregionalists, who call for a sense of regionality in terms of watersheds and the flora and fauna with which we share a given area. (1995, 127-128)

The third branch of radical ecology, ecofeminism, explains the ecological crisis as the result of a patriarchy that follows the “logic of domination.” According to this logic, that which is defined as superior to something else is entitled to use that which is inferior in any manner chosen by the superior. Thus, under patriarchy, maleness, spirit, culture, and rationality are designated as superior. Patriarchy regards femaleness, emotion, body, and nature as inferior. Members of the superior class have traditionally felt justified in subjugating women, abusing nature, and forcing the “other” to conform to categories that defines the patriarchal, masculine subject. Both wild nature and “headstrong” women must be tamed, ordered, and rendered pliant to the male will. Only the dismantling of patriarchy can free both human relations and nature from the dark consequences of the logic of domination (Zimmerman 1994, 2; Warren 1994, 268-270). Feminist author Karen J. Warren states:

I argue that the promise and power of ecological feminism is *that it provides a distinctive framework both for reconceiving feminism and for developing an environmental ethic which takes seriously connections between the domination of women and the domination of nature.* (Warren’s emphasis, 267)

Warren further explains that “Environmental degradation and exploitation are feminist issues because an understanding of them contributes to an understanding of the oppression of women” (267). However, the identities of Self and Other should not be

gendered nor essentialized: there exist many privileged women who benefit from structures of oppression and many men are subordinated through these structures as well (Gaard 1997, fn. 7)

In this context of the ecofeminism definition, wilderness takes on a special meaning. Similar to the social ecologists' position that humanity's treatment of wilderness is a reflection of human societal relations, ecofeminism sees the mistreatment of wilderness as a reflection of men's domination of women. Not only does man dominate nature, but humans in general are alienated from nature. Zimmerman believes that ecofeminists could argue that nature does not only exist "out there" in a landscape or a polluted aquifer, but that nature also resides within our living bodies. Unfortunately, the most profound aspect of our alienation from nature is alienation from our bodies (281). In the spirit of liberating all subordinated others from the shackles of patriarchy, Greta Gaard (1997) argues that ecofeminism ought to be concerned with the expansion and preservation of wilderness because it is the Other to the Self of Western culture and its master identity (5). In this sense wilderness is meaningful because ecofeminism is a movement to name, value, restore, and preserve what Western culture attempts to destroy. Ecofeminism is also a movement to heal (among other things) the artificial separation of nature and culture (6-7). Wilderness is one of many concerns that address both of the above ecofeminists' general concerns.

Gaard believes that wilderness, and its preservation and expansion, is important to ecofeminism for at least two reasons. First, ecofeminism as a theory is based on an understanding that all forms of domination are interconnected. Gaard says, "Because of the linking assumptions and hierarchical dualisms which form the basis of western

cultural ideology, ecofeminists have argued that the liberation of women cannot be effected without the liberation of all Others associated with nature “ (12). The subordinated Other of wilderness is one of the normative dualisms of Western culture. Gaard posits man and Western culture as a Self dualized against the Other of women and nature (13). The second reason why wilderness ought to be an ecofeminist concern is based on ideas of relationship, the basis of which is a definition of the self and of identity. Restoring a strong basis for people to value wilderness requires mending and healing the split between culture and nature. This healing in turn “requires replacing the master identity with a human identity capable of maintaining relationships in which the unique identities of Self and Other are preserved at the same time that connection is acknowledged” (13). These new identities can heal the culture/nature split and yet recognize “the life-affirming connection between humans and nature while still preserving the distinct identities of each” (13).

A human/wilderness relationship shapes human identity in unique ways. In particular space, sight, energy, smell, sound, and time all change dramatically when one leaves culture and enters wilderness (16-23). Warren says that one of the most valuable experiences that wilderness provides is an opportunity for a different type of perceptual “orienteering” – normally associated with map and compass, Warren uses this word to emphasize one’s relationship with the land (17). Unfortunately, as she notes, the opportunity for orienteering is more readily available to persons of privilege. Further, advocating that everyone visit wilderness to experience reorientation is not advisable because tourists are now “loving wilderness to death”. The problem here is the ratio of

humans to wilderness and, if one assumes the importance of a human/wilderness relationship, the answer to the ratio problem

... is not to reduce the number of human visitors: the answer is to redefine and to increase the size of wilderness, for if a wilderness orientation alters human perceptions of nature and culture, it may also alter human conceptions of appropriate ways of structuring the relationship between culture and nature, and through these conceptions, it may alter behaviors as well. (24)

Dwellness may provide one method of expanding the size of wilderness that Warren desires. Clearly the world includes us and the “other” of nonhuman reality, yet both the human and nonhuman share the common trait of residing within the same world. Perhaps on the basis of both commonalities and differences humanity may come to truly respect and cherish the world.

Chapter Four: Heidegger's Perspective

Having analyzed the predominant positive and negative characteristics of wilderness, I now delve into my possible solution to the problems and paradoxes of the same. The idea of dwellness is greatly influenced by the thought of Martin Heidegger who has also been, unwittingly, a tremendous influence upon environmental philosophy, a field of endeavor that did not even exist until near the end of Heidegger's life. According to Zimmerman (1994), Heidegger believed that subjectivism, dualism, anthropocentrism, and a progressive view of history all gave birth to a technological age. In this age all things are seen as nothing but raw material for consumption. Modern humanity, forgetting that its highest calling is to "let things be", to allow things to manifest themselves according to their own possibilities, becomes reduced to a "clever animal" who dominates everything for power and security. To move beyond this technological nihilism, Western man needs a new beginning that is as profound as the one initiated in ancient Greece (105-106).

Specifically, Heidegger contributed to ecology in three ways. First, Heidegger argued that since Plato, philosophy has taken an anthropocentric trend that has led to a technocratic mentality that espouses dominion over nature. Second, Heidegger encouraged people to begin a form of meditative thinking that would lead us to let things be. Third, Heidegger called us to dwell authentically upon the earth, similar to the call by deep ecologists to dwell in a bioregion with alertness to natural processes (105). No less

than a profound ontological paradigm shift will generate new attitudes, practices, and institutions that display respect and care for all beings.

To understand Heidegger's thought and how his ideas relate to my theory of dwellness, it is first necessary to understand his philosophy in a larger context. The central feature of Heidegger's work is the investigation into the nature of Being. This investigation is laid out in his magnum opus *Being and Time*. What follows is a general review of portions of that work and of Heidegger's predominant philosophical themes. I review only those sections of *Being and Time* that I believe are most relevant to dwellness.

In *Being and Time* Heidegger discusses the very concept of Being *qua* Being and the many ways, or modes, by which Being exists within the world. His aim is to examine the internal relationship between being and time. Because they lack phenomenal or empirical properties, being and time appear to be merely "nothing." But for Heidegger they are "that which is most worthy of thinking" (Zimmerman 1993, 244). One of Heidegger's goals is to make clear the difference between Being and entities.

Zimmerman recognizes two themes within Heidegger's thought. The first, which Zimmerman calls "ontological phenomenism," says that for something "to be" means for it to be present or manifest. As Zimmerman states:

According to ontological phenomenism, prior to dividing experience into knowing subjects and complex objects, manifesting occurs, that is, phenomena arise. There is no *Ding an sich*, no previously existing, independent object that stands "behind" those phenomena. Providing causal explanations for phenomena has some validity, but such explanations always come after the fact and are products of a cognizing subject that has separated itself out from the phenomenal manifold. (1994, 123)

The second theme holds that human existence is authentic when it is open for the *presencing* (*Anwesen*) of things (122), that is, when humans allow things to present themselves as they truly are. Zimmerman further notes that for something “to be” means for it to be manifest or to be present. Only humans can encounter entities, which are self-manifesting, as entities (and thus see them as objects in various domains) because humans can apprehend the “ontological difference” between being and entities. To say that humans understand entities as entities is to say that humans explicitly notice that things *are*, that things exist and have presence. Heidegger recognized this human capacity for understanding the *being* of entities, a capacity revealed by the myriad ways that humans use the verb “to be” (Zimmerman 1993, 242). “Being” is not a superentity, a metaphysical ground, a primal source, or a divine creator. Being is the event of presencing (*Anwesen*) by which an entity reveals itself. Human existence is the clearing or absencing (*Abwesen*) upon which entities could self-manifest or “be” (1994, 108-109). An analogy for this idea would be a stage play. The stage and its setting would be the clearing or absencing upon which the actors play their roles, with Being as the primary role played by the actors, or entities.

One may describe Heidegger’s analysis of being as a transcendental analysis.

Michael Gelven (1970) states:

... we could describe the problem of *Being and Time* as a *phenomenological description of the transcendental self*. This means that it describes that first order of our consciousness by which we are made aware of ourselves as the free and determining factor in our own existence and in our comprehension of the external world. (3)

‘Transcendental self’ is a Kantian term and simply refers to that part of the self which is able to examine the procedures and functions of the mind that in turn allow for such

things as scientific knowledge. This “transcendental perspective” provides the basis for epistemology as well as the ground for freedom and responsibility. In total, the above remarks constitute what Kant called his philosophy – transcendental idealism. Kant was important because he went beyond mere mathematical and scientific reasoning to inquire about what makes such enquiry possible, namely, freedom and responsibility along with presupposed categories of the mind such as causality, space, and time. Kant held that freedom and moral responsibility were not to be found in a strictly scientific analysis. Thus, freedom and responsibility belong to a perspective that transcends the limits of scientific knowledge. Kant insisted that humans’ abilities to transcend and reflect were due to reason and so he unified freedom and thought within the absolute autonomy of reason (4-5).

With this revolutionary turn of philosophy, Kant exerted an overwhelming influence upon 19th century philosophy. Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and other thinkers all dealt with, and expanded upon, the so-called transcendental problem. However, other thinkers were more impressed by Kant’s categories of reason and his examination of how science is possible. Thus Neo-Kantianism was born in the late 19th century and it was essentially positivist and only concerned with rigorous scientific inquiry. It was in this environment that Heidegger began his philosophical development. Heidegger agreed with Kant that freedom gives humans the ability to reflect and transcend their activities (although this proposition would be unacceptable to many philosophers because one could argue that a person must first be able to reflect before he or she could achieve freedom). But Heidegger did not agree that morality constitutes the transcendental perspective. Unlike the Neo-Kantians, Heidegger wished to direct

philosophy not towards scientific epistemology but towards an examination of the problem of the self and in particular the problems of freedom and self-awareness (5-7). Heidegger was virtually disgusted that the neo-Kantians devolved philosophy into an examination of the possibilities and language of science. Such a narrow view leaves out of consideration the rich and demanding questions of concern such as the meaning of life, virtue, morality, freedom, guilt and death. These problems were the original motivation behind the endeavor of philosophizing and the Neo-Kantian ploy to relegate them to secondary or meaningless status was to destroy the very purpose of philosophy (10-11).

One could thus argue that although Heidegger's philosophy may stem from the Kantian tradition with regards to the examination of the transcendental, his key to examining it was quite different than Kant's. Heidegger drew on two sources to aid him in his quest: the first is the insight of the ancient Greek philosophers that the question of Being is of the utmost importance; the second is the use of the phenomenological method of investigation and analysis. Simply stated, a phenomenologist's goal is to examine the data of immediate experience by discarding logical and epistemological constructs that make distinctions between the external world and consciousness (Flew, 143). The purpose of phenomenology is to achieve a view of consciousness that is completely clear of systems and interpretations. Phenomenology attempts to let the facts speak for themselves (Gelven, 34). Gelven sums up with the following:

Heidegger found that by using the descriptive insights provided by phenomenology in order to interpret the question of the Greeks about the meaning of Being, one could develop a phenomenological description of the transcendental self; this description provides the basis for what he called an "existential analysis," which illuminates the full range of human experience with transcendental significance. (7)

One facet of human experience is the world. But instead of viewing the world as a cosmological entity or as an epistemological object of knowledge, Heidegger asks what does it mean for one to be in the world, what does it mean to know that we are in a world, and what are the types of awareness and consciousness by which the word 'world' takes its meaning? Such questions are vital to dwellness because it demands a rethinking of how humans view their world. By answering the above questions, people may be able to understand why it is important to care about entities other than themselves.

Being and Time is composed of two parts. The first is the existential analytic and the second portion deals with temporality. Heidegger defines "existentials" as the modes of existence whose analysis reveals what it means to be. Like Kant's categories, Heidegger's existentials are not abstractions from experience but rather they are presupposed in an experience and make the experience possible; they are *a priori*. Heidegger's existential analytic, therefore, is an analysis of the *a priori* conditions by which one's awareness of one's existence is possible. The entire existential analytic in the first portion is done from the standpoint of everyday living. But for Heidegger, a more fundamental ontological interpretation of existence is needed. This new perspective follows from the existential analytic in that the one who is conducting the examination of Being, and who is also the one being investigated, is limited by and takes dimensions from time.

This twofold analysis of the self – the existential analytic and the temporal dimensions and their limitations upon the self – is for Heidegger the basis for philosophy because the existential analytic necessarily includes all the modes in which the self may exist and thus also includes all the possible philosophical problems. Heidegger therefore

calls his whole discipline “fundamental ontology” which is a study of the Being of the self who exists, thinks, and philosophizes and whose own mode of Being is the foundation of the entire philosophical edifice (Gelven, 9-10). *Being and Time* is essentially a study into a being who is concerned about his or her own Being. Thus Heidegger’s existential analytic is both an analysis of humans and an inquiry into the meaning of Being (14). Now we must go on to the work itself in order to examine those concepts most relevant to dwellness: Dasein, the world, and Dasein’s mode of care.

The Being of Dasein

For Heidegger, the best way to examine Being is to begin with analyzing the being of the creature that can even ask about the nature of being, i.e. humans. Heidegger uses the term *Dasein* to refer to that entity which can inquire about the nature of existence (being) and whose experiences (existential nature) indicate *Dasein*’s various modes of being. The German word ‘da’ means ‘there’ and ‘sein’ means ‘being.’ Literally translated, ‘Dasein’ means ‘being-there’. For Heidegger, “being” means for something to disclose, present, or manifest itself. Human existence is the clearing or opening for this self-manifesting of entities to take place. When the presentation of an entity occurs through human openness, the human encounters an entity as an entity. “Dasein” names this peculiar human capacity of receptivity for the being, or self-manifesting, of entities. Dasein is the place in which being occurs, the opening in which presencing transpires.

Zimmerman sums up these ideas:

For Heidegger, neither temporality (absencing, nothingness) nor being (presencing, self-manifesting) is an “entity.” Rather, they are the conditions necessary for entities to appear as such. We never “see” time or “touch” the

presenting of things: rather, we see and touch the *things* that manifest or present themselves. (1993, 244)

Later Heidegger (post 1935) would change this view of humans' understanding of being. Instead of conceiving of being from a human standpoint, later Heidegger would conceive of being in its own terms. This "turn", which was Heidegger's attempt to remove any vestiges of anthropocentrism from his ideas, occurred when he reasoned that human understanding was an aspect of being. Further, temporality/nothingness was not a dimension of human existence but arises within a more encompassing "region" that cannot be reduced to something merely human. It seems that being itself appropriates human existence as the site or clearing for the self-manifestation of entities (247).

As mentioned previously, Dasein is that entity which has the capacity to inquire about the meaning of Being or existence. Dasein's self-reflective nature makes it unique among all entities and Dasein has both ontical and ontological priority. Heidegger invented the word 'ontic' to denote concrete entities that can be examined scientifically and factually. 'Ontology' refers to the theory of being or an examination of what it means to be. Ontical investigations are called "categories" while ontological inquiries are called "existentials." Thus, any investigation of an entity is ontical, uses categories, and is factual. Any philosophical investigation into what it means to be is ontological, makes use of existentials, and is factual – another term coined by Heidegger. He makes these distinctions to show that an investigation of Being cannot proceed along scientific lines of analysis (Gelven, 19-20).

So why does Dasein have ontic *and* ontological priority? Heidegger's answer is the following: "Da-sein is a being that does not simply occur among other beings. Rather

it is ontically distinguished by the fact that in its being this being is concerned *about* its very being” (BT, 10). Heidegger is arguing that Dasein is unique among all other entities precisely because it knows that it exists and can also ask questions about its existence. Dasein is self-aware and inquisitive about its existence and of existence, or being, in general. These facts about Dasein make it ontically distinctive because it is the only entity that has the above qualities. Heidegger continues: “Thus it is constitutive of the being of Da-sein to have, in its very being, a relation of being to this being. And this in turn means that Da-sein understands itself in its being in some way and with some explicitness” (10). This statement means that important components of Dasein’s being are the above-mentioned qualities of self-awareness and inquisitiveness about its own existence. Dasein’s ability to consider and understand its own being enables Dasein to consider and understand the general notion of being as such. In addition, this understanding leads Dasein to know the *relationship* between its own being and with being in general (“Being” as opposed to “being”). Finally, “It is proper to this being that it be disclosed to itself with and through its being. *Understanding of being is itself a determination of being of Da-sein.* The ontic distinction of Da-sein lies in the fact that it is ontological” (10). Dasein’s nature is such that it knows itself through the fact of its existence. Dasein’s ability to understand being as such is part of Dasein’s being. Thus, what makes Dasein ontically distinctive as a concrete entity is its ability to theorize about and understand its being and Being as such. To understand the concept of existence, one must first ponder his or her existence, which then leads to an understanding of being as such. This ability makes Dasein ontological because Dasein itself becomes the locus of study and theorizing about being and existence.

In a similar vein, "...the meaning of existence can be significant only to one who asks about his own existence" (Gelven, 23). Because Dasein is the only entity that can ask about existence, and also because existence may only be understood through the investigative activities conducted by Dasein, fundamental ontology (i.e. the investigation into the nature of Being itself, as opposed to the nature of anything else) must come from the existential analytic of Dasein. Further, Dasein takes priority over all other entities in three ways. The first is an ontic priority: Dasein is an entity that does exist. This existence is a determinate character of Dasein's Being. The second priority is ontological: Dasein is ontological *because* existence is determinative of it. The third priority is ontico-ontological: as part of its understanding of existence, Dasein possesses an understanding of the Being of entities who have a different character than Dasein's character (*BT*, 11).

To further explain Dasein's existence, Zimmerman describes Dasein's activities in the world. Heidegger promulgated a nondualism when he claimed that people do not generally see themselves as subjects standing away from other objects. Rather, people see themselves as always engaged with tasks in the world. This holistic experience may be then divided into subjective and objective aspects. However, once separated the subject and object cannot be reunited. This is why Descartes could not explain how the subject could not transcend its mental self to reach an external object. For Heidegger, human existence is "the existential clearing in which the body, ego, feeling-states, memories, thoughts, tools, and natural things can all appear" (1994, 110). Further, human existence is an openness, clearing, or nothingness in which things may manifest themselves (Zimmerman 1993, 241). Human being is not a thing and its "nothingness" is

peculiar in that it is temporal-linguistic. Because humans are not things, “knowing” occurs differently. As Zimmerman states:

Knowing is not a relation between two things, mind and object. Rather, knowing occurs because the openness constituting human existence is configured in terms of the three temporal dimensions: past, present, future. These dimensions hold open the horizons on which entities may manifest themselves in determinate ways – for example, as instruments, objects, or persons. (243)

Zimmerman goes on to note that the temporal horizons and their characteristics are *a priori* and are analogous to Kant’s *a priori* categories of human understanding.

Human understanding does not take place inside a mind locked within a skull.

Zimmerman says, “Instead, understanding occurs because human temporality is receptive to particular ways in which things can present or manifest themselves” (243). For Heidegger, the constituents of mind, such as thoughts, beliefs, assertions, etc., are phenomena that occur within the temporal clearing of understanding. Thus, minds do not make thoughts possible. The *a priori* human understanding of being makes possible humans’ ability to conceive of themselves as minds with thoughts that are separate from an external world. Thoughts are not radically other than external entities such as trees and cars. Thoughts, trees, and cars are all entities manifesting themselves within the temporal clearing of human existence (243).

The “self” is not an entity that stands in a dualistic relationship opposed to other entities. The “self” is a clearing in which other entities may appear. Entities include not only other people but also thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and objects. Heidegger’s idea of the self helped him to overcome dualism as well as anthropocentrism, the notion that humans are the source of all value and that all things must serve human interest.

Heidegger further overcame anthropocentrism by maintaining that humans are authentic only when they allow something to manifest itself in accordance with its own possibilities, and not merely for an entity's instrumental value (Zimmerman 1993, 242).

Dasein tends to conceal that it is this clearing and so it becomes absorbed in its dealings with other entities. This absorption is a "falling into the world and away from one's own being" and arises from the fact that Dasein is inherently mortal and finite. This clearing that lets things be is really nothing but finite and mortal nothingness or openness. Dasein forgets about this openness and goes about its life unconsciously. But this forgetfulness is aggravated by a mood of anxiety (*Angst*) that "threatens to reveal Dasein's mortal nothingness" (Zimmerman 1994, 111). Dasein then flees from this revelation and plunges into a state of inauthenticity.

This inauthenticity (*uneigentlich*) is composed of two aspects. First, inauthentic (not authentic) Dasein reconceives itself as a stable, self-grounding subject and thus transforms itself from nothingness into a defensible ego-subject. Then to defend itself the ego-subject sets out to control all entities. Second, because inauthentic Dasein cannot succeed in turning itself into a fixed entity, it continues to feel a sense of existential lack or incompleteness. One way to overcome this lack is to fill up the self by consuming more entities. Inauthentic Dasein, who is now also death denying, attempts to protect and to complete itself by devouring other people and the planet. Zimmerman agrees with Heidegger that death-denial plays a central role in humanity's mistreatment of nature and other humans (111). To become humanly authentic, Dasein must affirm and gain insight into its mortality. If we resolutely submit to what the mood of angst reveals to us, we then become authentic (*eigentlich*) in the sense of "owning" our mortal existence. By

being authentic, we assume responsibility for the mortal openness that we already are; assuming this responsibility is essential to human freedom (Zimmerman 1993, 245).

I Find Myself in a World

Heidegger's existential analytic proceeds from the general to the specific; he begins with the general awareness of how the world presents itself to us and moves to "care" which is the specific existential that reveals to Dasein its own existence (Gelven, 52). Throughout his analytic, Heidegger discloses various existentials, or characteristics, of being. For many people these disclosures are obvious but Heidegger must make them apparent so that he may adequately elucidate his thought. Heidegger may have also wanted to make his disclosures simply because many people do not consider the fact that they exist or that they reside within a world. Heidegger recognizes that many people are oblivious to these seemingly obvious modes of being.

Dasein's first and *a priori* existential is that Dasein is in a world ("to-be-in-a-world"). According to Gelven, Heidegger says that the concept of 'Being-in-the-world' "stands for a *unified* phenomenon" (49). For Heidegger, 'being-in-the-world' (*In-der-Welt-sein*) contains three constitutive elements. First is 'in-the-world' which refers to the ontological structure of the world and defines the notion of *worldhood* (*Weltlichkeit*, also translated as 'worldliness'). 'Worldhood' signifies an ontological property of Dasein and is a context of involvements with other things in the world (Dostal, 155). The world is made of objects in "a holistic contexture of relations" (Guignon, 10) and what these objects *are* is determined by their roles within various projects and activities.

'Worldhood' describes the "totality of these functional relations" between objects as laid

out in a culture's practices (10-11). The second component is that *entity* which has being-in-the-world as a way in which that entity exists. This entity answers the question of "who is in the world" and will also help to determine who is in the mode of "Dasein's average everydayness" (Gelven, 49-50) – the mundane, day to day activities in which humans engage. The third component is the "being-in" as such and refers to the ontological status of "inhood" or what it means to be *within* the world (50). In later sections Heidegger handles the first two components but here he immediately deals with the concept of *inhood*. This order of analysis makes sense considering that he places the concept of being-in-the-world as the first and most general characteristic for the existential analytic.

Heidegger first notes an ontic perspective of being-in (*In-sein*):

What does *being-in* mean? Initially, we supplement the expression being-in with the phrase "in the world," and are inclined to understand this being-in as "being-in something." With this term, the kind of being of a being is named which is "in" something else, as water is "in" the glass, the dress is "in" the closet. (*BT*, 50)

These sorts of statements express a relationship of space and location and ultimately all things reside within a "world-space" (50). All entities that have this "being-in" relationship possess a type of being that Heidegger describes as objectively present, which simply refers to things that occur within the world (50).

But we are concerned with the ontological existential of being-in that is a state of Dasein's being. Here 'in' does not refer to a corporeal object or to a space/location relationship. In his typical fashion, Heidegger refers to archaic definitions of the word 'in' and finds that it refers to concepts such as to live, to dwell, used to, familiar with, and to take care of something. So "being-in" describes the idea of dwelling and staying near

a world that is familiar in some way. Heidegger now says, “*Being-in is thus the formal existential expression of the being of Da-sein which has the essential constitution of being-in-the-world*” (51).

To emphasize, “world” here does not refer to a planetary entity that can be described by the scientist. This is an ontic reference and is not *a priori* because knowing that I am in a world can only be known through experience – *a posteriori*. Rather, in an ontological sense, “world” is the place in which one is and one’s world may be the village boundaries or one’s country – not in a physical but in a mental conceptual sense. The ontological sense of the world is that which makes possible a feeling of familiarity that we have with the world and also that which makes the world a home. Dasein must have a world to live in, to dwell in, and to call home. These considerations are all *a priori* (Gelven, 52-54). Seemingly, because of this *a priori* condition of being-in-the-world, a human is one who exists in such a way as to belong to the earth and this earth-dwelling being has a home here on this planet (54).

At this juncture the difference between Earth and world needs mention. Zimmerman (1994) discusses Heidegger’s idea of nature as *physis*. This is neither a totality nor a ground of entities. It is a self-articulating event of presencing that has a two-fold sense. On one hand “it refers to the self-guiding emergence of living beings – the sprouting of a seed, the birth of an animal” (129). In the second sense, *physis* is “the self-manifestness of entities in a historical human world” (129). The first is self-emergence; the second is self-disclosure. Earth is a self-concealing power that generates things that can then thrust themselves and then appear within a historical world. World is a historical clearing through which earth may be partially disclosed in many ways. Earth

and world contend with one another: as earth strives to keep itself from being disclosed, world attempts to disclose what is hidden. But a world can sustain itself only so long as limit and balance mark its striving for disclosure (129-130).

The *a priori* capacity of Being-in-a-world gives us the ability to have relationships between things and other Daseins. This capacity also means that we “have things to relate to, care about, and concern ourselves with” (Gelven, 54). Of course Heidegger’s list is much more extensive:

With its facticity, the being-in-the-world of Da-sein is already dispersed in definite ways of being-in, perhaps even split up. The multiplicity of these kinds of being-in can be indicated by the following examples: to have to do with something, to produce, order and take care of something, to use something, to give something up and let it get lost, to undertake, to accomplish, to find out, to ask about, to observe, to speak about, to determine. These ways of being-in have the kind of being of *taking care of* which we shall characterize in greater detail. The *deficient* modes of omitting, neglecting, renouncing, resting, are also ways of taking care of something, in which the possibilities of taking care are kept to a "bare minimum." (BT, 53)

Heidegger points out that all of these statements regarding concern are only ontic colloquial expressions. Later he will use ‘concern’ as an ontological existential:

We do not choose this term because Da-sein is initially economical and "practical" to a large extent, but because the being of Da-sein itself is to be made visible as *care*. Again, this expression is to be understood as an ontological structure concept ... The expression has nothing to do with “distress,” “melancholy,” or “the cares of life” which can be found ontically in every Da-sein. These – like their opposites, “carefreeness” and “gaiety” – are ontically possible only because Dasein, ontologically understood, is care. Because being-in-the-world belongs essentially to Da-sein, its being toward the world is essentially taking care. (BT, 53)

“The Worldliness of the World”

Now that Heidegger has established that Dasein is in a world we must now ask, “What kind of world?” This is Heidegger’s first listed component of “being-in-the-world”. Recall that this discussion deals with the ontological structure of the world and the concept of *worldhood* (worldliness). Being-in-the-world is an *a priori* existential and Heidegger’s description of this concept is essentially negative, i.e., what this concept is not. The negative descriptions of being-in-the-world are ontic, derived, and *a posteriori* and thus do not satisfy Heidegger’s *a priori* criteria to fulfill the requirements for a fundamental ontology. In the section of *Being and Time* entitled “The Worldliness of the World” Heidegger lays out the positive characteristics of Being-in-the-world that are *a priori*. Heidegger seems to be aware of “three levels” of seeing the world:

Within the present field of investigation the repeatedly designated differences of the structures and dimensions of the ontological problematic are to be fundamentally distinguished:

1. The being of the innerworldly beings initially encountered (handiness);
2. The being *of* beings (objective presence) that is found and determined by discovering them in their own right in going through beings initially encountered;
3. The being of the ontic condition of the possibility of discovering innerworldly beings in general, the worldliness of the world. This third kind of being is an *existential* determination of being-in-the world, that is, of Da-sein. (BT, 82)

Heidegger goes on to explain that the first two levels are *categories* and are ontic in their nature. As such they are not *a priori* and so do not form part of the fundamental ontology.

Each of the above three items is a different way or mode of seeing the world. By themselves or together they present an incomplete perspective of the world and they are

different than, for example, seeing the world of another culture (i.e., learning to see the world from the perspective of another person). This type of seeing is not seeing the world as objects or as things to use. Heidegger also discusses other modes of seeing the world but for my purposes the above three are most relevant.

Heidegger's first level of seeing the world is described as "handiness". This term denotes a relationship with the world as one of *use*. The world and the things within it are seen as equipment. As he says, "We shall call the useful thing's kind of being in which it reveals itself by itself *handiness*. It is only because useful things have *this* 'being-in-themselves', and do not merely occur, that they are handy in the broadest sense and are at our disposal" (*BT*, 65). What is vitally important here is that this relationship is *primordial* as opposed to the view of "objective presence" which is a *derived* relationship – derived from experience:

The phenomenological exhibition of the being of beings encountered nearest to us can be accomplished under the guidance of the everyday being-in-the-world, which we also call *association in the world with inner-worldly beings*. Associations are already dispersed in manifold ways of taking care of things. However, as we showed, the closest kind of association is not mere perceptual cognition, but, rather, a handling, using, and taking care of things which has its own kind of "knowledge." (62-63)

Heidegger uses two concrete examples to illustrate his point. The first is that when I use a doorknob, I do not stop first to consider its properties, physical or metaphysical (63). I simply see the knob for what it is and then use it accordingly. The second example is a hammer. In the act of hammering with a hammer I become more aware of its intended purpose and am not concerned with its theoretical existence or its "equipment-structure". The less I stare at the hammer, and the more that I grasp and use it, the more primordial

does my relationship become with the hammer. Further, the more I just use the hammer, the more it becomes unveiled as equipment (64-65).

Heidegger's second level of seeing the world is the objective presence view. This view describes the seeing of things as independent and abstracted objects, and this includes Dasein. This view aims at objectivity and is the purview of the scientist and some philosophers; the world is seen as made up of objects independent of their use or function. This view is one that must be learned and indeed a scientist undergoes years of training to acquire this perspective. Objective presence is secondary and highly stylized when compared to seeing the world as handiness. As Gelven points out, the scientist in the lab simply uses the test tube and does not stop to consider the properties of the tube, although he may be keenly interested with the contents inside the tube. Heidegger is very clear that the view of objective presence is not incorrect or in some way wrong. Indeed, it is necessary for scientific activity. What is wrong is to believe that the *only* way to view the world is as one that consists merely of objective and abstract things (Gelven, 56-57). This is where much of science, philosophy, and modern culture in general slip into error.

Heidegger's third level of seeing the world is the notion of *worldliness* – seeing the world as an existential of the self. Heidegger uses the term 'worldliness' to describe an *a priori* condition and, as such, is properly a component of fundamental ontology. For Heidegger, the very notion of worldhood is grounded upon *involvement and significance* that in turn flow from handiness. Involvement and significance, as we shall see, express a type of relationship based upon concern and care which is the fundamental ontological character of Dasein. But how is handiness related to the world at large? Heidegger says:

Things at hand are encountered within the world. The being of these beings, handiness, is thus ontologically related to the world and to worldliness. World is always already "there" in all things at hand. World is already discovered beforehand together with everything encountered, although not thematically. However, it can also appear in certain ways of associating with the surrounding world. (77)

Heidegger goes on to say that we encounter handiness when we encounter something within the world. In so doing, we make free that which we encounter and this freeing allows us to conduct circumspection to take account of what is encountered by us (77). "Circumspection" (*Umsicht*) means to look at the world as environment and it may also be translated as "looking around" (Gelven, 59). From this point, we *assign* or *refer* a property or quality to something and the reference or assignment becomes concrete. Examples include declaring something serviceable, usable, or detrimental. The assigned qualities may be either appropriate or inappropriate but in either case the qualities are still bound up within the handiness. But 'quality' is not a correct term to use here: "They are not qualities at all if this term is supposed to designate the ontological structure of a possible determination of things" (*BT*, 78). The "suitability" of a piece of equipment is a constitutive state of that entity and denotes a condition of that entity. This condition makes it possible for one to define an entity's character in terms of its appropriateness (78).

The activity of assignment and reference is important because when that takes place then an entity is discovered. The discovered entity is then seen to be involved in something. Heidegger says, "The character of being of things at hand is *relevance*. To be relevant means to let something be together with something else" (78). The term

'reference' refers to this relationship of relevance or involvement (78). After a lengthy explanation we have finally arrived at relevance as a fundamental quality of worldhood:

Relevance is the being of innerworldly beings, for which they are always already initially freed. Beings are in each case relevant. Being is the *ontological* determination of the being of these beings, not an ontic statement about beings. (78)

In Heideggerian terms, relevance and its implicit notion of relationship are ontological. They are also presupposed, *a priori*, and necessarily implicit in Being-in-a-world. He says, "This "*a priori*" letting something be relevant is the condition of the possibility that things at hand be encountered so that Da-sein in its ontic association with the beings thus encountered can let them be relevant in an ontic sense" (79). Consider this example:

What the relevance is about is the what-for of serviceability, the wherefore of usability. The what-for of serviceability can in turn be relevant. For example, the thing at hand which we call a hammer has to do with hammering, the hammering has to do with fastening something, fastening something has to do with protection against bad weather. This protection "is" for the sake of providing shelter for Da-sein, that is, for the sake of a possibility of its being. (78)

Note that the idea of relevance, which implies relationship, is in direct opposition to the disposition of viewing the world as full of objects *qua* objects (scientific view) without reference to their pragmatic value. But Heidegger is not a pragmatist. Seeing the world as equipment (handiness) is not ontologically superior to conceptualizing things (objective presence). Using something and thinking about something are merely two different mental activities and neither of them exhausts one's awareness of the world. Nor does Heidegger disparage either of these two views as long as one recognizes that these are merely two of many different ways of seeing the world (Gelven, 58).

Of course, letting something be relevant, which in turn frees it for relevance, characterizes a kind of Being that belongs to Dasein. Dasein's concern encounters things as handiness and so moves the thing out of the mere status of objective presence (*BT*, 79-80). Relevance, which is the Being of something that displays handiness, is discovered only by virtue of the prior discovery of a totality of relevance. Heidegger calls this the “worldly character” of the handiness. Within this totality of relevance there exists an ontological relationship to the world (80). Letting an entity be relevant frees it for a totality of relevance. But for this to happen one must previously disclose the purpose for that which has been freed. This “previously disclosed” is simply an understanding of the world itself. Dasein understands the world because – and this is vitally important – Dasein's being already possesses an understanding of Being itself. Heidegger says, “If the kind of being of being-in-the-world essentially belongs to Da-sein, then the understanding of being-in-the-world belongs to the essential content of its understanding of being” (80). In other words, Dasein as an entity that exists already contains an understanding of the concept of Being and through this possession Dasein may then *understand* the being of the world as well as the being of things within the world. I would also add that this common-ness of being among all entities is what gives us the feeling of familiarity and belonging with the world.

At long last we arrive at Heidegger’s definitions of world and worldliness:

That *within* which Da-sein understands itself beforehand in the mode of self-reference is that *for which* it lets beings be encountered beforehand. *As that for which one lets beings be encountered in the kind of being of relevance, the wherein of self-referential understanding is the phenomenon of the world.* And the structure of that to which Da-sein is referred is what constitutes the *worldliness* of the world. (80-81)

Heidegger goes on to further explain this passage. Before Dasein becomes involved with the world, it already has an understanding of involvement and that this involvement is grounded upon an understanding of relationship. The world as a phenomenon is composed of relationships and worldhood is simply the *idea* of relationships or a structure that allows relationships to occur. This understanding is something with which Dasein is “primordially familiar” (81) and thus *a priori*. So worldliness is a context of assignments and references that signify relationships. Thus worldliness may be formally seen as a “system of relations” (81-82). In the end, an entity needs another entity for the first one *to be*.

Care and Concern

‘Care’ is Dasein's primal relationship to the world and the various ways of Being-in-the-world are also the different forms that care may take. For Heidegger, what it means to be is to care. Everything that one may do is a type of caring. Zimmerman (1993) says, “Heidegger emphasized the practical dimension of human existence by defining the very being of Dasein as “care.” To be human means to be concerned about things and to be solicitous toward other people” (247). However, existentials such as Being-in and Being-with describe Dasein's relationships with beings other than itself (Gelven, 119-121). As Heidegger’s existential analytic moves from the general to the more specific, the focus shifts from an explanation of Dasein in terms of other beings (such as the world) to an explanation of Dasein *as* Dasein. The manner in which Dasein relates to itself reveals the fundamental ontological characteristics that Heidegger is

attempting to reach. Heidegger says that the fundamental ontological characteristics of this entity are existentiality, facticity, and falling prey (178).

The first characteristic is existentiality, a quality that is revealed through understanding. Heidegger's analysis of understanding reveals that its chief quality is to *project possibilities*. Dasein is aware of its being able to be and through this it not only *has* possibilities, it *is* its possibilities. Thus, understanding projects before itself its own possibilities. By virtue of the awareness of my own possibilities, I can project choices in which my own Being is significant (what Heidegger calls the authentic) or I can project choices in which the Being of others (the "they") is significant (the inauthentic).

Heidegger calls this structure of understanding being-ahead-of-itself. As he states:

But ontologically, being toward one's ownmost potentiality-for-being means that Da-sein is always already *ahead* of itself in its being. Da-sein is always already "beyond itself," not as a way of behaving toward beings which it is *not*, but as being toward the potentiality-for-being which it itself is. (179)

It is important to note that Heidegger does not perceive this quality to refer to the "not yet" quality of future hopes and desires. It does refer to existing qualities that make the future significant for a person (Gelven, 121).

The second of Dasein's fundamental ontological characteristics is facticity.

Being-ahead-of-itself is not some sort of random and arbitrary freedom to live any way I choose. Heidegger says,

Being-ahead-of-itself does not mean anything like an isolated tendency in a worldless "subject," but characterizes being-in-the-world. But to being-in-the-world belongs the fact that it is entrusted to itself, that it is always already thrown *into a world*. (179)

The world has limits and there is much about myself that I cannot overcome. I am thrown into a world in which I have little to say or little to determine. Thus Dasein is Being-ahead-of-itself-in-a-world. I not only have possibilities but I am aware that my actuality has limits (Gelven, 122).

Dasein's third fundamental ontological characteristic is falling prey and it refers to Dasein's involvement in its daily mundane world. This involvement is with entities other than Dasein – the “they”. Dasein's existence is not only one of potentiality within the world but its existence is always also absorbed in the world of its concern (179-180). And further Heidegger states, “In being-ahead-of-oneself-already-being-in-the-world, entangled *being-together*-with inner-worldly things at hand taken care of lies essentially included” (179). This involvement makes Dasein turn from reflecting upon itself and instead focuses its attention on the world and on other entities. Heidegger labels this sort of attitude as inauthentic. But if falling prey is a response to entities external to Dasein, how can it be a fundamental ontological characteristic?

In the mode of falling, Dasein, through interest and care, turns away from itself and turns to the inauthentic world of the they-self. Heidegger also calls this the world of “everydayness”. The term ‘they’ means for Heidegger “... the everyday mode of being of discourse, sight, and interpretation, in specific phenomena” (156). In turning towards the everyday world, Dasein indirectly exposes concern for itself. Turning away from itself is a type of *involvement* in the they-self. In other words, falling is a form of care. Gelven says, “In its simplest form, *fallenness is the nonawareness of the significance of what it means to be*” (106). In its involvement with the they-self Dasein has little or no opportunity to reflect upon this involvement. In fact, the they-self does not even consider

such questions. When Dasein does not feel that involvement in the they-self is no longer easy and natural, Dasein then reflects upon its role. Dasein then becomes alienated and turns to itself. The feeling or mood that forces Dasein to turn to itself is what Heidegger calls *angst* (translated variously as “dread” or “anxiety”). Heidegger says:

However, in *Angst* there lies the possibility of a distinctive disclosure, since *Angst* individualizes. This individualizing fetches Da-sein back from its failing prey and reveals to it authenticity and inauthenticity as possibilities of its being. The fundamental possibilities of Da-sein, which are always my own, show themselves in *Angst* as they are, undistorted by innerworldly beings to which Da-sein, initially and for the most part, clings. (178)

Dread forces Dasein away from the they-self and isolates Dasein. Dread does not force Dasein to live authentically but it does make Dasein aware of choosing to live authentically (Gelven, 120, 122).

To become authentic, Dasein must let things be. Seemingly, for this to occur, several things must take place. Zimmerman (1994) notes that “modernity’s attempt to dominate nature stems from a constricted understanding of what things *are*, only an ontological paradigm shift can generate new attitudes, practices, and institutions that exhibit respect and care for all beings” (106). For Heidegger, only an unpredictable turn in the “destiny of being” (*Seinsgeschick*) could reverse the Western world’s long decline into anthropocentric nihilism (106). Authenticity (*Eigentlichkeit*) occurs when one is suddenly appropriated by a shift in the destiny of being (108). Zimmerman points out the following:

By 1940, however, Heidegger was saying that human existence is authentic only when Dasein is granted “releasement” (*Gelassenheit*) from the will to power, thereby becoming able to let things be appropriately. Letting be has at least three aspects. First, it means not unduly interfering with things. Second, it means taking care of things, in the sense of making it possible for them to fulfill their

potential. Third, letting be involves not just the ontical work of tending to things, but also the ontological work of keeping open the clearing through which they can appear. This disclosive sense of letting be lies beyond the distinction between activity and passivity, if activity means imposing one's will, and if passivity means standing around. (132)

Authentic existence means to be a caretaker of entities and a "shepherd of being" (112).

Caring is the freeing of things so that they may manifest themselves appropriately thus becoming what they already are. *Gelassenheit* (freedom from the compulsion to dominate) "allows Dasein to reveal things according to their own contours", rather than forcing things to conform to subject-imposed categories (112).

Referring back to Heidegger's definition of Dasein, Dasein is an entity that is full of possibilities (ahead-of-itself), is within and limited by a world (being-already-in), and is in the world with other entities (fallen prey). All of this is expressed in the simple term 'care'. Further, all three of these characteristics are *a priori* and thus necessary to the concept of Being. They are fundamentally ontological.

An outstanding feature of the existential analytic is that it expresses concepts of relationships. How Dasein relates to itself, to the world, and to other entities are all fundamental to dwellness. Dwellness itself implies a type of relationship (and by extension a type(s) of external manifestation) that all humans could potentially have with the world. That relationship is one of care and concern on the basis of fellow existence with the world and with other entities.

Chapter Five: Dwellness

For Heidegger, “dwelling” is a mode of “insistent caring”. Dwelling is “a way of abiding on the earth that opens a clearing where things can “gather” the surrounding environment into a coherent whole (a “region” or “play of time-space” [Zeit-Spiel-Raum])” (Guignon 1993, 33). In his essay “Building Dwelling Thinking”, Heidegger first asks, “What is it to dwell?” (323). On the surface, dwelling is a result of building (construction). Building has dwelling as its goal but not every building is a dwelling. Yet these non-dwelling structures remain within the domain of dwelling and this domain is not limited to the place of dwelling – a truck driver is at home on the highway but he does not have a shelter there. If dwelling merely means to take shelter in a structure, then spinning mills and power stations, which house humans, are not dwellings. Buildings that are not dwelling places are still informed by the concept of dwelling in that they serve humans’ need for dwelling (323-324). Thus, dwelling is the means that informs over all building. The concepts of dwelling and building are related as means and ends and thus the two are seen as separate activities. But, as Heidegger asserts, this “means-end schema” (324) blocks a view of the essential relations between building and dwelling: “For building is not merely a means and a way toward dwelling – to build is in itself already to dwell” (324).

At his juncture Heidegger gives an etymological discussion of the German words *bauen* (to build) and *buan* (to dwell). Although the modern German word *wohnen* means

“to dwell”, *buan*, as an Old High German word, also means to build and to dwell. *Buan* also has an older meaning that signifies to remain and to stay in place. *Buan* would transform into the modern *bauen*. Thus, the contemporary term *bauen* has its roots in a concept of dwelling. Heidegger says that dwelling is an activity that humans perform alongside other activities; dwelling does not refer to inactivity (324-325). He now presents the concept of dwelling in its fullness:

The way in which you are and I am, the manner in which we humans *are* on the earth, is *buan*, dwelling. To be a human being means to be on the earth as a mortal. It means to dwell. The old word *bauen*, which says that man *is* insofar as he *dwells*, this word *bauen* however *also* means at the same time to cherish and protect, to preserve and care for, specifically to till the soil, to cultivate the vine. Such building only takes care – it tends the growth that ripens into its fruit of its own accord. Building in the sense of preserving and nurturing is not making anything. Shipbuilding and temple-building, on the other hand, do in a certain way make their own works. Here building, in contrast with cultivating, is a constructing. Both modes of building – building as cultivating ... and building as raising up of edifices ... are comprised within genuine building, that is, dwelling. Building as dwelling, that is, as being on the earth, however, remains for man’s everyday experience that which is from the outset “habitual” – we inhabit it ... (325)

Heidegger’s conception of dwelling entails the concepts of *radah* and *kabash* discussed in the first chapter. *Radah* generally refers to taking care of the earth and all creatures through stewardship; *kabash* refers to tilling the soil. With his analysis of dwelling, Heidegger taps into an ancient concept of humans’ relationship with the world.

Heidegger suggests that language over time detracts from the original and true meanings of words in favor of “foreground meanings” (326). For Heidegger, language contains a “primal nature” of meanings and that such meanings “fall into oblivion” (326). The “primal call” of language then falls silent and humans do not heed that silence. Heidegger then urges the reader to really listen to the primal character of *bauen* to hear

three things: (1) Building is really dwelling; (2) Dwelling is the manner in which mortals are on earth; (3) Building as dwelling unfolds into the building that cultivates growing things and the building that erects buildings. So now we have a reversal of the dwelling/building means-end schema: dwelling is not a result of building, rather, we build because we dwell, that is, because we are *dwellers* (326).

The next step in Heidegger's analysis of *bauen* is to discover the nature of dwelling. Remaining and staying in place (*bauen*) is experienced peacefully which in turn means that which is free. Freedom then means to preserve something and to safeguard it from harm and danger. Now Heidegger closes in on the essential character of dwelling. As he states:

To free actually means to spare. The sparing itself consists not only in the fact that we do not harm the one whom we spare. Real sparing is something *positive* and takes place when we leave something beforehand in its own essence, when we return it specifically to its essential being, when we "free" it in the proper sense of the word into a preserve of peace. To dwell, to be set at peace, means to remain at peace within the free, the preserve, the free sphere that safeguards each thing in its essence. *The fundamental character of dwelling is this sparing.* It pervades dwelling in its whole range. That range reveals itself to us as soon as we recall that human being consists in dwelling and, indeed, dwelling in the sense of the stay of mortals on the earth. (327)

At this point Heidegger introduces his concept of the world as fourfold. The above passage ends with the phrase "on the earth" which, according to Heidegger, also means "under the sky." Both of these phrases include "remaining before the divinities" and "belonging to men's being with one another." All four of these concepts – earth and sky, divinities and mortals – belong together in a primal oneness (327). Mortals exist within the fourfold by virtue of dwelling, the basic character of which is to spare and to preserve (328). Sparing and preserving means "to take under our care, to look after the

fourfold in its presencing. What we take under our care must be kept safe” (329). So dwelling preserves the fourfold and keeps its nature within things. Dwelling is a staying with things so that dwelling, as preserving, keeps the fourfold in things and mortals stay (dwell) with things (329). Further, the manner in which mortals dwell is a manner of preserving the fourfold in its essential being and how it presents itself to mortals (328).

At this juncture it is necessary to discuss the poetic and mystical quality of Heidegger’s fourfold. His description of the four – earth, sky, divinities and mortals – and how each relates to the other three and how mortals relate to the four is a beautiful bit of poetry. He describes the earth as a “serving bearer, blossoming and fruiting”; sky is “the vaulting path of the sun, the course of the changing moon, the wandering glitter of the stars”; divinities are “beckoning messengers of the godhead”; mortals are the humans, “They are called mortals because they can die. To die means to be capable of death *as* death” (327-328). For humans to think of one of the four also means to be thinking of the other three “but we give no thought to the simple oneness of the four” (327).

Heidegger’s description of how mortals dwell in relation to the four reveals his phenomenological predilections. “Mortals dwell in that they save the earth ... To save really means to set something free into its own essence” (328). This statement is phenomenological because phenomenology, simply stated, is a method of investigation designed to yield the true essences of thoughts and of things. *Presencing* refers to the act of allowing something to be as it truly is and to have that essence be revealed to us. Heidegger states further “Mortals dwell in that they receive the sky as sky ... they do not turn night into day nor day into a harassed unrest” (328). “Mortals dwell in that they await the divinities as divinities ... They wait for intimations of their coming and do not

mistake the signs of their absence” (328). Lastly, with regards to the fourth of the fourfold, “Mortals dwell in that they initiate their own essential nature – their being capable of death as death – into the use and practice of this capacity, so that there may be a good death” (328-329). Heidegger seems to be saying that humans need to accept the fourfold as it is and to treat it accordingly. For we are part of the fourfold and how we treat one of the four indicates how we treat ourselves.

Zimmerman (1994) says that Heidegger hoped that modernity would yield to a new epoch or world that would allow things to show themselves appropriately. This world, founded by the poet, would grant to things their presence as things bear the world and as the world grants things. World is the hidden unity (*Ereignis*) of the fourfold (*Geviert*) of earth and sky, gods and mortals, gathered together by way of the thing named by the poet. Mortals fulfill themselves by participating in a “dance” in which all the constituents of the fourfold come to bear and allow each other to become manifest. Each of the constituents is an element in the “event of appropriation” which allows each element to come into its own (130). The clearing that allows entities to self-manifest is constituted by a thing – natural or non-humanmade – that gathers the fourfold into a cosmic dance that frees up the inner luminosity of things. The world creates itself by virtue of the spontaneous coordination of the appearances that arise (uncaused and from “no-thing”) from moment to moment. The world is composed of uncaused self-organized appearances. Later Heidegger used the term *logos* to name the mutual coordination of appearances that led to his claim that language (*logos*) lets things be (Zimmerman, 1993, 250).

While Heidegger's fourfold is quite beautiful and inspiring, some may find his language troubling because 'poetic' and 'mystical' are terms not usually associated with western philosophy, although there are many thinkers within this tradition who exemplify something other than explicit discourse about rationality. Many would feel that poetry belongs to literature studies while mysticism belongs to theology. Yet Heidegger frequently employs such language, elements of which can be read in his early work (1920s through the 1950s, including *Being and Time*) and which became much more prominent in his later period from the 1950s until his death in 1976. "Building Dwelling Thinking" is from his later period. Heidegger's use of such language has opened up much debate among scholars as to whether or not Heidegger was a mystic. There is also debate with regards to the nature of such language within his work, i.e. was it merely an affectation or had he stopped doing philosophy and crept over to theology in some surreptitious manner?

John D. Caputo (1978) deals with these issues and brings clarity to Heidegger's more enigmatic statements and ideas. According to Caputo, for humans to truly engage with the core of Being is to return to our mortality, i.e. to embrace our death. In addition, Heidegger's use of terms such as 'mortals', 'dwelling', and 'on earth' indicate his suggestion that humans "play" with the world and with Being by entering into a ring-dance with the fourfold. By embracing and entering their collective mortality, humans take up genuine dwelling within the world. Here the world is not a particular being but a totality and an all. Humans' attempts to explain the cause and ground for the world ultimately fail for such explanations fail to transcend the world's nature and actually fall short of it. Human explanations for the world do not adequately describe the simple

oneness and unity of existence. Humans must simply allow things to be as they are and in doing so we can better understand the world through this freeing of things. The fourfold can be seen within all things. Heidegger uses the example of a jug of wine. Its essence is one of giving when it pours out its contents as a sort of gift giving. These gifts are water and wine in which one finds the union of sky and earth. Rain comes from the sky and is stored in the earth; wine comes from the vine that is nourished by the sky. Mortals drink water and wine thus receiving refreshment and nourishment. Humans may also consecrate wine that is then offered to the gods. In this way mortals and gods are also found in the drink that is given by the jug. Thus the fourfold of earth and sky, mortals and gods reside together in the jug. As Caputo states: "The truth of Being comes about in the "thing" in which the "four" play together. In the thing, the disfiguration of the world, which is rooted in modern technology, gives way to the genuine configuration of earth and sky, mortal and god" (241).

Critics have argued that Heidegger seems to have abandoned scientific endeavor and called for a sort of surrender to the world as it is without investigating it. Further, such surrender is tantamount to a transgression of the limits of experience into an immediate experience of Being, an experience that is impossible. This maneuver is a sort of violation of the Kantian observation that attempts at transcendental knowledge are impossible because the conditions for knowledge have been removed once one attempts to attain the transcendental (241). Caputo holds that Heidegger purposely avoids this problem. Heidegger held that humans' approach to Being is never immediate because the thing in which Being appears always mediates this approach. Heidegger certainly does not say that humans must leave the sphere of beings to know the region of pure Being.

“On the contrary”, Caputo says, “ if man releases the “thing” in its essence as a thing, then he enters for the first time into the most inhabitable region of all, the region where a genuinely human “dwelling” takes place, the authentic “world” ” (242).

Thus the fourfold is a description of authentic human dwelling. Recall that the fourfold signifies that the heavens are the measure of the day, the earth is the source of human sustenance, the gods are messengers of the divine, and the mortals are humans. Caputo asserts that with the fourfold Heidegger has identified something very humane. The fourfold describes the life of humans for we are brought forth from the earth and we return to the earth. The fourfold point to a developmental process of beginning, middle, and end. It also describes the process of birth, growth, waxing power, then waning power, and finally death. Caputo says,

To be human is to be at once earth-ly, mortal, and temporal. Heidegger has, it seems to me, captured the essence of the “human chronology,” the “arc” which takes its origin from the earth and returns to the earth, while passing through the days and seasons of its years. (242)

The fourfold is an analysis of the passage of time and the rhythm of life. Within this analysis one can find an understanding of his or her life. The natural rhythm of life is destroyed by the technology that also destroys the world at large. The problem is not so much technology itself but its fast pace and its messages. These messages include the ideal of a youthful appearance, changing hair color, and maintaining youthful habits and attitudes. These messages deny the processes of growth, aging, and death. Artificial lighting and air conditioning erode the differences between night and day and also erode the differences between seasons. For Heidegger, the hurried pace of technology is opposed to living a genuinely human life. Finally, the fourfold analysis “is a protest

against the dehumanization of the earth, against rendering it inhumane and unlivable” (Caputo, 242-243). Heidegger’s assertion is that we must overcome the Western technological/metaphysical preconception that nature must be conquered. For Heidegger, nature is something to be befriended or rather, “to be freed to be the thing that it is” (Caputo, 243). By befriending nature, we may dwell with it, let it be, and find within it a message of Being (243).

I now close my discussion of the fourfold by offering my own interpretation. The fourfold expresses different modes of Being as well as different ways in which beings exist within the world. As such, “heavens” refers to transcendence -- those ideas and experiences that reside outside us. This would include, for example, the concepts of god, self and cosmos, those same ideas identified by Kant that are not explainable by reason, nor by the *a priori* forms of time and space and the category of cause and effect. Religious/mystical experiences would also fall into this category. “Earth” refers to immanence – those ideas and experiences that reside within the world and us. Immanence does include space and time, cause and effect, the dictums of reason, the sensible world, and feelings and emotions. “Divinities” refers to that which is permanent and eternal. One could place into this category the very notion of Being and any other idea, the constancy of existence, the turning of the seasons, the rising of the sun, and other such constant activities (I choose here to not entertain Hume’s argument against the Principle of Nature’s Uniformity and his critique of causality – arguments with which I agree – as my intention here is to be poetical/metaphorical rather than analytical). “Mortal” refers to that which is impermanent. This may include things and beings as well as particular experiences that come and go like the wind. Like Heidegger, this

fourfold of transcendence/immanence and permanent/impermanent also expresses different modes of Being as well as the different ways in which beings are in the world. And also like Heidegger, these four exist at all times within all things. These two notions of the fourfold pin down some foundational aspects of existence that most people do not recognize. To perceive and understand the fourfold is perhaps a first important step towards “authentic dwelling” and embracing our own mortality and thus being at peace with the world.

In the first part of “Building Dwelling Thinking” Heidegger discusses the concept of dwelling. Having completed that task, he then asks, “In what way does building belong to dwelling?” (329). Leading up to this question Heidegger notes the following:

Dwelling preserves the fourfold by bringing the essence of the fourfold into things. But things themselves secure the fourfold *only when* they themselves *as* things are let be in their essence. How does this happen? In this way, that mortals nurse and nurture the things that grow, and specially construct things that do not grow. Cultivating and construction are building in the narrower sense. *Dwelling*, inasmuch as it keeps or secures the fourfold in things, is, as this keeping, *a building*. With this, we are on our way to the second question. (329)

Heidegger’s discussion of construction is important for further understanding the nature of humans’ relationship with the world and how we dwell within it. Heidegger uses the example of a bridge. Humans place a bridge across a stream and thus create a “location”. The location was not already there before the bridge was made; rather, the location exists by virtue of the bridge. This is so because there are many places along the stream that could be occupied by something. The bridge, like any other “thing”, gathers the fourfold into itself because the bridge creates a site for the fourfold to take place. This site then determines “the localities and ways by which a space is provided for” (332).

From here Heidegger goes on to analyze the concept of space:

Space is in essence that for which room has been made, that which is let into its bounds. That for which room is made is always granted and hence is joined, that is, gathered, by virtue of a location, that is, by such a thing as the bridge. *Accordingly, spaces receive their being from locations and not from "space."* (332)

Buildings are simply those things that are locations that in turn provide a site and a space for the fourfold to occur. Heidegger says, "The relation between location and space lies in the essence of these things as locations, but so does the relation of the location to the man who lives at that location" (332). So now we have two relationships to clarify: one is between location and space, the other is between humans and space (333). Locations provide the spaces that humans move through on a daily basis. Various types of buildings determine and ground the nature of locations. This is a description of the relationship between locations and spaces as well as the relationship between spaces and space as such. This relationship then leads us to understanding the relation of humans and space (334).

Heidegger begins by asserting that space "is neither an external object nor an inner experience" (334). This is because the concept of "man" includes the notion of one who dwells and also "the stay within the fourfold among things" (334). The concept of "stay" is integral to Heidegger's conception of space. Recall, "... dwelling itself is always a staying with things. Dwelling, as preserving, keeps the fourfold in that with which mortals stay: in things" (329). In other words, it is through our relationship with things that we may become aware of Being. By virtue of dwelling-as-preserving we keep the fourfold within things themselves. By staying with things, which implies preserving, sparing, and caring for, we become better aware of the fourfold within things and within

ourselves. For this reason, when we think of things remote from ourselves, “we are staying with the things themselves” (334). Although Heidegger does not directly state as such, he seems to imply a sort of emotional bond that we can develop for things and places.

But Heidegger speaks also of thinking concepts. Thinking of the Heidelberg Bridge is more than replacing a thing with a mental representation as a substitute. Nor is it a mere inner experience. As Heidegger says:

If all of us now think, from where we are right here, of the old bridge in Heidelberg, this thinking toward that location is not a mere experience inside the persons present here; rather, it belongs to the essence of our thinking *of* that bridge that in *itself* thinking gets through, the distance to that location. From this spot right here, we are there at the bridge – we are by no means at some representational content in our consciousness. From right here we may even be much nearer to that bridge and to what it makes room for than someone who uses it daily as an indifferent river crossing. (334-335)

In a sense, the process of thinking connects us with a thing, distance notwithstanding. The Heidelberg Bridge, the Statue of Liberty, and the Grand Canyon are all locations that also occupy a space. Between all these locations there are also spaces that are intervals. Expanding on this notion we then have space as pure extension (333). But here is the key: the bridge as a thing and as a location provides a space to admit the fourfold (333). In this way, spaces and space as such “are always provided for already within the stay of mortals” (335). Spaces manifest because they are part of dwelling. This next quote from Heidegger nicely ties together his concepts of stay, space, and dwelling:

To say that mortals *are* is to say that *in dwelling* they persist through spaces by virtue of their stay among things and locations. And only because mortals pervade, persist through, spaces by their very nature are they able to go through

spaces. But in going through spaces we do not give up our standing in them. Rather, we always go through spaces in such a way that we already sustain them by staying constantly with near and remote locations and things. (335)

Heidegger concludes that locations are the mediator in the relationship between humans and spaces and that the relationship of humans with both locations and spaces occur by virtue of dwelling. More simply, “The relationship between man and space is none other than dwelling, thought essentially” (335).

The nature of the relation of locations and space, and the relation of humans and space, allows us to better understand the nature of the things that are themselves locations, namely, buildings. Buildings are locations that allow for spaces in which the fourfold enters. The activity of building is a construction of locations that in turn “is a founding and joining of spaces” (336). Further, as Heidegger states,

From the simple oneness in which earth and sky, divinities and mortals belong together, building *receives the directive* for its erecting of locations ... The edifices guard the fourfold. They are things that in their own way preserve the fourfold ... this fourfold preserving is the simple essence of dwelling. In this way, then, do genuine buildings give form to dwelling in its essence and house this essential unfolding. (336-337)

Building such as that described by Heidegger, what I call authentic building, is a response to the summons of the fourfold and is thus a distinctive “letting-dwell” (337). To me, “letting-dwell” has a twofold referent. First, “letting” means to allow. Authentic building allows us to authentically dwell. Second, “letting” refers to the Heideggerian phenomenological concept of allowing things to be as they truly are and to allow things to present themselves to us as they truly are. In this way we can have a more honest and authentic conception of the world and of Being in general. Thus, according to Heidegger, the true nature of building is letting-dwell and this true nature is accomplished when building raises locations and joins spaces. But, we have to first dwell before we can build

(338). We must first dwell before we can build because, according to Heidegger, dwelling “is *the basic character* of Being in keeping with which mortals exist” (338). Building belongs to dwelling and building also receives its nature from dwelling. Like the activity of building, the activity of thinking also belongs to dwelling, as was illustrated in the discussion of Heidelberg. But set alone, building and thinking are not sufficient for dwelling unless they listen to each other and “remain within their limits and realize that the one as much as the other comes from the workshop of long experience and incessant practice” (339).

Heidegger finishes “Building Dwelling Thinking” by discussing the plight of dwelling. Although he first delivered this work as a lecture in 1951 his thoughts are quite relevant today. For many, the plight of dwelling is concerned with housing shortages and homelessness. But for Heidegger, the real plight of dwelling is very old; the real plight is that humans are constantly searching for the true nature of dwelling and “that they *must ever learn to dwell*” (161). Heidegger wonders if true homelessness might be humans not considering the real plight (searching for and learning dwelling) as the true and foundational plight of dwelling as opposed to housing shortages. Heidegger though sees hope – if humans think about homelessness as a search for and a learning of dwelling then that questioning can serve as a summons that calls mortals into dwelling. Heidegger concludes with the following observation:

But how else can mortals answer this summons than by trying on *their* part, on their own, to bring dwelling to the fullness of its nature? This they accomplish when they build out of dwelling, and think for the sake of dwelling. (161)

Perhaps we can learn to see the earth, and not just a house, as the place where we dwell. The earth not only holds our dwellings but it is the place where we learn to dwell which in turn brings us closer to understanding Being. If Heidegger is correct in thinking that dwelling is the basic character of Being, then the earth is the locus for learning of our true natures. In this way the whole planet, and not just a few wilderness preserves, becomes the arena upon which we discover the Self. The process of self-discovery can take place within a city as easily as upon a mountain. Certainly we could all agree that any place that teaches us about our true selves is indeed special and worthy of the same consideration as that which we give to a national park.

Enframing

Dwellness gives us a new way to view our world. But this statement raises the question: what is the old, or current way, in which we view the world? Basically, we view the natural world as a “standing reserve” of resources and materiel to be used as we see fit. Zimmerman (1994) says that for Heidegger, humanity’s death-denial striving indicates that humanity is now reduced to a clever animal, a monstrous human-animal hybrid, Nietzsche’s power-craving beast. Because power may only be sustained by constantly increasing itself, the will to Power transforms to a constant Will to more Power or simply, the Will to Will. The application of humanity’s capacities to the unconditioned dominance of the whole Earth “is the hidden thorn which drives modern man” (112). Through this process nature becomes a gasoline station for fueling the drive towards infinite power (112). In his essay “The Question Concerning Technology” Heidegger uses the term ‘enframing’ (*Gestell*) to describe the attitude that arises from a

technological framework that sees all beings as utterly available and manipulatable: the standing reserve. As horrifying as this view sounds, Heidegger argues that there is hope within the danger of such a view. Basically, enframing is one way in which Being is unconcealed, or revealed. This unconcealing (*entdecken*) displays one facet of truth and essence. The particular essence under discussion here is the essence of technology, which has been defined by humans as enframing, and how that view of technology's essence relates to Being in general. Certainly enframing is not the only way to define technology's essence but that is the predominant view at this time (285).

Heidegger begins his argument with an intriguing analysis of technology and a unique conception of truth. He opens with two standard definitions of technology: it is a means to an end and it is a human activity. These two definitions belong together for positing ends and using the means to achieve them is a human activity. Humans create and use various tools, equipment, and machinery to achieve ends and the complex of these contrivances is technology. Further, technology is itself a contrivance. Heidegger calls this current conception of technology an instrumental and anthropological definition of technology. The instrumental conception of technology demands proper manipulation and control. There exists a human will to master technology, as well as a will to master all things, that becomes more urgent as technology slips from human control (287-289).

Yet the instrumental/anthropological definition of technology does not show technology's essence. Further, what if technology was not merely a means to some end? Thus we must ask what is the instrumental and to what do means and ends belong? As a partial answer to these questions Heidegger says,

A means is that whereby something is effected and thus attained. Whatever has an effect as its consequence is called a cause. But not only that by means of which something else is effected is a cause. The end in keeping with which the kind of means to be used is determined is also considered a cause. Wherever ends are pursued and means are employed, wherever instrumentality reigns, there reigns causality. (289)

At this juncture Heidegger launches into a discussion about causality and as expected, he takes an interesting twist on the theme. He begins with noting the classic Aristotelian doctrine of four causes: the formal, material, efficient, and final. Using the example of a sacrificial silver chalice, the formal refers to the form or shape of the object under discussion, namely, a chalice. The material cause refers to the material of which the chalice is composed and in this case it is silver. The efficient cause refers to that which brings about the chalice -- a silversmith. The final cause is the end itself as well as its function. This end and function determines the form and matter of the chalice (289-290). These four causes all interact with and inform each other.

For Heidegger, the classic notion of causality is “that which brings something about. In this connection, to bring about means to obtain results, effects” (290). Further, the efficient cause (silversmith) “sets the standard for all causality” (290). But Heidegger objects to this notion of causality. Referring back to the Greek tradition and to Aristotle, who asserted the fourfold character of causality, Heidegger shows that the Greek word for cause (*aition*) does not mean bringing about nor does it mean effecting. *Aition* means, “that to which something else is indebted. The four causes are the ways, all belonging at once to each other, of being responsible for something else” (290). In a manner reminiscent of his fourfold of earth and sky, divinities and mortals, Heidegger refers back to the chalice example and the theme of co-responsibility. The chalice is indebted, or

owes thanks to, the silver of which the chalice consists (material cause). The chalice is further indebted to the aspect of chaliceness, which gives it the form of chalice instead of a ring or brooch (formal cause). Prior to the material and formal causes is the final cause that grants the specific function or end for the chalice, in this case sacrificial and ceremonial. The final cause sets up boundaries for the thing in question. The final cause brings together the co-responsibilities of the material and formal causes. The final and fourth responsible party is the efficient cause. Paradoxically, Heidegger does not assign this role to the silversmith. The smith cannot be the true efficient cause because he brings about the chalice as an effect of making. Recall that *aition* means indebted and not an effect of making (290-291).

The four causes are all co-responsible for the creation of a chalice. Heidegger asks:

What unites them from the beginning? In what way does this playing in unison of the four ways of being responsible play? What is the source of unity of the four causes? What, after all, does this owing and being responsible mean, thought as the Greeks thought it? (292)

These questions are important because discovering the essence of causality can then lead us to discovering the essence of instrumentality and technology, which are founded upon causality (292). The answer to these questions is “bringing forth.” Heidegger takes this term from Plato’s *Symposium* (205b): “Every occasion for whatever passes beyond the nonpresent and goes forward into presencing is *poiesis*, bringing-forth” (293). Further, ‘bringing forth’ refers not only to manufacture, crafts, art and poetry. It also refers to natural events such as a flower blossom opening into full bloom. Here is a minor sticking point as humans, while they make art and poetry, do not make flowers

bloom. Such events are “self-caused”; their presence is a spontaneous unfolding or unconcealment of being. The four causes are at play within bringing-forth and through bringing-forth are natural events, arts, and crafts given their appearance.

But there is more to bringing forth. Heidegger says, “Bringing-forth brings out of concealment into unconcealment. Bringing-forth comes to pass only insofar as something concealed comes into unconcealment. This coming rests and moves freely within what we call revealing” (293-294). Revealing is the original meaning of ‘truth’ for the Greeks while today ‘truth’ stands for correctness of representation (294).

Heidegger’s lengthy yet intriguing discourse brings us back to the original task at hand: the essence of technology. Revealing has everything to do with technology because revealing grounds all types of bringing-forth. Bringing-forth gathers within itself the four modes of causality and the notions of ends, means, and instrumentality. If technology is a means to some end then its essence lies in revealing. Thus technology is not merely a means but it is a way of revealing. As a mode of revealing technology becomes present in the realm where revealing and unconcealment occur, that is, where truth happens. “It is the realm of revealing, i.e., of truth” (294).

Technology has existed for thousands of years but the problem at hand is modern technology. For Heidegger, modern technology differs from its predecessor by virtue of the type of revealing that dominates modern technology. Modern technology operates on a form of revealing that “does not unfold into a bringing-forth in the sense of *poiesis*” (296). For Heidegger, there is a large difference between old and modern technology.

As he says:

The revealing that rules in modern technology is a challenging, which puts to nature the unreasonable demand that it supply energy which can be extracted and stored as such. But does this not hold true for the old windmill as well? No. Its sails do indeed turn in the wind; they are left entirely to the wind's blowing. But the windmill does not unlock energy from the air currents in order to store it. (296)

Windmill technology is an obvious example of technology working with and cooperating with nature. Agriculture is another example. Heidegger argues that the peasant's activities do not challenge the soil. The farmer plants seed and entrusts to nature the growth and increase of the crops. The farmer here is working with nature. But today we no longer have farming; we have a mechanized food industry. Modern technology "sets upon" nature by challenging nature to yield, or produce, something. That something could be nitrogen, ore, or any number of effects. The setting-upon that challenges nature's energies is a two-fold type of expediting that unlocks and exposes. This activity in turn is directed toward furthering the goal of maximum yield at minimal expense. Coal has not been mined simply to be on hand at a location. It is stored and on call to deliver warmth whenever needed. In this way the sun's warmth, locked inside coal, is challenged by humans to give heat, which in turn yields steam to turn machinery (296-297).

Modern technology, which sets-upon and challenges nature, leads to a particular kind of unconcealment. What is it? Heidegger's answer is the core of his argument regarding technology's essence:

Everywhere everything is ordered to stand by, to be immediately on hand, indeed to stand there just so that it may be on call for further ordering. Whatever is ordered about in this way has its own standing. We call it the standing-reserve [*Bestand*]. The word expresses here something more, and something more essential, than mere "stock." The word "standing-reserve" assumes the rank of an inclusive rubric. It designates nothing less than the way in which everything

presences that is wrought upon by the revealing that challenges. Whatever stands by in the sense of standing-reserve no longer stands over against us as object. (298)

So now the real is revealed as a standing-reserve. Humans interpret what is revealed and unconcealed. But humans have no control over unconcealment itself (299). But we do seem to have control, and be responsible for, how we perceive what is unconcealed. Currently, we choose to view the unconcealed world as a standing-reserve and we could just as easily choose to see the unconcealed world as something else. As Heidegger states,

Only to the extent that man for his part is already challenged to exploit the energies of nature can this revealing which orders happen. If man is challenged, ordered, to do this, then does not man himself belong even more originally than nature within the standing-reserve? The current talk about human resources, about the supply of patients for a clinic, gives evidence of this. (299)

Because humans drive technology forward, they make the ordering of the world an act of revealing. In this way, humans do not transform into “mere standing-reserve” (300). The process of unconcealment itself comes to pass whenever it calls humans into the modes of revealing allotted to us. When humans reveal the unconcealed they are responding to the “call of unconcealment” even when they contradict that call by means of their choice of interpretation of what is revealed (300).

Seen in this light, modern technology is not only a human doing. For Heidegger, there exists a challenging claim that prompts man to order the revealed as standing-reserve. Heidegger names this claim “enframing” (301). The rule of enframing demands that nature be ordered as a standing-reserve (304). For Heidegger, enframing is the essence of modern technology. Enframing was heralded by the rise of modern physics

but what is the source of the herald of enframing? Heidegger cannot give an answer to this question (303).

Because humans are challenged forth in the way of enframing, we stand within the essential realm of enframing. Enframing sends humans to reveal the real as standing-reserve. This particular sending Heidegger calls “destining” (306). Destining orders us to see a world of objects and to merely objectify what is real. Destining, which rules the mode of enframing, is a supreme danger. Destining is dangerous for two reasons: first, if unconcealed reality no longer even concerns us as objects, thus becoming objectless, but instead as standing-reserve, then we become nothing more than the orderer of the standing-reserve. At this point we are in danger of becoming standing-reserve ourselves. Second, under this threat humans, particularly males, exalt themselves to be lords of the earth. Thus we create the illusion that everything we encounter exists only as our construct. In turn, everywhere we look we only encounter ourselves but it is a false self as seen through enframing. We do not actually encounter our true essence (308).

Enframing endangers humanity in its relationship with itself and with all other things. Destining forces humanity into a mode of revealing that is called ordering. Where ordering dominates, all other possibilities of revealing are eliminated. As such, enframing blocks the full unconcealment of truth and enframing also conceals the very act of revealing. Heidegger is very clear that he does not think that technology is either dangerous or demonic. Its essence is mysterious and technology’s essence of destining and revealing-as-enframing is the danger. Enframing denies humans the possibility of “a more original revealing and hence to experience the call of a more primal truth” (309).

While Heidegger's discussion sounds quite bleak, he believes that within the very danger of enframing lies the hope of saving the world and us. Within the concept of enframing lies a notion that Heidegger calls "granting." Heidegger makes the following cryptic statement: "*Only what is granted endures. What endures primally out of the earliest beginning is what grants*" (313). Heidegger does not offer a stipulative definition for 'granting' so one may safely assume the standard meaning of the word. 'Granting' means to confer, to give or to accord, to agree to or to accept, to transfer or to convey. While there are several meanings to 'granting' those that refer to an act of giving apply best to Heidegger's thinking. He states:

For it is granting that first conveys to man that share in revealing that the coming-to-pass of revealing needs. So needed and used, man is given to belong to the coming-to-pass of truth. The granting that sends one way or another into revealing is as such the saving power. For the saving power lets man see and enter into the highest dignity of his essence. This dignity lies in keeping watch over the unconcealment – and with it, from the first, the concealment – of all coming to presence on this earth. (313)

The granting referred to in the above passage indicates that we possess an ability to unconceal or reveal all of reality. Part of our function as humans is to uncover the many facets of truth as time moves along. Further, in so doing we become more self-aware and so in turn does the universe at large. Maybe it is the case that humans play a key role in helping reality to become more aware of itself. But we must come to understand that enframing is only one manner of revealing. The next passage handles this notion:

It is precisely in enframing, which threatens to sweep man away into ordering as the supposed single way of revealing, and so thrusts man into the danger of the surrender of his free essence – it is precisely in this extreme danger that the innermost indestructible belongingness of man within granting may come to light,

provided that we, for our part, begin to pay heed to the essence of technology.
(313-314)

Heidegger clearly believes that we must realize that for us the essence of technology is enframing – seeing the world and its resources as a standing reserve. Once we see this perspective, then we have taken a first step to asking what other perspectives may exist for us. In so doing, we open ourselves to unconcealing and revealing other truths that in turn brings us closer to knowing our own true essence. All of this is made possible through granting – our destiny to unconceal the world. It is true that the world is a standing-reserve because that is one of its many facets of being. But the standing-reserve is only one view and it is certainly not the best or healthiest choice of perspectives. We must now choose to see the world in a different way, one that allows all entities to fulfill their essence of being.

So what do Heidegger's ideas have to do with dwellness – the normative ethical claim that all areas of the earth ought to be seen with the same consideration that is currently accorded only to officially designated wilderness areas? Dwellness describes a mood that the Earth is our home. For many centuries, modern western civilization has lived under a myth that we “come into the world” instead of arising from it. This myth implies that we came from some other place and were put on the Earth by some contrivance perhaps executed by an amorphous deity. The result of our accepting this myth is that we believe the Earth and nature to be hostile, alien, and stupid with no intelligence or consciousness. Therefore we must now “conquer” nature and subdue it. The result of this attitude is environmental destruction and societal malaise. We have cut away a part of ourselves and we unwittingly still seek something that we cannot pinpoint

that may lead to our realization of wholeness and connectedness with reality at large. Yet we could just as easily accept another myth as a better strategy for living and perceiving the world and our lives. That myth is described in dwellness, which is of being at home on the Earth. Yet this myth would be a recycled one that once held sway in the past as evidenced by the beliefs of various groups of indigenous peoples. Dwellness could perhaps become the center of a new, yet old, cultural mythos that we so desperately need.

Dwellness expresses a feeling of familiarity with the earth, of belonging to the earth, and of seeing it as a home, no matter if one occupies a pristine forest, an urban center, a farm, or a suburb. Further, this place in which we dwell is a part of our being and of us just as we are a component of the earth's being. If we can all learn to truly *feel* this way about the earth then perhaps we have taken a big first step towards having a healthy planet and society. Zimmerman (1994) claims that Heidegger "said that the ethics needed to improve our treatment of nature cannot arise from the metaphysical framework of humanism, but only from a new ethos, a new way of understanding what humans and nonhumans are" (109). In this way, Heidegger's work on the idea of being can lead us to a new way of perceiving our world that may help us to solve ecological problems, as well as other social, economic, and political problems.

Despite the lofty idealism of dwellness there are some caveats to this idea. Zimmerman (105) points out that Heidegger was influenced by a long tradition of nature romanticism and, as discussed earlier in chapter two, romanticism brings problems (but also healthy respect and awe) into conceptions of wilderness. In addition, Heidegger was born and raised in rural Germany where his nature conception was one of a well-tended

garden or farm. By the time of Heidegger's birth, Germany and Europe as a whole possessed very few areas of unspoiled wilderness, especially in comparison with the U.S. The once great and vast European forests were mostly gone by the 19TH century. Indeed, the wild flora and fauna that Americans take for granted only exist for Europeans primarily within zoos and parks. Heidegger's discussion of the fourfold reflects his garden/farm presuppositions. As Guignon (33) shows, the fourfold is embodied in a centuries old Black Forest farmhouse where peasants dwell and so order this house within the world by allowing the power of the fourfold to enter into the simple oneness of things. Thus, a concept of nature based on Heidegger may yield a world that is entirely converted into a well-tended garden. Clearly this is undesirable because wild areas ought to be preserved as well.

Lynn White posed a problem with his critique of the Judeo-Christian ethic. When god is removed and separated from nature, radical, and often negative, changes result. Seemingly, when humans remove god from nature then humans also remove themselves from nature. Such a move may have been necessary to bring about modern science and technology but ironically this same science and technology is partially responsible for our current environmental malaise. Heidegger could be joined with the ancient Jewish insights and then linked up with White's observations to somehow "put god back into nature." But this notion of god cannot be the old Judeo-Christian notion as that clearly has many problems. Heidegger's conception of Being could replace a god concept. Because all things participate within Being, all things have something in common. In this way, humans could identify with nonhuman aspects of the world, which then leads to an attitude of care and concern. In addition, with the concept of the fourfold, Heidegger

breaks down the wall that separates humans and nature. The fourfold shows us that humans are a part of nature, not somehow separate or above nature. As Heidegger states, “By a *primal* oneness the four – earth and sky, divinities and mortals – belong together in one” (*BD & T*, 327).

As Zimmerman (1993) notes, this holistic view of life on earth fostered by Heidegger, a view that emphasizes care for all beings and decenters humanity, jibes with a postmodern worldview envisioned by the radical environmentalists -- deep ecologists, social ecologists, and ecofeminists. This view sees the thirst for knowledge tempered and guided by wisdom associated with loving kindness for all things. Implementing these views would require an immense transformation. To conclude, Zimmerman states:

Social ecologists have argued that the environmental crisis has arisen not because of anthropocentrism, but rather from hierarchical and authoritarian attitudes that started in society and were consequently projected onto nature. Ecofeminists, in turn, charge that the real root of the environmental crisis is not anthropocentrism, but instead androcentrism: man-centeredness or patriarchy. Despite these important differences, however, all radical environmentalists would agree that humanity needs a new self-understanding that will eliminate humanity-nature dualism as well as the kind of anthropocentrism that justifies the heedless exploitation of nature. We must learn what it means to let beings – human and nonhuman – be. (264)

Chapter Six: Is Nuclear Waste Natural?

Dwellness takes the wilderness conception and expands it to encompass the globe. In so doing, dwellness avoids the wilderness exclusionist problems and also includes humans within nature. Dwellness refers to the entire world and thus everything in it, including the variety of human-created environmental problems. The most obvious objection to dwellness is that this concept logically entails such nasty things as nuclear waste, air pollution, and all other human-created pollution. After all, industrial waste is as much a part of the world as trees. Animal-created waste can also be a problem but in those situations human actions are usually to blame. A few years ago, North Carolina, which is one of the nation's largest producers of pork, suffered a major environmental disaster when large amounts of pig feces leached into the state's groundwater supply. This problem arose because of how slaughterhouses conducted their pork processing operations, a problem that not only adversely affected the environment but that also greatly endangered human health.

Problems such as pig feces in groundwater, in light of dwellness, compel one to ask if it makes sense to regard pollution in the same manner with which we think of a pristine forest. Many would say that the former is unnatural while the latter is natural. But on what basis would one make such a distinction? Usually, the distinction is based upon what is human-created and what is nature-created. That which is environmentally harmful is typically man-made, artificial, and unnatural. That which is environmentally

beneficent is typically not man-made and natural. This bifurcation between natural and unnatural is false and leads, in part, to the wilderness problems discussed in chapter two. The natural/artificial distinction sets the ground for the exclusionist tendencies of the contemporary wilderness conception. For example, an urban area, typically deemed human-created and thus artificial, would not receive the same care and attention accorded to a pristine forest. The result of such an attitude could be that people, because they see a city as artificial and thus “not real” and as special as a forest, may not take steps to ensure a healthy urban environment. The city is its own sort of wilderness where people and other organisms live out their lives. In addition, a city may contain “natural” elements such as parks, tree-lined streets, and rooftop gardens. Because people and other beings live within a city it only makes sense to ensure that an urban area is made clean and healthy for the welfare of those that reside there. To view human-created things as artificial presupposes that humans are not a part of nature; thus the current notion of ‘natural’ suffers from the same affliction as does the concept of wilderness – the tendency to exclude humans from the rest of the world and from nature.

The Natural

Philosophical literature suffers from a tremendous dearth of research into the idea of ‘natural.’ This lack of literature and research strongly suggests that the concept is not open to question or criticism. The little writing that does exist on this topic is handled within philosophical fields other than environmental ethics, mainly philosophy of science. Peter Kroes (1994) discusses the distinction between the natural and the artificial with respect to scientific experimentation. Although he speaks more of

laboratory concerns, his insights may be extended to the world at large. He first briefly discusses the differences between the natural and the artificial:

The modern physical sciences lack a clear conception of nature and natural objects. The still widespread idea that nature is composed of objects with certain intrinsic properties and interactions between those objects is hardly compatible with modern physical theories. But whatever may be the precise character of the (ultimate) constituents of the world, it is assumed that, contrary to artificial entities, natural entities and their behavior are not man-made. According to modern physical theories it makes, moreover, no sense to attribute some goal or function to natural objects (at least, these notions do not figure in physical theorizing). Artificial objects, on the contrary are man-made; they are the outcome of *intentional* human action. (431-432)

Here Kroes not only points out the man-made/non man-made distinction, he also introduces the concept of teleological purpose. Natural objects, from the standpoint of scientific endeavor, have no teleology as they are merely objects to be studied. Man-made objects may be discussed without referring to their teleology but they are created with a teleological purpose in mind. Technological artifacts such as pencils, bicycles, and television sets are simple examples of Kroes' point. These artifacts are designed with a specific purpose in mind to perform a function. This function is integral to the artifact and it cannot be understood without taking the function into account. Kroes ends this part of his commentary by stating, "Thus, the distinction between that natural and the artificial is primarily a genetic one" (432). Interestingly, this statement is immediately followed by a footnote in which he says, "Note that the above distinction between the natural and the artificial presupposes that in some respect man is not part of nature" (fn.7).

Kroes' purpose in his article is not primarily one of dealing with the natural and the artificial. His aim is to discuss a view that in experimental science natural

phenomena are created and not discovered. This view, coupled with others, undermines the distinction between the natural and the artificial (431). Kroes' handling of the problem (i.e. phenomena created not discovered) ends with his position maintaining the distinction between the natural and the artificial (438). This conclusion may bode well for experimental science but it causes problems when one speaks of the metaphysical and ontological qualities of the land and of nature. However, Kroes discusses a reconception of nature that he feels is in order despite his maintenance of the natural/artificial difference. This closing commentary provides some interesting ways of viewing nature (Kroes equates 'nature' with the 'natural').

Kroes offers the notion of constraint as a starting point to reinterpret nature (438). As an analog he uses experimental science to help explain nature as constraints upon actions. Scientific experimentalists experience many kinds of constraints when they intervene in the world. Humans in general experience constraints when they act within, and upon, the world. As Kroes explains:

Science in the form of theory or representation is usually a form of ontology; it tells what really exists (Lelas 1993, 425). Correspondingly, nature is described as consisting of some sort of entities whose behavior is governed by natural laws. If we consider science as a form of practice or action, another conception of nature, in terms of restrictions on our actions, seems more appropriate. We cannot transform or intervene in our environment any way we like. We experience all kinds of constraints. Nature might, therefore, be conceived as the totality of constraints imposed on our action. (438)

In a similar vein with Kroes, Heidegger says that the world imposes limits upon Dasein and thus may only entertain a limited number of possibilities. Environmental problems demonstrate some of the constraints humans encounter when they attempt to transform and intervene in nature's processes.

At this juncture Kroes distinguishes between natural and technological constraints. He qualifies his notion of natural constraints within the strictures of physical science. Constraints that arise from biological or cultural origins, or those that arise from an individual involved in an action, do not qualify as natural constraints as they are not the objects of study for physical science. Also, constraints that come from limited technological capabilities do not count as natural constraints (438). Kroes concedes that naming natural constraints is a difficult question. As an object of science, nature consists of constraints that are valid in our interaction with the material world. These constraints operate independently of any context and so natural constraints are universal constraints and are called natural laws. Examples include physical principles such as the law of free fall, Ohm's law, and the Hall effect. But Kroes feels that such a distinction of natural constraints is too restrictive as these physical laws are only valid within specific idealized contexts (I assume here that he refers to a laboratory). Such constraints are created to the extent that they only appear within specific contexts. Yet, for Kroes, these are still natural constraints.

Kroes widens his criteria for natural constraints with the following:

Natural constraints might also be characterized as constraints that cannot be overcome, no matter how we intervene in our physical environment; they transcend human power. For instance, the law of conservation of energy forbids the creation of energy from nothing. (438)

Yet here too there are problems. Those constraints that in principle cannot be overcome may qualify as natural constraints (does this mean that gravity does not qualify as a natural constraint?) but not those in a given historical situation that may be overcome later. An example of the latter is the light microscope. The first models were very

limited due to the technology of the day and also due to the physical characteristics of light. Over time, technological improvements increased the resolution of the microscope but now the light microscope is as good as it can get. The microscope's resolution ability has reached a natural constraint imposed by the behavior of light. Perhaps in time other technological developments may improve the quality of the light microscope.

The idea of 'natural' contains an implicit assumption that what is natural is also good, right, or correct. Yet this assumption is easily destroyed. A person whose house was demolished by a tornado would hardly think that the tornado was in some way a good thing. This unfortunate individual may think that the tornado is natural in the sense of it coming from nature and not coming from human activity. Yet obviously this person would probably not say that the tornado was a good event. Numerous other examples such as the above are easily seen in the daily news. Obviously, what is natural (nature created) is not necessarily good. Further, what is unnatural (human created) is not necessarily bad (Heidegger's hammer for example). One may object that I am taking a consequentialist approach to the problem and ignoring the difference between nature created and human created. In other words, I am looking only at the outcomes resulting from the actions of either a tornado or a person using a hammer to build a house. I would object to this point on two counts.

First, one outstanding difference (with regards to things made by humans or things that come strictly from nonhuman nature) between a tornado and a hammer is that which created them. Obviously humans created hammers while the world was either created by a god, or spontaneously arose from nothing, or whatever non-human-intervention creationist theory one may offer. Although there are different sources of

origin, the fact remains that both human-made and nonhuman-made things may be good or bad depending on one's perspective, on one's use of an item, or depending upon the things destroyed by the tornado (be it a house or open range land filled with nothing but grass).

Second, the objector is focusing on what may be called the inherent qualities of something. Tornadoes possess inherent destructive qualities as does human-made radioactive waste. Both items can cause great harm and so one is forced to see that destruction and death are part of what is natural. Now the suffering caused by radioactive waste could be avoided but I seriously doubt that the intention of nuclear scientists and the nuclear industry is to cause harm with the radioactive waste. This harm may be a result of poor planning, greed, lack of foresight and other factors but one would be hard pressed to successfully argue that those who create and operate the nuclear power industry intend to harm others. Of course, nobody knows the intent of tornadoes or even if they have intent of any kind. Further, what humans create is made from raw materials that come from nature. So it does not make sense to say that a hammer is unnatural because it is a few steps away from using a stone to drive a nail.

Many environmentalists and others often make a distinction between humans and the rest of nature on the basis of the effects that both have on the environment. Certainly one would be hard pressed to deny the many wide-ranging environmentally harmful effects that result from human activity. But we must also understand that earthquakes, volcanic activity, floods, droughts, etc. may cause many problems for humans, non-humans, and the land. A major volcanic eruption can cause far worse air pollution than ten years worth of auto and factory exhaust. This example does not mean that we can

justify the pollution we create but it does point to a similarity in concept. Both humans and beavers build dams yet some environmentalists would charge that most, if not all, human-made dams cause various problems (such as impeding water flow that leads to drying out of land areas) while a beaver's dam is somehow harmonious within an ecosystem. If the environmentalists' judgment (about the beaver dam) is true then the solution is simply that humans need to learn to conduct their activities in such a way that they work with nature rather than against it. So the problem is not with the dam per se but with how it is used. Skyscrapers and the Hoover Dam do not seem to be conceptually different from termite mounds and anthills. Again the problem is with how our creations are made and used.

Degrees of Artificiality

Marta Feher (1993) also discusses the concepts of natural and artificial from the standpoint of philosophy of science. However, she also feels that clarifying the distinction between the two has important implications for artificial intelligence and environmental studies (74). Feher believes that “we are true heirs of the Baconian-Cartesian conception” (74). Prior to the seventeenth century, nature served as a model or analogy to understand and create artifacts. Bacon and Descartes reversed this trend thus making artifacts the model upon which to understand nature. According to Feher:

Whereas the Aristotelians kept the two respective spheres of cognition (theoretical and practical) separate, taking the latter as having no bearing upon the former, Bacon declared technical know-how a possible source of genuine knowledge claims. Technology – according to Bacon – will be able to promote natural science, because one learns more about nature when it is “subjected to the trials and vexations the mechanical arts impose upon it than when it is allowed to run

its own course” (Bacon, F. quoted: Dijksterhuis, 1986). This is a fundamental change indeed! (72)

Before Bacon, arts and crafts were deemed inferior to non-human nature and to theoretical considerations. For Bacon, scholars should no longer believe they are superior to the mechanical arts and they should be open to the knowledge provided by technology. Those arts that transform natural materials (e.g. chemistry and brewing) and the arts that presuppose the use of mechanical tools (e.g. carpentry and architecture) are especially important (72).

Feher then states:

According to Descartes (*Principia Philosophiae*) there is no difference in principle between natural and artificial bodies (machines), only their sizes and proportions differ; while those tubes, springs and wheels which are made by an artisan are big, those produced by nature are tiny and mostly invisible or hard to perceive. The difference is then merely quantitative. Descartes’ methodological advice to the scientist is, accordingly, to model natural processes on the analogy of the more easily observable artificial ones (like, e.g., the workings of machines), and to explain the former in terms of the latter. For the Cartesians it began to be conceptually impossible to draw a theoretical line between the natural and the artificial. (73)

Because of Bacon’s and Descartes’ efforts, both the natural and the artificial were seen as created by divine and human agents respectively, and both worked according to strict laws. Thus, truth and utility were, for Bacon and Descartes, inseparable (73).

Seemingly, Bacon and Descartes practically eliminated the natural/artificial distinction and created a new paradigm of which we, according to Feher, still abide by today. If true then this view runs counter to Kroes’ discussion as well as to popular belief. The Bacon-Cartesian conception seems, in part, based upon spontaneous creation versus intentional creation. All things therefore are intentionally created either by god or by humans. Thus

one may argue, surprisingly, that all things are artificial. The reason for this conclusion is that within the Cartesian-Newtonian schema we know how the world is only insofar as we can manipulate it or only insofar as we can model it upon the analogy of artifacts and instruments. Through this model we then see an artificial nature – a truly paradoxical notion (74). Under the Bacon-Descartes-Newton paradigm Feher proposes a definition of artificial. She says:

What is left for us, under these conditions, to use for a tentative definition of ‘artificial’? With the elaboration of thermodynamics a quasi-definition seems to emerge: those structures are artificial the probability of whose spontaneous coming into being (under their given conditions, in their environment) is extremely low and runs counter to, though is not excluded by, the law of entropy. They, therefore, come into being by the intervention of an intelligent being (a being who is able to think teleologically and has a predictive capacity). (74).

Feher’s historical analysis shows that the only unwavering quality of ‘artificial’ is ‘man-made-ness’. This feature’s value, and its subsequent epistemological, ontological, and, I would add, moral implications, varied widely throughout history. Thus, to understand the artificial one needs to know its referent and those factors that led to the creation of the referent (74-75).

Feher concludes by giving a brief description of artificiality, of which there are three classes. The first contains artificial (entirely human-created) products such as cars. The second class contains items that are artificially produced but eventually become natural such as domesticated cats and farm cows. The third class is mixed and is based upon both the procedure of creation and the end result as artificial. Examples are trimmed trees, mules, zedonks (a cross between a donkey and a zebra) and any product of genetic engineering (75). While intriguing, Feher’s classifications and examples are

debatable. For example, why are cars not in the third category? Should not trimmed trees be placed in the second category? Like Kroes' discussion of nature as imposed constraints, Feher's degrees of artificiality are all too brief and need work. Yet her investigations certainly compel one to reconsider some basic assumptions.

Using Nature

Another objection to Dwellness is that one may conclude that people should adopt a "hands off" or minimal-use approach towards Earth as a whole such as that used with wilderness areas. The objector would further charge that such a policy is unrealistic. My response is not only is such an outlook unrealistic but that it is impossible. Humans need to use nature to flourish and survive. The problem is with particular methods in the way we use nature. Human history shows that economic and consumption activities result in environmental destruction. One of the main reasons for this fact is that such activity runs against the workings of nonhuman ecosystems. If humans depend upon ecosystems for their survival then humans ought to model at least some of their behaviors upon the workings of these ecosystems. Environmental degradation is a result of humans working against ecosystem processes. When a mountainside forest is clear-cut, the lack of trees permits erosion and landslides that leads to further destruction, possibly of human dwellings. When trees are selectively cut, much of the forest remains and so erosion problems do not exist for these forests. Selective cutting is one method of working with ecosystems rather than against them.

Jan van der Straaten gives one possible solution to this problem in his article "An Economic Theory of Natural Resources." He talks about how ecosystems use, distribute,

and consume natural resources. He argues that by identifying the patterns and methods of resource use within ecosystems, humans could then model their economic patterns in the same manner which could possibly yield a way of living that would work with nature and not result in problems such as overconsumption and creation of excess waste. One typical example is recycling. This is one major component of any ecosystem and is slowly being implemented within human systems. While the specific human recycling processes of glass and aluminum, for example, may not be modeled upon wild ecosystems, the general action of recycling our waste is consistent with ecosystem activity. What are recycled are waste products that are then reintroduced back into a system thus having a synergistic effect upon an entire ecosystem (209-213).

Van der Straaten's theory provides several important implications. First, it recognizes and reaffirms humans' place within nature. Second, humans, by necessity, must use and participate with nature. Third, humans are an essential component within nature. By recognizing these implications, humans might better understand their impact upon the non-human world. We may also better understand our responsibility towards the world as well as towards ourselves. Through all of this, we may then see that we truly are natural and in realizing this concept we may then understand that we are natural in part because we are part of the world and not alien to it.

Whether or not human-made artifacts may properly be labeled as natural or artificial may continue to be an unresolved debate. But one thing is clear: artifacts, and the procedures of their creation, have many sorts of effects and impacts upon the world, upon nature, and upon humans. Feher notes that according to the second law of thermodynamics, producing artifacts means a decrease of entropy (disorder) within a

local subsystem of the global terrestrial system. Concurringly, this entropy decrease is done at the cost of a larger entropy increase elsewhere within the subsystem. Feher concludes:

Would this mean that by mankind's producing more and more complicated artifacts, i.e. highly complex structures, thereby locally decreasing entropy and disorder, by extending the technical sphere, we necessarily produce disorder at the same time in our terrestrial environment? Does technical development inescapably lead to the destruction of the natural order upon the Earth? I do not claim to have found the answer to this question. My guess is, however, that the answer is a gloomy yes. (75-76).

Conclusion: In the Future

I now need to be perfectly clear and state that I am not advocating the removal of wilderness areas from public protection. Nor do I believe that the creation of wilderness areas was wholly a bad idea. I completely agree with William Cronon when he states:

By now I hope that it is clear that my criticism in this essay is not directed at wild nature per se, or even at efforts to set aside large tracts of wild land, but rather at the specific habits of thinking that flow from this complex cultural construction called wilderness. It is not the things we label as wilderness that are the problem – for nonhuman nature and large tracts of the natural world do deserve protection – but rather what we ourselves mean when we use that label. (“Trouble”, 378)

In some cases it was wise and prudent for governments to set aside wilderness areas. The constant onslaught of industry practically demanded that something be done to preserve healthy ecosystems. But in many other cases, as I have discussed, creating wilderness areas has not been a wholly ethical decision, particularly when indigenous peoples are displaced from their cultural homelands. Perhaps some governmental policies regarding specific wilderness areas ought to be modified to allow, for example, indigenous peoples to remain on the land.

One of the most negative consequences of the current wilderness conception is that what is officially deemed wilderness is natural and good while other areas, such as farms, urban and suburban areas, are not deemed as wilderness. Thus, these non-wilderness areas become less important and not worthy of the same consideration and care that we grant to official wilderness areas. By not granting the special care and

consideration that we grant to “protected areas” we are greatly hurting ourselves. My attempt in this project has been to argue for the extension, to all areas upon the earth, the same sort of attitude and consideration that we currently grant only to wilderness areas. In doing so perhaps we humans will begin to see and feel the unique and sacred nature of all forms of existence. The same beauty and wonder we feel for a mountain could also be felt with a rooftop garden or a backyard anthill. Because the concept of wilderness is ultimately a state of mind and a metaphysical and ontological phenomenon, the wilderness concept is easily applied to the entire world in the form of dwellness.

Alas, the application of such an idea may not be so simple but perhaps there is hope. One possible source of help would be the many groups of indigenous peoples who still exist. These people know well how to cooperate with and live in harmony with nature. The White Mountain Apache of Arizona are one case example. On their reservation exists a stand of forest composed of a particular species of pine tree. This forest is the largest stand of its kind because of the pine tree’s prevalence. To earn money, the tribe decided to begin logging this forest. But instead of clear-cutting the forest, the tribe exercised sustainable logging practices. By using selective cutting, only trees of a particular size are cut and so the forest remains vibrant and healthy. Logging roads were made in such a way so as not to greatly disturb the resident elk population. A nice consequence of this practice is that the elk herd is the healthiest in the entire U.S. The tribe charges hunting fees for people to come onto the reservation to hunt the elk. So the tribe earns money from the logging and hunting while maintaining a healthy forest and elk herd.

Unfortunately, recent forest fires on the White Mountain Apache land have led some to conclude that the tribe's forestry practices were perhaps not very sound. In any case, American lumber companies have begun to practice sustainable forestry practices such as selective cutting. However they find it difficult to maintain such practices as selective cutting is more expensive than clear-cutting. Economic policies that focus on short-term profit for the next fiscal quarter, as opposed to long-term focused policies, further exacerbate this problem. Further, current economic policies and price schedules do not include hidden costs. These types of costs are negative results coming from unsound industrial activity. For example, if the side of a mountain is clear-cut then melting snow and rain runs down the mountain unabated. Trees are needed to impede the water flow as well as to absorb water through roots. Flooding results and threatens nearby towns and farmland. The damages incurred are not included in the cost of lumber. If hidden costs were factored into the price of what humans consume, few would be able to afford many foods and commodities such as fuel. And if hidden costs were factored into prices then many people would perhaps influence government and industry to change their policies and practices to ones that focus on sustainability and ecological harmony.

Solutions to environmental problems are not easy and the problems are vastly complex with many contributing factors. To do right by the environment would require a drastic change in lifestyle for all people. And any changes would need to be implemented gradually. But at the base of it all lays the fundamental attitudes humans hold towards Earth and towards nature. If attitudes and outlooks do not change then implementing environmentally friendly industrial practices would be difficult if not

impossible. Hopefully ideas such as dwellness may take prominence within the hearts and minds of all people so that all beings may be able to live upon our home in a beneficent manner. The following remark by Cronon perhaps best expresses my sentiments:

In critiquing wilderness as I have done in this essay, I'm forced to confront my own deep ambivalence about its meaning for modern environmentalism. On the one hand, one of my own most important environmental ethics is that people should always be conscious that they are part of the natural world, inextricably tied to the ecological systems that sustain their lives. Any way of looking at nature that encourages us to believe we are separate from nature – as wilderness tends to do – is likely to reinforce environmentally irresponsible behavior. On the other hand, I also think it no less crucial for us to recognize and honor nonhuman nature as a world we did not create, a world with its own independent, nonhuman reasons for being as it is. The autonomy of nonhuman nature seems to me an indispensable corrective to human arrogance. Any way of looking at nature that helps us remember – as wilderness also tends to do – that the interests of people are not necessarily identical to those of every other creature or of the earth itself is likely to foster *responsible* behavior. To the extent that wilderness has served as an important vehicle for articulating deep moral values regarding our obligations and responsibilities to the nonhuman world, I would not want to jettison the contributions it has made to our culture's ways of thinking about nature. (381-382)

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