THE TURN FROM REACTIVE TO RESPONSIVE ENVIRONMENTALISM: THE WILDERNESS DEBATE, RELATIONAL METAPHORS, AND THE ECO-PHENOMENOLOGY OF RESPONSE

Timothy C. Christion, B.S., B.A.

Thesis Prepared for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

December 2009

APPROVED:

J. Baird Callicott, Major Professor and Chair of the Department of Philosophy and Religion Studies
Martin Yaffe, Minor Professor
David Kaplan, Minor Professor
Robert Figueroa, Graduate Advisor
Michael Monticino, Dean of the Robert B. Toulouse School of Graduate Studies
A shift is occurring in environmentalism to a post-metaphysical understanding of the human relationship to nature. Stemming from developments within the wilderness debate, ecofeminism, and eco-phenomenology, the old dichotomy between John Muir’s tradition of privileging nature and Gifford Pinchot’s tradition of privileging society is giving way to a relational paradigm that privileges neither. The starting point for this involves articulating the ontology of relationship anew. Insofar as the dominant metaphors of nature and their complimentary narratives present a choice between the agency of the human or the natural worlds, they encourage one-sided or “reactive” relationships to the world. By contrast, developments sensitive to the mutual agency between them encourage “responsive” relationships. The relational metaphors of “partnership” (Merchant) and “dialogue” (Plumwood) are prominent examples. The idea of “nonhuman agency,” however, is counter-intuitive and problematic. The works of Buber, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty suggest a model of “mutual response” rather than “mutual agency.”
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

| I. INTRODUCTION | ................................................................. | 1 |
| II. THE NATURE OF METAPHORS AND METAPHORS OF NATURE: THE ONTOLOGY OF ORGANIC IDENTITY AND MECHANISTIC DIFFERENCE | ................................................................. | 4 |
| Relationships to the World | ................................................................. | 4 |
| Lakoff and Johnson’s Theory of Conceptual Metaphors | ................................................................. | 7 |
| A Genealogy of Organic Identity | ................................................................. | 15 |
| A Genealogy of Mechanistic Difference | ................................................................. | 22 |
| Narrative and Ethos | ................................................................. | 29 |
| III. THE WILDERNESS DEBATE: THE ETHOS OF RESPECT VS. THE ETHOS OF EMPOWERMENT IN ENVIRONMENTALISM | ................................................................. | 34 |
| Environmental Subcultures | ................................................................. | 34 |
| The Ethea of Muir and Pinchot | ................................................................. | 35 |
| The Cultural Politics of Environmentalism | ................................................................. | 42 |
| The Ethea of Respect and Empowerment in the Wilderness Debate | ................................................................. | 46 |
| Nature and Culture: Wilderness Revealed and Constructed | ................................................................. | 53 |
| Emerging Responses: Reinhabiting the Socio-ecological World | ................................................................. | 69 |
| Socio-ecological Agency: The Relational Metaphors of Merchant and Plumwood | ................................................................. | 72 |
| Respectful “Listening,” Empowered “Speaking,” and Buber's Mutualism | ................................................................. | 77 |
| The Question of Agency and the Eco-Phenomenology of Response | ................................................................. | 83 |
| V. CONCLUSION | ................................................................. | 90 |
| ENDNOTES | ................................................................. | 94 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | ................................................................. | 105 |
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Environmentalism, in the broadest sense, is at once a profound corrective to modernity and the very product of what is problematic about it. As a child of the organicism and primitivism of the Romantics, the movement has challenged the modern anthropocentrism enabling an alienating and dominating relationship between humans and the natural world. At the same time, environmentalism is also a descendant of the humanism and progressivism of the Enlightenment. This tradition has challenged the modern egocentric relationship to the world responsible for social disintegration, injustice, and oppressive forms of power. Both strains of environmentalism have successfully exposed the problems inherent in the way modern Western culture relates to the world. Even so, environmentalists themselves relate to the world in deeply modern ways. The way environmentalism conflicts with the public and the way factions within environmentalism conflict with each other tend to express the same subject/object dualism that the dominant modern order relies on to maintain its hold. How this is so, why it is problematic, and how environmentalism might be moving beyond it are the subjects of this thesis.

The modern way of relating within environmentalism is expressed even in avant garde, ostensibly “nondualistic” philosophies such as ecocentrism and social constructivism. What characterizes modern dualism isn't a distinction between mind and body, culture and nature, or civilization and wilderness, but rather their oppositional relationships. When values inform these dichotomies in the form of ethical precepts, ideologies, and narratives, they create an over-identification of one pole at unjust expense to the other. Thus, early proponents of the modern order privileged the mind (rationalism), humanism, and the narrative of civilized progress by marginalizing their polar opposites. Likewise, a central strategy of anti-modern
environmentalism has been to emphasize the sensory body, the natural world, and wilderness by
dependemphasizing rationality, humanism, and civilization. Insofar as “nondualistic” philosophies
ontologically set the human world in opposition to the nonhuman world and ethically privilege
one over the other, the marginalized world is robbed of its reality, agency, and importance. It is in
this sense particularly that environmentalism, despite its opposition to modernity, remains within
the subject/object structure that brought the modern world into being and guided its
development.

It is this reduction of the complexity of the world into pure, oppositional categories that
creates one-dimensional ideologies and ways of relating that are incapable of being respectful,
understanding, and truly decisive. Adopting ideologies structured in this way, one can only react
to that ultimate Other, since one cannot genuinely empathize with it, be present to it, and respond
to it accordingly. In this sense, I argue that the one-sided and oppositional character of modern
dualism fosters a fundamentally reactive way of relating to the world. This is just as true of
environmentalism vis-à-vis the modern order as it is between competing ideologies within
environmentalism. Either way, object-oriented ideologies come into incommensurable conflict
with subject-oriented ideologies, making genuine discourse and mutual growth impossible.

Ultimately, my objective in this thesis is two-fold. In the first two chapters, I investigate
the reactive postures of environmentalism and explicate their metaphysical origins. In Chapter I,
I examine the ontological grounding of these existential postures in the root conceptual
their ideological manifestations in the wilderness debate as “organic primitivism” vs. “humanist
progressivism.” In Chapter III, by contrast, I explore developments both within
environmentalism and without that point beyond the subject/object dualism by considering the
ontological and ethical significance of relationship anew. To this end, I explore scientific developments in ecology, the concepts of wildness and reinhabitation emerging from the wilderness debate, and the relational metaphor of Carolyn Merchant and Val Plumwood. Finally, I draw on Martin Buber, Martin Heidegger, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty to propose an “eco-phenomenology of response” capable of bringing ontological articulation to the projects of socio-ecological reinhabitation, partnership, and dialogue.

My hope is that the virtues of both environmental subcultures will be preserved and brought together under a common post-Cartesian framework such as socio-ecological partnership and dialogue—and done so in ways that, indeed, encourage a dialogue between these two equally important traditions in environmentalism.
CHAPTER II

THE NATURE OF METAPHORS AND METAPHORS OF NATURE: THE ONTOLOGY OF ORGANIC IDENTITY AND MECHANISTIC DIFFERENCE

Relationships to the World

The transition from what I am calling “reactive” to “responsive” environmentalism has as its conceptual foundation the idea of “relating to the world.” Consequently, understanding what it is to “relate to the world” within the context of environmentalism is primary to this thesis. Both “relationship” and “world,” however, are vague and casually used words in need of initial clarification before it is possible to grasp what it is to relate to the world in sufficient detail. Although it is common within the environmental movement to speak in terms of a “relationship to nature,” the nature of relationship easily passes unexamined. Relationship is a philosophically rich term in that it brings together self and other or, in this case, the human and natural worlds. As Plumwood argues, however, relationships typically fall prey to a pervasive metaphysical reductionism and foundationalism that either settles on identity (emphasizing sameness of self or other, human or nature, by absorbing one pole into its opposite) or difference (stressing a hard distinction between these poles, yet still tending to privilege one over the other).1 The idea of relationship, understood as responsive rather than reactive, I argue, has the potential to resist both alternatives. As an ontological concept, it renders the traditional metaphysical dichotomy between dualism and nondualism obsolete. The existential phenomenology of relationship also suggests a mutual “identity in difference” that refuses to systematically privilege and marginalize out of context. As such, it doesn't draw a sharp conceptual line between subjects and objects and their vicissitudes. I return to this in greater depth later in the thesis.2

This phenomenological turn to relationship also tends toward the idea of relating to the “world” rather than “nature,” partly because the latter term is loaded with metaphysical
assumptions of being essentially nonhuman. But this does not suggest the strong kind of social
constructivism exhibited in post-modern thought, for such thinking remains reductionist insofar
as it reduces the nonhuman world to the human world, just as traditions that center on “nature”
often fall prey to the opposite tendency. As used throughout this thesis, therefore, the term
“world” is intended to counter this foundationalism and essentialism by dynamically relating not
only self and other within the social world, but also humans and nonhumans within what I call
the “socio-ecological world.” I use the term “world” phenomenologically to encompass a
responsive dynamic between relating to nonhuman nature as a completely independent reality, at
one extreme, and relating to it strictly as a socio-cultural projection at the other.

At its purest, the divide in environmentalism traditionally represented by the intellectual
legacies of John Muir and Gifford Pinchot expresses two opposing ways of relating to the
world—one that centers on nature and the other on society. Yet, while this traditional account—
what has come down to us in short-hand as ecocentrism vs. anthropocentrism—retains a great
deal of explanatory power, it also masks an intricate complex of intellectual legacies expressed in
environmentalism today. Such simplifications, insofar as they are defined along the traditional
metaphysical dualisms of human/nature, civilization/wilderness, etc., encourage an either/or
choice between them that doesn't accord well with contemporary challenges like global warming,
sustainability, and large-scale habitat restoration. As these legacies have diversified and
intermingled, creating conceptual order out of chaos has become increasingly important. This
involves the intellectual historian's reach back into the cultural past to grasp the unifying essence
of the conflict before a workable coherence can be hoped for. In this regard, the wilderness
debate of the past two decades offers a valuable case study of how the conflicting traditions
represented by Muir and Pinchot have developed along the civilization/wilderness and
human/nature axes, as well as how this dichotomy is being transcended. It is in this spirit that I wish to reexamine what it is to relate to the world before I argue that a transition from a reactive to a responsive relationship is (and ought to be) taking place in environmentalism.

Relationships to the world are neither completely open nor completely closed, neither completely free nor completely determined. Rather, they are attuned or mediated by cultural experience. Consequently, exactly what attunes the relationship is of decisive importance. While historical methodologies pointing to traditions (religious, philosophical, political, etc.) can be too broad and general, philosophical analyses centering on specific ideas such as “intrinsic value” or “social construction” can be too narrow. As a cultural and intellectual historian, Carolyn Merchant employs a methodology that relates traditions to ideas by focusing on metaphors and narratives. As Merchant explains, root conceptual metaphors serve to bind “together the cosmos, society, and the self into a single cultural reality [or] worldview,”3 while narratives function to “absorb our goals in life, our morals, and our patterns of behavior.”4 The metaphors and narratives we internalize to mediate the world structure our relationship to it in basic ways.

To the extent that metaphors and narratives are normative, root conceptual metaphors can be largely understood as a culture's articulation of its core ontological assumptions, while narratives serve to organize and express a culture's dominant ethical precepts. This is not to suggest that the cultural roles of metaphors and narratives occupy separate realms. To the contrary, they typically evolve in mutual support with one another as “ethical ontologies.” For instance, Merchant alludes to the way narratives can culturally serve both ontological and ethical purposes when she writes: “To the extent to which people believe in or absorb the story, it organizes their behavior and hence their perception of the material world.”5 For my purposes here, therefore, “relating to the world” will hereby signify how culturally mediated metaphors...
organize the conceptual and perceptual world while narratives influence our basic comportment within it.

Metaphors, in particular, will therefore serve as the lens through which I analyze environmental thought as a shift from reactive to responsive ways of relating to world. Due to their cultural importance, it would be helpful to first articulate in more detail the role metaphors have in our everyday conceptualizing, reasoning, and decision-making. Here, I draw primarily on the works of cognitive linguist George Lakoff and philosopher Mark Johnson, who have perhaps done more than anyone to investigate the role conceptual metaphors serve in organizing our abstract assumptions of what is real. Thereafter, I offer philosophical genealogies of the Nature-as-Organism and Nature-as-Machine metaphors in an effort to clarify the network of cultural assumptions they articulate.

Lakoff and Johnson’s Theory of Conceptual Metaphors

Lakoff and Johnson define conceptual metaphors as “cognitive mechanisms” for conceptualizing the world abstractly and, as such, conveying “our everyday metaphysics, that is, our sense of what is real.”6 According to Lakoff and Johnson, metaphors are at the heart of abstract cognition itself. At the most basic level, root conceptual metaphors help mediate our relationship to the world by translating past cultural experience into the intelligible and meaningful activity of the present. That is, as conceptual metaphors develop over time via a culture's experience engaging with the world, coping with it, and deriving meaning from it, they effectively help render the world cognitively available to present and future generations.

In their book *Philosophy in the Flesh*, Lakoff and Johnson explore what they report to be the three major findings of a revolution in cognitive science, a turn marked by a questioning of representational epistemology, for instance, and other vestiges of Greek metaphysics and
Cartesian dualism. They propose an “embodied realism” model that posits the centrality of
depth metaphors, not only in language, but also in conceptual thought processes. Conceptual
metaphors, they argue, cognitively “borrow” from the world of sense and motor experience in
order to conceptualize, categorize, and reason about the world abstractly. That is, the body’s most
basic and everyday physical experiences in the world translate into neural networks that define
the abstract conceptual and linguistic structures that give rise to our mental lives. The three
major findings of cognitive science that they report are:

1.) Thought is mostly unconscious
2.) The mind is inherently embodied
3.) Abstract concepts are largely metaphorical

That thought is mostly unconscious suggests that the vast majority of our thinking is
inherited. Thought takes place largely in a social context and is derived from a shared cognitive
background or worldview evolved from cultural experience and practices composed of multiple
(and not always consistent) traditions of thought. Insofar as this cultural background relates self,
society, and world (or nature) by satisfying essential personal and social needs, it mostly
functions unconsciously.

The second major finding reported by Lakoff and Johnson, that the mind is inherently
embodied, is perhaps the most revolutionary in its philosophical implications. This is especially
ture vis-à-vis the classical Greek tradition of disembodied reason at the heart of modern
philosophy. The assertion here is that our capacity to conceptualize and reason derives primarily
from our bodily capacities rather than some transcendent mental realm. The concepts we reason
with are embodied because they develop out of our sensory and motor engagements in the
everyday world. Ultimately, the cultural or cognitive background of our conceptualizing and
reasoning minds evolve primarily from our bodily or “sensorimotor experiences” in the social

8
and natural worlds.

Although this challenges metaphysical objectivism, it does not imply a species of post-modern social constructivism. The philosophical breakthrough here comes from the discovery that our relationship to the world doesn’t boil down to how subjects represent objects in their minds (realism) or how subjects or culture constitute objects mentally or culturally (idealism/social constructivism), but rather how the cognitive background attunes encultured individuals to the world. That we seem to perceive and exist in the world as it truly is in itself (i.e. “objectively”) comes from the fact that we do indeed perceive the world accurately. This isn’t to say that our brains “represent” the world accurately, which still assumes a subject/object framework. The embodied mind does indeed have “real” contact with the world. Rather, the cognitive background accurately attunes us to the world in culture specific ways.

This attunement takes place on a scale from direct sensorimotor experience to abstract conceptualization. When we use concepts to perceive and interpret the more subjective and intangible aspects beyond direct sensorimotor experience, our ability to precisely categorize the world and reason about it diminishes significantly. And so when we attempt to interpret and communicate abstract psychological phenomena such as emotions or more existential matters that pertain to meaning and purpose in life, we often find them much more difficult to understand or articulate because these concepts aren’t as fundamentally rooted in our sensorimotor experience of the world.

This takes us to what Lakoff and Johnson report to be the third—and most important for this thesis—major finding of cognitive science: abstract thought is largely metaphorical. The further removed from the categories of everyday sensorimotor experience such as tree, chair, mountain, book, blue jay, and so on, the more dependent on metaphors we become to
conceptualize and reason about them. “The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another.” In this case, “embodied metaphors” translate categories from direct sensorimotor experience into the abstract categories of our subjective lives.

Let's take the phenomenon of anger as an example. Although we can infer anger via a number of behaviors that signify it as such, anger itself is intangible. A sophisticated complex of embodied metaphors has therefore developed to concertize and articulate this phenomenon and relate it to others. One of the most general metaphors for anger is Anger-is-Heat, as in “I had reached the boiling point” or “He lost his cool.” In turn, this basic metaphor can be metaphorically subdivided even further, such as Anger-is-Fire (e.g. “Those are inflammatory remarks,” “Your insincere apology just added fuel to the fire,” “He was consumed by his anger”), and Anger-is-the-Fluid-in-a-Container (e.g. “Simmer down!” “She was seething with rage,” “Let him stew”).

These metaphors of anger can also be derived from more general metaphors pertaining to emotions, of which anger is but a species. Examples include Emotions-are-Colors (“she was red with anger”) and Emotions-are-Animals (“he went ape”). Yet by far the most pervasive metaphors for emotions are hydrological in character, which borrows from our experience with pressure. For instance, the metaphorical Anger-is-Heat/Anger-is-the-Fluid-in-a-Container complex derives from the more general hydrological metaphors that can express a variety of emotions such as “being filled with joy,” “she couldn't hold in her love for him any longer,” and “I was bursting with pride.” When anger in particular is applied to this hydrological model, a highly consistent logic based on sensorimotor experience reveals itself. For example: When the intensity of anger increases, the fluid rises (e.g. “My anger kept building up inside me”); Intense
anger produces steam (e.g. “She got all steamed up”); Intense anger produces pressure on the container (e.g. “I could barely contain my rage”); When anger becomes too intense, the person explodes (e.g. “She blew up at me”); When a person explodes, what was inside comes out (e.g. “His anger finally came out”); and so on.16

The various hydraulic metaphors used to articulate anger, furthermore, draw partly on the cause-and-effect imagery of the even more general Nature-as-Machine metaphor, which characterizes the world itself in mechanistic terms. As this example shows, our everyday use of metaphors typically have an internal logic of their own that develops from general to more specific metaphors. Metaphors structure complex cognitive networks that enable us to better conceptualize and reason about the world abstractly.

The more intangible or general the entity or phenomenon, the more a culture is forced to rely on metaphors to cognitively articulate it. Philosophical and religious inquiry, for example, addresses some of the most abstract questions of all. Not “what is a blue jay?” in particular but “what is life?” in general. And not “what is anger?” but “what is the human experience?” Far removed from the sensorimotor world or even abstract categories such as “anger,” addressing these more general inquiries involve an even greater dependence on metaphors. All the more so when attempting to inquire about some of the most universal questions of all, including: What is it to be human? What is the good life? What is the good society? What is nature? Moreover, the question dealt with in this thesis and environmentalism generally, “What is the proper human relationship to the world?,” must deal with all of these abstract questions at some level or another. This is partly why environmentalism is so inherently philosophical and why it attracts such a broad array of sensibilities.

These general ontological and ethical questions are surely some of the most basic.
Together, they constitute the most enduring threads of a culture's cognitive background—its unconscious sense of what is most real and important. Metaphors that articulate our more general categories influence how subsequent metaphors articulate more particular ones. Ultimately, general metaphors have a powerful influence on how societies answer the particular questions that constitute culture and guide everyday life.

From the cognitive background to the particulars of immediate experience, metaphors ultimately give us conceptual “imagery” of the world, or a worldview, that derives from our cultural, subcultural, and individual experiences in the sensorimotor world. Our everyday lives draw on metaphors that stem from the creative conceptual imagery largely developed by common socio-cultural cultural practices, popular discourses, and intellectual movements that have evolved over time. By their very nature, socio-cultural movements develop new (or reemphasized old) metaphors that result in worldviews that substantiate interests of common concern in the present.

The implications, philosophical, political, and otherwise, are resounding:

[T]he traditional view of metaphor is empirically false, because metaphor is conceptual and everyday thought is largely metaphorical. Therefore, the views of reality, truth, language, knowledge, and morality that are tied to the traditional theory of metaphor must also be false. This is disquieting, because it calls into question many of our most basic common sense views of the world as well as the philosophical theories that elaborate these views.17

Disquieting indeed if we consider the deep cultural history of the metaphors we continue to employ to conceptualize and reason about Nature—what has been described as perhaps the most complex concept in the English language. If how we reason is inextricably bound to how we conceptualize reality, then it follows that how we metaphorically conceptualize Nature has profound implications for how we reason about it. And of course, given the gravity of the environmental crisis—the monumental task of reforming socio-economic institutions and the
cultural assumptions that support them—how we reason about nature and our relationship to it has everything to do with how successful we’ll be in coming to terms with the crisis.

Nature-as-Organism and Nature-as-Machine

Understood in an ultimate or cosmological sense, metaphors of Nature have a deep history of articulating the most general ontological and ethical questions mentioned above. Again, as a basic cognitive organizing principle, how a culture answers the question, What is nature?, has a strong influence on how they answer subsequent questions about what it is to be human, what the conditions of life are, what the good life is, what the proper form of society is and ought to be, what the beautiful is, and so on. That is, answering this basic question informs a whole complex of subsequent metaphors that determine how we think, feel, and reason in general. The Nature-as-Organism and Nature-as-Machine metaphors dominant in the West are prime examples.

These root conceptual metaphors are philosophically grounded in the ancient and early modern world. The organic view, however, was dominant in the ancient and Christian worlds before it was superseded by the mechanistic view during the Scientific Revolution. Both metaphors imply some ultimate cosmological order. But what most interests me here is how the former articulates an ontological identity between the human and nonhuman worlds and how the latter articulates difference. To begin with, the organism metaphor implies an interdependent whole (holism) while the machine metaphor focuses attention on independent parts (reductionism). The organic view, moreover, typically assumes a simple, primeval “Source” that gave birth to the world, holds it together, and governs its growth process in ways that don't sharply distinguish human and nonhuman “being” or development. Ultimately, this emphasis on process and purpose tends to assign greater ontological status to intrinsic relationships.
Under the machine metaphor, by contrast, things are perceived to be ontologically independent and hence related *extrinsically*. Accordingly, the mechanistic view tends to stress necessity and chance more than teleology, it doesn't usually place a great deal of importance on an ultimate “Source,” and even in the ancient world it tends to suggest linear (or infinite), rather than cyclical, assumptions about time. The mechanistic view explains the world in predictable, causal terms as ontologically distinct from human agency or purpose (which has a long history of confounding science). In this sense, it is typically believed that “disentangling” human perception or reason from the world enables one to step back, as it were, and behold the world as it is in itself. This involves a self-transcendence of sorts, which usually takes the form of a disciplined, disembodied rationality. In this sense, the mechanistic sensibility tends to favor “detached” reason, method, and theory as opposed to the common organic sensibility of participating—or even losing oneself—in the “One.” Although such an epistemology takes its leave from Descartes, some of the more “mechanistic” pre-Socratics helped pave the way.

Historically, the organism metaphor has proven promising as a rich source for answering the most general and abstract questions about the human relationship to the natural world, while the mechanistic view has excelled as a methodology for understanding the concrete particulars of sensorimotor experience with ever greater clarity and precision. Consequently, the former has fostered a rich complex of meaningful metaphors while the latter has come to richly articulate the world of sensorimotor experience with unprecedented stability. The machine metaphor at its purest, however, has been accused of “disenchanting” the world, alienating humans from it, and even promoting a dominating relationship to it.

Employing the organic metaphor, by contrast, encompasses a far broader realm of understanding, including the “subjective” realms, because it prompts thinking more towards the
supersensory and general rather than the sensuous particular. But it depends more heavily on culturally normative metaphors, which can be contentious and problematically relativistic in large and diverse cosmopolitan societies. The organic “Oneness” of nature, furthermore, can also encourage a relationship to the world that is just as alienating as mechanistic difference if it lapses too far into pure abstraction. In this sense, a pantheistic Nature can become just as “other-worldly” and out of touch as a transcendent God. A hyper-abstract organicism risks a boundless mythologizing divorced from critical thought, which, in turn, risks a passive, submissive, and ultimately fatalistic relationship to a world out of touch with the particulars of life.

Ultimately, it is important to note that both metaphors, as cognitive organizing principles, are what Max Weber calls ideal types or constitute what Ludwig Wittgenstein calls “family resemblances.” These first principles or “first metaphors” largely constitute the background of thought, and as such they have the power to frame perceptions and guide reason consistently. But this does not mean that they are mutually exclusive or operate independently of one another. They represent the “ideal” (i.e. most internally consistent) ends of a more or less continuous cognitive spectrum in the West that runs between relating to the world as completely “One” with the human self (the identity of organicism) to relating to it as completely nonhuman (the difference of the mechanical view). Even the most consistent of philosophies contain elements of both metaphors. In what follows, therefore, I want to emphasize their fluidity and interchangeability. Indeed, they are better thought of as “general patterns” rather than “worldviews” ready to hand. As Aristotle's warns, “We must not expect more precision than the subject matter admits of.”

A Genealogy of Organic Identity

Some of the philosophical seeds of the ancient organic view can already be discerned in
the Pre-Socratics. For thinkers like Thales, Anaximines, Heraclitus, and others who identified *physis* with one of the four basic elements, it can be argued that what they were in effect proposing were root conceptual metaphors to explain the whole of Nature, humans included. It is clear in Heraclitus, for example, that the principle of constant flux represented by Fire was as much psychological and sociological as it was naturalistic. Fire expressed not only the natural world of “becoming” and the heavenly aether, but also the internal strife of the soul and the conflicts of war. In this sense, *physis* as an all-encompassing category was closely related to *kosmos*.

Originally, *physis* expressed the intrinsic way of growth of a particular species of plant. In *The Greek Concept of Nature*, Gerrard Nadaff etymologically analyzes *physis* to conclude that it meant “the whole process of growth of a thing from birth to maturity.” Applied metaphorically, we can see that just as a plant expresses a particular way of development (i.e., its life cycle), *physis*, understood comprehensively, was thought to express a general way of development. As such, the particularity of *physis* or the way of a thing could be conceptualized as an embodiment of the general way of *physis* understood as the manifesting natural whole. “In sum, to know the real constitution of a thing (what makes it behave and appear as it does) entails a knowledge of the processes that regulate its nature, and these processes are the same processes that were behind the origin of the present order of things.”

Here, it is clear that not only must *physis* be understood dynamically as “the way,” but its “origin” is also important. In *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity*, Arthur Lovejoy and George Boas trace the etymological roots of *physis* back to “birth” or “origin” and conclude that “From this meaning most, if not all, of the manifold senses of 'nature' must be supposed to have developed, since *natura* is the Latin equivalent of φύσις [*physis*] and inherited its literary and
philosophical connotations from the Greek term.”26 According to Jonathan Barnes, moreover, the Pre-socratics beginning with Anaximander employed arche as a specialized term to express nature's birth or source. Thus understood, “Nature is a principle and origin of growth.”27 For Heraclitus, the arche of physis was Fire, just as it was Water for Thales.28 Heraclitus's particularly dynamic philosophy was therefore holistic or “organic” insofar as Fire folded nature, society, and self into a single primordial Arche or archaic Source. In this sense, he could claim “Listen not to me but to the logos, it is wise to agree that all things are one.”29

All of this meant that the dynamic, changing world could be, not just described, but ultimately explained. The life cycle of the whole of physis reflected the life cycles experienced in life. Time itself was cyclical. Heraclitus metaphorically appropriated the term logos—translated as the said “account” of something or “the reason” behind it30—to express this ultimate principle governing the world. Heraclitus was even prepared to say that the logos did his thinking for him. For instance, error in thought resulted from a failure to grasp the logos, the way of archaic Nature.

Like other Pre-socratics, Heraclitus also relied centrally on another Greek metaphor, “cosmic justice,” to express the logos of perpetual strife and change within balanced unity. Bertrand Russell explains:

[T]here is a kind of necessity or natural law which perpetually redresses the balance [between elements (conceived as gods)]; where there has been fire, for example, there are ashes, which are earth. This conception of justice—of not overstepping eternally fixed bounds—was one of the most profound of Greek beliefs. The gods [elements] were subject to justice just as much as men were.31

It is interesting to speculate to what extent, if any, this notion of “cosmic justice” might have found its way into, for example, the 19th and 20th century “balance of nature” paradigm at the heart of the Nature-as-Organism metaphor expressed in ecology and conservationism. What
is clear is that Heraclitus's philosophical treatment of Fire, cosmic justice, and the universal 
*logos* had a central influence on the Stoics, who in turn had an important influence on 
Christianity and 19th century Romanticism. For the Greek-educated John the Evangelist, the 
*logos* became Christ. His original gospel reads: “In the *arche* was the *Logos*, and the *Logos* was 
with God, and the *Logos* was God...And the Logos became flesh and dwelt among us.”32 For the 
Stoics, Nature’s *logos* was conceived as the primary ethical principle. One was to live in strict 
accordance with it. In this sense, Nature was the dominant metaphor for life, the model to 
emulate. John, however, in effect transferred the *logos* from Nature to Christ. Its Stoic meaning 
of Nature's (rational) way was incarnated into God's omniscient way or “Plan.” And insofar as 
the *logos* was now identified with the personification of God, Christ could now serve as the new 
normative metaphor for the perfect human or the perfect soul. Jesus, not Nature, was to be 
emulated. In this way, the basic characteristics of the organic metaphor, while transfigured, 
remained intact as the Pagan world gave way to Christianity.

There seems to be a close cognitive relationship, in fact, between God and Nature as the 
central organizing principles of Western organic thought. While the “what” of Nature is 
conducive to abstract ontological inquiry as, for example, the archaic Source or the universal 
*logos* of the world, the “who” of God is amenable to narratives (one doesn't tell compelling 
stories about the *Logos* or First Principle). The many incarnations of pantheism suggest such a 
close conceptual relationship between Nature and God, but according to Lovejoy and Boas, this 
is already evident during the time of the Pre-Socratics when *physis* was conceived as “normative 
and invested with quasi-religious sanctity. 'Nature,' in short, was taking on the attributes of 
divinity and becoming an object of piety. It was the result to which the several uses of the 
term...naturally tended.”33 By the time we get to the Roman Stoics, God and Nature are virtually
interchangeable, and the stage was set to translate the conceptual architecture of Nature into the God of Christianity. It is suggestive to compare the way the ancient Stoics argued that humans should yield to Nature's *logos* rather than to their passions with the way the Neo-stoics of the late medieval and early modern periods made the same arguments by substituting Nature for God. And once again, centuries later, the *logos* transferred from God back to Nature as the normative ethical ontology of romantics like Emerson and Thoreau who understood God-the-Sublime as immanent in His Creation.

This close association of Nature and God has also been expressed via the influence of Plato and Aristotle. Indeed, Merchant argues that the organism metaphor that developed during the Renaissance was comprised of three “root traditions” that synthesized Christianity with elements of Platonism, Aristotelianism, and Stoicism. Despite resisting classification, Plato and Aristotle express elements of an organic view insofar as they attempt to metaphysically identify human purpose with the cosmos itself. Plato's cosmology is most explicitly organic, although it also contains elements conducive to the 17th century machine metaphor. Because the organic cosmology contained in his *Timaeus* was the only one of his works known in the early Middle Ages (and one of the few works of pre-Christian natural philosophy available), its influence was profound. His attempt to reconcile the Heraclitian world of perpetual change with the Parmenidian understanding of ultimate reality as atemporal, undifferentiated, and unchanging involved a distinction between the fluctuating sensory world of the former and the ideal rational world order of the latter. Plato explains that the “whole universe of becoming” was created by a rational demiurge who “wanted everything to become as much like himself as possible.” As such, he favored a balance of the elements (cosmic justice) that reflected his inherent goodness. Harking back to the allegory of the cave, then, the “Heraclitian” world is an “image” or a
“model” of the higher and more complete “Parmenidian” world.

When the maker made our world, what living thing did he make it resemble? Let us not stoop to think that it was any of those that have the natural character of a part, for nothing that is a likeness of anything incomplete could ever turn out beautiful. Rather, let us lay it down that the universe resembles more closely than anything else that Living Thing of which all other living things are parts....Since the god wanted nothing more than to make the world like the best of the intelligible things, complete in every way, he made it into a single visible living thing, which contains within itself all the living things whose nature it is to share its kind.36

Plato's vision of the cosmos and the self, therefore, is interconnected and whole. And society too figures into his all-encompassing vision. In Book IV of the Republic, Socrates relates self and society with parallel wholeness. He argues that the tripartite human soul (appetitive, spirited, and rational) corresponds to the three classes of society (money-making, auxiliary, and deliberative). The soul was harmonious insofar as its rational part (which is one with the cosmological integrity of the world of forms) governed the other two. And by extension, “a whole city established according to nature would be wise because of the smallest class and part in it, namely, the governing or ruling one.”37 That is, society was harmonious insofar as the rational elite (philosopher kings) maintained “justice.” Reflecting the notion of cosmic justice, this amounted to a strict caste system in which each class stuck to its place in society without “meddling” with others (i.e. over-stepping class boundaries). Just as “moderation [of the soul] resembles a kind of harmony,” likewise in the just city “moderation spreads throughout the [social] whole.”38 (Plato's “noble lie,” which meant to tie one's soul to one's class to ensure a rigid social order that reflected the cosmic order itself, intimates the totalitarian potential of the organic view when the self is eclipsed by society or nature.)

Insofar as Plato's cosmos is mathematical and eternal in Parmenidian fashion, however, he lends himself more to the mechanistic view despite his explicit use of the organism metaphor. Aristotle also represents a heterogeneity of organic and mechanistic motifs. He too integrates
self, society, and cosmos. But his influence is distinctive via his teleological metaphysics. The world of change wasn't ontologically derived from something higher like it was for Plato. It was primary. Matter was active, purposeful, and in this sense, “alive.” All things, human and nonhuman alike, were self-directed, proceeding from the potential to the actual. Everything tended towards its essence or nature. The self, if rational and virtuous, tended toward its highest, most realized potential (eudaimonia),\(^{39}\) as exhibited in the harmonious soul. Villages, then communities, and then societies also tended towards their highest potential, The State (which, in turn, was necessary for fully realized humans).\(^{40}\) Indeed, everything in the world progressively moved from simple matter to greater degrees of complex form.\(^{41}\)

In each case, the whole is always prior and superior to its parts. An eye, Aristotle would say, cannot function without a body. Also indicative of an organic view is a respect for arche or Source, as when he writes: “As in other matters...it is by considering the growth of things from their beginning that one will obtain the clearest understanding of them.”\(^{42}\) Or elsewhere: “all men suppose what is called wisdom (sophia) to deal with the first causes…and the principles (archai) of things.”\(^{43}\) As interpreted by the medievals, Aristotle's cosmos amounted to a “Great Chain of Being” connecting humans to the orders of deities and nature alike. As with Plato and organicism generally, everything has its place.

Yet it would be a mistake to assume that organic change extends to the cosmos itself. Lovejoy and Boas write: “If Aristotle had applied his favorite categories of δύναμις and ένέργια to the universe, or to the organic world as a whole, and not solely to individuals and societies, his philosophy would have ended in a theory of cosmic or organic evolution.”\(^{44}\) Worldly growth and decay give way to timeless permanence on the cosmological scale. All the more so as we approach the eternal mind of God, a deeply influential component of the 17\(^{th}\) century machine
metaphor.

Until the Scientific Revolution, various tenets of Stoicism, Platonism, and Aristotelianism fused with Christianity to express elements of the organism metaphor in various ways to serve and justify a host of spiritual, social, and ecological needs. Later, partly in reaction to the dominance of the mechanistic view, a counter-enlightenment strain of romanticism would reappropriate the organism metaphor and combine it with an “Arcadian” and sublime aesthetic of nature, the primitivism of Montesquieu and Rousseau, German Idealism, and other cultural and intellectual strains to give it a more modern expression. In so doing, we might say that their aim was to restore the *logos* of Nature as a normative ethical guide, a closer relationship to the natural world, and a more integrated social vision.

**A Genealogy of Mechanistic Difference**

Although the philosophical attributes of the mechanistic view in the ancient world can most easily be traced to the atomists, some of its basic characteristics can already be seen in figures like Empedocles. For example, he was the first to claim an elemental theory of matter that remained influential in one form or another until the Renaissance.\(^45\) In contrast to the monistic Pre-Socratics who believed in a primary element (*Arche*), Empedocles argued that all four elements were equally basic.\(^46\) Unlike atoms, they combined and dissolved fluidly by opposing forces. But they anticipate atomism insofar as there was no overriding *purpose* manifesting the world.\(^47\) Things didn't come into being by some archaic *logos*, but rather constantly changed.\(^48\)

Intimations of the machine metaphor can also be found in germ in Anaxagoras, who was the first to propose that mind (*nous*) actively caused physical change. Insofar as *nous* was external to the elements it operated on, it anticipates the externality of modern laws of nature—
an important contribution to the machine metaphor. But of course, it is Democritus and
Leucippus who carried this anti-teleological trend to its ancient height. Like Empedocles, nature
exhibits no overall purpose. But unlike Empedocles, it was composed of strictly independent
parts that were extrinsically related to the extreme. The atoms are infinite in variety—no need for
an archaic Source to beget the world. They are always in motion in empty space and have always
been in motion—no need for a demiurge or archaic Source.\textsuperscript{49} Change was simply the result of the
random collision of indestructible particles according to external laws of causation. In contrast
with the organic predisposition to derive the part from the whole (as with Plato, it is always the
whole that is most beautiful), the atomists started with the parts and built up from there.

Unlike the organic view, the machine metaphor didn't become fully developed and self
conscious until atomism was revived in the 17\textsuperscript{th} century. Mounting evidence that the solid
organic whole of medieval cosmology was dying and taking the social body with it encouraged
the search for a new metaphor. As early as 1605, Kepler wrote: “My aim is to show that the
celestial machine is to be likened not to a divine organism but to a clockwork.”\textsuperscript{50} His
mathematical universe would crystallize in Newton's seemingly definitive system not long after.

In the ancient world, the precursors of the mechanical view included the ultimate lack of
purpose or teleology in the natural world, the passivity of matter vis-à-vis external forces, etc.
But humans were still solidly implicated in this picture. The soul, perception, emotions, and
thought were the result of atomic matter in motion and causal laws just as the natural world was.
As the machine metaphor takes shape in the early modern era, however, humans become
ontologically segregated from nature. It wasn't only the replacement of Aristotelian cosmology
and teleology with the causal laws of atomism that encouraged this shift from metaphysical
identity to difference. Ultimately, it was atomism combined with an exalted form of rationalism.
The Neo-Pythagorean and Neo-Platonic movements during this time were important influences. In addition to the growing distaste for Scholastic Aristotelianism, much of the appeal of Copernican heliocentrism involved Pythagorean sun-worshiping sensibilities and the Platonic aesthetic of a more geometrically “elegant” cosmos that didn't depend on Ptolemaic epicycles. The Copernican model didn't actually predict the motion of the planets better than Ptolemy's until Kepler. But it was more appealing because it simplified planetary motion to perfect circles around the exalted Sun, rather than circles within circles around the (Aristotelian) Earth. Pythagoras spiritualized pure mathematics and Plato followed suite by exalting disembodied rationality. The 17th century machine metaphor was apt because it represented an aesthetic of perfect cosmic order that could be comprehended rationally. In this sense, the early modern machine metaphor contained within it the rational transcendence of Plato's organic view which, when combined with atomism, translated into a growing separation between the rational mind and the atomic world. Within this rational order, atomism represented the power to grasp the world of change on earth.

There were also socio-cultural reasons for combining atomism with rationalism. Atomism was revived partly to explain new observations in chemistry and partly because it fit nicely with the anti-organic attitudes then taking shape. Atomism combined with the earlier Renaissance rival of Greco-Roman humanism and rationalism to help fuel a cultural shift from an otherworldly to a this-worldly sensibility. Medieval Europe, of course, had long lived in a world governed by invisible spirits that did everything from pushing the planets around the earth to influencing souls and life's fortune. Living in a culture that organically subsumed the visible world into an invisible one, superstitious thinking evolved virtually unfettered. God took an active role in the affairs of daily life as well as one's destiny's, but His Plan was often as
mysterious as His Will. As such, individuals were powerless in the face of the “world soul” of God's Mind.

Ultimately, it seems, the deeply conservative and tightly organic character of society suggested a kind of insecure fatalism as the late medieval world became increasingly uncertain. Great changes were afoot in Europe at that time. As the classical texts recovered during the Crusades engendered interest in pre-Christian thought, as the economy began transitioning from feudalism to capitalism, and as Protestantism and new developments in natural philosophy challenged tradition and the holistic cosmology behind it, traditional organic collectivism started breaking down into insecure individualism. The idea that “God works in mysterious ways” might be comforting in the face of inexplicable events like a death in the family. But when the whole of God's Creation or Plan becomes mysterious, or worse, when God becomes mysterious, this can only occasion deep anxiety, intemperance, and social turmoil.

In this context, the revival of ancient humanism and rationalism affected a transition from an other-worldly Christian faith in revelation to a confident this-worldly concern for human self-sufficiency, well-being, and excellence. What was needed in place of anxious individualism, it seems, was an empowered individualism capable of solving its own problems. A search for a new order was sought premised on reason and observation rather than myth. As the organic tradition broke down, as religious wars erupted, as social relations deteriorated, and as classical skepticism was being revived to cast doubt on the possibility of any secure grounding, a felt need for universal certainty without recourse to tradition of any kind emerged. This contributed to a forward-looking sensibility that eventually evolved into the anti-traditional progress narrative.

Rational atomism answered the needs of this tumultuous era in multiple ways. Not only were atoms indestructible and absolute, but they followed laws of nature which were themselves
absolute. This meant that nature was essentially the same in all ages and for all cultural
traditions, just as the ancients assumed. By reducing the world to its basic constituents and
bracketing out the intractable complexities of environmental context and teleology, nature could
be managed conceptually in an effort to secure solid epistemological foundations. If Nature was
the same in all ages, it could faithfully serve as the ultimate and universal referent from which to
draw concrete conclusions, regardless of religion and culture. With solid foundations, with
secure access to the timeless absolutes behind the world of constant change, a rational basis for
belief could be instituted to counter the philosophical skepticism perceived to be at the heart of
the intemperance, social upheavals, and religious wars plaguing Europe. Nietzsche argued that in
the context of the “anarchy” of soul and society in Socrates's Athens following the
Peloponnesian War, “rationality was...divined a saviour” in an effort to reinstitute order.55 Much
the same seems to apply to the circumstances behind the rational atomism of 17th century Europe
in the wake of a dying cosmological whole.

Rather than neglect or dismiss teleological questions of purpose as the ancient atomists
had, however, the modern strategy largely involved dividing the world into active minds (reason)
and passive bodies (atoms).56 The strong Christian legacy of 17th century European culture, of
course, didn't allow for the kind of pure materialism found in Democritus or Epicurus. Instead,
mind became disembodied and associated with the (rational) Mind of God. Here, teleological
questions could be neatly segregated from the material world. The active will (which moved
itself) was distinct from the causal atomic passivity of the material world. Descartes' distinction
between mind and body was made with a complete distrust of emotion, intuition, and sense
perception in favor of the “clear and distinct ideas” derived from rigorous, dispassionate reason.
Meanwhile, Galileo's influential distinction (originally Democritus's) between primary and
secondary qualities bracketed out the uncertainties of quality and judgement to reveal the “real” world to the rational mind. It is in this respect that rationalism and atomism, when taken together, accounted for the ontological difference articulated by the machine metaphor.

The rational mind could be purified by distilling it from the natural world of appearances to enable it access to the divine mind. For many, the forces of causal change in the visible world could be accounted for by deriving it from the rational Mind of God. The sensory world of constant change as such was untrustworthy epistemologically, as Plato argued. But the laws of nature, as reflections of God's Mind, could be counted on as an epistemological—and hence, normative—standard.

As exemplified in the various incarnations of *logos*, there's a long tradition of associating the laws of nature with God's Mind. Early in the Scientific Revolution, for example, Kepler reportedly spoke of “thinking God's thoughts after him.” Newton and even Einstein also inherited this line of thought. Expressed in the Platonic (and Christian) divide between the higher realm of forms and the lower realm of change, as well as in Aristotelian assumptions like the unmoved mover, early modern philosophers had more than enough intellectual resources to divide reality into the higher realm of the rational mind and the lower realm of atomic matter. It was nature's hidden laws as reflections of God's rationality rather than the dynamic world of nature that demanded respect. Insofar as disembodied rationality was capable of accessing this divine realm of natural law (and hence identify with it rather than the world below), the human world could be understood as being of a fundamentally different order than that of nature. This, it can be argued, represented the great modern synthesis between the this-worldly sensibility of classical humanism and the other-worldly (transcendent) sensibility of medieval Christian theology.
For the next two centuries, the organic vestiges of the machine metaphor would either be undermined as the—Platonic, Aristotelian, and Stoic—Christian world gave way more fully to modern science until even philosophies of mind and theologies were assimilated by the mechanistic view, or else they would re-emerge as attributes of both metaphors were synthesized. For the Desists, the providential God of the organic tradition was replaced by God the clock-maker. In some ways, this represents the zenith of the mechanistic view. But insofar as the rationalist attributes of the machine metaphor exalted this “higher realm” of Nature, it can also be said that the organic and primitivist traditions of respecting the more-than-human world as a model for human existence was retained, as was the organic motif of an archaic Source. As rational humanism and individualism continued to evolve, however, the rational will of God's Mind appears to have succumbed to the forward-looking human will of the progress narrative. Concurrently, the machine metaphor came to represent a movement to conceptualize humans as expert mechanics before the great machinery of nature.57

Merchant's analysis of the transition from the organic to the mechanistic view was framed by accounts of the emerging capitalist ethos of order and domination.58 Bacon, Gassendi, Descartes, and Hobbes were exposed as sanctioning domination in the spheres of nature and society alike. This is the dark side of modernity, and it has continuously galvanized anti-modernist critique from Rousseau to Foucault. What anti-modernists sometimes under-appreciate in the machine metaphor, however, is the empowered emancipatory project it led to during the Enlightenment. It has become commonplace in the anti-modern tradition to focus exclusively on the shortcomings of science, technology, and liberalism derived from the machine metaphor while maintaining the progressive rationalism and the values of equality, justice, and self-determination they inherited from it. And so there is an important distinction to be made between
the spirit of domination and the spirit of emancipation inherent in the machine metaphor and its
associated narrative of progress. They are related primarily insofar as they develop out of the
humanist emphasis on ontological difference articulated by the machine metaphor. Although the
atomism and rigidity of natural law basic to the machine metaphor eventually looses influence
within the emancipatory or progressive leg of the Enlightenment, the individual and human
autonomy bequeathed by rational humanism has always been maintained. Following Kant, the
deterministic machinery of Nature, as reflected by pure reason, gave way to a new kind of
rational human autonomy. And following Hegel and Marx, logos was transferred from Nature to
History. But it was the mechanistic movement toward ontological difference that paved the way
for these expressions of autonomy that made the progress narrative of empowerment so
compelling in the first place. This ontological independence from the fatalism of organicism
meant that humans, individually and collectively, were free and empowered to live autonomously
and perpetuate progress.

Narrative and Ethos

Both the Nature-as-Machine and Nature-as-Organism metaphors have developed in a
complementary relationship to narratives. For Lovejoy and Boas, narratives are “a kind of
philosophy of history, a theory, or a customary assumption, as to the time—past, present, or
future—at which the most excellent condition of human life, or the best state of the world in
general, must be supposed to occur.” Accordingly, narratives can be articulated via one of three
basic chronologies. The “Theory of Undulation” assumes that there is no significant difference
between the periods of history. Despite brief periods of progress and decline, humans have
become neither better nor worse in the course of development, and things will not change
significantly in the future. The “Theory of Decline,” by contrast, supposes that the best state of
affairs occurred at the very beginning of human existence, but has experienced a kind of decadence from this condition since then. And finally, “The Theory of Ascent” assumes that the beginning of human existence was the worst state of affairs, and that there has been a progressive improvement ever since. Within these basic chronological structures, a diversity of subsequent theoretical positions have been adumbrated as ideological contenders. Of the three, of course, the latter two have come into sharpest relief as “primitivism” and “progressivism.” And both were already well represented in classical antiquity before their modern counterparts emerged.

For primitivists, civilization represents a kind of fall from an idealized “state of nature” to the moral turpitude of contemporary civilization. By contrast, the opposite story of ascent assumes that existence in the original state of nature represented the worst of human conditions. As such, those that adhere to this narrative assume that forward-looking drive toward civilization as the best way to overcome it. And so exactly what that state of nature is and why this deviation took place (for good or ill) largely determines the basic outlook and the philosophical details of primitivism and progressivism. Insofar as the idea of “primitive wilderness” represents this original state of nature, I argue that it has figured predominantly in the wilderness debate.

Insofar as conceptual metaphors articulate a culture's ontological framework, they can be compared with the way narratives articulate an ethical framework of values to guide “right action.” The root conceptual metaphors previously discussed relate self and world (or the human and nonhuman worlds) in very basic and general ways by expressing ontological identity and difference. The ethics encoded in narrative, by contrast, tend to relate self and world by expressing a more temporal dimension insofar as they instruct the present by connecting a culture to its past and future. For Arran Gare, narrative is “a vital dimension of culture” because it “provide[s] people with an orientation to life.” Furthermore, he explains: “Narratives,
whether mythical, historical, or fictional...evoke emotions and orient people for action...[and] in so doing they can deploy concepts at many levels of abstraction and have a significance that transcends their immediate reference. "61 And like metaphors, narratives that “deploy concepts” at the most general “levels of abstraction,” have a strong influence on the more particular ones. For example, how we understand the whole of cosmic becoming or the over-arching trajectory of history has a profound influence on how we understand the proper course of social and individual developments. As such, the counterparts of root conceptual metaphors are what are often called “meta-narratives.” Like the works of the Bible or those of Homer, the stories a culture tells itself help organize its values, attitudes, and expectations in life, as well as give meaning to its ultimate purposes.

In this regard, however, it is important to reemphasize that metaphors and narratives, while distinct, do not function independently from one another. Although one might serve a greater cognitive or existential role than its counterpart, they always exist in mutual support.62 Ontologies serve to structure our understandings and perceptions of the world (“being”) by articulating what exists. Whereas an ethic, by contrast, tends to implicate human life within it by disclosing what is important. That is, ethics give us meaningful, principled purpose or direction in a world we already understand ontologically via the cultural background.

As root conceptual metaphors and narratives become mutually reinforcing in time, emerging “ethical ontologies” can become “elected” into a culture in the form of an ethos. And of course, on the historically rare occasions when social or ecological changes render a culture's traditional ethos maladapted to contemporary life, alternatives can emerge.63 Ethos is most often defined as the underlying spirit, disposition, values, or assumptions that most fundamentally characterize a culture. Here I want to contrast the philosophical term “ethical ontology” with the
anthropological term “ethos” to highlight the socio-cultural meanings of “spirit” or “mood” (as in “the spirit of the age” or the “mood of the times”) basic to the latter. Ethical ontologies represent the intellectual emergence of a mutually supportive constellation of concepts and values, while ethea (the plural) represent the normative cultural establishment of metaphors and narratives that constitute the cognitive background.

It is ultimately within this broad cultural framework, I argue, that environmental thinkers disagree most fundamentally. It might be said that, while the debates themselves concern competing ethical ontologies, what is really at issue are the conflicting subcultural ethea. Because the dualized wilderness/civilization categories tend to bring the competing metaphors and narratives of the counter-cultural and progressive traditions in environmentalism into sharp relief, it has the benefit of spurring a reexamination of deeply held assumptions and encouraging innovative solutions. It is also apparent, however, that such sharp schisms also trigger insecurity and a strongly reactive mindset, not unlike those experienced in eras marked by cultural change. Insofar as this internal debate within environmentalism reflects a larger conflict between ethical ontologies within Western culture at large, it may hint at the changing nature of the cognitive background in general. If so, the time might be ripe for a more appropriate ethos, complete with metaphors and narratives that spell out a more agreeable and appropriate relationship to the world. However, until a more comprehensively picture emerges of the cultural backgrounds or ethea that fully constitute this divide, moving forward by resolving problematic conflicts in environmentalism will remain an uphill battle.

In analyzing the ethical ontologies expressed in the wilderness debate, it is important to note the complimentary relationship between the organism and machine metaphors previous discussed with their narrative counterparts. Humanist assumptions, such as the 'rational
transparency’ and 'human independence' largely pre-figured in the Nature-as-Machine metaphor, have lent themselves to the narrative of human progress. Together, the ontology of difference and the ethic of ascent from wilderness to civilization constitute what I term “humanist progressivism.” This environmental subculture, in turn, expresses an “ethos of empowerment.”

This strongly contrasts with the 'interdependent holism' and 'ultimate Source' assumptions intrinsic to the Nature-as-Organism metaphor. The wilderness ideal expressed via the organic view has lent itself to a primitivist counter-narrative of decline from the pre-civilized “Oneness” or archaic Source of life in the “state of nature” to the alienating world of present-day civil society. Together, the ontology of identity and the ethic of a return to a more primordial existence constitute “organic primitivism.” In contrast to the homocentric ethos of empowerment, this environmental subculture embodies an “ethos of respect” vis-à-vis the natural world.
CHAPTER III

THE WILDERNESS DEBATE: THE ETHOS OF RESPECT VS. THE ETHOS OF EMPOWERMENT IN ENVIRONMENTALISM

Environmental Subcultures

We are now in a position to analyze the intellectual trajectories of environmentalism today. As argued above, the opposing ontologies articulated by the organic and mechanistic views entail ethical complements in the forms of primitivism and progressivism, respectively. Within this conceptual structure, opposing ideal types have emerged. Organic primitivists, of course, yearn for the existential *arche* that represents the original state of nature. As such, they often celebrate the “inner” realm of instinct and the “outer” realm of wild nature. Within this framework, moreover, numerous subsequent ethical ontologies have emerged that differ, for example, in their emphases on the individual vs. the collective. What remains at the center, however, is an ethos of respect premised on a kind of monotheistic Nature—the transcultural organizing principle of human life.

By contrast, humanist progressives often champion the complex as a *positive* expression of culture, mind, and civilization. The collectivist strain of humanist progressivism typically looks forward to a truly just, egalitarian, free, peaceful, temperate, and rationally administered civilization. Humanist progressives typically believe that “human nature” is collective, good, and defined by socio-cultural conditions. Consequently, humanity is deemed free to rationally cultivate and refine itself. And again, within this basic conceptual framework, several subsequent ethical ontologies have been elaborated. This includes anti-Enlightenment influences (e.g. Freud, Weber, Heidegger, the Frankfurt School, Post-structuralism, etc.). But what remains at the center is the homocentric ethos of empowerment as championed by the emancipatory project of the *philosophes* and Marx.
Both ethea, that of respect and empowerment, are integral to contemporary environmentalism. Historians trace a fundamental split in the environmental movement to the break between Muir and Pinchot. I follow this tradition by discussing Muir and Pinchot as salient exemplars of each ethos, while thereafter discussing their contemporary manifestations in the wilderness debate. In so doing, I draw on Chapter I to argue that the great heterogeneity of perspectives represented in environmentalism in general and the wilderness debate in particular can largely be divided along the antitheses previously discussed. To the extent that these opposing ethea encourage reactive ways of relating to the world, they make dialogue between them difficult.

The Ethea of Muir and Pinchot

The ethos of respect in environmentalism reveals itself in its purest forms as an almost pious reverence for the “more-than-human” world. True to its existential orientation, an ethic that respects the absolute reality and value of the more-than-human world is meant to encourage a kind of primordial contact with its archaic Source in ways that reveal its logos and a meaningful place for human existence in the greater scheme of things. Muir expresses this ethos par excellence.

Muir had portraits of Emerson and Thoreau on his mantel in Martinez, California, and these three figures best represent both the philosophical and religious development of this tradition in environmentalism. Emerson's *Nature* shows little sign of the kind of missionary zeal that would come to define Muir. However, it laid much of the philosophical groundwork by articulating its romantic project in a compelling way: “The foregoing generations beheld God and nature face to face; we through their eyes. Why should we not also enjoy an original relation to the universe?”\(^{64}\) Reflecting the dualism still at the heart of wilderness-based environmentalism
today, he goes on to the familiar metaphysical foundations of modern philosophy: “[T]he universe is composed of Nature and the Soul. Strictly speaking, therefore, all which Philosophy distinguishes as the NOT ME...must be ranked under this name, Nature.”

Thoreau and Muir later substituted (and sharpened) this dualism between “Nature” and “Soul” with the related one between wilderness and civilization as a tool of resistance. Whereas industrialism sought to build civilization in place of wilderness, they reversed the value poles of this dualism by championing wilderness and downplaying civilization—sometimes to the point of misanthropy insofar as desirous, egocentric human nature was deemed responsible for the fall. If we all respected wild Nature as the “NOT ME,” we would find ourselves grounded via a cultural and spiritual organizing principle that could give us a place, an existential home, in the larger scheme of things.

The Transcendental project, however, was not to maintain an insurmountable gulf between “Nature” and “Soul.” This was merely a first step toward questioning oneself and one's society in light of something that it was not. Ultimately, the Soul was to be brought into accord with Nature by opening oneself up to its absolute, transcendent reality. For Emerson in the Platonic tradition, Nature was not valued so much in its material reality. It was important because it put one in touch with an ordered reality beyond the constantly changing human world. Like the ancient primitivists, this attitude would encourage a return to real, pure, authentic Nature as opposed to the preoccupations of mundane life. In this sense, Emerson's transcendentalism expresses both Stoic and Platonic organicism insofar as the “Soul” is to respect or harmonized with Nature.

Thoreau and Muir inherited the basic transcendentalist beliefs in organic identity. Insofar as the culture of industrial civilization was misguided, Nature offered an alternative. In sharing a
common ground or in being held at their center, communities would share a connection to something that transcends them. For 19th century society was seen to constantly splinter off into different ways of relating to the world: into different cultures and different religions, certainly, but also into different sects, different political ideologies, different lifestyles, and so on. What was needed was organic identity, something even monotheism seemed incapable of providing in 19th century America. This compelled some transcendentalists toward political activism. For Emerson, Thoreau, and Muir, however, activism wasn't enough. “There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root,” Thoreau complained.\(^6\) As idealists, what was needed was not so much a focus on empirical society as such, the “branches,” but rather the cultural “root” (notice the singular) hidden underground. In varying degrees, this tended Thoreau towards a pantheistic ontology of organic identity and a primitivist ethic of primordial return. Emerson and Thoreau were enamored with the Greco-roman world. Stoicism was one of the most powerful of attractions. Richardson explains:

Stoicism dates back to the collapse of the Greek city-state and the undermining of Greek reliance on the polis or state as the authoritative context and ultimate justification of moral action. Unable any longer to turn to the polis for reliable answers to the questions how one's life should be lived; unable to find such answers in the form of traditional religion; and unable to trust society, such as it was, for the answers, Zeno...turned to Nature as the one remaining source of trustworthy moral principles. This turning not to the state, not to God, and not to society, but to nature is the essence of the Stoic way.\(^67\)

Thoreau spent virtually his entire adult life looking for the one “law” of nature to ground ethics. His journals are filled with exciting epiphanies of how Nature—“the source of our life”—was the same in his time as it was in ancient times.\(^68\) He had become increasingly interested in the “metamorphosis” of nature, as well as the ecology or “economy” of nature. Yet it would be a mistake to assume that Thoreau abandoned transcendental idealism for scientific materialism, for it was the underlying process of change, the way of growth itself, not the growing things as such,
that was all-important. He never stopped thinking about the general principle of Nature that he hoped would reveal a new ground for ethics.

As reflected in “Ktaadn” and “Walking,” he became increasingly interested in the nature of wildness as such a candidate. In wildness there lurked the general “principle of growth” he longed for. It is wildness that drives evolution in the natural world and, when we are attuned to it ourselves, the “inner” world as well. This is because what is “wildness” in nature is “willedness” in human beings. Thoreau found in the linguist Richard Trench a connection between wild and will: “Trench says a wild man is a willed man. Well then, a man of will who does what he wills or wishes...for not only the obstinate is willed, but far more the constant and persevering.”

Wildness is the archaic Source that Thoreau believed industrial society was quickly moving away from and lapsing into decadence as a result.

_Walden_, of course, was an experiment in how “to live a primitive and frontier life, though in the midst of a civilization.” What Thoreau believed in was a more self-sufficient and content life in accordance with nature. Like the Cynics and Stoics, Thoreau disapproved of the spirit behind technology and he believed that the complexities inherent in a desire-driven economy distracted one from living an authentic and more satisfying existence in touch with nature and our true selves. Following _Walden_, he would sharpen these primitivistic attitudes by shifting further from civilization to wildness. This would culminate in his essay “Walking” where he announces his famous “in Wildness is the preservation of the World”—the conservation ethic of organic primitivism.

Muir would pick up where Thoreau left off. Thoreau's primitivism had its limits. Muir, by contrast, was far more “wild.” Even more than Rousseau, Muir would push the reversal from Mind to Body, Culture to Nature, and Civilization to Wilderness to an unprecedented degree.
There was something in Muir, one suspects, that wanted to be possessed by the sublimity of wild nature. He craved pure contact. On one occasion upon the onset of a great storm in the Sierra Nevada, for instance, he “lost no time in pushing into the woods” to climb a tree where he perched himself for hours to be one with the waving forest: “the force of the gale was such that the most steadfast monarch of them all rocked down to its roots...and every fiber of the most rigid giants thrilled with glad excitement....giving rise to storm effects indescribably glorious.”

When it was over,

The storm-tomes died away, and turning toward the east, I beheld the countless hosts of the forest hushed and tranquil, towering above one another on the slopes of the hills like a devout audience. The setting sun filled them with amber light, and seemed to say, while they listened, “My peace I give unto you.” As I gazed on the impressive scene, all the so-called ruin of the storm was forgotten, and never before did these noble woods appear so fresh, so joyous, so immortal.

If Emerson thought Nature represented God, for Muir God represented Nature. Muir used religious language, not because he was “a believer,” and not only because he wanted to appeal to Judeo-Christian society. One suspects that it was because this was the only language available to him capable of expressing the reverential spirituality he felt towards wild nature. Likewise, Muir's constant anthropomorphizing suggests a desire to turn nature into something he could relate to more closely. Indeed, what's most noteworthy about Muir was his ability to loose himself in the wild. It possessed him. And in that sense, one gathers, Nature healed something in Muir. It has been observed that one's philosophy is often a disguised reflection of one's unconscious needs. As to what might have been in need of healing in Muir, biographer Stephan Fox offers a potential clue:

[Muir] felt...ambivalent about “that exacting Scotch conscience of mine,” a merciless internal monitor he sometimes would have preferred to shake off. As an adult he could recognize the personal aspirations of “the contrary extravagant self-denying doctrine taught in old Scotland that we should never do what we like to do but only what we like least.”... [H]is earlier years were scarred by Scotch harshness. “They must practice self-
denial and subdue their body with its passions; they must keep their bodies subject to the principles that they are taught,” he later recalled in anger.75

Fully embodied in the wilderness, it wasn't John Muir who was in control exactly—“that exacting Scottish conscience.” It was something far greater than himself, something benevolent and comforting to be sure, but also something simultaneously humbling and ecstatic—not in the literal sense of being “out of body,” but rather something more akin to being “out of mind.” To the extent that his audience could identify with the malaise of civilization (what Freud would later psychoanalyze in *Civilization and its Discontents*), they must have been attracted to Muir's rendering of the wilderness as a tonic.

Consequently, one finds a more worldly orientation in Muir not matched by Thoreau. Wilderness was valuable primarily because it humbled our place in Nature, not because it reconnected a “willedness” within in us that translated into becoming a higher human being. To this extent, we see, in roughly the same philosophical framework, a steady transition from Emerson to Thoreau to Muir a shift from the ethos of empowerment still latent in Emerson to a fully developed ethos of respect.

It is also telling that Muir and Thoreau generally disapproved of reformers. Even if they agreed with their ends, they must have felt that reformers were too hasty, too sure of themselves. Although Muir came of age in the Progressive Era, he is often at odds with its spirit. Pinchot, by contrast, wholly embodies this spirit. And while Muir and Pinchot were united during their friendship, that unity was largely based on a common enemy: liberal individualism. “Private, short term interests,” Pinchot would say, “must give way to public, long-term needs.”76 Yet, as the conservation movement gained a larger hearing, and as Pinchot and Muir established themselves as prominent public figures, their differences gradually emerged. Pinchot was a committed humanist progressive.
In his 1959 *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency*, Samuel Hayes writes:

“Conservation, above all, was a scientific movement, and its role in history arises from the implications of science and technology.” The progressive response to the *techne* ushered in by the industrial revolution didn't come in the form of its marginalization vis-à-vis the primacy of *physis*. It called for a more disciplined *techne* in light of concrete social issues and in the context of a broader social vision of equitable and sustainable progress. As Lovejoy and Boas explain:

> The broader significance of the conservation movement stemmed from the role it played in the transformation of a decentralized, nontechnical, loosely organized society, where waste and inefficiency ran rampant, into a highly organized, technical, and centrally planned and directed social organization which could meet a complex world with efficiency and purpose....This was the gospel of efficiency—efficiency which could be realized only through planning, foresight, and conscious purpose.

Progressivism is both the story of liberation and the story of curbing freedom out of control—the story, in other words, of shifting freedom from the liberal individual to the social whole. But it also reflects an anxiety stemming from the perceived instability of industrial America. From relatively isolated communities bounded together by common traditions, developments in transportation, communications, public education, etc., wrought fundamental change. And as always, a world of swift socio-cultural change compels a search for order.

This is the world into which Pinchot comes of age. Despite loving the natural world like Muir, as a child of humanist progressivism, Pinchot believed that the most responsible relationship to nature involved using its resources wisely (rationally and efficiently) so as to insure the well being and order of society as a whole—including, but not limited to, future generations. As with George Perkins Marsh (an early influence of Pinchot’s), conservation was a matter of saving civilization rather than wilderness.

Pinchot's ethic was utilitarian to be sure, but more fundamentally, it was democratic—impressively so. He wanted to empower as many groups and individuals as possible by giving
them equal access to resources. In fact, the promise of a society based, not only on sustainability but also on equality, justice, peace, and general prosperity, drove him beyond conservation. This was especially true in the 1930’s during the Great Depression. “So far as I am able to judge the people are generally more aroused against the big corporations...than they were in TR's time,” he observed with interest. Such an opportunity offered the first “real chance for a big step in the direction of real equality of opportunity in this country.” Pinchot, along with his wife Cornelia, was solidly committed to the progressive movements of the day. They mixed readily with various reformers, concerning themselves with a variety of issues from the plight of the small farmer to struggling inner-city immigrants. Their social philosophy was broad indeed, and their energies directed. As governor, Pinchot released relief monies to support striking families and took bold measures to protect the strikers, while Cornelia gave several pro-union speeches, walked the picket lines in solidarity, and did what she could to mediate labor disputes. That Pinchot responded to the depression before the New Deal probably reveals his spirit of empowerment as well as anything. As one historian put it, “Pinchot believed in the art of the possible.” Not only did he lobby the Hoover administration for federal taxation of the wealthy to aid the poor and exploit loopholes during his own governorship to help them when he could, but he went much further still.

It was Pinchot's bottom-up social philosophy and his optimistic view of human potential that inspired the ethos of empowerment that characterizes his conservation outlook.

The Cultural Politics of Environmentalism

The spirit of the Progressive Era embodied by Pinchot and harking back to the American Enlightenment was reinvigorated in the 1960s. It was a spirit that sought to liberate the disenfranchised by questioning the status quo and taking on powerful socio-cultural institutions.
Following the outrage that accompanied Rachael Carson's *Silent Spring*, for instance, the New Left found expression in Pinchot-style environmentalism in that sense. Deeply egalitarian and acutely conscious of social conditions, this spirit directed much of the anti-pollution activism of the '60s and '70s, and largely guides, for instance, the environmental justice and sustainability movements today.

However, as suggested by the popularity Nash's 1967 *Wilderness and the American Mind*, the 1960's wilderness activists were typically more counter-cultural than progressive. Indeed, Fox observes that the 1960s wilderness advocates “had practically nothing in common [with the New Left], despite labored efforts to discover common elements between them.” Instead, “The most obvious affinities were with the most fuzziest of movements, the hippie counterculture.” Given the largely independent traditions these two environmental subcultures drew on, it is no surprise that they found little common ground. By the late 1960s they would unite against a common enemy, but as with Muir and Pinchot, it was a tenuous relationship.

As Fox explains, the present-day diversity of environmentalism can largely be traced to 1960s politics. Much of it, however, can be understood as expressions of the ethos of respect and empowerment, or a mixture of the two. Not surprisingly, the wilderness idea would come to be interpreted by these two groups in radically different ways. According to historian James Turner, 1960s politics marked a turning point for the wilderness movement. Some wilderness activists adopted the ethos of empowerment of the New Left. As concerns surfaced that the ascending *social* environmentalism (concerned with pollution, etc.) would leave the wilderness movement behind, the latter “repositioned itself to draw on the [former] movement’s new tools—legislative, legal, and scientific—to advance the campaign for wilderness.” As Turner explains, however, “That strategy...set the stage for a backlash against the wilderness movement.”
While some radical wilderness activists were caught up in the New Left ethos of empowerment, others saw renewing the wilderness idea as a subversive tool against modernity. “Ironically, as wilderness advocates succeeded in expanding the wilderness system, more radical wilderness advocates narrowed their ideas of what wilderness might mean…[C]hanging political debates over the meaning of wilderness...have combined to make wilderness one of the most divisive concepts in contemporary American environmental thought and politics.”

As the spirit of the 1960s lost momentum, and as environmentalists entered the mainstream by winning a series of victories, the alliance between wilderness advocates and social environmentalism started breaking down. Environmentalism was becoming increasingly bureaucratized and professionalized. According to Turner, this inspired a two-pronged rebellion: one conservative and distressed with both 1960s activism and resentful of “Big Government” regulations, the other radical and impatient with an environmentalism watered-down by “success.”

It was within this atmosphere especially that the wilderness idea found reinvigorated inspiration in the organic primitivism embodied in Muir. Deep ecology, with its philosophical commitment to biocentrism and its crusade against humanism and the progress narrative, attracted increasing popularity. Disillusioned by the compromises of professional environmentalism in the 1970s, galvanized by new scientific reports that pointed to environmental catastrophe on a global scale in the 1980s, and frustrated by the neo-conservative attack in the 1990s, these environmentalists were determined to get back to basics. As with the primitivism of the Cynics and the pantheism of the Stoics, they wanted to completely break away from civilization by exalting pure, unadulterated wilderness as the centerpiece of their agenda.

Largely appropriating the organism metaphor from, for instance, the “ecological
conscience” of Leopold's land ethic, the ontology of identity seemed scientifically sanctioned. For Arne Naess, “Self-realization” represented this identification with Nature. Ironically, as in the case of Earth First! and other wilderness groups who wanted to put deep ecology into practice, the 1960s ethos of empowerment was adopted to demand an urgent ethos of respect towards the Earth. While the wilderness movement was primarily pragmatic in the 1960s, by the late 1980s this would be supplanted by a “wilderness fundamentalism” that consistently advanced a hard-line approach.

And yet, just as the no-compromise orientation of wilderness fundamentalism was born of reactive backlash, it too would give birth to subsequent reactions against it—drawing not only the wrath of Rush Limbaugh, but also of progressive environmentalists alienated and offended by their anti-humanist and seemingly anti-social rhetoric. Progressives like Murray Bookchin and several eco-feminists charged deep ecology with elitism, a disregard for the plight of the socially disenfranchised, and a blindness to the concrete political, economic, and socio-historical conditions undergirding the environmental crisis. Ramachandra Guha, an Indian progressive, wrote a scathing attack against “the conservation elite.” In exporting the American idea that wildlife needs unpeopled wilderness in order to survive, measures have been taken to evict people from their traditional homelands. And just as Guha was critiquing “the cultural rootedness of a philosophy that likes to present itself in universalistic terms,” the post-modern attack against the sort of metaphysical foundations found in the wilderness idea itself was gaining influence in American universities. At the same time, “the new ecology” announced in Daniel Botkin's *Discordant Harmonies* sabotaged decades of rhetoric by scientifically undermining the organism metaphor. By the early 1990s, scholars started to systematically challenge the wilderness idea itself.
The Ethea of Respect and Empowerment in the Wilderness Debate

When J. Baird Callicott published “The Wilderness Idea Revisited” suggesting a shift in focus from wilderness as traditionally conceived to sustainable development, wilderness-based environmentalism reacted. The first reaction came from Holmes Rolston. Callicott charged that the wilderness idea was dualistic, ethnocentric, and loaded with obsolete metaphysical assumptions. His tripartite critique of the wilderness idea and Rolston's reaction to it set the stage for further elaborations.

First, in his critique of wilderness dualism, Callicott challenged the organic primitivist project of humbling the human relationship to the world. This debate concerning the relationship between nature and culture or wilderness and civilization, moreover, developed into a discussion regarding the relationship between various dualisms and nondualisms. Second, by charging the wilderness idea with ethnocentrism, Callicott's critique also coincided with a resurgence of progressive scholarship implicating the wilderness idea in a variety of social justice concerns. And finally, Callicott argued that the wilderness idea had been rendered scientifically outdated by a paradigm shift in ecology from a teleological, static climax model premised largely on Greek organicism to a post-organic view that emphasizes localized, stochastic, non-teleological flux in nature. This final critique would bring scholarship into environmental discourses that challenged the wilderness-inspired primitivist narrative of getting back to “pristine nature,” as well as the organic assumption that doing so required protecting its “delicate balance” from anthropogenic influence.

Each of these critiques are interlocking insofar as they challenge the conceptual structure of *physis* as it developed in the Greek Enlightenment: including its various antitheses, its privileged status as the normative standard, and its subsequent ethical implementation in the
form of various primitivisms. As the critique of “wilderness fundamentalism” culminated in
William Cronon's “The Trouble with Wilderness,” it would challenge the ethos of respect,
advance its own ethos of empowerment, and subsequently inspire counter-reactions in return.

Of the three, the charge of dualism garnered the most attention. Callicott understands
culture as an outgrowth of nature while Rolston argues that the two realms exist independently.
While this appears at the outset to be a case of Callicott advancing ontological identity while
Rolston adheres to ontological difference, I argue that, in an ethical sense, the opposite is true.
While Callicott begins with identity to argue the case that culture isn't ontologically outside the
natural order (i.e. that culture isn't necessarily an adulterating influence on it), ethically he
advances difference as most significant insofar as human agency is championed over the organic
fatalism implicit in the wilderness ideal. And while Rolston ends with ontological difference to
uphold nature's autonomy or agency, what he really begins with and privileges ethically is
identity insofar as human agency is to be subsumed by (or differed to) wild, organic nature.

In considering both thinkers and the ethea they largely represent, the ethical question of
agency has to be dealt with as integral to questions concerning the relationship between culture
and nature. For Callicott, what is emphasized is not the limits imposed on human agency, as the
quasi-fatalism implicit in the organic primitivism encourages, but rather humanity's positive
potential to create its own destiny. Rolston, by contrast, stresses an organic dependence on, and
identification with, wild nature as a source of values. Like others, he understands wilderness as
“self-willed land.”88

I also argue that what Callicott proposes is a progressive account that emphasizes
civilization (albeit, untraditionally understood) over wilderness (traditionally understood), while
Rolston advances the preservationist line of wilderness over civilization. In other words,
Callicott tends toward an empowered, anti-primitivistic ethos of techne to argue for "conservation via sustainable development" while Rolston adheres to the concept of physis at the heart of organic primitivism.

There's a sense in which Callicott ontologically privileges organic nature insofar as he recognizes an initial identity between nature and culture. He does so, however, in ways that speak to the anti-primitivists of antiquity. By drawing on a kind of Darwinian ontogeny from simple to complex, he goes on to imply a parallel process from ontological identity to difference: “[T]he cultural component of human development is so greatly developed as to become more a difference of kind than of degree.” Like anti-primitivists, Callicott never denies that humans ontologically belong to the natural world in an original sense. Yet, by drawing attention to a progressive differentiation between humans in the Darwinian state of nature and modern culture today, he makes room for the cultural tradition of techne he needs to argue that “a mature civilization might actually improve upon [nature].” The physis of “human works,” he would say, belongs to “culture not instinct.” From this ontological position of difference, Callicott can go on to argue for a certain anti-primitivistic ethic of ascent: “Precisely because the works of man are largely cultural they are capable of being rapidly reformed.” In this sense, humans are ontologically “natural” and yet capable of realizing “an active, transformative, managerial relationship of people to nature in which both the human and nonhuman parties to the relationship [are] benefited.” His argument isn't so much for a humble return to wilderness as it is a call to take hold of our own destiny in order to sustainably create the “human-nature symbiosis” of the future. His forward-looking approach can be gleaned from the following:

But how can we get from here to this range utopia? I don't know. Very real political and economic obstacles, to say nothing of the sheer inertia of habit and tradition, stand in the way. But before we can figure out how to get from here to anywhere, we have to have a vision to guide us. Utopias may be unattainable in reality, but they are not impractical.
They help us move off dead center. And falling short of an ideal is still movement in the right direction.\textsuperscript{95}

As with the anti-primitivists, it is clear that custom ("habit and tradition"—νόμος) is not an "obstacle" to a return to archaic nature. Instead, it's an obstacle to moving forward towards a preconceived ideal with conscious purpose.

The same is roughly true for Cronon. Although he denounces wilderness dualism and speaks of respecting the "autonomy of nonhuman nature" as "an indispensable corrective to human arrogance,"\textsuperscript{96} what his essay comes down to ethically is a progressive vision of empowerment—"an ethical, sustainable, honorable human place in nature."\textsuperscript{97} We not only see an ontology of difference reflected in the assumption that humans are capable of standing back and deconstructing "wilderness," but also in the accompanying tacit idea that we can re-construct our relationship to the natural world in more viable ways. "The majority of our environmental problems start right here, at home, and if we are to solve these problems, we need an environmental ethic that will tell us as much about using nature as about not using it."\textsuperscript{98}

For Cronon, identifying ourselves with wilderness encourages an escapist "flight from history,"\textsuperscript{99} an evasion of "responsibility for the lives we actually lead."\textsuperscript{100} Here, both the ontology of identity and wilderness primitivism are deemed politically problematic. "We inhabit civilization while holding some part of ourselves—what we imagine to be the most precious part—aloof from its entanglements."\textsuperscript{101} And so in addition to an ethic of "using nature," Cronon calls for an engaged ethic of social responsibility premised on the "striving for critical self-consciousness in all our actions."\textsuperscript{102} It is essentially the "can-do" spirit that defined Pinchot.

Rolston addresses each of Callicott's critiques individually. But what seems to galvanize him more than anything is the idea that humans "can and ought to improve wild nature,"\textsuperscript{103} or the proposal that "[d]eliberately rebuilt environments replace spontaneous wild ones."\textsuperscript{104} Rolston
states explicitly from the beginning that “there are crucial differences between wild nature and human culture.” However, as with all dualisms, Rolston's isn't at all free of privilege. For him, it is “spontaneous” wild nature that is privileged over the deliberative (rational) human will.

Although few champions of wilderness after Rolston could defend his explicit dualism, they nevertheless support the ethos of respect he advances so consistently. As argued below, the philosophically untenable position of culture/nature dualism that marks the wilderness idea shifts from a rhetoric of limits, sacrifice, and self-restraint to one of receptivity and openness that is less conspicuously dualistic. What consistently remains, however, is the ethos of respect.

Although Rolston at one point warns against risking “primitivism,” his argument is surely primitivistic in orientation. When he writes: “We are breaking through culture to discover, non-anthropocentrically, that fauna and flora can count in their own rite,” we can understand him as saying that we are “breaking through culture” to realize an identity with nature. This entails a movement from an alienated dualism to a more receptive nondualism. As such, if Rolston adheres to an ontology of difference as he suggests, then he does so only in the sense that the Stoics and Transcendentalists did: humans are ontologically “free” from nature only insofar as they have a choice. But they are not ethically free from nature insofar as the right choice involves humbly identifying with it. That is, humans have a free will independent of nature only in the sense that they are capable of consciously recognizing it as a transcendent model or source of values for human existence (and respecting its limits accordingly).

It is in this sense that Rolston “begins” with dualistic difference and “ends” with organic identity. For the Stoics, humans were free to acknowledge the ultimate way of the Logos and conform to it as such. Or they were free not to (at their own expense). And for the Stoic-inspired Transcendentalists, Nature (Emerson) or wildness (Thoreau) revealed existential truths or
guiding insights to the properly attuned or initiated. Insofar as the “intrinsic values” of wild nature serve as existential guidelines for an alienated, fragmented, myopic, and misguided civilization, it is of first importance that humans come to recognize and respect an alternative world of values fundamentally other than themselves if they are to reground themselves as human beings. Today's world, it is believed, demands a respect for the timeless values of wild, spontaneous, nonhuman nature. Rolston writes:

[Wilderness advocates] insist that there are intrinsic values that are *not* human values. These ought to be preserved for what they can *contribute* to human values, and also because they are valuable...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, non-cultural values. Only humans have conscience enough to do this.107

Hence Rolston's logic when he claims: “The values intrinsic to wilderness cannot, on pain of both logical and empirical contradiction, be 'improved' by deliberate human management, because deliberation is the antithesis of wildness. That is the sense in which civilization is the antithesis of wildness.”108 Here we see the antithetical conceptual structure basic to ancient primitivism more clearly than ever: *physis* is ontologically pitted against the *techne* of *nous* rendered willful deliberation.

As far as the charge of ethnocentrism goes, Rolston responds indirectly almost by way of concession. The *idea* of wilderness has indeed become a necessity for modern culture because it has ethically divorced itself from wild nature to such a great extent. As Foreman claims, “It is human civilization that has caused a Nature-human dualism. Wilderness areas are the best idea we have for healing that breach, for reintegrating people back into Nature in a humble and respectful way.”109 Similarly, deep ecologist David Johns explains that “by healing our split from [the Earth], by healing the split between cortex and heart, and by healing nature from within, we can begin to heal all nature.”110 Accordingly, the wilderness idea is fitting for a people (e.g.
moderns) alienated by civilization and admittedly ethnocentric in that sense.

Rolston's response to Callicott's third critique is more nuanced. Speaking to the notion of stability in wild nature, Callicott is questioning ideas long explicit in organic ecology that “biotic communities” proceed teleologically in successional sequence from one stage to the next until it climaxes or “matures” to a steady-state. Consequently, there is nothing “intrinsic” to preserve in wilderness areas in the first place. “In the course of time,” Callicott explains, “ecological succession is continually reset by one or another natural disturbance.”111 The rhetoric, therefore, has to shift from the “preservation” and “balance” of “pristine nature” to a focus on “the importance of rate and scale of change.”112 And insofar as humans are inextricably implicated in ecological “disturbance regimes,” this ultimately involves a different—for Callicott a more active—way of relating to the world.

Rolston affirms change in nature, but doesn't exactly address the metaphysics behind concepts such as balance, climax stability, and so on that concerned Callicott. Instead, he discusses more abstract notions like the “perennial character” of “natural processes” inherent on “the scale of deep time.”113 He writes:

There is nothing illusory...about appreciating...wilderness processes that have a primeval character. There, the natural processes of 1992 do not differ much from those of 1492, half a millennium earlier. We may enjoy that perennial character, constancy in change, in contrast with the rapid pace of cultural changes....114

Because it is so important that we “keep clearly in mind the difference between nature and culture,”115 Rolston's philosophy requires a way to conceptualize the essence of each domain—if not in Platonic fashion, then perhaps in a more Stoic sense, as a primordial logos that remains constant, distinct, and clearly discernible through change. For Rolston, we have to be clear about exactly what we're “protecting.” While Callicott draws on Leopold's ethos of empowerment to claim that humans are indeed capable of realizing a “harmony” of wilderness and civilization,
Rolston relies on Leopold's ethos of respect and the organic paradigm in ecology of Leopold's day.

Ultimately, when Rolston writes: “In wilderness, time mixes with eternity; that is one reason we value it so highly,” he tells us what he wants to identify with and protect. He wants is a world “untrammeled by man, a world left to its own autonomous creativity...” Summing up organic primitivism by invoking Leopold, Rolston explains:

He means that we never know who we are or where we are until we know and respect our wild origins and our wild neighbors on this home planet. We never get our values straight until we value wilderness appropriately. The definition of the human kinds of value is incomplete until we have this larger vision of natural values.

It is no accident here that Rolston juxtaposes the need to “respect our wild origins...on this home planet” with getting “our values straight” and having a “larger vision of natural values.” What he calls for here is a relationship to the world that grounds pure nature as an ethical-ontological model to emulate. By intimately identifying with it as our “home planet,” we respect something larger than ourselves and come to “know who we are” in the process. The ethic complementing this ontology of identity is a return to our “wild origins,” suggesting a narrative of decline from wilderness to civilization and back again.

Other critics and defenders have filled in the details regarding the relationship of culture to nature, the social justice concerns of the wilderness idea like ethnocentrism, and the ecological issue of how humans ought to relate to the natural world. Next, I examine what followed from the Callicott/Rolston exchange.

Nature and Culture: Wilderness Revealed and Constructed

Jill Belsky, Jonathan Maskit, and Val Plumwood are among those who suggest that the basic philosophical conflicts in the wilderness debate boils down to the relationship between nature and culture. Belsky traces the disagreement largely to a conflict between “materialists”
“social constructivists.” The materialist tendency, she argues, is predisposed toward a “protectionist approach” that understands the human relationship to nature in terms of “material factors and restraints.” What is of paramount concern here is coming to understand wilderness areas “as they are” so that we can work toward respecting their ecological limits. Many social constructivists, by contrast, tend to assume “community-based” approaches that focus on how people interpret such places. For them, if we are to develop sustainable relationships to the natural world in ways that merge social and ecological imperatives, it is of first importance that the socio-cultural conditions that mediate these relationships be well understood.119

Belsky’s division accords fairly well with Maskit’s between “wilderness ontologists” and “social constructivists.” Wilderness ontologists focus centrally on the “reality” of wilderness, especially insofar as that reality exists outside the realm of culture or the human world. Such thinkers typically ground their ethical conclusions about the proper human relationship to nature by starting with actual wilderness areas. According to this camp, nature as “[i]ndependent and self-directed, should be treated as, to borrow Kant’s phrase, an end-in-itself.”120 Their social constructivists counterparts, however, tend to focus on the way wilderness is understood culturally. “Wilderness, for [such] writers...is not something independent and free. Rather, it is a human construct. Wilderness is not the other of culture, but a ‘product’ of culture.”121 This philosophical conflict, Maskit claims, can be largely explained by the tendency of wilderness ontologists to rely on pre-Kantian or substantialist metaphysics, on the one hand, and the social constructivists’ inheritance of “Kant's epistemological vision” on the other.122

While Maskit is right to point to Kant as a central figure for the social constructivists, it is only a half-truth to suggest that the “wilderness ontologists” are pre-Kantian. While intrinsic values suggests pre-Kantian metaphysics, it is also true that the Transcendentalists were
profoundly caught up in Kantian idealism. Richardson explains:

But with Emerson and his contemporaries...German thought and literature finally reached a wide audience in New England, contributing heavily to shaping the new temper of mind that came to be called transcendentalism....One could not expect, in 1837, to understand the advanced intellectual atmosphere of the times without taking up Germany. Almost unavoidably, then, Thoreau took four terms of German at college...

This debt to post-Kantian transcendentalism can perhaps be gleaned in the wilderness debate by a shift in rhetoric from one based on human limits vis-à-vis the natural world to one that focuses instead on being “open” to it. Those in the primitivist tradition typically focus on “human nature” as a corrupting influence on wild nature. Reed Noss is an example. He writes “Wilderness represents self-imposed restraint in a society that generally seeks to dominate and control all of nature. [O]ur desire to manage everything is exceedingly arrogant given our ignorance of how nature works. In many cases, what needs to be managed is not nature but rather our own consumptive, manipulative, and destructive behavior.” Yet there are wilderness defenders who counsel, not limits in the tradition of Muir, but rather an open receptivity to nature more in the style of Thoreau. In both cases, the ethos of respect at the heart of the wilderness idea remains at the center. But instead of respecting a sublime wilderness beyond reach as a model to submit to and emulate, we are, in the words of Birch, invited to cultivate a “radical openness” in which “the wildness of others of all sorts is respected.”

In this sense, both sides of the wilderness debate express post-Kantian influences. The difference between them rests largely on how they appropriated Kant's legacy. The transcendentalist appropriation differs from the anti-metaphysical turn of the social constructivists. Interestingly, the trajectory of the later dates back to Kant's attempt to rescue metaphysics from Hume's skepticism. For Kant, the question as to whether our relationship to the world originates primarily from within (rationalism) or from without (empiricism) fails to
recognize how the mind mediates experience. As metaphysics receded, so did realism. The point
Plumwood, Ouderkirk, Crist, and others make, however, is that metaphysics hasn't been done
away with at all. It's merely been transfigured.

Of course, human insulation from nature is not the impulse guiding the post-modern
project. More than anything, and despite its anti-Enlightenment rhetoric, it represents the latest
variation of the Enlightenment's emancipatory project. Belsky mentions this concern in terms of
“naturalization” arguments which claim “that if some thing is natural, it can be no other way, it is
inevitable.” As such, insofar as the conceptual habit of employing *physis* as the normative
“state of nature” is challenged, postmodernism is more anti-primitivistic than neo-primitivistic,
more grounded in ontological difference than identity. Belsky's discussion of Marx's analysis of
ideology in a postmodern context suggests that, despite anti-modern influence, social
constructivism belongs firmly to humanist progressivism.

Marx and Engels were bothered by the way Darwin’s work enables science to be used as
source of political legitimation....If capitalism resembled so closely the laws of nature,
the argument could and was being made that it also is inevitable....Furthermore, an
emphasis on seeing certain human actions and nature as “natural,” and hence innate,
essential, eternal, nonnegotiable and off-limits to critical questioning and scrutiny, also
flows from the appeal to nature as a stable external source of nonhuman values against
which human actions can be judged without ambiguity.

Undermining transcendental truth claims “from above,” it is hoped, might empower those “from
below” to break the grip of these hegemonic or more cultural forms of power intersecting class,
race, gender, and so on.

For Plumwood, the division marking the wilderness debate is between a counter-cultural
strain in wilderness-based environmentalism and the post-modernism of the “wilderness
skeptics.” While counter-cultural environmentalism tends to conceive wilderness as an inherent
absence of human influence, wilderness skeptics tend to deny the reality of wilderness so
defined. For Plumwood, however, both are guilty of over-simplifying the relationship between nature and culture insofar as one is systematically privileged over the other, as opposed to affirming “the ground of continuity” and the differences between them, which she believes to be the great challenge of environmentalism.\textsuperscript{129}

Plumwood, the conceptual privileging and marginalizing tendency of dualism is problematic. This can be seen, for instance, in the way wilderness has been gendered—as expressed in the “virgin” metaphor, for example—in ways that reinforce patriarchal assumptions (e.g. the untouched “feminized Other.”) It also “forces a dualistic conception of land as either totally untouched or 'not really there'.\textsuperscript{130}

Here we see some of the political problems that concern humanist progressives. She speaks, for instance, of a tendency to reduce those living in a “state of nature” to “nature” itself. For example, when Rolston and Foreman prioritize wilderness and claim that dualism was\textit{caused} by modern (civilized) humans, they imply that non-modern or non-civilized humans are more Nature than Human, more Other than Self. Plumwood explains that when the early European settlers saw a “\textit{terra nullius},” or “empty land” in Australia waiting to be colonized, it wasn’t because they were unaware of the aborigines that inhabited the continent. Rather, it was because the aborigines were thought of more as wildlife than as true (i.e. European) human beings like themselves. And it was this human-to-nature reduction that justified programs of extermination and removal on the one hand, and assimilation into “civil society” on the other. And this works on both sides of the dualism. Whether they are denied their culture and land by being absorbed into the modern fold or they’re held up as exemplary “noble savages” as a tool of resistance, their genuine and distinctive human presence is passed over just the same.

Plumwood also takes up a line of critique that harks back to Cronon, Birch, and Wendell
Berry. “If nature proper is found only in places without any human influence, there is no way we can recognize the importance of nature or respect its limits in our daily lives....If nature tends to be ‘somewhere else,’ we do not need to be sensitive to its operations in our local environments of urban, working, and domestic life.” The parallel romantic model of transcendence before sublime Nature was apparently intended in similar ways. Transcendence was meant to be realized by looking to wild nature as a kind of organizing principle for the “soul” of society. It was supposed to represent a more humbling (and hence, benign) place for humans than the modern one had to offer. But if wild nature is conceptualized too strongly as a model before us (i.e. outside us), it seems counterproductive to change that model according to human desires, objectives, etc. If it is to remain a model for human culture, then it certainly cannot be influenced by the very thing it is supposed to inform, especially if humans are understood as manipulative and self-serving. Consequently, the reasoning behind the romantic nature-as-model project—as expressed in terms of purity and virginity—has been realized strategically as preserving tracts of wilderness away from our everyday lives, away from humans who might (or surely would) disrupt the wholeness of nature and therefore “spoil” it as an organizing principle from which to live. As such, the opposite of what was originally intended has occurred. A strong wilderness focus has excluded us at a core existential level from the natural world we so respect and admire. By protecting it so strongly from human influence, it can only have a limited and indirect influence on us as a culture.

On the other side of the debate, according to Plumwood, are the wilderness skeptics. Largely in reaction to the counter-cultural wilderness idea, progressives have effected a reversal of their own. Here, it is the nature pole that is marginalized. As such, Plumwood makes a distinction between those that legitimately criticize the problematic dualisms implicated in the
wilderness idea from those that are anthropocentric to the point of denying the reality, agency, and importance of nonhuman nature altogether.

Plumwood largely traces this post-modern reaction to an attempt to redress the culture/nature dualism by undermining the distinction between them all together. This, however, only leads to a logic of mutual exclusion that leaves traditional dualism—what Ouderkirk calls the “ghost of dualism”—intact.

It is a feature of dualistic hegemonies that they produce oscillating reductions, in which now one, now another, pole of the dualism is reversed....Thus, in the current discussion there has been a tendency to try to resolve the nature/culture dualism inherent in the conventional understandings of wilderness by a reduction of one or other of the poles of nature or culture, either reducing wilderness to culture, or reducing human activity which might disturb wilderness to nature. Wilderness critics...seem to think that the problems generated by the dualism of nature and culture show that there is no valid distinction between nature and culture.132

In this regard, Crist argues that social constructivism actually “embeds the assumption that people operate on an existentially distinct plane vis-à-vis the natural world” insofar as the “idea of imputing meaning to the natural world presumes a standpoint separate from it.”133 Ultimately, it is argued, this has led to an over-stated emphasis on nature as a “social construct” that we can never come to terms with as an independent reality. It precludes from the beginning an openness and genuine respect for nature and inhibits our ability to learn from and adapt to it in ways that aren't culturally prefigured to begin with. While some wilderness purists hold an exalted Nature about as far from everyday human affairs as some monotheists hold an exalted God from theirs', social constructivists tend to keep nature so tightly within the human world that they cannot “see” it and come terms with it in its own rite. In each case, we find it impossible to be truly present to nonhuman nature and respond accordingly. In this sense, as I argue below, both orientations invite reactive rather than responsive relationships.

To conclude, Belsky, Maskit, and Plumwood have shown that it has become clear that,
since the initial exchange between Callicott and Rolston, the issue of dualism vs. nondualism as such has become increasingly unhelpful as a way to analyze the debate. Virtually everyone after Rolston renounces dualism and embraces nondualism. Yet “nondualism” has come to signify a number of positions in the debate that are just as oppositional as that between dualism and nondualism itself. And ultimately, both sides of the debate exhibit elements of both. They are dualistic in that they privilege either nature or culture within that traditional framework, and they are both nondualistic insofar as one pole is absorbed (and thus denied) into its opposite.

In this respect, it is more helpful to stick to the ethical distinction between ecocentrism and anthropocentrism. But even this can be confusing and not entirely accurate. Rolston and Callicott are “ecocentrist.” And while Rolston and deep ecology both espouse the intrinsic value of wild nature, Rolston affirms dualism while Naess affirms nondualism. It is also significant that those defenders of the wilderness idea that have inherited the transcendentalism are in some ways just as rooted in the trajectory of “social constructivism” that goes back to Kant as their post-modern opponents. Hence the works of Nash, Max Oelschlaeger, and others who “deconstruct” negative interpretations of the wilderness idea while historically detailing positive “constructions” of it. In this respect, analyzing the debate in terms of realism vs. constructivism or pre- vs. post-Kantian metaphysics is as limited as analyzing it in terms of dualism vs. nondualism.

It is in this respect that I argue for analyses that highlight subcultural differences that focus on metaphors, narratives, and the ethea that express them. A more comprehensive approach is needed to understand the debate and resolve it agreeably. Of course, catch-all labels never completely suffice. Even so, they are important analytically if we are to come to terms with some of the more central conflicts.
In the next and final chapter, I explore the ethical challenges implicated in the largely post-metaphysical paradigm in ecology and innovative responses to it. This includes an examination of the concepts of wildness and reinhabitation as alternatives to the traditional wilderness idea, the relational metaphors of socio-ecological “partnership” (Merchant) and “dialogue” (Plumwood), and an “eco-phenomenology of response” drawn from the insights of Martin Buber and others.
CHAPTER IV

Beyond Organism vs. Machine: Ecology and the Human Relationship to Nature

Although scholars agree that culture/nature dualism is untenable, the habits of thought instituted by conceptual antitheses such as physis and techne have nevertheless made the goals of conservation easy to comprehend and communicate. This is especially clear in cases that involve preservation vs. land management insofar as the organism metaphor of the former tends to privilege physis while the machine metaphor privileges techne. For those who identify with the natural world and assume an ethic of returning to the arche of nature, the human relationship to nature tends toward a protectionist “hands-off” approach. By contrast, those who differentiate humans from the natural world and adhere to an ethic of advancing civilization typically express a more “hands-on” approach. And so it is no wonder that when Callicott proposed a more “active, transformative, managerial relationship of people to nature” based on the “rate and scale of [ecological] change,” Rolston disagreed.

[Environmental professionals will make disastrous decisions if confused by what is and is not natural. Callicott warns them that they do have to worry about 'accelerating rates of change.' No one can begin to understand these rates of changes if the changes are thought of as being introduced by a species that is entirely natural.

For Callicott, we can no longer rely on a dichotomy between 'authentic wildness' and 'imposed artifice' as our conceptual standard. The world does not consist of two independent realms that we can simply compare. Drawing on ecology, he argues that we have to focus on the temporal dynamics of the culture-nature complex to keep change within acceptable limits. Rolston, however, worries that without getting “clearly in mind the difference between nature and culture,” we will have no decisive standard, no clear way to judge limits of what is and
what isn't acceptable, healthy, good, etc. Donald Waller responds to Cronon's reduction of nature to culture with similar concerns.

[H]ow are we to establish criteria for evaluating human behavior? What boundaries shall we place upon our own tendency to expand and subvert other biotic systems to our own ends? If no boundaries exist between wild and tame, natural and unnatural, why shouldn't we establish parks to protect rock quarries, damned rivers, and hog farms? If all areas are considered as natural or wild, or denatured and tamed, as any other, why should we concern ourselves with conserving nature at all? This is the dilemma of environmental relativism raised, yet not resolved, in Cronon's essay.138

There is indeed an ethical challenge posed by the current paradigm in ecology. And it's the same challenge expressed throughout this thesis. Just as organic primitivism and humanist progressivism take ontological root in the organism and machine metaphors of nature, so too the science of ecology expresses a paradigmatic division in its development between these same metaphors. The science of ecology today, however, has made significant strides in resolving this basic division. Yet, as the wilderness debate demonstrates, the radical philosophical implications of the new paradigm in ecology have yet to translate into a viable ethical ontology. Due to the close working relationship between ecology and environmentalism, approaching the ethical concerns expressed by Rolston and Waller while addressing the problems of wilderness dualism brought to light by Callicott and Cronon is going to require a philosophical investigation of this science.

Ecology has played a profound role informing the human relationship to the natural world in the environmental movement. Yet the history of ecology has always been a particularly multifarious one, and this partly accounts for the conflicts embodied in environmentalism today. Although ecology has a history that includes both the organic and mechanistic views of nature, today's paradigm is best understood as post-organic and post-mechanistic. Consequently, it largely transcends standard theoretical dichotomies in ways that challenge the corresponding
ethical dichotomies between the protectionist and managerial approaches in the wilderness debate. If environmentalism is to continue to draw from this science, it will have to transcend the divide between organic primitivism and humanist progressivism to announce a new, genuinely post-metaphysical relationship to the world beyond wilderness fundamentalism and social constructivism.

Before Ernest Haeckel's 1866 coining of “œcology” caught on, naturalists typically referred to the “economy of nature,” which, according to Donald Worster, can be traced to Linnaeus's 1749 essay by that name. The natural history tradition following Linnaeus exhibited the mechanistic view of the Scientific Revolution. The natural world was law-governed, rigidly categorized, composed of “atomic” units or species, and transparent to reason. As the spirit of the Enlightenment gave way to Romanticism, however, it was the organic tradition of natural history that was ascendant. Haeckel initiated a tradition that likened “œcology” to physiology, for instance, while a foundational 1887 paper by Stephen Forbes further instituted the motifs of the organic view. He begins “The Lake as Microcosm” as follows:

A lake is to the naturalist a chapter out of the history of a primeval time, for the conditions of life there are primitive...and the organic interactions by which they influence and control each other has remained substantially unchanged from a remote geological period....Nowhere can one see more clearly illustrated what may be called the sensibility of such an organic complex, expressed by the fact that whatever affects any species belonging to it, must have its influence of some sort upon the whole assemblage.

From here, Forbes goes on to speak of the “steady balance of organic nature,” the “close community of interests,” and the “beneficent power of natural selection” before summing up his essay: “[E]ven here, out of these hard conditions, an order has been evolved which is the best conceivable without a total change in the conditions themselves; an equilibrium has been reached and is steadily maintained that actually accomplishes for all parties involved the greatest
good...\textsuperscript{142} While reductionism lent itself to a “hands-on” approach of studying individual parts (as subject to the controls of the laboratory), holism encouraged a “hands off” method of field observation. Nature was not to be manipulated, but observed intact in its primordial “natural state.”

The organic philosophy that the natural history tradition brought to ecology culminated in the “super-organism” paradigm of Fredrick Clements. Reaching the height of its popularity in the 1930s when the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl served to cast doubt on liberal individualism, organic ecology explicitly depicted nature in terms of the “biotic community.” Every organism had its place in the community or “super-organism” to which it belonged. Described scientifically as succession, communities lived and developed together as they matured into the “adult climax stage,” guided to maturation by the climate that shaped the community and maintained its harmony.

The mechanistic view, by contrast, was marginal in ecology until after World War II. At this point the relationship between these two views of nature become more convoluted. As the “super-organism” paradigm was giving way to the “ecosystem” view, ecology retained the holism essential to organicism, but increasingly tended to adopt the mechanistic attributes of mathematical abstraction and deductive analysis. Arthur Tansley, the ecologist who coined the term ecosystem, intended to not only include biotic communities, but the abiotic factors as well into a single whole. In this sense, Tansley was even more holistic than Clements. Yet this required a shift of sorts from the organic view to a systems metaphor. “[The] fundamental conception is...the whole \textit{system} (in the sense of physics), including not only the organism complex, but also the whole complex of physical factors forming what we call the environment of the biome.”\textsuperscript{143} This trend culminated in Raymond Lindeman’s attempt to mathematically
abstract the ecosystem concept entirely in terms of thermodynamic energy flow and inert materials cycling.

The philosophical foundations of ecology were complicated even further with the rise of the “individualistic” paradigm pioneered by Henry Gleason and recaptured decades later by population and evolutionary ecologists. The term individualistic was obviously in direct opposition to the collectivism of the community metaphor. The liberal motif of the autonomous individual represented the philosophy of reductionism: “every species of plant is a law unto itself.” In a stretch back to Democritus, moreover, the teleological implications of the “biotic community” were reduced to a “coincidence” of random factors such as the happenstance of seed dispersal by wind or animals. Here we see the debates of the Greek Enlightenment perpetuated.

By the 1960s, the reductionism of population and evolutionary ecology had come into direct conflict with the holism of ecosystem ecology. The confidence of this emerging group was fuelled by the belief that the holism of the ecosystem concept was scientifically untenable in light of biological evolution because it necessarily presupposed that ecosystem wholes, not the individuals within them, acted as the objects of natural selection. The holistic functionalism of the ecosystem concept assumed that the wholes (ecosystems) were more primary than the parts (individual organisms). Following the neo-Darwinian synthesis of evolution with genetics, however, it became difficult to believe that evolution acted on anything but the gene-endowing individual (genotype) and not, as ecosystem ecology insisted, on the wholes or communities.

The marginalization of holism was even more far-reaching than the prior paradigm shift against the Clementsian super-organism. As argued by Simberloff, this shift was itself deeply embedded within a more widespread philosophical shift away from the idealism, essentialism, and foundationalism of Greek metaphysics toward the materialism and statistical probabilism of
the 19th century “materialist revolution.” This can be characterized as a move away from categorizing phenomena in metaphysical terms of timeless and linear absolutes or universals such as natural “types” and “states” of nature, and toward context-dependency and developmental models that are non-deterministic and non-linear.

This non-equilibrium paradigm is to be understood in dynamic terms of constant, stochastic change rather than static idealizations such as balance, equilibrium, stability, and other constructs defining a normative “state of nature.” This doesn’t simply represent a shift from the organic metaphor back again to the machine metaphor, or vice-versa. Given its tortuous, dialectical genealogy, post-metaphysical ecology has evolved into a heterogeneous mix of the two. More importantly, it spills beyond the limits of these classical metaphors altogether to suggest something altogether new.

Compared to previous paradigms, consistently teasing out the metaphorical genealogy of non-equilibrium ecology is difficult. The holism of the organic metaphor has largely given way to the atomism and reductionism of the individualistic motif characteristic of the machine metaphor. However, the transparency, linearity, and predictability of the mechanistic view have been eclipsed by a more dynamic historicity that reflects emergent or “organic” change and development. And this is not quasi-mystical, but the result of the nonlinear and stochastic processes of a given area. And while still amenable to mathematical abstraction and computer modeling, this new paradigm shifts from hopes of generalizable or universal theoretical explanations deduced, so to speak, from the very “machinery” of nature, to an embrace of the characteristics of particular natural and social areas. The new ecology is largely place-based in ways that integrate anthropogenic and non-anthropogenic influences.

Yet, as Botkin argues, ecology today has yet to settle on a new root metaphor of nature.
Moreover, the heterogeneous ontological model of ecology today translates into a heterogeneous ethical correlate. Humans are understood to be integral to the ecology of nature and yet still capable of great, “unnatural” harm. Nature may still be subject to human “management” in some sense, but this cannot be done by relying on any theoretical models that overly imply universality in application, precision, certainty, and predictability—and hence technical control. Without the internal coherency afforded by root conceptual metaphors, any answers we give to questions of management within the sanctity of ecology today will have to be as metaphorically heterogeneous as the science it draws upon. For we have to ask, on what basis do we “manage,” what can we “agree” on to order our relationship to the natural world? The multifarious relationships between physis and techne remain a thorny issue for conservation and restoration biologists alike, and this extends to sustainable development as well—and for the same reasons. Without some degree of internal coherency, the metaphors and narratives that constitute the background of thought cannot ethically guide culture in consistent and compelling ways. Ultimately, the much more difficult question of cultivating a relationship to the ecological world capable of fostering sustainable human societies depends centrally on substantive cultural changes that reinvision the basic relationship between civilization and wilderness. This demands not only coherent philosophical articulations, but compelling ones as well. If a viable environmental culture is to develop, it has to address the timeless existential questions that all cultures have to address, and do so in meaningful ways. The post-modern paradigm of ecology has to be responded to, for example, in the same way Leopold responded to the organic paradigm of his time.

While progressives compel us to relate to the social world actively, Leopold compelled the environmental movement to relate to the ecological world in ways that spoke to a sensibility
of home, belonging, and purpose. Confronting the issues of post-modern ecology in particular and the wilderness debate in general, we now have to ask what it is to relate to the socio-ecological world. In this regard, some of the developments emerging from the wilderness debate and elsewhere offer promising first steps.

Emerging Responses: Reinhabiting the Socio-ecological World

In *The Great New Wilderness Debate*, Callicott and Michael Nelson report seeing “two alternatives to the received wilderness idea currently taking shape.”¹⁴⁵ One is to “deanthropocentrize” the wilderness idea by dedicating areas of undeveloped land for biodiversity rather than human-centered ends such as “recreation, scenery, and solitude.” The other is to “replace the received wilderness idea with the obviously related, but very different, concept of wildness and the concepts of free nature, sustainability, and reinhabitation that are allied with it.”¹⁴⁶ As Callicott and Nelson note, this latter alternative is relatively amorphous conceptually. It requires an ethical ontology that articulates “a human harmony with nature, a mutually beneficial relationship between Homo sapiens and the ecosystem human beings inhabit.”¹⁴⁷ As I argue throughout this thesis, however, discovering and developing true, post-metaphysical alternatives will not be easy. My efforts to demonstrate a turn from reactive to responsive environmentalism based on a socio-ecological relationship to the world, therefore, will focus on the latter alternative to the traditional wilderness idea, particularly the concept of reinhabitation.

After enumerating the ways in which the wilderness idea actually divorces us from the “biological order,” Jack Turner's “In Wildness is the Preservation of the World” turns to a discussion of what it is to reinhabit wildness.¹⁴⁸ The concept of wildness, however, remains vague and in dispute. Like *physis* for the Greeks, it's a concept with widespread appeal. But also
like *physis*, appropriations easily conflict with one another. Cronon and Waller, for example, both champion wildness as the appropriate metaphysical alternative to the wilderness idea. Yet Cronon speaks of the “tree in the garden” to argue the case that “wildness (as opposed to wilderness) can be found anywhere: in the seemingly tame fields and woodlots of Massachusetts, in the cracks of a Manhattan sidewalk, even in the cells of our own bodies.”¹⁴⁹ For Waller, however, “the tree in the garden is not wild because it has been removed from its ancestral ecological and evolutionary context. We should define an organism as tame or wild according to its context rather than its constitution”¹⁵⁰

Maskit's appropriation of Deleuze and Guattari's distinction between “smooth” and “striated” space, by contrast, speaks to both the world we inhabit and the new ecology. Smooth space can be thought of as wild space insofar as it’s uncolonized by the sort of taming forces described by Birch, Crist, Irene Klaver, and others. Striated space, by contrast, is space that’s been “territorialized.” Accordingly, Maskit argues for a politics that “de-colonizes” striated space and converts it to relatively smooth space. But not all smooth space is desirable. Birch’s example of finding wildness in old road beds or Cronon’s example of the tree in the garden, for instance, may be “smooth” insofar as control is absent. But this kind of smooth space won’t help us learn how to inhabit the socio-ecological world more generally. And so Maskit introduces the idea of “historically smooth spaces.” Simply put, areas that have been smooth or wild for longer periods of time should be understood as more valuable.

The phenomenology of temporal space here is a key development. For example, we can think of natural places like “ancient forests” or “timeless canyons” as well as historic social places like quaint medieval European towns as embodiments of temporal space. Such areas have a deep history that tends to appeal—a deep sense of time that translates into a deep sense of
reality. This existential anchor undoubtedly means something to a culture living in a high-paced, ephemeral, and even disposable world of constant change. Applied to the socio-ecological world, reinhabiting place means establishing oneself within the social and ecological communities one dwells in.

This is what Gary Snyder means when he speaks of wildness as a bioregional connection to place: “Bioregionalism calls for a commitment to this continent place by place, in terms of biographical regions and watersheds. It calls us to see our country in terms of its landforms, plant life, weather patterns, and seasonal changes...to become ‘reinhabitory’.\textsuperscript{151} Here, Snyder takes important steps toward balancing social and ecological imperatives. Yet, to the extent that bioregionalism is defined predominantly “in terms of its landforms, plant life, weather patterns, and seasonal changes,” he remains slanted towards organic primitivism. Like the Transcendentalists, Snyder calls for a return to the close communities people took for granted before the Industrial Revolution. As such, his strategy involves privileging ecology as the unifying center: “To work on behalf of the wild is to restore culture.”\textsuperscript{152} Humanist progressives, however, might be inclined to invert this to say: “To work on behalf of culture is to restore the wild.”

While taking significant steps in the right direction, such post-wilderness proposals remain stuck, in one way or another, within the dichotomous conceptual frameworks that impel us to choose between the social and the ecological worlds. The reason, I suggest, has a lot to do with an unconscious reliance on the ontological and ethical dichotomies discussed above. While a conscious need has developed to transcend such dichotomies, without equally conscious efforts to develop alternatives to the metaphors and narratives that maintain their cultural hold, such efforts will remain mired in subject/object metaphysics despite earnest intentions to the contrary.
In this regard, Merchant and Plumwood take us even closer to relating to the temporal spatiotemporality of socio-ecological place. They propose metaphors that mutually relate the social and ecological worlds in lieu of the subject-oriented metaphor of the machine and the object-oriented metaphor of the organism. Insofar as the subject/object framework that divides the organic primitivists from the humanist progressives encourages an existentially reactive relationship to the world while socio-ecological mutuality invites a responsive relationship to it, Merchant and Plumwood are among those marking a turn from reactive to responsive environmentalism.

Socio-ecological Agency: The Relational Metaphors of Merchant and Plumwood

Perhaps the most pressing need regarding the project of articulating an understanding of the nonhuman world as a “partner” (Merchant) or a something we can communicate with in “dialogue” (Plumwood), is to overcome modernist assumptions of nature as either a lifeless world of passive objects or as something so large and powerful that it completely absorbs “mere” humans. The question of how humans are to relate to the ecological world is tied to the question of how the ecological world relates to humans. To this end, there has been a concerted effort to re-articulate nature as an agent that we can relate to.

One of the first steps toward socio-ecological partnership and dialogue is moving beyond the one-sidedness of the anthropocentrism vs. ecocentrism hermeneutic. Such interpretive strategies have proven to be irreducibly tied to a problematic and obsolete metaphysics that pits the subject against the object, techne against physis, etc. As revealed in the wilderness debate, philosophical and political problems inevitably surface regarding the marginalized world (social or ecological) that has been held out of reach.

Like Plumwood, Merchant argues that the best way to transcend the dominating tendencies of anthropocentrism, while avoiding the ecocentric problematic of sacrificing one’s
cultural identity to the cosmological whole of nature, is to understand the self “as grounded in the concept of relation rather than in the ego, society, or the cosmos.” The challenge represented by the non-equilibrium paradigm in ecology plays an important role here. Merchant suggests that this “post-modern science” is compatible with a depiction of nature as an active agent. Situating Botkin’s non-equilibrium ecology in a broader cultural context, Merchant claims that

The concept of discordant harmonies, theories of the chaotic and complex behavior of nature…raise questions about earlier ethical approaches to environmental management. Self-interested, or egocentric ethics (what is good for the individual is good for society); social-interested, or homocentric ethics (the greatest good for the greatest number); and even earth-centered, or ecocentric ethics (all living and non-living things are morally considerable and have rights) all have problematical implications for a sustainable world….What is called for is a new ethic that arises out of both the needs of nature and the needs of humanity. Both must be considered as active agents.

The partnership metaphor challenges the organic primitivist project of protecting archaic states of nature from human disturbance as well as the humanist progressive assumption that we can abstract nature linearly, use science to accurately deduce its inner workings, and manage it to specification with the use of modern technologies. In neither of these views is nature seriously understood as an influential force on humans. As such, Merchant counsels the “need to cultivate a new ability to hear nature's voice.”

If a partnership framework helps us listen to the otherness of “nature's voice,” will it also enable us to “speak”? That is, will a partnership framework not only encourage the kind of respect needed to attune people to the natural world and learn from it as such, but also empower them to actively respond to it in ways that promote mutual adaptation, to say nothing of the mutual thriving? For Merchant, human agency is just as important as recognizing that of nature's. A partnership is one “in which humans act to fulfill both humanity's vital needs and nature's needs...”
In this sense, the partnership metaphor calls for an attunement to place that relates the social and ecological worlds dynamically: “A partnership ethic entails a viable relationship between a human community and a nonhuman community in a particular place, a place in which connections to a larger world are recognized through economic and ecological exchanges.”

Defining ourselves in partnership, Merchant suggests, we become empowered to perceive the emerging needs of the social and ecological worlds, reason about them as such, and make decisive actions accordingly without the biases built into organic primitivism or humanist progressivism.

If Merchant's relational metaphor of partnership articulates an equity between the social and ecological worlds, then Plumwood's relational metaphor of dialogue articulates a communication between them. Dialogue is important, she argues, because the metaphysics at the heart of modernity tends to encourage “monologue.” Whereas humanist progressivism tends to encourage one-way communication from the social to the ecological world, organic primitivism foster monologue in the opposite direction. Such closed off and one-sided relationships are best understood as monological to the extent that influence or power flows predominantly in one direction: from the privileged poles of organic primitivism and humanist progressivism to their marginalized opposites.

Plumwood speaks of a debate between Naess and fellow mountaineer Peter Reed to illustrate the problems that accompany the identity vs. difference framework. Reed criticizes Naess's focus on the existential identification with nature represented by Self-realization. Like Rolston, Reed argues that respect has to be grounded in the very existential difference that Naess sought to overcome. For Plumwood, Naess is right to criticize Reed's dualism insofar as the latter reproduces the issues that stem from such a metaphysical standpoint, including the twin...
problems of alienation and domination. “It is hard to know how this kind of orientation to 'the Wholly Other' can provide a basis for consideration of nature in the large number of situations where it is less impressive and more vulnerable—precisely...where we especially need a respect ethic.”

Nevertheless, Naess's model of a “fusion” of interests with the natural world is also problematic. For instance, there are indeed critical differences between human and nonhuman interests such as habitat needs, and any attempt to gloss over those differences only serves to absorb the nonhuman world into the human world despite intentions to the contrary. As previously argued, this kind of ecocentrism also invites a number of political problems. For Plumwood, we “need to stress the difference and divergent agency of the other in order to defeat that further part of the colonizing dynamic that seeks to assimilate and instrumentalize the other, recognizing and valuing them only as a part of the self, alike to self, or as means to self's ends.”

Plumwood thus makes a distinction between an “identification” with the natural world and our “continuity” with it, on the one hand, and between “hyperseparation” and “difference” on the other. There are indeed continuities between the social and ecological worlds that enable humans and nonhumans to truly relate to one another responsively. But there are also critical differences between them that don’t amount to hyperseparation. For Plumwood, Naess's arguments against Reed's concept of nature as “pure other” and Reed's critique of Naess's identification with nature as “pure self” are both valid. But each position is also flawed insofar as they reproduce “the underlying metaphysical choice of Same/Different.” The virtues and vices of each position, and the problems represented by such a false dichotomy, necessitate “a resolution via a third position that would allow us to combine elements of both continuity and
difference, self and other, in dynamic tension.”161 This “third position” would become articulated as dialogue.

Given that the metaphors we employ to think abstractly and reason derive from our embodied experience in the “sensorimotor world,” as Lakoff and Johnson argue, the self/other communication phenomena we experience in the everyday human world seems to offer a rich cognitive framework for articulating how we might better relate to the socio-ecological world. Our capacity for relating to others in complex and nuanced ways via communication is surely innate to the evolutionary development of Homo sapiens. Although we typically think of conscious verbal language as the essence of communication, this is only the tip of the iceberg—the rest of it being unconscious, pre-linguistic, and embodied. Like abstract conceptualization, communication is very much an expression of the cognitive background that largely determines our cultural relationship to the world in basic ways. In a word, as I argue below, this more cultural form of communication can be summed up simply as “responding to the situation.”

While Plumwood does not speak in terms of an ethos of respect or empowerment, it is possible to articulate her basic model of socio-ecological communication along similar lines. On the one hand, she speaks of those “communicative virtues” that promote a presence of “openness” to nonhuman others that “listens” to them as such. On the other hand, there are virtues that encourage an “active invitation to communicative interaction” and “negotiation, a two-way, mutual adjustment stance.” The former family of virtues, I suggest, embody the ethos of respect expressed by organic primitivism at its best, while the latter family of virtues convey the empowerment of humanist progressivism at its best. Importantly, Plumwood does not intend this “third position” of dialogue as an alternative to identity and difference, but rather as a complementary approach. Like Merchant's partnership metaphor, socio-ecological dialogue can
be generalized as an articulation of how we relate to the world in a basic sense without necessarily falling into metaphysical essentialism and foundationalism.

Respectful “Listening,” Empowered “Speaking,” and Buber's Mutualism

The current paradigm in ecology and the place-based reinhabitation theme in the wilderness debate are both conducive to the relational metaphors of partnership and dialogue. By articulating the social and ecological worlds as dynamically related, dialogical partnership can express a continuity between the social and ecological worlds without eclipsing their differences. At the same time, relational metaphors can help mediate the ethical extremes between “hands-on” progressivism and “hands-off” primitivism. Finally, I argue that understanding our relationship to the socio-ecological world in terms of dialogical partnership is philosophically conducive to complimenting the ethos of respect and empowerment.

The open and receptive orientation to the world at the heart of the ethos of respect can be understood in terms of the virtues of the respectful “listener,” while the confidence and proactive orientation basic to the ethos of empowerment can be read as the virtues of the empowered “speaker.” The truly open listener respects and values the otherness of the world. As such, the open listener is capable of learning from, and adapting to, a variety of human and nonhuman others, things, and situations. By contrast, the confident speaker is empowered to invite relationships in pro-active and responsible ways. If the open listener is capable of respectfully hearing the voice of others and understanding them as such, then the confident speaker is capable of voicing itself to others—and even empowering the marginalized politically by “giving voice to the voiceless.” Both orientations to the socio-ecological world are imperative to a truly dialogical partnership.

While some prove themselves open and respectful listeners and others demonstrate the
empowered confidence needed to speak effectively, only those capable of being both good
listeners and good speakers can properly be called good communicators. And of course, good
relationships of all kinds depend centrally on good communication. In this sense, partnership
itself implies dialogue. While humanist progressives excel in their ability to actively “speak”
from the social world and organic primitivists “listen” well to the ecological world, what is
ultimately needed is a culture capable of genuine communication in socio-ecological partnership.

Modern philosophies of communication have long assumed a dialectical model that takes
the form of active speakers (subjects) and passive listeners (objects) taking turns in a back-and-
forth exchange. Yet only when both self and other express a genuine mutuality can we truly
move beyond the subject/object assumptions of speaker/listener communication. As such, it is
helpful to take our conceptual leave from lived experience if we are to avoid reverting to the
privileging and marginalizing poles of metaphysics. And indeed, it is from lived experience that,
according to Lakoff and Johnson, we derive the “embodied metaphors” that inform language and
abstract thinking in the first place.

There hides a great deal of experience in the response in the forms of that which precedes
the response and that which follows from it. For example, what we say when speaking to others
(and how we say it) is largely influenced by the response we anticipate from them. That is, what
we say and the body language that accompanies it not only depends on our own perspectives,
aims, and so on, but it also depends on our understanding of the other and the situation itself. As
such, how we anticipate responding to the speaker greatly influences what we tune into as
significant. Likewise, what we say and how we speak in response to others or the situation is
conditioned by similar factors. Neither an ontology of difference nor identity can capture the
basic mutualism of the phenomenon of response.
It is the response that intertwines listeners and speakers, constantly translating one into the other—in ways, indeed, that cannot simply be reduced to “listeners” vs. “speakers.” It is in the response that we find good communicators as well as the “live” conversations that creatively emerge from them. Such dialogues are neither completely “spontaneous” in the primitivist tradition of *physis*, nor are they deliberately calculated in the anti-primitivist tradition of *techne*. While people are often absorbed in good conversations, they never really “loose themselves” as listeners, much less sacrifice their identities by “submitting” to the speaker. And while speakers may assert themselves passionately and forcefully in good conversations, they never “dominate” them. Only when mediated by rigid metaphysical precepts are they encouraged to do so.

Buber understands the extreme predispositions toward dominating and submissive forms of dialogue as being overly oriented to what he calls the “It” world, as opposed to the world of “You” (often translated as “Thou”). In some ways, the distinction between these relational orientations corresponds variously to Plumwood’s distinctions between dialogue and monologue. The I-It and I-You relations flow in and out of one another in the course of experience. As Maurice Friedman explains, “I-It is not evil in itself but only when it is allowed to have mastery”.

The I-It relationship is between subjects and objects, and it is important because it orders our world in predictable, familiar, and secure ways. The structures of the It-world mediate experience and establish what Buber calls “orienting knowledge.” Existentially, such knowledge is “buried” in the past and, consequently, determinative for the future. We can therefore count on it to secure life and safely guide us through it. “This world is somewhat reliable; it has density and duration; its articulation can be surveyed, one can get it out again and again....Without it you cannot remain alive; its reliability preserves you.” Insofar as the root metaphors and narratives
discussed in this thesis are culturally normative and invisible as such, they establish our relationships ahead of time by instructing our perceptual and evaluative expectations. For this reason, we cannot simply “overthrow” or analyze away the ethical ontologies of organic primitivism and humanist progressivism. We can, however, keep them from having ideological “mastery” to the extent that we temper their positive cultural service with another valuable need—the need to openly embody the “here and now” of lived experience.

In this sense, there is good reason to be culturally conservative in how one relates to the world. And yet, when such metaphors and narratives become invisible, concertized, and tightly grasped as such, problems can arise at the extreme ends of the I-It continuum. Indeed, these extremes bear some correspondence to those of organic primitivism and humanist progressivism. Especially in times of socio-cultural confusion, disorientation, and anxious insecurity, there is a tendency to gravitate too strongly to one side or the other of the I-It—subject-object or self-world—divide. Buber understands this dual tendency as an attempt to find secure ground as a way of coping. Here, one can either sacrifice the self (or human) by absorbing it into the world as wilderness realism sometimes does, or one sacrifices instead the otherness of the world by absorbing it into the (human) self as social constructivism is sometimes guilty of. He writes:

Henceforth, when man is for once overcome by the horror of alienation and the world fills him with anxiety, he looks up...and sees a picture. Then he sees that the I is contained in the world, and that there really is no I, and thus the world cannot harm the I, and he calms down; or he sees that the world is contained in the I, and that there really is no world, and thus the world cannot really harm the I, and he calms down. And when man is overcome again by the horror of alienation and the I fills him with anxiety, he looks up and sees a picture; and whichever he sees, it does not matter, either the empty I is stuffed full of world or it is submerged in the flood of the world, and he calms down.165

Buber understands the former tendency, that of absorbing the self into the world, as the “capricious man” who simply “allows things to happen.” Or he identifies it with ascetic and mystical sensibilities in which one sacrifices one's being to something “greater.” For such a
person, “there is no longer any room for a will of one's own, he accepts his place in the Plan.”

Buber also saw that “abdication in the face of the It-world” often lends itself to a declensionist sensibility that tends to exalt “laws” of organic fatalism in one form or another.

Buber understands the opposite extreme of absorbing the world into the self as those, for instance, who no longer encounter “stars and creatures and world but [rather] feelings and representations.” Those who “psychologize the world” in this way, as in the idealist strain of social constructivism, express “the gigantic illusion of a human spirit bent back into itself—the delusion that spirit occurs in man.” For Buber, this way of relating to the world also diminishes our freedom. As Friedman writes: “A subject that annuls the object to rise above it annuls its own actuality.” Those that reduce the It-world to the I-world simply live in a “world of conscious aims and purposes supported by a collection of means.” This, however, merely maintains the illusion of freedom because one can only react to a world that is itself devoid of response. For the I of this I-It relationship, “the It does not respond but passively allows itself to be experienced.”

For Buber, genuine freedom cannot be found in the I-It relation insofar as such relations are lived in the past and deterministically projected into the future via metaphors, narratives, and other metaphysical constructs. Although they secure our lives, they do not foster the creative and decisive moments that mark authentic freedom. We might be prepared for such transformative events at some level, but they are not predictable precisely because they are not grounded. According to Buber, it is only when we find ourselves in a position to truly respond to such events as we encounter them that we face the unanticipated “You.”

However, it is not enough for an event to simply be unanticipated. As Heidegger argued, when we encounter something unanticipated we usually react, as when something isn't working
We react to un-ordinary occurrences, but we respond to the extraordinary moments when we encounter the “You” as other “with our whole being.” For Buber, the You can be human, natural, or spiritual. When we find ourselves truly respecting the unique moment, as when we encounter a particular person, landscape, or idea in meaningful context, and we do so by being truly present, we can then respond to the encounter by bringing ourselves to the situation in relatively unconditioned ways. This ability to respond and to be present to the response of others is, for Buber, the realizing essence of novelty and creativity.

But what can be said about our relationship to the nonhuman world more specifically? As previously noted, Buber divides the I-You relationship into the natural, social, and spiritual. He understands our response to nature as “below language,” our social responses as “entering language,” and our spiritual responses as that which “lacks but creates language.” When we encounter something in the natural world in the specificity of the moment, we respond to it for what it is rather than what it culturally represents. Such encounters are contextualized and inhabited within the meaningful, everyday place we are existentially adapted to. And to the extent that our anticipated responses serve to tune us into different aspects of the world, language can develop in response in an effort to express what's been revealed. In this way, our natural, social, and spiritual responses reinforce one another to keep us well adapted to the socio-ecological world and maintain its health as such.

To the extent that meaningful situations “speak” to us, responding to the natural world means belonging to a world that responds to us. But what does it mean to say that the world “speaks” to us? Of course, such wording is metaphorical to the extent that embodied communication is nonverbal. And insofar as our relationship with the ecological world is pre-
linguistic, there's a sense in which we are indeed relegated to using conceptual metaphors that borrow from the social world in order to express it. That is, we can use direct language to speak about the ways we relate to the ecological world. We extract resources, restore habitat, etc. But if this relationship is mutual, as Merchant, Plumwood, and others properly insist, we have to confront the question of how the natural world relates to us. It is in this domain especially that we need the right metaphors and narratives. This returns us to the question of nonhuman agency.

The Question of Agency and the Eco-Phenomenology of Response

As mentioned above regarding the debate between Callicott and Rolston, the question of agency is central to the philosophical conflicts expressed in the wilderness debate. It is also central to Merchant and Plumwood's relational metaphors. At this point, however, a difficult question presents itself. Living in modern Western culture, the notion that we can come to understand the nonhuman world as a kind of subject that we are in partnership with or that we can communicate with seems far from intuitive. Of course, all radical proposals for how we relate to the world in basic ways never seem intuitive at first. One could think of the daunting task of the early moderns as they tried to convince their contemporaries that the natural world was more like a machine than an organism. And yet, one could also think of the developments that culminated in the Scientific Revolution that lent themselves to such an interpretation and made it believable. Centuries later, it indeed became intuitive to think of nature as a machine. Similarly, we can look to current developments to see how we might relate to the natural world in more mutualistic ways.

Despite such developments, however, I question the strategy of making “nature's agency” intelligible as the best way to overcome Cartesian metaphysics. My concern is that the notion of agency itself presupposes a mind with an intentional will. Trying to overcome this modernist
understanding of agency, Plumwood makes a case for “weak panpsychism” (later developing it into what she calls “intentional panpsychism”). By overcoming perceptions that locate agency or intentionality solely in human consciousness, we can sensitize ourselves to nonhuman agency and “extend our recognition of mind-like qualities much more widely into the world.” But is a focus on “mind,” human or nonhuman, really feasible?

I agree that at various pre-linguistic levels we can communicate in embodied form with nonhuman others and even places. That is, I think communication is a good metaphor. It's a promising way of encouraging the reinhabitation to place needed to develop viable relationships with the socio-ecological world. But in looking for agency in the nonhuman world, we remain conceptually stuck in the Cartesian tradition of consciousness despite earnest efforts to move beyond it. The notion of intentional agency, for instance, connotes a center of causation and the primacy of conscious deliberation. As such, it remains implicitly tied to a first-person perspective rather than the relationship itself. Environmental historian Linda Nash explains:

The problem is that we have not overtly challenged common assumptions about human agency. What are these assumptions? Typically, the agency of human beings is distinguished by our ability to convert ideas into purposeful actions. Thus while it is not only human action that alters the world, human action remains unique. To invoke a classic example, while a bee can build a hive, the bee cannot envision the hive prior to its building. The bee just builds, whereas the human is presumed to think and then build....But what if, instead of...insisting on the "agency of nature," environmental historians...insist on the need to think about agency in altogether different terms?....What we uncover is not merely the way that nature influences and constrains human actions, but also the way that particular environments shape human intentions. [T]he bee/architect metaphor does not hold. It is through practical engagement with the world, not disembodied contemplation, that human beings develop their plans.¹⁷³

I think Nash is on the right track here. But here too, traditional metaphysics creeps in to the extent that she articulates a reversal from privileging the mind-pole of “disembodied contemplation” to the body-pole of “practical engagements with the world.” As Plumwood makes clear in the wilderness debate, however, reversals retain dualism, they do not go beyond
it. As Nash's alternative to “disembodied contemplation” illustrates, looking for intentional agency in the nonhuman world maintains problematic assumptions inherent to modern philosophies of consciousness and lends itself to reversals that keep our thinking trapped in the very dualisms we wish to overcome.

Instead of approaching socio-ecological communication in terms of expanding intentional agency to the nonhuman world, therefore, I propose that we approach our ethical ontologies of socio-ecological relationship via an “eco-phenomenology of response.” The notion of response, I believe, has several advantages over that of intentional agency. First, response is clearly a relational term. And when contrasted with the term reaction, we see that the response connotes volition in ways that suggest agency while avoiding its one-sided mental connotations.

If relational metaphors like partnership and dialogue can successfully articulate a mutuality of response rather than agency, they may enable a more successful movement beyond the metaphysics of identity vs. difference. In this regard, both Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty have been credited with developing an ontological “identity in difference” that reconciles this dichotomy. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger critiqued Husserl's neo-Cartesian phenomenology largely by developing an innovative alternative to his transcendental intentionality. Heidegger's existential phenomenology can be read as articulating an “average everyday” kind of intentionality of openly responding to the situation one is adapted to.174

In his essay *The Thing*, Heidegger speaks of a “co-responding.”175 Existing responsively means being open in such a way that we are continuous with the world and well adapted to it as such, but adapted to it in ways that retain meaningful distinctions between self and others, things, and situations. When we respond to the world openly, the world responds by opening itself up to us, inviting us to respond again in turn. In his 1950 “A Letter to a Young Student,” Heidegger
explains how we should think about such a co-responding. He writes: “To think 'Being' means: to respond to the appeal of its presencing. The response stems from the appeal and releases itself toward that appeal. The responding is a giving way before the appeal and in this way an entering into its speech.” Here we can interpret such worldly appeals as responses to human existence. But responding to such appeals does not imply blindly following or submitting to them as such. Rather, this entering into the “speech” of the world, or what Heidegger calls “the path of responding,” demands a sort of “stepping back” or a vigilant “testing” of that hearing that takes the form of a “thoughtful deliberateness.” Indeed, as he says elsewhere, it's a listening that takes the form of speaking itself.

In many ways, Merleau-Ponty inherited Heidegger's ontology of response. But it is in his notion of “reversibility” that we see Merleau-Ponty's own ontology of “identity in difference.” I have been suggesting that we respond to a world that responds to us. For Merleau-Ponty, this is because there is a “reversibility” between self and others, things, situations, etc. But this does not mean that how we (as individuals, humans, societies, etc.) respond to the world is identical to how the world responds to us. As Martin Dillon argues, there are “asymmetries” basic to our relationship to the world that mark important divergences. This is what distinguishes Merleau-Ponty's notion of reversibility from what Plumwood means when speaking of dualistic reversals.

Merleau-Ponty illustrates this asymmetry in The Visible and the Invisible by first drawing attention to the fact that the phenomenology of touching something is not identical to being touched. Even, as he says, when I touch my left hand with my right, there is an important difference between the touching and the touched even though they are both part of the same sentient flesh. From this paradigm of touch, he goes on to investigate the reversibility of vision, intersubjectivity, reflection, and language. In each case, however, there are degrees of asymmetry.
that distinguish the co-response characteristic of one situation or event from that of another.

In the same way, there's a continuity between the social and ecological worlds insofar as they are both expressions of the same world. But there are also asymmetries that mark important differences. This is all the more true to the extent that the “visible” world of nature is held in a kind of asymmetric tension with the “invisible” world of culture. Any understanding of the corresponding of socio-ecological partnership or dialogue, therefore, would have to successfully articulate this asymmetry if mutual adaptation, to say nothing at this point of a mutual thriving, is to be approached.

Now we're in a better position to ask: What does it mean for the nonhuman world to respond to us? In his essay “Eye and Mind,” Merleau-Ponty cites a passage that attempts to illustrate the reversibility between a painter and the forest he is painting. “In a forest, I have felt many times over that it was not I who was looking at the forest. I felt, on certain days, that it was rather the trees that were looking at me.” He goes on to say that, at this point, “one no longer knows who sees and who is seen, who paints and who is painted.”179 Taken literally, of course, this implies an absurd relationship of symmetry in which the trees somehow have light-sensitive flesh capable of visualizing the painter in the same way that the painter visualizes the trees. So what explains the asymmetrical relationship of reversibility between the painter and the tress? Dillon explains:

[This] passage...leads to a discussion of the mirror image. The trees 'see' in a manner comparable to that in which the mirror 'sees' the painter: that is, the trees, like the mirror, let him become visible; they define a point of view on him which renders visible for him something that otherwise would remain invisible—his outside,...his carnal presence. The trees and the mirror function as Other. They provide, at the level of perception, the literal reflection of thought turned on itself.180

Is Merleau-Ponty simply being metaphorical in the sense that it is as if the trees “see” the painter? And if so, why does he seem to speak so literally about such “seeing” trees? Similarly,
in thinking about the nonhuman response, are we being literal or metaphorical? Does the nonhuman world really “respond” to us? Or does it simply appear to when in fact it is reacting involuntarily to what we do? In thinking through the very dichotomy between the metaphorical and literal, such questions take us to the limits of language.

Plumwood insists that the “as if” strategy of attributing mind-like qualities to nonhumans is inadequate. Insofar as such a strategy projects human consciousness onto the natural world, it refuses to “take intentionality seriously in ethical terms.”\textsuperscript{181} Similarly, Dillon argues that to speak of the trees “as if” they were seeing the painter would tie Merleau-Ponty to the very philosophy of consciousness he wished to overcome. Like Plumwood, he wants to \textit{de-center} ontology, and this entails going beyond consciousness.

How might we cultivate relationships to the visible and invisible places we live in so that, in being collectively attuned to them, we find ourselves capable of openly adapting to the rhythms that make up the social and ecological character of these places? And not only openly adapting to our socio-ecological dwellings, but actually thriving with them? If an eco-phenomenology of response is to capture the synergy of such a culture-nature intertwining in ways that truly speak to a dialogical partnership between them, it should locate the creative potential for this synergy in the response itself. It should explore, for example, how differentiated social responses lend themselves to transformative cultural responses to the ecological world.

It is in this sense that I think Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty serve as a corrective to Plumwood's panpsychic approach. It is true that Plumwood insists on recognizing radically different forms of intentional agency in the nonhuman world. Yet, the language of intentionality and agency doesn't convey the asymmetries between the social and ecological worlds very well. Indeed, it lends itself to dualistic reversals insofar as intentional agency remains conceptually
tied to philosophies of consciousness.

Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty both suggest an existential phenomenology in which we openly respond to the things and others of the world—and understand ourselves as such—to the extent that the world responds to us in varying degrees of asymmetry. To the extent that the dominant metaphors of nature, the machine and the organism, keep us mired in Descartes' reactive world of either identity or difference but not both, then Merchant and Plumwood's relational metaphors might successfully supplant them and point to a reformed culture defined by responsive socio-ecological relationships. Root conceptual metaphors have this power. New metaphors, however, aren't enough if they don't successfully break the spell of Descartes and the Greek Enlightenment before him.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Reflecting the distinction between “reactive” and “responsive” relationships to the world, my project in this thesis has been two-fold. The first, which constitutes chapters I and II, is to recognize how traditional metaphysics tends to ontologically and ethically privilege one pole over its opposite by assigning it exclusive reality and agency. I have endeavored to illustrate this ontological and ethical one-sidedness in various ways by offering genealogies of organic identity and mechanistic difference. In analyzing how this dichotomous metaphysics has manifested in environmentalism in general and the wilderness debate in particular, I have argued that it can be generally understood at a cultural level as expressing a reactive relationship to the world.

The second and more difficult project of this thesis, which constitutes chapter III, involves exploring ways of countering that Cartesian habit by articulating a relationship to the world sensitive to the mutuality of culture and nature, civilization and wilderness, and so on. By exploring the innovative and interlocking developments in non-equilibrium ecology, the place-based notion of reinhabitation in the wilderness debate, and the relational metaphors of Merchant and Plumwood, I have endeavored to show that a general transition is taking place within the broader outlines of environmentalism in ways that are sensitive to the problems of traditional metaphysics. This has largely taken the character of an ethical ontology of relationality. I denote this understanding of relationality with the term response to express the inherent mutualism of genuine relationships in contrast to the exclusive reality and agency assumed in reactive ways of relating.

Drawing on Merchant and Plumwood's metaphors as articulations of such a relational ethical ontology, I suggest that the aim of a dialogical partnership with the socio-ecological
world ought to be two-fold. It should articulate relationships to the world that successfully combine the virtues embodied in the ethea of respect and empowerment without privileging one over the other. Insofar as the dialogical response encourages both the openness of the respectful “listener” and the responsibility of the empowered “speaker,” the virtues of both subcultures should cross-fertilize under the rubric of socio-ecological partnership. To the extent that there is a cognitive, existential, and phenomenological relationship between responding to people and responding to the world in general, I have argued that learning to relate to people responsively presupposes and contributes to relating to nonhuman others, things, and situations responsively.

Because such a philosophical project requires a more complete understanding of what it is to respond in general, I have turned to Buber's work. Buber's communicative paradigm of dialogue helps to more fully flush out Merchant and Plumwood's project of articulating a dialogical partnership with the socio-ecological world. However, to the extent that their project of making “nonhuman agency” basic to their relational metaphors is untenable, I have drawn on the works of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty to argue for an eco-phenomenology of response.

Ultimately, a more dynamic ethical ontology is needed that privileges neither identity nor difference, but instead expresses a kind of mutual relationality responsive to socio-ecological contexts and situations. And similarly in the realm of ethics, what's needed to reinhabit culture is not a pre-determined orientation to the past or to the future, but rather a kind of cultural attunement to the socio-ecological situations of the present. Non-linear narratives are needed that simultaneously draw meaning from the cultural past while projecting us with purpose into the social future. Both organic primitivists and humanist progressives tend to escape the here and now of culture or “mere custom”—the former looking back in order to identify with the archaic world of spontaneous physis while the latter differentiating itself from it by looking ahead to an
improved world made possible by the *techne of nous*. Reinhabitation, by contrast, should attune culture to the socio-ecological “here and now” of global warming, sustainability, and social justice as well as wildlife habitat conservation and restoration.

Rather than encouraging a freedom from technological civilization or a freedom from the constraints imposed by wild nature, ethical ontologies should promote a kind of *wild techne* that gives us the freedom to engage the socio-ecological world and respond to it appropriately. What needs to be respected *and* empowered is the socio-ecological relationship itself. Scientific and technological developments in general, and land management and development in particular, can be neither wholly spontaneous in character as if they simply manifested from the dictates of wild nature, nor completely intentional and deliberate as if we could stand back and rationally create the world of our choosing. What's called for, instead, are experiential relationships to the world capable of opening culture up to the socio-ecological situation and actively responding to it as such.

By developing co-responsive relationships, I suggest, we might find ourselves in a better position to ask questions that were only approached in this thesis. How do we understand the relationship between nature and culture or wilderness and civilization? What is it, more exactly, for the ecological world to respond to the human world, and vice-versa? What is the world situation today and how do we respond to it? And finally, given the ethical ontologies that we've been encultured with and given our social ideals of a mutually adaptive and thriving relationship between the social and ecological worlds, how can we both conservatively draw on and radically reform the background of Western thought so as to successfully realize those ideals? And not only realize those ideals, but cultivate the ability to ask the right questions in the first place?

To the extent that the cultural background cannot be directly approached as such, I
suspect that addressing such inquiries has something to do with learning how to carefully respond to the socio-ecological world itself. This brings to mind Meno's paradox. Questioning Socrates’ epistemology, Meno asks: “But how will you look for something when you don't in the least know what it is? How on earth are you going to set up something you don't know as the object of your search?” Ultimately, addressing this paradox does not, as Meno assumes, boil down to a black and white issue of knowledge vs. ignorance. If environmental science, engineering, and politics excel as ways of answering questions, perhaps the role of environmental philosophy should be to cultivate ways of thinking that come to ask the right questions—and ask them by learning how to respond to the situation we find ourselves in.

2 Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty offer philosophies that have been described as articulating an “identity in difference” based on the existential phenomenology of relationship. See, for example, Ed. Duane H. Davis, Merleau-Ponty's Later Works and Their Implication: The Dehiscence of Responsibility (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2001), pp. 13, 240.


5 Ibid, p. 37


7 Ibid, Chapter 4

8 Ibid, p. 3

9 Lakoff and Johnson speak of the “background” in relation to Merleau-Ponty, who “argued that 'subjects' and 'objects' are not independent entities, but instead arise from a background, or 'horizon,' of fluid, integrated experience on which we impose the concepts 'subjective' and 'objective.' Lakoff and Johnson, Philosophy in the Flesh, p. 97, italics added. For a Heideggerian discussion on the phenomenological “background,” see Hubert L. Dreyfus Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time (Cambridge & London, The MIT Press, 1990), pp. 198-200, 223.

10 See Lakoff and Johnson, Philosophy in the Flesh, p. 25


13 Ibid, p. 388

14 Ibid, p. 383


Lakoff and Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh*, p. 118.

Max Weber, while not mentioning the machine metaphor directly, speaks of the “disenchantment of the world” in Western culture as the outcome of equating “progress” with the increased “rationalization and intellectualization” represented by science. See Max Weber “Science as Vocation” in H.H Gerth & C. Wright Mills *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York, Oxford Press, 1947), pp. 129-156.

See Merchant, *The Death of Nature*.

Max Weber offers a discussion of ideal types as theoretical constructions meant to loosely define and analyze “life orders” as they’ve developed historically. He writes: “The constructed scheme, of course, only serves the purpose of offering an ideal typical means of orientation....Such constructions make it possible to determine the typological locus of a historical phenomenon.” Weber, “Religious Rejections of the World and Their Directions,” in Gerth & Mills *From Max Weber*, pp. 323-324.


Ibid, p. 15.


Barnes, *Early Greek Philosophy*, p. 20.


Ibid, p. 102.
30 Ibid, p. 21
32 John 1:1;14 N.I.V., with Greek inserted.
33 Lovejoy and Boas, Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity, p. 109
34 Merchant, *The Death of Nature*, p. 103
35 Plato, *Timaeus*, 29d, Trans. by Donald J. Zeyl
36 Ibid, 30c-31a
37 Plato, *Republic*, 428e, Trans. by G.M.A. Grube
38 Ibid, 431e-432a
40 Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy*, p.186
41 Ibid, p. 169
42 Lovejoy and Boas, Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity, p. 174
43 Aristotle, 981 b28
44 Lovejoy and Boas, Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity, p. 190
45 Gottlieb, *The Dream of Reason*, p. 73
46 Ibid, p. 77
47 See Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy*, p.55
48 Ibid, 57-58
49 See Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy*, pp. 65-66
50 Quoted from: Merchant, *The Death of Nature*, pp. 128-129
52 See Merchant, *The Death of Nature*, Chapter 8
The association of organicism and fatalism goes back as far as Heraclitus' theory of the world cycles. Diogenes Laertius explains Heraclitus: “And the whole is limited and the cosmos is one. It arises from fire and again is consumed by fire in certain periods throughout all eternity. And this takes place in accordance with fate.” Quoted from Lovejoy and Boas, Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity, p. 80

See Merchant, The Death of Nature, Chapter 8


This was especially true for rationalists like Descartes, Leibniz, and Spinoza.

See Merchant, The Death of Nature, Chapter 9. “The domination of nature depends equally on man as operator deriving from an emphasis on power and man as manager deriving from the stress on order and rationality as criteria for progress and development.” p. 235

Ibid. Merchant writes “The brilliant achievement of mechanism as a worldview was its reordering of reality around two fundamental constituents of human experience—order and power.”

Lovejoy and Boas, Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity, pp. 1-4


Ibid, p. 206


My usage of the “ontology” of metaphor and the “ethics” of narrative are similar to what Clifford Geertz terms “worldview” and “ethos,” respectively In American Indian Environmental Ethics: An Ojibwa Case Study, J. Baird Callicott and Michael P. Nelson quote Geertz. “In recent anthropological discussion the moral (and aesthetic) aspects of a given culture, the evaluative elements, have commonly been summed up in the term “ethos,” while the cognitive, existential aspects have been designated by the term “worldview.” A people's ethos is the tone, character, and quality of their life, its moral and aesthetic style and mode; it is the underlying attitude toward themselves and their world that life reflects. Their worldview is the picture of the way things are, their concept of nature, of self, of society. It contains their most comprehensive ideas of order.” The point to be made here is that, anthropologically, “worldview” and “ethos” are not to be neatly separated: “The powerfully coercive 'ought' is felt to grow out of a comprehensive factual 'is'.” (p. 12)

65 Ibid, pp. 3-4


67 Richardson, *Henry David Thoreau*, p. 189

68 Ibid, p. 169

69 Ibid, p. 245

70 Ibid, p. 293

71 Ibid, p. 153


73 Ibid, pp. 320-321

74 Ibid, p. 325


78 Ibid, pp. 265-266

79 Miller, Gifford Pinchot and the Making of Modern Environmentalism, p. 328


81 Fox, The American Conservation Movement, p. 324

82 Ibid, p. 322

84 Ibid, p. 249
85 Ibid, p. 244
86 Ibid, p. 257


90 Ibid, p. 351
91 Ibid, p. 339
92 Ibid
93 Ibid, p. 351
94 Ibid, p. 357
95 Ibid, p. 360


97 Ibid, p. 484, italics added
98 Ibid, p. 490
99 Ibid, p. 483
100 Ibid, p. 485
101 Ibid
102 Ibid, p. 495

104 Ibid, p. 368
105 Ibid

106 Ibid, p. 379

107 Ibid, p. 369, italics added

108 Ibid, p. 370


112 Ibid, p. 355


114 Ibid, p. 375

115 Ibid, p. 376


117 Ibid, p. 381, italics added

118 Ibid, p. 383


121 Ibid, pp. 465-466

122 Ibid, p. 465

123 Richardson, Henry David Thoreau, p. 27


126 Ibid, p. 456


128 Ibid, p. 403


135 Ibid, p. 355


137 Ibid, p. 376


142 Ibid, pp. 26-27


145 Callicott & Nelson (Eds.) *The Great New Wilderness Debate*, p. 13

146 Ibid

147 Ibid

148 See Jack Turner “In Wildness is the Preservation of the World” in *The Great New Wilderness Debate*, Ed. by Callicott & Nelson

149 William Cronon “The Trouble with Wilderness, or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature” in *The Great New Wilderness Debate*, Ed. by Callicott & Nelson, p. 495


152 Ibid, p. 651


154 Ibid, p. 217

155 Ibid, p. 227

156 Ibid, p. 224

157 Ibid


159 Ibid, p. 64
Ibid

Ibid, p. 61


Buber, *I and Thou*, pp. 82-83

Ibid, 121-122

Ibid, p. 156

Ibid, p. 141

Friedman, *Martin Buber*, p. 137

Ibid, p. 72

Ibid, p. 59


Buber, *I and Thou*, p. 57


Martin Heidegger, “A Letter to a Young Student” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, pp. 183-184

Ibid, pp. 184-185


Ibid, p. 161

Ibid, pp. 161-162

182 Plato, *Meno*, 80d3


Buber, Martin. *I and Thou* (New York: Touchstone, 1996)


—*The Wilderness Debate Rages On* (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 2008)


McIntosh, Robert P. *The Background of Ecology: Concept and Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985)


Russell, Bertrand. *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Clarion, 1945)


