INTER-SPECIES ETHICS: AUSTRALIAN PERSPECTIVES

A Cross-Cultural Study of Attitudes Towards Non-Human Animal Species

by

DAVID HOWARD BENNETT

A thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

of the Australian National University

January 1986

Except where otherwise acknowledged all the work in this thesis is my original work.

Signed

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The production of a thesis is a lot like the production of a play. The final product that you see before you is the result of many people working behind the scenes. I should particularly like to thank (in chronological order) my supervisors: William Grey, Thomas Mautner and Ian Hughes. I should also like to thank (in alphabetical order) the following people for helping make this production possible. Pastor P. Albrecht, Nona Bennett, Penny Hanley, Dick Kimber, H.J. McCloskey, Calvin Martin, David Martin, John Morton, Jean Norman, John Passmore, Val Plumwood, Brian Scarlett, Peter Singer, Peter Sutton, Richard Sylvan, John von Sturmer, and the library staff of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (especially Nan and Pat).

ABSTRACT

This thesis presents an Australian-oriented cross-cultural study of attitudes towards non-human animal species. It is divided into three sections. In the first section, ideas and considerations of five Australian philosophers - H.J. McCloskey, John Passmore, Peter Singer, and Val Plumwood and Richard Sylvan - are surveyed. This section is divided into three parts: morally relevant characteristics, arguments for recognizing moral consideration, and calls for new ethics. In the first part, the possibility of non-human animals possessing morally relevant characteristics such as interests, self-awareness, moral autonomy, rationality and a soul are considered and doubt is cast on these characteristics being exclusive to humans. In the second part, instrumental, prudential, and extension arguments and rights are considered. Advantages and disadvantages of each type of argument are given. In the third part, deep green theory and deep ecology are considered as answers to calls for a new environmental ethic. In the second section, attitudes and practices of Australian Aborigines are given. This section is also divided into three parts: an overview of Aboriginal attitudes and worldviews, the attitudes and practices of the Wik of North Queensland, and the attitudes and practices of the Aranda of central Australia. In each of these parts the ways in which Aborigines relate to their environment and non-human animal species is considered within the framework of the four-fold relationship of people, landscape, ancestral beings, and totemism. The third section is a discussion of what Aboriginal attitudes and practices can contribute to the resolution of some of the problems presented in the first section. It is concluded that Aboriginal attitudes and practices can do little to solve the problems of non-Aborigines, if non-Aborigines remain within

the current dominate social paradigm. Aborigines can provide inspiration for changes. Principally, this is inspiration for developing an alternative environmentally-oriented paradigm, rather than inspiration for changes in specific practices.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of Chillagoe's Midlu.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores inter-species ethics in an Australian context and alternative moral principles for better conduct towards non-human animal species. As used throughout this thesis inter-species ethics refers specifically to the ethical relationships between humans and non-human animal species. It does not refer to relationships between or among two or more non-human animal species.

The structure of this thesis is divided into three sections. The first section focuses on issues raised by Australian philosophers interested in environmental ethics and on questions concerning moral consideration for non-human animal species. Particular attention is given to the thinking of H.J. McCloskey, John Passmore, Val Plumwood and Richard Sylvan[1] and Peter Singer. The second section focuses on Australian Aboriginal attitudes towards and consideration for non-human animal species as exemplified by the Aranda and the Wik. The third section explores the extent to which Aboriginal perspectives and attitudes can serve as guides for appeals for better treatment of non-human animmals by non-Aboriginal Australians and also explores what directions for a 'new ethic' could be derived from Australian Aboriginal thinking.

In the first section three major and related topics are explored: 1) the morally relevant characteristics of non-human animal species, 2) metaethical issues, concerning 'rights', 'obligations', 'preferences', and 'values'; and 3) calls for a 'new ethic'. I begin by examining characteristics of non-human animal species. If a non-human animal species possesses morally relevant characteristics or qualities, then a closer examination of their morally relevant characteristics should help dispel misconceptions about them that lead philosophers to dismiss the possibility of granting them moral or ethical considerations. Second, I compare the views of the above mentioned philosophers and contrast their stances so as to identify the problem areas and to evaluate their suggested solutions or resolutions to the problems. Third, calls for a 'new ethic', which have been made, for example, by Val Plumwood and Richard Sylvan (christened "deep green theory" by Sylvan) and by the Deep Ecology Movement are examined and some ground work is laid for a possible contribution to this task by Australian Aboriginal groups.

The second section is also divided into three parts: 1) a general overview of Aboriginal

---

[1]Formerly Val and Richard Routley.

thinking about their land, their ancestral beings, their totems and their relationships to non-human animal species; 2) a more detailed examination of Wik thinking on these issues; and 3) a more detailed examination of Aranda thinking on these issues. The general overview serves as a guide to Aboriginal 'cosmology', 'morality', 'philosophy', and the ideology that is the basis of their treatment of non-human animal species. It is noted here, and again in the general overview, that the Aboriginal concepts or ideologies are those of traditional Aborigines as we (present-day non-Aborigines) understand them. What is considered is a reconstruction of idealized 'morality' or religion and attitudes towards animals of two Aboriginal groups as understood by non-Aboriginal explorers, anthropologists, other academics, and others who observed and recorded their impressions of Aboriginal concepts relating to non-human animal species. It is not intended to be a comment on how closely traditional practice may or may not have matched traditional ideology, or on present-day practice and ideology. To what degree (if any) these idealized "moral" and religious ideas are held by present-day Aborigines is not at issue here.

The third section focuses on whether or not Australian Aborigines can be ecological moral authorities for present-day Australian society. I explore to what extent Aboriginal perspectives and attitudes can serve as guides for appeals for better treatment and I also explore what directions could be derived from Australian Aboriginal thinking for a 'new ethic'.

Section 1

Before giving a more detailed analysis and comparison of the stances of the five philosophers who are the central concern of Section 1, it is worthwhile to summarize their stances.

H.J. McCLOSKEY

McCloskey's conclusion is that rights should be restricted to the realm of rational beings. He contends that non-human animals species are entitled to better treatment and consideration as long as any obligations regarding them do not impinge on the rights of humans, who are rational beings, although he does "not believe all human beings to be rational beings in the relevant sense" (McCloskey, personal communication, 1984). McCloskey presents several arguments based on the connection between moral autonomy and the nature of rights against extension or acknowledgement of rights to non-humans, claiming that because animals are incapable of making claims, fulfilling obligations, and reciprocity they are incapable of possessing 'rights to'.[2] He denies that there are "rights

[2]'Rights to' and 'rights against' are explained more fully in Chapter Three.

against". He feels that having interests is a factor in having rights, but not sufficient for predicating rights. He feels that the more a being is like a human the more it is to be given human-like consideration.

John Passmore

John Passmore's interest is the practical concern of eliminating some of the more ecologically disastrous aspects of Western traditions, while retaining "what seems uniquely valuable in our society - its capacity to criticise ways of life, its pluralism, its diversity" (Passmore, personal communication, 1983). His position on man's responsibility for nature, which he sees as derivative of man's responsibility for other men, can be summed up in three parts: 1) critical analysis of moral principles in Stoic-Christian traditions; 2) instrumental value arguments - in a very broad sense of instrumental, not narrowly utilitarian - for the preservation of species and wildernesses; and 3) although he does not regard it as a *responsibility*, humanizing nature, but without wanton destructiveness and cruelty, by relating to it through valuable aspects of Western civilization. Passmore holds that the Stoic-Christian traditions of not sanctifying nature, of not accepting direct moral obligations to other species, and the view of nature being for man's use can be interpreted to give either a 'despotic' view or, as he prefers, a 'responsible dominion' view, marked by co-operation and stewardship. Although he does not totally reject calls for a 'new ethic', he favours a stronger adherence to principles and beliefs that will produce practical concern and believes the 'seeds' of these principles and beliefs reside in Western culture. Finally, the 'seeds' selected for more ecologically and environmentally responsible principles and beliefs should not be those that foster mysticism and discard science, a particular glory of the Western tradition of rational enquiry and a valuable tool in man's process of relating to nature.

Val Plumwood and Richard Sylvan

Plumwood and Sylvan argue that moral principles can be applied to all species and to the natural environment in general. They deny that moral consideration and intrinsic values are limited to humans and that the current anthropocentric morality should simply be extended to other species. They reject anthropocentric and human chauvinistic (the substantial, discriminatory, and unjustifiable preference for humans) moral systems, and instead propose an annular picture of types of objects of of moral relevance based on characteristics including, *inter alia*, sentience, preference-having, interest-having, and contractual obligations. These categories are *not* associated with any one particular class of beings. Their proposed ethical framework would allow for a non-interference principle and generalizable moral principles associated with the preferences, interests, and the

intrinsic value of species and biotas.[3]

Peter Singer

Singer is a utilitarian who is interested in better treatment for all sentient animals, but focuses on factory-farmed and experimental and laboratory animals, because they are "relatively neglected in proportion to the extent of their sufferings" (Singer, personal communication, 7 December 1983). He proposes to liberate non-human animals from human speciesism - the prejudical and discriminatory preference of one species over another - and advocates the extension of moral principles to all species capable of suffering. He argues that some sentient non-human animals - beings capable of suffering pain and experiencing pleasure - are as capable of suffering as some humans, and he argues that since there is no other demonstrable principle making moral consideration exclusive to humans, it is inconsistent not to extend moral consideration to such beings. On the question of killing non-human animal species, he argues that one relevant criterion for consideration is whether the creature in question is self-conscious or merely conscious.

Section 2

There are no fixed orthographies for most Aboriginal languages, although some conventions have been adopted for some languages. 'Aranda' (the spelling to be used in this text) may appear in quoted sources as 'Arunta' for instance, and 'Wik' may appear as 'Wik-Mungkana', 'Wik-Mungkan', 'Wik-Munkan', or 'Wig-Munkan'. Where spellings of Aboriginal words and names vary, one spelling will be chosen for use in the text and variant spellings that may appear in quotations will be indicated.

The two Aboriginal groups in this study - the Wik and the Aranda - were chosen for several reasons. First, they inhabit very different environmental regions of Australia. The northern Queensland country of the Wik is mostly wet and green, while the south-central Northern Territory country of the Aranda is mostly dry and red. The difference in environment could indicate a difference in response to the environment, if a policy of 'environmental determinism' is followed.[4] Second, by the standards of Australian Aboriginal anthropology both groups have been studied for a reasonably long time: the

---

[3] A biota is the sum total of flora and fauna in any designated region.

[4] Environmental determinism will not be taken up in detail in this thesis, but the influence on Australian Aboriginal anthropology can be seen in part from works such as F.D. McCarthy (1957) and T.G.H. Strehlow (1965) that have in turn influenced this thesis. McCarthy has quoted J.M. Herskovits, *Man and His Works*, as being important to him.

Wik since the 1920's and the Aranda since the 1890's. Also, both have been the subjects of recent as well as early studies. The earliest studies of these groups were done when Aboriginal contact with whites was still low, thus decreasing the chances of these reports being adulterated or conceptually distorted by cultural contact. The recent studies provide an opportunity to check for cultural change, or in some cases to determine if (or how) earlier studies might have been influenced by the attitudes of early investigators. Reports of earlier observations may have influenced the expectations of later observers, but it is likely that the greater the similarity between the earlier and the later studies, the closer the reports on cultural attitudes will reflect the actual attitudes of the people studied.

It has been estimated that Australia has between three hundred and seven hundred dialect or language groups; often misdesignated as "tribes". The difficulty in determining the number of groups derives from the difficulty in defining what constitutes a dialect and what constitutes a language or for that matter, a 'tribe'. Linguistic similarities among groups in a region make enumeration perplexing. With so many groups, it might well be wondered if two groups are representative. On the one hand, there are differences among the groups; for example, within the five Aranda dialect groups, there are notable differences in the events and characters in myths relating the same story. Mythical characters are usually area-specific. Although their deeds may be repeated at another location, each deed is always fixed to a specific geographical location. Furthermore, there are differences in ritual practices. For example, in some areas circumcision is practiced and in other areas it is not. On the other hand, there are strong similarities among all the groups across the continent. All groups, for example, have remarkably similar cosmological beliefs about the origin of their particular ancestral beings. Another example of the similarities among groups, and one of special interest to this work, are 'increase' ceremonies. All groups have ceremonies for the maintenance of species in their country, and although the practice of these ceremonies may differ greatly from group to group, two groups will be sufficient to elucidate significant similarities and differences. More groups short of a statistically valid sample would not prove one group to be right and another wrong, although a statistical sample would presumably show that more groups follow one practice over another. For the purposes of this inquiry it is sufficient to examine two groups with substantial and sustained records of their customs and beliefs, and that come from very different environmental regions.

Section 3

Section 3 brings together some current problems in Australian environmental philosophy with particular reference to non-human animal species and proposes a possible role for Australian Aborigines as ecological role models for 'ecophilosophers'.

American historian, Calvin Martin states in "The American Indian as Miscast Ecologist" and in the "Epilogue" to *Keepers of the Game* that the American Indians cannot teach contemporary America how to deal with its environmental problems, because the American Indian's "traditional interpretation of the world beyond him is profoundly different from our Western cosmology" (Martin 1981a, 138). What he has in mind is that contemporary Western cultures cannot adopt the assumptions, metaphysics, or ethical considerations of other cultures, like Amerindian or Australian Aboriginal cultures, because their interpretations of the world are different from and, more important, deemed to be incompatible with ours. He assumes that if we cannot accept another culture's way of looking at the world, we cannot learn from it. He illuminates the differences and incompatibilities with examples such as the Western de-animation of Nature (Martin 1981a, 138), the incorporation by American Indians of non-human animal species into the human social universe (Martin 1981a, 144), and Indian society and culture not functioning outside of and separate from the natural world, but rather being permeated by it (Martin 1981a, 146-7).

A parallel can be drawn between the role of American Indians as ecological teachers in America and for Australian Aborigines in Australia. However, drawing such a parallel does not entail accepting Martin's conclusion that they cannot fill such a role. While Martin's objections have some force, he overstates his case. It may be true that Western cultures cannot accept another culture's attitudes and perspectives, at least as accepted by them. But this does not mean that we cannot gain partial comprehension of their attitudes and perspectives and seek support in our own traditions for those injunctions, nor that we cannot accept some modified form of another culture's attitudes and perspectives. Furthermore, while it may be true that we cannot fully understand or appreciate how another culture forms its attitudes and perspectives and therefore we may partially misrepresent their attitudes and perspectives, our misrepresentations may still be valuable. Even granting that we cannot adopt the moral injunctions of another people nor accept their principles as our assumptions, we can by looking at their injunctions and principles challenge or reinforce our principles, and having done so, we can invent new solutions ('new ethics') or reinforce our solutions. In the words of William Godfrey-Smith - commenting on Martin's position - "we can gain much of positive value from such

cultures...even though it may be that the insights which we gain are, from their own point of view, in some important respects a misrepresentation of their beliefs" (Godfrey-Smith 1983, 357). Martin's denial that some portions of Amerindian or, in the present case, Australian Aboriginal beliefs can be used to solve some problems in Western environmental ethics does not allow for the possibility of misrepresenting or misunderstanding what is being taught but still learning something valuable.

The main objection is that the two traditions are incompatible. Two points relating to this objection should be made. The first point is, if American Indians or Australian Aborigines can supply leading ideas for the environmental movement or provide a model for a 'new ethic', then it is assumed that they already incorporate in their way of life or their ideals perspectives and attitudes that are desirable for adoption by Western cultures. That is, if their attitudes are to be used as the model, then their attitudes should be examples of what it is desirable to achieve. This assumes that an Indian or Aboriginal approach to the environment is not only preferable to Western approaches but is capable of achieving the results, goals, or standards desired by Westerners. This would require that Western 'ecophilosophers' or more broadly Western cultures: 1) have a concept of what is a desirable direction to go; 2) have some understanding of what an Indian or Aboriginal approach offers, even if this understanding is faulty. Also Western cultures must be willing to reconcile their traditions with the traditions of their chosen model or abandon their orientation for that of the chosen model. This is the second point - unless Westerners are willing to accommodate another tradition in their own or to abandon their own in favour of another, then Indians or Aborigines or any other tradition although alluring, remains unacceptable as a leader, teacher, or model. Section 3 deals, then, with what may or may not be acceptable from Aboriginal traditions to Western traditions and the degree to which they are acceptable and also indicates something of the order of the magnitude of the task of accepting the acceptable.

CHAPTER 2

Non-Human Animal Species

And Morally Relevant Characteristics

This chapter explores some morally relevant characteristics and the possibility of some non-human animal species possessing those characteristics. It has been assumed that non-human animal species are bereft of morally relevant characteristics. This assumption needs to be challenged. An examination of characteristics of non-human animal species should help dispel philosophers' misconceptions about them.

At least since the pre-Socratics, philosophers interested in ethics have touched on the issues of whether or not non-human animals are eligible for or should be given moral consideration. Confronted with problems of moral consideration for non-human animal species most philosophers would disregard apparently morally relevant similarities between humans and non-humans with a cavalier wave of the hand and a reference to some characteristic, attribute, quality or excellence (hereafter, this phrase will be abridged to the term characteristic) thought unique to humans that disqualified non-humans from moral consideration.

As with many other issues, Western philosophic and religious traditions bolstered one another on this issue. The Australian philosopher and historian of ideas, John Passmore has characterised this prevailing attitude in Western traditions, "for centuries it came to be standard Christian teaching that men could do what they liked with animals, that their behaviour towards them need not be governed by any moral considerations whatsoever" (Passmore 1974, 112). The governing attitude towards non-human animal species was, if non-humans presented a moral dilemma, then, "The moral thing to do about a moral dilemma is circumvent it" (Brophy 1971, 125).

For a variety of reasons chronicled by historians, philosophers and ecologists among others, questions of moral concern for non-human animal species can no longer be cavalierly circumvented[1]:

> New evidence of higher cognitive faculties in some animals including reason, language, and emotional sensitivity have resonated throughout the scientific and

---

[1]Some works on Western environmental concern and the development of relationships between Western society and nature are: Clark 1977; Glacken 1967; Klaits 1974; Passmore 1975; Passmore 1975; Sessions 1981; Singer 1977; White 1967.

> lay press.... Ethological work on animal and human behavior has thus eroded the key foundation for the age-old rigid distinctions between human and non-human....(Burghardt and Herzog 1980, 763).

One major reason for a closer scrutiny of and renewed confrontation with questions of moral concern in the twentieth century has been the "environmental crisis" - a culmination of factors including environmental degradation, pollution, human population growth and the endangering or extinction of species - that has forced Western societies to re-evaluate their relationships to the environment and responsibility to or for nature.[2] Increasingly the impact of human activities on the biosphere's capacity to support human life became a concern. Contamination of the environment was (and is) proceeding at a pace faster than natural processes could neutralize or disperse it. The possibility of human fertility outstripping the capacity of natural resources to sustain our species became very real. The increasing rapidity with which other species and their habitats disappeared passed from a lamentable loss to a concern about an impoverishment of other species for human enjoyment, study and use.

Since the mid-1960's, a number of philosophers in Australia have reflected upon moral consideration for non-humans. They have considered issues, such as the moral uniqueness of humans, the limitation of moral concern to humans, morally relevant characteristics and ways and means of promoting, recognizing, or otherwise attempting to alter or increase moral consideration for and the moral significance of non-human animal species.

One issue of primary concern has been: On what grounds is moral consideration to be recognized? Two much discussed grounds for moral consideration have been instrumental consideration and intrinsic consideration. Instrumental consideration or value is attributed to a being that in some way is of value to or useful to another. Bernard Rollin defines the instrumental value of non-human animal species as "any worth they may have stems from their usefulness for humans" (Rollin 1981, 19). Intrinsic value is attributed to a being that has value in-itself because, for instance, it possesses some morally relevant characteristic that should be taken into account. The types of arguments that follow from these considerations - instrumental and prudential arguments in the first case and extension arguments and animal rights in the second case - will be discussed in Chapter Three. In conjunction with the latter arguments arise discussions about the morally relevant characteristics of non-human animal species.

---

[2]Some sources on the "environmental crisis" are: Black 1970; Carson 1962; Commoner 1972; Pirages and Ehrlich 1974.

Humans have for so long been the only beings on the moral plain that, seeing other species dimly on the horizon, they liken them to humans. Moreover, because humans are the moralizers, their own kind will be at the centre of their moralizing. Moral consideration is so anthropocentric, McCloskey contends, that humans cannot operate with moral regard to any other species, except as that species reflects the human. One kind of moral consideration is thus misused when rights are ascribed to non-human animal species, from McCloskey's point of view:

> It is the heart of my contention that those who attribute rights to animals without anthropomorphizing them are misusing, misapplying, or revising the concept of a right. That is why I am concerned to suggest that animals which lack the relevant human excellences noted here cannot be possessors of rights... (McCloskey 1975, 416).

This argument begs the question against animal rights or any moral consideration. Why must the relevant excellences be "human" excellences? Why must the possessors of rights be anthropomorphized? Surely what is important about the recognition of moral consideration or rights specifically is possessing the morally relevant excellences, because they are morally relevant and not because they are human excellences.

By placing the emphasis on the human aspect of the characteristics, rather than the morally relevant aspect, moral consideration is restricted to humans by definition. Plumwood and Sylvan have characterized the restriction of moral consideration to humans by fallacious definitional move as being like a fallacious appeal to club rules as self-validating and unchallengeable:

> The fallacy of the definitional move is that of believing that by converting the substantive evaluative theses of human chauvinism to matters of definition they become somehow exempt from challenge or need for justification. This is comparable to justifying discriminatory membership for a club by referring to the rules, similarly conceived as self-validating and exempt from question or need of justification (Routley and Routley 1979, 38).

In this case the club rules define the "Moral Club". The definitional fallacy that Plumwood and Sylvan describe is an attempt to justify unwarranted inferior treatment by institutionalizing it. In this case, human chauvinism is institutionalized. Human chauvinism is a form of class chauvinism. If class chauvinism "is *substantially* differential, discriminatory and inferior treatment (by sufficiently many members of the class) for items outside the class, for which there is not *sufficient* justification" (Routley and Routley 1980a, 96, their emphasis), then 'human chauvinism' is the form of class chauvinism in which the species, *Homo sapiens*, substantially morally discriminates against everything non-human by an insufficiently justified assumption of human moral uniqueness.

There is a perniciousness about human chauvinism, because it is moral narcissism. Human beings, the only creatures of this earth known to be capable of discharging moral obligations, become equated with the class of objects of moral consideration. The "fairest of Creation, last and best/Of all God's works"[3] become not only the standard by which all subjects are to be judged, but the exclusive objects of moral consideration as well.

According to Plumwood and Sylvan, these definitions call upon either physical characteristics or a set of properties that are logically connected with qualification for moral consideration. They hold, and I think rightly so, that physical characteristics are not morally relevant:

> It is impossible to restrict moral terms to particular species, when species distinctions are defined in terms of physical characteristics which are not morally relevant. More generally, an attempt to derive a logically necessary connection between humanity itself and the applicability of morality is bound to fail. For creatures anatomically and zoologically distinct from humans which are identical with humans in terms of morally relevant features are logically possible, upsetting any logical linkage (Routley and Routley 1979, 39).

It would be possible to imagine, as Jonathan Swift has, a race of beings, such as the yahoos, that has the physical characteristics of humans, but almost no other characteristics associated with humans or thought morally relevant, and a second race of beings, the houyhnhnm, that does not have the physical characteristics of humans, but does have other characteristics associated with humans or thought morally relevant. Would one want to say simply on the grounds of physical appearance that the yahoos were entitled to the same moral considerations normally recognized for humans, while the houyhnhnm were not?

This point about the irrelevance of physical characteristics can be made in another way. If a human physical characteristic is chosen, take for example taillessness, then some of the ramifications of considering physical characteristics morally relevant are immediately obvious. Moral consideration for any human born with an external extension of the coccyx is ruled out. Assuming that this criterion could be extended outside the human race, a manx (a tailless breed of cat) would rate higher than any other breed of domestic cat, although they are the same species.

The characteristics needed to support the definitional move have to be, therefore, other than physical characteristics. This leaves a range of characteristics that are properties

---

[3]Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book IX, Line 896.

logically connected with moral consideration. Of the many which have been used at one time or another as morally relevant and markers for distinctions between humans and non-humans - interests, including sentience; rationality; self-awareness; moral autonomy; and the human soul shall be taken up. These traits of humankind still command attention, while some of the other defining traits, such as tool use, have been abandoned. In a recent article on tool use among animals and insects it is stated, "Because so many primitive creatures display 'tool' use, it is no longer considered a sign of intelligence" (Abrahamson 1985, 25). With the abandonment of the connection of tool use to intelligence goes the connection to humans as a defining characteristic.[4] Although an exhaustive analysis of any one of these characteristics would be a study on its own, a brief and somewhat uneven indication of the sorts of problems involved in each can be given. In each case the purpose is to establish what the characteristic is and to cast some doubt on the exclusiveness to humans of the characteristic.

Interests

Interests have drawn much attention in literature on inter-species ethics. It can be argued, as Peter Singer and Bernard Rollin do (and I think rightly) that moral consideration is consideration for the interests of an entity. Rollin holds, "what makes something fall within the scope of moral concern of a being capable of moral action is the presence of needs, desires, goals, aims, wants, or, more generally, interests, which that being has and which the being capable of moral action can help, ignore, or hinder" (Rollin 1981, 35).

Two morally relevant senses of the concept of interests can be distinguished:[5]

> the sort of interests that organise or give a consistent direction to otherwise diverse activity - like an interest in music, or football, or making money. ... But we can say that something is in someone's interests, where what is meant is only that it is conducive to his well-being (Benn 1975, 9).

---

[4]Dispensing with tool use as a sign of intelligence poses an interesting problem. The problem is how to treat the link between a characteristic, the significance or relevance of that characteristic and its use as a defining criterion for humans. In this work it will be argued that if a particular characteristic has been considered morally relevant and it can be shown or reasonably asserted that some other species possesses that characteristic, then for the sake of consistency that species should be treated with like (but not necessarily identical) consideration due to a human with that characteristic. But another option exists. This other option is less desirable to those (like myself) who are in favour of greater moral consideration for non-human animal species. If it is shown that another species possesses a characteristic that has been considered morally relevant, then instead of extending like consideration, the other option is no longer to consider the characteristic morally relevant.

[5], For discussions of the two senses of interests *see* Frey 1979; McCloskey 1965; Regan 1977.

McCloskey acknowledges a distinction between the senses of "someone's interest in" and "in someone's interest" in his article *Rights*. He takes it as a foregone conclusion that animals cannot have interests in the sense of "someone's interest in", because "the concept of interests has this evaluative-prescriptive overtone" (McCloskey 1965, 126). As Tom Regan has noted, McCloskey states this claim without defending or establishing it:

> It is peculiar, in view of his observation that the concept of interests is 'important and elusive', that, after a few cursory remarks about it, McCloskey peremptorily declares that animals do not have interests, or, at any rate, that 'we decline to speak' in this way (Regan 1976, 253).

Singer - for one - does speak in this way. Interests in both senses are highly important. Singer argues that the interests of animals warrant consideration for their own sake and that humans have direct duties to members of other species, regardless of whether the animals have corresponding rights (Singer 1977, 246; 1979b, 196-7). Rollin - for another - argues in a similar vein, "that in any living thing, insofar as it evidences interests ... is worthy of being an object of moral concern" (Rollin 1981, 43). Singer and Rollin both hold that what is "in someone's interests" is worthy of moral consideration.

Like most other philosophers considering the moral relationships between humans and non-humans, Singer asks first if there is any basis or characteristic that limits moral consideration exclusively to humans and precludes giving moral consideration to non-humans. He says, "Faced with a situation in which they see a need for some basis for the moral gulf that is commonly thought to separate humans and animals, but can find no concrete difference that will do this without undermining the equality of humans, philosophers tend to waffle" (Singer 1974, 243). He claims that no such basis has yet been proved to exist.

If the class of all humans is compared with that of some given species, say wombats, using a given criterion for special moral consideration, say rationality, it is found that some humans have as little or less claim to rationality than some wombats. The categories of humans usually cited as examples of those with minimal, i.e. little or less, claim are infants, imbeciles, and the insane. If it is desired to exclude wombats from moral consideration, then infants, imbeciles, and the insane will also have to be excluded. Because most do not want to exclude any humans then they will have to accept members of other species have to be given moral consideration. This sort of argument is called, "The Argument From Marginal Cases" by Jan Narveson and is a call for consistency

(Narveson 1977, 164).[6] If it is true that a morally significant boundary that includes all members of the class humans and excludes all members of other classes cannot be drawn along species lines, then for a consistent application of moral principles the principles must be applied to any being who meets the criteria for the application of that principle. Sufficent rationality to make moral decisions is, after all, not characteristic of infants, the insane, or imbeciles.

If no basis has yet been shown for the exclusive moral consideration of humans over non-humans, then what basis is or bases are relevant to moral consideration? For an answer to this Singer turns to one of the founding fathers of his (the Utilitarian) tradition and quotes Jeremy Bentham, "...the question is not, Can they *reason*? nor, can they *talk*? but Can they *suffer*?" (Bentham 1823, 283). Singer elaborates on this:

> If a being is not capable of suffering, or of experiencing enjoyment or happiness, there is nothing to be taken into account. This is why the limit of sentience (using the term as a convenient, if not strictly accurate, shorthand for the capacity to suffer or experience enjoyment or happiness) is the only defensible boundary of concern for the interests of others. To mark this boundary by some characteristic like intelligence or rationality would be to mark it in an arbitrary way (Singer 1976a, 154).[7]

Sentience is a non-arbitrary, non-speciesist basis for moral consideration of interests, Singer holds, and furthermore, in Utilitarian terms, "the capacity for suffering and enjoying things is a pre-requisite for having interests in any meaningful way" (Singer 1976a, 154).[8] Singer uses interests here in the sense of 'in someone's interest'.

Singer's position is based on the principle of equal consideration of interests. In order to understand his use of sentience and interests as the foundation for moral consideration, a few points about his uses of equality and interests need to be explicated. First, Singer recognizes that there are morally relevant differences between humans and non-humans:

> there *are* important differences between humans and other animals, and these differences must give rise to some differences in the rights that each have. Recognizing this obvious fact, however, is no barrier to the case for extending the basic principle of equality to non-human animals (Singer 1976a, 150).

---

[6]John Rodman calls this argument, "The Method of Argument from Human Analogy and Anomaly" (Rodman 1977, 87).

[7]R.G. Frey contends that Singer accepts Bentham's claim without establishing it (Frey 1980, 158).

[8]Rollin argues that it is the other way around. Sentience is an example of an interest (Rollin 1981, 35).

These differences are not barriers because there are also morally relevant similarities and it is in regard to these that the principle of equality applies. Furthermore, he considers the principle of equality prescriptive, not descriptive:

> Equality is a moral ideal, not a simple assertion of fact. There is no logically compelling reason for assuming that a factual difference in ability between two people justifies any difference in the amount of consideration we give to satisfying their needs and interests. The principle of the equality of humans beings is not a description of an alleged actual equality among humans: it is a prescription of how we should treat humans (Singer 1976a, 152).

The principle of equality is extended to apply to relations between humans and non-humans in the same manner as it applies between humans. Singer proposes extending consideration of interests to give the interests of the other species an equal opportunity with humans. He is not proposing a transvaluation of values and moral considerations, but only an extension of current human values and considerations beyond the human species. While Singer's argument extends moral consideration from humans only to all sentient beings, his argument does nothing to change the present anthropocentric orientation of moral consideration. Although "moral extensions are 'inadequate to articulate the intention that sustains the [environmental] movement'" (Routley and Routley 1980a, 142)[9] nonetheless, the importance of extending moral consideration should not be belittled. Extension opens the way for more radical reconsiderations and changes. Through the use of extension arguments the idea that the interests of non-humans should not be violated for trivial reasons can be accepted. Extension arguments can be a starting point for the process of change in attitudes. Moreover, the basic principle of equality is extended so that, "the interests of every being affected by an action are to be taken into account and given the same weight as the like interests of any other being" (Singer 1976a, 152) and the recognition of the interests of non-humans is an important move in advancing moral consideration for them.

Second, important differences between humans and other animals give rise to, among other things, differences in capacities to enjoy or to suffer and, for that matter, to have interests:

> Giving equal consideration to the interests of two different beings does not mean treating them alike or holding their lives to be of equal value. We recognize that the interests of one being are greater than those of another, and equal consideration will then lead us to sacrifice the being with lesser interests, if one or the other must be sacrificed. (Singer 1979b, 195-6)

---

[9]This thought is a development of an observation by Rodman, political scientist and environmental thinker.

This may sound somewhat negative and defeating his purpose, because it suggests that a 'greater value assumption' (Routley and Routley 1980b, 171) i.e. the assumption that humans and their interests and concerns are automatically given greater value than anything else, still operates within his moral extension. But the distinguishing moral characteristics are not human and non-human characteristics, rather they are morally relevant or morally irrelevant characteristics independent of the species in which they occur. So there is a positive side:

> The more positive side of the principle of equal consideration is this: where interests are equal, they must be given equal weight. So where human and nonhuman animals share an interest -- as in the case of the interest in avoiding physical pain -- we must give as much weight to violations of the interest of the nonhumans as we do to similar violations of the human's interest (Singer 1979b, 196).

As an example of how the principle of equal consideration of interests operates in practice, Singer applies it to the human practice of eating sentient species. He argues that unlike some predators humans do not need to eat flesh and for moral, health, diet, and economic reasons *inter alia*, humans should eat further down the food chain.[10] Having argued this, he contends, that there remains only one reason for continuing to eat the flesh of sentient creatures: to cater for "our pleasures of taste, our practice of rearing and killing other animals in order to eat them is a clear instance of the sacrifice of the most important interests of other beings in order to satisfy trivial interests of our own" (Singer 1976a, 155).

Interests and Animal Rights

So far interests have been discussed as a basis for moral consideration on their own. With respect to one form of moral consideration - rights - there is more than usual agreement among opponents and proponents that interests are required for the possession of rights.[11] At one point McCloskey agreed that interests were required for the possession of rights. Except for a principle of equal consideration of interests, McCloskey's position ascribing on sentience and interests to non-human species was once very close to Singer's. As McCloskey subsequently stated his earlier position:

> The capacity to experience pleasure and pain seems to have greater moral

---

[10]For Singer's discussion of the reasons humans should eat further down the food chain, see Chapter 4 in his *Animal Liberation*.

[11]For a dissenting opinion on interests being a requisite for the possession of moral rights, *see* Frey, 1980.

> significance than the mere capacity to experience feelings of other kinds. However, again, apart from the fact that this capacity might be a ground for ascribing interests, and interests be a ground for ascribing a capacity for possessing rights, the moral significance of the capacity to experience pleasure and pain seems to relate only to duties, not to the capacity to be a bearer of rights (McCloskey 1979, 34).

Where they differ is on the significance of sentience 'to the capacity to be a bearer of rights'. Singer's argument need go no farther than relating sentience to duties. That sentience may or may not be connected to a notion of rights does not concern him. Singer explains rights in terms of duties. Because rights are significant for McCloskey, he is concerned with the connection between ascribing sentience and interests and the capacity to be a bearer of rights.

After the publication of his 1965 article, McCloskey subsequently revised his position, and diverged from Singer. McCloskey faults his earlier position on three counts:

> 1) First, I wish to concede that the concept of interests is a much looser one than I previously suggested. The original usage of the expression 'interests' may well have been, and its present paradigm use may still be, such as to relate interests to persons, where a person's interests relate to his good as that person as a physical and spiritual being.
>
> ...
>
> 2) A second respect in which I believe my earlier position to have been mistaken is in linking interests and the having of interests, with the having of the capacity to be a bearer of rights.
>
> ...
>
> 3) A third respect in which I wish to modify my view about rights and interests relates to the consideration that interests can be represented. I argued, and I believe, rightly, that it is possible to represent a being in respect of its interests, although the practical difficulties in the way of doing so are very considerable (McCloskey 1979, 36-9).

The second of these revisions is the most significant for the connection between having interests and having rights. McCloskey revises his views on interests to sever the connection between rights and interests:

> rights and interests are completely distinct things. A possessor of rights may wish to exercise his rights contrary to his interests. It may be in a person's interests to deprive him of the opportunity to exercise his rights contrary to his interests. He may lack the moral right to pursue his interests - this is so when his interests involve evil actions and ends, as with the racist leader, the professional criminal, and the like (McCloskey 1979, 39).

McCloskey wants to establish this sharp demarcation between interests and rights to establish a distinction between the values of rights and interests. He holds that rights are accorded for the good of the bearer, but interests can be immoral when the pursuit of them conflicts with someone else's rights. If having interests is taken as a necessary, but not sufficient condition for having rights, then having interests can remain a prerequisite for having rights, without recognizing rights for pursuing immoral interests. And it is this distinction he brings to bear against Singer's position on the equal consideration of interests:

> Pursuit of interests may involve doing what is gravely immoral, what one lacks the right to do. The view that has been canvassed by R.M. Hare, P. Singer and others that interests *qua* interests ought to be respected, and respected equally, rests on a completely uncritical appraisal of what is involved in interests and their pursuit (McCloskey 1979, 40).

McCloskey is correct in ascribing to Singer 'an uncritical appraisal of what is involved in interests', but too harsh. Singer's concern with interests is not as indiscriminate as McCloskey implies. Singer compares like interests. More specifically he wants to compare interests such as a single meal for a human against the only life of a pig.

The argument for predicating the possession of moral rights on the possession of interests is called the "interest requirement" by Frey and he states it like this:

> All and only beings which (can) have interests (can) have moral rights;
>
> Animals as well as humans (can) have interests;
>
> Therefore, animals (can) have moral rights (Frey 1980, 5).

It is not agreed among proponents and opponents of rights whether interests are a necessary, a sufficient, or a necessary and sufficient condition for rights. However, with regard to moral considerations other than rights, an interest requirement could be no more than a sufficient condition. Besides being a requisite for the possession of rights, interests can be ends-in-themselves. Singer argues that interests are what are to be considered, while McCloskey argues that if interests can be immoral and rights are for the benefit of the bearer, then rights are what are to be considered. McCloskey assumes that if the argument for equal consideration of interests presented by Singer is given any credence, then interests are merely a step on the way to rights, although he does not want to concede interests as necessarily a prerequisite for rights. He argues thus:

> The key to justice is the treating of equals equally, discriminating only on the basis of a relevant difference. Some, such as P. Singer and others, who see animals as coming under the orbit of justice, see as the basic duty of justice that

> of respecting all interests, whatever their nature and content. There are obvious objections to treating interests as a relevant basis for treatment - some interests are evil, and ought to be overridden, thwarted, morally ignored. It is what makes up the content of interests that is relevant to justice. This varies from person to person, being to being. I suggest that a serious approach to animal rights via justice would involve examining why, when, and in what ways, considerations such as desert, merit, well-being, levels of well-being, needs properly understood, wishes, desires, are relevant considerartions in respect of justice in the treatment of human beings, and then considering whether these considerations apply as dictates of justice in respect of animals (McCloskey 1979, 47-8).

Singer wishes to place the emphasis on equal consideration of interests; McCloskey wishes to place emphasis on the treatment of equals. Singer's concern is directed at the characteristic; McCloskey's concern is directed at the possessor.

By implying that interests are a step on the way to rights and not ends-in-themselves, when he speaks of "a serious approach to animal rights," he imputes to Singer a position held by some philosophers but not by Singer. Concerning rights, Singer says, "I doubt if the claim that animals have rights is worth the effort required in its defense; it is a claim which invites replies which, whatever their philosophical merits, serve as a distraction from the central practical question" (Singer 1979b, 197). His practical concern is to secure the better treatment of non-human animal species. This can be done by stopping at interests without making them a staging ground for a defense of animal rights, "anything that is expressed by talking of such a right could equally well be expressed by the assertion that animals' interests ought to be given equal consideration with the like interests of humans" (Singer 1978, 122). Nor does it follow that Singer or any other philosopher interested in moral consideration for non-human species ignores "examining why, when, and in what ways, considerations such as desert, merit, well-being" etc. are involved in their approach to bringing animals "under the orbit of justice". Indeed, this very consideration seems to be a point of a major departure between Singer and McCloskey. For McCloskey, 'justice' is closely related to respect for people's rights. He thinks that considerations of 'justice' are backward looking to people's rights. This is in contrast to Singer's utilitarian approach which is a consequentialist way of thinking.

Singer is interested in giving non-human animals equal and just treatment of like interests with humans and thereby making changes in the pragmatic treatment of non-human animals possible. McCloskey is interested in giving non-human animals better treatment, if better treatment for them does not inconvenience humans and if it does not accord animals a right or impose duties on humans. To prevent this latter consequence, McCloskey is careful to show that a duty does not necessarily imply that the object of the duty has a corresponding right:

> it is commonly assumed that the duties of justice relate only to humans, and that there the relevant correlative rights can hold only of humans. However, if one considers the accounts that have been given of justice the rendering to each what is due, treating equals equally, unequals unequally in the relevant respects, discriminating only on the basis of relevant difference, there seems no reason in the nature of justice itself why its principles could not be extended, if there were not other grounds for rejecting such an extension. I suggest that the reason the principles are not so applied is because the notion of a right held by the object of the duty of justice is so basic and intrinsic to the whole concept of justice, that where the object of the duty is apprehended as one who is incapable of rights, it is seen therefore to be incapable of being an object of a duty of justice. Since here we are proceeding on the hypothesis that animals could possess rights, it would follow that they could be the objects of duties of justice, and hence possess the rights that are correlative with these duties. The substantial question would then become that of determining what duties of justice could hold in respect of animals (McCloskey 1979, 47).

McCloskey postulates that unless the animals are entitled to the kinds of duties that carry with them correlative rights, they are not entitled to justice. Yet, he does not seem to go on to say anything that would contradict the hypothesis that animals could otherwise be the objects of moral consideration, although he does not affirm it either. Rights and duties are taken up in the next chapter.

Rationality

Foremost among the characteristics traditionally considered morally relevant is rationality. Two reasons for rationality being considered morally relevant are: the connection between rationality and moral agency and the thought that rationality is unique to humans. On the basis of the connection between rationality and moral agency, Kant considered rationality as the single most important morally relevant characteristic. Only finite rational beings, which Kant equated with humans, are entitled to direct moral consideration or duties. But Kant "merely assumes that it is only in human beings that we are acquainted with rational nature" (Broadie and Pybus 1974, 377). The significance of the connection has been summed up by Rollin:

> It is easy to see, of course, why rationality would be important for a being to be considered a *moral agent*, that is, a being whose actions and intentions can be assessed as right and wrong, good and bad. We are certainly not inclined to hold anyone responsible for his actions if he is incapable of reason - even our laws reflect this notion. ... But it is, of course, not obvious that one must be capable of being a moral agent before one can be considered an object of moral consideration (Rollin 1981, 11)[12].

---

[12]The connection between moral agency and moral consideration is covered in greater detail in the section on moral autonomy.

As for the uniqueness of rationality to humans, Aristotle used it as *the* defining characteristic, "Man is a rational animal".

What counts as rationality? As Richard Sylvan and Val Plumwood have pointed out rationality may be 1) "the ability to reason, this being tested by such basically linguistic performances as the ability to do logic" or 2) "the ability to solve problems and to fit action to individual goals becomes the test -- that is, practical reason is the test" (Routley and Routley 1979, 41).

Two recent discoveries about honey bees raise interesting questions concerning the scope of rationality and cast doubt on rationality being a difference of kind rather than of degree between humans and non-humans, as philosopher Jonathan Bennett proclaimed it. Kirk Visscher of Cornell University has discovered that among the different tasks honey bees perform during their lives, such as cleaning out cells, feeding larvae, and foraging, is undertaking, the removal of dead bees. Undertaking is a necessary task for the cleanliness and safety of the hive, but what makes undertaking remarkable is that it is a specialized task limited to a few bees at any given time and it "is only temporary, lasting a few days before the bees go on to another job" (Anon. 1983, 8). If rationality is defined in terms of problem solving and fitting individual action to goals, then the rotation of tasks, such as undertaking, could be evidence that honey bees are finite rational beings. No explanation is advanced as to how the bees know it is their turn to remove the dead or when their turn is over. It could be an "open instinct".[13] If it is an "open instinct", then the claim for rationality is diminished. Alternatively, like their transmission of information about the location of nectar sources, rotation of tasks could be communicated by a *Schwanzeltanz* or "wiggle dance", which increases the claim for rationality because it implies among honey bees a capacity to designate tasks and delegate responsibility over a designated time-span.

Another researcher, James Gould of Princeton University, has attributed honey bees with "the second most complex language we know of" (Abrahamson 1983, 12).[14] While no one has given them the premisses of a syllogism and asked them to draw the

---

[13]Closed instincts are fixed genetically-determined pattern that emerge intact usually triggered by an external stimulus. Open instincts are partly fixed, but depend for their development on learning experiences. For discussion of open and closed instincts *see*, Midgley 1979, 51-7.

[14]The claim that the dances of honey bees constitute a language may be too strong for some, for discussions of this *see* Bennett 1964, 7-11; Griffin 1981, 61-72; Koehler 1972, 82-91; Lorenz 1962, 87-103.

conclusion, bees have demonstrated a remarkable logical and problem-solving ability. Using sugar water to train bees to fly to a desired location Gould and associates followed a standard practice of placing containers of sugar water a measured distance from the hive and relocating the sugar water twenty-five percent farther away with each subsequent move. Gould reports, "When we moved to a new, more distant area, they were already there waiting for us -- as if they had been able to figure out the rule we were using to move the sugar" (Abrahamson 1983, 12).

Job swapping could be explained by "open instinct", but how is the deciphering of ratios to be explained? Gould states, "it's hard to explain this behavior as innate, because there is nothing I know of in the natural history of flowers that has allowed them to move" (Abrahamson 1983, 12). Bees seem to be more than 'ganglion on wings' driven by instinct, they seem to pass either test for rationality - that of logic and that of problem solving.

J. Bennett's claim is founded on a connection between language and rationality. Using the data of Karl von Frisch, who first interpreted the meanings transmitted by the 'wiggle dance', Bennett claims that the 'wiggle dance' is insufficient evidence for attributing language, and therefore rationality, to honey bees. The two discoveries discussed in this section make the denial of honey bee rationality more problematic than the denial of the 'wiggle dance' as language alone.

Self-Awareness

Another traditionally morally relevant characteristic and one that has been associated with rationality is self-awareness. Regan states that consciousness is a criterion for the possession of interests (Regan 1982, 132). Humans and non-human animal species possess consciousness, but self-awareness or self-consciousness as it is sometimes called has commonly been thought to be limited to humans. Self-awareness can be construed as cognizance of one's own being, that is, the ability to recognize and differentiate oneself from others, or as an introspective endeavour to reveal one's inner being, that is, the capacity to examine one's own consciousness or one's own ability to recognize and differentiate oneself from others. The capacity to do the latter entails the ability to do the former. Until proven otherwise, it is reasonable to assume that any creature with the ability to do the former is in theory capable of the latter.

One example of self-awareness of the latter kind is implied in Socrates' dictum, "Know Thyself". "Know Thyself" assumes self-awareness. On the Socratic account, self-awareness is closely connected with rationality. One interpretation of his dictum is that

human virtue depends on the formation of a character which is true to the essential nature of humans, their rationality. Humans can only participate in the moral community by self-awareness or self-knowledge and it is through their rational nature that humans are connected to each other and the universe.

This interpretation of the importance of self-awareness for moral consideration depends on a knowledge-based theory of moral consideration, that is, moral consideration is something to be learned and the source of knowledge is an examination of self. Of course, this is only one method of elucidating a connection between self-awareness and moral consideration, but self-awareness of the latter kind exceeds the notion of being aware of self. Although self-awareness of the latter kind is the sort of thing in which at least some humans can indulge, few do. Not exercising the capacity for introspection is precisely what gave rise to Socrates' exhortation, "Know thyself".

There are some interesting observations in ethology concerning self-awareness of the former kind. In his book *The Question of Animal Awareness*, Donald Griffin takes up self-awareness. He reports on evidence of self-awareness in his summary of G.G. Gallup's experiments with chimpanzees and great apes. Gallup found if he gave chimpanzees a mirror, that unlike other species (e.g. gibbons and monkeys) they did not think their reflection was another individual, but recognized themselves. After allowing chimpanzees to familiarize themselves with a mirror, Gallup anaesthetized them and placed a spot of paint on some part of their body they could not see without the aid of a mirror, such as the forehead or an earlobe:

> Upon awakening, they paid no attention to the markings, indicating that local, tactile stimulation was absent or ineffective. But when a mirror was provided, the chimpanzees familiar with their mirror images looked at themselves and then almost immediately reached for the colored spot and rubbed it or picked at it with their fingers. Those lacking experience with mirrors continued to ignore the paint marks. Certainly this experiment suggests that they recognized the mirror image as a representation of their own bodies (Griffin 1981, 31).

His experiments have only proved positive with great apes, so Gallup concludes, according to Griffin, "that no other animal has the capacity for self-awareness" (Griffin 1981, 31). The important point is not that many do not have self-awareness, but that some do.

Moral Autonomy

Three recent definitions of moral autonomy illustrate the diverse understandings of and difficulties in defining this concept. Robert Young calls moral autonomy a character ideal

and equates moral autonomy with "being able to choose and act so as to make one's own lot in life" (Young 1982, 39). Philip Rossi says that Kant (who along with Rousseau was among the first to articulate the purported importance of the concept) meant moral autonomy to be "human destiny under human control" (Rossi 1982, 443). David Richards is more expansive on the topic and quotes from Harry Frankfurt:

> Autonomy ... is a complex assumption about the capacities, developed or undeveloped, of persons, which enable them to develop, want to act on, and act on higher-order plans of action which take as their self-critical object one's life and the way it is lived. As Frankfurt put it, persons "are capable of wanting to be different, in their preferences and purposes, from what they are. Many animals appear to have the capacity for... 'first-order desires' or 'desires of the first order,' which are simple desires to do or not to do one thing or another. No animal other than man, however, appears to have the capacity for reflective self-evaluation that is manifested in the formation of second-order desires." (Richards 1981, 6)

Non-human animal species could certainly be included under Young's definition. Rossi's definition could either be considered exclusive to humans by definition (with the sorts of reservations previously mentioned in this chapter about definitional fallacies) or it could be considered that the definition merely illustrates the nature of the concept and that control of one's own destiny independent of one's species is the core notion of moral autonomy. For wombats, moral autonomy is wombat destiny under wombat control. Richards' definition seems to exclude non-human animals, unless, of course, non-humans are capable of the second-order desires. Richards gives as an example of a second-order desire, "cultivating one's still undeveloped capacities for love and tender mutual response" (Richards 1981, 6). Although it is not clear what would count as cultivating an undeveloped capacity for love and tender mutual response, experiments investigating social interactions between rabbits and an experimenter have shown that establishing a pet relationship has a dramatic effect on the physical health of the rabbits. The experimenters report that the rabbits "even sought her [the experimenter's] personal attention" (Nerem, Levesque and Cornhill 1980, 1475). Whether it is possible to label as love the rabbits' seeking the attention of the experimenter is difficult to judge, but it is certain from the experiment that the rabbits were developing some capacity for tender response that was conducive to their physical well-being. Another example that may cast some doubt on the inability of non-human animal species to develop capacities for love and tender mutual responses is reported by Iain and Oria Douglas-Hamilton. In a five year study of elephants (*Loxodonta africana*) they observed:

> the bond between a mother and her daughter could go one of two ways. Either it would weaken, marked by intolerant outbursts from the mother .... Alternatively the bond might develop from the overriding attachment between

> baby and mother, until it became a permanent bond between two adults, reinforced by all the shared experiences and dangers which need co-ordinated action to overcome (Douglas-Hamilton 1975, 214).

The bond between elephants allows latitude to develop or to sour, to become "tender mutual response" or rejection.

One point that can be made against Rossi's and Richards' definitions is that the concept of moral autonomy is, as Young says, "crucial to our conception of moral agency" (Young 1982, 39). To be the object of duties or moral considerations one need not be a moral agent. Furthermore, what Griffin has said of other possible non-empirical characteristics of non-humans applies equally well to autonomy - it is a "territory so unknown that its very existence has been seriously questioned" (Griffin 1981, 149). There are no experiments in animal behaviour or ethology attempting to establish moral autonomy, presumably because contemporary researchers assume, like Kant did two centuries ago, that non-human animal species do not possess moral autonomy, or as will be noted shortly, that moral autonomy cannot be empirically demonstrated.

Kant was the first noted thinker to expand the notion of autonomy from the realm of politics to the realm of moral philosophy. In the *Grundlegung* Kant calls the principle of autonomy the sole principle of morals:

> Autonomy of the will is the property the will has of being a law to itself (independently of every property belonging to the objects of volition). Hence the principle of autonomy is 'Never to choose except in such a way that in the same volition the maxims of your choice are also present as universal law'. That this practical rule is an imperative -- that is, that the will of every rational being is necessarily bound to the rule as a condition -- cannot be proved by mere analysis of the concepts contained in it, since it is a synthetic propostion. For proof we should have to go beyond knowledge of objects and pass to a critique of the subject -- that is, of pure practical reason -- since this synthetic proposition, as commanding apodeictically, must be capable of being known entirely *a priori* (Kant 1785, 87-8).

If Kant is correct in saying, "for proof we should have to go beyond knowledge of objects and pass to a critique of the subject", then it cannot be proved that any creature, including humans, have moral autonomy. It must be known as Kant says, "entirely *a priori*." Like another's pain, another's autonomy can only be assumed and either attributed or not attributed by analogy or some similar argument, such as an argument

from common concordance behaviour.[15] Therefore, the possibility of attributing or not attributing autonomy to non-human animal species depends on establishing that a given species does or does not have the sort of associated characteristics that serve as evidence for the presence of autonomy. The sort of evidence that might lead one to attribute or not attribute autonomy on a Kantian analysis is bound up with what one accepts as constituting a rational being. Some of the problems of determining what constitutes a rational being have been discussed already.

But, for McCloskey, it is not enough that a being merely possesses characteristics such as rationality, self-awareness, and moral autonomy, the being must possess them all and be able to use them to a specific end. Hence, McCloskey specifies that a being must be more than just self-aware. "Mere self-awareness seems to be of little importance. It is the *kind* of being that is self-aware that is of importance" (McCloskey 1979, 40).

Moral Autonomy and Animal Rights

In addition to general considerations of the relevance of moral autonomy, McCloskey holds that "animals that lack autonomy do not and cannot possess moral rights" (McCloskey 1983, 121). He excludes "most of the higher animals, dogs, pigs, apes, chimpanzees..." from the class of potential right-bearers, but admits doubt in the case "of the dolphin (and whale) to know whether or not they will prove to be animals possessed of moral autonomy" (McCloskey 1980, 220-1). He does not attribute rights - and the same might be assumed to be true of any moral consideration based on possessing a prerequisite attribute - to "all members of a species *qua* member of a species, but *qua* possessor of relevant attributes" (McCloskey 1979, 51).

So humans without the relevant excellences are not rights bearers, but are the objects of duties just as non-human animals can be the objects of duties. Therefore, his position is not open to the charge of inconsistency on 'The Argument From Marginal Cases'. Yet what he does not make clear is how, if at all, the moral regard ensuing from duties owed to humans of these types differs from that given to humans who are the possessors of rights. Nor, in turn, how, if at all, the moral regard ensuing from the duties owed to humans of these types differs from that given to non-humans to whom the same duties are

---

[15] Richard Sylvan uses an argument from common concordance behaviour to attribute beliefs to animals. The basis of the argument is that appropriate behaviour is acting in accordance with a belief that the world is constituted in some particular way, that is, by watching behaviour one can predict and ascribe certain beliefs about the way the world is to the entity observed (Routley 1981, 408-9).

owed. Like his emphasis on justice applying to the equal treatment of equals, his emphasis here is on the kind of being that possesses rationality, moreover a rationality capable of making moral judgments:

> Mere rationality without the rational capacity for moral judgments is not enough, since it is the moral will that must be represented. It is not what is in a rational being's interests, nor what a rational being wills, but what he wills within the limits of his moral rights, that the representative must seek to represent. The capacity for moral deliberation and decision is a crucial factor (McCloskey 1979, 41).

Thus the end that McCloskey has in mind is the ability to understand, make and abide by moral judgments. In other words, the closer any being is to being a moral agent, the more likely it is to have rights ascribed to it:

> It is *qua* moral agent, possessed of a capacity to be morally self-determining, that we attribute the basic rights, the ascription of which gives some meaning and import to the ascription of these other kinds of rights in the puzzle cases.
>
> That it is the capacity for moral autonomy, for moral self-direction and self-determination, that is basic to the possiblity of possessing a right is confirmed by the fact that if we imagine the existence of any other kind of being, be it an angel, a purely spiritual being, a Martian, a whale, a dolphin, or the like, whether or not it be thought to possess sentience, capacity for feeling, for pain and pleasure, or the like, we should meaningfully ascribe rights to them if we believe them to be possessed of a capacity for moral self-determination, for moral autonomy (McCloskey 1979, 30-1).

This claim, McCloskey thinks, excludes all species other than humans from possessing rights, even though some non-human species possess rationality and self-awareness:

> The evidence available to date about the rational capacities of animals is far from complete, but to date it appears to be decidely unfavourable to the view that any animals possess the relevant moral capacities. Thus, whilst research on chimpanzees, monkeys, and many other animals, reveals a significant degree of rationality which provides an important ground for justified moral demands that they be better treated than they now are, the degree and kind of rationality fall far short of that necessary for moral judgment and moral self-determination (McCloskey 1979, 42).

Despite the assertion that all species other than humans fall far short of possessing the relevant blend of excellences or moral capacities to be unequivocally possessors of rights, he feels it appropriate to act towards some species, e.g. dolphins and whales, "*as if* they are possessors of rights" (McCloskey 1979, 42-3). In their cases enough doubt exists about them possessing the morally relevant capacities that it is safest to give them the most morally inclusive consideration, until their capacities are proved sufficient or deficient.

McCloskey's introduction of the inadequacy of any single characteristic and his presentation of a combination of characteristics as requisite for the possession of rights is in marked contrast to Singer's use of sentience as the sole requisite for moral consideration. McCloskey's use of a combination of characteristics establishes a higher threshold for recognizing the possession of rights than is set by the possession of a single characteristic. He attempts to eliminate those non-human animal species possessing any given single characteristic or those possessing more than one characteristic, but still below the set threshold for the possession of rights. Designating the morally relevant requisite(s) and setting the threshold for moral competence for the possession of rights, the way he does, is homologous on a restricted scale to designating some morally relevant characteristic that divides humans from non-humans and makes the moral rights exclusively human.

Human Soul

One characteristic, if held to be necessary for moral consideration, that meets the conditions of adequacy for limiting to humans moral consideration of any sort is the human soul.[16] If moral consideration is predicated on the possession of a human soul, then no other species could possibly fulfill the requirement, unless what is meant by the human soul is what Aristotle called 'the rational soul'. If having a 'rational soul' means possessing the ability to reason, then the sorts of arguments and considerations that were discussed under rationality hold. But if the human soul is a God-given gift - a special moral endowment whereby the hand of God is placed on his chosen species - then only those beings touched by God could receive moral consideration. No matter what the constitution of any real or imaginary entity, no matter what characteristics it may possess, it cannot have a human soul unless *it is a human.* Swift's houyhnhnm may have rational souls, but could they be conceded human souls?

In an era that John Black has called the "'post-Christian' age of the twentieth century" (Black 1970, 40), the possession of a human soul has more fallen from favour rather than been proved irrelevant. The doctrine of a human soul has been cut adrift from its traditional moorings:

> *the sharp moral distinction*, commonly accepted in ethics by philosophers and others alike, *between all humans and all other animal species, lacks a satisfactory coherent basis.* The distinction, which historically rested on the assumption that humans possessed a soul (or higher reason) but that other

---

[16]For a discussion of the human soul as a common characteristic fundamental to rights, *see* Schedler 1980, 153-67.

> animals, brutes, did not, appears to have been uncritically retained even after the religious beliefs or philosophical theories underpinning it have been abandonded (Routley and Routley 1980a, 103).

Such a characteristic, if it were accepted, would solve the equality problem. No human anomalies or marginal cases would exist. No examination of other species for the characteristic would be necessary. Non-humans could not have a human soul. But would moral beings be justified in adopting a stance like that attributed to Descartes in which non-human animal species are automata (biological machines without consciousness) that may be treated anyway one desires since mistreatment is never a possibility?[17] *Pace* Descartes, sentient beings would still be capable of suffering unnecessarily. Would the lack of a human soul justify and allow callous treatment?

Conditions for Exclusive Moral Consideration

Against this more exclusivist (human chauvinist) division of humans and non-humans Plumwood and Sylvan have argued that if properties logically tied with moral considerations are examined closely, it is found that they do not support the exclusive eligibility of humans to moral consideration. To return to the metaphor of a Moral Club mentioned earlier, Plumwood and Sylvan have set down three conditions of adequacy for making the Club exclusive to humans:

> 1. The set of characteristics must be possessed by at least all properly functioning humans, since to omit any significant group usually considered subject to moral consideration, such as infants, young children, primitive tribesmen, etc., and to allow that it was permissible to treat these groups in the way it is considered permissible to treat non-humans, that is, as mere instruments, would certainly be repugnant to modern moral sensibilities and would offend common intuitions as to the brotherhood of man, the view that all humans are possessors of inalienable rights. Thus human chauvinism, if it is to produce a coherent theory which does not unacceptably rule out some groups of humans, must find some set of features common to the most diverse members of humankind.... (*The Total Inclusion assumption*)
>
> 2. In order for human chauvinism to be justified, this set of characteristics must not be possessed by any non-human. (*The Total Exclusion assumption*)
>
> 3. The set of characteristics must be not merely morally relevant but sufficient to justify, in a non-circular way, the cut-off of moral consideration at exactly the right point. If human chauvinism is to avoid the charge of arbitrariness and unjustifiability and to demonstrate its inevitability and the impossibility of alternatives, it must emerge from the characteristics why items not having them

---

[17]For a development of Descartes' position *see* his *Discourse on Method*, pt. 5. John Cottingham gives Descartes the benefit of the doubt and argues that Descartes did not hold as extreme a position as is so often attributed to him, (Cottingham 1978, 53, 551-9).

> may be used as mere instruments to serve the interests of those which do possess them. (*The Instrumental Justification assumption*). (Routley and Routley 1979, 39-40)

But the properties usually assumed to give humans exclusive entry into the Moral Club when tested against these conditions either admit some non-humans or exclude some humans. Thirty-two such properties tested by Plumwood and Sylvan *inter alia*, using tools, possessing intelligence, using language, self-awareness, being aware of the inevitability of one's own death, being able to answer questions about moral issues such as human chauvinism, having interests, having projects, belonging to a social community, and being morally responsible for one's actions are all found wanting on at least one count.

The conditions of adequacy might be challenged as too stringent. Yet, if the Moral Club is to be exclusive to humans and neither arbitrary nor unjustified, then condition 1 - that all functioning humans possess the property - must apply, otherwise the requirements for Club membership are drawn too narrowly and some humans are excluded. Against this condition it might be argued, as McCloskey does, that the category 'human' is too broad in scope and it is only persons (where person is defined by some morally relevant parameter as a subclass of humans) who should be considered. This would mean that those humans who did not qualify as persons should not be entitled to treatment as members of the Moral Club or if they were treated as members (persons) that treatment was arbitrary and unjust.

If moral consideration is hierarchical (though it need not be conceived as such) and if rights are at the pinnacle of moral consideration, it is easier to argue for the exclusiveness of this single zone of moral consideration than for the exclusiveness of all sorts of moral consideration. If the possession of rights is dependent on possessing certain morally requisite characteristics, then entities, humans included, not possessing the morally relevant characteristics (to satisfy a criterion of or to meet a threshold of personhood) could be denied rights. But denial of rights does not deny them other kinds of moral considerations, even if rights are so conceived that more qualifications are needed to have rights than are needed to enjoy other kinds of moral consideration. Restricting the coverage of the *Total Inclusion assumption* to a subclass of humans eliminates most non-humans at the cost of only a few humans. Also this allows McCloskey and others who argue that rights are exclusive to persons to avoid an 'Argument From Marginal Cases' being brought against them on the grounds of arbitrarily and unjustifiably including some humans who have no greater claim to possessing rights than some non-human animal species.

Yet an 'Argument From Marginal Cases' might still apply if some non-humans in addition to most, but not all, humans possess the requisite(s) or properties. If some non-humans possess the property or properties (condition 2), then the requirements for Club membership are drawn too broadly and some non-humans are eligible. If excluding non-human animal species from the possession of rights is desired and the *Total Inclusion assumption* has been limited to persons, instead of all humans, then a higher threshold for the possession of rights can be set than for other sorts of moral consideration. It is emphasised that for McCloskey, simply having the three characteristics is not enough. The characteristics must be integrated such that the possessor of them must not only meet the criterion of possessing them, but possess them in an integrated combination. The criterion of the *Total Exclusion assumption* is easier to meet by designating an integration of characteristics with a greater overall threshold than most or all non-human animal species can reach.

Finally, it is not enough to separate the eligible from the ineligible (or perhaps the inedible from the edible), it must be shown why the ineligible are not only ineligible for membership, but also why they cannot even be considered for membership, otherwise the difference in treatment is not justified.

To carry the Club metaphor a little farther, while members may have certain privileges, this does not necessarily mean that in addition to withholding these privileges from non-members members can also withhold benefits that should be common to members and non-members. Why should non-members be put at the disposal of members? If these conditions of adequacy stand, then the definitional necessity of exclusiveness falls.

Furthermore, even if McCloskey's position on rights meets these conditions of adequacy, to show that non-human animals are not rights-bearers does not exclude them from moral consideration, neither does it reduce them to "mere instruments to serve the interests of those which do possess them". Nor does it exclude them from receiving the benefits of duties like those given to rights bearers.

Conclusion

From this brief discussion and review of some characteristics generally considered to be morally relevant, defensible reasons for granting non-human animal species moral consideration have been given. It has been shown that it makes sense to raise moral questions about non-human animal species. Still there are a number of assumptions that need to be exposed and points that need to be emphasized. One assumption is that there is a definable, morally relevant difference or differences between humans and non-humans

that is or are relevant to excluding all non-humans from moral discussion. Each species is a unique collection or blend of empirical (and perhaps non-empirical) characteristics. An examination of various morally relevant characteristics has shown that in considering any given characteristic humans differ in some regards from any other given species, but what has not been shown is that this difference or these differences exclude some or *all* non-human animal species from all forms of moral consideration. Some differences may exclude some species from some forms of moral consideration. For instance, some or all non-human animal species may be denied moral rights, but as noted earlier, exclusion from one form of moral consideration is not exclusion from all forms. The search for some characteristic that makes humans (or persons, a subclass of humans) capable of being right-bearers, but excludes all else, starts with the assumption that humans (or persons) and non-humans are fundamentally unalike in some morally relevant manner, and it is only a matter of isolating some characteristic property of humanity that sets it apart from the rest of nature. This assumption is substantially *The Total Inclusion assumption.* Those subscribing to the dominant Western traditions view themselves as the exclusive and all-inclusive class of beings capable of having moral rights, but the view from this human vantage point (the greater value assumption) goes only to the horizon of their species, because of moral myopia (anthropocentrism) and too much vanity (human chauvinism) to wear corrective moral spectacles.

Embedded in "Greek philosophy and intellectual method; Hebrew theology and its reinterpretation in Christianity; [and] Roman concepts of law and organization" (Black 1970, 24) that form the intellectual and metaphysical background of dominant Western paradigms, the difference and distinction between humans and non-human animal species is normally assumed to be of order and degree.[18] However, closer studies of non-human animal species by ethologists and other researchers have shown that the faculties once thought to be the hallmarks of humans are to be found in other species and fall along continuums incorporating many species. At the molecular level, for instance, the physical make-up of humans and some non-humans is startlingly close. Gribbin and Cherfas have shown that the difference in the DNA of humans and gorillas and chimpanzees is only one per cent (Gribbin and Cherfas 1982, 15). In the realm of the ninety-nine percent similarity, a study by Alan Templeton on DNA mutations has revealed that for some physical traits humans are more "primitive" than gorillas and chimpanzees, who "are evolving two or three times faster than man at the molecular level" (Anon. 1984, 31). Of course, it can be argued that this similarity is not morally relevant and that the morally

---

[18]See footnote 1 for a list of sources on dominant Judeo-Christian/Stoic influences.

relevant difference lies in the one percent. The question is: Are the differences sufficient to justify exclusion of non-human animal species from the moral realm?

> It must be shown separately that this difference is itself the best human quality, that it is the point where humanity is excellent as well as exceptional. And it is surely possible *a priori* that the point on which humanity is excellent is one in which it is not wholly unique -- that at least some aspect of it might be shared with another race of beings? (Midgley 1976, 102)

Assumed differences between those entitled to moral consideration and those not entitled to moral consideration have led not only to the exclusion of non-humans from some forms of moral consideration, but, in the past, the exclusion of some humans. An example is Aristotle's assumption that rational beings were entitled to moral consideration but slaves were not rational beings. There is, however, no reason for the total exclusion of non-humans. "Moral philosophers, in particular, have so thoroughly and deliberately starved themselves of the natural facts needed to deal with their problems that many of them are reduced to a weak state in which they lack resistance to even the most obvious absurdities" (Midgley 1979b, 458). Eventually the actual characteristics and not the supposed characteristics of individual species must be turned to in order to know what moral considerations (that are based on morally relevant characteristics) might be due to them.

Establishing that a particular species does or does not have a particular morally relevant characteristic may not be a simple matter. It may be impossible to 'prove' whether non-human animal species have certain morally relevant characteristics for reasons similar to those advanced in arguments about problems like the problem of another's pain. Inter-species complications and a reluctance to accept what proof can be provided compound this problem.

To paraphrase Frey, overt behaviour is all that virtually all animals present us, and it is only on the basis of that behaviour that they can possibly convey their possession of certain characteristics, but overt physical behaviour - no matter how complex or complicated - will never suffice to prove conclusively that a given species possesses certain characteristics (Frey 1980, 107). Two points are made here. One, certain characteristics can only be attributed to other species (as is the case with humans), because their behaviour indicates the possibility of the existence of the characteristic (but does not conclusively prove its existence). Two, to demonstrate that another species does or does not have a particular characteristic requires either that the species in question normally displays behaviour appropriate to attributing the designated characteristic, or that the species be placed in some situation where behavioural evidence of the characteristic can be

elicited. In the former case, to prove conclusively that another being has a soul is like proving that the being is in pain. Another person's or animal's pain can only be attributed to them because they display behaviour, including linguistic behaviour in some cases, that is associated with being in pain. But it can never be proved definitely that another is in pain, for the observers may be mistaken in their interpretation of the behaviour, or the person or animal observed may be deliberating misleading the observers, c.f. animals simulating death.

Observing the behaviour may be as difficult a problem as interpreting it. An example of eliciting a behaviour or a characteristic not normally displayed by a being, but nonetheless possessed by it, is Karl von Frisch's experiments to prove that fish hear. "Putting himself in the fish's position, he reasoned that even the most heavenly singing would mean nothing unless it could somehow be made crucial to the creature's existence" (Sparks 1982, 182). Working with a blinded catfish, von Frisch associated a whistle with feeding and after six days the catfish responded, "It lunged out of its lair as soon as von Frish whistled, but *before* he had time to offer the fish a piece of worm" (Sparks 1982, 182). This is only to point out that other species may possess morally relevant characteristics not normally exhibited in their behaviour. It may be necessary to attempt to elicit a display of a characteristic before it is assumed (as has so often been the case in the past) that the species does not possess it.

Furthermore, there is a reluctance to accept behavioural evidence or to seek it. Part of the reason for this relates to the assumption that humans and non-humans are essentially different and part of the reluctance is due, as Mary Midgley says, to a:

> strong symbolic barrier that still makes it hard for many people who officially believe in evolution to accept its consequences, to see the kinship between man and other species that becomes so obvious once we start to observe both dispassionately. Kinship is not identity. But even kinship may be hard to admit if you are convinced that the other party is essentially evil, or if you think of your only path to salvation as leading away from him as fast as possible (Midgely 1979a, 198).

Kinship and symbolic connections between humans and non-humans will be brought up again in relation to Aboriginal views.

The cardinal point about this second assumption is that moral judgments should be made on the characteristics of a species and not on an assumed image of that species.

Determining the normal species characteristics is not the end of the problem. The core of an argument like McCloskey's on the possession of rights is that it is not a single

characteristic, but the kind of entity possessing the characteristic that makes the difference:

> At this point we seem to have a choice. Either we must say that (a) rights are ascribed on the basis of normal species characteristics, and anomalies will be treated as if they were not anomalies (why? - in the interests of taxonomical economy?), or else we must say that (b) rights are ascribed on the basis of some broader criterion, such as sentience...or conative life (the experience of desire and aversion). In the latter case there can be no ground for denying that (certain) nonhuman beings have (certain) rights, since the evidence suggests that horses, dogs, deer, mice, etc., suffer pain and enjoy pleasure, desire some things and flee from others (Rodman 1977, 88-9).

McCloskey disallows anomalies and this is his departure from a position like position (a) in the above quotation. He insists that any being deviating from the 'normal species characteristics' does not acquire or possess the associated right(s). Thus he avoids inconsistency for trival or morally irrelevant reasons in the service of intra-species consolidation or what Rodman scornfully phrases, "taxonomical economy".

Choosing either position (a) or position (b) as set out by Rodman requires knowledge of the 'normal species characteristics' or 'broader criterion' characteristics of non-human species and not merely assumptions about them. The second assumption, which is closely associated with the first, is that non-humans lack the relevant characteristic(s) to be entitled to moral consideration. This assumption is substantially *The Total Exclusion assumption.*

Part of the impetus for the symbolic barrier mentioned by Midgley comes from a third assumption: humans and non-humans, or on a broader scope humans and nature, are not only different but in conflict. The third assumption is integrated with the first two. Humans are assumed to be moral or deserving of moral treatment, and all else (nature) is assumed not to be moral and not deserving moral treatment (*The Instrumental Justification assumption*). Merely to demonstrate a case or need may not suffice to generate moral consideration for other species. It may also be necessary to dislodge the deeply felt dichotomy that has become a part of a definition by contrast of what it means to be human. Under this assumption the horizons of moral consideration are defined. Even if the differences between humans and non-humans are minimized in their importance, the questions remain: "How far should moral consideration for non-humans go?" How does, or should, human convenience limit moral concern for non-humans? Should a test for non-human moral consideration be what is good for humans?

But if the assumption that humanity and nature are in opposition is abandoned, the

possibility opens up that morally relevant characteristics not confined to the human model. This possibility extends to identifying morally relevant characteristics only minimally possessed by humans. Predicting these characteristics entices the imagination.

In addition to the discussion of the three assumptions a point about the role of rights may be appended. Rights are an important form of moral consideration, but speaking of 'animal rights' has become the focus of much of the debate on moral consideration. Concentration on 'animal rights' confines and channels the scope of thinking on moral consideration for non-human animal species. Rights are not a *sine qua non* of moral consideration for non-humans as Singer's "principle of equal consideration of interests" demonstrates. But the extension of the recognized range of application of rights or Singer's principle of equal consideration of interests or any form of conventionally-based anthropocentric moral consideration perpetuates the prevailing anthropocentric orientation. What may be needed instead is to construct an environmental- or biocentric-oriented ethic. Is it not reasonable that if all or some animals and humans are endowed with or share some common characteristics worthy of moral consideration, then the treatment to which they are entitled is relative to the moral relevancy of the characteristic(s) and not to the degree to which the non-human species is in form and morals expressly and admirably like humans?

From the discussion in this chapter it should be clear that at least some non-human animal species possess some characteristics, such as sentience, that make their bearer worthy of some form of moral consideration and that moral consideration for non-human animal species can no longer be cavalierly dismissed.

Chapter Three

ARGUMENTS FOR MORAL CONSIDERATION FOR NON-HUMAN ANIMAL SPECIES

In Chapter Two it was said that moral consideration is given either because those to whom it is given are in some way valuable to the person who gives the consideration or because they possses some morally relevant characteristic(s) that ought to be taken into account. From these two reasons several forms of argument can be developed. From the former reason instrumental and prudential arguments can be developed; from the latter reason extension arguments and animal rights can be developed.

Instrumental and Prudential Arguments

Instrumental and prudential arguments are closely akin. Instrumental arguments are pleas for prudent behaviour. They are grounded in human interests. Instrumental arguments for other species are dependent on the usefulness of the species to human purposes. Prudential arguments are arguments encouraging humans to exercise wisdom, but the wisdom is mainly the wisdom of protecting human interests. Instrumental arguments are a subspecies of prudential arguments, although prudential arguments can be made for species with no current or apparent usefulness to humans.

Usually instrumental arguments further the interests "of a privileged class; for example, the goal may be taken to be determined in terms of the interests, concerns, advantage, or welfare of the class of humans, or of persons, or of sentient creatures..." (Routley and Routley 1979, 48). Instrumental arguments argue for what is good for the valuers (i.e., in the interests of) and not the item valued. Of course, the item valued can benefit from these arguments. However, if the item's value depends solely on its usefulness, then should the item no longer be needed it is no longer valued.

John Passmore asserts a variety of economic, scientific, recreational, renewal and aesthetic instrumental arguments for the preservation of the environment that can be applied to the preservation of species. Before setting out these, however, there is one anthropocentrically-based instrumental argument that should be noted first. If the vindication behind anthropocentric arguments is the consideration of humans for humans, then the responsibility of the present generation for future generations should at least be mentioned. On the assumption that future generations will hold as valuable what the present generation holds as valuable, it can be argued that "we ought to try to improve

the world so that we shall be able to hand it over to our successors in a better condition" (Passmore 1974, 91). Part of handing over the world in a better condition is not to destroy species or let them perish through contributory negligence and thereby deprive posterity of the opportunity to observe, study, and otherwise have the experience of the diversity of species enjoyed by the present generation. This argument is called the 'Posterity Argument'. With a 'Posterity Argument' Passmore is not calling for passive restraint on the part of humans in their dealings with other species. For him, handing over the world in a better condition means "transforming the world into a civilised state". This transformation is man's "major responsibility to their fellow-men" (Passmore 1974, 178). Betterment through transformation may mean the protection of some non-human species, but with the major responsibility to other humans, it could mean the destruction of species considered harmful or 'un-civilised'.

Yet Passmore would wish to soften the possibly harsh impact of this line of reasoning. He gives a second argument, which could be called the 'Gene Pool' or 'Silo Argument',[1] that says it is in humanity's own interest to keep wildstock as a reservoir or gene pool. As humans utilise the plant and animal resources of the world they modify them through cultivation and domestication, but a modification for one purpose, say the cross-breeding of cattle to produce more beef or greater drought resistance, can cause undesirable side effects, say less hybrid vigour, i.e. less disease resistance. 'Gene Pools' of wild stock are required to revitalize or modify cultivated stock. Or in Passmore's words:

> Cultivated plants and animals have been bred for special purposes; they are liable, in consequence of their breeding, to diseases which could in principle entirely wipe them out. Men need a reservoir of wild species, with their greater genetic diversity, to protect them against this eventuality (Passmore 1974, 102).

Now this argument is quite reasonable for preserving the wild counterparts of domesticated species that produce meat, milk, fur, and other economically valuable products, but what of species that are not economically valuable to humans? Passmore feels, "a purely economic argument will suffice to establish at least a prima facie case against the clearing of wildernesses, the destruction of species" (Passmore 1974, 102). It could be objected that a prima facie case does not hold if it is more economic to destroy a wilderness or species for immediate gain:

> The conservation of the Abbott's booby provides a classic example of a conflict between the preservation of a scientifically interesting species - which occurs

---

[1]The argument labels 'silo', 'laboratory', 'cathedral', and 'recreation' come from William Godfrey-Smith's article 'The Value of Wilderness' (Godfrey-Smith 1979).

> nowhere else and whose value is difficult to assess - and the utilisation of valuable resources. There are surface phosphate deposits derived from bird droppings over countless years. The main breeding areas of the Abbott's booby coincide with areas rich in phosphate (Ovington 1978, 43, 147).

To mine the phosphate requires cutting down the trees in which the booby's nest. The mining of the resource endangers the source. This self-perpetuating circular set of interactions is described in more detail in Chapter Four in the anchovies/guanays example. Once the circle is disturbed the inter-relationships along the entire food chain are disrupted.

Passmore comes to the defense of species not currently held to be valuable with a third argument - the 'Rare Herb Argument':

> To attempt totally to wipe out dangerous species of viruses and bacteria, even, might encourage the emergence of still more dangerous mutants. A species often turns out to be unexpectedly useful, a tropical plant to contain pharmacologically valuable substances (Passmore 1974, 102)

Passmore wishes to establish that the environment and species can be saved on the moral principles now existing, but as William Godfrey-Smith notes, "The rare herb argument is a sound argument in favour of preservation on the grounds of *prudence*, but it is not, on the face of it, a *moral* argument" (Godfrey-Smith 1980, 31). If it is effective, it need not be a moral argument. But prudence has not prevented the destruction or near destruction of species. In Australia alone fifty-one vertebrate species have become extinct or nearly extinct by direct or indirect human intervention since 1788.[2] Hopefully, adherence to the 'Rare Herb' argument could prevent the obliteration of more species. Unfortunately, like the 'Gene Pool' or 'Silo' argument, it says nothing of the numbers, conditions, or manner under which these reservoirs are kept and could permit the decimation of these species to zoo populations, breeding colonies, or token specimens.

Connected with this 'Rare Herb Argument' is the companion concept that unless these possible sources of pharmacologically valuable substances - whatever form they may take, non-human animals, for instance - are preserved for experimentation then the diversity of man's environmental laboratory is diminished. This fourth instrumental argument, the 'Laboratory Argument' is more covertly implied than enunicated in Passmore's commentary, yet the elements of this argument as delineated by Godfrey-Smith for wilderness areas are there:

---

[2]For lists of extinct, endangered and threatened species, *see* Ovington (1978) and Gould League (1982).

> This is the argument that wilderness areas provide vital subject matter for scientific inquiry which provides us with an understanding of the intricate interdependencies of biological systems, their modes of change and development, their energy cycles, and the sources of their stabilities. If we are to understand our own biological dependencies, we require natural systems as a norm, to inform us of the biololgical laws which we transgress at our peril (Godfrey-Smith 1979, 311).

'Non-human animals' could be substituted for 'wilderness areas' in the above quotation and the argument would lose none of its meaning and weight. As with the 'Silo Argument', the major thrust of the 'Labortory Argument' is that biological modification and experimentation by humans requires natural species as norms and fresh sources.

A fifth appeal for the preservation of the wilderness is:

> that there is refreshment as well as enjoyment to be found in wandering through wild country. (Not only recreation but re-creation; it renews one's sense of proportion.) (Passmore 1974, 107)

This can be split into two arguments: the 'Recreation Argument', where humans use wilderness as their gymnasium and the 'Cathedral Argument' where humans draw spiritual revitalization from wildernesses. Both of these apply more readily, of course, to the wider considerations of 'wilderness-experiences' than to the narrower consideration of non-human animals, nonetheless both can still be applied to non-human animals, because they are part of the system of interactions (the gestalt) that constitutes 'wilderness experiences'.

A sixth instrumental argument is the 'Aesthetic Argument'. Passmore holds that, "A new ethic is not required to justify action against the beauty-destroying polluter; at most what is needed is a strengthening of existing moral principles" (Passmore 1974, 56). Beauty need not be limited to spectacular sundowns or majestic waterfalls; there is recognised beauty in individual species, such as Bridled Nail-tailed Wallabies (*Onychogalea fraenata*) and Paradise Parrots (*Psephotus pulcherrimus*). The application of the 'Aesthetic Argument' can be widened to support the preservation of non-human animals endangered by human activities other than pollution. On the whole, as McCloskey observes, "we hold the beautiful and mysterious in nature in awe and wonder, see much as precious, and view with moral shock and even moral outrage the willful destruction of a beautiful species" (McCloskey 1983, 34). The 'Aesthetic Argument' conveys the concept of "beauty-destroying", which Passmore finds is a "more explicitly Western tradition that it is wrong unnecessarily to destroy - a principle embodied in the concept of 'vandalism'" (Passmore 1974, 124):

> One could at least go this far: the moral onus is on anyone who destroys. This is particularly so when, as in the case of species, the destruction is irreversible. We commonly speak, indeed, of 'wanton' destruction where no defence of the destruction can be offered (Passmore 1974, 124).

Objects of instrumental and prudential arguments are held to have some sort of value without being included in the moral community or given moral consideration for their own sake. Another form of argument, the extension argument, is used to argue for the recognition of non-human animal species and other items in the environment for their own sake.

Extension Arguments

A second form of argument for moral consideration for non-human animal species is the extension argument. Extension arguments include arguments such as the 'Argument from Marginal Cases' and other consistency arguments and Leopold's land ethic. The 'Argument from Marginal Cases' and arguments for consistency have already been discussed and examples, such as Singer's arguments, given in Chapter Two. However, to summarize briefly arguments for consistency: if entity *A* is given certain moral considerations or treated in a certain manner because it has some given characteristic(s), then entity *B* having the same characteristic(s) should be given the same moral consideration or treated in the same manner regarding that characteristic or characteristics. This is the sort of argument that was used in the struggle to abolish slavery and, more recently, to secure civil rights for blacks and equal opportunity for women. When applied to non-human animal species, arguments for consistency maintain that the species barrier is no more morally relevant than differences in skin colour or gender for determining treatment.

Leopold's land ethic will be discussed in Chapter Four. However, to foreshadow that discussion some of the differences between the arguments for consistency and Leopold's land ethic can be indicated now. According to extension arguments based on consistency, if one being's interests or well-being is given moral consideration, then any other being with the same or similar interests or well-being should be given like moral consideration as concerns the similar interests or well-being. To take Singer's argument for example, if a creature is sentient, then it is morally wrong to inflict pain on it. Thus it is reasonable to argue that wombats and adult humans have a common interest in avoiding pain and it is wrong to inflict pain on either, but sentience is not grounds for granting wombats (or humans for that matter) the right to vote. Extension arguments for consistency can be

more complicated and complex than this, but the principle is the same. Extension arguments like Leopold's land ethic do not trade on comparisons of similarities in interests or well-being of various entities. Instead, Leopold called for an extension of ethical consideration to the land, or more broadly and accurately extending the ethical community to include the ecosphere. Leopold sought to make the ethical and the biotic community co-extensive. He wanted items in the natural environment to be recognized to have value-in-themselves as well as or despite any value they may have for humans. He took as his primary ethical principle the maxim: "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise" (Leopold 1966, 262). Individual characteristics are not important in terms of making the argument for inclusion in the moral community, and only come into play, if at all, in determining the treatment of items already within the moral community.

As previously indicated, the merits and difficulties of both of these forms of extension are discussed in other chapters. There is, however, another extension of moral consideration that has received more attention and generated more debate than the forms just discussed combined. This is 'Animal Rights'. Animal rights are an extension of conventional moral thinking because they represent recognizing the same moral rights for non-human animal species that are recognized for humans. They are not new rights or rights only recognized for non-human animal species.

Animal Rights

Animal rights have received an issue-by-issue or right-by-right treatment. Proponents and opponents array their arguments on issues such as perceptions of rights, roles of correlative duties, roles of reciprocity, or their arguments for or against the extension or recognition of a particular right, say, the right to life or the right to liberty.

In philosophy in Australia, H.J. McCloskey's stance on moral consideration for non-human animal species is an especially good place to begin an investigation of animal rights, because his firmly-held and oft-redeveloped stance represents the case against non-human animal species possessing rights. McCloskey's primary concern is not with animals, but with the application of the concept of rights. He views rights as restricted to persons, a subclass of humans, and desires to show why this concept does not apply to non-human animals.

McCloskey's vigorous opposition to recognising moral rights of non-human species is not against any particular advocate of animal rights, but to the notion that entities other

than persons possess rights. In denying rights to non-human animals, he does not deny them consideration and grants that humans should treat other species better:

> However, the moral consideration in favour of better treatment of and concern for animals based on the contention that they possess moral rights are not alternative to, but rather they are such that they may be reinforced and supplemented by other ethical considerations which in no way rest on the view that animals possess rights (McCloskey 1979, 24).

McCloskey states explicitly several reasons why non-humans animals cannot possess rights, but he also objects to the ramifications for humans if non-humans possessed rights:

> The issue of whether or not nonhuman animals, all or some, may and do possess rights relates in an important way to the question of the morally proper treatment of and concern for animals and their well-being *vis-a-vis* human beings and their well-beings. The nature of the duties human persons have in respect of animals will be significantly influenced by the nature of the rights, if any, that animals possess. There are good reasons for believing that it is via the claim that animals possess rights that the strongest kind of case, both for improved treatment and for greater concern at a higher level, is to be made out. This is partly because rights are seen prima facie at least as giving rise to duties of active assistance to, protection of, the possessor of the right, partly because rights are seen to be constraints, if not absolute constraints, constraints of a very stringent character on what it is permissible to do and refrain from doing in respect of the possessor of the right. The possession of moral rights by animals would both impose important duties and seriously limit the moral freedom of human persons (McCloskey 1979, 23-4).

Beyond any substantial philosophical objections involving the capability of non-human animals to possess rights, McCloskey holds that rights for non-humans are an undesirable and unwarranted restriction upon humans. If humans recognise moral rights for non-human species, then they would limit their own moral freedom. From this it could be concluded that the better treatment and concern to which McCloskey says non-human species are entitled, extends only to the limits of human convenience and not so far as to inconvenience them or restrict their freedom. This could mean that non-humans are entitled to moral convenience, not moral regard. To put this another way, humans should not, for instance, be cruel to non-human animals because it would reflect poorly on humans, but they should not be required not to be cruel if such a requirement restricts human freedom. If there were any doubt about McCloskey's position, he dissolves it when he paraphrases R.G. Frey approvingly, "the animal rights thesis simply extends the range of those beings accorded the right to ravage nature" (McCloskey 1983, 69) and in his own terms, "mankind has a moral duty to preserve species and wilderness unless it is very evidently in man's interest to endanger or destroy them" (McCloskey 1983, 110), and again:

> if it is clearly in man's interest that a species be exterminated, made extinct, as I believe it to be the case in respect of the Australian tiger snake, or as it may come to be the case with the dingo, if rabies reaches Australia, and the dingo population became a reservoir of rabies, then we should be acting rightly to exterminate or to endanger the species (McCloskey 1980, 221).

It is worthwhile to explore the urge to pitch the discourse in terms of rights. Implicit in this urge is a predisposition to consider rights "trumps" in moral debate. One reason for such an approach is a sense of power or strength that the idea of 'rights' gives to those who wield it or have it wielded on their behalf, a feeling Olivecrona has described:

> We have ... the illusion that the word 'right' signifies a power ... though a power which we can never grasp. The illusion stems from the emotional background. Under certain circumstances, especially in situations of conflict, the idea of possessing a right gives rise to a feeling of strength. When I am convinced of having a right, I am in some way more powerful than my opponent, even if he be actually stronger. My power is not an actual power but a 'must-be power'. This means that the feeling of strength is 'objectivated'. It produces a floating idea that I possess some kind of power which is independent of, and elevated above, the actual power-situation. So the word 'right' seems to signify an unseizable power (Olivecrona 1971, 184).

Rights give the "underdog" a sense of power, a sense that rights will afford protection even where no other form of moral consideration is thought fit or potent. However, power is not immunity.[3] The sense of power and the sense of protection are illusions.

Although the illusion of power associated with rights can not provide immunity, it does provide a limited defense. If humans are convinced that non-human animals have rights, then they sense that those non-human animals have in Olivecrona's words a "must-be power". Humans would have to provide reasons for interfering with, jeopardizing, or instrumentally utilizing non-human animal species. If non-human animal species are rights-bearers, then humans would have duties *to* them in addition to duties *regarding* them. The distinction between "duties regarding" and "duties to" can be illustrated by the theories Aquinas and Kant advance about cruelty toward animals. Passmore summarizes their positions very well, "In so far as cruelty to animals was wrong, this was only because, ... it might induce a callousness towards human suffering. There was nothing wrong with cruelty to animals *in itself*" (Passmore 1974, 113). Following such a line of thought, a "duty regarding" cruelty to animals is based ultimately on a "duty to" another human. It is based on the possibility of treating another human cruelly or

---

[3]Lindahl (1977) presents several descriptions of the differences between power and immunity in relation to rights, particularly his synopses of Hohfeld's theory, pp. 25-37, and Kanger's theory, pp. 38-63.

causing an owner grief by harming another human's property (cow, dog, or whatever non-human animal). Non-human animal species are not ends-in-themselves, but means by which human interests can be respected or infringed. A "duty to" animals treats them as ends-in-themselves and is a duty owed to the animal itself and not to it because a human is involved. It is based on the instrinsic wrongness of cruelty.

It is not unusual that a desire to substantially widen the circle of moral consideration by means of rights arouses reactionary interpretations of rights. The Animal Rights or Animal Liberation Movement, like the women's and Black liberation movements with which it has been compared (Rodman 1977, 101-7), desires to widen the circle of moral consideration. An appeal for the recognition of moral rights for non-human animal species is an appeal to the "must-be power" of rights and to the illusion of immunity. An entity recognized as having rights is included in the moral circle, i.e., it becomes a member of the Moral Club:

> though the privileged circle is defined by reference to a class characteristic, like skin-colour or sex, the basic kind of consideration accorded to a member is the recognition that he, unlike members of the excluded class, is entitled to the forbearance of others in the prosecution of his projects (Benn 1975, 14).

One reason a right-bearer is entitled to the forbearance of others and a significant reason why animal rights are pursued as the means to moral consideration for non-human animal species is that rights justify the use of coercion (Kleinig 1978, 42; 1984, 25). The recognition of rights is intended to remove non-human animal species from the moral penumbra between being persons and being things and to recognize that these species have interests as well as functions, so that they are no longer seen as solely biological tools and resources, but as entities with morally relevant and significant characteristics and which must be taken into account. Sometimes the illusions about rights are ignored by what amounts to an obsession with rights because rights seem to offer hope for desired changes.

The preoccupation with the significance and nature of rights, obscures the main issue, *viz.* moral consideration for non-human animals. The preoccupation is reinforced by claims like Dworkin's that rights are trumps (Dworkin 1977, xi). Rights are not necessarily dominant as arguments of these philosophers imply. Some philosophers hold the position that only rights provide moral consideration (protection) adequate to persuade humans that they have a duty to non-humans, a duty not easily overridden for trival reasons. Such a position is an inversion of the force of rights:

> current obsession with the idea of rights has led ... to the position that rights are

> at least a primary determinant of what we ought to do. In contrast, I suggest that the correct analysis is that we determine what we ought to do, how we ought to behave, and then our statement of rights serves to formalize our commitment to this ethical way of acting. Policy and ethics serve as the primary basis for rights, and not vice versa (Freedman 1981, 167).

If, as Kleinig suggests, rights justify the use of coercion, then recognition of a right is formalizing recognition of a commitment to an ethical way of acting and sanctioning the enforcement of this commitment.

Freedman's position against rights as primary determinants seems plausible. However, when he locates the primary basis for rights to 'policy and ethics', this could be taken to imply that a moral right could be morally legislated in a manner analogous to the legislation of legal rights. In other words, were it 'policy', a species, any species, could be given moral rights. But as seen in the second chapter, recognition of a moral right is subject to an entity possessing the moral requisite(s) for that right. If it is acknowledged that treatment T is or is not appropriate to entity E, then, to recognize E's right is no more than, in Freedman's words, "to formalize our commitment to this ethical way of acting" or not acting. He is right in saying that the determination of what we ought to do should precede the formalization of our moral commitments. Where he can be misconstrued is in the implication that the determination of what we ought to do can substantially change the grounds on which rights are recognized (already discussed, in part, in the previous chapter).

If rights are accepted as "a primary determinant of what we ought to do", then any change in the status of a given entity due to recognition that it is a rights-bearer depends greatly on what rights are conceived to be.

Conceptions of Rights

The notion of rights is extremely complex and extremely elusive. Or put another way, the notion of rights is fuzzy. Some of the fuzziness is created by the confusion and conjunction of similarities and differences between legal rights and moral rights, by mistaking resemblances among various rights for uniformity, and by what they are conceived to be. There are resemblances between moral and legal rights. According to Reid, who is among the earliest commentators to contemplate conceptions of rights, a legal right "signifies all that a man may lawfully do, all that he may lawfully possess and use, and all that he may lawfully claim of any other person" (Reid 1768, Essay v, Chap. iii). Reid's explication follows F. Hutcheson's earlier explication of rights, "Whenever it

appears to us, that *a Faculty of doing, demanding, or possessing any thing, universally allow'd in certain Circumstances, would in the whole tend to the general Good*, we say that any person in such Circumstances has *a Right to do, possess, or demand that thing*" (Hutcheson 1725, Treatise II, Sect.#7, IV). On natural (moral) rights Reid echoes his own position on legal rights and Hutcheson's position on rights in that he relates natural (moral) rights to what a right-bearer may do, possess or demand. The difference between legal rights and moral rights is not a difference between what can lawfully be claimed and what can be morally claimed. A fuzziness is created by resemblances between legal and moral rights is mistaking a similarity in the scope of what is covered by each for a similarity in the attribution of legal rights and the recognition of moral rights. Unlike moral rights, legal rights do not depend on any requisite morally relevant characteristics of the entity in question. The only necessary condition or requisite for an entity to possess a legal right is that some legal or legislative system grant them rights using only such arguments as the legal or legislative system finds satisfactory.

Rights cover the different activities of doing, possessing, and demanding. The sort of fuzziness generated within the realm of just one of these activities can be seen in McCloskey's discussion of possessing a right. An argument McCloskey advanced in "Rights" but later retracted is: "A right cannot not be possessed by someone; hence, only beings which can possess things can possess rights" (McCloskey 1965, 126). Animals cannot possess things, he maintains, therefore they cannot possess rights. This conjunction of the possession of rights and the possession of things strikes some commentators, notably Tom Regan, as odd, "It is difficult to see any obvious logical connection between these two ideas. For a right is not a *thing*, and those beings which do possess things do not stand in the same relation to them as to the rights which they happen to possess" (Regan 1976, 252). Regan charges that McCloskey's "linguistic legislation" (as Regan calls it) is unreliable and counters McCloskey's example of a horse not being able to possess things:

> McCloskey's intuitions of what we can and cannot say (literally) are not reliable in this case. Imagine that McCloskey's horse takes it into his head not to surrender his rug. Despite our efforts to take it from him, he will not let it go. In a perfectly ordinary, literal use of the word, we could say that the horse possesses the rug; it is the horse who has possession of it. So, McCloskey's denial to the contrary notwithstanding, an animal can possess something in a literal sense of 'possess' (Regan 1976, 252).

Regan's finds McCloskey's linking of the ability to possess things and the ability to possess rights unsound. The possession of rights is not like the possession of things. Even if the link held, Regan postulates, McCloskey is wrong to believe that a non-human animal cannot possess a thing in a literal sense of the word.

The activities to which rights relate have apparently influenced what rights are thought to be. Qualitatively different rights are not necessary to cover different activities, but a 'right to demand' involves action on the part of the right-bearer or the bearer's agent, while a 'right to possess' does not necessarily involve action on the part of the bearer or agent. In the context of animal rights - doing, demanding, and possessing have been discussed in terms of 'rights to' and 'rights against'.

'Rights to' and 'Rights against'

McCloskey denies that a right, such as the right to life, is a claim that a right-bearer can make against another being:

> My right to life is not a right against anyone. It is *my* right and by virtue of it, it is normally permissible for me to sustain my life in the face of obstacles. It does not give rise to rights against others *in the sense* that others have or may come to have duties to refrain from killing me, but it is essentially a right of mine, not an infinite list of claims, hypothetical and actual, against an infinite number of actual, potential, and as yet non-existent human beings (McCloskey 1965, 118).

In selecting his exemplary right, McCloskey may have loaded the argument in his favour. The right to life is always talked about as a 'right to' and not as a 'right against', even though the sense of a 'right against' may be implied. For instance, Regan gives a right to life as an example of a right against, "some thinkers...contend that to have a right is to have a claim to something or against others. Thus, to have the right to life, for example, is to have a claim against others not to take one's life..." (Regan 1976, 15).

As defined by McCloskey a right to life - "to sustain my life in the face of obstacles" - need not have any correlative duty on the part of others. Yet if there is no correlative duty can there be a right? William Godfrey-Smith succinctly says no:

> McCloskey claims that the basic notion of a right is a right *to* something, and not a right *against* someone. We can, according to McCloskey, make sense of rights without involving the notion of corresponding duties on the part of moral agents in respect of these rights. I must confess that I can't make good sense of this at all (Godfrey-Smith 1980, 38).

Indeed by McCloskey's definition, the right to life need not even be considered a right; it is a non-interference principle or what Lawrence Haworth defines as a liberty:

> If someone is merely at liberty to do something, then it is merely the case that it is not wrong for him to do it. His being at liberty does not entail an obligation on anyone else's part to make way. ... A strong right is a liberty with something

> added: the obligation of at least one other person not to interfere with one's exercise of his right. Strong rights are rights that are matched by correlative obligations (Haworth 1978, 95).

Despite what McCloskey says, the correlative duty as Godfrey-Smith terms it or obligation as Haworth terms it (here the terms are synonymous) that accompanies a right to life is the duty to refrain from killing the right-bearer. Indeed, in Judeo-Christian morality the commandment, "Thou shall not kill", gives just the duty that McCloskey denies. It can be argued, of course, that the commandment does not give, but only implies, a right to life, because denying a right to kill is not affirming a right to life. However, it is not clear why a right to life cannot be both a 'right to' preserve life "in the face of obstacles" and a 'right against' others not to be killed by them.

Another question arises: What is the link between rights against and rights for non-human animal species? The link is somewhat obscure, but as with the question of 'rights to' and 'rights against' it hinges on the "vexed question of the relation between rights and duties" (McCloskey 1965, 121). McCloskey seems to feel that a good deal of confusion has been generated over the human duties to non-human animals and whether or not non-humans then have rights corresponding to those duties, as he states, "to have a duty is not necessarily for another to have a right" (McCloskey 1965, 123).

McCloskey here disputes a link between 'rights against' (if such rights exist) and the case for non-human animals having rights, a link he illustrates in his summary of an argument given by Plamenatz, "animals have rights, by claiming that rights are *rights against rational beings*" (McCloskey 1965, 123). McCloskey argues that rights are 'rights to' only and that 'rights to' "may rationally be demanded only of rational beings, for the obvious reason that only rational beings are capable of complying with the demands" (McCloskey 1965, 123). Given such a position, he goes on: that these rights are 'rights against', "obviously will not do, for the reasons noted above, namely, that rights are not primarily rights against but rights to" (McCloskey 1965, 123). Although the reasoning seems somewhat circular and 'rights against' also "may be rationally demanded of only rational beings", McCloskey's objection is correct in that it is a mistake to attribute correlative rights to animals simply because duties to animals are attributed to humans. However, an alternative view is given by Godfrey-Smith:

> If we suppose that a right is simply an entitlement of an individual or group of individuals to receive consideration in their treatment *by* moral agents - whether or not such individuals are *themselves* moral agents - then it seems to me that there can be no objection to speaking of, say, rain forests as having rights. Rights and duties on this view are correlative terms" (Godfrey-Smith 1980, 34).

What is still not clear is: Why the mistake of attributing a correlative right where a duty may exist, but where no right may exist, is an argument against 'rights against'?

One answer lies in the reciprocity assumption. "This is the assumption that if two individuals stand in a moral relationship, then *both* individuals must be fully-fledged moral agents. A moral agent, I assume, must be capable of exercising reflective rational choice on the basis of principles" (Godfrey-Smith 1980, 33-34). An argument intended to counter 'rights against', but not necessarily McCloskey's argument, and that connects the notions of 'rights against' and the reciprocity assumption runs something like this: If a right-bearer B has a 'right against' some other entity M (a moral agent), then entity M has a duty regarding right-bearer B's right. However, unless entity M has the same or another 'right against' right-bearer B, then B has no duty regarding M. If the reciprocity assumption is brought to bear on this relationship, then:

> It is plausible to think that moral requirements can exist only where certain conditions of reciprocity are satisfied. The basic idea here is that a person is obligated to respect the interests of others, and acknowledge that they have claims against him, only if the others are willing to respect his interests and acknowledge his claims. This may be thought of as a matter of fairness: if we are to accept inconvenient restrictions on our conduct, in the interests of benefiting or at least not harming others, then it is only fair that the others should accept similar restrictions on *their* conduct for the sake of *our* interests (Rachels 1976, 221).

This condition of reciprocity is moral correlativity. If the reciprocity assumption holds, then animal rights is defeated. Nevertheless, one can ask, as Godfrey-Smith does, "Now although I do not think we could legitimately speak of a moral relationship obtaining between individuals *neither* of which is a moral agent, is there any good reason for supposing that *both* individuals must be moral agents?" (Godfrey-Smith 1980, 34). James Rachels provides an answer to this that holds open the possibility of animal rights, despite the reciprocity assumption:

> The requirement of reciprocity says that a person is morally required to accept restrictions on his conduct, in the interests of not harming others, only if the others reciprocate. The example of the retarded person shows this to be false. He is not capable of restricting his conduct in this way; nevertheless we have an obligation to restrict ours. We are in the same position with respect to nonhuman animals: like the retarded person, they lack characteristics necessary for having obligations; but they may still be proper beneficiaries of our obligations. The fact that they cannot reciprocate, then, does not affect our basic obligations to them (Rachels 1976, 223).

The reciprocity assumption is one of the strongest arguments against animal rights whether or not those rights are considered as 'rights against' or 'rights to'. 'Rights

against' may be reciprocal rights as Rachels' mention of "claims against" demonstrates. The point then becomes not whether animal rights" are 'rights to' or 'rights against', but whether or not the reciprocity assumption obtains. If it does not obtain, then it is no obstacle to animal rights. If it does obtain, then it becomes a question of whether or not moral agents are willing to waive their claim to reciprocity in the case of non-human animal species.

Claims

Rights are often considered claims or entitlements in the literature on environmental ethics, but the nature of their relationship conveyed by "or" is not clear. The most generous reading is that some rights are claims, some are entitlements, and some are both. One way of making a distinction between rights as claims and rights as entitlements is to consider claims as 'rights against' and entitlements as 'rights to'. McCloskey makes a distinction between a right as a claim and a right as an entitlement:

> If we look at *moral rights*, in particular at what we intend to claim when we claim a right, we find here too that a right is an entitlement. It may be an entitlement to do, to enjoy, to be, to have done for us. Rights may be rights to act, to exist, to enjoy, to demand. We speak of rights as being *possessed*, *exercised*, and *enjoyed*. In these respects there is an affinity between our talk about rights and our talk about capacities, powers, and the like, and a distinct contrast with talk about claims, for we *make* claims but do not possess, exercise, or enjoy them. But, since a right may exist and be possessed in the absence of the relevant power or capacity, rights are distinct from powers (McCloskey 1965, 117).

Although a challenge may be mounted against McCloskey's "linguistic legislation" concerning whether or not claims can be possessed, exercised, or enjoyed - his distinction does appear founded. But he does not consider either claims or entitlements 'rights against'. Moral rights are, he observes, "commonly explained as being some sort of *claim* or *power* which ought to be recognized" (McCloskey 1965, 115). Rights are often perceived as claims. "A central feature of a moral right is that it is something that can morally be exercised, morally claimed," so McCloskey argues (McCloskey 1980, 220-1). As far as this statement goes a right might be regarded as an exercise. McCloskey makes the following observation about exercising a claim:

> it is empty and meaningless to ascribe rights to beings who could not claim them and who could not be represented, for whom guardians could not act to claim and defend them in respect of their enjoyment and exerise of their rights (McCloskey 1983, 64).

Two potential problem areas are implied in McCloskey's approach to claiming rights: one, if a right is exercised, it must be claimed by either the right-bearer or the guardian or agent of the right-bearer; and two, most non-human animals (or non-persons) are incapable of claiming a right for themselves.[4]

Regarding the ability of a right-bearer to claim their right, Joel Feinberg makes an important distinction between "having a claim" and "making claim to". According to Feinberg, "making claim to," is "'to petition or seek by virtue of supposed right; to demand as due'" (Feinberg 1973, 64). "Making claim to" is a performative sense in which "only the person who has a title or has qualified for it, or someone speaking in his name, can make claim to something as a matter of right" (Feinberg 1973, 65). If A has a right to do, demand, or possess X and doing, demanding, or possessing X involves B, then B has a duty to recognize A's right to X only if A chooses. To have a claim, Feinberg says, "*consists in being in a position to claim in the performative sense*" (Feinberg 1973, 65). "Having a claim" is the substantive sense. What makes this distinction important is that one can have a claim "without ever claiming that to which one is entitled, or without even knowing that one has the claim" (Feinberg 1973, 65). The act of making a claim does not ratify the claim. But not making a claim and not being able to make a claim are not the same thing. It is reasonable that a being capable of making a claim might not do so out of choice or ignorance, but is it reasonable that a being incapable of making a claim might have a claim?

McCloskey and Feinberg agree that an agent can claim a right or claim for a right-bearer. Right-bearers need not make claims for themselves. Agents often act for infants, imbeciles, and other so-called marginal humans and agents could act for non-human animal species. McCloskey agrees that they can, but:

> The big difference would seem to be that animals must be represented, have guardians to seek to secure for them the enjoyment of their rights and also paternalistically to ensure that they do not exercise them to their own detriment if that supervision itself be compatible with respect for their rights (McCloskey 1983, 121).

"The big difference" cannot be simply that non-human animal species are never capable of making claims for themselves, because some marginal humans are also never capable of making claims for themselves. The difference must be that unlike marginal humans, non-

---

[4]Some interesting experiments concerning chimpanzees, gorillas, orangutans and vervet monkeys communicating with humans open speculation on the possibilities of these non-humans being able to claim rights, if they were recognized to be right-bearers. (Seyfarth 1982, 12-18).

humans have to rely on another species to make their claims for them. Not only another species, but the species that controls the ethical system(s) in which recognition for them is sought. The obvious point is that *some* humans are unable to claim, but (almost) *all* non-humans are unable to claim.

Indeed, the crux of the problem of moral recognition for non-human animal species or any entity outside the human species is: What sort of appeal can convince humans that they should not be or are not uniquely the objects of their own ethical systems? What sort of appeal can convince humans to strive to acquire and cultivate an ethical concern for non-human animal species?

One appeal is a modification of Olivecrona's observation mentioned earlier: if a right is recognized for a non-human animal species, then that species has some form of power over or (as it is sometimes interpreted) some form of immunity from human violators. In human-controlled moral systems, recognition for the claims of non-human animal species is an important step towards protecting them from human violators and it is against human violators that they need protection. Having human agents for non-human animal species is reminiscent of setting the fox to mind the chickens, but what choice is there? The choice may be between a "paternalistic" quardian of a recognized right (claim) or no guardian and no right (claim) at all.

Another appeal has been: If humans recognize that cruelty, inflicting unnecessary suffering, or other forms of abuse, or maltreatment are intrinsically wrong or improper, or conversely that some forms of treatment are intrinsically correct or proper, then any entity with the morally relevant requisite(s) for experiencing appropriate or inappropriate behaviour corresponding to an intrinsically improper or proper treatment should be accorded a right to enjoy proper treatment or be spared improper treatment. If humans must serve as agents in making claims to appropriate treatment for non-human animal species, it is fitting. "The species barrier is, in itself, irrelevant. Members of one species do in fact often succeed in understanding members of another well enough for both prediction and a personal bond. Nothing more is necessary" (Midgley 1979a, 348). Moreover, the antithesis, restricting intrinsically proper modes of behaviour to only a part of the class of beings capable of suffering from inappropriate behaviour or to only a part of the class of beings capable of enjoying appropriate behaviour, seems not only inconsistent and unbecoming, but a discredit to a species that prides itself on having the only moral agents, that is, the only beings capable of recognizing the inconsistency and unbecomingness.

If rights are claims, then to exercise those rights they must be claimed. But the right-bearer need not itself make the claim, agents could be appointed for non-human right-bearers (if such entities exist) as they are for some humans. Furthermore, if it is acknowledged that a given entity has the requisite(s) for being a right-bearer but is not itself capable of claiming its right(s), why should the species of that entity be a barrier to appointing a guardian, even a guardian of another species? If a right is a claim, and if no other factors need be considered beyond possessing the proper requisite(s) for being a right-bearer (acknowledging that in light of possession of those requisite(s) that it would be inconsistent not to recognize the claim of such an entity to treatment appropriate to the requisite(s)), and a guardian or agent can be appointed to make the claim for the entity (should the entity not be able to make a claim for itself), then there seems to be no barrier to recognizing that some non-human animal species can have moral claims. Unless, however, in equating rights with claims, it is held that a right-bearer must be capable of claiming the right(s) it possesses. If that were the case, then no being unable to claim a right could be a right-bearer. But, rights are not solely conceived as claims and other factors must be taken into account.

Entitlements

McCloskey objects that it is a "serious error to construe general rights as rights against rather than rights to or entitlements..." (McCloskey 1965, 118). If a right is an entitlement as opposed to claim, then it may be an "entitlement to complain in a special way in defense of oneself" (Jones 1977, 61). Possible differences between rights as claims and rights as entitlements include: entitlements are possessed and enjoyed while claims are made or exercised; entitlements are 'rights to' while claims are 'rights against'; and how correlative duties and reciprocity are conceived to apply to claims and entitlements. The difference between possessing and enjoying entitlements and making or exercising claims ultimately implies a difference between the sort of entity that can possess entitlements and the sort that can possess claims. Making claims can be done by an agent for the right-bearer, but enjoying an entitlement cannot be done by an agent for the right-bearer. The sort of being that can possess entitlements must be capable of acting for itself in the moral realm.

However, it is not clear that this distinction holds. For instance, if an agent can secure the benefit of an entitlement for the right-bearer, then the right-bearer could enjoy the entitlement given by the right. A baby may enjoy a right to life that is secured for it by its parents. The same could hold true for non-human animal species, such as prized

breeding stock, if they have a right to life. Another, but related, distinction to be drawn from possessing and enjoying entitlements as opposed to making or exercising claims is that entitlements are something that the bearer has for itself while claims are something the bearer imposes against others. Thus the distinction of 'rights to' and 'rights against'. The purpose and impact of the distinction between 'rights to' and 'rights against' lies in choice. 'Rights to' involve the capacity to make choices:

> It is when the notion of choice, possible or actual choice, enters the picture that the idea of a right possessed by the holder of the right gets some sort of grip. ... It seems then quite evidently not simply to be your duty to act in certain ways towards the being who can and does choose to do certain things; such a being comes to be thought to have entitlement, to have some sort of right to respect for his existence and choices, and he/it to be a possessor of rights which impose duties on others (McCloskey 1975, 413).

McCloskey argues that it is choice expressed in terms of exercising and enjoying that sets rights apart from other forms of moral consideration. "Perhaps the most important feature of talk about moral rights, and that which most distinguishes such talk from talk about duties, is the reference to exercising, claiming, forgoing, yielding up one's rights" (McCloskey 1979, 28). Here rights have the flavour of 'powers' - powers to be exercised or powers to be forgone.

If the right-bearer must be able to choose, must be able to exercise its right for itself, and to enjoy its right for itself, then the only known group that can meet these criteria are persons, a subclass of humans.[5] This does not mean agents cannot be appointed for persons, but it does suggest that right-bearers must be capable of exercising and enjoying their rights without an agent and also must be capable of personally waiving the exercise of their right(s) in favour of an agent. Robert Burch, who supports a modified version of McCloskey's position, says that:

> the unique contribution of the notion of rights to our moral system ... involves the idea that the possessor of rights is a special agent on his own behalf from the point of view of morality. The unique contribution of rights is to make the holder of rights someone who is morally entitled to act in a special way in his own interest. The concept of rights makes it the case that when a rights-holder is wronged, he is especially entitled to lodge complaints, to make someone answerable, to seek redress. ... The inclusion in our moral system of rights, then, seems to be a recognition of a special moral role that each person has as an agent in his own behalf. We might say that the notion of a right is the crystallization in morality of the notion of self-defense" (Burch 1977, 54-5).

---

[5]Persons as rights-bearers were discussed in the previous chapter.

This conception of rights suggests what John Kleinig calls the discretionary view. If A has a right to X with regard to B, then at A's discretion B has a duty to give X to A unless A chooses otherwise, or B has a duty to give X to A only if A chooses.[6] If rights are 'rights against' or "claims against", then the capacity of the right-bearer to make choices is not necessarily involved. Also if a "right against" can subsist independently of any choice no agent is needed either. But if rights are 'rights to' or entitlements to, then the capacity to make choices is a necessary characteristic of the right-bearer, including the choice to have an agent. It is at this point that correlative duties and reciprocity get a grip:

> According to the reciprocity framework, the radical division between human beings and nonhuman animals and nature is justified and explained by the fact that among human beings, reciprocal rights and duties are *intrinsic* or *primary* .... Any purported rights of and duties to entities that cannot reciprocate are extrinsic or secondary ... (Watson 1979, 105).

If reciprocity is thought to be part of rights, non-humans would have to be made "beneficiaries of moral obligations, but without imposing upon them mutual or reciprocal obligations, duties, or moral limitations, which it would be impossible for them to bear and absurd for us to suppose that they might" (Callicott 1979, 76). As in the case of the retarded persons given by Rachels, the expectation or demand that non-human animals return moral consideration in kind would have to be waived.

However, another conception of rights - rights as side-constraints - allows non-human animal species to be the beneficiaries of moral obligations without imposing upon them reciprocal obligations.

Side-Constraints

If Godfrey-Smith's view of a right as an entitlement of an individual or group of individuals to receive consideration in their treatment by moral agents is taken together with another statement of his that was quoted earlier that at least one but not all parties in a moral relationship must be a moral agent, something like the view advanced by Robert Nozick - rights as side-constraints - is suggested. This is not to say that Godfrey-Smith advocates the side-constraint view, indeed to apply the side constraints view to animal rights tears this conception from Nozick's context, but there is a precedent for doing so in the work of Stephen R.L. Clark (Clark 1979). Nonetheless an alternative view

---

[6] I draw this formulation from John Kleinig (Kleinig 1978, 42).

like the side-constraint view could be developed from the suggestions put forward by Godfrey-Smith.

On this side-constraint view rights are constraints on the actions of moral agents. If rights are side-constraints, the bearer need not act or choose. Nozick explains the side-constraint view in this way:

> In contrast to incorporating rights into the end state to be achieved, one might place them as side constraints upon the actions to be done: don't violate constraint *C*. The rights of others determine the constraints upon your actions. (A *goal-directed* view with constraints added would be: among those acts available to you that don't violate constraints *C*, act so as to maximize goal *G*. Here, the rights of others would constrain our goal-directed behavior. I do not mean to imply that the correct moral view includes mandatory goals that must be pursued, even within the constraints.) This view differs from one that tries to build the side constraints *C into* the goal *G*. The side-constraints view forbids you to violate these moral constraints in the pursuit of your goals; whereas the view whose objective is to minimize the violation of these rights allows you to violate the rights (the constraints) in order to lessen their total violation in the society (Nozick 1974, 29).

Rights as side-constraints avoid talk of 'rights to' and 'rights against'. The side-constraint view is not like Plamenatz's argument that animal rights are 'rights against' rational beings. On the side-constraint view, a moral constraint does apply only to rational beings, but the constraint is not a claim made against rational beings but rather it is a constraint on the scope of permissible actions by moral agents. Since a moral constraint applies to a goal of the moral agent and not that of the right-bearer, a moral agent does not act as an agent for a non-human animal right-bearer on the side constraint view. Taking up Nozick's idea of side-constraints, Clark observes that "we" (which I take to mean moral agents) "ought not to violate animal rights, but are under no obligation always to prevent such violations" (Clark 1979, 176). Here what he has in mind is "free men have more responsibilities than those incapable of moral deliberation" (Clark 1979, 184) to diminish their destructive impact on other species, but they are not responsible for policing relationships such as the predator/prey relationship. Moral agents are responsible for their own actions, but they are not responsible for the actions of non-moral agents, even if the actions of non-moral agents violates the right(s) of another.

The side-constraint view does not offer absolute protection - no right offers that - but neither does it render animal rights absurd. Even if "the rights consist only in the requirement that their [non-human animal species'] distresses be entered in the moral reckoning, or more seriously in a prima facie bar against ... exploitation" (Clark 1979, 176).

The side-constraint view also narrows the range of justifications for violating rights in that it eliminates what Nozick characterizes as the 'utilitarian' position. The 'utilitarian' position allows that in order to lessen the total violation of rights it is permissible to violate the rights of some. Nozick remarks rather acerbically of this position:

> let us label this position "utilitarianism for animals, Kantianism for people." It says: (1) maximize the total happiness of all living beings; (2) place stringent side constraints on what one may do to human beings. Human beings may not be used or sacrificed for the benefit of others; animals may be used or sacrificed for the benefit of other people or animals *only if* those benefits are greater than the loss inflicted (Nozick 1974, 39).

Lessening the total violation could no longer be counted as a moral justification or even an excuse for the violation of animal rights under the side constraint view. This does not mean that there are not moral justifications for the violation of rights, but that non-human animal species, like humans, are taken to be ends-in-themselves as well as being means for humans and other non-human animal species.

Conceptions of rights: as 'rights to'; as 'rights against'; as claims, as entitlements, and as side-constraints have been discussed. The discussions of these concepts of rights are far from definitive. But another aspect of rights also needs to be addressed. Assuming that non-human animals do have rights or a right such as a right to life, what would be the nature of this right?

A Right To Life

Using the right to life as an example, the question is: What arguments can be arrayed for and against non-human animal species having a a right to life? In discussing the right to life in relation to non-human animal species, two related notions are involved: a right for non-humans animal species to life, and a right for humans to kill non-human animal species.

On the broadest scale, the right to life is argued from the perspective of the intrinsic or inherent value of the life to its possessor:

> the noteworthy thing about the lives of the humans in question is that certain forms of life are better or worse *for them*; that is, even in the case of the severely mentally enfeebled, there are alternative forms of life concerning which it is intelligible to say that *they* (i.e. the humans in question themselves) are better off having one form of life rather than another. In a word, *all* of the humans in question including (even) the severely mentally enfeebled, not only are alive but are subjects of a life which itself has value (is better or worse) for the individual

> whose life it is. Each is, as it were, the center of his/her own universe of value, living through slices of experience which bode well or ill for the subject himself or herself. The suggestion before us, then, is that all but the irreversibly comatose have inherent value because all these humans have a life which is of more or less positive or negative value for them, and this logically independently of whether they (the humans in question) are valued by anyone else (Regan 1979, 208).

At the core of a right to life, or some principle of respect for life, is an assumption about intrinsic value. This does not mean that it is life itself that has intrinsic value, but that the removal of life diminishes or negates intrinsic value. An item or entity with intrinsic value is of value in-itself or for-itself. It is, in other words, an end-in-itself. An item or entity with instrumental value is of value for obtaining some end or purpose. It is, in other words, a means to an end. In Kantian ethics humans and their lives are ends-in-themselves and are never *only* or *solely* a means to something, while non-humans and their lives may be used only or solely as means to human ends.

Two assumptions need to be questioned: the assumption that non-human animal species have instrumental value but no intrinsic value and the assumption that human life is more valuable in all cases than non-human life. The intrinsic value (or inherent value as Regan terms it) argument shows that non-human animal species have intrinsic value for themselves as well as instrumental value for humans. The 'Argument from Marginal Cases' shows that at least some non-human animal species have as much claim, if not a greater claim, to a right to life than some humans:

> It is simply a (common) mistake to think that values and rights do not have a meaning, or an application, outside the human context or situation: to establish this point (on which Moore rightly insisted) it is enough to point out again that (hypothetical) valuers, not necessarily human or persons, can assign values with respect to situations and worlds devoid of humans and of persons altogether (Routley 1980a, 157-8).

A wide spectrum of notions about a right to life have been advanced. The span of the spectrum is from an equal and high value for life at one extreme to no value for life-in-itself at the other extreme.

At one extreme the value of life is embodied in Albert Schweitzer's "reverence for life", and here all life is equally valued and that value is positive and high. "Ethics," Schweitzer declares, "are nothing but reverence for life" (Schweitzer 1949, xviii). Reverence for life enlarges the sphere of ethics from a concern for human life to a concern for all life:

> A man is ethical only when life, as such, is sacred to him, that of plants and animals as that of his fellow man, and when he devotes himself helpfully to all

> life that is in need of help. Only the universal ethic of the feeling of responsibility in an ever-widening sphere for all that lives -- only that ethic can be founded in thought (Schweitzer 1933, 188).

Despite the appeal for plants and animals and the call for a universal ethic of responsibility for all that lives, Schweitzer's "reverence for life" is not an undifferentiated principle. Following Karl Barth, Passmore points out that Schweitzer places human life ahead of at least some non-human life (Passmore 1980, 122-23). Schweitzer, the ethicist, declares all life sacred; but Schweitzer, the doctor, will destroy yellow fever organisms to save human beings. Although not necessarily an assumption to which Schweitzer subscribes, the assumption "that even though other things may have intrinsic value, people or humans are more valuable than anything else, and rank more highly (no matter how large their number)" is a 'greater value assumption' (Routley and Routley 1980a, 171).

It may be the case that life has or imparts some intrinsic value, but that there are different degrees of intrinsic value. The value of life does not have to be an all-or-none affair. An undifferentiated right to life, i.e., all life is valued exactly the same, can lead to the false choice of respectful non-use and disrespectful use expounded by Plumwood and Sylvan:

> the choice presented in Western thought is typically one of *either* use without respect or serious constraint, of using animals for example in the ways characteristic of large-scale mass-production farming and a market economic system which are incompatible with respect, *or* on the other hand of not making any use of animals at all, for example, never making use of animals for food or for farming purposes (Routley and Routley 1980a, 179).

Respect for the intrinsic value of an entity need not be abandoned though the false choice between respectful non-use and disrespectful use is abandoned. The intrinsic value of non-human animal species can be respected and yet a species still be used for human purposes; but decisions about which species are used and how they are used take on ethical significance.

If the extreme of equal value or reverence for all life is modified to respectful use or to some non-arbitrary differentiation of the right to life, then criteria are needed by which such differentiation can be accomplished. Singer has suggested one set of criteria. Singer's criteria shift the argument from the question of a right to life to a near relative of a question mentioned earlier - a right to kill. Singer does not hold rights talk to be necessary, because any moral consideration expressed in terms of rights can be equally well expressed in other moral terms (Singer 1978, 122). Because Singer does not

champion the use of right-concepts, he does not advocate a right to life, nor a right to kill, but rather he questions: Under what conditions is it permissible to kill? and What factors are relevant to deciding the value of a given life?

Singer sets sentience as the primary criterion. He takes sentience to mean the ability to experience pleasure and suffer pain. As the primary criterion, sentience defines the major boundary for his concern.[7] "Sentience suffices to place a being within the sphere of equal consideration of interests; but it does not mean that the being has a personal interest in continuing to live" (Singer 1979a, 152). According to Singer it is wrong to cause a creature to suffer a painful death. But the wrongness is in causing the pain, not in causing the death. If one can kill painlessly, then Singer's sentience criterion is met.

Another criterion is the 'side-effects' argument:

> If we are considering killing a normal human being, the utilitarian can point to obvious bad effects that the killing of one normal human has on others. Killing leads to grief on the part of friends and relatives of the victim, and to fear and insecurity in the community generally (Singer 1979a, 145-6).

This is called the 'side-effects' argument because "it does not touch upon the real wrongness of killing" (Singer 1979a, 146), that is, it focuses on the effect the killing has on those about the victim and not the effect it has on the victim. The 'side effect' argument applies to species that have one or more of the following characteristics: "sufficient knowledge of what is happening to feel fear and insecurity, ... pair-bonding, maternal relations, or social relations ... strong enough to give rise to [a] sense of loss among the survivors" (Singer 1979a, 146). To mention but a few species that display some of these characteristics and that could be included under this argument: pair-bonding - wolves (*Canis lupis*) (Mowat 1979, 67), greylag geese (*Anser anser*) and jackdaws (*Coloeus monedula*) (Lorenz 1962, 177; 182); and strong maternal and social relations - elephants (*Loxodonta africana*) (Douglas-Hamilton 1975, 214; 234). As Singer is aware, the problem in this approach is to explain fully the real wrongness of killing:

> So what should we say about the wrongness of killing beings to whom the 'side-effects' argument does not apply? Here the most obvious answer for the utilitarian to give is that, provided the being is capable of pleasant experiences, to kill it is to reduce the amount of pleasure in the world. Since pleasure is good, this is, wrong (Singer 1979a, 146).

---

[7] Within this condition Singer has a particular concern for those species that are commonly used in scientific, medical and other laboratory research (cats, chimps, dogs, mice, rats, rabbits) and those species used in factory-farming (chickens, pigs, veal calves).

Singer is careful to warn that the connection between death and reducing pleasure is not as clear-cut as it might at first appear:

> we cannot move automatically from a preference for a pleasant life rather than an unpleasant one, to a preference for a pleasant life rather than no life at all. For, it might be objected, being killed does not make us worse off; it makes us cease to exist. Once we have ceased to exist, we shall not miss the pleasure we would have experienced (Singer 1979a, 146).

This warning reinforces a point made by Roslind Godlovitch. Suffering - and for that matter pleasure - is a concommitant of living:

> if a man were to consider it his duty to prevent animal suffering without holding that animal life has value, then it would follow that he ought to exterminate all animal life. It seems an inevitable fact that all sentient creatures suffer to a greater or lesser extent at some points in their lives. Suffering is accepted as a concommitant of living and, as such (except perhaps for extremely severe and prolonged suffering) is considered worth tolerating. But it is considered worth tolerating because a value is placed on *living* (Godlovitch 1971, 168).

However, the suffering that is a part of the due course of living should be distinguished from needless suffering. Such a distinction separates the loss of sight on a thorn that a rabbit might suffers during flight from a predator from the loss of sight it suffers during a Draize test. The elimination of needless suffering is not the elimination of all suffering.

For the utilitarian increasing pleasure or happiness can be related to a respect for life, or to the problem of killing, and Singer formalizes this as a 'prior existence' view:

> if we take the 'prior existence' view we shall hold that it is wrong to kill any being whose life is likely to contain, or can be brought to contain, more pleasure than pain. This implies that it is normally wrong to kill animals for food, since we could bring it about that these animals had a few pleasant months or even years before they died -- and the brief pleasure we get from eating them would not outweight this (Singer 1979a, 148).

Against such a view it could be argued that if side-effects are taken into account, then the loss of pleasure inflicted on one animal is balanced by the benefit conferred on the next (Singer 1979a, 149; 1980, 249). This is the 'replaceability' argument. Singer is convinced that the 'replaceability' argument fails to take into account an important distinction. He asks whether:

> The important distinction so far as killing is concerned is the distinction between beings that are merely conscious and those that are also self-conscious, in the sense of being able to conceive of themselves as distinct entities, existing over time with a past and future? If we think of a living creature as a self-conscious individual, leading its own life and with a desire to go on living, the replaceability argument holds little appeal (Singer 1979a, 151).

If this distinction holds, as he thinks it does, then in seeking a possible utilitarian answer to the problem of killing Singer can draw a morally crucial demarcation between those beings which are merely conscious and those beings which are self-conscious.

The crucial demarcation between merely conscious beings and self-conscious beings distinguishes "animals who are *conscious* and capable of feeling but not *self-conscious* or capable of conceiving themselves as distinct entities existing over time" (Singer 1980, 244). It can be asked: What constitutes "capable of conceiving themselves as distinct entities existing over time"? Singer answers:

> I do not think anything more is required as evidence for the existence of self-consciousness than the evidence already offered in support of the existence of intentional behavior. If an animal can devise a careful plan for obtaining a banana, not now but at some future time, and can take precautions against his own propensity to give away the object of the plan, that animal seems to be aware of himself as a distinct entity existing over time (Singer 1980, 242).[8]

For any being incapable of seeing itself as a distinct entity existing over time, Singer says, "death is the cessation of experiences, in much the same way that birth is the beginning of experiences. Death cannot be contrary to a preference for continued life, any more than birth could be in accordance with a preference for commencing life" (Singer 1979a, 152). Beings conscious of self are aware of the possibility of their own deaths, it is supposed, and thus death is not just a deprivation of sensation, but a deprivation of self and of the anticipation of future pleasures. Furthermore, while Singer is not "convinced that the notion of a moral right is a helpful or meaningful one, except when it is used as a shorthand way of referring to more fundamental moral considerations" (Singer 1980, 238), he does see some merit in Michael Tooley's argument for a right to life based on self-consciousness, i.e. the capacity for conceiving of oneself as a distinct entity existing over time. Singer puts the argument simply, perhaps too simply, he admits:

> if the right to life is the right to continue existing as a distinct entity, then the desire relevant to possessing a right to life is the desire to continue existing as a distinct entity. But only a being that is capable of conceiving itself as a distinct entity existing over time - that is, a person - could have this desire. Therefore, only a person can have this desire (Singer 1980, 239).

If the criterion for being a person is self-consciousness - defined as 'capable of conceiving

---

[8]Singer draws the example of a banana from Jane van Lawick-Goodall's chimpanzee study *In the Shadow of Man*. His reference is to the chimpanzee, Figan spying a banana but waiting for the more dominant chimpanzees to move out of the area before going to the fruit (Lawick-Goodall 1971, 95-96).

itself a distinct entity existing over time' - then, as shown in this and the previous chapter, at least some non-human animals are persons by this definition and, therefore, are capable of having a right to life.

Singer does not argue only for self-conscious beings. He takes up Regan's argument for attributing a right to life to all merely conscious beings:

> Tom Regan has suggested that the most plausible candidate is the fact that all humans, even mental defectives - or at least those who are conscious - have positive interests in the shape of desires, goals, or preferences, the satisfaction of which provides them with intrinsically valuable experiences. The intrinsic value brought into the life of any one human being by the satisfaction of his or her desires is, Regan claims, "just as good, judged in itself" as the intrinsic value brought into the life of any other human being by the satisfaction of that human being's desires. Since one can seek to satisfy one's desires only if one is still alive, it is possible to draw from this argument the conclusion that there is value in the life of any being that has desires, and that can derive some valuable experienced from their satisfaction (Singer 1980, 244).

Singer says this argument has the weakness that it "relies on the assumption that all human beings ... have an equal right to life" (Singer 1980, 245). The argument rests on the assumption that there is an undifferentiated right to life. Suppose, however, much as Plato supposed, that the value of a life is acquired and depends on certain characteristics of the life bearer, then for a human who can no longer perform the normal functions of an adult human (in Regan's argument mental defectives) "his life is no longer worth living and he might as well die" (Kleinig 1980, 13). If Regan's argument holds, then, departing from Singer, one is left with a choice. Either all conscious human life is of equal value, independently of whatever other characteristics that each individual may possess or lack, or the value of human life (and for that matter any life) depends on certain characteristics possessed. If the first of these alternatives is accepted, then one accepts either that humans such as mental defectives have an equal right to life with normal adult humans on some basis such as 'taxonomical economy', which narrows the sphere of moral consideration to one species; or in the absence of other evidence to the contrary one accepts that any merely conscious non-human animal has an equal right to life with humans. Or, if one adopts the second of these alternatives, then one accepts either that conscious human and non-human lives are valued differently according to the characteristics possessed by the individual; or one accepts that life has no value in- and of-itself and it is the characteristics that have value.

On the assumption that Regan's argument holds and Singer's does not, the first of these four possible alternatives leads to inconsistency and speciesism, as unjustified a discrimination as racism; the second alternative leads to a revision in the moral status of

non-human animals; the third alternative leads to a change in the perception of marginal humans and how they can be treated which in turn leads to the possibility of using these humans in ways similar to the ways non-human animals are now used; and the fourth alternative leads to the other extreme on the value of life - life has no value. The last alternative should not be dismissed without examination.

An argument that life has no value might proceed like this: some act X is bad because it terminates some activity or state Y, but X is bad only if Y has some positive value or is good. Where X is death and Y is life, death is bad only if life has positive value or is good. But it can be argued, life is neither good nor bad, it simply *is*. The mere existence of life is neither an explanation, nor a justification for its having value. Life itself is not valuable, it is a precondition for having or exercising certain values. If life is not valuable but is only a precondition for value, how should this effect the treatment of living beings? Even if life-in-itself does not have value, this does not determine how any living being can or should be treated. It only indicates that the mere fact of life is insufficient to determine what treatment the being is due. Taking up a suggestion by Jan Narveson, "we should value others in the sense that we should allow them to live their lives as they please, without interference. We should, in short, not *value*, but rather *respect*, their lives" (Narveson 1980, 121). This suggestion is like Brigid Brophy's argument concerning the value of lives:

> different though you and I may be in the mode of our being and our sentiency, and even perhaps in the intensity of them, our rights to them have to be taken as equal. My life may seem to you a poor and limited little affair, the loss of which you would reckon no great loss. That doesn't, however, entitle you to make me lose it. Since we are separate entities, the question is not what my life is worth to you, but what it is worth to me, whose only life it is and who am the only person who leads it (Brophy 1971, 128).

Conclusion

The right to life is but one right that non-human animals may possess and the preceding analysis of a right to life is but one analysis of some features of a right to life and issues involved in recognizing that right for non-human animals. Many other analyses are possible, including, as Singer does, a rejection of the concept of a right in favour of discussing the issues of treatment for non-human animals and the respect given their lives in other terms. The foregoing discussion of a right to life for non-human animal species illustrates issues and difficulties involved in attempting to treat with non-humans in the existing moral and ethical structures created to deal with relationships between humans

or, more restrictively, persons, where persons are seen as a subset of humans. The analysis does not decisively demonstrate that non-human animal species do or do not possess a right to life, nor does it decisively show that the characteristics mentioned are the only or best characteristics for determining if and to what degree respect is due to the lives of each non-human animal species. What it does show is that a case can be made for revising human perspectives on the treatment and respect given to non-human animal species and their lives.

To be unable to resolve the question of whether or not at least some non-human animals have a right to life may not be so much a problem of determining what species have a right to life as a problem with the concept of a right. What is important is that a case can be made for revising human regard for non-human animals' lives. "If animals or other entities cannot have rights, nothing follows concerning how they may be treated. What has been foreclosed is a way of speech, not of action" (Freedman 1981, 168). Rights are not the central issue. If some non-human animal species can have rights well and good, but if they cannot have them nothing is necessarily lost in the case for revising human perspectives of the treatment and respect due to other species. The central issue is the need for a favourable revision in practices and perspectives towards non-human animal species. If the rhetoric of rights becomes central and the favourable revision of human practices and perspectives to non-human animals becomes secondary, then the whole process becomes just a debate about rearranging deckchairs on the Titanic.

Rights are but one way to revision. In the next chapter another way - calls for a new ethic to deal with relationships between humans and non-humans - will be discussed.

Chapter 4

CALLS FOR A NEW ETHIC

Among other things, an ethic indicates appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and treatment and to whom it is applicable. Calls for a new environmental ethic are calls for a reconceptualization of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour towards and treatment of the environment by humans and an application of an ethic directly to environment. The term ethics comes from the Greek *ethos* meaning custom, character, people or system. According to the OED 'ethos' has come to mean in English the characteristic spirit of a community. In Western traditions the characteristic spirit of the ethical community has been limited to humans or some subset of humans. Fifty years ago, Albert Schweitzer commented, "The great fault of all ethics hitherto has been that they believed themselves to have to deal only with the relations of man to man" (Schweitzer 1933, 188).

Hitherto humans have been both the objects of moral concern and the class of reference or frame of reference for determining moral relevance. A new environmental ethic would make the biotic community, the environment, or nature the object of moral concern and the characteristics, attributes, qualities or excellences of the biotic community or items in the environment would be used as the fundamental determinants of moral relevance. An inter-species ethic would be included within a more inclusive environmental ethic.

One proposal for the inclusion of the biotic community is Aldo Leopold's land ethic set forth in 1949. "The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively, the land." (Leopold 1966, 219).

Two related problems inhere in enlarging the ethical community: first, enlarging the ethical community beyond humans to the biotic community calls for a reconsideration of what characteristics are morally relevant; and second, what ethical principles and/or norms should be used to take account of these characteristics?

The notion of 'simply enlarges' in Leopold's land ethic implies that currently accepted principles and norms for appropriate and inappropriate behaviour would remain unchanged or relatively unchanged while the community would be expanded to include the non-human world. To 'simply enlarge' ethical boundaries "by the process of 'extension' perpetuates the basic presuppositions of the conventional modern paradigm, however much it fiddles with the boundaries" (Rodman 1977, 95). Although a call for a new environmental ethic is not a call for the abandonment of all currently held and used

ethical and moral principles and norms, it is a call for the reconceptualization and application of those principles and the addition of other principles, as necessary, to take account of the shift from humans to the biotic community as the fundamental reference class. Those principles and norms that do not admit the intrinsic or inherent value of other species and environmental entities - or a value beyond their value to humans - will have to be revised, abandoned, or replaced by principles and norms that do.

But if it were the case that the community were enlarged without reconceptualizing which ethical principles and norms apply and how they apply, then one might argue as John Passmore has against Leopold. Passmore has argued that it may be true that humans are members of the biotic community, but that does not make the community an ethical community:

> Ecologically, no doubt, men form a community with plants, animals, soil, in the sense that a particular life-cycle will involve all four of them. But if it is essential to a community that the members of it have common interests and recognize mutual obligations then men, plants, animals and soil do not form a community. ... In the only sense in which belonging to a community generates ethical obligation, they do not belong to the same community (Passmore 1974, 116).

At first glance it would seem Passmore and Leopold agree on the basic ecological fact, but differ on how to value this fact. But Leopold would not have accepted Passmore's limited meaning of an 'ecological community'. The ecological community includes the concepts of interdependency of the members and elements of the community and the greater dependency of humans (and other lately-evolved omnivores and carnivores) on the community.[1] Leopold accepts the concept of the ecological community as both environmentally descriptive and ethically prescriptive. Further, he would reject what appears to be a conflation of a sociological sense of community (i.e. composed of one species) with a biotic or ecological sense (i.e. composed of a diversity of species). That is, the biotic or ecological community is not simply a loose collection of members but an association of mutual dependency. Leopold does not say that the ethical obligations have to be mutual in the ethical/biotic community. Rather he indicates about a land ethic what J. Baird Callicott (following Leopold's lead) states about an environmental ethic that it is "a distinct ethical theory which provides direct moral standing for the land (in Leopold's inclusive sense)" (Callicott 1982, 164). An environmental ethic starts with the idea that the biotic community - where biotic is not confined to life-forms, but is

---

[1]For some of the complexities of the interdependences and the greater dependency of larger species, see Colinvaux 1980.

understood to include soils, waters, and other non-living features - forms the ethical community and the relationships within the community are based on the relevant characteristics applicable to the whole community rather than those possessed by one species, namely, humans. However, it is only the relationships between humans and non-humans that are changed. Passmore imports a restricted sense of obligation to prevent the ethical community from becoming co-extensive with the biotic community. This is the same sort of objection that those opposed to recognizing 'animal rights' raise using the concept of reciprocity. Furthermore, the 'common interests' in the biotic community are different from the common interests of one species (any one species), which Passmore apparently fails to realize. Members of one species have interests in common that they do not have in common with other species, but they also have interests in common with other species. Recalling the arguments about interests presented in Chapter 2, the model of the biotic/ethical community is more aligned with Singer's notion of equal consideration of interests, than McCloskey's notion of treatment of equals. The biotic/ethical communities are composed of mutually dependent, but heterogeneous entities. As will be discussed later in this chapter, in a broad sense of symbiotic relationships, biotic communities do have common interests.

While an environmental ethic enlarges or redefines the ethical community to which a direct moral concern is due, it does not make humans the moral watchdogs for interactions among non-human members of the community. Humans are responsible for their interactions with other species, but not for the interactions among other species. The human position within the community is special only in that being the only known moral agents - and the species posing the single greatest threat to the rest of the community, and thereby to itself - it is human behaviour within and treatment of the community that has to be moderated and monitored. As Callicott puts this position:

> We wish to "enlarge the boundaries of the community" to include nonhuman natural entities as beneficiaries of moral obligation, but without imposing upon them mutual or reciprocal obligations, duties, or moral limitations, which it would be impossible for them to bear and absurd for us to suppose that they might (Callicott 1979, 76).

Although humans remain the only known moral agents and, therefore, the only species which can observe the ethical restrictions and mandates of an environmental ethic, the biotic community forms the ethical community. Human beings are the moral agents without being the ethically privileged species in terms of remaining the exclusive objects of ethical concern, nor the standard by which ethical concern is measured.

Humans as a species are subject to the same evolutionary and ecological principles as

any other species. Human survival is no less an ethical concern than it ever was, but the preservation of humans is through and not at the expense of the preservation of the biotic community. The traditional assumption of the dominant Western paradigm of human supremacy over the rest of creation - an environmental 'might makes right' assumption - is rejected. And human insensibility and insouciance towards the rest of the biotic community is supplanted with due and direct regard.

Human survival remains a central concern without humans remaining the central focus. An ethic appropriate to a long term future for *Homo sapiens* requires the adoption of the biotic/ecological meaning of community, rather than the anthropocentric, sociological meaning. In other words, the biotic community's interests *are* ultimately human interests. William Godfrey-Smith states this in terms of an ethical Copernican revolution:

> Just as Copernicus showed us that man does not occupy the physical center of the universe, Darwin and his successors have shown us that man occupies no *biologically* privileged position. We still have to assimilate the implications which this biological knowledge has for morality (Godfrey-Smith 1979, 317).

An environmental ethic shifts the frame of reference for ethical consideration from humans to the biotic community. The shift in the scope of ethical concern also shifts the conceptualization of what is a morally relevant characteristic. Shifting to the biotic community as the frame of reference raises problems of how to respect or value the members of the community. Stanley Benn says:

> What is needed is some body of principles of action that will safeguard valuable things, as presently accepted principles will not. An 'ethic' would then be not so much a systematization of intuitive judgements, but a set of practical prescriptions. Its validity would depend then on the axiological standing of the objects protected by it (Benn 1975, 5).

The voluntary displacement of humans from the centre of the moral universe is disquieting to many. According to Callicott, if too great an ethical burden is placed on humans for the biotic/ethical community, then that burden becomes a form of reverse chauvinism. While he accepts, "*we* should evolve or assume environmental ethical limitations upon *our* conduct" (Callicott 1979, 76), he does not hold with the position that he attributes to Richard Sylvan that, "if one is a member of the environmental community, then one is also subject to an environmental ethic..." (Callicott 1979, 75). Callicott's concern is this: if an environmental ethic is based on the biotic community's interests rather than human interests, what is the role and the position of humans in the community? How far are humans expected to restrict their behaviour? Can humans be expected to uphold an environmental ethic that is detrimental to their species on the

short term? An environmental ethic or philosophy must be consistent with environmental/ecological principles and with life, i.e. livable.

Two calls for an environment ethic will be considered here: the first is proposed by Val Plumwood and Richard Sylvan and the second is Deep Ecology.

Plumwood and Sylvan

Plumwood and Sylvan have set out and developed their position in a number of publications starting about 1973. Sylvan recently christened this ethic "deep green theory" (Sylvan 1985, 57). Their environmental ethic is characterised by a respect thesis for environmental entities; no class of reference or base class and instead non-arbitrary categorical distinctions for determining moral relevance; generalizable obligation principles; a no-reduction view, rather than a "partist"[2] or holist view of the inter-relationships within the environment; a non-interference principle and a shift in the onus of proof requiring that reasons be given for interfering with the environment rather than reasons for not interfering with it; revision of economic, metaphysical, and social structures; a no-waste economy; and direct responsibility for environmental interference or modification.

Plumwood and Sylvan recognize that a simple extension of current anthropocentric ethics is not sufficient to develop an ethic that can satisfactorily cover the divergent entities and items in the environment. Such anthropocentric ethics for the most part make valuing and the objects of ethical concern exclusive to humans or some subclass of humans. Plumwood and Sylvan deny the exclusiveness of value and morality to humans and the putative link of values and morals to solely human interests. They maintain that non-human animals can have value independent of their value to humans and that non-humans can be the direct objects of ethical concern.

The use of a single species to determine moral relevance they call the "base class assumption". They reject any single species, e.g. humans, as a base class or class of reference for determining moral relevance. Instead of comparing non-humans to humans, they shift to an examination of morally relevant categorical distinctions:

> it is not possible to provide criteria which would *justify* distinguishing, in the sharp way standard Western ethics do, between humans and certain nonhuman creatures, and particularily those creatures which have preferences or preferred

---

[2]"Partist" is the term used by Plumwood and Sylvan as an antonym for holist and will be adopted in this work.

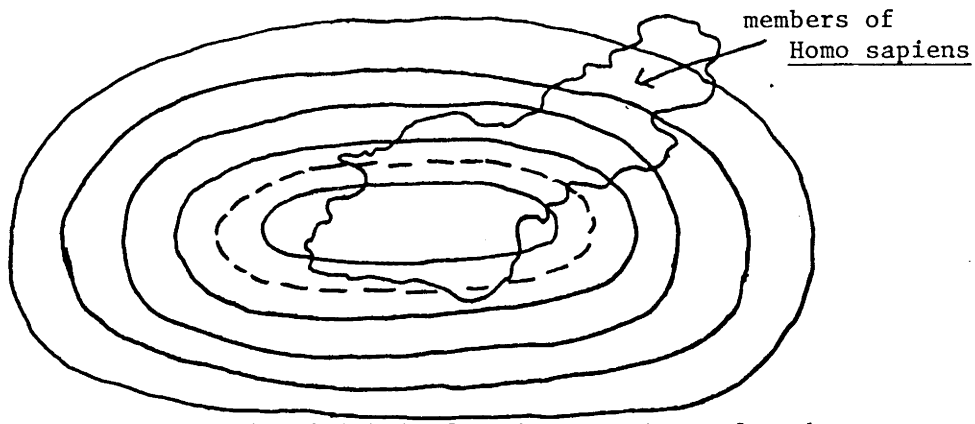
> states. For such criteria appear to depend upon the mistaken assumption that moral respect for other creatures is due only when they can be shown to measure up to some rather *arbitrarily-determined* and *loaded* tests for membership of a privileged class (essentially an elitist view), instead of upon, say, respect for the preferences of other creatures. Accordingly the sharp moral distinction, commonly accepted in ethics by philosophers and others alike, *between all humans and all other animal species, lacks a satisfactory coherent basis* (Routley and Routley 1980a, 103).

Rejecting the base class assumption, they also reject the determination of value only by utility to the base class. This does not mean that human values are rejected, but that value is no longer judged solely in terms of benefit to humans and that human chauvinistic values no longer automatically take precedence over all other values. Thus any given biotic community or ecosystem, e.g. a swamp, is recognized as having value other than its value or potential value as a human resource, for example as a store of fresh water. It is seen as having value as the home of a number of various flora and fauna species with a complex set of inter-relationships and as a system-in-itself that is not reducible to the interests of one species or even a group of species within it. Rejecting the base class assumption separates moral consideration from exclusively human interests and provides a basis for the ethical consideration of a wider range of characteristics possessed by entities and systems:

> What emerges is a picture of types of moral obligation as associated with a nest of rings or annular boundary classes, with the innermost class, consisting of highly intelligent, social, sentient creatures, having the full range of moral obligations applicable to them, and outer classes of such nonsentient items as trees and rocks having only a much more restricted range of moral obligations significantly applicable to them. In some cases there is no sharp division between the rings. But there is no single uniform privileged class of items, no one base class, to which all and only moral principles directly apply, and moreover the zoological class of humans is not one of the really significant boundary classes. The recognition that some types of moral obligation only apply within the context of a particular sort of society, or through contract, does nothing to support the case of human chauvinism (Routley and Routley 1979, 55).

This notion of nested zones or an annular picture of classes may be diagrammed as in Diagram 1 (Routley 1982a, 2).

Diagram 1: ANNULAR PICTURE OF MORAL RINGS IN OBJECT SPACE (and the position of humans).



Key:- Notional labels for the interiors of such morally relevant rings (or ellipses), from outer to inner:

Objects of value, objects of moral concern
Objects having well-being
Preference havers, choice makers
Rights holders
Obligation holders, responsibility bearers
Contractual obligation makers

The labels for the rings or zones represent:

> respectively different sorts of objects - such as, objects of moral concern, welfare-having objects, preference-havers (and choice-makers), right-holders, obligation-holders and responsibility-bearers, those contractually-committed - and the different sorts of obligations that can significantly apply to such objects. Not all the types of objects indicated are distinct, nor is the listing intended to be exhaustive but rather illustrative. For strictly the labels given should be expanded, as the distinctions are categorical ones, so that what matters is not whether an object is, for instance, contractually committed in some fashion but whether it is the sort of thing that can be, whether it can significantly enter into or be committed by arrangements of a contractual kind (Routley and Routley 1980a, 107-8).

Moreover, the categorical distinctions that demarcate the various rings or zones are morally relevant categories. With the annular picture Plumwood and Sylvan do not reject traditional ethical categories such as rationality, self-awareness, having interests, but they do reject the limitation of categories to a comparison of the characteristics of all other entities with the characteristics of one species or base class. Also they reject as unjustified distinctions that are not "categorical distinctions which tie analytically with ethical notions" (Routley and Routley 1980a, 108). For example, they do not hold that the human/non-human distinction to be ethically significant. This being the case, they state their annular picture:

> is certainly in no way species chauvinist or human chauvinist. For none of the zones of the annular picture comprises the class of humans (or its minor variant the class of persons); for this class is not of moral relevance (Routley and Routley 1980a, 108).

Returning again to the metaphor of the Moral Club mentioned in Chapter Two, under the annular picture membership in the Club is automatic for all objects of moral concern, but the privileges within the Club are limited by moral capacities to use the facilities of the Club. The obligations and the extent of those obligations of human members to non-human members rest upon the type of moral object the non-human is and on its capacities (illustrated by its overlay on the rings), not upon a comparison of the non-human to the human. For example a being capable of contractual obligation could justifiably discriminate against a being unable to make contracts with reference to contractual obligations, regardless of the species of the two beings. Normal adult humans do not enter into contracts with adult wombats nor do they enter into contracts with infant humans, both of which are incapable of contractual obligations. By the same token, it would be unjust of a preference-haver to discriminate against another preference-haver solely because the two preference-havers were of different species. This recalls the point made by Singer about equal consideration of like interests that was discussed in Chapter Two. It does not mean, however, that there will not be conflicts of interests or preferences or whatever, nor that ethical dilemmas about conflicts will be any easier to solve or resolve.

Also it should be noted that Diagram 1 illustrates the position of humans as a species and not that of a particular human. Any given human, as with any given object of moral concern plotted on the rings, would not necessarily match in each detail the plot of the species to which it belongs:

> Just as there are relevant divisions beyond the class of preference-havers, so there are within the class. Thus the suggestion that the class towards which moral obligations (and a corresponding *sort* of moral concern which takes account of creatures' states) may be held is bounded by the class of preference-havers, does not of course imply that *no distinctions* can be made *within* the class of preference-havers with respect to the kind of behaviour appropriate to them (Routley and Routley 1980a, 107).

Moving on from their rejection of the base class assumption, they develop a respect thesis founded on three generalizable obligation principles and a no-reduction view of environmental inter-relationships. Briefly stated the obligation principles are: 1) "*not to put others (other preference-havers) into a dispreferred state for no good reason*"; 2) "*not to jeopardise the wellbeing of natural objects or systems without good reason*" and

3) not to damage or destroy items which "*cannot literally be put into dispreferred states...but they can be damaged or destroyed or have their value eroded or impaired*" (Routley and Routley 1980a, 104, 107, 109). One or more of these three obligation principles applies to the range of environmental possibilities, e.g. ecosystems, parts of ecosystems, and inter-relationships between the parts or between the parts and the whole of the system.

They apply these generalizable obligation principles in conjunction with their no-reduction view of environmental inter-relationships. This view permits a middle ground between 'partist' and holist views. The 'partist', holist, and no-reduction views can apply to the perception of an individual in a social or environmental milieu or to the milieu itself. When applied to the individual, on the 'partist' view the individual is self-contained and disconnected from other individuals. This leads to egoism. On the holist view the individual is an intersection of holistic elements. This leads to a denial of self. When applied to the environment, the 'partist' view would be the equivalent of an atomistic view of the world in which individual items in the environment, such as individual species, were the focus of attention. The holist view would focus on entire systems.

To return to the swamp example, on the 'partist' view values, preferences, and other considerations would be focussed on the mangroves, epiphytes, mussels, barnacles, crabs, water snakes, mud flats, salt domes and other entities and items of the swamp. On the holist view attention is focussed on the swamp as an integrated whole. The middle ground of the no-reduction view provides a locus for what Plumwood and Sylvan term 'the ecological outlook':

> the no-reduction position can provide a suitable metaphysical base for an ecological outlook or worldview, in which man is seen as part of a natural community, part of natural systems seen as integrated wholes and with welfare and interests bound up with the whole, and not as, in the typical Western view, a separate, self-contained actor standing outside the system and manipulating it in the pursuit of self-contained interests (Routley and Routley 1980b, 319).

The no-reduction view provides for a policy of respect for the system, its parts, and for the inter-relationships between parts and between the parts and the whole:

> The no-reduction position can thus provide a natural foundation for a genuinely environmental ethic, one which allows human actions to be guided by respect, care and concern for the natural world and rejects the "Human Egoist" thesis that the only constraints on human action concerning nature arise from the interests of other humans (Routley and Routley 1980b, 319).

On the no-reduction view, both the individual species and items of the swamp and the swamp as a whole are considered, but the whole is not reducible to the sum of the parts, nor are the parts considered to the exclusion of the relationships and value of the whole. The parts and the whole are respected, but neither is given respect or care at the expense of the other.

Their respect thesis is not to be understood as a reverence position. For instance, interference is acceptable, as in the case of "*essential predation*...which is essential to the normal livelihood" of the predator, and where the predator takes for itself no more than it requires for its livelihood (Routley 1982a, 32). The lives, preferences, choices, and considerations of other species or objects of moral concern are not to be taken as sacred and inviolable, nonetheless the respect thesis requires that good reasons be given for interfering with the environment:

> one starts from a restricted position, a position of no interference and no exploitation, a position at peace with the natural world so to say, and allows interference -- not as on Western thinking, restricts interference -- for good reasons. The onus of proof is thus entirely inverted: good reasons are required *for* interference, not *to stop* interference (Routley and Routley 1980a, 174).

Instead of individuals doing as they wish until they run up against some side-constraint, such as polluting a stream until it affects the lives of humans downstream, by inverting the onus of proof the generalizable obligation principles become constraints on individuals to have a good reason to act before they act. The obligation principles are initial restraints on action, not inaction. The constraints are on beginning to act, not a limitation on where to stop acting. However, these restraints do not prevent action or use. Plumwood and Sylvan consider the choice between disrespectful use and respectful non-use as a false dichotomy:

> The conventional wisdom of Western Society tends to offer a false dichotomy of use versus respectful nonuse - a false choice which comes out especially clearly again in the treatment of animals. Here the choice presented in Western thought is typically one of *either* use without respect or serious constraint, of using animals for example in the ways characteristic of large- scale mass-production farming and a market economic system which are incompatible with respect, *or* on the other hand of not making any use of animals at all, for example, never making use of animals for food or for farming purposes. What is left out in this choice is the alternative the Indians and other non-Western people have recognized, the alternative of limited and respectful use, which enables use to be made of animals, but does not allow animals to be used in an unconstrained way or merely as means to human ends. (Routley and Routley 1980a, 179).

For there to be a respectful position that denies the dichotomy of unconstrained use

versus respectful nonuse, but that also allows for the relationship between the user and the item as well as the preferences, interests or wellbeing, or value of the item to be taken into account, fundamental changes in the present relationship between humans and the environment are needed. One fundamental change is for users to take individual direct responsibility for their impact:

> Respect positions can only be generally realized in a society in which the basic social structure and economy enables people to take direct responsibility for the impact on the natural world their needs and their statisfaction create ... (Routley and Routley 1980b, 323).

If human users take direct responsiblility for their impact, the expectation is that they will reduce their impact. Like the supposition behind essential predation (that the predator takes for itself and takes only what it needs) if human users bear the responsibility for producing and managing what they need, then they should produce only what they need and should 'go lighter' on the environment. Direct responsibility would, it is anticipated, lead to:

> a *no-waste society* in which nothing is produced which does not correspond to genuine needs and in which production is designed to satisfy those needs with a minimum of waste. The possibility of production of material which does not correspond to genuine needs is eliminated by two factors in the economy of cooperative exchange and involvement; first, a direct relationship between the possibility of use of an item and direct expenditure of labour on the part of the user, and second, direct
>
> cooperative involvement between producers and users (Routley and Routley 1980b, 313).

Thus an alternative to the Western dichotomy of use versus nonuse is to mitigate, if possible, the impact of human use by considering the preferences, interests or wellbeing, or value of the item:

> To so use something without treating it as available for unlimited or unconstrained use for human ends is characteristic of *respectful* use. In contrast non-respectful use treats the use of the item as constrained by no considerations arising from the item itself and the user's relationship to it, but as constrained only in a derivative way, by considerations of the convenience, welfare and so forth of other humans (Routley and Routley 1980a, 179).

If the preferences, interests or wellbeing, or value of items in the environment are respected, then, according to Plumwood and Sylvan, the assumption that the environment or pieces of it can be private property to be done with or disposed of at will by humans without regard for those preferences, interests or wellbeing, or values is repudiated. Before a swamp can be drained, or a forest cut, or a stream polluted some good reason

must be given. Human convenience and economic gain alone would not count as sufficient reasons. "Respect does not preclude use, but it does preclude certain sorts of use. It is incompatible above all with a private property view and with regarding something solely as a means to the user's ends (Routley and Routley 1980b, 322).

This ethic extends far beyond the interrelations of human and non-human animal species. When applied to Western cultures, it is intended to face among other issues the economic/ethical conflicts that have been at the core of many of the practical ethical problems concerning humans and non-humans and that have given rise to much of the current debate over inter-species ethics. The respect thesis is intended, therefore, to reduce the impact of human users on the entire environment. The respect thesis is a strong rival to the Dominion Thesis that has been the ruling and guiding principle of Western thought on ethical relationships between humans and non-humans. Briefly, the Dominion Thesis states the view "that humans are entitled to manipulate the earth, its ecosystems, and all its non-human inhabitants for human benefit" (Routley 1975, 172). The Dominion Thesis is founded on the Christian teaching that God gave humans dominion over the earth and all that dwells therein and the Stoic teaching that nature exists only to serve human interests.[3] Like the Dominion Thesis, the respect thesis is a basic set of principles from which a whole range of problems, situations, and questions can be approached. Unlike the Dominion Thesis it is not the product of centuries of sometimes haphazard, sometimes convenient, sometimes intentional development. It is the deliberate and rational choice to develop a specifically environmental outlook.

Deep Ecology

Deep Ecology is not a philosophical system, but a grass roots movement. Arne Naess, the Norwegian philosopher who coined the term Deep Ecology, says, "one must consequently avoid looking for one definite philosophy or religious view among the supporters of the deep ecological movement" (Naess 1984, 1). It does, however, provide an ecophilosophical view or ecosophy (ecological wisdom). Deep Ecology has attracted a following in Australia. The ecosophy of Deep Ecology has also attracted comment and criticism in Australia, notably that of Richard Sylvan.

Deep Ecology is contrasted with shallow ecology. Shallow ecology is characterized as an anthropocentric "fight against pollution and resource depletion...[with the] central objective: the health and affluence of people in developed countries" (Naess 1973, 95).

---

[3]Aristotle maintained a similar stance on nature and other species, "Now if nature makes nothing incomplete, and nothing in vain, the inference must be that she has made all animals for the sake of man." (Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 1, ch. 8).

Deep Ecology has four levels. On the first level are the sources of the inspirations, insights, and intuitions of the movement. These may be Christian, philosophical, Buddhist, or some other source. On the second level is the platform. The platform consists of principles or departure formulations derived from level one. On the third level are generalized hypotheses. These are generalized ways of behaving towards the environment. The fourth level is the level of actions. These are specific actions in specific cases. Only at level two is there a consensus, and here the consensus is only a consensus on the intuitions of the principles and not on their exact formulations. Latitude is left for specific formulations for specific circumstances or bioregions.

The roots of Deep Ecology are many and varied. A US West Coast exponent of Deep Ecology, Bill Devall has identified five sources of Deep Ecology: "the influx of Eastern spiritual traditions into the West", in particular he mentions the Buddhist and Zen influences of Alan Watts, Daisetz Suzuki, Alan Ginsberg, and Gary Synder; "the re-evaluation of Native Americans (and other preliterate peoples)", here he indicates a trend to dispense with romantic ideals and to appreciate and to understand traditional religions and philosophies; "the 'minority tradition' of Western religious and philosophical traditions," he makes particular reference to Spinoza, Whitehead, and Heidegger; "the scientific discipline of *ecology*"; and "those artists who have tried to maintain a sense of place in their work", he names Ansel Adams, Morris Graves, and Larry Gray (Devall 1980, 304-8). The principles of Deep Ecology are supported by these many and varied roots.

The statements of the basic principles, or departure formulations, of Deep Ecology have evolved since 1973, when Naess first published them in English. However, the underlying ecophilosophical intuitions fundamental to Deep Ecology have not changed. In his 1973 summary of the basic principles of Deep Ecology, Naess listed seven points:

1. Rejection of the man-in-the-environment image in favour of *the relational, total-field image.*
2. *Biospherical egalitarianism* - in principle.
3. *Principles of diversity and of symbiosis.*
4. *Anti-class posture.*
5. *Fight against pollution and resource depletion.*
6. *Complexity, not complication.*
7. *Local autonomy and decentralization* (Naess 1973, 95-98).

In 1984, Naess and George Sessions, another US West Coast advocate of Deep Ecology, reformulated the basic principles and published them in *Ecophilosophy VI.* This recent formulation lists eight basic principles of Deep Ecology:

1. The well-being and flourishing of human and non-human Life on Earth have value in themselves (synonyms: intrinsic value, inherent value). These values are independent of the usefulness of the non-human world for human purposes.

2. Richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realization of these values and are also values in themselves.

3. Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy *vital* needs.

4. The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantial decrease of the human population. The flourishing of non-human life requires such a decrease.

5. Present human interference with the non-human world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening.

6. Policies must therefore be changed. These policies affect basic economic, technological, and ideological structures. The resulting state of affairs will be deeply different from the present.

7. The ideological change is mainly that of appreciating *life quality* (dwelling in situations of inherent value) rather than adhering to an increasingly higher standard of living. There will be a profound awareness of the difference between big and great.

8. Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to try to implement the necessary changes (Naess and Sessions 1984, 5).

There seems to be very little overlap between the two formulations of basic principles.[4] Only principles 1 in the recent set and 2 in the early set, principles 2 and 3 in the recent set and 3 in the early set, and principle 5 in each set are recognizably the same. But it must be remembered that Deep Ecology is a movement and not a fixed philosophy. The difference in the two formulations marks a progression, not an inconsistency. Deep Ecology is a way of arguing for the conservation and preservation of the environment, and, therefore, it is flexible to keep abreast of changes in threats to the environment. Flexibility in the formulations has lead to the refinement of the intentionally vague formulations. Refinements have lead to a metamorphosis of the basic formulations, such

[4]Richard Sylvan (formerly Routley) has gone into greater detail on the evolution of Deep Ecology and its principles in his paper, "A Critique Of Deep Ecology" (Sylvan 1984).

that while the intuitions may remain the same new expressions render the formulations practically unrecognizable. As an example, principle number 7 in the early set could be expanded to be principles 6 and 7 in the recent set. Early 7 is a call for local self-sufficiency. It is a call for a rethinking and redistribution of economic activity and could be characterised by the slogan "*Think globally, act locally*". Recent 6 also is characterized by "*Think globally, act locally*" and requires a rethinking and redistribution of economic activity, while recent 7 calls for a new quality of life, rather than a standard of life that is predominately concerned with economic status. However, some principles in one list have no counterpart in the other list, for example, in the early list, number 1 - a relational, total-field image, and in the recent list, number 4 - the call for a decrease in the human population and number 8 - the obligation to implement the new policy.

From these early and recent statements of the fundamental principles of Deep Ecology a list of ecophilosophical intuitions fundamental to Deep Ecology can be drawn out. This list would comprise, but not be limited to, "biospheric egalitarianism - in principle" and the inherent value of non-human items in the ecosphere; diversity and complexity; reduced human interference in the environment involving a fight against pollution and resource depletion; a relational, total-field image; reduction in the human population; and economic reorganization. Each principle requires expansion, although Naess warns, and I think rightly so, that the slogans (and I think the principles as well) of Deep Ecology are imprecise, but to make them more precise makes them less powerful. Nonetheless this does not preclude the value of elaborating the concepts embedded in the slogans (and principles), but it is a caution against confusing the purpose and impact of the elaboration with the purpose and impact of the slogans (and principles).

Biospheric Egalitarianism

The ideas of "biospheric egalitarianism - in principle" and inherent value are related, but not equivalent. "Biospheric egalitarianism - in principle" is a respect for all ways and forms of life, or according to Naess, it is an "*equal right to live and blossom*" (Naess 1973, 96). Biospheric is used in Deep Ecology "in a more comprehensive non-technical way to refer also to what biologists classify as 'non-living'; rivers (watersheds), landscapes, ecosystems" (Naess and Sessions 1984, 5). Thus it extends the ethical community beyond humans to the biotic community, but the prefix 'bio-' loses its precision when used in this way. As Sylvan points out (Sylvan 1985, 16-18), 'bio-' is used to mean both that which is living and that which is not living, that is, to mean not only what it does mean but also what it does not mean. Two objections to using the expression "biospheric" can be raised. First, is the objection to using to the term 'bio-' or life with such a broad reference that it loses all precision of meaning, when according to Naess and Sessions the term refers "more

accurately to the ecosphere as a whole" (Naess and Sessions 1984, 5). Against this objection it can be argued that "biospheric" means "of the biosphere" and biosphere has always been defined as including the non-living elements essential to life. And second, the use of biospheric, instead of ecospheric sounds like a broadening of human chauvinism to bio-chauvinism. This would be no more than the transfer of the putatively privileged status of humans in the ethical sphere to all living beings at the expense of the inanimate. While the use of "biospheric" would be acceptable in developing an inter-species ethic for non-human animal species, in developing an ecospheric ethic it is too limited. If ecospheric is more accurate, why not use it? The term ecospheric is a delimitation of the class of things in the environment which matter and that class includes *every* natural item. But, if the meaning of "biospheric" as "of the biosphere" is accepted, then "biospheric" and "ecospheric" are co-terminous, then the inanimate would be included. The term used becomes a matter of preference or a matter of breaking traditional associations as with non-exclusive sexist language or a matter of avoiding objections like Sylvan's.

The term egalitarian implies how the items in the ecosphere are to be treated. It denies the privileged status of any species or group in the ecospherical/ethical community. It is with the term "egalitarian" that the "equal right" of "*equal right to live and blossom*" and inherent value come into play. The term "right" is used here to imply it is wrong for humans to interfere with an item in such a way that the item is placed in a dispreferred state or devalued, unless the interference is based on a vital need for humans! Vital need "is left deliberately vague to allow for considerable latitude in judgment" (Naess and Sessions 1984, 6). The wrongness of interference for a non-vital need is based on the inherent value of the parts and the whole of the ecosphere. Naess and Sessions hold inherent value is synonymous with intrinsic value. They quote Tom Regan approvingly, "*The presence of inherent value in a natural object is independent of any awareness, interest, or appreciation of it by any conscious being*" (Regan 1982, 199). Regan, who uses the phrase 'inherent value' extensively, uses it quasi-technically. He incorporates into it such aspects as: "*The inherent value of natural object is such that toward it the fitting attitude is one of admiring respect*" and "*The admiring respect of what is inherently valuable in nature gives rise to the preservation principle*" (Regan 1982, 200). These may not be aspects of intrinsic value. If these aspects are included in the Deep Ecology use of inherent value, then the term "egalitarianism" conveys the idea that the whole of the ecosphere and its parts are equally entitled to preservation and (human) admiration and respect, because the whole of the ecosphere and all of its parts have a value independent of humans or an appreciation of them by any conscious being.

The sorts of distinctions that Plumwood and Sylvan make with their three obligation principles would be overlooked using the concept of "egalitarian", unless its meaning embraces a provision like: "The presence of inherent value is a consequence of its possessing those other properties that it happens to possess" (Regan 1982, 199). That is, various items in the ecosphere have different characteristics and these differences require different ethical principles to take account of them. Biospheric egalitarianism is modifed by the provisio "in principle", in recognition of differences in required treatment, if not differences in characteristics.

The import of the proviso "in principle" can be summarized using Singer's discussion of equality as it applies to non-human animal species, which he derived from how equality applies to humans:

> Equality is a moral idea, not an assertion of fact. There is no logically compelling reason for assuming that a factual difference in ability between two people justifies any difference in the amount of consideration we give to their needs and interests. *The principle of the equality of human beings is not a description of an alleged actual equality among humans: it is a perscription of how we should treat humans* (Singer 1977, 24).

Deep Ecology applies the same moral idea to the ecosphere. There are numerous factual differences among pebbles, kangaroos, humans, and swamps, but "biospheric (ecospheric) egalitarianism - in principle" would accord them an equal respect and an equal entitlement to preservation, but any differences in the manner in which this was done or the degree to which it was done would depend not as might be expected on the actual characteristics of each item, but on the view that "any realistic praxis necessitates some killing, exploitation, and suppression" (Sessions 1980, 398). Deep Ecology recognizes, as does the Plumwood and Sylvan ethic, that use is not prohibited by respect. In principle, a quartz pebble and a swamp have an "equal right to live and blossom", although in practice a quartz pebble can neither literally or metaphorically live or blossom. This is not meant to suggest that the pebble is accorded less respect because it is considered only a part of the whole. The part/whole distinction is not made. The principle of biospheric (ecospherical) egalitarianism carries with it a "refusal to acknowledge that some life forms have greater or lesser intrinsic value than others" (Naess and Sessions 1984, 6), but the "in principle" proviso moderates this to allow use of the ecosphere and its parts. Warwick Fox, a Western Australian ecophilosopher, holds that this refusal is the central intuition of Deep Ecology and describes it as "the idea that there is no firm ontological divide in the field of existence" (Fox 1984a, 196).

To recapitulate "biospheric (ecospherical) egalitarianism - in principle", can be

characterised as follows. Its basic intuition is the rejection of anthropocentrism and the greater value assumption. It redefines the ethical community to include all natural items in the ecosphere as well as the ecosphere taken as a whole. It affirms the inherent value of the ecosphere and all its parts.

Diversity and Complexity

In Naess's 1973 statement of the principles of Deep Ecology, diversity and symbiosis went together while the role of complexity was stated separately and distinguished from complication. But in his latest statement with Sessions, complexity has been combined with symbiosis to support diversity, "From the ecological standpoint, complexity and symbiosis are conditions for maximizing diversity" (Naess and Sessions 1984, 6).

Devall states, "Diversity is inherently desirable both culturally and as a principle of health and stability of ecosystems" (Devall 1980, 312). In addition to the natural entities of the environment, Deep Ecology recognizes that the processes by which and the principles upon which the entities and ecosystems operate are also important. This brings out a salient feature of Deep Ecology - it is interested in both how ecology works and how to value it. Deep Ecology is a value theory. In formulating the principles of Deep Ecology, Naess and others have recognized what Holmes Rolston III so succinctly states, "science cannot teach us what we need most to know about nature - that is how to value it" (Rolston 1981, 114). Naess wants particularly to establish this point about human treatment of the ecosphere. He has alternatively named Deep Ecology - *Ecosophy* - and has stated in an interview with Stephen Bodian:

> What we need today is a tremendous expansion of ecological thinking in what I call ecosophy. *Sophy* comes from the Greek term *sophia*, "wisdom", which relates to ethics, norms, rules and practice. Ecosophy, or deep ecology, then, involves a shift from science to wisdom (Bodian 1982, 10).

In Deep Ecology diversity, complexity and symbiosis are interconnected. For Deep Ecology diversity, i.e. variety of species, is the pivotal term among these.[5] Characteristic uses of the other terms can be illuminated in relation to the use of diversity. The interconnections among diversity, complexity and symbiosis may be dually characterized with regard to how they are used in ecology and how they are used in Deep Ecology. On the one hand, according to the science of ecology, a direct relationship between diversity

---

[5]According to ecologist W.H. Dowdeswell diversity is not simply the variety of species. "The diversity of any community is a function of the number of different species represented and the number of individuals belonging to each species" (Dowdeswell 1984, 21).

and stability was once thought to obtain, but that relationship has now been reconsidered:

> Ecologists have commonly argued for the preservation of diversity because they have believed that the stability of ecological systems may depend upon it. Now...considerable doubt has been thrown on the notion that diversity causes stability, and even on the idea that the two are associated (Ehrlich, Ehrlich, and Holdren 1977, 141-2)

Only two years after Ehrlich, Ehrlich and Holdren expressed considerable doubt about the connection between diversity and stability, G. Tyler Miller spoke of the connection thus: "*The idea that diversity leads to ecosystem stability may be valid in some types of ecosystems.... But we should be wary of applying this idea to all situations*" (Miller 1979, 88, Miller's italics). Miller speaks in terms of diversity increasing stability, not causing it. Also he denies the universality of the application of the connection. The degree to which the principle (diversity increases stability) works is specific to the ecosystem to which it is applied. In 1984, texts such as W.H. Dowdeswell's *Ecology: Principles and Practice* makes no mention of stability except for an oblique reference in the progressively more stable stages of succession.[6] "The diversity of species tends to increase with succession" (Dowdeswell 1984, 68). The oblique reference to stability is made when Dowdeswell speaks about the last stage of succession, called 'climax', when species' diversity reaches a maximum. Using the example of trees in the community reaching climax, he says, "eventually, an equilibrium will be reached in which the death of old trees is counterbalanced by the maturation of younger ones. This steady state is known as *climax*" (Dowdeswell 1984, 67). Dowdeswell's description of the stages of succession indicates that as diversity increases the interaction between species becomes more complex. This is the connection on which Deep Ecology focuses. According to Deep Ecology an increase in diversity contributes to an increase in complexity, not stability. The term 'stability' is not used in Deep Ecology literature. In ecological literature stability carries two meanings. Stability means either "the ability of the system to remain reasonably similar to itself" or "the system has a greater resistance to changes that are external to the system in their origin" (Margalef 1968, 11). For Deep Ecology the connection between diversity and complexity may not necessarily be based on the dubious conventional wisdom that diversity causes stability, but on the wisdom of the reverse claim, "instability increases as a direct function of trophic simplicity" (Southwick

---

[6]"Succession: A progressive series of changes in the plant and animal life of a community from initial colonization to climax" (Dowdeswell 1984, 306).

1972, 141).[7] This is aimed towards the idea that a reduction in diversity tends to instability rather than towards the idea that an increase in diversity tends to stability. Ecosystems of comparatively little diversity such as the desert regions in Central Australia inhabited by the Aranda are stable although delicate. To put this another way, diversity may not cause stability, but simplification reduces stability and increases ecological vulnerability. The specific element of wisdom to be drawn from this is: the simplification of an ecosystem by humans reduces the stability of the system. It is much easier for a pathogen or some other agent to devastate entirely a single species (monoculture), than it is for an agent or even several agents to devastate a diversity of species. For example, a single wheat rust can decimate an entire wheat monoculture. This suggests one reason why, as previously noted, diversity is thought inherently desirable.

Symbiosis means "living together" or "living together with mutual benefit". The second use is its more specific and standardly accepted use; the first use is its generic use. Generically the term stands for a number of relationships such as amensalism, antibiosis, commensalism, mutualism, predation, parasitism, and interspecific competition. Without going into detail, the distinct forms of symbiosis described by these terms are:

> Amensalism is an interspecific relationship in which one population is inhibited while the other is unaffected. ... Antibiosis is a specific type of amensalism in which one organism produces a metabolite that is toxic to other oragnisms. ... Commensalism is an interspecific relationship in which one population is enhanced or benefited and the other population is unaffected. ... Mutualism is a relationship in which both populations are enhanced or benefited. ... Predation is a relationship in which one animal species kills another animal for food. ... Parasitism is an interspecific relationship in which one population derives its nutrition from another, usually without killing the host. ... Interspecific competition ...two species cannot occupy precisely the same niche (Southwick 1972, 237, 239).

About such relationships Deep Ecologists make the point, "the so-called struggle of life; and survival of the fittest, should be interpreted in the sense of ability to coexist in complex relationships, rather than ability to kill, exploit, and suppress" (Naess 1973, 96). In a Darwinian sense, its most important meaning is ability to *breed* successfully. The tension that balances nature (maintains the dynamic equilibrium) is not one of domination, but of co-dependency. The tendency in the dominant Western paradigm to

---

[7]Trophic refers to the nutritional sources available. Trophic simplicity means there are few varieties of food, i.e., fewer species, available as opposed to the quantity of food available, i.e., an abundant monoculture. Trophic simplicity can be understood as relatively few feeding levels in the food chain or few species at particular levels.

be in conflict with and to attempt to dominate nature is contrary to most of the interspecific relationships in nature.

For ecology, complexity emphasises relationships and could be characterized as "a biological community in an area ... interconnected by an intricate web of relationships, a web that also includes the physical environment in which the organisms exist" (Ehrlich, Ehrlich, and Holdren 1977, 128). Complexity is the factor that unifies a diversity of species into a community or system. Complexity is a vague term in Deep Ecology. Naess makes a distinction between complexity and complication that is not a biological distinction, "The theory of ecosystems contains an important distinction between what is complicated without any Gestalt or unifying principles - we may think of finding our way through a chaotic city - and what is complex" (Naess 1973, 97). The distinction Naess makes between complicated and complex rests on the unifying interrelationships among the elements of an ecosystem. Complex implies a set of functional relationships whereas complicated does not. It is analogous to the distinction in chemistry between a compound (complex) and a mixture (complicated). In a compound the various elements that make it up are welded together while in a mixture the various elements are simply placed together.

Human Interference

Intentional and unintentional human interference with the environment is a threat to ecological diversity. To supply human wants and needs vast areas of land are converted from their natural diversities to agricultural use. In the most severe forms of conversion, diversities are replaced with monocultures that exclude all but two species, the cultivated species and the humans who tend it. Yet even less drastic ecosystem modification than monocultural agriculture threatens non-human animal species, because their habitats are modified or altogether eliminated. "By far the greatest cause of a living organism's becoming endangered is removal of its natural 'home' or habitat" (Gould League 1982, 3). Some examples of Australian species endangered by habitat modification are the numbat (*Myrmecobius fasciatus*), the helmeted honeyeater (*Lichenostomus melanops cassidix*), the victor snail (*Victaphanta compacta*), and the Archie grasshopper (*Achurimima sp. 42*).[8]

Another form of human interference is pollution. Forms of pollution and their sources

---

[8]For an example of the impact of agriculture on wildlife in Australia, see Bennett and Nevill 1983, 10-11.

and effects are well-known, but a few examples can serve as a reminder.[9] Air is polluted with the gaseous by-products of manufacturing, automobile exhaust, and thermal changes to the atmosphere from processes such as these. Water is polluted by the residues of manufacturing, including thermal residues, chemical pollution from insecticides and other farm chemicals such as fertilizers, acid rain and human waste, accompanied by rapid eutrophication (the overfertilization of lakes, rivers, and other bodies of water) from the dumping of high phosphorus compounds and nitrogen compounds such as agricultural run-off and some laundry and dish washing detergents. Land is polluted by the repeated application of pesticides, the dumping of waste products, the disposal of rubbish, and acid rain.

The important point about pollution for the current discussion is its effect on other species. Pollution not only destroys or rapidly modifies habitats in a manner destructive to species, but is also directly kills species. For instance, insecticides may kill the target species but often kill their natural predators, such as birds and insects, as well.[10] Besides the direct effect on target species and their predators, there is an accumulative effect of toxins further up the food chains and networks. "For animals like the Peregrine Falcon the effect of this is to make eggs laid by the female have extremely thin shells. When the adult sits on the nest to brood eggs, they break" (Gould League 1982, 4). The argument from Deep Ecology is that while humans are entitled to protect their own vital needs, they are not entitled to pollute the habitats of other species without good reason. In seeming to protect their short-term vital needs they often damage the system that will meet their long-term needs. Long-term viability is part of determining a vital need. The human pollution of the environment is imprudent because it affects humans, but it is also wrong of humans to ignore that they share the environment with other species that have a claim to its use and an interest in its quality. "The question is whether any civilization can wage relentless war on life without destroying itself, and without losing the right to be called civilized" (Carson 1962, 99). As noted earlier with reference to Passmore, the interests of other species are an interest of the human species, for humans are dependent upon other species' continued well-being. In the words of Leibniz, "when we believe that God made the world for us alone, it is a great mistake" (Leibniz 1846, 33).

---

[9]Some further sources for information on pollution and its effects are: Black 1970, especially chapter 1; Ehrlich, Ehrlich, and Holdren 1977, especially chapter 10; Myers 1979; Passmore 1974; Sabath and Quinnell 1981, especially chapter 10; and the classic work in this area - Carson 1962.

[10]As Rachel Carson notes in *Silent Spring* insecticides are not target specific, but worse yet they often are not effectual in the long run. Target species quickly develop resistance to pesticides.

Resources depletion is another form of human interference. Resources required by humans are also required by other species. "The shallow ecology movement talks only about resources of mankind, whereas in deep ecology we talk about resources for each species" (Bodian 1982, 10). While the most common concern is with the depletion of non-renewable resources - i.e., there are finite quantities of fossil fuels such as coal and petroleum available and once they are depleted they cannot be replaced (not, at least, in human time scales) - there is also a significant and growing concern about what have been considered renewable resources. The depletion of the systems by which renewable resources are produced would be an eco-catastrophe for all species. A case in point is the circular connection uniting guanays, guano, humans, anchovies, tuna, and plankton.[11] Fifty years ago thousands of guanays, a sea bird that lives off the coast of Chile on the Chinochos and Sangallan Islands, produced vast quantities of guano which was mined for fertilizer. When chemical fertilizers replaced guano the market for guano disappeared and the Chileans turned from guano mining to anchovy fishing for a livelihood. Anchovies are the principal food of the guanays and of tuna and sea bass, which were also fished by the Chileans. The anchovy fishing was both lucrative and thriving and within a few years the anchovies were fished out. Thousands of guanays, who depended on the anchovies for food, died. With their deaths the guano that once fertilized the sea as well as built up on the islands disappeared. Plankton, the main nutrition for the anchovies, was fertilized by the guano that fell into the sea. Without the plankton the anchovies could not prosper; without the anchovies the tuna, sea bass, and guanays could not thrive; without the guanays to produce guano the plankton could not flourish. Thus in one act of resource depletion the guanays, the anchovies, the tuna, the sea bass, and the humans were all deprived of their livelihoods. A similar circular connection exists on Christmas Island with the Abbott's Booby, nesting trees, and guano mining.

The call for a reduction of human interference is a second similarity between Deep Ecology and the Plumwood and Sylvan's deep green theory. Both wish to lower the impact of humans on the environment by curbing human demands on the environment and eliminating waste in the production or harvesting of natural resources for vital needs. As I have written elsewhere:

> The argument does not deny human beings the prerogative of habitat modification. To deny them that would be to deny them an entitlement exercised and enjoyed by other creatures, which would be contrary to the integrity and stability of the biotic community. The argument is rather that

---

[11]This example is drawn from David Attenborough's *Living Planet* (Attenborough 1984, 305,307).

> human beings - in the Western traditions at least - have to reconceptualize their relationship with nature to develop a heightened sensitivity to what preserves the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community - modification without devastation (Bennett 1984, 15)

Relational, Total-Field Image

The relational, total-field image principle is drawn from Gestalt thinking and recommends a different perspective or *Weltanschauung* on the relationships between humans and the environment. The recommended perspective is a "rejection of the man-in-the-environment image in favour of the *relational, total-field image*" (Naess 1973, 95). Devall states that the perspective of the integration or identity "of humans with non-human nature" (Devall 1980, 310), along with biospheric egalitarianism, are the most important ideas of Deep Ecology. Devall puts the relational, total-field image principle in this way, "Man is an integral part of nature, not over or apart from nature" (Devall 1980, 310).

There is nothing new in the concept that humans are an integral part of nature, rather than the masters over or foes of nature.[12] The Cynics held a doctrine that condemned the unnaturalness of humans and implied the equality of humans and non-humans. Along the same line, Spinoza held that humans were an integral part of nature and insisted that man has no privileged position in nature. Attractive as Spinoza's position is to the principles of Deep Ecology, Genevieve Lloyd argues that he is not a suitable candidate for the "patron philosopher of the environmental movement" (Lloyd 1980, 294). She holds that while Spinoza maintains that humans do not have a privileged place in nature, he also maintains that "morality is entirely circumscribed by the human spcies; that it is inextricably grounded in drives for *human* self-preservation; that other species can be ruthlessly exploited for human ends" (Lloyd 1980, 294).

This principle of Deep Ecology is a call for a new metaphysics of ecology. Calls for a non-anthropocentric metaphysics are not new, Spinoza's metaphysics is against anthropocentricism. What has not been fully perceived until recently are the implications of such a metaphysics for ecology. Although this principle sounds trivial, if adopted, the impact would not be trivial. The dominant Western paradigm described by Passmore in *Man's Responsibility for Nature* embodies a subjugation perspective: humans can or should dominate the rest of the environment. Deep Ecology denies the human arrogance

---

[12]For further information on the development of Western attitudes towards the relationships between humans and the environment see: Attfield 1983; Black 1970; Ehrenfeld 1978; Gill 1969; Glacken 1967; Midgley 1978; Passmore 1980; White 1967; and Worster 1977.

that if humans are not the masters of nature, then they should endeavour to become so. Deep Ecology takes a holistic view. However, unlike the holistic view described in the Plumwood and Sylvan environmental ethic, Deep Ecology sees the individual (the part) expanded by, not denied by, the holistic perspective. The view of humans as set apart from the rest of the environment is replaced with a view of humans as one species among many and the narrower human-oriented perspective is replaced by a wider bioregional, and ultimately, global perspective. Human participation is by co-operation with the environment, that is in accordance with the wisdom of ecological principles. The idea of humans co-operating with nature is not a call for two rational beings (i.e. treating nature as a rational being and partner in the enterprise) to assist one another in obtaining their mutually desired ends. Rather it is a call to recognize that the survival of humans and the survival of other species depends upon compliance with ecological principles and that human dominance over the environment conflicts' with compliance with ecological principles. Robin Attfield in his discussion of Passmore's position on human stewardship of nature says:

> What needs to be rejected is the attitude and tradition of Despotism, an interpretation of the Biblical belief in man's dominion according to which everything is made for man, nothing else is of any intrinsic value or moral importance, and people may treat nature in any way that they like without inhibition. Instead we should accept that natural processes are not devised or guaranteed to serve humanity, and that manipulating them requires skill and care (Attfield 1983, 4).

Promoting human interests by a species-centered approach is rejected in favour of promoting human interests by promoting the ecological relationships of which humans are a part. In other words, the attitude of human domination over or separation from the environment is replaced with an attitude of human interdependence with their environment in which human participation is integrated with the environment. Human ends are still promoted, but they are promoted through an integration of humans' needs with the needs of other species and the welfare of the environment. An attitude of respect replaces an attitude of despotic domination.

Human Population

Sir Otto Frankel and Michael Soule have stated, "there is a clear association between human population density and faunal destruction" (Frankel and Soule 1981, 26). Deep Ecology considers two countermeasures to faunal and environmental destruction: reduction of the human of population, and adoption and implementation of Deep Ecology's departure formulations, or some other set of principles that give rise to a heighten ecological consciousness. heighten ecological consciousness such as Deep Ecology

departure formulations. There is an inversely proportional relationship between principle four on the recent list - the drastic reduction of the human population - and principle eight - the adoption and implementation of Deep Ecology departure formulations. The larger the human population the more urgent it is to supersede environmentally insensitive policies with ecologically-inspired and sensitive policies. Conversely, the lower the human population (then - theoretically) the more likely that human devastation of habitats can be contained without the immediate adoption of Deep Ecology principles. Humans have both overrun and overfilled their own and the habitats of most, if not all other species. Naess states, "The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantial decrease of the human population. The flourishing of non-human life requires such a decrease" (Naess 1984, 4), and he suggests a maximum human population of one hundred million (Bodian 1982, 10).

Without the immediate adoption of Deep Ecology principles, containment of human environmental devastation by reducing and stabilizing the human population is hypothetically possible, but only if accompanied by technological limitation. "Cultural diversity today requires advanced technology" (Naess and Sessions 1984, 7). If a reduced human population retains elements of advanced technology, such as nuclear weapons, then they still would be able to devastate the world with a nuclear winter or similar catastrophe.

The call for a reduction in the human population is not a call for genocide. First, the loss of any species, including the human species, is deplored. If for no other reason, a decrease in diversity is contrary to Deep Ecology principles. Yet, massive reduction in human numbers would very likely enhance diversity in most habitats, because threatened species could recover and because restricted distributions could spread out again. Second, no violence is implied. The decrease should be through natural attrition and negative population growth among other things, but not violent methods or even triage methods as suggested by Garrett Hardin.[13] Although not stated as a principle, non-violence is an implicit norm common to most Deep Ecologists.[14]

A drastic decrease to one hundred million humans would bring about a change in human

---

[13]See Hardin's life boat ethics (Hardin 1968; Hardin 1977) and a critique of these by Griffin and Bennett (1984).

[14]Perhaps, it should be stated in the platform. Devall and Sessions spell out the norm of non-violence in *Deep Ecology*, chapter 11.

economic and other relationships to the environment. The rapidity and effect of economic changes would depend in part on the time-scale of human population reduction.

Economic Change

Within the scope of this current project no more than the trends or general directions of an ecologically-inspired economy compatible with Deep Ecology can be indicated. An ecologically-inspired economy would continue to depend on many of the same factors that now determine economic policies, such as the size of the human population and the amount of manufacturing and commerce. The reduction of the human population to one hundred million would produce a profound change in the impact of human economic demands on the environment. But the main change would be a change in ideological attitude. "The ideological change is mainly that of appreciating *life quality* (dwelling in situations of inherent value) rather than adhering to an increasingly higher standard of living" (Naess and Sessions 1984, 5).

Deep Ecology opposes a mentality and goal of a growth-oriented exploitive economic system. A sustainable society with an ecologically-sound ethic need not preclude a growth in quality, only the now pervasive dedication to a continual growth in quantity. Deep Ecology supports a steady state economy which sustains all life, not just human life, with an emphasis on quality of life, rather than material style of life. That is, richness of experience need not depend on continual economic growth. Indeed, resource depletion indicates that a continual economic growth policy will result in an eventual reduction in both quality and style of life and that economic growth *cannot* continue forever. The indiscriminate treatment of the environment as a resource will result in an economic collapse such as the guanay-anchovy example given earlier in which the livelihoods of a number of species were affected. Sessions and Naess contend that the mentality of continual economic growth as practiced now in Western societies is incompatible with the inherent value of all life, with the maintenance of diversity, and that it creates excessive human interference (Naess and Sessions 1984, 7). Futhermore, value is assessed on scarcity and commodity (i.e. instrumental) value. "There is a prestige in vast consumption and *waste*" (Naess and Sessions 1984, 7). Like the environmental philosophy of Plumwood and Sylvan, Deep Ecology would support a "no-waste" economy, but it also recommends a voluntary restriction by consumers to fulfilling vital needs (recent principle 3). A voluntary simplicity of life-style that is 'simple in means and rich in ends'.

Human impact on the environment would also be reduced by a move towards local self-sufficiency and a larger degree of decentralization. "Pollution problems, including those of thermal pollution and recirculation of materials, also leads us in this direction, because

increased local autonomy, if we are able to keep other factors constant, reduces energy consumption" (Naess 1973, 98). Further energy savings and support for decentralization can come from changes in technology. "So-called soft, intermediate, and alternative technologies are steps in this direction" (Naess and Sessions 1984, 7).

In summary, the general tendencies of Deep Ecology economic policy are to lowering human impact on the environment, consideration of long-term viability and inclusion of the requirements of non-humans into considerations of meeting the requirements of humans.

Conclusion

Calls for a new environmental ethic, or more broadly an environmental philosophy, are calls for rethinking all facets of human involvement with the ecosphere, human relationships and interactions with other species and the nature of the human dependence on other species. An extension of an ethic is not thought sufficient. Merely revitalizing and extending our current ethical attitudes to other species is insufficient, because it continues the anthropocentric assumption that humans are more valuable than anything else or are the only valuable item in the environment. Reconstructing attitudes and assumptions as well as heightening awareness of a range of ethical considerations beyond the human sphere is required. Or put more simply, humans subscribing to the conventional wisdom of the dominant Western traditions need to radically re-evaluate their relationships to the environment. The change in ethical relationships with non-human animal species requires a change in the treatment of the environment. The approaches of deep green theory and Deep Ecology reject a species-specific ethic in favour of a total and relational biocentric or ecocentric approach.

Plumwood and Sylvan present a metaphysical, ethical approach; the Deep Ecology, long-range movement presents a grass-roots approach with philosophical underpinnings. Both agree that changes are needed in the attitudes, awareness, and approaches of people subscribing to the dominant Western paradigm. Among changes both agree are needed is the replacement of the anthropocentric view. Plumwood and Sylvan suggest a no-reduction, respect thesis with obligation principles based on the characteristics of items in the ecosphere. Deep Ecology suggests a holistic, respect thesis founded on "biospheric (ecospheric) egalitarianism - in principle". Both agree that a closer identity or integration with other species and the environment is needed. Both hold that human manipulation of the environment is excessive. And both hold that a decrease in human interference is connected with a change in current economic structures. Both of these 'new ethics' have much to recommend them. Both take a broad approach to the problems of inter-species

ethics and hold that the ethical problems involving other species cannot be solved by dealing only with the issues involving other species directly. Solutions will involve a wide range of social, economic, ethical and other considerations.

While a revolutionary change in values or attitudes may arise from the modification or rejection of the dominant paradigm, another approach which is a source for inspiration of Deep Ecology is to evaluate the relationships of primal peoples to the environment. An examination of Australian Aboriginal interactions with the environment and non-human animal species offers the chance to evaluate a response to non-human animal species in a different cultural tradition and to see if their response offers any solutions or dissolutions to the vexing ethical problems of how to treat non-human animal species and the environment as a whole.

Chapter 5

Aboriginal Philosophy and Worldviews - An Overview

This chapter provides an overview of Aboriginal worldviews and Aboriginal relationships to their land, their ancestral beings, and through the medium of totemism, other species. However, there are a number of pitfalls in cross-cultural studies. Generalizations about Australian Aborigines can be hazardous and misleading. It is hazardous to generalize about the many (300-500) Aboriginal groups because it encourages the sort of fallacious picture, still prevalent as late as the Nineteenth Century, of Aborigines as one people with one language and one set of customs, homogeneous across the continent. It can be misleading if it emphasizes the similarities that exist among the many groups and excludes significant differences. However, some generalization about Aboriginal philosophy and worldviews is essential here as an introduction to the two specific examples examined in the next two chapters and the differences bwtween fgroups are not of the kind that weaken the argument developed in this thesis.

In addition to the caution about overgeneralizing and oversimplifying Aboriginal traditions, several qualifications regarding cross-cultural philosophical and especially ethical studies require mention. 'Ethics' is not so clear-cut and finely polished a concept that it applies equally well and unequivocally to Western and Aboriginal worldviews. What is explored here is a generalized and *idealized* overview of the way in which Aborigines related to non-human animal species. What is available for study are the customs and manners of Aboriginal groups. At least one noted Australian anthropologist, W.E.H. Stanner, holds that their customs and manners reflect their attitudes on the foundation of their worldviews. To generalize from Stanner's observation on the process of socialization to the problem of eliciting a cross-cultural and inter-species ethic: "It is a plausible hypothesis that the outward signs were thought of as having inward counterparts; that the rites were held to put on...a moral-spiritual mark as well" (Stanner 1979, 121). The principle question is not: Do their customs and manners and the attitudes behind them (or some portion of them) form an ethic?, but rather: How do other species fit into their world view? Nonetheless it is worthwhile to probe into some concomitant problems regarding cross-cultural ethical studies: the identification of an 'ethic' in another culture; whether Aborigines have 'ethical' ways of viewing their relationships with other species; and our dependence on interpretations of Aboriginal worldviews filtered through Western worldviews.

Whether or not Aboriginal attitudes or customs and manners constitute an ethic in an

acknowledged philosophical use of that word does not matter for this study. What does matter is drawing from Aboriginal attitudes or customs and manners suggestions, solutions, or directions for use in a Western ethic. Whether the attitudes, customs and manners are considered an ethic in their natural setting is an interesting question, but it does not need an affirmative answer to make those attitudes, customs and manners useful in altering or developing a Western ethic.

In seeking an answer to the interesting question of the existence of an Aboriginal ethic, the first problem is to determine what is being sought when trying to identify an ethic in another culture. Others working in the cross-cultural context have reflected on this problem.[1] For instance, in *Sudanese Ethics* Tore Nordenstam characterizes ethics as "the inquiry into the good life" (Nordenstam 1968, 18). He follows Aristotelian tradition with this definition. It is a definiton that fits in well with a study of Australian Aboriginal ethics. Anthropologist R.M. Berndt has remarked, "Differences between good and bad actions were never in doubt. They were spelt out in considerable detail in the mythology which constituted the basis of their belief system and were identified in everyday life" (Berndt 1979, 24). Aborigines have a concept of the good life that would give them entrance into Nordenstam's definition of ethics, what they lack is an inquiry. Aborigines do not make ethics an abstract study. Ethics is part and parcel of their everyday life according to Berndt. Through the mythology and ritual of a group:

> The plan of life ... has been maintained over time. Its continued maintenance is the guarantee of a social life in which relevances are understood, that is, of a moral order. The highest good of living men lies in the perpetuation of what has been found to be the guarantee (Stanner 1959, 116).

This suggests that Aboriginal mythology provides a moral charter. Australian anthropologist L.R. Hiatt takes this idea to task in his introductory article in *Australian Aboriginal Mythology* (Hiatt 1975, 1-23). Myth as charter is a functionalist position. "The functionalist position on myth is that the narratives constitute a conservative socializing force whose function is to sanctify existing institutions and to foster the values of sociality" (Hiatt 1975, 5). While Hiatt presents some persuasive counterarguments to this position, he does admit that there are "numerous Australian myths in which conventionally reprehensible behaviour is punished" (Hiatt 1975, 6). One assumes that when Hiatt calls the behaviour reprehensible, he means it is reprehensible by Aboriginal standards. Though all myths may not be moral charters at least some, and in particular

---

[1]For discussions and definitions of ethics in cross-cultural situations *see*: Brandt 1954, 2-12; Ladd 1957, 42-81; MacBeath 1952, 2-29; and Nordenstam 1968, 21-4.

those associated with ritual, can be moral charters. Those associated with ritual are singled out because myth can be understood to validate ceremonies. Or as R.M. and C.H. Berndt, "the foremost exponents of functionalism" in Australian Aborignal anthropology (as Hiatt declares them) have said, "Ritual is an acting out of events or instructions incorporated in myth, and mythology substantiates or justifies or explains a whole range of rituals" (Berndt 1964, 240). Not all myths can be assumed to have a moral content. Some can. Those that do provide an entree into Aboriginal concepts of good and bad.

Those concepts have to be described. Especially for the purposes of this study, any concepts of good or bad are relevant that relate to the treatment of non-human animal species and show how, if at all, non-human animal species fit into an Aboriginal conceptual framework. Nordenstam says 'descriptive ethics' is "the discipline which describes and analyses the ethical norms, values and ideals which individuals and groups actually have" (Nordenstam 1968, 15). This definition of descriptive ethics assumes that "ethical norms, values and ideals" in another culture are recognizable for description, however greatly they might differ from one culture to another. On the question of how one might go about recognizing "ethical norms, values and ideals" in another culture Nordenstam observes that moral considerations are held to be more important than other considerations and "if there is a conflict between moral and non-moral considerations, the moral considerations should always take precedence over the others" (Nordenstam 1968, 20). If moral and ethical are synonymous for purposes of his definition (as Nordenstam seems to hold them to be), then what is being sought are the norms, values and ideals which are regarded as highest or best or most important. By this definition whatever considerations take precedent over all other considerations can be labelled ethical considerations. The problem with this criterion is that while it can be used as an indicator of possible moral values, it is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for identifying moral considerations. One need only reflect for a moment on the role of financial considerations in most Western cultures to realize that in a conflict between financial and ethical considerations, the ethical considerations do not always take precedence. Also in governmental situations where political expediency and compromise are the order of the day, political survival can take precedence over moral considerations. Those considerations that "take precedence over the others" are sufficient for this study. What is being sought is not necessarily the ethics of another culture but principles or features that can be converted into ethical precepts in Western culture.

The interesting question which began this enquiry becomes a red herring. It has been established that Aborigines have concepts of good and bad. These concepts relate to how they behave, even if Aborigines do not make moral/non-moral distinctions. Although

Western ideas of what constitutes ethical considerations for Aborigines may remain somewhat vague and ethnocentric, there are identifiable Aboriginal norms, values and ideals that are different in their foundations and expressions from Western ethical concepts. These norms, values and ideals are available for conversion into ethical precepts for Western cultures. Customs, myths, rites, rituals and behaviours are available for study and interpretation. An ethical content can be elicited from these.

"*Any* investigation of one culture in terms of another culture is bound to be ethnocentric in the sense that the terms of reference of one's study are ethnocentric" (Nordenstam 1968, 23). It is pointless to try and impossible to eliminate ethnocentrism. Like translating from one language to another, to make the translation intelligible there must be a frame of reference, so it is with interpreting the customs and manners of one culture into the terms of another culture. What becomes more significant is: How much does the ethnocentric filtering distort Aboriginal concepts and does the distortion matter? There is no doubt that the Aboriginal religious and ethical concepts (which for Aborigines are inseparable) have been distorted by the recorders of them. For instance, it was once thought, as a concomitant to the "One People" theory, that Aborigines had one unified set of beliefs. This is rather like saying Catholics and Jews have one set of beliefs. Not only were Aboriginal beliefs thought to be homogeneous, but many missionaries and observers of Aboriginal rituals considered Aborigines to have no religion. Aboriginal rituals, ceremonies, myths and concepts about their relation to ancestral or mythical beings (deities) were not considered to be a religion when compared to Christianity.

As with translating a language, as long as the distortion does not render the interpretation of other cultures' customs and manners senseless,the distortion does not matter for this study, for it is sufficient to grasp major conceptual and ethical similarities to and differences from the concepts presented in the Western point of view.

Criticisms of and comments upon an imaginary opponent are not as convincing as those against or for a actual opponent. Data from real life are more valuable than hypothetical formulations derived from our own culture, to study another people (like the Australian Aborigines in this study) provides, as Brandt has argued, "the best available opportunity for observing human nature in different conditions, since they live in very different kinds of physical and sociocultural environments" (Brandt 1954, 1). In the case of the Australian Aborigines and non-Aboriginal Australians two different responses to what was initially the same environment can be studied and the different attitudes to and conceptualizations of the same species can be studied. Cross-cultural studies can stimulate philosophical progress by prodding a philosopher:

> into analyzing certain concepts and providing operational criteria for the application of his technical terms (e.g., "ethical attitude") which he might not otherwise have troubled about. Or such a study might cause him to notice things about the phenomenology of moral experience in the Western tradition which he might not otherwise have noticed (Brandt 1954, 10).

One of the most exciting and informative facets of cross-cultural studies is becoming aware of one's own cultural filters and another culture's way of handling a problem, despite one's awareness of possible shortcomings in understanding the other culture. Indeed, an important part of this study is identifying and understanding Aboriginal handling of norms, values and ideals concerning non-human species as a different background against which to view Western norms, values and ideals concerning non-human species. Perhaps Aboriginal norms, values and ideals will challenge Western norms, values and ideals vigorously enough to result in a better understanding of both. The purpose is not to imagine how problems might be solved but to reveal how they were solved. Examining Aboriginal views on other species encourages a search for comparisons and contrasts from within Western views and an expansion of ethical possibilities, considerations and solutions.

While not specifically discussing ethics, two who knew well Aboriginal traditions, customs, and worldviews, W.E.H. Stanner and A.P. Elkin, have made the following statements regarding Aboriginal philosophical thought:

> There were no Aboriginal philosophers and one can thus speak of 'philosophy' only metaphorically. But there is ground for saying that they lived - and therefore thought - by axioms, which were 'objective' in that they related to a supposed nature of man and condition of human life (Stanner 1979, 122).

> Compared with the philosophical systems of Plato and Aristotle, of Aquinas and Kant, of Berkeley and Bertrand Russell, the inherent and implied cosmologies and metaphysics of such preliterate peoples as the American Indian, the Polynesians and the Australian Aborigines may not seem appropriately termed philosophical. But if we were to compare the latter with the earliest recorded philosophical essays, such as those of Thales and Heracleitus, who found the first principles in water and fire respectively, we would realize that they were doing no more than what our so-called "primitive" philosophers do: they were looking for "some one kind of existence out of which the diversity of the universe sprang, and some permanent ground at the back of the never-ending process of change" (Elkin 1969, 86).

To understand Aboriginal philosophy, that is their concepts on the "nature of man and the condition of human life" and the "existence out of which the diversity of the universe sprang", it is imperative to understand something of the complex interrelationships among the elements of the tetrad of living people, their country, their totems, and their

ancestral beings as embodied in the principle of The Dreaming. Traditional Aboriginal ethical norms, values and ideals are founded in The Dreaming or The Dreamtime. The Dreamtime is both an active creation period, when the world was given shape and the norms, values and ideals of Aboriginal people were fixed like the landscape, and a continuous passive time now "existing alongside secular time but not identical with it" that reaffirms the norms, values and ideals set during the creation period (Berndt 1974, 8). In the creative phase the moral universe was established and fixed once-and-for-all-time. The Dreaming "determines not only what life *is* but also *what it can be*" (Stanner 1979, 29).

In the Dreamtime genesis, the world was without form, but it was not void. Unlike the Biblical Genesis, creation in The Dreaming is not *ex nihilo*, but a transformation and culmination of a formed, but featureless world already existing. No explanation is given, nor thought needed for existence prior to The Dreaming. Perhaps this is because taken as a whole The Dreamtime stories of the Aborigines "deal less with origins as such than with the instituting of relevances - the beginnings of a moral system - in a life which already was" (Stanner 1960a, 266). The Dreaming is not a theory of mystical explanation of moral origins, but an account of what Stanner calls 'the principle of assent to the disclosed terms of life', which governs the ritual behaviour and descriptive statements about the moral relations among species. In other words, Aborigines are not attempting to analyse why things are the way they are, but are accepting Dreamtime stories as demonstrations of the way things are.

The agents of change or transformation -- and the first element of the tetrad (people, country, totems, and ancestral beings) to be explored against the element of the people -- were ancestral beings. Their impact and significance varied regionally and very few, if any, ancestral beings were known throughout the continent. The ancestral beings have been called cultural heroes, deities, mythical beings, gods spirit beings, or creative ancestral beings. These ancestral beings (to call them but one name for convenience) were limited, or perhaps more accurately, *specific*, in their powers and were more like personified forces or superhumans to be co-operated with and to be used, than gods to be worshipped and to be entreated for their aid. With the exception of some superhuman or supernatural powers the ancestral beings:

> were like men and women of today in that they had similar thoughts, strivings and feelings, could be hurt and suffer pain, could age and in a certain physical sense die although a part of them, a second soul, could not die. Otherwise they were free of the limitations, restrictions and inhibitions that affect today's men and women (Stanner 1976, 5-6)

Two of their superhuman powers were the creative capacity to transform and give definition to the world, and the ability to change their own shape. Their creative capacities extended over the physical and moral realms:

> The mythical beings are believed to have been responsible not only for creating the natural species, which included man, and much of the physiographic features of the country associated with them. Importantly also, in this context, they are believed to have established an Aboriginal way of life, its social institutions and its patterns of activity: in other words, they established a moral order, comprising a series of 'oughts' and 'ought nots', indicating what people should and should not do. But such injunctures [sic] are not necessarily explicitly articulated; they are usually recognized implicitly (Berndt 1970, 216-17)

The Dreamtime heritage emphasizes two complementary doctrines:

> The fixation or instituting of things in an enduring form, and the simultaneous endowment of all things -- including man, and his condition of life -- with their good and/or bad properties (Stanner 1979, 115)

The complementary relationship of the landscape and the moral system provides a physical manifestation of the truth of the moral system, if such proof was needed, and it also gives a sense of the solidity, resilience, and resistence to change of the moral system founded in The Dreamtime. The Dreamtime provides an aetiology of landscapes while the landscapes are empirical, irrefutable proof of the existence of The Dreamtime. The argument is circular, but stories of The Dreamtime are accepted as axiomatic and do not depend on empirical proof. The empirical "proof" functions as a reassurance, not a guarantee.

In giving shape and definition to the landscape the ancestral beings created the meaning of the second element of the tetrad - the country. Each Aboriginal group has many myths about the creation of their country or land by their ancestral beings. "From the Aboriginal point of view, the two (land and the mythical characters) are inseparable" (Berndt 1974, 9). Aborigines hold that there is a direct connection between themselves and their ancestral beings, and because they hold that their country and their ancestral beings are inseparable, they hold that there is a direct connection between themselves and their country. Former Chairperson of the Northern Land Council, Galarrwuy Yunupingu describes the land as a foundation and a structure. He says it is a foundation that "gives me the identity that I belong to something from which my spirit actually came out" (Galarrwuy Yunupingu 1980, 12) and it is also "a structure in which everything is connected to the land. It has to be" (Galarrwuy Yunupingu 1980, 14). Within every country there are locations, often called Dreaming Sites, where ancestral beings have left a mark of their passage, 'evidence' of some event or act, or in the case of 'increase sites' the

point at which they 'went-down'. When ancestral beings finished the wanderings that gave definition to the face of the earth, they are said to 'go-down' marking the end of the creative phase of their existence. The spot at which they 'go-down' is called an 'increase site'. It is the place where the ancestral beings have continued their spiritual existence since the active, creation period of The Dreaming. Within these sites, it is believed, there are life-forces, or the potential for all life - human, animal and plant. But each site is specific to a given ancestral being, so the life-force is specific to a given totem. For example, if in Aranda country there is a waterhole that is the site of Karora, the Bandicoot, then that site is the source for bandicoots and humans of the bandicoot totem. It is not a site, for example, of green parrots or red flying-foxes.

A second superhuman power is shape-changing. Ancestral beings not only created all species, including humans, but are represented as having both the form of a human and the form of one other species. Examples are Pilitman, the Green Parrot Woman, in Murinbata mythology; Karora, the Bandicoot, in Aranda mythology; and Wu:ku, the Red Flying-Fox Man, in Wik mythology. Shape-changing comes down in the symbolism of totemism. Totemism will be dealt with in greater detail later:

> On the one hand, that life force or power is immanent in the presence of these mythic beings at particular sites, or in their mundane manifestations -- though various cognate animal species, elements, objects, etc.; and it can be activated in specific circumstances for particular purposes, through the ritual actions of man. On the other hand, every person is believed to contain the same spiritual essence as the particular mythic being(s) with which he is most closely identified. He may even be regarded as a living manifestation of that being (Berndt 1974, 10)

The life-force that is shared among Aborigines, their ancestral beings and their totems is thought to be sacred. Aborigines maintain their Dreaming sites partially by physical maintenance, e.g., repainting paintings on the site, and partially by ritual maintenance. Through the site ancestral beings provide the life-force, but people must also play their part by inducing through ritual the continuance and spread of that life-force. One type of ritual that is particularly important to the interrelationship between Aborigines and the species with which they are connected totemically is the increase ritual. Increase is a misnomer:

> Fundamentally, the ritual for increase of species is not an attempt to control nature by magical means, but is a method of expressing man's needs, expecially his need that the normal order of nature should be maintained; it is a way of co-operating with nature at just those seasons when the increase of particular species or rain should occur. It is not an attempt to bring about the irregular and extraordinary, but to maintain the regular (Elkin 1964, 228)

An 'increase ritual' might have more appropriately been called a 'maintenance ritual'.

Each member in a tribal group has the responsibility according to their totemic affiliation for maintaining their totemic areas in the group's country and thereby for maintaining a portion of the group's resources.

This brings up the third, and for this study the most important, element of the tetrad - totems. The connections between people and their totems (and their country and their ancestral beings) are irreversible, having been set in the creative period of Dreamtime. They are fixed and perpetual. The Dreamtime did not cease at the end of the creative period, but continues as a mystical time alongside profane time; and has an historical, mystical, substantial, and essential character.

Totemism is historical in that from the first true humans after The Dreaming there are supposedly unbroken totemic descent lines of persons who can be named and who lived 'in history'. It is substantial in that the country and its resources, including totemic sites, have provided body and soul to the people of that country since the beginning and it is the last resting place for their bodies and the eternal home of their souls. It is spiritual in that a shared essence expressed symbolically in totemism connects each person to country and clansmen. And it is mystical in that a shared consciousness deepens and enlarges the sense of being.[2]

Totemism is an important element because it ethically connects Aborigines and other species. Totemism also connects Aborigines with other features of their environment such as natural phenomena (lightning, shooting stars), places or objects (sandy beach, water hole), parts of other species (tail of a dog, bark of a tree), or physical or emotional conditions (itchiness, greed). For present purposes attention is centred on totems that are non-human animal species. Regardless of the form the totem takes, totemism is the:

> key to the understanding of aboriginal philosophy of life and the universe -- a philosophy which regards man and nature as one corporate whole for social, ceremonial, and religious purposes, a philosophy which is from one aspect pre-animistic, but from another is animistic, a philosophy which is historical, being built on the heroic acts of the past which provide the sanctions for the present, a philosophy which, indeed, passes into the realm of religion and provides that faith, hope and courage in the face of his daily needs, which man must have if he is to persevere and persist, both as an individual and as a social being. (Elkin 1933, 131)

Totemism is one of the most debated concepts in anthropology. It has been defined,

---

[2]Stanner discusses this mystical element in his 1976 article "Some Aspects of Aboriginal Religion.

redefined and attempts have been made to discard it. Despite the controversy, it remains indispensable to the study of Aboriginal philosophy and religion. As Berndt, Elkin, Stanner and others used it in reference to Australian Aborigines, it may be summarized as:

> the totem binds the members not only to one another, but also to some aspect of nature; and the bond of connection is not only a peculiarly intimate one but also one which cannot be severed, and which imposes duties and obligations and confers rights and privileges. Totemism, in short, is a way of expressing the unity of men with one another, the unity of past and present, and the unity of men and nature or at any rate the unity of the men who live in a particular territory and their natural environment (MacBeath 1952, 205)

The symbolic relationships expressed by the totem work something like this - by connecting a person to a particular ancestral being, that person is connected to a species or natural phenomenon that was also represented by the same ancestral being. The person is connected as well to landscape features that are associated with that ancestral being. Some landscape features are also increase sites, which are the sources of the species associated with it. Furthermore totems are a method of classifying people, so the person is related to all others in his and adjoining countries who are of the same totem, and finally totems establish relationships among totemic groups. Before exploring each relationship, perhaps an example will make the interdependences clearer: if a Wik is 'of' the Red Flying-Fox totem, then that individual is thought to share a common life-force with Wu:ka, the Red Flying-Fox Man (ancestral being), and with red flying-foxes. Within Wik country there is a place, Wu:k'auwa, near the mouth of the Holroyd River that is the site where Wu:ka 'went down' and the increase site for red flying-foxes. The maintenance of this site will be the responsibility of that individual and other members of the Red Flying-Fox totemic clan. Thus the individual must co-operate with others of the totem as well as the power of Wu:ka thought to reside in that place. The well-being of the individual and the other members of the totem, the continuance of red flying-foxes, and renewal of resources for the rest of the Wik are thought to depend on the co-operation of all concerned. The welfare of the rest of the Wik is involved because the maintenance of the whole country requires the maintenance of each totemic site.

Aborigines lived in an intimate and materialistic relationship with nature. Intimate because being hunters and gatherers, they depended on nature's bounty for their subsistence and drew the necessities of life directly from nature without attempting to intervene for the most part with animal husbandry or agricultural endeavours. Materialistic because the purpose of many of their rites was to secure a material end, such as maintaining an adequate supply of some species in order to eat. They knew other

species to be their kin, but they did not hold their kin in a reverence that left them powerless to survive. Their intimate relationship with other species did not prevent them from utilizing other species to meet their material needs. They had a respect for other species, but their respect did not preclude use. They did not conceive of themselves in their dependence as helpless in the face of nature, nor did they conceive of nature as something outside themselves against which they must struggle for their existence. A bond exists between Aborigines and their environment. They did not make a sharp distinction between themselves and nature. Many groups, the Murinbata is one example, did not have a concept or word for nature, "There is only The Dreaming, that which comprehends all and is adequate to all" (Stanner 1960b, 111). "Human beings are regarded as being part of nature, bound to it by strong emotional ties, sharing a common life-force" (Berndt 1979, 19). In Aboriginal mythology humans and other species were created simultaneously of one matter by ancestral beings, who were themselves capable of shifting between the form of a human and that of some other species and this shared creation established a bond of a shared life-force between humans and non-human species. The bond established in The Dreaming is a moral, social, and psychological nexus connecting humans, their ancestral beings, and the landscape and is symbolically expressed as a totem:

> A mythic symbol, in the form of a creature or some associated manifestation, animates a foetus, bringing with it a life-force emanating from the Dreaming. This symbol, or 'totem' as it is sometimes called, serves as an agent, a manifestation of that bond. In doing so, it underlines the belief that he, or she, has the *same* being. In some areas, he or she is regarded as a living representation of a particular mythic character (Berndt 1979, 19)

This bond is not only a symbol of a moral, social, and psychological order or structural system, it also forms a connection of physical mutual interdepencence between Aborigines and other items in their environment. The totems and the country, like the country and the ancestral beings, are inextricably related. It is not enough that humans toil to extract their subsistence from the environment - for the seasons to pass, for species to renew themselves, and for the balance of all things to be maintained - rituals must be performed and humans must play their part. Aborigines believed that other species depended on human ritual for their survival. Totemism is a symbol for physical and spiritual survival for all species.

Totemism is also a method for classifying groups of people:

> It is the associating of a totem with a set of people which makes them into a group, that can operate, or be operated on, in virtue of the totemic sign. Members of the group have a ground of right over the totem and anything it stands for. They are also held answerable for all it imports (Stanner 1960a, 253)

It provides a method for persons outside the group to identify the group and their relationship to that group and provides for those within the group a common or group property. So in connection with the relationships between people, the totem is both a symbolic identification and cohesion principle.

In turn this connection within and among groups, connects the individual and the group to the country:

> The effect of the totemic complex as a whole is to parcel out, on a kind of distributive plan, all the non-human entities made or recognized by the ancestors, and given relevance one to another, that is set up in a moral system (Stanner 1960a, 252)

The bond between the totemic group and the sites relevant to its totem is an authority on which the moral system is established. This bond is not only symbolic, but is thought by the Aborigines to be physically important. The country is not self-managing. Lack of human ritual participation leads to the deterioration of the quality of the environment. The sanctions for omitting or neglecting ritual maintenance are material and consist in resource deprivations visited on the offender in this life and not punishments foreshadowed for some afterlife or next life. Failure to practice ritual maintenance results, it is held, in failure of supply:

> During the grim eight-year drought which ended in 1966, many sophisticated Aboriginal agnostics and some Christianized younger leaders privately joined together in the same chords of abuse: 'The old men always said that the rains would fail to come, that the animals and trees would die, and that men and women would fall ill, if the sacred songs were no longer sung and if the sacred acts were no longer performed. And what they said has come true. We young folk who know nothing about the old traditions are helpless to save the country; and the white people are just as useless' (Strehlow 1970, 111).

Totemism personifies and incorporates natural phenomena into the social and moral systems of people, thus allowing people to participate in the maintenance of natural phenomena with the same sorts of ritual practices with which they maintain aspects of their own social lives. With some sort of substantial identity thought to exist among all members of a totemic class, the incorporation of the natural phenomena is not so much an incorporation as it is a recognition of the unity of people and natural phenomena. The recognition of the unity and the mutual interdependence establishes the moral relevance of non-humans to humans and vice-versa. An internal and external group unity is formed. Internally totemism provides an identity and cohesion principle that defines and holds together a group of people in connection with some natural phenomena. Externally totemism provides a method for relating each group to any other group and establishes a

moral order that maintains all natural phenomena. This notion of internal and external refers not only to the relationship of one totemic group to another but to people and their environment.

The internal unity is not an indiscriminate identity. It does not mean, for example, that a totemite of the emu totem:

> regards himself as in all respects identical with an emu, or that he does not see any difference between his fellow members of the totemic group and the emus which roam in his territory. But it does mean that he does not draw the sharp distinction which we do between men and animals or between either of them and inanimate objects (MacBeath 1952, 207)

What it does mean is that for certain ceremonial and ritual purposes the totemite regards the totem as entitled to social and moral treatment similar to that which any other member of the totem is entitled. For subsistence purposes it means a prohibition in some groups on totemites eating their own totems. In other groups totemites may eat their totem, but individuals who stand in certain kinship relations to the totemite (for example, the totemite's mother-in-law) may not eat of a totemic animal killed by the totemite. For most groups it means the totem may not be eaten or harmed in certain seasons or at certain locations. At least in part the value and social importance of animals and other phenomena as they affect the social good or ill are embodied in mythology. In theory, the mythological treatment becomes the established and proper treatment of a given species.

In summary, totemites feel a unity with their totemic species that is derived from a common or shared life-force. On the one hand, totemites have certain responsibilities usually of a ritual or ceremonial nature to their totemic species for the welfare of the species and the maintenance of that species population. On the other hand, the common bond does not preclude use of totemic species. Part of the reason for maintaining the species population is to provide subsistence for the group. The relationship is one of spiritual unity and mundane utility. To put this another way, the relationship is one of spiritual and physical inter-dependence. If the species is not the totem of a person, then the relationship between that person and the species is determined in part by the relationships between their ancestral beings:

> What is meant by totemism in Aboriginal Australia is *always* a mystical connection, expressed by symbolic devices and maintained by rules, between living persons, whether as individuals or as groups or as stocks, and other existents -- their 'totems' -- within an ontology of life that in Aboriginal understanding depends for order and continuity on maintaining the identities and associations which exemplify the connection (Stanner 1979, 127-8)

Chapter 6

WIK

The Wik-speaking peoples are not one homogeneous group, but a number of disparate groups with related dialects. Among the groups that compose the Wik-speaking peoples (or Wik as a convenient shorthand) are the Wik-Ngathara, Wik-Ngathana, Wik-Iiyanh, and the Wik-Mungkana, who have received more attention than perhaps any other Wik group.[1] Study of the Wik started about 1927, when anthropologist Ursula McConnel went to the region. "The *Wik* peoples of western Cape York Peninsula belong to a region bounded roughly by the Archer River in the north and the Edward River in the south .... It extends about 100 km. inland and about 180 km. along the coast. It covers an area of roughly 15,000 km^2" (Von Sturmer 1978, 13)[2] Topographically, the region is an alluvial flood plain varying between five and twenty km. in width flanked by ridges of sand and shellgrit:

> There are two major ridge systems, roughly parallel; one is just behind the coastal dunes, the other is several kilometres inland and just west of the dry sclerophyll country which slopes gradually up to the Great Dividing Range 180 kilometres to the east. Coastal watercourses are short and, for about half of the year, tidal for part or most of their length. Permanent surface fresh water is restricted to a handful of lakes and swamps. The lower reaches of the Love and Kirke Rivers form large, shallow estuaries which are saline for most of the year. There are extensive areas of saltpan which are exposed for the grater part of the year. Apart from the ridges, which mostly stand only a few metres high, the coast area is utterly flat. The chief soils are deep-cracking heavy clays which usually have "gilgai" microrelief (... gilgais are depressions about a metre across and up to 50 cm deep; in this region they are practically ubiquitous on grass plains) (Sutton 1978, 44)

The distribution of resources in the region is uneven. Generally the coastal flood plain and dune woodland zones are rich in resources. But the Wik describe some areas as "hungry country", since they may lack "tidal creeks, mangroves, flying foxes, and large areas of dune woodlands" (Sutton 1978, 48). Despite living in a region generally rich in resources, the Wik have developed a complex set of rules for food distribution. David McKnight speculates:

---

[1]Sutton (1978, 38-9) and Von Sturmer (1978, 14-19) give histories of the research on the Wik-Mungkana.

[2]Peter Sutton has mapped in great detail the locations of linguistic and dialectic groups and sites of significance for the region (Sutton 1978, chapter 2). Earlier, less accurately mapped descriptions of the region can be found in McConnel (1930, 97) and McKnight (1973, 195).

> It is hard to believe that they ever wanted for food. It is unlikely that the complex rules surrounding the distribution of food were a response to a meagre food supply. (McKnight 1973, 196)

One alternative to the food distributon rules being based on scarcity is that they are part of complex social relationships, which directly (consumption as food or use as raw materials) or indirectly (symbols for totemic kinship relations) affect the Wik's relationships with other species.[3] Food distribution rules are interesting for the purposes of this study only in so far as they affect the (ethical) relationships between human and non-human. As well as serving as guidelines for the distribution of a commodity, such food rules may serve as indicators of the importance of the relationships between other species and the Wik, the complexity of these relationships, and the role that other species play in Wik beliefs.

Wik beliefs follow the tetrad pattern of people, totem, country, and ancestral beings described in the previous chapter. Their mythology contains "sacred and profane accounts of events which transpired at the beginning of time when the ancestors related themselves to particular totems and land and established the sacred rites and ceremonies" (Sharp 1939, 272). In other words, the Wik Dreaming and associated Dreamtime mythology influence Wik ritual behaviour and worldview concerning their relationships with other species as well as their behaviour and worldview in general. Myths keep before them the foundation of their ethical and behavioural codes. By the recitation of myths and the performance of rituals associated with those myths they recollect anew the important facts and models that govern their behaviour.

Linguist Peter Sutton holds that reading Wik mythology too rigorously as a moral charter is a mistake. He charges reading mythology this way with "Aesopism and regard[s] it as Eurocentric" (Sutton, personal communication, 3 June 1985). Wik mythology, like the distribution of Wik resources, is uneven. To think that all Wik mythology is morally significant is a mistake. But it would equally well be a mistake to assume that Wik mythology is totally devoid of moral significance. Sutton admits that it is "a society which holds mythology to be the charter for present world order, and ... which social and political order is partly maintained by popular assent within a religious system" (Sutton 1978, 139). The mythology of The Dreaming provides a conceptual framework and that framework is partially embodied in mythology.

---

[3]Studies on Wik kinship include Adams 1970, McConnel 1939-40, Sutton 1978, Thomson 1972 and Von Sturmer 1978.

"The *Wik-Mungkana* not only exploited their environment, but conceptualized it" (Von Sturmer 1978, 49). The social order is imposed on the natural order but in terms derived from the natural order. "Not only so, but the pecularities of nature and animal life, construed in terms of human behaviour, are personified as social types..." (McConnel 1957, 162). Nature and the social order are blended so that personified totemic species are given a social value independent of the species-in-themselves.

John von Sturmer, an Australian anthropologist who has worked with the Wik-Mungkana, compares species and natural objects that are totems to the mascots of sports teams (Von Sturmer 1978, 503). They are symbols or emblems of affliation. They give a feeling of unity to the social order. Though Von Sturmer finds much of the work done by McConnel forty years before him to be in error, he seems in agreement with her that totems unify the social order. McConnel said:

> All kinds of awe-inspiring tales meant to impress the hearers are told by members of clans about their totems' powers for evil towards strangers who trespass upon the clan privacies and no doubt in early times these evils were real enough. The mental attitude towards the totems of association and protection on the one hand and of dissociation and fear on the other, reflect the respective social attitudes of members of a clan.... Every totem reflects some one aspect of the total social reality and function of some one clan as an economic, kinship or spiritual unit which is necessary to tribal or inter-tribal security. ... The totem is thus an integral part of a social system and reflects the various attitudes of members of society towards one another. (McConnel 1931, 43-4).

Gaining some understanding of how the Wik blend natural and social orders and conceptualize species reveals something of Wik relationships with and their worldview concerning other species.

According to the generalized description already given, the Wik Dreaming and Dreamtime mythology relates to the actions of Wik ancestral beings, to landscape features within their country, and totems including animals and plants found within that country.

Puul waya or *pulwaiya*, which literally means "old father's father" (McConnel 1930, 187) or "father's father-bad", where "bad" means 'dear' or 'respected' (Sutton 1978, 131) is the Wik-Mungkana term for ancestral beings. *Puul waya* also means clan ancestors, that is, actual historical persons. What is interesting to note about this term is that totems are "conceived of as clan ancestors" (Sutton 1978, 131) at least metaphorically. *Puul waya* possess both the power of creating landscape features and the power to change shape typically attributed to all Australian Aboriginal ancestral beings. A connection

exists between the wanderings of the Wik's ancestral beings during their creation of the landscape and the wanderings of the human hunters, who are their descendants. The wanderings of each *puul waya* are restricted in their geographical scope, although not always confined to Wik country, and reflected the territories of the species associated with that being. Hence, the wanderings of the *puul waya* reflect their animal characteristics more than their human characteristics; suggesting that Wik *puul waya* are more animal than human and accentuating the importance of the *puul waya* "to economic needs and the skills associated with the capture and preparation of food" (McConnel 1957, *xx*). "Totems, totemic centres ... and other ritual property are not mere accidents. They were actively left in the world *by* some being or other, and *for* the benefit of those now living" (Sutton 1978, 138). However, to stress the economic aspects at the expense of other aspects is misleading as shall be discussed later.

The emphasis on the animal characteristics of *puul waya* is heightened by another of their characteristics. After they have created, invented or sanctioned some one aspect of the present social or moral order, the *puul waya* are said to 'go-down' at a site that then becomes sacred to that *puul waya*. 'Going-down' signals the end of their creative phase and establishes the *awa* (sacred site) for that *puul waya*, where they remain active - inasmuch as the sites they inhabit are sources of power. Some, but not all *awa* are the increase sites for the animal form of the *puul waya*. *Awa* that are increase sites are believed to be the origin of and destination for the spirits of the people and animals of the totem associated with it. The *awa* is normally near the centre of the breeding grounds or nesting sites where the associated species is abundant. Not all breeding grounds, however, have *awa*'s.[4] At those *awa* or totem-centres which are increase sites, "the *pulwaiya* resides and into which the dead of the clan are believed to go. They are said to play about the vicinity of the *auwa* in the form of their totem" (McConnel 1930, 187).

Although the above quotation tends to suggest that there is a distinction between the *puul waya* and the 'dead of the clan', the term *puul waya* applies to both the Dreamtime ancestral beings and historical relatives (hereafter referred to as kin).[5] The Wik do not harm or kill a totemic animal near its *awa*, because they believe their ancestral beings and the spirits of their kin reside in the vicinity of the *awa* in totemic form. Thus, the respect

---

[4]John Von Sturmer agrees that, "there is a high correlation between breeding and *awa*" (Von Sturmer 1978, 521), but he questions how an *awa* was chosen from the many habitats (Von Sturmer 1978, 88-90).

[5]For further information on this point *see*: Von Sturmer 1978, 85-93.

shown totemic animals in the vicinity of their *awa* is out of consideration for deceased kin, who may be incarnate in animal form, rather than a respect for the totemic animal. This suggests that to kill a totemic animal near its *awa* would be like killing one's kin.[6]

The Wik kill animals of their totemic species. According to whether or not a particular animal is thought to contain an ancestral spirit, a distinction can be made between the animal as a *puul waya* and the animal as an ordinary individual of its kind. A totemic animal found near the *awa* is thought to contain a human spirit and is not to be killed, while one found away from the *awa* is thought to lack a human spirit and may be killed, unless the presence of human spirit is otherwise indicated by some factor such as peculiar behaviour. If an animal is seen acting uncharacteristically for its kind - moving in odd manner or approaching rather than avoiding hunters - it is thought to be a *puul waya*. Because *puul waya* are kin, a totemic animal thought to be a *puul waya* is accorded the respect and deferential treatment due to an ancestor or relative. Ordinary individuals are neither considered sacred nor accorded any deference for the animal's sake.

Not only would it be like killing kin to kill a totemic animal near the *awa*, but it could curtail or cease the reproductive process. McConnel contends that the deceased kin incarnate in animal form act as perpetuators of the original role of the Dreamtime *puul waya*:

> the spirits of the dead of a clan are believed to assume the form of the totem at death in order to participate in the perpetuation of the species, by mating and reproduction, in much the same way as the original *pulwaiya* are believed to be responsible for he origin of the species by having been changed into the totemic form and continuing to mate (McConnel 1937, 361-2).[7]

Sutton describes the role of the increase sites and *puul waya* in the following way:

> The phenomenon in the centre is said to have "gone down" there, usually into a hole in the ground or under water, signs of which may still be visible .... The spirits of the ancestors of the clan owning the locale ... are said to be in the centre. They are called on to chase out the phenomenon and plenty of noise may be made to "frighten" the phenomenon and make it spread. This is called "throwing" the centre ..., and the frightening out of the phenomenon is literally "chasing" it .... People call for more of the phenomenon to emerge (Sutton 1978, 135).

---

[6]Anthropological theorist Claude Levi-Strauss has gone so far as to call a totemite killing a member of his or her totemic species, "almost as bad as murder" (Levi-Strauss 1973, 145).

[7]Von Sturmer questions McConnel's interpretation of the relationships between living people and *puul waya* as kin and ancestral beings. He holds that she confuses some points and "does not seem to have accepted the evidence before her" (Von Sturmer 1978, 85).

Each totemic species as a whole benefits from the treatment of some individuals of that species as *puul waya*. There may be no ethical considerations for ordinary individuals of the species, but the chances of survival for the species as a whole are enhanced by considering some of them to be *puul waya*.

Puul waya are induced to provide. But any ethical considerations given them or any obligation owed to them are given to the *puul waya* as people incarnate in animal form, not as animals. The ancestral beings:

> undergo totemic transformation with the express purpose of supplying the daily needs of their descendants. For example, the oyster brothers, Min Wara, chose a likely spot on an island in the mouth of the Tokali River where oysters now cluster in abundance on the roots of the mangrove trees, and made their home there with the words: "Let us go down here, and our children will eat us for food." (McConnel 1937, 362)

The distinction is between the supplier and the supplied, but it is to the supplier that all praise and favour is rendered. That the group "should feel an economic dependence upon its ancestors is natural, since it is from them that the knowledge and skill required for the pursuance of economic activities have been handed down" (Fraser 1937, 192).

It is to the ancestors that increase ceremonies are directed for them to continue, inhibit, or increase the supply of some species. The desire to regulate the quantity of a species is an expression of interest in, concern for, and co-operation with the moral, social, and economic orders of the world. Refraining from killing some individuals of a species is a consideration for an ancestor or kin who might be in the form of the totemic species, rather than to the species or individuals of the species. *Prima facie*, increase ceremonies seem to be one area in which ethical concern for other species might be illustrated in Wik thinking. However, increase ceremonies are also expressions of interest and concern for the wellbeing of the humans who perform the ceremonies and utilize the species maintained by the increase ceremonies. In other words, increase ceremonies are primarily instrumental considerations for human welfare and only secondarily considerations for the wellbeing of the non-human animal species involved. Yet this notion of supplier and supplied is misleading for three reasons: it overemphasizes the economic value of species and the economic relationships between people, and between living people and their *puul wayas*; it underemphasizes the relationships between living people and manifestations of their totems; and it ignores the abstract qualities attributed to totems.

"Most totems are animals and plants.... Many totems, however, are neither. These include dawn, clear water, beach, sea breaking, spear, lower leg, knee, eyes and blood" (Sutton 1978, 132). Some totems are only part of an animal or plant "such as tail of dog

or skin of arrowroot" (Sutton 1978, 133). Of those animal species that are totems, not all are totems because they have an economic value. This is "attempting to account for precise social forms on the basis of utility" (Von Sturmer 1978, 528). Some totemic species do not have an economic value. Indeed, frequency of contact could be a more likely reason for a species becoming a totem. Flies and leeches are totemic species for other than economic reasons. For the Wik the order of their universe is interconnected with and incorporated into the social order. Some aspects of their physical environment can exert influence over some aspects of the social environment. Ideally, this would mean that to maintain the social order, the Wik would have to maintain the physical order by the performance of rituals, such as increase ceremonies. If they were to allow, say, leeches to become extinct by omitting the proper rites, a social consequence would eventuate in addition to the extinction of leeches. In somewhat the reverse situation, some species are increased for their nuisance value. McConnel give the example of the fly, which is "increased only for the discomfort of one's enemies" (McConnel 1957, 42-3). Other species are not increased or "chased-out" at all. "No one would chase [taipan's] *auwa*! If they did many snakes would come about everywhere and a cyclonic wind would come up" (McConnel 1957, 116). In reality some totemic centres ae not possessed by any known clan and some centres are no longer the focus of ceremonies. The people of the region hold "that long absences of Aboriginal people have caused the sites to become erratic in their emanation of power. Some are said to have become "weak"; others have become more dangerous through lack of maintenance, and through the loss of precise knowledge by older people concerning approach and manipulation" (Chase 1984, 113).

In the deterministic worldview of the Wik, indeed of all Australian Aborigines, every action produces consequences, normally in both the social and physical realms simultaneously. Consequences are usually, but not always predictable, because the consequences of given actions and the actions for producing given consequences have been indicated. The pattern of action and consequence was set during the creative phase of the Dreaming. Rituals are the re-enactments of the actions of the *puul waya*. Historical accounts or "stories" are the indicators for acting or not acting and the models for the action indicated are the ancestral beings. To observe the lessons of the historical accounts and to imitate or to avoid the actions of the *puul waya* according to the consequences illustrated in "story" and ritual is to follow the correct course of action. If a ritual is properly executed, the outcome indicated in the ritual is advanced. Usually the consequence for not observing the indicated actions or inactions or not properly executing or omitting those actions is also indicated. Recall the consequences of chasing the Taipan *awa* mentioned earlier. This means, however, that the number of sanctioned actions is

limited by the number of historical accounts and rituals and the number of situations described within them. To act in an unprescribed manner is perilous.

Along with this deterministic worldview goes a 'principle of interconnectedness', a conviction that everything is connected to everything else rendering it impossible to change one thing at a time. Barry Commoner's First Law of Ecology is a latter day expression of this same conviction (Commoner 1972, 33). The combination of a deterministic worldview and a 'principle of interconnectedness' tends to make the Wik cautious about acting and prone to not acting where the action and its consequences have not been prescribed. When confronted with a new situation or a situation not recognizable as having a precedent, the Wik find it improvident to act. Actions inappropriate to a situation carry deleterious consequences. Inaction usually carries no penalty, unless the inaction is the failure to perform some required action, such as an increase ceremony to promote a desired end. The subsequent resignation pursuant to knowing that every action has a consequence; being forewarned of most, but not all, consequences in general; and cognizance of some, but not all, required and correct actions is what Stanner calls the "assent to the disclosed terms of being". This assent produces a "philosophy of inaction".[8]

To relate the foregoing back to the original point that not all totemic species have an economic value, first, it is important for the Wik to preserve species in order to maintain the world-as-they-know-it, so that they can perpetuate familiar situations and behave appropriately. If as R. Lauriston Sharp contends, "It is commonly believed that the daily life of the community exactly mirrors the ordinary doings of the ancestors" (Sharp 1968, 71), then the actions of the *puul waya* describe and prescribe the proper relationships with other species and the necessary actions for perpetuating those relationships. Thus the loss of a species (or an individual from the human community) changes the order of the world, thereby altering the ability to act in some situations. But given time, the Wik can adjust their cognitive order. They can adjust through methods such as receiving new dreams or by a 'shortness of memory'. In an interesting observation, Sutton points out that in a social order based on traditions held to be old, continuous and true, a threatened disruption of that order was sometimes dealt with by a socially expedient amnesia. "At least on some occasions, this must result in an active opposition to remembering" (Sutton 1978, 139).

---

[8]I draw the phrase "philosophy of inaction" from John von Sturmer (personal communication, 19 January 1983).

Second, the Wik consider individual animals of their totem species thought to be a *puul-waya* in animal form to be kin. Protecting these individuals is protecting one's kin. Furthermore, because the totemic complex parcels out the protection of other species, the relationships between totemite and totem affects others in the community. Other members of the community would be aggrieved or injured if another acted wrongly towards his or her totem. But, as will be taken up shortly, a totemite might deliberately influence the relationship between his or her totem and others in an injurious or negative way.

The personal relationship between totemite and totem is often rather vague with the totemite assuming no special attitude toward the totemic species, but a marker of this relationship is the name given to a totemite.[9] "The personal names of the clan members will be seen to reflect in a picturesque and striking manner the characteristics of the totems, or their value to the clan" (McConnel 1930, 189). The conventions for assigning personal names are complex. Personal names are of the social rather than the individual order marking the relationship of the individual to the society and carrying with them social obligations correlative to social position.[10] Through the social order personal names relate people to natural species in those cases where the totem is a natural species. Personal names reinforce the "belief in the oneness of life which is shared by man and natural species" (Elkin 1933, 129). The totem and the totemite share a common origin and common characteristics, attributes, and qualities, although the latter may not always be shared to the same degree. Sutton gives the example of naming an individual of a stingray totem *Ooentatham Iinychanya* meaning "going along on its chest" (Sutton 1978, 133).

Among the Wik there is the practice of giving personal names to dogs. Giving dogs a personal name includes them in the kinship and totemic systems. This makes them 'social relatives'. Totemic names "are possessed by both human beings and dogs. Human names are different from dog names, but there is evidence that a large number of human names are derived from dog names (i.e., instead of being called **X**, people become known as 'those with dogs named **Y**'.... Males and females of both categories have separate sets of

---

[9]Sharp discusses the vague nature of the relationship and the significance of name-giving in, "Notes on Northeast Australian Totemism",(Sharp 1968, 69-70), and Sutton discusses name-giving in his thesis (Sutton 1978, 133; 190-211). The classic paper on Wik-Mungkana naming is Thomson's "Names and Naming in the Wik Mungkan Tribe" (Thomson 1946, 157-68).

[10]Elkin takes this up in "Studies in Australian Totemism" (Elkin 1933, 113-31).

names" (Sutton 1982, 192-3). The dog that has been given a personal name will be called "brother" or "sister" by the sons of the man who owns it (Sharp 1968, 70). Those with personal names are considered members of the clan having a status different from other species. Women will suckle dingo pups and men will build shelters for them (McConnel 1957, 7-8), but they are not treated like humans in other respects. Their status is higher than other species, but lower than a male tribal member.

Despite the sometimes vague character of the totem/totemite relationship, the Wik hold that there is an affinity between themselves and every animal of their totemic species. Totemites claim to know if one of their totemic animals is injured or killed. For example, if a crocodile is wounded or killed members of the crocodile clan will become aware of it.

Totemites have some control over the actions of their totemic animals, too. Therefore, it is prudent to maintain harmonious relationships with totemites who have economically valuable totemic species, in order to eat. Conversely, it is imprudent to incur the wrath of totemites with potentially dangerous or noxious totemic species, because the totemite can send his totem to harm or plague them. The Wik hold that a crocodile man can send his son (a crocodile) to carry away women, to drive fish into his nets, and to take vengence on his enemies.[11] There seems to be no ethical obligation implied by this intimate kinship or identity with the totemic species. To regard another as a close kin or oneself should carry with it consideration for the other equal to the consideration for a close kin or oneself, including equal moral regard. To claim another species to be a close kin or oneself should be a powerful moral argument in inter-species ethics, yet the Wik do not deal with their totemic species in this way. Perhaps this is because the non-Aboriginal observer expects either a respectful non-use or disrespectful use or perhaps because greater identity than exists is expected. The unity of their identity is differentiated. For there to be an expression of moral concern for another species does not mean that the other species must be treated identically with humans. This would disregard the specific qualities, excellences and properties of each species.

Third:

> All totems inherently possess abstract qualities. ... The more significant the

---

[11] McConnel imples that the connection between a crocodile and a crocodile man is that between totem and totemite (McConnel 1957, 10-11), but Von Sturmer holds that all males have their own crocodile and that the relationship is a separate order of events from totemism (Von Sturmer 1983, personal communication). The relationship is closer to that of a warlock and his familiar. Berndt and Berndt give examples from other groups of the totem acting as a familiar or 'second-self' for a totemite (Berndt and Berndt 1985, 232-3).

> social function of the totemic object, and its supposed qualities, the greater the power it possess and the more important is the cult in tribal esteem. (McConnel 1936, 88)

For example, the taipan is thought to be a great doctor with control over the heart and blood of mankind and "presides over the devasting forces of nature such as storms, floods, and cyclones, thunder and lightening" (McConnel 1957, 12).

These abstract qualities are derived from qualities the species possesses to the exclusion of humans, or in a superior manner to humans, or from characteristics possessed by the ancestral being associated with the species. Examples of superior qualities possessed by other species or qualities possessed by other species but not humans are flight, speed, and poison. An example of a quality possessed by an ancestral being and associated with the species is the taipan as a healer or doctor.

Once animals become symbols or conceptual tools representing abstract qualities, a distinction is made between the animal and the totemic symbolism of the animal. To use a Western example in order not to complicate the point with cross-cultural metaphors, the lion is a symbol of ferocity, strength, and courage. After these symbolic meanings have been established the creature's symbolic qualities displace or distort its actual characteristics and the actual lion can be dispensed with becoming no more necessary to represent strength and England on the British coat-of-arms than an actual unicorn is necessary to represent purity and Scotland.

Establishing a symbolic meaning for a non-human animal species displaces or influences the perception of the actual animal with its characteristics. The treatment of the actual animal can be prejudiced by the image of its symbolic counterpart. In the Western world, "Of the wide range of physical attributes and behavioral characteristics of animals we have ignored most and substituted human characteristics to condense and heighten an image or to evoke an emotion" (Nietschmann 1977, 86). In the Wik world, the rock python or carpet snake (*Morelia spilotes*) inspires fear and awe. McConnel attributes part of this fear and awe prestige to "the fact that it crushes its prey, but it probably also borrows some of its reputation for fierceness from its ophidian relationship with more deadly snakes, which are credited with even greater powers of destruction" (McConnel 1957, 12). The destructive powers and fear-inspiring qualities of the python and other snakes include producing thunder, and the control of some food supplies such as honey and yams.

However, this may be a false conceptualization of how Aborigines use other species as

symbols. They may use them as symbols, as with the sports team example given earlier, but the 'meaning' of the particular species is not reduced to its symbolic function only. Its symbolic function is nonetheless one of the meanings of a species. In the Wik world a range of physical attributes and behavioural characteristics possessed by totem and totemite are mutually influenced. For instance, a short, stocky man is delegated certain tasks in the increase of barramundi, because, "A thin participant would make the barramundi come up poor, a stocky man would make them come up fat" (Sutton 1978, 135).

Konrad Lorenz gives excellent examples of image versus actuality in *King Solomon's Ring*. He describes how a ring-necked dove - the dove, a symbol of peace - lacerated and defeathered a turtle dove then stood in the middle of the turtle dove's back "plucked bare of feathers, but so flayed as to form a single wound dripping with blood" (Lorenz 1962, 205). He contrasts this with a wolf - long a symbol of cruelty - and describes how wolves are inhibited from biting one another when one submits and "offers its neck to its adversary" (Lorenz 1962, 209). Lorenz's point is quite simple: the supposed characteristics of these creatures and the symbolic significance attached to these creatures are dramatically opposed to their actual behaviour. Considerable difference can exist between an animal's symbolic significance, ideas about how the animal behaves, and the animal, how the animal actually behaves. Symbolism "has enormous power, and deeply distorts traditional Western beliefs about the actual behaviour of animals" (Midgley 1983, 79). Except for the most common of domestic species, ignorance of the actual characteristics of many species abounded until an upsurge of ethological studies over the last few decades. For many other species ignorance still abounds. Biases created by the symbolic characterization of non-human species, Bernard Nietschmann calls somewhat facetiously, "the Bambi Factor" (Nietschmann 1977, 84, 86-7).

The discrepancy between species and symbol has several implications for inter-species ethics. One implication is that the symbolic significance influences the perception and thereby the treatment of the species. Totems may be regarded according to the nature of their image rather than according to their actual characteristics and attributes. The Wik treat the species and symbol differently. Any preferential treatment ensuing from the symbolic significance of a species is reserved for those individual creatures considered incarnations of ancestors. Although individual creatures may be considered to share a life force with a totemite, unless they are considered incarnations of ancestors, they are not given ethical consideration. These latter creatures provide totemites with subsistence resources, as exemplified by the Min Wara or Oyster Brothers, who gave themselves to be eaten by their descendants. In addition to symbolizing some specific abstract quality, the

totem is a symbol for the lives of totemites and the lives of their ancestors. Hence, the totem is "symbolic or representational of a wider range of associations. ... The totem ... serves as a link between the human world and the world of myth" (Berndt and Berndt 1985, 239). Ethical considerations are not given to non-human species, rather ethical considerations are continued to persons in a new, an animal form, since metempsychosis, the transmigration of souls, is recognized.

Animal symbols may be used in dreams by the *puul waya*, it is believed, to communicate with living persons. The Wik, and other Aboriginal groups, believe that animals appearing in their dreams are omens indicating what they should do or are warnings that something is being done to them. If their own totemic animal appears in a dream, it can mean that someone is performing magic against a member of their totem. If the totemic animal appears twice to the same dreamer, the magic is against the dreamer. Someone else's totem appearing in a dream can be a sign for the dreamer to hunt the dreamt animal. Normally, the dreamer expects the animal of the dream to place itself in his path. Having dreamt the animal and successfully hunted it, he can approach a totemite of the totem he has hunted with an explanation of his actions. The totemite of the hunted species will report that he had been "a-little-bit-sick", meaning that he already knew his totem had been hunted and wounded or killed, and usually he accepts the dream as a justification for the action.

The use of totemic symbols in dreams has ramifications for the "philosophy of inaction". In dreams totemic symbols become justifications for action. They are taken as warnings or authorizations from the *puul waya* that some action should cease or that certain actions are possible or required. The use of totemic symbols in dreams can be interpreted within the Aboriginal belief system as the ancestral beings modifying or regulating the moral system of The Dreaming. The animals participate in this ethical transaction merely as means, they are not the source of the warning or authorization.

Another implication is that when the symbols are actively employed ceremonially the users symbolically acquire the qualities of the species concerned. This sort of activity reinforces the bond between the totem and the totemite by accentuating the commonality of origin in the ancestral beings.

In summary, the symbolic use of animals divides the animal from an image of the animal. The image, the symbol, is accorded a different regard than the animal itself, although this symbolic meaning will influence the regard accorded the animal. The result seems to be: if the image is favourable, then the actual animal may enjoy favourable

regard and treatment; however, if the image is negative, then the animal may suffer harsher regard and treatment than its actual characteristics warrant. Among the Wik the symbolism is connected with the *puul waya*. The animal symbolizes the *puul waya*. Symbolism emphasizes an idea of or about an animal, but that idea is expressed in relation to humans and qualities to which humans wish to relate. A totemic animal like a sporting team mascot emphasizes qualities important to that totemic group. The totemites identify with the quality, just as a team in a sport requiring jumping might identify with the image of a kangaroo as a creature with superior jumping ability. But the image also serves the more important purpose of giving them an identity - they are all kangaroos.

Thus the relationship between a totemite and his totem is significantly influenced by several aspects other than the economic value of the species. Metaphysical aspects concerning their deterministic worldview and a 'principle of interconnectedness' set the tenor for these relationships. Social aspects of the relationship define to some extent the role of the human in the tribal milieu and the importance of the species to the tribal group. Symbolic aspects conjoin the metaphysical, social and economic aspects.

Non-human species have an instrumental value for the Wik, but seemingly no intrinsic value. As manifestations of the *puul waya* their value and any ethical consideration they may enjoy are directed not to the species, but to the human spirits incarnate in them. Because as economic utilities they benefit from a metaphysical and moral conception of the world that holds it is necessary to actively the maintain the species of the world in order to maintain the order of the universe. This means the Wik feel responsible for the continuation of species and the environment. The *puul waya* are entreated, therefore, to continue the species with which they are associated. The deterministic worldview and a 'principle of interconnectedness' leads to stablity in relationships between the Wik and non-human species that is enhanced by the strictures of historical accounts and the actions of the *puul waya* that sharply define for good or bad the ethical treatment of non-human species. Uses and treatments of indigneous non-human species are established in historical accounts and exemplified by the actions of the *puul waya*. Although modifications and new relationships between humans and non-humans may be established through omens in dreams, thought to be the *puul waya* communicating with their living descendants, for the most part the caution that comes from a 'philosophy of inaction' stabilizes relationships.

Chapter 7

ARANDA

Like the Wik, the Aranda are not a homogeneous group. They speak five related dialects - Northern, Eastern, Central, Southern and Western Aranda[1] - and inhabit an area of approximately 122,200 square kilometers encompassing Alice Springs in central Australia. Their country runs from the Hann Range in the north to Old Crown Point on the lower Finke River in the south and from Gosse's Range in the west to the far eastern edge of the Harts Range and the western edge of the Simpson Desert in the east.[2]

Many terrain variations occur in this country that by the standards of central Australia is well-watered - receiving two hundred and fifty millimeters of rainfall a year. Northern Aranda country contains the sandhills that fringe the Hann Range in the north, the Strangways Range to the east, the foothills of the Central MacDonnell Ranges in the south, and to the west more sandhills and the Burt Plain, "a vast grey sea of Mulga" (Strehlow 1947, 48). Further west in the country of the Western Aranda the foothills give way to the plains between the western MacDonnell Ranges and the Krichauff Ranges, and then to red sand. The red sand extends south to the country of the Southern Aranda where the greater part of the "upper southern area is an arid waste of red sandhills and grey, barren table mountains" (Strehlow 1947, 70). The red sandhills and grey mountains that form the Lower Steppes of Aranda country give way to desert regions without water courses in the south and west. The main water courses (which are indeed courses rather than constant supplies) of the Aranda country are the Finke and Palmer Rivers in the Southern region, the Hale and the Todd of the Eastern region, the Hugh of the Northern and Central regions, and the Finke and the Ellery of the Western region.

Though this country may appear desolate, harsh and barren to non-Aborigines and to most non-desert Aborigines like the Wik, an Aranda would never see it "as anything but 'properly good'" (Kimber 1976, 141-5). This country is considered "properly good" partly because the Aranda have an intimate knowledge of their environment. But they do make quality judgments about their country. And not all of the land has totemic affiliations. Olive Pink remarks that there are areas in the Arandic regions that are not affiliated with any totemic group. These areas are called *endotha* or *enthata* meaning 'no good'. "It is

---

[1] Anmatjera, Kaititja and Alyawarra are also Arandic dialectics.

[2] For descriptions of Aranda country, *see*: Strehlow 1947, 47-48, 59-60, 69-70; Spencer and Gillen 1927, 1-2; Meggitt 1962, 32; and Tindale 1974, 220-1.

just a piece of waste ground to them, over which they can travel at will or camp uninvited, in marked contradistinction to the procedure on totemic "estates." The *endotha* is usually very poor country with no permanent water" (Pink 1936, 284). Dry red Aranda country is a sharp contrast to the wetter, greener Wik country. Yet these parts of the continent thought desolate to non-Aborigines are 'good' to the Aranda (or any arid-land Aborigine in his or her home country) due to their spiritual as well as physical relationship to the land:

> It is this personal legendary link with the animals, trees, and rocks of his environment that had the power once to turn even an arid and sun-scorched tract of desert into a spiritual home for our natives; and the emotions stirred up by the sight of the animals, trees, and rocks of their home gave to the aboriginals in past times spiritual strength during cruel droughts and disastrous epidemics. As long as the mountains stood, the springs flowed, the animals survived, and the ancestral rocks escaped damage, the tribe had no fear for the future. (Strehlow 1950, 17)

Knowledge of the resources and The Dreaming of each region or country is important. To feel at home in one's own country or to feel frightened in 'foreign' country implies knowing the life and death issues of when and where the resources are available, but in addition, knowing what is dangerous and what is not according to The Dreaming of that country. "It is only on the strong foundation of an intimate knowledge of the land and its resources and the technology required to manage and utilize it, that they are able to develop a rich social and religious life" (Latz 1982, 37).

Along with the contrasts in the appearances of the Wik and Aranda countries, there are contrasts in the mythical aetiologies of the countries. Aranda landscape was given its definition by both ancestral beings and other non-ancestral Dreamtime beings of the 'Alcheringa' or The Dreamtime.[3] Furthermore, the variety of these beings is greater than those of the Wik.

With some variation in particulars among the five dialects, Aranda Dreamtime beings fall into three categories: sky beings, the *Inapwerla*, and earth beings:

> The sky is said to be inhabited by three persons -- a gigantic man with an immense foot shaped like that of the emu, a woman, and a child who never develops beyond childhood. The man is called *Ulthaana*, meaning spirit. (Gillen 1896, 183)

---

[3] *See* Spencer and Gillen 1927, 589-96; Roheim 1925, 94-142; and Strehlow 1947, 85-6 for discussions of the meanings of the word Alcheringa (standardized spelling according to the forthcoming *Australian National Dictionary*.

In the Western Aranda version, recorded by T.G.H. Strehlow, the emu-footed gigantic man or Great Father is called *knjaritja* and he is also the eternal youth, *atua nditja*. In another variation, the emu-footed being has several dog-footed wives and many children, so their sky home is considerably more densely inhabited:

> They lived on fruits and vegetable foods in an eternally green land unaffected by droughts, through which the Milky Way flowed like a broad river; and the stars were their campfires. In this green land there were only trees, flowers and birds; no game animals existed, and no meat was eaten. (Strehlow 1964, 725)

Prima facie, the sky beings not eating meat seems an important point in analyzing the behaviours and inter-species ethics of Aborigines, except that Strehlow notes:

> It is clear that it would be impossible to regard the emu-footed Great Father in the sky...as a supreme Being in any sense of this word; for neither he nor his family ever exerted any influence beyond the limits of the sky. (Strehlow 1964, 726)

They are *dei otiosi*, ineffectual supernatural beings, and they take no active part in the affairs of humans. The Great Father "did not create people, nor does he afflict or injure them" (Strehlow 1907-8, 2). Though they do not influence what happens beyond the skies, it could be speculated that they may influence those beneath the skies by providing an example without exerting pressure to follow that example. There may be a form of symbolic parallelism between those in the sky and those beneath it. As shall be discussed later, with one exception, Aranda totemites do not eat their totems. That those above do not eat animals might reinforce practice below or serve as a reminder, just as the environment of the sky-dwellers serves as a reminder of the creative period or of the 'Golden Age of Alcheringa'. During the creative phase of The Dreaming, the Aranda country was supposed to have been wet and green like the land in the sky.

The second of the Dreamtime beings, were the *Inapatua* (other spelling and dialectic versions are *inapertwa*, *(Inaap)ertwa* and *Inapwerla*):

> which had no limbs or organs of sight, smell, or hearing, and which did not eat food. This animal, incapable of motion, presented the appearance of a man whose legs and arms were so shrunken and "doubled up" that mere indications of limbs were visible. (Gillen 1896, 184-5)

Gillen also described them as malformed "porcupines", i.e., echidnas (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*) with indistinctly defined limbs. *Inapatua* were transformed into the first human beings.

The story of their transformation varies from one Aranda dialect group to another, but

the basic story tells of one or more spirit beings, for instance, *Alkappera*, a spirit man, or two spirit beings, *ungambikula* (current orthography spells this *Ngambakala* and it means literally "having originated from nothing"), who came from the east in the former case and from the west in the latter case and seeing the *Inapatua* took pity on them. Using a magical knife the spirit being(s) "released their half-formed arms and legs, cut open their mouths, bored holes for nostrils, slit the eyelids apart, and thus out of the *inapertwa* made men and women" (Spencer and Gillen 1904, 150).[4] In the version featuring *Alkappera*, he used his fingers as well as his magical knife to form humans in his own image. Companies of these newly-formed humans traversed the Dreamtime Aranda country performing legend inspiring acts, transforming the landscape, and creating ceremonies. Nothing like the *Inapatua* appears in Wik stories, which contains neither group transformations nor companies of such beings marching across the landscape. Although the *Inapatua* played their part in the creation of the landscape and mythology:

> These *Inapatua* creatures were in reality stages in the transformation of various animals and plants into human beings, and thus they were naturally, when made into human beings, intimately associated with the particular animal or plant, as the case may be, of which they were the transformations -- in other words, each individual of necessity belonged to a totem the name of which was, of course, that of the animal or plant which he or she was a transformation. (Spencer and Gillen 1927, 308)

The third group of Aranda supernatural beings are the earth beings. The earth beings are the ancestral beings of the Aranda:

> Only below the surface of the earth did life already exist in its fulness, in the form of thousands of uncreated supernatural beings that had always existed; but even these were still slumbering in eternal sleep. Time began when these supernatural beings awakened from their sleep. They broke through to the surface of the earth; and their "birthplaces" became the first sites on the earth to be impregnated with their life and power. (Strehlow 1964, 727)

The earth-beings had various shapes and appearances, but most appeared in the form of various animals and:

> In most of these supernatural beings there was an indivisible linking between elements found in animals...on the one hand and in humans on the other. Those beings that looked like animals, for instance, generally thought and acted like humans; conversely, those in human form could change at will into the particular animal with which they were indivisibly linked. (Strehlow 1964, 727)

Along with the power to bring life to the surface of the earth, the earth-born beings had

---

[4] Alternative versions of the same legend can be found in: Gillen 1896, 184-5; Spencer and Gillen 1927, 307-19; Spencer and Gillen 1938, 127; and Strehlow 1964, 727.

the same superhuman powers as the Wik *pulwaiya* the ability to change their own shape back and forth between the form of a human and that of one other species and the ability to transform and give definition to the world. Their powers to transform extended beyond giving definition to the landscape, in addition to *Alkappera* and the *ungambikula*, the ancestral beings "liberated the semi-embryonic masses of humanity [*Inapatua*] into the fullnes of life, and then taught the separated individuals the most important things necessary for their survival as mature men and women" (Strehlow 1964, 728). But with life, they also brought death, although not for themselves. Unlike the Sky Beings and the *Inapatua*, before their transformation to the first human beings, the earth-born Alcheringa ancestors:

> were subject to age and to decay. They could be hurt and wounded, and they knew the meaning of pain. But while they resembled mankind in their subjection to many of the ills of the flesh, they differed from it in one vital respect: they were immortal, and even those of them who had been "killed" by other totemic ancestors still lived on in the form of *tjurunga*. (Strehlow 1964, 729)

A *tjurunga* (spelled *Churinga* by Spencer and Gillen) is among other things a sacred stone or wooden object with life-holding magical properties.[5] The *tjurunga* is part of the ancestor's own being and contains a part of the shared life-force or common bond between totemites, their totems, and their ancestral beings. When the *Inapatua* settled and the earth-born Alcheringa beings resettled into the ground they took with them a *tjurunga*. Their bodies died, "but some natural feature, such as a rock or tree, arose to mark the spot, while [their] spirit part remained in the Churinga" (Spencer and Gillen 1938, 123). A *tjurunga* is both a receptacle for the shared life-force and a symbol of that shared life-force. A *tjurunga*, like an *awa* of the Wik, is a source of the vital force shared by humans and their totemic animals.

Although the Aranda earth-born beings' mode of existence does not seem to differ greatly from that of the Wik *puul-waya*, nevertheless several differences are manifest between Aranda ancestral beings and Wik *puul-waya*. Like the *Inapatua*, some of the earth-born beings arose in groups from their *pmara kutata* (translated as 'everlasting homes'), an Aranda equivalent of the Wik *awa*. The character of the relationship between ancestral beings and people or between ancestral beings and their animal representations in the Aranda and Wik is not markedly different. However, the inclusion of *tjurunga*

---

[5] *Tjurunga* are also sacred ceremonies, bull-roarers, sacred ground-paintings, ceremonial poles, ceremonial head-gear, sacred chants, and sacred earth mounds (Strehlow 1947, 85-6).

means there are more sources for the transmission of the ancestral beings' life-force. For the Aranda the shared life-force between humans and non-humans can be acquired in a number of ways including: from the *tjurunga*, from the *pmara kutata* (major sacred sites), or from the Dreaming tracks (minor sacred sites). Dreaming tracks mark the routes the earth-born ancestral beings took as they travelled from place to place fashioning the features of the landscape leaving in their wake a track or trail imbued with their life-force.

A significant difference between Aranda and Wik beliefs, is that the Aranda believe that humans have two souls. When a man and woman mate the foetus:

> has a mortal human "life" (or "soul") of its own: in other words, man comes into being initially like the animals, whose existence also results from mating between male and female parents. But man differs from the animals in acquiring an all-important second "life" (or "soul") which is immortal. This second soul is part of the "life" of one of the immortal supernatural ancestors, which entered the body of an already pregnant woman at some definite point of the landscape. (Strehlow 1964, 730)

What is not clear from this is how a human (totemite) and a non-human (totem) share a common life-force? This is especially puzzling since Strehlow also said that among the Aranda the unity of totemite and totem meant that the totemite:

> had been reincarnated at a certain place from the trail of life left there by a supernatural being from whose body kangaroos [as an example] had also originated at the beginning of time. Human beings were hence linked with animals...only through the supernatural beings that had given life to them both. (Strehlow 1964, 732)

If, as Strehlow said, "human beings are linked with animals...only through the supernatural beings that had given life to them both", how is it possible that the "second life (or 'soul'), which is immortal" and originates with the ancestral beings or totemic ancestors is only possessed by humans? One possibility is that humans and non-humans both have two souls, despite Strehlow's implication that only humans have two souls when he wrote "man differs from the animals in acquiring an all-important second life". Indeed, this would make much sense, if it is assumed that what gives the difference in form between totemites and totems is the "mating between male and female parents", and what gives shared essence or common life-force between them is the second soul. The descriptions given earlier of *Alkappera* and the ancestral beings shaping the *Inapatua* in their own images strenghtens this explanation. *Alkappera* and the ancestral beings, beings with human form, are analogous to parents giving form to their progeny, and the *Inapatua*, amorphous plants and animals, are analogous to the essence shared by humans and non-humans. Yet more strength is lent this explanation by Strehlow's description of

totemites, totems and *tjurunga* all being "different forms of the intangible living something that is essentially the same in all cases" (Strehlow 1947, 16-17). Undeniably, non-human animal species - like the rest of nature - share the 'essence', 'spirit' or whatever it is of The Dreaming. While this may sound like a good explanation, unfortunately Aranda exegesis does not support it. "There is none ... that says animals have two souls," says John Morton, an anthropoligist who works with the Aranda (personal communication, July 1985).

This doctrine of two souls may remind one of the Aristotelian doctrine of different types of soul (*De Anima*, Bk 2, 2-4). In this doctrine there is a soul (life principle) that is uniquely human, and another soul (life principle) that both humans and non-humans have. (Aristotle also posits a third - vegetative soul - but it is of no importance here). In the Aristotelian doctrine, however, the uniquely human soul (life principle) is of a higher order and sets humans apart from other animals, while for the Aranda it marks a "differentiation without inequality" (Strehlow 1956, 11). Every animal has a soul; just like a human has. (Spencer and Gillen 1927, 85)

A distinction between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal doctrines is indicated by remarks such as, "that one...is just the same as me," when Aranda totemites refer to their totems (Spencer and Gillen 1938, 202) and is emphasized by misunderstandings:

> When an Aranda man declared to a white questioner that he was a honey-ant, a kangaroo, an emu, and so on, he was merely using a normal abridged formula for stating his totem, relying - as he could among his own tribesmen - on the commonsense of his white interrogator to interpret his answer. It did not occur to him that any white man could be so stupid as to regard him as a moron incapable of knowing the difference between men and animals. (Strehlow 1964, 732)

Totemites have a unity with their totems, but their unity is not identity in all respects. They are united through a common ancestral being and through a life-force given to both human and non-human by that being. The shared characteristics that bind totemites aand totem may be imparted independently of a soul. That is, on the Aristotelian model, the ancestral beings could impart a 'life principle' that is not a soul but is nonetheless shared. Thus the problem is generated by equating 'life' and 'soul'. Indeed, if one reflects on the connection between totem and totemite as a kin relation (that of sibling usually a brother among the Aranda), then the shared characteristics can be seen as the same sort of characteristics seen as shared by half-brothers and -sisters.

As noted before, the common bond or shared life-force that established the link between

Aranda totemites and their totems can be transmitted through *tjurunga*, sacred sites, or Dreaming tracks. Strehlow pointed out that connection between Arandas and their totems is "through the supernatural beings that had given life to them both," and that this connection is established, that is, life is given to both, "at a certain place from the trail of life left there by a supernatural being". These places called *pmara kutata* in the Northern dialect are like the *awa* of the Wik in that they are the "everlasting homes" of the ancestral beings. The Aranda approach their sacred sites with more ceremonial respect, than the Wik. Sites are approached by the 'proper' track, i.e, the ritual track by which the ancestral being approached the site and sometimes the proper approach extends to walking backwards as a further sign of respect. Often gifts, such as a branch of a bush endemic to or associated with the site, are presented to "spirits of the dead" at the site to safeguard the individual approaching the site. (Pink 1933, 184-5) Aranda sacred sites normally have a sacred storehouse, a tree or cave, associated with them in which sacred and ceremonial objects, *tjurunga*, related to that particular *pmara kutata* are kept and:

> its immediate environs constituted a prohibited area, whose edge was generally about a mile (or even more) from the sacred cave. Within these sacred precincts all hunting and food gathering was forbidden. Even wounded animals could not be pursued into this forbidden zone, which could be entered only for ceremonial purposes. (Strehlow 1965, 143)

Again as with the Wik, it is the ancestors and ancestral beings to whom respect and moral consideration is due, not the totemic species. The Aranda prohibit all hunting in the vicinity of the *pmara kutata* not just the hunting of the species associated with the site.[6] The prohibition is wider thus the protection is greater, but the consideration is for the ancestors and ancestral beings, not the species.

Furthermore, the *tjurunga* stored at the *pmara kutata* are "regarded as the actual changed body of an...ancestor; and the chipped edge hence represented an injury done to this personage" (Strehlow 1970, 117). A transgression of proper conduct at the *pmara kutata* or the injury of an animal in its vicinity is a transgression against or injury to a personage in the form of an animal and not a transgression against an animal. Except for ceremonial purposes, carrying weapons into these prohibited areas was forbidden, and because hunting is forbidden in the vicinity of the *pmara kutata*, they became sanctuaries or game reserves. T.G.H. Strehlow, who was reared among the Aranda, noted that

---

[6]This may represent the ideal rather than the practice. There is some evidence to show that the prohibition is not as strict as Strehlow indicates. Olive Pink gives the example of blue bells (*Wahlenbergia graciles*) which the Aranda use as a food, being picked by her Aranda guide for her at a bandicoot site. (Pink 1933, 184-5) However, this example may be prejudiced because Pink was a non-Aborigine.

"many of the finest waterholes...provided inviolable sanctuaries for kangaroos..." and that:

> While there is no evidence to show that the Aranda *pmara kutata* had intentionally been created as game reserves.... Totemic religion meant that there was a strong emotional bond between a man and his totem animal. ... This compassion for animals, even if it had not first created the game reserves in Central Australia, certainly helped to protect their integrity in times of droughts. (Strehlow 1965, 144)

While there is still no evidence to show that they were intentionally created as game reserves, since Strehlow's observation other evidence has been supplied confirming that the totemic sites serve as sanctuaries or game reserves. Zoologist, A.E. Newsome compared the ecology of the red kangaroo (*Macropus rufus*) with Aranda mythology about kangaroos. He found, "In Aranda mythology the major totemic sites for the red kangaroo coincide with the most favourable habitat for the species" (Newsome 1980, 327). Because hunting is forbidden at these totemic sites, red kangaroos are protected near their best habitat. Newsome concludes, "The coincidence of myth and reality indicates an underlying ecological base to the mythology and its high adaptiveness in that it was unlikely to fail" (Newsome 1980, 333).

Newsome's demonstration that red kangaroo totemic sites coincide with the best kangaroo habitats (the best food and water supplies for them) and Strehlow's observation that the totemic sites form game reserves suggests that the Aranda have a conservation effect in their moral system. Or, to put this more forcibly, they built their moral system in part on a conservation effect. The simultaneous creation of the landscape and moral system in The Dreamtime combines a intimate knowledge of the environment with a moral regard for it. Aranda ideology is one of production rather than conservation. They are hunters first; they are 'religious persons' second. The first demands that they kill what they can lay their hands on; the second means that they can always guarantee its renewal through ritual means. Non-human animal species are accorded a moral status founded on a concern for the environment which acknowledges that the environment and the species that are part of it can both be used and respected. If at least a part of the purpose of the Aranda 'moral system' is to guarantee food resources in a delicate environment, then the method of guarantee is to attune human behaviour to the management of the environment by means of a moral code. This system calls for human ritual participation to promote the vitality of the land and maintain the quality of the environment. "They did not seek to impose themselves so much as to *maintain* themselves in a natural order in which their ancestors had given them *laws of maintenance* derived from the mythological life forces; correct ritual had to be carried out

if plant and animal supplies were to be maintained" (Kimber 1976, 145). Above all, increase ceremonies are commemorative acts - re-enactments of the ancestral beings deeds. It ensures the continuation of species and resources for humans and non-humans alike and contributes to lowering human impact on the environment.

In addition to the sites providing non-human animal species with sanctuaries from human predation because of the respect due to the ancestors and ancestral beings, the ceremonies associated with the sites promote the welfare of species. With two exceptions, Arandas are forbidden normally to eat their personal totemic species. The two exceptions are: during the most severe droughts or on ceremonial occasions. Even during severe droughts the eating of one's own totemic species will be avoided, if possible, for the same reason it is restricted at other times. Eating too freely, too much of one's totemic species, would cause the species to disappear, it is believed. Arandas "are not absolutely forbidden to eat it [their totemic species], but must only do so to a small extent, for, if they were to eat too much, then the power of successfully performing the *Mbanbiuma* [increase ceremony] would depart from them" (Spencer and Gillen 1927, 82).[7] When performing an increase ceremony, *Mbanbiuma*, for instance, it is necessary, however, for the totemites "to eat a little of the totemic animal, as to eat none would have the same effect as eating too freely" (Spencer and Gillen 1927, 82). A small portion, but never the best parts, of the totemic species is eaten to strengthen the common bond between totemite and totem and thereby to enhance the the likelihood of success of the increase ceremony.

A parallel between this ceremonial partaking of the flesh of the totemic animal and the Christian Eucharist or Holy Communion is obvious. They share ritualized consumption to enhance an internal bond between the celebrant and the power or deity with whom the celebrant is bonded. The significance of the consumption lies in refreshing the union rather than in the item consumed. The totem is less significant than the bond of which it is a symbol or emblem. Following Radcliffe-Brown and Elkin, Ronald Berndt emphasizes "the philosophical aspect of totemism, as 'a set of symbols, a conventional expression of the value system of the society to which it belongs'" (Berndt 1970, 1043). The value of the totemic species as a symbol is "comparable to heraldic animals in coats of arms"

---

[7] *Mbanbiuma* is but one name for increase ceremonies. Another mentioned by Spencer and Gillen is *Intichiuma*. Increase ceremonies for each species can have their own names and the names may differ from one dialect to another. Also it is worth restating what was said about increase ceremonies in Chapter Five. Increase ceremonies are to maintain the normal order of nature and not intended to bring about the irregular or extraordinary. They are forms of co-operation, not subjugation.

(Pink 1936, 267) symbolizing a relationship between initiated members of the totemic clan and relationship between the totemic clan members and their ancestral beings, the value resides in those relationships, not the symbol.

This is illustrated by another Aranda symbol - the *tjurunga*. As noted earlier, damage to the *tjurunga* is considered an injury to the personage it represents. Damage to the *tjurunga* is significant only in so far as it is believed to be damage to a personage. If totemic animals are symbols just as *tjurunga* are, and it is what is symbolized rather than the symbol that is sacred, then in the case of totemic species, the moral consideration goes, as it does with the *tjurunga*, to the personages represented by the symbol. The ritual approach to a sacred site where *tjurunga* are stored and the prohibition against killing animals in the vicinity of the site are considerations for the ancestors and ancestral beings thought resident at the site, not for the *tjurunga* and the totemic animals.

It should be emphasized that *tjurunga* are not comparable to totemic animals on other levels. *Tjurunga* are *eternal*, while both humans and animals are ephemeral. *Tjurunga* have a claim to being purely sacred. The punishment for damaging a *tjurunga* is death (Strehlow 1970, 117).

However, it might also be argued, as T.K. Penniman has argued concerning *tjurunga*:

> it is the emblem which is sacred, rather than the creature which it symbolically portrays. This emblem...stands for the men of the totem, as well as for the animal or plant which is the badge of the totem. The initiated men of the totem are just as sacred as, if not more sacred than, their animal relatives. (Penniman 1929, 24)

If Penniman's claim is correct, then the totemic species can be considered sacred as a symbol on the one hand, but not sacred as a species on the other hand. In the former case, members of the totemic clan for whom the symbol has significance do not freely indulge in eating the totemic animal, but participate only in ritual consumption, because of the symbolic significance of the species. In the latter case, non-members of that totem are allowed to eat it, because the species carries no symbolic significance for them. However, the symbol need not be interpreted as 'sacred' as Penniman has done, anymore than the symbolic creatures of a coat-of-arms need be treated as sacred for the reasons stated above in the discussion of the symbolic value of the *tjurunga*.

Between the performance of an increase ceremony and the time when the ceremony is considered to have had its effect, eating the totemic species is normally restricted. While those who are not members of the totem may eat it, "It must on no account be eaten like

other food, out in the bush, or the men of the totem would be angry and the grub [or whatever totemic species] would vanish" (Spencer and Gillen 1927, 81-2). One effect of this temporal restriction on the eating of a species is to give the species an opportunity in its breeding season to reproduce unhampered by human predation. Totemic species that are not eaten or otherwise utilized have this temporal protection extended.

It should be made clear that the anger of the totemites and the vanishing of the totemic species are not strictly causally connected. Both arise from the belief that ceremonial acts would produce their "practical effects only if they were performed in their entirety, and without any deviations from exact patterns that have been instituted by the supernatural beings at the beginning of time" (Strehlow 1970, 111). The untimely eating arouses anger because it is a deviation from the pattern, thereby impairing the power to maintain the species. A species' vanishing is due to the deviation from the pattern negating the practical effects of the ceremony. It is not a matter of totemites in their anger causing species to vanish. However, this does not preclude totemites threatening to withhold their participation in the maintenance of their totemic species as an expression of anger. It is a threat that would be taken seriously by others in the community. "The very existence of the whole Aboriginal population of the Aranda-speaking area was believed to depend on the continued existence of *all* the local groups found in it" (Strehlow 1970, 1-2-03).

The place, time, and agent restrictions on the consumption of species serves to maintain the populations of totemic species for the use or benefit of those who are not members of the totem, even though in theory, the totemic clan members should have first claim on the species. Interestingly enough, in Aranda mythology there are few precedents for the prohibition of totemites freely consuming their own totem. Although some circumstantial references are found to this, no attempt is made to explain how the present taboo (*ekirinja*) arose. "On the contrary, according to the traditions, it was the normal thing for a man to feed upon his totemic animal or plant" (Spencer and Gillen 1904, 321). In a myth about Karora, a bandicoot ancestor, bandicoots come out of his navel and arm pits. After producing these bandicoots, "The gurra [bandicoot] ancestor arose, feeling hungry, since magical powers had gone out from his body. ... He gropes about in his dazed state; he feels a moving mass of bandicoots all around him. ... He thinks, he desires. In his great hunger he seizes two young bandicoots; he cooks them... (Strehlow 1947, 8). The story goes on that the gurra ancestor produced sons that hunted for him until all the bandicoots were gone.

An exception to this is the mythology surrounding the *Achilpa* or wild cat (*Dasyurus geoffroyi*) totem. Other than for ceremonial purposes, with the possible exception of the

Western group, all Aranda are prohibited from eating *Achilpa*. There are two reasons for this: one is a disease, *Erkincha*, thought to affect anyone who eats *Achilpa* and the other is the belief "that if any man who had killed another at any time of this life were to eat this particular animal then his spirit part...would leave his body and he would soon be killed by some enemy...and there are very few men who do not lay claim to this distinction" of having killed another man. (Spencer and Gillen 1938, 166-8)

The place, time, and agent restrictions on the use of totemic species applies also to species not considered useful or of which no use is made. Species such as flies and mosquitoes that are 'pests' also have increase ceremonies and the disruption of their ceremonies or the abuse of the species can lead to their vanishing:

> at first sight, it is not easy to understand why ceremonies to increase their number should be performed...however, it must be remembered that flies and mosquitoes, though themselves intensely objectionable, are very intimately associated with what the native above all things desires to see at certain times of the year, and this is a heavy rainfall. (Spencer and Gillen 1904, 61)

Two principles inhere in this relationship: one, flies and mosquitoes are the harbingers of rain, and two, a cosmological connection exists between flies and mosquitoes and rain. In the first, Aborigines, who are exremely sensitive to minute changes in their environment and mark many of these changes of season and other environmental conditions by various associated events, saw the coming of flies and mosquitoes as the sign that the rains could not be far behind. This is similar to the traditions in the northern hemisphere of the first robin in the United States or the first cuckoo in United Kingdom announcing the coming of spring. It is interesting to note that most non-Aboriginal Australians do not have associations between the activities of a species and a change of season with the possible exception of blow flies heralding summer. In the second, the coming of the flies and mosquitoes does not cause the coming of rain, but:

> The perpetual well-being of the universe, and the whole welfare of the material world,...depended on the the continued repetition of the original creative acts of the original supernatural beings by their human reincarnations from generation to generation.... The universe that was being perpetuated in this way continued to embrace, with relentless logic, not only those things that gave life and joy to mankind but also those other things which caused hurt and pain. Centipedes and scorpions, mosquitoes, flies and fleas, bull-ants and processional caterpillars, and the whole tribe of venomous snakes were mentioned, even if only in some rarely sung verses, in creative songs attached to certain of the totemic centres. (Strehlow 1970, 132)

This second principle reaffirms the interconnectedness of humans, their moral system, and human dependence on nature. There is a mutual dependence that makes the correct and accurate reading of changes in environment and environmental conditions crucial to

human survival, and the survival of non-humans dependent on human ritual involvement. This is an interesting and significant contrast to the dominant Western tradition(s), in which other species' chances of survival are thought enhanced by the elimination of human intervention, notwithstanding active conservation and preservation strategies. These strategies now include non-interference as a feasible alternative or substitute for active intervention. On the one hand, it makes the survival of non-human animal species even more instrumental than the dominant Western tradition(s), yet on the other hand, it makes human concern for the survival of non-human animal species a vital and personal concern of each individual.

Conclusion

Like the Wik, the Aranda are connected to non-human animal species through their ancestral beings, their land and totemism. "Their religious life is very closely tied to the land and to the natural features on it" (Latz 1982, 35). But their connection to non-human animal species is an enhancement of their connection to ancestral beings, and respect paid to totemic species is a reflection of the respect due to ancestral beings and ancestors. The Aranda believe themselves to be incarnations of their ancestral beings. They believe that they have two souls - one from their human parents and the other from their ancestral beings. They and their totemic species share a common life-force that originated with their common ancestral being. Therefore, a human being and the totemic species with which the human is associated are, to requote Strehlow, "different forms of the intangible living something that is essentially the same in all cases" (Strehlow 1947, 16-17).

Their ancestral beings impart the second soul to them from sacred sites (*pmara kutata*), *tjurunga* (sacred objects), and Dreaming tracks (the routes of the ancestral beings). While the Aranda have a greater number of sources for obtaining the common life-force than the Wik, this makes no difference to the relationship between totemites and their totems. The Aranda prohibition against killing animals near the *pmara kutata* is respect for the ancestral beings thought to reside there. The Aranda religion, like the Wik religion, is a land-centered or geocentric religion. Their primary concern and their primary link to their ancestral beings is through the land, and the association with non-human animal species is secondary to this.

What seems a notable exception to this secondary relationship is the prohibition against eating one's totemic species. Except for the *Achilpa* and the example of non-meat eating Sky Beings, this prohibition is not founded in the Aranda mythology. The Aranda prohibition against eating one's totemic species is founded on the belief that if they eat

too much of it they would lose their power to maintain the species and it would vanish. Besides this prohibition not being shared by the Wik, what makes it particularly interesting is that this prohibition seems to be a contradiction between the founding tradition and subsequent practice. Their Dreamtime ancestors ate their fill of the species associated with them, but present-day Aborigines can only in small portions of their totemic species to strengthen the bond between them. If variation in practice is thought to lead to undesirable consequences or the inability to maintain the familiar, thus becoming a moral disruption, then such a major change in custom as ceasing to eat one's totemic species should produce a disastrous moral disruption. However, no such consequence seems to have eventuated.

Albeit an interesting puzzle to contemplate, it does not make any significant moral difference and is of no interest here, beyond noting that the desire to continue any given species is a desire to provide that species for the use or benefit of others - human and non-human. While eating a small portion of the totemic species to strengthen and refresh the common bond between totemite and totem is an enhancement of the bond between totemite and ancestral being, not eating it may be an example of concern for a species. But even this prohibition seems aimed not at the totemic species, but the totemic ancestors. It is respect for ancestral power.

A number of influences produces a conservation effect and provides for the preservation of species. Each of these influences contributes to the effect, although none of them individually constitutes an explanation, all of them may. An element of geographical or environmental determinism may reside in this prohibition. In a land with relatively few individuals of some species, prohibiting a segment of the human population from eating that species eases the pressure of human predation and promote the continued existence of that species. This complements the restrictions of time and place on killing species and Strehlow's and Newsome's observation that *pmara kutata* form game reserves. However, it should be born in mind that the treatment of species does not differ regardless of whether a species is prolific or sparse. As hunters their basic concern is production. While the easing of the pressure of human predation has a conservation effect, this effect is due to a respect for ancestral beings.

This prohibition is also connected with the totem as a symbol. The totemic connection is not one of identity in all respects, but of unity. It is only those who have unity with the species that do not eat it, because the species carries a symbolic significance for them. It is like them, although not identical with them, and to eat it would be like eating a relative (a sibling), for instance. The ceremonial consumption of a small portion of the species is a mark of respect for the unity between them and enhances this unity.

Chapter 8

CONCLUSION:

Prolegomenon to an Australian Bioregional

Inter-Species Ecophilosophy

The crux of the problem throughout this enquiry has been: What appeals can convince humans in Western traditions that they are not or should not be uniquely the objects of their ethical systems? The object of revising ethical systems is to include non-human animals in them and thereby accord them better treatment. Some of the problems, some of the solutions, and some of the attitudes and behaviours have been indicated. Appeals to change current behaviours and attitudes in relation to non-human animal species in radical ways have focused on an ethic as an indicator of what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour or treatment and to whom that behaviour or treatment is applicable.

To paraphrase a line from Regan, knotty moral and ethical problems concerning non-human animal species cannot be solved by continually pulling on one conceptual string. Continually worrying one conceptual string, such as rights, creates as many tangles as it solves. Several conceptual strings need to be teased and pulled and unravelled jointly and simultaneously. Also, in some cases, Alexander's solution to the Gordian Knot should be applied and some lines of philosophical tradition severed.

Allied with this notion of breaking with some philosophical traditions to find solutions to the problems of securing better treatment for non-human animal species is another concern of this inquiry: what assistance, if any, can Australian Aboriginal traditions provide in unravelling some of these problems. The question of how can Aboriginal examples answer questions posed by current non-Aboriginal Australians can be answered in several ways. *Prima facie* the most obvious way is - if non-Aborigines wish to adopt the solutions of Aborigines they must also adopt the world-view of Aborigines. But Calvin Martin, an American historian, has pointed out that non-Indians (non-Aborigines) either cannot or will not adopt the world-view of another culture. For this reason American Indians are miscast as leaders or mentors of an ecological movement, according to Martin.

In "The American Indian as Miscast Ecologist" and in the "Epilogue" to *Keepers of the Game*, Martin states that the American Indians cannot teach contemporary America how

to deal with its environmental problems, because the American Indian's "traditional interpretation of the world beyond him is profoundly different from our Western cosmology" (Martin 1981a, 138)[1] He holds that the practices and attitudes of other cultures, such as Amerindian or Australian Aboriginal cultures, cannot be incorporated in modern Western cultures, because Western and Amerindian interpretations of the world are different, but, more important, are deemed to be incompatible. He assumes that if another culture's way of looking at the world cannot be accepted, Western peoples cannot learn from them. For instance, Martin makes this point about land-use (but it is applicable to other aspects of environmental ethics) "the traditional native ideology of land-use will not be acceptable to, and is incapable of adoption by, Western man, at least as long as he remains a Christian" (Martin 1978, 188). He may overemphasize Christianity as *the* stumbling-block, but he is certainly rubbing the correct sore toe. Unless Western cultures are willing to revise or to forsake those elements in their own worldview that contribute to the environmental crisis and unless they are willing to accommodate different points of view, then ideas for change, regardless of their origins are ineffectual. He illuminates the differences and incompatibilities with examples such as the Western de-animation of Nature (Martin 1981a, 138), the incorporation by American Indians of non-human animal species into the human social universe (Martin 1981a, 144), and Indian society and culture not functioning outside of and separate from the natural world, but rather being permeated by it (Martin 1981a, 146-7).

He states his position very strongly, "To suggest that we might adopt such an Indian world view is preposterous" (Martin 1981a, 145). But there are many examples of subculture movements such as permaculture, or the religions such as the International Society of Krishna Consciousness, or as they are better known, the Hare Krishnas. The Hare Krishnas hold, "The basic and transcendental equality of all conscious entities is not an abstract notion but is obvious to everyday sense perception - if only we look beyond the superficial differences in the varieties of material bodies" (Goswami *et al.* 1983, 40). This suggests that all conscious beings are essentially alike, or akin, given that they also hold, "Every living creature is the son of the Supreme Lord" (Goswami *et al.* 1983, 41). These doctrines are comparable with the Amerindian and Aboriginal beliefs, comparable in the sense that the ideologies of American Indians or Australian Aborigines and the ideoolgy of Hare Krishnas are both radically different worldviews from the dominant Western paradigm. In making this comparison two distinct questions should not be

---

[1]Western is a vague term, but I understand Martin to use it in contrast to an indigenous culture and to mean in line of descent from European culture.

confused. The first question is: Should Western societies be prepared to embrace a radically different 'alien' worldview? And the second question is: Should Western societies be willing to embrace an older indigenous worldview? An answer to the second question implies an answer to the first, but the converse does not hold. Martin's answer is:

> a few Western iconoclasts might embrace the native ideology..., one would expect that most individuals would instead add the alien ideology ... to the existing, Western ideology ...; the former would not be substituted for the latter, but would, at best, exist alongside it (Martin 1978, 188).

Martin does not attack "the principle of cultural borrowing and rejection" (Martin 1978, 188). Rather he "cannot imagine how the two views are capable of reconciliation (Martin 1978, 188) and doubts that one culture would replace its ideology with that of another, instead of adopting some aspects of another culture. A parallel can be drawn between the role of American Indians as ecological teachers in America and for Australian Aborigines in Australia. However, drawing such a parallel does not entail accepting Martin's conclusion that they cannot fill such a role. Martin's objections have force. It may be true that Western cultures will not accept another culture's attitudes and perspectives and cannot accept them at least as accepted by the other culture. But this does not mean that some of their attitudes and perspectives cannot be accepted, or that some modified form of another culture's attitudes and perspectives cannot be accepted. John Black, who takes a similar stance to Martin on the adoption of new ideas, says:

> We may now proceed to examine the stock of ideas within the contemporary world view, to see if there are some which might serve as a solution to our problem, which could be developed to fill the present vacuum. It is at first sight unlikely that any totally new concept could serve this purpose; if such an idea were compatible with our outlook, then it is likely that it is already lurking somewhere in the cultural heritage of our civilization waiting its turn to be taken up and used to meet a new set of circumstances. However, new inventions provide the possibility of new metaphors, new concepts, so that prediction is dangerous (Black 1970, 119-120).

At least three possibilities for departure ensue from the positions of Martin and Black. First, there may already exist within Western cultural milieus alternative concepts that would support concepts from other cultures. Following Black, Passmore befittingly labels these alternative concepts with a botantical term "seeds" (Passmore 1980, 40). Writers like Lynn White Jr. have nominated some alternative "seeds", such as the approach to other species of St. Francis of Assisi. In effect what Black is saying is that some "seeds" have longer germination periods or lie dormant waiting the proper conditions. Alternative concepts from another culture that can be grafted onto a germinating or dormant "seed" are compatible with Western cultural milieus.

Second, Black's rider about new inventions, new metaphors, and new concepts acknowledges (and correctly so) that new ideas can be introduced into a culture and become part of that culture. Exotic "seeds" once implanted take time to become established and grow, but they can be introduced. Some ideas grow rapidly. In 1945, computers were still in transition from science fiction to science. In 1985, personal computers are an established part of industrial societies. Other ideas that have more fundamentally challenged intellectual and social norms take longer to mature, e.g. a heliocentric universe, a round earth, universal franchise, abolition of slavery, and evolution.

Martin acknowledges that new concepts can be introduced into a culture, but holds that once introduced these ideas become subsumed into the culture and do not supersede the existing ideas (Martin 1978, 188). This denies the possibility of paradigm shifts. A paradigm shift is the replacement or subordination of a concept or metaphor - to use Black's terms - with another concept or metaphor. At one level, a paradigm shift is *inter alia* the intellectual context within which puzzles are solved, boundaries and constraints are set, and a general consensus unifying attitudes or approaches and background information on any given body of subject matter.[2] Examples of previous shifts are the shift from a geocentric to a heliocentric picture of our solar system and a shift from a creation theory to an evolution theory.

It seems to be true as David Pepper notes, "Developments within a discipline - paradigm developments, that is - cannot be seen as divorced from the political, social and economic developments in society at large" (Pepper 1984, 145). Martin's objection is that the shift is not merely within a single aspect of the wider political, social and economic concerns, but is a shift in the paradigm on which those wider concerns are based. In this case it would be a shift from the dominant social paradigm to an alternative environmental paradigm based on or inspired by attitudes or approaches of an indigenous people. A new ideology could initially be added to existing ideologies, and eventually could supersede the old order. Evolutionary theory is a case in point. Also the addition of a new ideology (the introduction of an alternative environmental paradigm) alongside the existing ideology might in itself be sufficient to inspire modification of the old order. Calls for a new ethic are not necessarily calls for a new ethic to totally supersede all previously existing standards and precepts.

---

[2] A fuller discussion of paradigms is found in Routley 1982b.

Third, although another culture's attitudes and perspectives are misrepresented or misunderstood, these misrepresentations may be valuable. Assuming that the moral injunctions of another culture cannot be adopted as ours nor their principles accepted as ours, still as stated by Nordenstam in Chapter Five, examining their injunctions and principles can challenge or reinforce our injunctions and principles. Having done so, new principles ('new ethics') can be adopted or existing principles reinforced. In the words of Godfrey-Smith - commenting on Martin's position - "we can gain much of positive value from such cultures ... even though it may be that the insights which we gain are, from their own point of view, in some important respects a misrepresentation of their beliefs" (Godfrey-Smith 1983, 357).

Besides Martin's issue of incompatibility, there is another issue that needs some consideration. If American Indians or Australian Aborigines supply lessons for an environmental movement or provide a model for a 'new ethic', then it is assumed that they incorporate in their lessons and models elements desirable for adoption. That is, if their attitudes are to be used as the model for or inspiration for a new ethic, and if the purpose of adopting a new ethic is to achieve new practices more favourable to non-human animal species, then it would be pointless to adopt an ethic from another culture which reinforces or supports what is thought pernicious in the existing ethic or makes present conditions worse.

Some Aboriginal practices are incongruous with desirable reforms in Western traditions. Observations like the following cast doubt on the desirability of adopting Aboriginal practices and attitudes:

> Tribesmen were unfeeling towards animals, except with their dogs, and still are so. Only recently two instances of this were noted -- five horses, tied up to a rail, all died from thirst and starvation. A yard full of cattle with no food, no water, and so far gone that it was imposible to save them, the nearest water being many miles away. Breaking the legs of kangaroos, so that he would "keep", not being required for consumption at the moment. (Beattie and de Lacy Lowe 1980, 170).

One of the main reasons for formulating an inter-species ethic is to abate practices we consider cruel. A reformation of Western environmental or inter-species attitudes that as a matter of course permit such practices would be unacceptable. The example needs further consideration, however. Neither horses nor cattle are totemic species. Tradition does not dictate modes of conduct with relation to horses or cattle. No common bond is shared between the people and these introduced species. At least in part, attitudes towards and treatment of introduced species, such as horses and cattle, were introduced along with them.

As for their treatment of kangaroos, Aborigines have a concern for species, but not for individual animals. They perform increase ceremonies to preserve kangaroos (or any given species), yet they must hunt kangaroos to preserve themselves. We consider maiming other species repugnant despite such practices as the force-feeding of Strasbourg geese, docking Doberman pinschers' ears and tails, and the Draize test. The question of cruelty is not even raised for Aborigines.

The attitude of concern for the species, but not necessarily the individual animal is the reverse of a general trend in Western thinking. At least in recent times, Western thought has emphasized the individual. The cute and cuddly charms of a Koala escape few, while their habitats can be devastated by wood-chipping or 'developed' with little concern. Or in the opening paragraphs of *Animal Liberation*, Singer describes he and his wife having tea with a woman who proclaims her love for her dog and two cats while eating a ham sandwich. The individually-owned dog is pampered, while a dozen strays are impounded. Both have the same morally relevant characteristics but the domestic dog has a closer tie to humans or a particular human - its owner. The privileged treatment is in keeping with the way relationships are conducted between humans. The closer one individual is to another by dint of familial ties, friendship, geography or other such bonds or associations, the more likely that individual is to receive moral consideration. Conversely, the further one individual is from another by such bonds or associations, the less likely that individual is to receive moral consideration. Propinquity as one factor determining moral consideration may be called moral distance.

Moral distance is found in Aboriginal thinking. In some cases moral distance is related to physical distance. For example, a member of a species near its increase site is protected, while one farther away is not. Aboriginal traditions provide examples of concern for the species as a whole and of the mutual dependence of humans upon other species and other species upon humans.

An Indian or Aboriginal approach to the environment must not only be capable of adoption, but capable of achieving desirable results, goals, and standards, sought by Westerners. This would require that 'ecophilosophers' or more broadly people of Western cultures: 1) select desirable directions to go; and, 2) have some appreciation of what an Indian or Aboriginal approach offers, even if their understanding of what is offered is faulty. Then they must be willing to reconcile their traditions with the traditions of their chosen model or, if need be, abandon their orientation for that of the chosen model. Unless they are willing to assimilate another tradition into their own or to abandon their own in favour of another, then Indians or Aborigines or any other tradition although alluring, remains unacceptable as a model.

The Aboriginal example does not seem to offer much inspiration for the treatment of individuals of other species. On a broader scope, however, if the Aboriginal example is taken as an illustration that humans can live in conformity with ecological principles and can modify their habitat without devastating it, then the Aboriginal example can help solve some current questions. If their example is taken as inspiration rather than as doctrine, then it can be of greater use.

Many degrees of receptivity lie between total rejection and total acceptance of Aboriginal worldviews. At one extreme, non-Aboriginal Australians can reject the example and inspiration provided by Aborigines and place ecological problems in the too-hard basket until it is time to shift them to the too-late basket. At the other extreme, they could adopt or try to adopt an Aboriginal sense of place and identify with other species. Many possibilities fall between these two extremes.

So far the question of obtaining better treatment for non-human animal species has been approached as if the answer lay only in or predominately in changing ethical systems. But the question asks what appeals are needed. Appeals for better treatment extend beyond the realm of solely ethical concerns. As Passmore says, "new modes of behaviour are much more important than new moral principles" (Passmore 1980, ix). If we now took this to mean that new moral or ethical principles and precepts will follow or coincide with changes in modes of behaviour towards non-human animals, then a more comprehensive picture of needed changes is given.[3] Certainly some beneficial changes in overall practices and attitudes can be affected by simply changing ethical practices and theories. But a wider range of considerations is involved in improving attitudes towards and bettering treatment of non-human animal species than simply changing ethical attitudes. Changes are needed in a range of related attitudes. This is not to say that at least some answers are to be found in a transvaluation of ethical theory and practice, but rather it is to say that to secure a change in ethical attitudes and to promote better treatment for non-human animal species requires a wider range of changes than changes solely within the realm of ethical theory and practice.

Appeals have been made to look more closely at the characteristics of other species; to examine the nature of and perspectives on currently accepted ethical doctrines, practices and theories as they relate to non-human animal species; and to two proposals for changing current practices and theories in radical ways. From these appeals arise a

---

[3]In the context, Passmore means that new moral principles are not needed.

number of further appeals or arguments for reconsidering current practices and theories on treatment of non-human animal species.

An appeal to examine more closely the characteristics of other species is made on the grounds that if eligibility for moral or ethical consideration depends on the possession of morally relevant characteristics, then it should not be assumed that non-human species lack these characteristics simply because they are non-human. If a creature possesses morally relevant characteristics, then the species to which it belongs should not be a barrier to recognizing moral or ethical considerations for it. Furthermore, a closer examination of other species should dispell misconceptions about them. Midgley has made the point that philosophers' dismissals of other species are often founded on misconceptions about animals, "Actual wolves...are not much like the folk-figure of the wolf, and the same goes for apes and other creatures. But *it is the folk-figure that has been popular with philosophers*" (Midgley 1976, 96). If it is accepted that changes in treatment of non-human animal species require changes in a broader range of behaviours than only ethical principles and precepts, then an examination of characteristics of non-human animal species takes on added significance. Morally relevant characteristics remain important, but better treatment for and preservation of species can be initiated with instrumental arguments.

Instrumental and Prudential Arguments

Instrumental arguments are useful. They offer an excellent starting point for countering human indifference or buffering some of the harsher detrimental effects of human activities. Instrumental arguments are initial appeals; not final resorts. They are neither ultimate nor exhaustive among appeals for non-human animal species, rather they are superficial yet potentially effective. How humans treat non-human animal species will depend in part on how non-human species are viewed in relation to the humans. That is, how humans treat another species, say wombats, depends on how humans perceive each species in relation to the other. Instrumental arguments are superficial because they consider the relationship to humans from the single perspective of the other species fitness to supply the needs of humans. They disregard the morally relevant characteristics of the other species in favour of practical utility. Therefore, although they may be effective arguments, because they trade solely on human self-interest, they are anthropocentric.

Although Aborigines have no counterparts for most instrumental arguments, Aboriginal practices lend support to the prudence of instrumental arguments. If Newsome's analysis of the eco-mythological connection is correct, the Aranda example demonstrates that the Aboriginal worldview has a conservation effect. This conservation effect is instrumental.

Instrumentally-based considerations work as long as the needs upon which instrumental considerations are based do not change. In general, Aboriginal worldviews demonstrate the wisdom of taking into account needs of other species, if those species are desired for human use. On the Aboriginal example, other species are provided with appropriate opportunities to breed during the most favourable seasons and in the most favourable habitats for each species plus relief from human predation. Other species can thrive despite humans use of them. More specifically, the "philosophy of inaction", the Aboriginal reluctance to modify their environment (endanger other species), without knowledge of the ramifications of the modification, supports the 'Rare Herb' argument and their land-based religious system supports the 'Cathedral' argument.

However as pleas for prudent behaviour on the part of humans, instrumental arguments alone do not fundamentally change attitudes towards other species. Taking into account the needs of other species says nothing of the conditions under which these needs are met. Factory farmers take into account food, water, and shelter of their livestock, but simply taking into account these needs is not enough. How they are met must also be taken into consideration. Acknowledging that chickens are hierarchical by debeaking them or putting 'chicken specs' (blinders) on them certainly resolves the basic problems in their need to establish a 'pecking order'. These solutions do not acknowledge the chickens' own solutions to living in a 'pecking order'. By the Aboriginal example the interests of other species are promoted on the other species' own terms. Instrumental arguments take account only of the functional aspects of other species. They let things be what they are and show their other aspects. Instrumental arguments primarily take account of human needs and promote solutions which solve problems for fulfilling human needs. To solve these problems in other ways, ways which take account both of human needs and the needs of other species involved, may call for fundamental changes in attitudes. Whether or not a fundamental change in attitude is needed is one of the greatest points of contention in ecophilosophy.

One source of this contention involves the methods needed to solve environmental problems. Those willing to take what may appear to be drastic measures, to explore new metaphysical, ethical, economic, and other orientations towards the environment reflect a concern that the problems are too serious to be dealt with piecemeal and that a contributing source of these problems arises from attitudes of hostility or, at best, indifference to the environment embedded in the dominant paradigm. Those willing to seek answers within the dominant paradigm, while nonetheless concerned with the seriousness of environmental problems, hold that the problems can be solved by reforming only those attitudes which directly contribute to environmental degradation. The more

extensive the need for reformation of environmental attitudes is seen to be, the greater a part Aboriginal traditions can play in that reformation. The more radical the need for change is seen to be the more an Aboriginal example can be called upon to provide inspiration for modes of change. Without a willingness to change and, if necessary, a willingness to abandon some traditions in favour of other ways of thinking or doing, inspiration drawn from an Aboriginal example or for that matter from any other example will not help. Reformists need not look to other cultures for advice and examples, but if they do, then an indigenous people with a respect for the environment can provide a source of inspiration for reformation.

Extension Arguments

Aborigines do not have extension arguments. Nor is it easy to see how their traditions or practices might support extension arguments. They hold that there is already a conjunction between individual humans and an animal species where the individual's totem is an animal species. Futhermore, their totemic systems parcel out the environment thus dissolving any need to extend the human order to the environmental order. As already quoted, "The effect of the totemic complex as a whole is to parcel out, on a kind of distributive plan, all the non-human entities made or recognized by the ancestors, and given relevance one to another, that is, set up in a moral order" (Stanner 1960, 252). A division between human and nature does not exist. Aborigines did not see themselves apart from nature, they had no word or concept for nature (Stanner 1960, 111). Here two of Martin's observations about Amerindians ring true of Australian Aborigines, "Indian society and culture did not function outside of and separate from the natural world ... Nature *was* culture and society" (Martin 1981a, 146-7) and "The Indian was a participant-observer of Nature, whereas we in the Western cultural tradition tend to be voyeurs" (Martin 1981b, 154). There was no need for extension because humans and non-humans were included within Aboriginal 'philosophy' in The Dreaming. Further, "whereas we hold (and may live) a philosophy of abstract propositions, attained by someone standing professionally outside 'life' and treating it as an object of contemplation and inquiry, the [Aborigine] ... proceeds to live it [his philosophy] out 'in' life" (Stanner 1979, 29-30).

While extension appeals are powerful arguments, they have two faults. One, they make or retain human characteristics as the criteria for moral consideration. In doing this, they patronize other species for their incompleteness. Other species are required to measure up to the human example. Though any similarities between a particular non-human species and humans are emphasized, characteristic differences which make that species what it is are ignored and the other species are treated as lesser or marginal humans. Two,

extension appeals extend the vices of current ethical systems in addition to the virtues. Like instrumental arguments, extension arguments should be regarded as stations along the way and not the final destination.

Aborigines have no counterparts for extension arguments, nor do they have any need for them. The concept would be foreign to their approach. Their stance on the kinship between humans and non-humans does not admit of the separation between humans and non-humans necessary for formulating extension arguments. In a sense the Aboriginal relationship with non-human animal species is post-extension.

Rights

Opinion on critical assessment of 'animal rights' may be roughly divided into three groups according to the role conceived for rights in moral discourse. There are those who hold that non-human animals have or can have rights; those who hold that it is meaningless to extend rights beyond humans or persons; and those who (and my own conclusion falls into this group) hold that non-human animals perhaps have rights, but appeals to 'animal rights' have thus far been counterproductive.

Problems about rights seem to be of two kinds. Those arising from disagreements about what constitutes a right-bearer and those arising from disagreements about what constitutes or is perceived to constitute a given right. Although, as Midgley observes, these disagreements are rhetorical, "These arguments are usually verbal rather than moral, and they are hardly ever meant as direct treatments of the animal issue. They are normally outlying parts of discussions about the exact meaning of *rights*, *justice*, *duty* and rest" (Midgley 1983, 47).

Within the present context, an appeal to rights or any other ethical precept was initiated as part of a practical ethic. A practical ethic that is meant to secure better treatment and/or a favourable shift in attitude towards non-human animal species. As long as this appeal is blocked by rhetoric it is ineffectual, although such an appeal may be fruitful eventually. Action dwindles to rhetoric.

This rhetorical problem may be limited to philosophical circles. Naess suggests that for many outside those circles, 'animal rights' create no problems. "The confusion about the term 'rights' in philosophical and legal academic milieus does not constitute a decisive counterargument. At least in some countries the talk of rights of animals does not confuse people and is endorsed by the majority" (Naess 1985, 13). His point is illustrated by Animal Liberation.

Following the philosophies expressed and implied in Singer's *Animal Liberation*, the Animal Liberation Movement has drawn a wide following in Australia who hold that humans should not cause non-human animals unnecessary suffering and should extend ethical precepts to sentient non-humans. Animal Liberation opposes practices such as factory farming, needless repetitive laboratory tests involving animals, and some uses of animals for entertainment that can be cruel, e.g. rodeos and some circus acts. They accept 'animal rights', which cause no problems for them.

To establish that non-human animals have rights would mean that moral agents, i.e., humans, have 'duties to', not just 'duties regarding' non-humans. To establish that non-human animals have rights would justify the use of coercion to protect their interests, well-being, or intrinsic value. To establish that non-humans animals have rights would provide a strong case for thwarting cruel, painful, or otherwise undesirable treatment of non-human animals. That is to say, while not contending that rights provide immunity or endow the right-bearer with power, rights-talk is rhetorically effective in daunting opponents. Thus if rights give practical results practically, well and good. Rights-talk is only one way of attempting to improve attitudes towards and treatment of non-human animals. Rights-talk may be *a* way of solving some of the problems, but it is not the only way, nor necessarily the best way. It is the most contentious way. Like instrumental and extension arguments, they should not be relied upon to support the full burden of change. At least some non-human animals may be recognized to have moral rights, but seeking moral recognition for *all* non-human animal species under the aegis of rights may be futile. Futhermore, to use a rights framework places moral recognition for non-human animal species within the constraints of the current anthropocentric moral system(s). This in effect perpetuates the emphasis on species having rights because they have characteristics humans have and not because they and humans share morally relevant characteristics. If, however, instrumental arguments, prudential arguments, extension arguments and rights, as a subspecies of extension arguments, are taken to be deficient in that they treat the symptoms and not the causes, then to treat the causes, something 'deeper' is required. To treat the causes may require a paradigm shift. A modification in current practice or a refurbishing of current values may cosmetically treat problems, but the problems still remain.

A Prolegomenon

What follows is speculation on how an Aboriginal example could contribute to a 'deeper' change in attitudes towards the environment and other species. It is one course of environmental reform to solve problems that are seen as founded in the dominant paradigm. As Devall and Sessions suggest, taking this course may not need "something

new, but need to reawaken something very old" (Devall and Sessions 1985, ix). In awaking Aboriginal traditions a romantic vision is not sought, but a practical basis for environmental philosophies and practices for Western societies. The call for a new ethic is a call for an applied ethic. Strehlow has said:

> all religions seek to instruct the faithful how they should conduct themselves in order to live in harmony with the purposive universe into which they have been born. In brief, a living religion is something practical, something that is concerned with everyday life. (Strehlow 1970, 131)

It does not have to be a religion of the environment, but it does have to be livable, applicable, and meaningful. Paul Shepard says an environmental ethic needs "a content, passionately believed in, that relates man to nature, centering all human experience" (Shepard 1973, 228). To trade one dead vision for another, no matter how romantic the latter may be, is a stupid and futile gesture.

Some Australian philosophers, such as Passmore - although Passmore has modified his position (Passmore 1983, 16) - and to some extent McCloskey have argued that there is no need to look beyond instrumental arguments to develop an environmental ethic. Other Australian ecophilosophers, namely Plumwood and Sylvan, find this instrumental approach insufficient. Ecophilosophies based on such arguments are the ecophilosophical equivalent of a Mobius Strip - they look complex but they are all one-sided.[4] Plumwood and Sylvan critize the limiting of philosophical argument concerning the environment to instrumental arguments as human chauvinistic. They argue that unless humans radically revise their attitudes towards the environment and other species, then the same attitudes which have spawned the current ecological crisis will be propagated.

Such limited (or shallow) argumentation produces a 'flat-earth' ecophilosophy. With instrumental arguments and similar arguments the well-being or continued existence of other species depends on the largess or good graces of human beings. And it is a lack of largess that has created the problem.

One way of attempting to rectify the lack of largess is to change human attitudes about the centrality of human interests by adopting a non-anthropocentric attitude. Aboriginal traditions are geocentric. Their traditions make their environment a vital and personal concern. Their traditions offer harmony and co-operation with nature (rather than

---

[4] A Mobius strip is a surface with only one side and edge formed by joing ends of rectangle after twisting one end through 180 degrees. In other words it is a three-dimensional one-sided figure.

domination over it), closer affiliation of humans and non-humans, and lower impact on the environment. Their traditions unite them with other species. But their regard for other species is indirect by way of their regard for ancestral beings. Other species are kin and utilities.

There are many ways of formulating a non-anthropocentric attitude to overcome the derisive effects of the us/them distinction. Ethologists and geneticists have observed that the behavioural and genetic distinctions between humans and at least some non-human animal species are not as great as once thought. Noting behavioural and genetic similarities helps to break down the species barrier of ethical exclusiveness and to emphasize the unjustifiability of ignoring the morally relevant similarities between humans and non-humans.[5] Singer notes the arbitrariness of this "speciesist" discrimination and advocates extending equal consideration to the interests of sentient beings. Plumwood and Sylvan dispense with comparing and contrasting other species to humans to determine their eligibility for moral consideration, instead they propose a set of nested, morally relevant boundary classes. Deep Ecology proposes the egalitarian treatment of all species and other items in the ecosphere, emphasizing the significance of the interconnections among them and advocates a shift in perspectives on the interconnections from an atomistic to a holistic view of the human condition and situation in the world. Although their traditions are geocentric, Aboriginal traditions offer a relationship that could help overcome anthropocentrism. Aborigines identify with non-humans. Aborigines claim common ancestory between each human individual and some specific non-human item.

In one way or another each of the above suggests a unity between humans and non-humans. Thus one conceptual string to pull is an acceptance of the ecological unity (and perhaps behavioural and genetic unity) of humans and non-humans. If a human/non-human unity is accepted, then the possibility of non-human animal species being eligible for membership in the Moral Club can be accepted.

The unity between humans and non-humans is an area in which an Aboriginal example can help. In Chapter One, an examination of the characteristics of non-human animal species revealed that in addition to a continuum of physical characteristics, such as

---

[5]These similarities have led some ethologists and geneticists to speculate on the relevance of their disciplines to ethics. *See* Lorenz 1962, chapter 12; Wilson 1975, chapters 1 and 27; Dawkins 1976, chapters 8 and 11; and Midgley's comments and criticisms on these speculations 1979a, chapters 3 and 6, and 1979b, 439-58.

sensory apparatus, along which humans and non-humans fall; there is also a continum of morally relevant characteristics, such as rationality. The implication of this is that humans have a specific blend of characteristic endowments, but they do not have exclusive possession of any (except possibly a human soul). Furthermore, this means that there is a form of unity between humans and other species. Australian Aborigines recognize this unity as a common ancestry with another species. Despite the general acceptance of evolutionary theory, ethical ramifications of common ancestry have been unacceptable in Western traditions. Midgley comments that it is still "hard for many people who offically believe in evolution to accept its consequences, to see the kinship between man and other species that becomes so obvious once we start to observe both dispassionately" (Midgley 1979, 198). A major difference between a Western recognition of kinship based on evolution and the Aboriginal recognition of kinship is that the evolutionary system would favour those species evolutionarily closer to humans as closer kin, while the Aboriginal system is without preference. Aboriginal conceptions of kinship are seen as mysticism and unacceptable to Western traditions.

To acknowledge kinship is to acknowledge similarity to another and to share some form of alliance with another. Nonetheless, as Aboriginal examples demonstrate, once kinship is accepted nothing follows concerning treatment accorded. In general kinship is a mark of affiliation and usually results in preferred or favourable treatment, but in the case of the Wik one's kin may be eaten. Kinship is grounds for moral consideration, but does not determine moral significance. Kinship does not automatically guarantee ethical significance or better treatment, yet it does favour better treatment and mitigates abuse or disregard. Although the possibility of reifying your kin exists, it is not a normal practice. Recognition of non-human animal species as akin to humans could curtail reification of them and advance the requirement that a good reason be given for maltreating a non-human animal species, because of the contingent expectation that kin are not maltreated as a matter of course.

In addition to the recognition of kinship between humans and non-human animal species being an argument for according non-human animal species ethical significance, it could lead to a modified "Posterity Argument" in which the posterity of all species is taken into account. Instead of preserving species for the enjoyment, use, education or other purposes solely of humans, all species are preserved for all species. This is no more than to acknowledge that each species is a component of its ecosystem and contributes to the continuation of the other components of that ecosystem. This being so, if kinship is acknowledged then the application of instrumental arguments may be broadened so that there is no single privileged class which these arguments serve, but an instrumental

argument for the biosphere in favour of the biosphere. That is, the usefulness of the biosphere is argued from the point-of-view of the biosphere. Or to acknowledge, as Aborigines have, that the land (in Leopold's inclusive sense) belongs to all within it regardless of species.

Kinship does not dissolve the differences between humans and non-human animal species; yet it can affect how other species are conceptualized. Kinship is not the point. Kinship is one method of breaking down the species barrier between humans and non-humans, or between us and them. The point is to find methods of recognizing ethical considerations for and ethical significance of other species. Kinship is an almost untried method in Western thought. Ideological bases are present in Western traditions. There is the theory of evolution and there is the minority Christian tradition of St. Francis of Assissi. There are morally relevant similarities and differences between humans and non-humans. Until recently, Western thinking has concentrated on differences. Aborigines have emphasized similarities. Kinship is one channel for emphasizing similarities without disregarding differences.

Instrumental arguments and extension arguments are founded on a metaphysical bifurcation of the world into realms of human and non-human. These arguments are intended to show the lack of wisdom, or the lack of prudence, or an inconsistency in the human realm mistreating the other realm. But with a different metaphysical assumption other appeals can be made. If it is assumed that humans and non-humans are all part of a 'seamless web' of existence, then "our traditional bifurcations of reality into the 'human' and the 'natural' ... must collapse" (Fox 1984, 179). Martin has stated poignantly of Amerindians' relationships to the web of life, "It is as though the North American Indian stepped into that diagram in the general ecology text book showing the web of life. We understand the diagram theoretically and abstractly - ecologically, scientifically - but we do not really experience it as culture and society" (Martin 1981, 146-7). 'Australian Aborigine' could be substituted for 'North American Indian' and nothing would be lost. Also a basic difference between Aboriginal and non-Aborginal view of the world would be illuminated. "An Australian native consequently had an affection for, and a feeling of oneness with, Nature that few of the present-day generation of white Australians can even comprehend, let alone feel in their own hearts" (Strehlow 1950, 17). To accept, as Aborigines have accepted, a 'seamless web' of existence is a decision tantamount to the adopting of a new way of life. A new way of life with a new worldview like that described by physicist Fritjof Capra:

> the universe is seen as a dynamic web of interrelated events. None of the properties of any part of this web is fundamental; they all follow from the

> properties of the other parts, and the overall consistency of their mutual interrelations determines the structure of the entire web (Capra 1975, 302).

A valuable lesson that can be learned from Aborigines is respect for the environment. Aboriginal traditions can help Western societies realize a role in the environment compatible with ecological principles, or as Leopold said, compatible with the continuing "integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community". Accompanying the idea of 'seamless web' is another point - how humans treat other species involves not just individuals of the species or the species as a whole, but the environment as a whole, or more specifically or more geographically immediate, a bioregion. While no single property or any part is fundamental to the whole - the part cannot exist without the whole. Human beings are like any other species in this regard - they are part of the whole. As part of the whole, they are interrelated with the other parts. An appeal can be made for the maintenance of the other parts in order to maintain humans. In the final analysis, those arguments that appeal to human preservation are the arguments that will change human attitudes and practices. Without undue cynicism it is almost too obvious to remark that if Western societies could continue to manipulate the world without any serious environmental repercussions to themselves, they would. Yet appeals to human preservation are not limited to arguments appealing to the selfish interests of humans, nor do they exclude arguments recognizing the intrinsic value of other species and the environment. Indeed, the opposite is true. If it is accepted that the part cannot exist without the whole, then preserving the whole is in the interest of each part. Insofar as humans are a part of the whole it is in their best interests to preserve, protect or nurture the whole. If humans recognize that they are part of the environmental/ecological whole and not separable from the whole nor outside the whole, then the other parts can be seen as valuable for maintaining the whole and thus maintaining human interests.

"'Species-by-species' protection has long been recognized by conservationists as an insufficient approach" (Holden 1974, 646). This applies equally well to humans as to any other species. If human preservation is subordinated to environmental preservation on the grounds that human preservation is not possible without environmental preservation, then human preservation becomes instrumental to environmental preservation. This is what Aborigines practiced. This is stepping into the web of life as a participant rather than standing outside it as a voyeur.

This argument can be taken a step further. To preserve as many species as possible, a new ethic could go beyond an anthropocentric evaluation of diversity, emphasizing human requirement, and include "an 'ethic of biotic diversity', in which such diversity is

perceived as having value in itself" besides any value diversity has for "the survival and fitness of the human race" (Holden 1974, 646). An 'ethic of biotic diversity' would recognize that biotic diversity is one important factor in developing new norms and values concerning the environment and would re-evaluate the interrelationships between humans and other species. It would recognize and respect intrinsic value as well as instrumental values of non-human species and biotic systems but, more importantly, the value of human beings and human activities would not automatically be assumed superior to the value of other species and biotic systems.

One inspiration that can be derived from Australian Aboriginal ideology and practice and applied to Western situations is the lesson of their lifestyle. Aborigines lived a simple lifestyle, but with rich and complex relationships with the environment and with each other. This lifestyle can be summarized in the Deep Ecology slogan, "Simple in means, rich in ends". The complexity of relationships was fixed by The Dreamtime; the complexity of Western relationships could be set by ecological principles. Aborigines related to their environment according to the fixed attitudes and modes of behaviour set down by their ancestral beings. Western traditions are not bound by tradition in this way. Western traditions have on the one hand the flexibility to change current attitudes and behaviours detrimental to the environment, but, on the other hand, Western traditions in a sense lack flexibility as well. The Western emphasis on function and utility obscures recognition of the morally relevant similarities between humans and non-humans, or for that matter other similarities as well.[6] The us/them distinction has become a humans/resources distinction. Except other species are not merely resources nor solely means. Aborigines have a commitment to other species beyond the functional aspects and values of those species. This is the point Plumwood and Sylvan make about the false choice between disrespectful use and respectful non-use: other species have instrinsic as well as instrumental value. Western societies have contracted the scope of value and limited it to the realm of humans. They have developed a dogmatic picture with humans on one side and on the other side the rest is 'dead matter' for the use of the valuable part. Aboriginal traditions are not so impoverished and maintain value in the rest of the world. Calls for a new environmental ethic are calls to change in ways favourable to the environment and to fix bounds on attitudes and behaviour.

---

[6]The example of Anthony A. Wright of the University of Texas reporting on memory of first and last items in pigeons (*Columba livia*), monkeys (*Macaca mulatta*) and humans reinforces this point about emphasising difference. Wright is reported to have said, "The surprising thing is the large number of of similarities between human and animal memory rather than the differences" (Anon. 1985, 12). Wright *et al.*'s findings are published in *Science*, July 19, 1985, 287-9.

The modes of simplicity would vary greatly between a traditional Aboriginal lifestyle and a contemporary Western lifestyle. Then again differences between present dominant Western lifestyles and lifestyles of voluntary simplicity would vary greatly as well. The major shift would be from enrichment of life by materialistic means to enrichment by less tangible means. For Aborigines these less tangible means include a ritual relationship with their environment and complex kinship ties.

Aborigines participated ritually in their environment and in the maintenance of other species. Western societies have dispensed with ritual involvement with the environment as superstitious and unscientific, but this does not prevent Western-oriented humans from becoming personally and intimately involved with their environment and with other species. Afterall, the gist of Aborigines' ritual participation in their environment and with other species is that they have a personal commitment to the well-being of their landscape which for them has meaning beyond utility. While they do not attribute to other species anything approaching what may be called inherent value, they do recognize that other species have their own interests and that other species are entitled to pursue those interests.

While ritual participation may not be the form Western commitment to the environment and other species would or could take, the lesson to be learned is that of intimate involvement rather than an affected air of superiority and detachment. Aborigines respond to the nature of things and go along with the nature of things. They do not attempt to control things beyond the ordinary. With a few exceptions, the forms voluntary simplicity would take are beyond the scope of the present considerations. A greater appreciation of and enjoyment of other species and a recognition of their interests would be one such exception.

Related to voluntary simplicity is another area in which the Aboriginal example can provide inspiration - population control and limitation. Aboriginal populations did not exceed the carrying capacity of their land. While the number of people making demands on a bioregion is not the only factor to take into consideration in lowering human impact on a bioregion, a lowering of the number of high impact users of a bioregion should lower human impact on other species. If there are fewer humans and they practice voluntary simplicity, a combination of ingredients that typifies Aboriginal relationships with the environment, then impact on other species should be lowered. The number of individuals of other species utilized by humans and the number of species endangered by humans overfilling and overflowing their niche is reduced.

Land gives Aborigines their identity. They are at home. In the terms of Deep Ecology, seeing their landscape as being saturated with significance, Aborigines dwelt "in situations of inherent value" (Devall and Sessions 1985, 70). Although non-Aboriginal Australians are the inheritors of the country through an Argumentum Ad Baculum, they cannot adopt Aboriginal ancestors, and therefore, they cannot adopt an Aboriginal sense of identity. Unless they could imitate General Stanley in *The Pirates of Penzance* when he says, "in this chapel are ancestors: you cannot deny that. With the estate, I bought the chapel and its contents. I don't know whose ancestors they *were*, but I know whose ancestors they *are*" (Gilbert 1932, 81). Nevertheless, non-Aboriginal Australians can develop a sense of unity with the land and other species. Both the Plumwood and Sylvan environmental ethic (deep green theory) and Deep Ecology view this as an important step in developing better treatment of other species. Aboriginal totemic systems connect individuals or totemic groups with species and connect these species with features of the landscape. The sharp distinction between us and them is collapsed. The environment is given consideration and significance. The argument does not deny human beings the prerogative of habitat modification. To deny them that would be to deny them an entitlement exercised and enjoyed by other creatures, which would be contrary to the integrity and stability of the biotic community. The argument is rather that human beings - in the Western traditions at least - have to reconceptualize their relationship with nature to develop an ecological consciousness, i.e., a heightened sensitivity to what preserves the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community - modification without devastation. It is permissible to introduce new technologies. Stability in nature is not rigidity, but a dynamic equilibrium in which opposing forces such as predator and prey populations continually redress imbalances. The trick is to work in accord with these principles rather than attempt to reset, redefine, or remove them.

Aborigines have a generalized attitude towards the environment that can be specifically applied. This attitude can be likened to the maxim of "Think globally, act locally". Aborigines practiced a form of bioregionalism. The specific applications can be seen in the differences in attitude towards eating one's own totem. Assuming that the number of individuals of a species would be fewer per unit of geographical area (e.g., fewer kangaroos per square kilometer) in Aranda territory than in Wik territory, one can speculate that the Aranda prohibition against eating one's own totemic species reduced predation on that species. Having a greater number of individuals of a species, the Wik had less occasion to institute such a prohibition, although they did have other food taboos. Whether or not this difference in their practices arose partly or solely or at all out of ecological considerations is unknown, but the difference could well reflect differences in bioregions.

The Aranda and Wik recognize that other species require and share the resources of the land and that continued well-being depends directly on the continued well-being of other species, not only this but on the continued well-being of the land and their ritual participation in and maintenance of the land.

The basic point to be made about using an Aboriginal example is this: traditional Australian Aboriginal practices and attitudes cannot contribute so much to the specific content of changes as provide inspiration for general changes in context for Western societies. Ways in which the context of Western practices and attitudes can be changed include but are not limited to acknowledging that there is a kinship between humans and other species, or put more broadly, that the distinctions between humans and other species (us/them) are less sharp than it is usually made out to be; that a life simple in means can be rich in ends and that such a life can lower human impact on other species; that Western societies should be encouraged to 'dwell in situations of inherent value'; that the relationships between humans and other species is not solely a matter of the other species functional utility to humans; that Western societies can better live in accord with their environment by accepting ecological principles and living according to the character of their particular bioregion; and that voluntary reduction and control of the human population would be a factor in the lowering of human impact on the environment and other species.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abrahamson, David. 1983. "Do Animals Think?" *National Wildlife*, 21: 6-13.

----- 1985. "Creatures of Invention" *National Wildlife*, 25: 25-28.

Adams, E. Jean. 1970. Changes in Wikmunkan Kinship Structure. Clayton, Vic.: Monash University. BA(Hons).

Anon. 1983. "A New Undertaking for Honeybees". *Science 83*, 4: 8.

Anon. 1984. "Apes Outpace Man In Some Physical Traits". *National Wildlife*, 22: 31.

Anon. 1985. "First and Last in Memory". *Science 85*, 6: 12.

Aristotle. *Politics*. W.D. Ross, trans. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921.

Attenborough, David. 1984. *Living Planet*. Sydney: Collins.

Attfield, Robin. 1983. *The Ethics of Environmental Concern.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Beattie, W.A. and **M. de Lacy Lowe.** 1980. *Australia's North-West Challenge.* Melbourne: Kimberley Publishing.

Benn, S.I. 1975. "Personal Freedom and Environmental Ethics: The Moral Inequity of Species". Presented to the World Congress on Philosophy of Law and Social Philosophy, St. Louis, Mo., August, 1975. 34 pp.

Bennett, Andrew and **Jon Nevill.** 1983. "The Impact of Agriculture on Victoria's Wildlife". *Environment Victoria*, 48: 10-11.

Bennett, David H. 1984. "The *Is/Ought* Dichotomy and Environmental Ethics." Presented at Australasian Association of Philosophy Conference, Canberra, 26-31 August 1984. 18 pp.

Bennett, Jonathan. 1964. *Rationality: an essay towards an analysis.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Bentham, Jeremy. 1823. *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, J.H. Burns and H.L.A. Hart, eds. London: Athlone Press, 1970.

Berndt, Ronald Murray. 1970. "Traditional Morality as Expresssed Through the Medium of an Australian Aboriginal Religion". *Australian Aboriginal Anthropology: modern studies in the social anthropology of the Australian Aborigines*. R.M. Berndt, ed. Nedlands, WA: University of Western Australia Press for the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 216-47.

----- 1974. *Australian Aboriginal Religion*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.

----- 1979. "A Profile of Good and Bad in Australian Aboriginal Religion". *Australian and New Zealand Theological Review*, 12: 17-32.

----- and **C.H. Berndt**. 1985. *The World of the First Australians*. 4th ed. Adelaide: Rigby.

Beston, Henry. 1976. *The Outermost House: A year of life on the Great Beach of Cape Cod*. New York: Penguin.

Black, John. 1970. *The Dominion of Man: the search for ecological responsibility*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Bodian, Stephen. 1982. "Simple in Means, Rich in Ends: a conversation with Arne Naess". *Ten Directions*, Sum/Fall, 7: 10-12.

Brandt, Richard B. 1954. *Hopi Ethics: a theoretical analysis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Broadie, Alexander and **Elizabeth M. Pybus**. 1974. "Kant's Treatment of Animals". *Philosophy*, 49: 375-83.

Brophy, Brigid. 1971. "In Pursuit of Fantasy". *Animals, Men and Morals: an enquiry into the maltreatment of non-humans*. S. Godlovitch, R. Godlovitch, and J. Harris, eds. London: Victor Gollancz, 125-45.

Burch, Robert W. 1977. "Animals, Rights, and Claims". *Southwestern Journal of Philosophy*, 8: 53-9.

Burghardt, Gordon M. and **Harold A. Herzog, jr.** 1980. "Beyond Conspecifics: is Brer Rabbit our brother?" *BioScience*, 30: 763-8.

Callicott, J. Baird. 1979. "Elements of an Environmental Ethic: moral considerability and the biotic community". *Environmental Ethics*, 1: 71-81.

----- 1982. "Hume's *Is/Ought* Dichotomy and the Relation of Ecology to Leopold's Land Ethic". *Environmental Ethics*, 4: 63-74.

Capra, Fritjof. 1975. *The Tao of Physics.* London: Wildwood House.

Carson, Rachel. 1962. *Silent Spring.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Cebik, L.B. 1981. "Can Animals Have Rights? No and Yes". *Philosophical Forum*, 12: 251-68.

Chase, A.K. 1984. "Belonging to Country: territory, identity and environment in Cape York Peninsula, Northern Queensland". *Aboriginal Landowners: contemporary issues in the determination of traditional Aboriginal land ownership.* L.R. Hiatt, ed. Sydney: University of Sydney, 104-22.

Clark, Stephen R.L. 1977. *The Moral Status of Animals.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Colinvaux, Paul. 1980. *Why Big Fierce Animals Are Rare.* Harmondsworth: Pelican.

Commoner, Barry. 1972. *The Closing Circle.* London: Jonathan Cape.

Cottingham, John. 1978. "A Brute to the Brutes?" *Philosophy*, 53: 551-9.

Dawkins, Richard. 1976. *The Selfish Gene.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Devall, W.B. 1980. "The Deep Ecology Movement". *Natural Resources Journal*, 20: 299-322.

----- and **George Sessions.** 1985. *Deep Ecology.* Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith Books.

Douglas-Hamilton, Iain and **Oria Douglas-Hamilton.** 1975. *Among the Elephants.* London: Collins & Harvill.

Dowdeswell, W.H. 1984. *Ecology: principles and practice.* London: Heinemann Educational Books.

Dworkin, Ronald. 1977. *Taking Rights Seriously.* London: Duckworth.

Ehrenfeld, David W. 1978. *The Arrogance of Humanism.* New York: Oxford.

Ehrlich, Paul R., Ehrlich, Anne H. and **John P. Holdren.** 1977. *Ecoscience: population, resources, environment.* San Francisco: W.H. Freeman.

Eliade, M. 1973. *Australian Religions: an introduction.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Elkin, Adolphus Peter. 1933. "Studies in Australian Totemism: the nature of Australian totemism". *Oceania*, 4: 113-31.

----- 1969. "Elements of Australian Aboriginal Philosophy". *Oceania*, 40: 85-98.

Fox, Warwick. 1984(a). "Deep Ecology: a new philosophy of our time?" *The Ecologist*, 14: 194-204.

----- 1984(b). "Book review article: The Liberation of Life". *The Ecologist*, 14: 178-82.

Frankel, O.H. and **M.E. Soule.** 1981. *Conservation and Evolution.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Freedman, Benjamin. 1981. "The Entity-Restriction of Rights: notes on a fashion in ethics". *Metaphilosophy*, 12: 159-68.

Frey, R.G. 1979. "Rights, Interests, Desires and Beliefs". *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 16: 233-9.

----- 1980. *Interests and Rights: the case against animals.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Friedrich, Heinz. 1972. *Man and Animal.* London: Paladin.

Galarrwuy Yunupingu, James. 1980. "Aboriginal Land Rights". *Counterpointforum*, Wednesday, 29 October 1980, 11-14.

Gilbert, W.S. 1932. *The Best Known Works of W.S. Gilbert.* Cleveland: World Publishing Co.

Gillen, F.J. 1896. "Notes on Some Manners and Customs of the Aborigines of the McDonnell Ranges Belonging to the Arunta Tribe". *Report on the Work of the Horn Scientific Expedition to Central Australia: IV.* B. Spencer, ed. Melbourne: Melville, Mullen and Slade, 162-86.

Glacken, Clarence J. 1967. *Traces on the Rhodian Shore.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Godfrey-Smith, William. 1979. "The Value of Wilderness". *Environmental Ethics*, 1: 309-19.

----- 1980. "The Rights of Non-Humans and Intrinsic Values". *Environmental Philosophy.* D.S. Mannison, M.A. McRobbie, and R. Routley, eds. Canberra: Australian National University, Research School of Social Science, Department of Philosophy, 30-47.

----- 1983. "Book Review [Robert C. Schultz and J. Donald Hughes, eds. *Ecological Consciousness: Essays from the Earthday X Colloquium, University of Denver, April 21-24, 1980.* Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1981]". *Environmental Ethics*, 5: 355-9.

Goodpaster, K.E. and **K.M. Sayre**, eds. 1979. *Ethics and Problems of the 21st Century.* Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

Goswami, Mukunda, Bhutatma dasa, and **Drutakarma dasa**, eds. 1983. *The Higher Taste.* Darlinghurst, NSW: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust.

Gould League of Victoria. 1982. *The Edge of Extinction: Australian wildlife at risk.* Prahran, Vic.: Gould League of Victoria.

Gribbin, John and **Jeremy Cherfas.** 1982. *The Monkey Puzzle: a family tree.* London: Bodley Head.

Griffin, Donald R. 1981. *The Question of Animal Awareness.* Los Altos, Ca.: Kaufmann.

Griffin, Nicholas and **D.H. Bennett.** 1984. "The Ethics of Triage". *Discussion Papers in Environmental Philosophy, 8.* Canberra: Australian National University, Philosophy Departments, 60 pp.

Hardin, Garrett. 1968. "The Tragedy of the Commons". *Science*, 162: 1243-8.

----- and **John Baden**, eds. 1977. *Managing The Commons.* San Francisco: W.H. Freeman.

Haworth, Lawrence. 1978. "Rights, Wrongs, and Animals". *Ethics*, 88: 95-105.

Hiatt, L.R., ed. 1975. *Australian Aboriginal Mythology: essays in honour of W.E.H. Stanner.* Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies.

Holden, C. 1974. "Scientists Talk of the Need for Conservation and an Ethic of Biotic Diversity to Slow Species Extinction". *Science*, 184: 646-7.

Hutcheson, Francis. 1725. *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue.* vol. 1. Bernhard Fabian, ed. Hildesheim: Georg Ohms, 1971.

Jones, Hardy. 1977. "Reply: Concerning the Moral Status of Animals". *Southwestern Journal of Philosophy*, 8: 61-3.

Kant, I. 1785. *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten.* H.J. Paton, trans. London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1947.

Kimber, R.G. 1976. "Beginnings of Farming? Some man-plant-animal relationships in Central Australia". *Mankind*, 10: 142-50.

Klaits, J. and **B. Klaits.** 1974. *Animals and Man in Historical Perspective.* New York: Harper Torchbooks.

Kleinig, John. 1978. "Human Rights, Legal Rights and Social Change". *Human Rights*, E. Kamenka and A. Erh-Soon Tay, eds. London: E. Arnold, 36-47.

----- 1980. "The Value of Life". *Interchange*, 28: 3-20.

----- 1984. "Animal Welfare: a philosophical critique". A paper presented at the ANU Philosophy Society, 4 July 1984, 31 pp.

Koehler, Otto. 1972. "Prototypes of Human Communication Systems in Animals". *Man and Animal.* Heinz Freidrich, ed. London: Paladin, 82-91.

Ladd, John. 1957. *The Structure of a Moral Code: a philosophical analysis of ethical discourse applied to the ethics of the Navaho Indians.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Latz, Peter K. 1982. Bushfires and Bushtucker: Aborigines and plants in Central Australia. Armidale, NSW: University of New England. MA(Hons).

Lawick-Goodall, Jane van. 1971. *In the Shadow of Man.* London: Collins.

Leibniz, Gottfried. 1846. *Discourse on Metaphysics.* Peter G. Lucas and Leslie Glint, trans. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1961. (Translation based on diplomatic text of 1907.)

Leopold, Aldo. 1966. *A Sand County Alamanac.* New York: Oxford. (First published 1949.)

Levi-Strauss, Claude. 1973. *Totemism.* Rodney Needham, trans. Ringwood, Vic.: Penguin.

Lindahl, Lars. 1977. *Position and Change: a study in law and logic.* Boston: D. Reidel.

Lloyd, Genevieve. 1980. "Spinoza's Environmental Ethics". *Inquiry*, 23: 293-311.

Lorenz. Konrad. 1962. *King Solomon's Ring.* New York: Time Incorporated.

MacBeath, A. 1952. *Experiments in Living: a study of the nature and foundation of ethics or morals in the light of recent work in social anthropology.* London: Macmillan.

McCarthy, F.D. 1957. "Habitat, Economy, and Equipment of the Australian Aborigines". *Australian Journal of Science*, 1, 88-97.

McCloskey, H.J. 1965. "Rights". *Philosophical Quarterly*, 15: 115-27.

----- 1975. "The Right to Life". *Mind*, 84: 403-25.

----- 1979. "Moral Rights and Animals". *Inquiry*, 22: 23-54.

----- 1980. "Ecological Values, the State, and the Individual's Right to Liberty". *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 61: 212-32.

----- 1983. *Ecological Ethics and Politics.* Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield.

McConnel, Ursula. 1930. "The Wik-Mungkan Tribe of Cape York Peninsula". *Oceania*, 1: 97-104; 181-205.

----- 1931. "Symbolism as a Mental Process". *Psyche*, 12: 37-51.

----- 1937. "The Mourning Ritual Among the Tribes of Cape York Peninsula". *Oceania*, 7: 346-71.

----- 1939-40. "Social Organization of the Tribes of Cape York Peninsula, North Queensland". *Oceania*, 10: 54-72; 434-55.

----- 1957. *Myths of the Mungkan.* Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

MacIntyre, A.C. 1966. "Hume on 'Is' and 'Ought'. *Hume.* V.C. Chappell, ed. New York: Anchor Books, 240-64.

MacKnight, David. 1973. "Sexual Symbolism of Food Among the Wik-Mungkan". *Man*, n.s. 8: 194-209.

Margalef, Ramon. 1968. *Perspectives in Ecological Theory.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Martin, Calvin. 1978. *Keepers of the Game.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

----- 1981. "The American Indian As Miscast Ecologist". *Ecological Consciousness: Essays from the Earthday X Colloquium, University of Denver, April 21-4, 1980.* Robert C. Schultz and J. Donald Hughes, eds. Washington: University Press of America, 137-48.

Meggit, M.J. 1962. *Desert People: a study of the Walbiri Aborigines of Central Australia.* Sydney: Angus and Robertson.

Midgley, Mary. 1976. "The Concept of Beastliness". *Animal Rights and Human Obligations.* Tom Regan and Peter Singer, eds. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 93-106.

----- 1979(a). *Beast and Man.* London: Methuen.

----- 1979(b). "Gene-juggling". *Philosophy*, 54: 439-58.

----- 1983. *Animals and Why They Matter.* Ringwood, Vic.: Penguin.

Miller, G. Tyler. 1979. *Listening to the Environment.* 2nd. ed. Belmont, Ca.: Wadsworth Publishing.

Mowat, Farley. 1979. *Never Cry Wolf.* London: Pan.

Myers, Norman. 1979. *The Sinking Ark.* Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Naess, Arne. 1973. "The Shallow and The Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement: a summary". *Inquiry*, 16: 95-100.

----- 1984. What is Basic in Deep Ecology. Canberra: unpublished. 5 pp.

----- 1985. Notes on Professor Sylvan's *Critique of the Deep Ecology Movement.* Oslo: unpublished. 19 pp.

----- and **George Sessions.** 1984. "Basic Principles of Deep Ecology". *Ecophilosophy VI*, 3-7.

Narveson, Jan. 1977. "Animal Rights". *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 7: 161-78.

Nerem, R.M., Levesque, M.J. and **J.F. Cornhill.** 1980. "Social Environment as a Factor in Diet-induced Atherosclerosis". *Science*, 208: 1475-6.

Narveson, Jan. 1980. "Violence and War". *Matters of Life and Death: new introductory essays in moral philosophy.* Tom Regan, ed. New York: Random House, 101-47.

Newsome, A.E. 1980. "The Eco-Mythology of the Red Kangaroo in Central Australia". *Mankind*, 12: 327-33.

Nietschmann, Bernard. 1977. "The Bambi Factor". *Natural History*, 86: 86-7.

Nordenstam, Tore. 1968. *Sudanese Ethics.* Uppsala: The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies.

Nozick, Robert. 1974. *Anarchy, State, and Utopia.* New York: Basic Books.

Olivecrona, Karl. 1971. *Law as Fact.* London: Stevens and Sons.

Ovington, Derek. 1978. *Australian Endangered Species: mammals, birds, and reptiles.* Stanmore, NSW: Cassell Australia.

Passmore, John. 1974. *Man's Responsibility for Nature.* London: Duckworth. (2nd ed. 1980).

----- 1975(a). "Attitudes to Nature". *Nature and Conduct.* R.S. Peters, ed. London: Macmillian, 251-64.

----- 1975(b). "The Treatment of Animals". *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 26: 195-218.

Penniman, T.K. 1929. "The Arunta Religion". *Sociological Review*, 21: 20-37.

Pepper, David. 1984. *The Roots of Modern Environmentalism.* Beckenham, Kent: Croom Helm.

Pink, Olive. 1933. "Spirit Ancestors in a Northern Aranda Horde Country". *Oceania*, 4: 176-86.

----- 1935. "Land Ownership Among the Aborigines". *Mankind*, 1: 267.

----- 1936. "The Landowners in the Northern Division of the Aranda Tribe, Central Australia". *Oceania*, 6: 275-305.

Pirages, Dennis C. and **P.R. Ehrlich.** 1974. *Ark II: social response to environmental imperatives.* San Francisco: W.H. Freeman.

Rachels, James. 1976. "Do Animals Have the Right to Liberty". *Animal Rights and Human Obligations.* Tom Regan and Peter Singer, eds. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 205-23.

Regan, Tom. 1976(a). "Introduction". *Animal Rights and Human Obligations.* Tom Regan and Peter Singer, eds. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1-20.

----- 1976(b). "McCloskey on Why Animals Cannot Have Rights". *Philosophical Quarterly*, 26: 251-7.

----- 1977. "Frey on Interests and Animal Rights". *Philosophical Quarterly*, 27: 335-7.

----- 1979. "An Examination and Defense of One Argument Concerning Animal Rights". *Inquiry*, 22: 189-219.

----- 1982. *All That Dwells Therein.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

----- and **Peter Singer**, eds. 1976. *Animal Rights and Human Obligations.* Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Reid, Thomas. 1768. *Essays on the Active Powers of Man. The Works of Thomas Reid.* William Hamilton, ed. Edinburgh: James Thin, 1895.

Richards, David A.J. 1981. "Rights and Autonomy". *Ethics*, 92: 3-20.

Rodman, John. 1977. "The Liberation of Nature?" *Inquiry*, 20: 83-131.

Roheim, Geza. 1925. *Australian Totemism: a psycho-analytic study in anthropology.* M.D. Elder, trans. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Rollin, Bernard E. 1981. *Animal Rights and Human Morality.* Buffalo: Prometheus.

Rolston, Holmes III. 1981. "Values in Nature". *Environmental Ethics*, 3: 113-128.

Rossi, Philip J. 1982. "Moral Autonomy, Divine Transcendence and Human Destiny: Kant's doctrine of hope as a philosophical foundation for Christian ethics". *Thomist*, 46: 441-58.

Routley, Richard. 1981. "Alleged Problems in Attributing Beliefs, and Intentionality, to Animals". *Inquiry*, 24: 385-417.

----- 1982(a). "In Defense of Cannibalism". *Discussion Papers in Environmental Philosophy, 2.* Canberra: Australian National University, Philosophy Departments. 47 pp.

----- 1982(b). "Roles and Limits of Paradigms in Environmental Thought and Action". *Discussion Papers in Environmental Philosophy, 1.* Canberra: Australian National University, Philosophy Departments. 44 pp.

Routley, Val. 1975. "Critical Notice (review of *Man's Responsibility for Nature*, by J. Passmore)". *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 53: 171-85.

Routley, Richard and **Val Routley.** 1979. "Against the Inevitability of Human Chauvinism". *Ethics and Problems of the 21st Century.* K.E. Goodpaster and K.M. Sayre, eds. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 36-59.

----- 1980(a). "Human Chauvinism and Environmental Ethics". *Environmental Philosophy.* D.S. Mannison, McRobbie, M.A. and R. Routley, eds. Canberra: Australian National University, Research School of Social Sciences, Department of Philosophy, 96-189.

----- 1980(b). "Social Theories, Self Management, and Environmental Problems". *Environmental Philosophy.* D.S. Mannison, McRobbie, M.A. and R. Routley, eds. Canberra: Australian National University, Research School of Social Sciences, Department of Philosophy, 217-332.

Sabath, Michael D. and **Susan Quinnell.** 1981. *Ecosystems.* Melbourne: Longman Cheshire.

Schedler, George. 1980. "A Catholic, Non-Thomist View of Human Rights". *New Scholasticism*, 54: 153-67.

Schweitzer, Albert. 1933. *My Life & Thought.* C.T. Champion, trans. London: George Allen & Unwin.

----- 1949. *Civilization and Ethics.* 3rd ed. London: Adam & Charles Black.

Sessions, George. 1980. "Shallow and Deep Ecology: a review of the philosophical literature". *Ecological Consciousness: Essays From the Earthday X Colliquium.* Robert C. Schultz and J. Donald Hughes, eds. Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1981, 391-462.

Seyfarth, Robert M. 1982. "'Talking' with Monkeys and Great Apes". *International Wildlife*, 12: 12-18.

Sharp, R. Lauriston. 1968. "Notes on Northeast Australian Totemism". *Studies in the Anthropology of Oceania and Asia.* C.S. Coon and J.M.Andrews, eds. New York: Kraus Reprint Corp., 66-71.

----- 1939. "Tribes and Totemism in North-East Australia". *Oceania*, 9: 254-75; 439-61.

Shepard, Paul. 1973. *The Tender Carnivore and The Sacred Game.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Singer, Peter. 1976(a). "All Animals Are Equal". *Animal Rights and Human Obligations*, Tom Regan and Peter Singer, eds. Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall, 148-62.

----- 1976(b). "Down on the Factory Farm". *Animal Rights and Human Obligations.* Tom Regan and Peter Singer, eds. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 23-32.

----- 1977. *Animal Liberation.* London: Granada.

----- 1978. "The Fable of the Fox and the Unliberated Animals". *Ethics*, 88: 119-25.

----- 1979(a). "Killing Humans and Killing Animals". *Inquiry*, 22: 145-56.

----- 1979(b). "Not for Humans Only: the place of nonhumans in environmental issues". *Ethics and Problems of the 21st Century.* K.E. Goodpaster and K.M. Sayre, eds. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 191-206.

----- 1980. "Animals and the Value of Life". *Matters of Life and Death. new introductory essays in moral philosophy.* Tom Regan, ed. New York: Random House, 218-59.

Southwick, Charles H. 1972. *Ecology and the Quality of Our Environment.* New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.

Sparks, John. 1982. *The Discovery of Animal Behaviour.* Sydney: Collins.

Spencer, B. and **F.J. Gillen.** 1904. *The Northern Tribes of Central Australia.* London: Macmillan.

----- 1927. *The Arunta: a study of a stone age people.* London: Macmillan.

----- 1938. *The Native Tribes of Central Australia.* London: Macmillan.

Stanner, W.E.H. 1959. "On Aboriginal Religion". *Oceania*, 30: 108-27.

----- 1960(a). "On Aboriginal Religion". *Oceania*, 30: 245-78.

----- 1960(b). "On Aboriginal Religion". *Oceania*, 31: 100-20.

----- 1961(a). "On Aboriginal Religion". *Oceania*, 31: 233-58.

----- 1961(b). "On Aboriginal Religion". *Oceania*, 32: 79-108.

----- 1963. "On Aboriginal Religion". *Oceania*, 33: 239-73.

----- 1965. "Religion, Totemism and Symbolism". *Aboriginal Man in Australia.* R.M. Berndt and C.H. Berndt, eds. Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 207-37.

----- 1976. "Some Aspects of Aboriginal Religion". *Colloquium*, 9: 19-35.

----- 1979. *White Man Got No Dreaming: essays 1938-1973.* Canberra: Australian National University Press.

Strehlow, Carl. 1907-8. *Die Aranda- und Loritja- Stamme in Zentral-Australien.* C. Chewings trans. Frankfurt am Main: unpublished. 5 vols.

Strehlow, T.G.H. 1947. *Aranda Traditions.* Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

----- 1950. *An Australian Viewpoint.* Adelaide: For the author by Hawthorn Press.

----- 1956. *The Sustaining Ideals of Australian Aboriginal Societies.* Adelaide: Aborigines Advancement League.

----- 1964. "Personal Monototemism in a Polytotemic Community". *Festschrift fur Ad. E. Jensen.* E. Haberland, M. Schuster, and H. Straube, eds. Munchen: Klause Renner, 723-54.

----- 1965. "Culture, Social Structure, and Environment in Aboriginal Central Australia". *Aboriginal Man in Australia*, R.M. Berndt and C.H. Berndt, eds. Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 121-45.

----- 1970. "Geography and the Totemic Landscape in Central Australia: a functional study". *Australian Aboriginal Anthropology.* R.M. Berndt, ed. Nedlands, WA: The University of Western Australia for the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 92-140.

Sutton, Peter. 1978. Wik: Aboriginal society, territory and language at Cape Keerweer, Cape York Peninsula, Australia. St. Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland. PhD Thesis.

----- 1982. "Personal Power, Kin Classification and Speech Etiquette in Aboriginal Australia". *Languages of Kinship in Aboriginal Australia.* Jeffery Heath, Merlan, F. and A. Rumsey, eds. Sydney: University of Sydney, 182-211. (Oceania Monograph, 24).

Sylvan, Richard. 1984. "A Critique of Deep Ecology". *Discussion Papers in Environmental Philosophy, 12.* Canberra: Australian National University, Philosophy Departments. 64 pp.

Tindale, Norman B. 1974. *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia.* Canberra: Australian National University Press.

Thomson, D.E. 1946. "Names and Naming in the Wik Mungkan Tribe". *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 76: 157-68.

----- 1972. *Kinship Behaviour in North Queensland.* H.W. Scheffler, ed. Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies.

Von Frisch, Karl. 1954. *The Dancing Bees.* Dora Ilse, trans. London: Methuen.

----- 1967. *The Dance Language and Orientation of Bees.* L.E. Chadwick, trans. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Von Strumer, John. 1978. The *Wik* Region: economy, territoriality and totemism in Western Cape York Peninsula, North Queensland. St. Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland. PhD thesis.

Watson, Richard A. 1979. "Self-Consciousness and the Rights of Nonhuman Animals and Nature". *Environmental Ethics*, 1: 99-129.

White, Lynn Jr. 1967. "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis". *Science*, 155: 1203-7.

Wilson, E.O. 1975. *Sociobiology: the new synthesis.* Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Worster, Donald. 1977. *Nature's Economy.* San Francisco: Sierra Club.

Wright, A.A., Santiago, H.C., Sands, S.F., Kendrick, D.F. and **R.G. Cook.** 1985. "Memory Processing of Serial Lists by Pigeons, Monkeys, and People". *Science*, 229: 287-9.

Young, Robert. 1982. "The Value of Autonomy". *Philosophical Quarterly*, 32: 35-44.