WOMEN OF THE MYSTERIOUS FOREST:

Women, Nature, and Philosophy:

an exploration of self and gender
in relation to traditional
dualisms in western culture

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
of the Australian National University
on 1st July 1990.
Except where otherwise indicated, all the work in this thesis is my own:

Signed:

[Signature]

VAL PLUMWOOD
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The thesis aims to develop an account of the ecological self and its relationship to nature which takes account both of a feminist perspective and of the critique advanced by recent environmental philosophy, and to understand the role of gender and gendered nature/culture dualism in the development of a human identity alienated from nature in western culture. I argue that the fact that the dominant human identity has been masculinised has been a major aspect of the problem. A major resulting theme is concern with problems in ecofeminism and especially the question of how far an alternative identity can be based on women and the affirmation of the feminine.

Chapter One sets ecological feminism in a political context, examining its relationships to both feminist and green theory. Chapter Two reviews the major literature in the area and its critique of western culture, as well as examining problems arising from it concerning the history of patriarchal culture, the status of the body as nature, and tension between accounts stressing dualism and those stressing difference. Chapter Three problematises both liberal feminist (androcentric) and radical feminist (gynocentric) positions, and tries to clarify the range of options to the androcentric model of human identity, and what is defensible in the affirmation of the feminine.

Chapters Four, Five and Six develop a feminist and historical perspective on environmental philosophy, arguing that dualism -- a notion clarified in Chapter Four with the help of gender theory -- has shaped not only our concepts of human identity as alien to nature (Chapter Four), but also our concept of nature as mechanism (Chapter Five). These chapters examine the historical legacy of rationalism, while Chapter Six develops a feminist perspective on instrumentalism and on the self. This is built on in Chapter Seven, which also critiques from the
perspective of feminist ethics current trends in environmental ethics and deep ecology, arguing that these positions have been insufficiently sensitive to the contribution of rationalism to the problem and its continued influence in their philosophical frameworks. Chapter Eight returns to consideration of the major theme of earlier chapters in clarifying the affirmation of the feminine and options for the reconstruction of gender, and presents an account which combines elements of both power and difference analyses.
Chapter One: Ecological Feminism: Linking the Movements

At the same time, by understanding that we are all part of the same organic flow of life, we are reminded, with a stirring that excites our deepest selves, of who we really are. We are part of this earth, and thus the world becomes a place of infinite mystery, of delight to the senses and the intellect.

Judith Plant, Remembering Who We Are: The Meaning of Ecofeminism.

If there is one idea that can be said to link together all that is said and reported here, this idea is also a feeling. It is a grief over the fate of the earth, that contains within it a joyful hope that we might reclaim this earth. Does this one idea answer all our questions? It is not meant to. It is meant to make us ask more questions.

Susan Griffin

INTRODUCTION: GENDER, ECOLOGY, IDENTITY.

Western civilisation faces a profound crisis in its relationship to nature, a crisis which demands much rethinking, but especially that we rethink the way in which our human identity has been framed in the west as outside and independent of the natural world. This thesis is about the way forward to a new human identity which recognises continuity and interdependence and reconceptualises not only the human but also nature itself. It is also about the past, about what went wrong with the old identity, for the forging of a new identity is not independent of how we understand the problems in the old, of what it has done to distort our view of ourselves, our view of nature, and of the appropriate relations between our species and the rest of the earth.

I address especially the role of gender in the problem, and the way in which patriarchal culture in its western expression, has employed a genderised nature/culture distinction to construct a human identity which is alien to nature. The formation of this human identity in relation
to nature, I argue, has taken place in a way which parallels in certain crucial respects the formation of masculine identity in relation to the feminine, so that this human identity can itself be regarded as gendered, as masculine. Attempts to reconstruct this identity along new lines will be inadequate unless they take account of the dimension of gender.

This raises the question which forms the second major theme I address — to what extent and in what sense the alternative is an identity which is feminine. I discuss the attempts of modern gender theorists, especially ecological feminists, to construct an alternative identity based on reintegration what has been neglected, repudiated and suppressed in the formation of this masculinised human identity and in the masculine domination of culture, an identity which is based too upon the affirmation of those aspects of both nature and culture which have been devalued and excluded as feminine. I try to clarify the meaning of this reintegration and affirmation of the feminine. It has been of particular concern to ecological feminism, but it is in tension with other aspects of feminism and raises many problems and questions.

ECOLOGICAL FEMINISM: PROBLEMS AND QUESTIONS

The story of a land where women live at peace with themselves and with the natural world is a recurrent theme of feminist utopias. This is a land where there is no hierarchy, among humans or between humans and animals, where people care for themselves and for nature, where the earth and the forest retain their mystery, power, and wholeness, where the power of technology and of military and economic force does not rule the earth, or at least that part of it controlled by women. For usually this state is seen as a beleaguered one, surviving against the hostile intent of men, who control a world of power and inequality, of military and technological might and
screaming poverty, where power is the game and power means domination of both nature and people. Feminist vision often draws the contrasts starkly — it is life versus death, Gaia versus Mars, mysterious forest versus technological desert, women versus men.

It is hard to deny the power of that vision, or its ability to harness the hope and the sorrow the present world holds for those who can bear to confront its current course. We do live in a world often distressingly like the feminist dystopias, where technological mastery extinguishes both nature and less technologically "rational" cultures, where we face the imminent prospect of loss of the world's forests along with the bulk of its species diversity and human cultural diversity, where already many cultures have had the whole basis of ancient survival patterns destroyed by a species of development and "progress" which produces inequality as inexorably as it produces pollution and waste, and where the dominance of "rational" man threatens ultimately to produce the most irrational of results, the extinction of our species along with many others. Ecological feminism tells us that it is no accident that this world is dominated by men.

If we are women, we have as a group an interest in escaping our ancient domination. We women also have an interest, which we share with all other living creatures and even with men, in a sound and healthy planet, in sound, healthy and balanced ecosystems and in a sustainable and satisfying way of living on the earth. But according to ecological feminism there is more to it than that, and more to the connection of the movements than this accidental one, of women who happen to be green. Gender is at least a major part of the problem, and there is a way of relating to the other that is especially associated with women which contains the seeds of a different human relationship to the earth and perhaps too of human survival on it and with it.

But as it is often stated the ecofeminist vision, so sane and so attractive, seems to raise many problems
and questions. Is ecofeminism giving us a version of the story that the goodness of women will save us? Is it only women (and perhaps only certain properly womanly women) who can know the mysterious forest, or is that knowledge and that love in principle accessible to us all? Do we have to renounce the achievements of culture and technology to come to inhabit the mysterious forest? Can we affirm women's special qualities without endorsing their traditional role and confinement to a "woman's sphere"? Can a reign of women possibly be the answer to the earth's destruction and to all the other related problems? Is ecofeminism giving us another version of the story that all problems will cease when the powerless take power? Is ecofeminism inevitably based in gynocentric essentialism?

I come from a background in both environmental philosophy and activism and feminist philosophy and activism, yet my initial reaction to the position asserting such a link, like that of many people, was one of mistrust. It seemed to combine a romantic conception of both women and nature, the idea that women have special powers and capacities of nurturance, empathy and "closeness to nature", which are unshareable by men and which justify their special treatment, which of course nearly always turns out to be inferior treatment. It seemed to be the antithesis of feminism, giving positive value to the "barefoot and pregnant" image of women and validating their exclusion from the world of culture and relegation to that of nature, a position which is perhaps best represented in modern times by the male writer D.H.Lawrence. Or it did seem to provide a green version of the "good woman" argument of the suffragettes, in which good and moral women, who are nurturant, empathic and life-oriented, confront and reclaim the world from bad men, who are immersed in power, hierarchy and a culture of death. Later reading showed me the diversity of the position and that, while an element of this is present in some accounts, by no means all accounts conform to this romantic picture, nor is it a necessary part of a position which takes seriously the claim of non-accidental connection between the movements.
One essential feature of all ecofeminist positions is that they give positive value to a connection of women with nature which was previously, in the west, given negative cultural value and which was the main ground of their devaluation and oppression. They are involved in a great cultural revaluation of the status of women, the feminine and the natural, a revaluation which must recognise the way in which their historical connection in western culture has influenced the construction of feminine identity, and as I shall try to show, of both masculine and human identity. Beyond that there is a great deal of diversity; ecofeminists differ on how and even whether women are connected to nature, on whether such connection is in principle shareable by men, on how to treat the exclusion of women from culture, and on how the revaluing of the connection with nature connects with the revaluing of traditional feminine characteristics generally, to mention a few areas. They differ too on the implications of ecofeminism for the connected movements, feminism and the environment movement, and their intellectual counterparts, the critiques of androcentrism and anthropocentrism respectively. There is great variation in ecofeminist literature on all these areas.

Like any other diverse position, ecological feminism is amenable to careful and less careful statements, and some versions of ecofeminism do provide a version of the argument that it is the goodness of women which will save us. This is an argument, with its Christian overtones of fall and feminine redemption, which appeared in Victorian times as the view that women's moral goodness, their purity, patience, self-sacrifice, spirituality and maternal instinct, either meant that they would redeem fallen political life (if given the vote), or, on the alternative version, meant that they were too good for fallen political life and so shouldn't have the vote. The first version ignores the way in which these stirling qualities are formed by powerlessness, and will fail to survive translation to a context of power; the second
recognises this but insists that in order to maintain these qualities for the benefit of men women must remain powerless.

The popular contemporary green version attributes to women a range of different but related virtues, those of empathy, nurturance, cooperativeness and connectedness to others and to nature, and usually finds the basis for these also in women's reproductive capacity. It replaces the "angel in the house" version of women by the "angel in the ecosystem" version. The myth of the angel is, like the the Victorian version, of dubious value for women; unlike the more usual misogynist accounts western culture provides of women it recognises strengths in women's way of being, but it does so in an unsatisfactory and unrealistic way, and again fails to recognise the dynamic of power.

Simplistic versions of this story usually attribute these qualities to women simply and universally, but it is only plausible to do so if one practices a denial of the reality of women's lives, and not least a denial of the divisions between women themselves, both within the women's movement and in the wider society. Not all women are empathic, nurturant and cooperative, and many of these virtues have been real but restricted to a small circle of close others. Women do not necessarily treat other women as sisters or the earth as a mother; women are capable of conflict, of domination and even, in the right circumstances, of violence. Western women may not have been in the forefront of the attack on nature, driving the bulldozers and operating the chainsaws, but many of them have been support troops or have been participants, often unwitting but still enthusiastic, in a modern consumer culture of which they are the main symbols, and which assaults nature in a myriad direct and indirect ways daily. And of course women have also played a major role, largely unacknowledged in a male-led and male dominated environment movement, in resisting and organizing against the assault on nature. The invisible, alternative background economy which has for so long framed their identity is not so
strongly based on disregard for the earth as the official male-centred and male-controlled official economy of the developed world. As we shall see, the western mapping of a hierarchical gender relation onto the nature/culture distinction is a major culprit in the destruction of the biosphere, but this does not translate into a simple "men bad, women good" formula, and if we think that the fact of being female guarantees that we are automatically provided with an ecological consciousness and can do no wrong to nature or to one another, we are going to be badly disappointed, and we are going to miss out on discerning and developing the real strengths that women and feminine identity have to offer. It is difficult to steer a course between unrealistically idealising women and recognising their real and potential strengths—especially difficult because of the millenia of denigration and inferiorisation of both women and the qualities they have or have been taken to have—but we must try to steer that course.

ECOFEMINISM AND FEMINISM

The "angel in the ecosystem" is a simplistic version of the affirmation of feminine qualities, both individual and cultural, which has been such a marked feature of this century's second wave of feminism, especially that which has stressed difference. The link is not nearly as simple as the "angel" version of women's character takes it to be—in fact the "angel" argument involves a classic sex/gender confusion, since to say that there are connections for instance, between androcentrism and anthropocentrism is not to say anything at all about women in general being "close to nature". Nevertheless, there is an important point in the linkage of women to many of these qualities which our culture needs now to affirm, and a vitally important critique in the addition of the critical dimension of gender to the story of human, and especially western, relations to nature. Clarifying and
refining what it is that is liberatory and defensible about this affirmation of the feminine, and clarifying just how these qualities are connected to women, has been the major task of the search for a feminist identity and for feminist theory and scholarship in the last fifteen years, and this task continues to challenge our political and philosophical understandings and frontiers.

The need to clarify and refine the statement and meaning of this affirmation for the case of ecofeminism is one of the major themes explored here, and ecofeminist analysis of these problems may help in turn to advance our understanding of some of these questions, which have been difficult and often divisive for feminist theory. And as Karen Warren has pointed out, ecological feminism may help to resolve some of these divisions in feminist theory. As well as the difference between power and difference analyses, some of the main varieties of feminism have inherited from their father theories frameworks assuming the inferiority of the sphere of nature, or imposing a sharp nature/culture division, and these must be challenged and transcended in ecofeminism's development of a new phase of feminist theory. Much ecofeminism to date has drawn mainly on radical feminism for its inspiration, and tended to inherit much of its outlook and sometimes its problems, for example assumptions tending to gynocentric essentialism and the attempt by some forms of radical feminism to take over and reduce other critiques rather than to develop connections with them. This results at the extreme in the view that women's oppression is the one basic and fundamental kind of oppression in terms of which all others are to be explained, and that patriarchy is the one fundamental explanation for all evils, including that of the destruction of nature, that is, in reductionist and totalising approaches. But there is nothing inevitable about these reductionist approaches, which in my view place an excessive explanatory burden on the category of gender, and suffer from the usual problems of reductionist and totalising positions.
Ecofeminism as it stands in terms of contemporary feminist theory seems to rest on the horns of a dilemma framed by the division in feminist theory between power and difference analyses. If it stresses women's power as an antidote to their powerlessness in their traditional role, and the creation of a new identity in terms of culture, it may be feminist but it is not ecological, for its claim to be so rested on women's identity as part of the excluded sphere of nature. But if it stresses women's difference and identity based on kinship with nature in such a way as to accept exclusion from power and the sphere of culture, it may be ecological but it is not feminist. For ecofeminism to work it must find a way to resolve this dilemma, to be both liberatory for women and for the sphere conceived of as nature with which women have been identified, and hence to point the way to a resolution of the division between those forms of feminism which analyse women's situation in terms of power and those which analyse it in terms of difference. I have tried to make use of insights and analysis from both areas.

In western thought systems, women have been seen as nature, and women, the feminine and the natural have been, with few exceptions, valued negatively. Ecofeminism addresses a major problem this gives rise to for contemporary western women in throwing off their ancient oppression as "nature". They can try to join men as equals in the realm of culture, spirit, and domination of the natural order, breaking the ancient connection and accepting the inferiorising and distance from nature which is part of this model. Or they can accept their old identity as "close to nature", embracing this now with pride. The first of these solutions ignores the devaluation of nature, and is unacceptable in terms of the new critique of the western model of human relations to nature. The second ignores the oppressiveness to women of an identity thus constructed by exclusion from what has been valued in human culture. While the parameters of the problem are set in traditional terms, each solution is unacceptable to one movement or the other.
This problem, which is central for ecofeminism, is a major theme considered in this thesis. One of the main claims this thesis will pursue is that this dilemma can only be resolved satisfactorily by challenging the oppositional construction of the nature/culture distinction. We must insist that women are as fully human and as fully part of human culture as men, but that the model of the human and of what is valuable in human culture constructed in opposition to nature and the feminine must go. The problem is stated here in terms of a dilemma for women's contemporary identity, but it is not just a problem for women, for both women and men need to find a way of being in the world which does not depend on the exploitation, exclusion and devaluation of the sphere of the feminine and of nature, both within and without the human self. And it seems that only ecofeminism is addressing this problem fully, environmental theorists mostly being content to give a positive value to nature and add this on to existing structures (as in the case of wilderness and the ethics of wilderness) without addressing the changes that need to be made as a result to oppositionally-constructed concepts of human culture, identity and self.

The careful and theoretically sophisticated working out of these new positions also presents a political dilemma familiar from past radical movements. If too much sophisticated machinery is required, the resulting analysis will be accessible only to very few, and those few not much concerned with real change. And inaccessibility carries real-political dangers of elitism and ineffectiveness. But if no such careful analysis is made and the position remains so unconvincing as to be readily -- too readily -- rejected, it will also eventually be politically ineffective. Either way the chance to make an important set of connections is lost, and we don't do justice to the position and lose the insights it has to offer. I do not know the solution to this problem which has beset so many past movements and their intellectual critiques, and which is becoming a serious problem for the
women's movement. It is a problem tied to the problematic, which is taken up in some detail in what follows, of dualism and the dominance of the rational. I think that part of the answer lies in countering the dominant and hierarchical role which tends to be accorded theoretical activity, rather than ceasing or resisting theoretical development, and in working at and integrating theoretical analysis in a variety of levels and as one part of a variety of ways of working for political and cultural goals. So the theory should be developed but not given exclusive or highest priority, and it should be not opposed to but integrated with other activities and wider goals.

Despite this, clarification and development of an ecofeminist position in a way that is both strategically useful (for the social movements involved) and theoretically rigorous is one of the central intellectual endeavours of our time. Ecofeminism is essentially a response to a set of key problems thrown up by the movement of the two great social currents of the later part of this century -- feminism and the environment movement, and addresses a number of shared problems. There is the shared problem of how (and whether) to reconcile these movements and their associated critiques (of anthropocentrism and androcentrism), which have many areas of conflict as well as some common ground. There is also the problem of how to reintegrate the great western division of nature and culture, and of how to give a positive value to what has been traditionally devalued and excluded as nature without simply reversing values and rejecting the sphere of culture. These are central problems for the theories, strategies and alliances of both movements.
LINKING THE MOVEMENTS : CRITIQUE NETWORKING

The drawing of links between the women's and green movements is a difficult but essential task of networking at both the theoretical, cultural and political levels. It is currently fashionable to view different social movements such as feminism, the environment movement, anarchism, socialism etc., and their associated critiques as presenting "incommensurable discourses". This has the virtue of avoiding the reductions and takeover bids so familiar from the Marxist past, but it also dodges the crucial question of how these movements and critiques connect.

Back in the days when Marxism was king of radical discourses, other discourses, such as those of the women's movement and the environment movement, were reduced to subject status, to be subsumed, incorporated into the kingdom of the sovereign. Their insights and problems were recognised just to the extent that they could be so absorbed. When a rebellion finally arose, the newly-freed subject discourses agreed to avoid competing for power between themselves, to respect one another's territory and differences, by taking the noble status of "incommensurable discourses", each to remain in its own fiefdom. This meant that they were different and incomparable, so there could be no question of one taking over and subsuming the others. But it also meant that they never really encountered one another, that questions could not be asked about how they were related, that they could not cooperate or combine at the level of theory, and that they were therefore isolated and so much the weaker.

One can hope that it is possible to respect the differences which different struggles and forms of oppression give rise to, to recognise their irreducibility, without paying this kind of price. As with individuals, so with movements, connection is risky but nevertheless essential for many
reasons. First, some of us find ourselves oppressed in
different but connected ways, and hope for a world in
which sexism, the destruction of nature, and racism, for
example, do not exist. It would be nice to know that
their underlying philosophies or theories are compatible,
which is often not the case at present. To seek
compatibility is not to require uniformity, or the
absorption of each critique and movement into a single
global theory or movement. Different forms of domination
must lead to different views of the world, different
priorities and struggles. But it may still be essential to
know whether environmentalism, for instance, is being built
on assumptions and practices which feminism makes a point
of rejecting. Some conflicts may be impossible to avoid,
others may point to weaknesses, incompleteness or problem
areas within one or both positions.

There is an enormous amount to be gained from exploring
connections, at all levels, and this is an inherently
strengthening process for movements. For example, seeing
how women are treated as "nature" and as body helps explain
so many features of their historical oppression, from their
confinement to a reproductive role to their categorisation
as emotional and the treatment of their contribution as a
mere background to what is valuable in human life (culture
and rationality). It also explains many features of both
the current and historical treatment of nature, as an
object upon which to demonstrate control and prove
masculinity, as a mere instrument to human ends, and as
something to be maximally differentiated from and
distanced from as inferior. Such links illustrate the way
in which struggles and their associated critiques can be
distinct and non-reducible, but still essentially and not
merely accidentally connected. We do not have to choose
between the reduction of critiques to one another or their
isolation as "incommensurable", between cannibalism and
atomism. Awareness of such links influences choice of
strategy in a variety of ways.

Exploration and awareness of links also enables movements
to change, challenge and enrich each other, and helps to counter the danger of their absorption into the status quo. For example women who are aware of these links between the domination of women and domination of nature come to see the struggle as much wider than simply elevating women to some sort of equality in the ranks of male workers or in the male sphere of public life. Ecological feminism provides one important test of whether feminism retains any capacity to challenge broader aspects of the society and to be critical of male institutions and culture. Similarly, ecofeminism challenges the tendency or potential of the environment movement to be sexist, to show ignorance not only of feminist critique but that of other groups, and to be insensitive to issues of power and inequality in problem analysis and strategy. Ecofeminism has particularly stressed that the treatment of nature as inferior has supported and "naturalised" not only the hierarchy of male to female but the inferiorisation of many other groups of humans seen as more closely identified with nature, for example the supposed inferiority of black races (conceived as more animal), the supposed inferiority of "uncivilised" or "primitive" cultures, and the supposed superiority of master to slave, boss to employee, mental to manual worker. For western society, which has particularly employed a strongly genderised concept of nature as way of imposing a hierarchical order on the world, feminisation and naturalisation have been crucial and connected planks in supporting pervasive human relations of inequality both within western society and between western society and non-western societies. At the level of the forest, the domination and destruction of nature goes hand in hand with the domination and destruction of the human cultures economically dependent on it and linked to it by powerful and ancient bonds.

In isolation then resistance to domination can often be accommodated by a broadening of the dominating class to include those resisting, or significant and vocal sections of them, and yesterday's radicals become to-day's speech-writers, press secretaries or advisers. Connection with
other struggles provides one means to resist this co-
option -- change must not only elevate the original
resisting group but also challenge the status and
character of the oppressing group in its relation
to other oppressed groups. Strategies which take account
of or promote this wider, connected set of objectives are
then preferred. An example which illustrates the
connectedness of these issues and strategies is the fight
for tropical rainforest and the fight for social justice
(eg. land reform) and the rights of indigenous peoples in
the third world.

Ecofeminism provides a good example of a movement-linking
activity we might call, drawing on women's traditional
activities in linking social groups, "movement networking";
at the theoretical level it is "critique networking". Like
women's social networking, this area has been backgrounded,
of low visibility and status, but is essential to the
continued functioning of social groups. Women make
effective networkers in radical movements because they
usually suffer from multiple forms of oppression, and
relate unrelated theories through their lived experience;
they are black women, they are ethnic women, they are
women who suffer through the product and process of the
destruction of nature, they are women who are subordinated
in their working relations as women, either in the movement
or outside it, and in their personal relationships as
women, and they are subordinated especially in terms of
those of their qualities and characteristics perceived as
natural, their sexuality, their reproductivity. Networking
is not always a pleasant, supportive and "helpful"
activity, undertaken by the angel in the ecosystem; it
may involve criticism, revision and re-examination of
comfortable certainties and positions, and confrontation of
oppressive relations. It may be seen as divisive,
threatening and timewasting by people who remain in an
instrumental paradigm which defines movement goals as
narrowly, and therefore conservatively, as possible.
Feminist criticism of the environment movement has often
been seen in this way. Definitely not a task for angels.
Networking is one answer to a system of power relations conceived of as itself a net. On this analysis there is no simple "us" and "them", and power does not emanate from a single simple source, (as theories of power such as earlier forms of anarchism supposed) but, as Foucault notes, "is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are almost always also the elements of its articulation." 5 Power is often articulated through the formation of identity, including sexual and gender identity, (and I shall argue, human identity), and is not a separate, added-on element to that identity. Challenging that network of power relations involves challenging at a very deep level the formation of our identities, as women or men, and as human beings in a culture which separates off and subordinates nature. We need not take all elements in the net of oppression as of equal significance, nor see power as so diffused as to be "everywhere and therefore nowhere". There are key points or foci in the web, and gender has emerged as playing just such a key role in linking, modelling and structuring other elements. It is therefore capable of providing insights into and connections to many other forms of oppression. Masculine and feminine are traditionally related as humanity to animality, as mind to body, as reason to feeling, as subject to object, as end to means, as centre to periphery, as focus to background, as dominant to subordinate, as higher to lower orders of being. Very often, to be powerless is to be feminised. This has much to tell us of the structure of oppression.

HUMAN IDENTITY AND CULTURAL RELATIVISM

The key role of a sharply differentiated and genderised concept of nature, in which women (and other inferiorised
groups) are seen as aligned with the inferior order of nature and men as aligned with the superior order of culture, intellect and rationality. This is something some ecofeminist writers have particularly stressed in their historical analysis. These ecofeminists have been developing a somewhat different line of thought concerning the connection of gender and nature to that involved in the affirmation of the feminine, and its connections with this affirmation require further investigation. This account stresses the historical and explanatory importance of a dualistic way of thinking which opposes mind to body, culture to nature, humans to nature, male to female, emotion to reason, as separate and superior as contrasted to inferior orders of being. A major part of my argument here is that it is not only the list of contrasted areas above which have been treated dualistically in western systems of thought and social organisation, but also the contrast of human and nature itself, and that this has important consequences both for its account of human identity and its account of nature.

This framework focussing on this system of linked dualisms has considerable explanatory power and a strongly integrative function for cultural critique, since there are already independent critiques of a number of these (and quite a few more) in social theory and especially in feminist thought. It reveals also a common enemy in this network of dualisms, linked centrally by the account of reason or mind and of its various bearers, which provides a framework in which the various parts support and strengthen each other. The various critiques and movements which correspond to these dualisms are connected, in an essential and not accidental way, as the undersides of the contrasts of reason and its various elaborations. The critique of reason, an important aspect of contemporary philosophy and especially feminist philosophy has, as I try to show below, a great deal to contribute to our understanding of these dualisms and to our understanding of the connections between critiques and the forms of domination and resistance movements they correspond to.
But the gendered character of this concept of reason, of the nature / culture dualism, and of the whole web of other dualisms interconnected with it, is not a feature of human thought or culture per se, and does not relate the universal man to the universal woman; it is specifically a feature of western thought. It is important that an ecofeminist analysis recognises this, and some have failed to do so clearly. Women in certain New Guinea cultures for example are seen as aligned with the domestic or cultivated sphere, men with the forest and with wild land. We cannot therefore see the alignment of women to nature as the entire basis and source of women's oppression, as some accounts have done, since women often stand in relatively powerless positions even in cultures which have not made the connection of women to nature or which have a different set of genderised dichotomies. Nevertheless it can still be seen as providing the basis of much of the cultural elaboration of that oppression in the west, the particular form that it takes in the western context, and that is still of considerable explanatory value. And this feature can be used to explain in turn much that is especially western in our ways of relating to the other and to nature. That is how I have tried to use it here.

Another related problem which must be considered concerns the way in which the concepts of humanity and of nature are used in developing the critique of the human domination of nature. Some critics have complained that the use of the blanket category "human" obscures highly relevant cultural differences and differences in responsibility for and benefits from the domination of nature between different human groups. The Penan who defend the forest at the risk of their lives are not to be held responsible for its destruction in the way those who pursue its destruction for power and enrichment are. The blanket concept of "humanity" can be used to obscure the fact that the forces directing the destruction of nature and the wealth produced from it are owned and controlled overwhelmingly by men. I think that this criticism is valid.
for some ways of developing the critique, but not for others. Certainly it applies to those ways of developing the critique which hold that it is simply humanity as a species which is the problem and which use the blanket concept "human" to hide vitally important social, political and gender-based analyses of the problem, which assume some sort of underlying species selfishness, perhaps as part of human nature, and which tend to focus on a general reduction in human numbers as the solution.

But this approach should not be confused with the critique of the way human identity has been treated in particular influential cultures such as western culture. According to the way of understanding the critique developed here, it is the development in certain cultures, especially and originally western culture, of a particular concept and practice of human identity and relationship to nature which is the problem, not the state of being human as such. The difference might be compared to the difference between ways of understanding patriarchal domination which see males (sex) as the problem and ways which see the problem in terms of particular understandings and practices of masculine identity in particular social and cultural contexts (gender). There has been much confusion on this point, which has led to charges that critiques which question human domination are "anti-human", treat being human as a disease, and so on. The critique of human domination is and must be a continuation of the familiar and healthy practice of cultural critique, not some sort of acultural and ahistorical expression of collective human-species guilt and revulsion.

Similarly, although the critique must involve some recognition of the human species as a whole as more limited in its claims on the earth and in its relation to other species than it has commonly been taken to be, this does not translate simply into claims about the need for blanket reductions in human numbers or into the view that different human groupings have equal responsibility for and benefit equally from the destruction of nature. This process is
human-centred in the competitive, chauvinistic sense that it does in the short term (although not in evolutionary terms) benefit humans comparatively as a species in terms of the percentage of the earth's surface which is humanised at the expense of other species. But it is not human-centred in any noble sense, since not all humans share in or benefit from this process or from the problematic concept of human identity, indeed some -- including women as well as those identified as less fully human -- are its victims, just as many humans are the victims rather than the beneficiaries of the assault on nature. Thus understood, the critique is in no way incompatible with older critiques which reject human hierarchy, indeed it complements and makes more complete our understanding of this hierarchy. But just as the situation for women cannot be remedied or justified by more equal parcelling out of the spoils between males in the way the pre-feminist critiques invoking equality and fraternity assumed, so destruction of nature can be neither rectified nor justified by a more equal distribution of the results among human groups, as these older critiques suggested. Instead as ecofeminist political understandings reveal it, and as ecofeminism particularly has insisted, human domination of the natural sphere must be seen as continuous with human domination of other humans, although like all forms of domination adding specific and non-reducible elements of its own.

ECOFEMINISM AND GREEN THEORY

What might loosely be called "green theory" includes several critiques and positions whose relationship has recently been the subject of vigorous and often bitter debate, and which have some common ground but apparently a number of major divergences. The three main articulated
positions involved in this debate, which are usually taken to present alternative and competitive accounts of the analysis of environmental problems, are social ecology, deep ecology, and ecofeminism.

The debate seems to have revealed that there is at present no underlying unified account, theory, or ideology behind the environment movement, and raises the question of whether it is and must remain no more than a political alliance of convenience between different interest groups affected differently by the assault on nature. There are several major areas of difference. Points of difference have arisen between those accounts which treat the crucial factor as the domination of nature (characteristically deep ecology) versus those which analyse the problem in terms of human hierarchy (characteristically social ecology) or as some other problem envisaged as social. There is debate between those accounts which view human domination including especially the domination of women and the domination of nature as connected (characteristically ecofeminism) versus those (especially deep ecology) which take the view that, as two leading deep ecologists recently expressed it, "there is no necessary connection between these two forms of domination". There is still disagreement as to whether the critique of anthropocentrism, of the human domination of nature, is valid and non-reducible or not, its validity and non-reducibility being contested by leading social ecologists and a few ecofeminists.

Ecofeminist positions which reject this critique of anthropocentrism or deny it independent status include those which would reduce its explanation entirely to patriarchal domination, as well as those which work in the framework of social ecology. The main thrust of ecofeminism however has involved critique networking, and has been to recognise the validity of both critiques and forms of domination and to treat their explanation as connected, and to use understandings and insights from feminist thought to enrich understandings of the connected...
area (and vice versa) without attempting to reduce one to the other. Hence most ecofeminists are not committed to the thesis that the struggle against patriarchy is the same struggle as the struggle of the environment movement, or that fixing one problem would automatically fix the other, which is a causal fallacy for most linked phenomena. Confusion on these points plays an important role as motivation for the denial of links. Thus ecofeminist positions such as my own can and do recognize the significance and irreducibility of the critique of anthropocentrism and of human domination of nature and treat its importance, especially at this juncture in the history of our culture, as being no less than that of androcentrism or male domination.

Deep ecology has a high profile in some parts of the environment movement and is often identified with this critique of anthropocentrism, but this is a major error. Not only in terms of conceptual alternatives but also historically, but it is one which deep ecologists, with some exceptions do not usually hasten to correct. In fact the critique of anthropocentrism has been developed in a number of different ways by various different schools of environmental philosophy, and deep ecology is only one of these ways, not necessarily the most satisfactory, especially from the point of view of providing a unified account of environmental concerns. This is a key point, because much criticism does not distinguish criticism of the kind of position deep ecology represents, the critique of anthropocentrism, from the specific details of this critique which are peculiar to the deep ecology form of development of that critique. This has an important bearing on how the alternatives are seen and on the question of whether the type of enterprise deep ecology represents is reconstructible in different terms or whether it has to be entirely abandoned as some critics have claimed. Ecofeminism provides a different account of the basis and dynamics of anthropocentrism from that provided either by deep ecology or the main brands of environmental philosophy.
There is also major disagreement between all three positions at the philosophical level especially over the treatment of the ecological self and its relation to nature and on various other connected points. This last issue is taken up in detail in later chapters of this thesis, where I argue that ecofeminism can provide an account of the ecological self which is unlike that provided by those developments in deep ecology which draw on eastern religious traditions, and which links a number of radical critiques, including that of feminism and of critics of the market and of instrumental reason. It is here in the account of the self I think that we find both the basis of disagreement and the seeds of potential agreement between these green positions, as well as a wider range of critiques. Feminist accounts critique egoism and view the self as embedded in a network of particular relationships, whereas deep ecology has been developed to provide an account in terms of a merged self or an expanded "Self" operating on the familiar fuel of egoism and transcending ties to the corrupting particular in favour of identification with a cosmic whole. Deep ecologists have wanted to appeal to this account of self as close to a feminist sensibility, but this has raised problems for a number of feminists.

Janet Biehl, writing in 1988 in the Canadian anarchist magazine *Kick it Over*, expresses some of this feminist misgiving when she says that this deep ecological account of the self as merged with nature seems to ask women to return to the arena of their oppression, to require that women remain egoless, unformed, and as they have been for millennia, connected to the point of self-effacement. Women and men alike are asked "to efface themselves before nature, to ignore their identity as a species in a surrender to a boundaryless, cosmic "oneness"". She argues that this connected identity has been a problem for women, who are now "intensely striving for subjectivity, precisely for selfhood and for a full recognition of their subjectivity and selfhood in a new society".
Feminists now do insist that women can no longer be relegated to the sphere of nature interpreted as exclusive of that of culture, and in these terms Janet Biehl is right in rejecting, in the name of feminism, the continued (even if now laudatory) treatment of women as undifferentiated nature by some proponents of deep ecology. Feminists reject also the altruistic, self-effacing role traditionally assigned to them in the private sphere (and often now reflected in their public sphere roles) in which their significance is entirely relational and value is assessed in terms of an ideal of feminine goodness which is instrumental to male ends, and which fails to recognise their subjectivity and self-worth and forces them to pursue their ends and goals by "living through" others. This is a form of selfhood in which the self is merged with the other, and fails to achieve true individuation.

But at the same time feminism has been equally critical of the counterpart deformation, the masculine selfhood embodied as the dominant mode in the public sphere and its institutions, especially in the market and in liberal ideals of political life. Masculine selfhood, especially as understood by object-relations theory, is seen as disconnected from the other, and as achieving its individuation ("false individuation") by forming itself reactively, in opposition to the other and the feminine. It is, or tries to be, a non-relational self, whose connections to others are always external and accidental to its sense of its own identity, and which aims to maximise satisfaction of a set of desires which take only accidental account of those of others, just as described in the theory of the market and in theorems such as the Hidden Hand. This sort of self has been characterised as "disembodied and disembedded"; its aim is power over others as a means of achieving its self-contained desires, and its mode of relating to the other is as instrument to the realisation of these ends.

These two forms of selfhood, corresponding to ideals of
masculinity and femininity as understood in certain traditional social contexts, to public and private, to egoism and altruism, to the sphere of ends and that of means, stand as complementary distortions of human individual and social possibility. At the same time modern "difference" feminism has discerned in traditional feminine selfhood and relationship to others, if translated to a new social context of equality and opportunity for women, the seeds of a different, more social and connected way of being, a self whose identity is formed in and fully acknowledges relationship to others, and potentially also to the natural world, and which reaches its ethical expression not in intellectual obeisance to abstract moral principles but in a network of relationships and responsibilities to particular others. This relational account of self is common both to some radical and some socialist feminism and to some forms of socialist and anarchist theory — for example in modern critiques of the market and in Kropotkin's account of the social individual as embedded in a network of social relations and of true social, political and ethical life as an expression of this embeddedness.

But there is an important rider here. This is not a merged or indistinguishable self, defined holistically as lacking boundaries and distinctness, and its connections to others involve usually highly particularistic ties and responsibilities. It is better viewed as a self-in-relationship, whose identity is formed not as isolated atom or in opposition to others, but by embedding in a network of relationships to particular others. It is not the sort of self described by Murray Bookchin as passive and de-individuated, but it is not the sort of self made the basis of theory by deep ecology either. There are serious conflicts and discrepancies between the deep ecologists' account of the ecological self, especially as derived from some eastern religious sources, and the feminist account of the ecological self, just as there are between feminist accounts of the basis of ecological morality and that of malestream environmental philosophy.
Deep Ecology: Unmaking Connections

Criticism of deep ecology from other positions has clustered especially around this treatment of the self, and this is now a major problem area in relating the different critiques which have come to make up green theory, especially feminism and social ecology. Social ecology and ecofeminism are hardly in much agreement on these points however, and social ecology, as expressed in the work of its leading proponent Murray Bookchin, also lacks a coherent critique of egoism or individualism, and suffers from a number of other problems. It fails to adequately critique the domination of nature which it views as reducible to human domination and hierarchy, and to the extent that the critique of anthropocentrism is essential to the ecology movement it cannot provide what is needed as the basis of a unified ethical or philosophical theory. Bookchin's account gives excessive emphasis to "second nature" over first nature, as realising the highest development of first nature, and views humans as able to foster and accelerate natural processes in a way that seems to perpetuate human arrogance. The concept of humans as nature realising consciousness recognises human continuity with nature (although in a somewhat hierarchical way which inherits the overvaluation of the intellectual sphere) but does not seem to permit adequate conceptualisation of conflicts between the human species and nature.

Nevertheless I think that Bookchin is right in part of his critique of deep ecology, that essentially deep ecology has chosen the company of American nature mysticism and of certain religious eastern traditions such as Buddhism which are popular with the west coast Americans who have developed the theory, over that of various radical movements, including feminism, it might have kept better company with. Deep ecology has chosen to develop its account of ecological self in a way which is incompatible
with these critiques and which stress a different set of connections. I think social ecology is right too about some of the political implications of this choice, that they lead away from connections with the women's movement and other radical movements and traditions, and lead towards these being seen as only accidentally connected to environmental concerns. That is, deep ecology has chosen a theoretical base which leads to a weakening of connection with other radical movements that are then seen as only accidentally connected, which from a different perspective appear essentially connected. (See Chapter Seven below). Its stance is the opposite to that of ecofeminism, which is that of making connections -- mistaken by deep ecologists for the project of reduction.

If we look to the concerns of the environment movement since its beginnings, there seems to be little doubt that it has been concerned with such conflicts, and also to raise the status of nature from its traditional role as a background to human life. The critique of anthropocentrism goes to the heart of many of those concerns, especially those oriented to preserving natural ecosystems and diversity. But it is equally clear that it has been concerned too, and equally centrally, with environmental problems as aspects of human social organisation and as a form of human oppression. That has been the main focus of many struggles over a long period, especially those turning around energy use, health and development issues, and nuclear power and nuclear weapons. This sort of concern is nicely expressed by Marge Piercy's poem The Bottom Line:

That white withered angel cancer
steals into a house through cracks,
lurks in the foundation, the walls,
litters down its infinitesimal dandruff
from school ceilings into childrens' lungs.
That invisible fungus hides in processed food,
in the cereal, the salami, the cake.
Welcomed into the body like a friend
it proceeds to eat you from inside,
parasitic wasp in a tomato worm.

29
Out of what caprice quenched in a moment's pleasure does the poison seep?
We come to mistrust the body
a slave to be starved into submission,
an other that can like a rabid dog turn on and bite a separate me.
But the galloping horse of the thighs,
the giraffe of the spine are innocent browsing their green. We die of decisions made at three fifteen in boardrooms

We die of the bottom line. We die of stockholders' dividends and a big bonus for top executives and more perks. Cancer is the white radioactive shadow of profit falling across, withering the dumb flesh.

Key aspects of environmental critiques too are centred on the way that control over and exploitation of nature contributes to, or is even more strongly linked to, control over and exploitation of human beings. As numerous research studies have shown, high technology agriculture and forestry in the third world which is ecologically insensitive also strengthens the control of elites and social inequality, increasing for example men's control over the economy at the expense of women, and it does these things not just as a matter of accident. People suffer because the environment is damaged, and also from the process which damages it, because the process has disregard for needs other than those of an elite built into it. We die of the product (the destruction of nature) and also of the process (technological brutality alias technological rationality serving the end of the marketisation of nature). As the free water we drink from common streams, the free air we breathe in common become increasingly unfit to sustain life, the biospheric means for a healthy life will increasingly be privatised, and will increasingly become the privilege of those who can afford to pay for them. The losers will be (and in many places already are) those, human and non-human, without market power, and environmental issues and issues of justice will increasingly converge. It seems that unless we are to write these two sorts of environmental concerns
off as simply divergent and disparate tendencies, an adequate theoretical account will have to cater for both sets of concerns, those concerned with human social systems and those concerned with nature, and give an important place to their connection, even unification.

Given these points it seems that both deep ecology and social ecology are unsuitable as they are currently articulated for forming the basis of such a connecting framework. Social ecology stresses environmental problems as social problems, arising from the domination of human by human, but has no adequate account of the connection to the domination of nature, while deep ecology has chosen to develop in a way which provides an account of the domination of nature but blocks its connection theoretically to human oppression, and leading theorists of deep ecology can write off any links. So deep ecology has developed in a way which has the virtue of resisting attempts to reduce the domination of nature to some form of human domination, but which attempts to direct the focus of the movement away from connections with human domination and to confine it to wilderness issues.

Both these positions provide an inadequate basis for a unifying theory. It seems that if we are to obtain such a theoretical base adequate to encompass and link the concerns of the environment movement then it is to ecological feminism that we will have to turn for it. The account of the social and ecological self developed here, together with other aspects of the ecofeminist critique such as the account of dualism and the role of the concept reason in linking a range of different hierarchies, makes it highly promising for such a task. Connections to other radical movements and traditions also flow from such an account. The domination of women is of course central to the ecofeminist understanding of domination, but is also an illuminating model for many other kinds of domination, since the oppressed are often both feminised and naturalised. The ecofeminism of writers such as Rosemary Ruether has always stressed the links between the
domination of women, of human groups and of nature. "An ecological ethic", she writes, "must always be an ethic of ecojustice that recognises the interconnection of social domination and the domination of nature". Ecofeminism provides an excellent framework for the exploration of such interconnections. I attempt here to provide some of the philosophical basis for such an account.

Ecology and Human Identity

One of my main concerns has been to apply the insights of feminist theory, both socialist feminist and radical feminist, to the development of a different account of human identity and of environmental philosophy than is provided by any of the malestream brands, including both deep ecology and more conventional environmental ethics. Both these positions employ methods and assumptions drawn from rationalism which have been used to inferiorise both women and nature, and these are discussed and rejected. The problem is reconceptualised in terms of the concepts of self and other, of difference, continuity and power, and this results in a considerable re-orientation of environmental philosophy. What becomes central is the cultural adoption of dualistic masculine models of human identity and of the self, and of nature construed in polarised terms as passive and mechanistic, that is as the underside of the dualisms of human/nature and self/other.

Modern environmental prophets such as David Suzuki have as their main, constantly stressed message that humans are animals and that we have the same dependence on a healthy biosphere as other forms of life. It is puzzling, obviously puzzling to them also, that an apparent truism should have so much force, find so much resistance and should so much need to be stressed. The reason is that western culture has for so long denied it, and has given us a picture of human identity as only accidentally connected to the earth, a picture which for all our formal knowledge
of evolution remains deeply entrenched in our conceptions of ourselves and of nature and which is reinforced by many aspects of technology and the urban life style which has become in recent times the dominant one over much of the globe. The rationalist tradition has given us an account of human identity defined in opposition both to the feminine and to nature. In the construction of an alternative, the feminist account of self as essentially related to others is extended to give an account of the ecological self which enables explanation of the instrumental treatment of nature and of its exclusion in western culture from ethical significance. The problem is not that of simply revising upward the value of nature and adding this somehow on to an otherwise unchanged structure of human identity and the institutions of liberal economic, political and social life, but that of reworking human identity and associated concepts of human society, value and virtue as they have been conceived since at least the time of the Greeks, as exclusive of and discontinuous with the inferior orders of nature and the feminine.
References.


5. Michel Foucault "Disciplinary Power and Subjection", in Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings of Michel Foucault 1972-1977, C. Gordon (ed), Harvester Press, 1980, p234. The net or web analogy is an alternative to the pillar analogy of some ecofeminists, as in "Racism, sexism, class exploitation and ecological destruction form interlocking pillars upon which the structure of patriarchy rests." (Sheila Collins quoted in Karen Warren, "Feminism and Ecology" op. cit 7.) This seems unnecessarily limiting and quantified.


9. This is suggested in some accounts, for example John Seed, Joanna Macy, Pat Fleming, Arne Naess, *Thinking Like a Mountain* New Society Publishers, Philadelphia 1988. Although there is much that challenges human identity and supremacy and invokes guilt, this is not clearly related to cultural specificity.


11. Fox, ibid, p18 asserts of ecofeminism that "The upshot is that there is no need to worry about any form of human domination other than that of androcentrism", which is certainly not the meaning of many ecofeminist claims about the way in which forms of oppression are linked.


13. Bill Devall and George Sessions *Deep Ecology: Living as if Nature Mattered*, Peregrine Smith, Salt Lake City, 1985. Sessions and Devall claim that "Deep ecology is an intellectual articulation of insights that many females have known for centuries" (p93), and add a 2 1/2 page appendix which takes the connection to be mainly that the earth is a home, and hence apparently the concern of housewifely women. Both of these presentations seem to depend on sexist stereotypes of women, (the first in terms of prelinguistic "women’s intuition" or body wisdom) and their assimilation into the field of nature, or at least are given such scant treatment as to be inadequately distinguished from these sexist positions.


17. Robin Eckersley op. cit p115.


Patriarchal religion split apart the dialectical unities of mother religion into an absolute dualism, elevating a male-identified consciousness to transcendent apriority. Fundamentally this is rooted in an effort to deny one's own mortality, to identify essential (male) humanity with a transcendent divine sphere beyond the matrix of coming-to-be-and-passing-away. By the same token, woman came to be identified with the sphere of finitude that one must deny in order to negate one's own origins and inclusion in this realm. The woman, the body and the world were the lower half of a dualism that must be declared posterior to, created by, subject to, and ultimately alien to the nature of (male) consciousness, in whose image man made his god....The patriarchal self-deception about the origins of consciousness ends logically in the destruction of the earth.

Rosemary Radford Ruether New Woman New Earth, p195.

The view that women's oppression and inferiority was linked to their connection to and immersion in the sphere of nature predates ecofeminism. It was central to the analysis of Simone de Beauvoir, and is implicit in earlier feminist analyses such as that of Mary Wollstonecraft. In these early treatments however the connection with nature is seen as negative, as precisely what women have to throw off if they are to become fully human.

What is different and new in ecofeminism is the treatment of the connection with nature as a positive rather than negative feature of women's identity, and of nature itself in positive terms. Ecofeminism is a diverse position, and different ecofeminist positions vary considerably in their accounts of how the connection with nature has arisen, what it now means for women and how it should now be dealt with. For some ecofeminists it is a matter of embracing with pride their old maternally-derived identity as part of nature — an identity they view as only doubtfully accessible to men — and empowering this as a new model of the human by having female experience determine culture.
For others the old identity of women as natural beings requires considerable transformation, and the ecofeminist project involves the development of a new human identity as both natural and cultural beings which is accessible to men as well as women. Empowering this identity is not a matter of having women replace men as power holders, but a matter of developing and empowering certain qualities, areas of life and types of social organisation which have been excluded from male dominant culture. These are found especially but not exclusively in women, because of the kinds of lives they have led and the areas of human life they have had responsibility for. What both sorts of positions have in common is the rejection of the contemporary and historical western model of human identity in terms of the alienation from and domination of nature, an understanding of this model as linked to patriarchy, and an understanding of women as oppressed by the same processes and structures of patriarchy which result in the domination and destruction of nature.

The last decade has seen the appearance of a body of powerful and passionate literature whose main theme is the link between the domination of women and the domination of nature. The ecofeminist theme has been a minor but persistent one in much recent feminist literature, especially radical feminist literature (for example in the work of Adrienne Rich, Mary O'Brien, and Mary Daly). The theme has been a major one in a number of pieces of work ranging through a variety of literary forms — from academic books and papers in philosophy, theology, politics and the history of ideas, to activist speeches and essays, poetry and novels. Much of this more specialised work can be seen as extending the concerns of feminism generally, for example showing how the same structures of domination operate to oppress both women and nature. The area has been largely ignored by academic feminism, with a few exceptions, and the wellsprings of much of the literature have come from activism, from women voicing their concern and anger at the destructiveness they see around them at women's marches, rallies and actions to save a
piece of nature or to demonstrate against nuclear technology or armaments. The literature of ecofeminism offers a striking and highly relevant historically-based critique of the development of western culture up to the present time, as well as a vision of alternatives to it.

ECOFEMINISM AND WESTERN CULTURE

Three major themes have been prominent in ecofeminist writing: two of them are historical in emphasis, explaining how western society inherited or evolved from the past its current patterns of domination of women and nature:

(1) the location of the problem for both women and nature in their place as part of a set of dualisms which have their origin in classical philosophy and which can be traced through a complex history to the present; or in some cases the location of the problem even further back in the displacement by patriarchy of matriarchy and the resulting displacement of earth-oriented goddess religion.

(2) the location of the problem for both women and nature in the rise of mechanistic science during the Enlightenment and pre-Enlightenment period.

(3) contemporary critique stressing explanations of the link based on either contemporary dualism or on difference e.g. on sexually-differentiated personality formation or consciousness, and on features of masculinity and structures of contemporary patriarchy.

Although a coherent ecofeminist historical perspective does emerge from the work of particular authors such as Rosemary Ruether, there are overall some substantive disagreements about the historical account, especially of the pre-classical period. The ecofeminist historical perspective sees the current formation of contemporary western human identity in relation to nature in terms of
the evolution of a number of phases of culture. The pre-
classical phase in which female deities were worshipped is
seen variously. On some accounts it was one in which the
worship of the life-generating and nurturing powers of the
universe, conceptualised as female, was reflected in
female power and status in society, that is, in
matriarchy or else in a society in which women held equal
power to men. For others such as Rosemary Ruether it was
a period in which the power of the earth goddess, that of
nature and of female creativity, was invoked and used by
male rulers in the service of a basically male power
structure -- the period of the conquest of the mother.

The classical period, whose contribution to our
intellectual, social and philosophical traditions is much
easier to document, has been less contentious for
ecofeminists. Its contribution to the shaping of a human
identity conceived of as outside of or in opposition to
the inferior sphere of nature and the feminine has been a
major focus of much insightful work. This identity can be
traced back to a dualism arising in classical civilisation
between male and female, reason and nature, which
associates reason with masculinity and elevates reason to
supreme status. Both ecofeminist and feminist analyses have
rejected such a dualism, and those who stress its
influence in their analysis of the problems of women and
nature include Rosemary Radford Ruether, Susan Griffin,
Elizabeth Dodson Gray, Ynestra King, Ariel Kay Salleh,
Karen J. Warren and also a number of contemporary
feminist theorists.

The first account of the historical development of this
dualistically-conceived human identity in the classical
period, and still one of the clearest and most
suggestive, was presented by Rosemary Radford Ruether in
her 1975 book *New Woman New Earth: Sexist Ideologies and
Human Liberation*. A theologian with a concern for
racism and hierarchy as well as sexism and the destruction
of nature, Ruether provides an account of the linkages
between women and nature in terms of the development and
persistence in western thought of a gendered, hierarchical dualism, developing especially from the Greek view and fusing with the Hebraic position to give the Christian tradition, and tracing this dualistic tradition briefly through neo-Platonic thought, the enlightenment and romanticism to the present day. This dualism is seen by Ruether as a feature of patriarchal religion, but it is just as much (indeed primarily) a feature of classical philosophy, transferred to patriarchal religion via the influence of classical thought on it.

Nature, Ruether points out, was not rejected in the Old Testament tradition. Although it was seen as available for human use, it was not seen as inferior, corrupt or evil, but rather as "an autonomous sphere of God's dominance and the revelation of divine power and glory ...". The Old Testament, she concludes, was patriarchal without linking this to an alienated view of creation. The element of alienation enters with the Greek tradition and classical philosophy, and especially with the development of what she calls "transcendent dualism", that view which regards consciousness as transcendent to visible nature and the bodily sphere as inferior. This spirit-nature split is then read into class and sexist relations, women, slaves and lower classes being seen as analogous to the inferior realm of bodily "nature", while ruling class males identify themselves with transcendent spirit. The result was a "naturalisation" of hierarchy, especially the hierarchy of males over females:

These two elements, absent from pre-exilic Old Testament religion, are typical of classical philosophy. Here the authentic self is regarded as the soul or transcendent rationality, over against bodily existence. As we have seen, the relation of spirit to body is one of repression, subjugation, and mastery. Material existence is ontologically inferior to mind and the root of moral evil. Moreover, the language of hierarchical dualism is identified with social hierarchy. The hierarchy of spirit over body is expressed in the dominion of males over females, freedmen over slaves, Greeks over "barbarians". Domination is "naturalized", so that the inferior ontological and moral characteristics of body in relation to mind are identified with the inferior psychobiological "natures" of women and subjugated classes.
Thus "cosmic alienation and spiritual dualism triumphed in classical Christian spirituality" and Christian neo-Platonism rejected as evil both women and the material world of the body and nature — this phase she calls "the negation of the mother". Ruether goes on to give an account of the key historical stages in reaching our current position in terms of the development of the reason / nature dualism of classical times to the modern position of public/ private dualism, in which men are identified still with the "real world" of rationality, now expressed as the sphere of rational public economic and political life, while women are limited to being custodians of the realm of "natural" feeling and relationships in the increasingly less important domestic sphere of the home. Women's identification with the inferior realm of nature undergoes a further development in the Victorian account of femininity -- the phase of "the sublimation of the mother" -- in which their motherhood is lauded but their sexuality is denied, and they are treated as weak and enfeebled. After renaissance humanism the modern version of transcendent rationality is expressed in the male realms of science and technology, as well as in public and economic life, and dualism is expressed in the enterprise of redeeming nature, through transformation by science, from the demonic sphere. The classical dualisms are retained as gendered but take a peculiarly modern form.

Ruether's pathbreaking and thought-provoking book is splendidly complemented by two others which appeared a few years later, Susan Griffin's *Women and Nature* and Elizabeth Dodson Gray's *Green Paradise Lost*. These illuminate the detail of how the critique of dualism transfers to a contemporary context and explore the effects of dualism on the consciousness of women and within the human self. Susan Griffin suggests the way in which dualistic treatment of distinctions not only elevates one side (eg reason) and inferiorises the other (eg nature, the feminine, the emotions) but also defines and narrows the concept of reason itself and its contrasts. This is an area which has also received attention from feminist...
philosophers recently (eg Genevieve Lloyd The Man of Reason). Susan Griffin writes in the preface of "going underneath logic, writing associatively ... thus my prose in the book is like poetry and like poetry always begins with feeling. One of the loudest complaints which this book makes about patriarchal thought ... is that it claims to be objective, and separated from emotion, and so it is appropriate that the style of this book does not make that separation." (p.xv). The writing conveys powerfully and dramatically the common domination and devaluation of women and nature in classical patriarchy and the rationalist tradition, placing philosophical judgements about the nature of matter side by side with opinions about the nature of women. Patriarchy speaks its absurd and oppressive edicts in the rational voice of authority and detachment (indicated by the passive voice "It is decided that..."

It is decided that matter is transitory and illusory like the shadows on a wall cast by firelight; that we dwell in a cave, in the cave of our flesh, which is also matter, also illusory; it is decided that what is real is outside the cave, in a light brighter than we can imagine, that matter traps us in darkness. That the idea of matter existed before matter and is more perfect, ideal... It is decided that matter is passive and inert, and that all motion originates from outside matter... That matter is only a potential for form or a potential for movement. It is decided that the nature of woman is passive, that she is a vessel waiting to be filled. 11

The first part of the book deals with the same themes as Ruether -- the rejection of the body, of nature and of women which reached its peak in Neo-Platonic thought and the period of the witch-craze -- and the elevation to supremacy of a transcendent masculine-identified consciousness and rationality.

And what is sublunary is decaying and corruptible. The earth "is so depraved and broken in all kinds of vice and abominations that it seemeth to be a place that hath received all the filthiness and purgings of all other worlds and ages", it is said.

And the air below the moon is thick and dirty, while the air above "shineth night and day of resplendour perpetual", it is said.

And it is decided that the angels live above the moon and aid God in the movement of the celestial spheres.
"The good angels", it is said, "hold cheap all the knowledge of material and temporal matters which inflates the demon with pride."

And the demon resides in the earth, it is decided, in Hell, under our feet.

It is observed that women are closer to the earth.

That women lead to man's corruption. Women are "the Devil's Gateway", it is said. To those without acquaintance with classical philosophy much of what is written here would appear incredible: the fact that it is an accurate if imaginative portrayal of periods of patriarchal thought needs to be conveyed by some sort of referencing system. Later sections are concerned with mechanism and the character of science and scientific knowledge. The development of the mechanistic view of nature as inert and passive, as devoid of any reality or significance except that expressed in disembodied systems of numbers, is another expression of the priority patriarchal consciousness attributes to a distorted model of rationality, as the only thing which is real, worthwhile, or capable of providing knowledge. The devaluation and suppression of the natural sphere and its construal as passive is paralleled by the suppression of femaleness, female culture and the female voice as women come to fear nature within and without, to practice muteness and to fit themselves into an instrumental mould. As the book progresses the female voice (the "we"), at first subdued and demoralised, gathers strength and confidence, and begins to explore alternatives to dualistic and mechanistic ways of perceiving the world. This voice rejects the classical account of human identity as discontinuous from or outside nature, the dualistic view of the true human home as being in a separate, superior world of culture defined in terms of reason or its creations, and the associated ontological cleavage between the perceiving, conscious and rational knower or subject and the passive object of knowledge:

We know ourselves to be made from this earth. We know this earth is made from our bodies. For we see ourselves. And we are nature. We are nature seeing nature. We are nature with a concept of nature. Nature weeping. Nature speaking of nature to nature."
A different approach to the historical account is taken by Carolyn Merchant in *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution*. This details the replacement of the organic model of nature, in which nature was seen as a living being -- usually a benevolent, nurturing mother -- by a mechanistic model in the period since the sixteenth century. It discusses also some views of nature as female and as nurturing mother in classical thought.

On Merchant's account, the identification of women with nature was by no means always negative, licensing the exercise of power over an inferior sphere, but could also be protective and respect-invoking for both. She sees the pre-sixteenth century view as one in which "the root metaphor binding the self, society, and the cosmos was that of an organism ......organismic theory emphasised interdependence among the parts of the human body, subordination of the individual to communal purposes in family, commerce and state, and vital life permeating the cosmos to the lowliest stone".

The enlightenment substituted for this organic model one of nature as empty mechanism, but also continued to treat it as a female to be interrogated by science in a metaphor in which knowledge is construed as power, and the power of the male knower (subject) over the female known (object).

**PROBLEMS IN THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

There seems to be some conflict between this account of the pre-enlightenment view of nature as organic and that of the first group of theorists stressing classical dualism and rationalism as the source of the problem, for the problem, according to Merchant's account, essentially sets in after the replacement of this pre-enlightenment organic model. According to Merchant:

*The rise of mechanism laid the foundation for a new*
synthesis of the cosmos, society, and the human being, construed as ordered systems of mechanical parts subject to governance by law and to predictability through deductive reasoning. A new concept of the self as a rational master of the passions housed in a machine-like body began to replace the concept of the self as an integral part of a close-knit harmony of organic parts united to the cosmos and society. Mechanism rendered nature effectively dead, inert and manipulable from without. As a system of thought, it rapidly gained in plausibility during the second half of the seventeenth century...

It is difficult to reconcile Merchant's account of the pre-seventeenth century concept of the self as "an integral part of a close-knit harmony of organic parts united to the cosmos and society" and of "vital life penetrating the cosmos to the lowliest stone" with the classical and neo-Platonic Christian world views of transcendent dualism discussed by the first group of ecofeminist writers, which saw the authentic self as soul or transcendent spirit divorced from the lower realms of nature and the body. The concept of the self as rational master of the passions is a major theme of classical rationalism, especially Platonic rationalism, and these dualist views appear to be the ones which triumphed in the dominant traditions of Christian thought in the pre-enlightenment period. The "pre-seventeenth century organic view" Merchant outlines seems rosy indeed, and the contrast between pre-seventeenth century organicism and later mechanism too simple. The first group of theorists seem to be correct in stressing the key role of classical dualism, and its effects on Christianity; Cartesian mechanism did not arise in a vacuum, but has its roots in this earlier dualism and rationalism. Seventeenth century mechanism takes over and intensifies the contrast between the human (mental) sphere and the inferior mindless non-human sphere, reinterpreting the world of nature as a neutral machine-like sphere open for the human mind's manipulation, instead of as an evil sphere of the devil, but it does not originate that dualism.

Despite the assembling of a great deal of detailed and sometimes suggestive historical material on various views of nature as female, and useful chapters on Bacon and
The Death of Nature does not really fulfil its promise of illuminating the conceptual connections between women and nature, or between anti-mechanism and feminism, being mainly content to find examples (of which there are very many) of metaphor or transfer of imagery from the sphere of women to that of nature and vice versa. One reason for this is that because of the failure to get to grips with the roots of the connection in pre-seventeenth century transcendent dualism, the real basis of the conceptual and historical connection has been lost, leaving only a set of metaphors apparently based on little more than convention. The thesis of the loss of a dominant organic world view before the seventeenth century would also, if correct, actually create difficulties for the ecofeminist thesis of a connection between women and nature, since it cannot explain the rejection of physicality or the treatment of women as inferior or as evil during the pre-enlightenment period. We are left with a vision of a pre-enlightenment organic pastorale which seems to correspond poorly to facts such as the witch-trials during the alleged organic period.

Nevertheless Merchant's book is impressively documented, although often from minor sources as far as the organic view is concerned. Could it be that a much older, pre-classical organic tradition has persisted as a minor one all along, often alongside the dominant tradition, its fortunes varying at different points? More work is needed to resolve these issues, and a more adequate historical account would no doubt need to be more complex than either Ruether's or Merchant's accounts, recognising different strands of tradition (and thus perhaps resolving the conflict between their accounts). Although ecofeminism is not primarily an historical thesis, the issue is an important one because it makes a difference to where the heart of the problem, both for women and for environmental philosophy, is seen to lie. If Merchant is right the key to the problem lies in mechanism and atomism, and the alternative lies in a more connected and enspirited view of nature. What the alternative is for women in developing or
rejecting their ancient association with nature is unclear. If the dualist analysis is correct (and that is the view I favour), mechanism and atomism are only part of the problem, and can essentially be explained as forms of dualism (see Chapter Five below). The overall problem is much bigger, and its ultimate and thorough resolution would also involve the reworking of gender, of dualised human identity and of large areas of culture in which interlocking dualist structures are embedded.

But the dualist analysis itself is not without its problems. None of the accounts making use of the concept of dualism or transcendent dualism (with the exception of Jaggar and Warren) clarify sufficiently this key notion, which raises a great many unanswered questions. Different authors seem to mean different things by it, some assuming that any distinction counts as a dualism, and some taking it to be a certain specially polarised distinction. (I try to clarify this notion in Chapter Four).

The account also raises a number of further unanswered questions about the nature of the link between women and nature and is in places ambiguous. For example, at a number of points Ruether suggests that the connection is a metaphor, or the transfer of a model from one sphere to another, "the reading of the spirit-nature split into class and sexist relations" (p.188 my italics); "The language of hierachical dualism is identified with social hierarchy" (p.189 my italics). . ."the structures of patriarchal consciousness that destroy the harmony of nature are expressed symbolically and socially in the repression of women" (p.196 my italics.). The last thesis seems a little stronger than the others. But the thesis that the one sphere has provided linguistic images or other symbolism for the other is a relatively weak one for ecofeminism, and provides only for a rather loose connection based apparently on convention. Why does the metaphor transfer, it is tempting to ask?

Another possibility is to understand the link as a causal
or historical connection, in which transcendental dualism arose first and actually led to the inferiorisation of the female and the non-human sphere through the identification of the female sphere with nature and the body. But this causal interpretation would strike trouble as an explanation of women's domination if patriarchy existed in times prior to transcendental dualism, and in cultures less affected by it. It seems that such an account in terms of dualism would be relevant to explaining only one form of the domination of women, the particular form it takes in western culture strongly permeated by "transcendental dualism" and other gendered dualisms, rather than being able to present a general explanation of it. This more limited explanation would be no mean achievement, and indeed if we aim to explain the destruction of nature it does seem essential to focus on the influential western model, but it is essential that the cultural relativism of such an explanation be clearly recognised.

If the thesis is interpreted as a causal thesis, it also strikes chicken and egg problems, the familiar problems of the assumption that conceptual structures are the causal agents of social change. Transcendental dualism itself presumably did not appear in a social vacuum; did it produce inferiorization of the spheres of women and nature? Or were the foundations already present in the inferior treatment of women, nature and inferior social groups such as slaves? Are women inferiorized because of identification with nature, or is nature inferiorized because of identification with the female sphere? Or are we faced with a set of interlocking structures and levels of domination which mutually evolve and reinforce one another, in turn both aiding and drawing strength from the conceptual structure of transcendental dualism? The latter seems more likely. But these questions seem to need more clarification and consideration than they have so far received.

Again, Ruether takes the rise of transcendent dualism as explanatorily basic. But in some radical feminist
frameworks, the emergence of transcendental dualism itself— the elevation of "a male-identified consciousness to transcendent apriority"— would in turn be explained in terms of sexual domination. The "excessive priority of the rational", Ruether herself suggests at one point, can be seen as compensation for males for their inability to create life— instead life is created by a male deity and males recreate and manipulate the earth through a male-identified science and technology. The emphasis on the mental is fundamentally rooted in "an effort to deny one's own mortality, to identify essential (male) humanity with a transcendent divine sphere beyond the matrix of coming-to-be and passing away".17.

Such radical feminist explanatory frameworks take sexual domination as explanatorily basic, and seek to explain the appearance of transcendent dualism in terms of it. Cultural diversity remains a problem for such explanations, since the reproductively-based features of masculinity and femininity— the ability to create life or the lack of it— which they seek to use as antecedent and as an explanatory basis were (until recently at least) universal, but the supposed consequent, the "transcendent apriority of the rational" is not a universal feature, but appears in a much more marked form in some cultures as opposed to others. These problems do not mean that such a position is not illuminating, but do point to the need for a more complex explanatory framework than one where the only dimension is that of gender.

Ecofeminism and the Mythic Past

There is major disagreement within feminist accounts concerning the period of the preclassical past for which there is only sketchy information, information which is compatible with a variety of hypotheses. Ecofeminism has had a major role in speculation about and interpretation of this period because of the crucial role the woman/nature connection is believed to have played in preclassical
goddess religions and in the mythic systems of the west. This period can be seen as a mythic past not only because it is concerned with the meaning of religion and myth, which forms much of the basis of its interpretative enterprise, but also because such interpretation is itself the creation of myth, the construction of a history to complement and extend a vision of the present and the possibilities for the future. This is explicitly recognised by Andree Collard, who writes "The history of women's oppression must continually be juxtaposed with what came before. Only then can we have a vision of what we were and therefore what we can be". In fact most of the arguments for a prepatriarchal matriarchy have taken the instrumental form followed by Collard, that such a set of beliefs would be helpful to women and assist their empowerment. The mythic past is treated as an area of freedom where choice and vision is continuous with and related to choice and vision of the future. Thus different feminist and ecofeminist approaches to the contemporary issue of women's identity have been engaged in constructing their own versions of the preclassical period of goddess worship, as well as in deconstructing the authorised androcentric versions.

The chief area of contention is the question of whether goddess worship represented a period when nature was revered and women were powerful, a period some characterise as matriarchy and others as a period of sex-equality or partnership. To many advocates of the matriarchal hypothesis this is simply obvious and does not need further consideration or argument. Thus Andree Collard writes "Earth/Goddess worship is always a sign of matriarchal organisation". As Riane Eisler puts it "It further seems logical that women would not be seen as subservient in societies that conceptualised the powers governing the universe in female form -- and that "effeminate" qualities such as caring, compassion and non-violence would be highly valued in these societies". But as Rosemary Ruether among others points out, this conclusion does not follow. She envisages the social context of goddess worship as one
in which already ruling males exercise power (as sons) through the mother goddess and take over these creative powers, conceptualised as female, in the service of a male-dominated elite. Human identity was conceived in terms of dependence on female nature, rather than as master of it, but in Ruether's view "this stage of religious symbols also represents the first stage of a male cooptation of the female into a system of power exercised by males" — the conquest of the mother.

It is hard to accept the identification of goddess-worship with female power which is so uncritically made by many contemporary advocates, especially given that worship may be based not upon reverence for female creative power but upon envy of it or upon the attempt to compensate for it, assimilate it, or obtain such power for males. That the worship of female deities and the conception of nature as a female deity is neither necessary nor sufficient for women's social empowerment is borne out not only by Ruether's analysis of Egyptian and other ancient uses of the mother goddess, but by the continued conceptualisation of nature and the earth as a divine female in periods (eg the mediaeval and late classical periods) when women had poor social status. Some contemporary non-western religions, such as some of the cargo cults of New Guinea, also present examples where the major deities are female but women do not hold much social power or status, and where religion may use female deities to compensate males for their role in reproduction or to obtain access to or control over power conceived as female.

Nevertheless while female deities do not imply female power in society as so often assumed, they may be compatible with it and may in some cases be suggestive of a still earlier social phase of women's empowerment which "the conquest of the mother" succeeded. Differences on this point are not crucially problematic for ecofeminism, since neither the critique of the succeeding periods nor the conception of contemporary alternatives depends in any
crucial way on the assumption of a matriarchal or sex-equal "golden age". Neither is the treatment of the mythic past as an area of freedom for the construction of helpful myths necessarily problematic; where there is scanty or conflicting evidence and a number of competing theories are compatible with that evidence, there is an area of freedom and choice, and choice of theory will usually be a matter of preference based on politics, values, or some view of the significance of the past for the present. It is better to recognise the bases for theory choice explicitly as Collard and others have done than to hide them, (as is done in so much malestream theory which refuses to consider accounts which are not androcentric), and better still to indicate the range of options as well as the reasons for choice. Dogma and irrationalism sets in not with choice based on values but when such choices are treated as not open to revision in the light of further evidence or changing values. So far androcentric interpretations of the mythic past are at least as liable to the charge of dogmatism and lack of historical fidelity as gynocentric ones.

The question of the historical fidelity of current feminist reconstruction and revival of goddess-worship as an ecological and gynocentric religion is a vexed one, but the real problems and dangers do not seem to lie in the much canvassed issue of its historical fidelity, but in its current content, political directions, and in the adequacy of the gynocentric outlook it is associated with. Because so much of the story is a blank, appeals to a past period of matriarchy or goddess worship are usually attempts to transpose onto the past questions which really arise in and require resolution in a contemporary context. It is also to misrepresent the nature of these questions, and thereby options for both the present and the future.

We need to ask why those who see the need for a contemporary woman-centred, ecological religion need to find it inscribed in the past. The construction of a new...
ecological and post-patriarchal culture (which may involve a spiritual component) is crucial, but its viability and defensibility do not depend upon discovering its replica in the past. Such a discovery would wear an ambiguous face as far as a demonstration of viability is concerned, since its demise and replacement could be seen as demonstrating its lack of viability, and unless we were able to discover more about its actual features would do very little either to settle issues about the likely political consequences of its contemporary adoption. Often the real, largely unacknowledged reason for the desire to believe that ancient goddess-worship provides what is currently needed is the belief that true human nature is and has always been gynocentric, and that the period of patriarchal culture is an aberration from that true nature to which a revival of gynocentric culture will return us. This aims to legitimate a current gynocentrism by giving it the mantle of naturalness, just as androcentrism has for so long been legitimated, and presupposes an atemporal, culturally universal female nature.

This does not mean that there is not a great deal of point in questioning androcentric assumptions about the past and the way in which sexist cultural evolution theory projects male values from the present onto the past. Collard is right in her claim that perspectives on the past have a deep effect on how present potentialities are seen. A feminist account will seek to reject the assumption that women played a passive and auxiliary role in the development of human culture, just as feminists reject that account for the present, and to affirm continuity with past women and their lives and achievements. But this is not the same as finding a fully developed solution to contemporary problems and a contemporary identity in a remote and idealised period of history, and politically it is much more open than the assumption that the past conformed to one among the several contemporary options to androcentrism, the gynocentric one.

The attempt to construct a religious context for
affirmation of kinship with nature and of women must be assessed on its own merits rather than legitimated in terms of the mythic past. There are many merits in the affirmation of community, of embodiment, emotionality and continuity with animals and nature found in current goddess religion, and in the celebration of women as powerful and creative. But as a number of critics have pointed out, there are also many problems and dangers. The dangers and problems in current attempts to "revive" goddess-worship lie mainly in potentialities for reproducing patriarchal and hierarchical patterns in subtle forms, for example through the construction of a reverse demonology, and a reverse account of virtue. Hilde Hein argues that "adherents of the Goddess religion do not deny the role ascribed to women by patriarchy, but they reverse the patriarchal estimation of its value". Women's essential nature is still conceived in terms of motherhood, the body and closeness to nature. Such an approach preserves patriarchal dualism and its ways of conceiving human experience, rather than challenging or escaping those ways. It continues a tradition which, as Luce Irigaray notes, "continually presents and represents us with the glorious satisfaction of motherhood, but rarely with that of womanhood". The role of female divinity in reinforcing hierarchy is another problem some have pointed to; as Irigaray notes "There is no great advantage in resisting the man-woman hierarchy, woman-State, a certain woman-God, or woman-machine only to fall back under the power of nature-woman, animal-woman, or even matriarch-woman or women-women".

For Rosemary Ruether the problem faced by a gynocentric religion which affirms what has been denied, suppressed and devalued in western culture is the same as that faced by romanticism in its affirmation of an alternative to the dominant aspects of western culture, that "it casts people into false options between the dominant and suppressed consciousness", between the biblical and the pagan, the rational and the instinctual, the "masculine" and the "feminine". There is no good reason why such an
attempt to construct a contemporary ecological and feminist religion has to follow these well-worn paths which lead to the creation of an inverted image of the androcentric worldview, (except that because they are well-worn they are easy to follow). But as we shall see susceptibility to this kind of problem and danger provides an important watershed between different anti-androcentric positions and strategies. It is a problem inherent in the gynocentric strategy of substitution of a feminine model for the masculine one as providing the true content of human identity, where feminine and masculine have been conceived and determined, as in usual patriarchal culture, in terms of a polarity or dualism. This problem appears repeatedly in contemporary ecofeminist critiques and visioning of alternatives through a whole range of areas.

THE CONTEMPORARY CRITIQUE: SEX OR GENDER?

Much of the ecofeminist critique continues to emphasise the importance of dualism in a contemporary rather than historical context. For example the role of dualism and of patriarchal religion is one of the themes taken up in Elizabeth Dodson Gray's book Green Paradise Lost: Remythig Genesis. She argues that the perception of difference in nature and between species has been shaped by hierarchical dualism and treated as one of superiority-inferiority. She presents, with many clear and well thought out examples, the beginnings of an alternative environmental philosophy, adopting a strongly anti-instrumental view, rejecting the "human stewardship" approach to nature as too paternalistic and implicitly hierarchical, and stressing connectedness and continuity between living things. Dodson Gray is one of the few ecofeminist writers who has begun to address the details of a feminist environmental philosophy and ethics concerned with relations with the non-human world, most being concerned only with its broad outlines. There has been little interaction between environmental philosophy and feminist thought in this area. Dodson Gray
argues against anthropocentrism, seeing humans as having justified the view of humans as superior by the question-begging route of making what they (that is, humans) do best the true measure of superiority. Elizabeth Dodson Gray applies the critique of dualism especially to the treatment of nature in the form of the human body, illustrating the still honoured and influential place of such dualism in contemporary thought by a critique of the work of Ernest Becker. Becker's *The Denial of Death*, which won a Pulitzer Prize, has become a favourite target for feminists, because it displays an almost Platonic aversion to and horror of the body, with added existential flavouring. It draws together and sums up many patriarchal themes, showing by example how negative attitudes to the body are associated with aversion to women, nature and with anthropocentric arrogance towards animals. The mental and symbolic, Becker assures us, give man the place of "a small god in nature", but his sorrow is the body, source of painful contradiction and of problem, "a material fleshy casing that is alien to him in many ways", which bleeds, decays and dies and forces the "small god" to participate in the awful mortality of the natural world. The identification of the authentic human self with the mental and undecaying and of the body as a "problem" external to the self is a further Platonic feature of Becker's account. Becker's connection of the problem area of the body and the physical with the equally problematic female is clearly made, as Dodson Gray points out.

The hierarchic paradigm, she suggests, has produced a severing of connections with the body and nature, the body being nature in the human form. The rejection of nature and physicality carries with it the rejection of woman. Although highly critical of patriarchy's inferiorisation of the body, Dodson Gray accepts its view of woman as determined by nature and the body to a far greater extent than men; because of the reproductive cycle, she claims, it is much harder for women to escape a sense of connection to the natural world. Woman's bodily experience, she
suggests "an inescapable limit upon her physical existence. It would be difficult for such a woman to dream up a sense of herself as unlimited or as all-conquering mind or as a Promethean self". There is no comparable experience for most men, she suggests. In the closing chapters she outlines an alternative of openness to and connectedness with the natural world and the body; the body (and its limitations) can be valued positively and not negatively as it is in a framework of hierarchical dualism.

Difference and the Body: Sex Or Gender?

The argument raises the question of how far ecofeminism is a thesis about sex, about differently sexed bodies and the consequences of them for the formation of attitudes to the natural world, and how far it is a thesis about gender, about the social significance given to bodies and bodily difference. The argument as presented by Dodson Gray and by some kinds of radical feminism seems to try to ground an alternative and universal female consciousness in sex, in different reproductive features of the female body, and this raises some problems. The male body does seem to offer comparable experiences of limitation not only through sickness and disease but because humans are quite limited beings, in the sense that they are unable to do many things that other species of animals can do, and many things that machines can do, as well as many things they might imagine themselves doing or want to do. And it is only from a particular social perspective (that of male dominance and of the male as a norm) that the female body is seen as more limiting than the male, is seen in terms of inability, is so construed and so constructed. Both male and female bodies are limited, although in different ways. It is what men and women make of this experience of limitation that is different, and here feminists such as Simone de Beauvoir have shown how, in western society at least, women are expected to accept bodily limitation (and other kinds of limitation as well), while men are expected to chafe against it and challenge it. But this difference does not just arise from the body, and to treat it as if it does is
to is to write out the social context of male dominance.

There are similar problems in the idea that there is a single, universal female bodily experience, inaccessible to men, which provides, unmediated by culture, a link to nature. Menstruation, Dodson Gray's example, may be viewed and experienced very differently depending on its social context; it is not a pure, cultureless, "female" (sex) bodily experience of connection to nature. For example in a culture which treats nature as alien to human identity and women as alien to the norm of humanity, menstruation may be viewed highly negatively and confirm the view of nature as an obstacle to and hindrance to the truly human life; it becomes a badge of shame for women who must share the state of fallen nature, or is seen as the takeover of the body by the force of necessity alien to true humanity, as described by Simone de Beauvoir. But those of us who have seen such views challenged and changed (perhaps not as much as we would like, but to some extent) in our own lifetimes will be aware that such meanings are not built-in but are acquired in a given social context. But the same is true of the treatment of menstruation as providing a link to nature and a sense of proper limitation regarding nature.

Similar points can be made about nurturance; although women's reproductivity may be shared with female animals, so is men's shared with male animals, and so are many other features of our human lives. Although it is true that this shared area of reproductivity is a more important part of most women's lives and identities than it is of men's, that is also not something which should be seen as due just to nature, at least not according to feminists; it can be changed, and is changing. It is doubtful that we can find a clear sense in which such female experience can be seen as providing, independently of social context and meaning, a universal female characteristic of limitation or closeness to nature based in female bodies.
This is not to argue that bodily difference is irrelevant and has no role in determining consciousness, that culture or mind is the only relevant factor in the framing of gender. If the body and bodily experience is not pure nature, neither is it pure culture. Gender is a matter of the social significance of the sexed body, and hence has to be seen as involving both nature and culture, and usually not in separable ways. A polarising and dualising nature/culture distinction distorts this area as many others, encouraging a dualistic treatment of the sex/gender distinction as either a matter of pure nature (sex, the body) or of gender treated as pure culture, or else counselling its abandonment if it does not conform to this pattern.

The treatment of female bodily experience in terms identifying it with pure nature, now valued positively, reproduces the dualist reversal strategy discussed above. Thus it is questionable how far such a treatment of body and of woman's connection to it is successful in escaping, rather than merely reversing, the dualism Dodson Gray criticises. The acceptance of the closer connectedness of women with the body and nature seems to flirt with the romantic position of accepting the dualistic division but assigning a positive valuation to the hitherto negatively-valued side, the side of physicality, the body, bodily limitation and of women. Such reverse value strategies fail to take account of the way in which superiority/inferiority, dominance and polarisation, complementarity and exclusiveness, have developed together as part of a system of power in which exclusion from valued activities and confinement to less valued ones becomes written into gender.

The resulting apparent acceptance of female confinement to immanence is unacceptable from a feminist point of view. It seems at times to come dangerously close to implicitly accepting the polarities which are part of the dualism, and to trying to fix up the result by a reversal of the valuation which would have men joining women in immanence.
and identifying the authentic self as the body. As an important group of ecofeminists now argue, a questioning of the negative valuation assigned to the physical sphere is certainly needed, but a real solution will involve much more, questioning not only the negative valuation of the sphere of physicality but also the polarised way in the mind/body human/nature, male/female and nature/culture dichotomies (among others) have been defined, and other parts of the dualistic framework as well. Thus Karen Warren writes of radical feminism's location of women on the nature side of the nature/culture dualism:

"...it mystifies women's experience to locate women closer to nature than men, just as it underplays important aspects of the oppression of women to deny the connection of women with nature, for the truth is that women, like men, are both connected to nature and separate from it, natural and cultural beings. Insofar as radical feminism comes down in favor of one side or the other of nature/culture dualism -- by locating women on the nature or on the culture side -- it mistakenly perpetuates the sort of oppositional thinking for which patriarchal conceptual frameworks are criticised."  

Dodson Gray's draws attention however to the way in which acceptance of the body does involve accepting limitation, and the way in which conceiving identity in terms of "a Promethean self" beyond the body involves a particular kind of rejection of limitation and a view of the true self as outside nature. She is right in taking this view of limitation to be associated with masculinity and the rationalist tradition, (and perhaps to an even greater extent with the Marxist tradition) and in suggesting that it needs to be abandoned or modified in forming an ecological identity, that we need to see ourselves as much more limited with respect to nature than the western tradition has permitted. "The Promethean self" of the west sees itself as transcendent, having virtually unlimited powers and rights with respect to nature. The more modest attitudes of other cultures have often seen this as hubris and the acceptance of limitation (sometimes treated as feminine) is a major message of non-western texts such as the Tao-Te-Ching. As Chief Joseph put it in his discussion of white men's ways in 1873: "We were content to let
things remain as the Great Spirit made them. They were not, and would change the rivers if they did not suit them" 39.

Does this mean that such an ecological self involves here a feminine model, accepting the kind of traditional feminine immersion in nature which has been so oppressive to women on the analysis of feminists such as Simone de Beauvoir? It depends of course on which limitation and how much; even Taoists do not accept everything. But that it has been so oppressive is partly due to the fact that it has been just women who have been thus required to accept limitation, "immanence", and that this is part of the context of their social oppression in a society where full humanity is defined in terms of not accepting it, and part of a pattern of domination in which feminine immanence contrasts with masculine transcendence. If acceptance of limitation is now to be taken as an ecological virtue it must clearly be so for everybody, not just women, and is thus different from traditional subordinated feminine passivity and immanence.

But on the kind of analysis involved in the critique of dualism, what is needed here is not so much general acceptance of a traditional feminine model of passivity and immanence based in inequality, as a rethinking of these concepts themselves and the way in which the dominant western model for human/nature relations has developed as part of a gendered pattern of domination in which both nature and women are seen as acted upon by a dominant and transcendent masculine subjectivity, that is, the dualistic construction of the transcendence/immanence, masculine/feminine, and human/nature contrasts as a relationship of dominance and subordination.

THE CRITIQUE OF MASCULINITY

An alternative approach to ecofeminism follows out a rather different strategy to those discussed above based in the historical account and the critique of dualism. This alternative appeals to difference theory and the critique
of masculinity to explain ecological destruction. But difference and masculinity are treated by the different feminist positions in very different ways, and this leads to different perspectives on 'ecofeminism. This area has been ably discussed by Karen Warren, who has traced the way in which the four leading feminist positions of liberal, Marxist, socialist and radical feminism treat environmental issues and issues of women's relation to nature.

Neither liberal nor Marxist feminists, if they remain faithful to their father theories, can treat seriously the issue of an alternative ecological self based in a critique of western relations to gender and nature, since both positions are committed to the existing paradigm of human identity in which nature is what is to be left behind in the formation of the truly human aspects of social and individual identity. But for both radical feminism and for those broader forms of socialist or anarchist feminism which have been less influenced by the Marxist treatment of nature, the issue of framing a new ecological identity which integrates a critique of gender does arise, but is treated in very different ways. Radical feminism has indeed addressed the issue as one requiring radical change, and mainly seen the new identity as needing to be based on rejection of masculinity and the adoption of a feminine model. Radical feminist treatments of the destruction of nature have tended not only to reduce the problem to one of gender difference, blaming masculinity and allowing other factors only a minor role or none at all, but have tended to deal with gender difference as a cultural universal. Thus Andree Collard writes:

Just as the Goddess had the same characteristics the world over, so the God is similar everywhere. Man, too, named himself through his gods and took his images with him wherever he went. Woman had perceived herself as being like unto nature; man named himself as distinct from nature.

But any attempt to thus explain the problem of environmental destructiveness in terms of differences which are treated as culturally universal, whether of the
features of the female body or of the male body, seems to be doomed to failure. Such an explanation is much too diffuse, implicating all male humans, and indeed in some cases all male animals. Environmental destructiveness is not a feature of all cultures, and does not appear to correlate in any simple way with male/female dominance patterns within cultures. Contemporary forms appear to be especially to western culture and technology and its treatment of nature in terms of a genderised nature/culture dualism. Radical feminism's insensitivity to cultural context slips easily into ethnocentrism, taking a western viewpoint for granted as the universal context of human life. This does not mean that gender is not implicated, but that it is necessary to examine not just maleness but the different forms of masculinity as they are worked out in different cultural contexts. It does not mean either that radical feminist work in the area has not contributed many very valuable insights, or that some claims may not be valid in specific cultural contexts, but rather that these have often been given the wrong significance.

Collard supports her view by implicating original male association with a culturally universal activity — hunting — as the source of a violent and predatory attitude towards nature and animals, later extended to women. Feminist thinkers have rightly challenged the emphasis on hunting in the thinking of male dominated accounts of human cultural evolution; but this blanket condemnation of hunting seems a harsh judgement on the many human cultures which have lived responsibly and sensitively with their non-human surroundings, including controlled hunting of animals in their activities as any group which exploits the food chain fully must do. Hunting is, as Collard claims, a violent act, but the social context of the act can give it a different significance from the social cultivation of violence. Thus Indian hunters variously evolved a special sacred relationship with the hunted animal, invoked its consent by ritual means, explaining the depth of their need, and carried out religious ceremonies to place the
act in a context of continuity between life forms and of respect for the slain. Hunting is not divided strictly according to gender, and in many societies (Australian Aboriginal society is an example) women regularly hunted and killed small animals, whose claim to consideration is presumably not invalidated by their small size. The normal hunting context of contemporary western society is very different. It is that of an instrumental masculinity, treating the world as its oyster, killing for pleasure and without true need or sometimes even purpose, an approach thoroughly condemned by many traditional hunters such as Black Elk:

"I can remember when the bison were so many that they could not be counted, but more and more Wasichus came to kill them until there were only heaps of bones scattered where they used to be. The Wasichus did not kill them to eat; they killed them for the metal that makes them crazy; and they took only the hides to sell. Sometimes they did not even take the hides, only the tongues; and I have heard that fire-boats came down the Missouri River loaded with dried bison tongues. You can see that the men who did this were crazy. Sometimes they did not even take the tongues; they just killed and killed them because they liked to do that. When we hunted bison, we killed only what we needed."

Masculinity is certainly implicated, but in a specific cultural context and in combination with other factors. Explanation in terms of a universal masculinity suppresses or takes such social context for granted, or as in the case above, invalidly extrapolates a particular social context. Western culture is also implicated, but the destructiveness of western culture has a great deal to do with the way in which it has conceived the nature/culture distinction in terms of a male/female relationship of domination and subordination.

There is a case for treating masculinity in a less monolithic fashion. Although there may be some things we can say about masculinity as a cultural universal, mostly we will need to focus on particular social and cultural forms of gender, both between societies and within societies -- on forms of masculinity rather than masculinity. This provides a better explanatory
framework since it enables gender to function non-reductively in explanations; it enables explanation to take account of gender in combination with other factors, which seems likely to provide a better approach to explaining the destruction of nature given that the alignment of gender with the culture/nature contrast (which is a major factor in most of the explanations advanced so far) is culturally specific. Thus much of the problematic content of contemporary masculinity in the west as far as nature is concerned derives from its alignment with the market and other institutions of the public sphere. These, as I shall argue, continue and enhance the conception of human/male identity in terms of discontinuity from nature handed down by the classical and rationalist tradition.

The appeal to universal and invariant formations of gender adopted by some forms of radical feminism to account for ecological destruction must be rejected, along with the attempt to reverse the value of feminine characteristics and to discover a universal female experience which ensures that women are closer to nature. Nevertheless there is something that seems profoundly right about the idea that we need, as a culture, to review and upgrade the value of the feminine forms and areas of life, and that this is highly relevant to our culture's ecological crisis. This is the perception that the omission, subordination and devaluation of what has been set apart as feminine/natural has profoundly distorted male dominant culture, and especially those areas of it which have had to do with nature, the formation of the self, and human identity. Jean Baker Miller provides some insight into what this distortion has meant:

In the course of projecting into women's domain some of its most troublesome and problematic exigencies, male-led society may have also simultaneously, and unwittingly, delegated to women not humanity's "lowest needs" but its "highest necessities" — that is, the intense, emotionally connected creativity necessary for human life and growth.

This process of distortion and omission, which has applied both to women and to nature, has meant that the dominant spheres of
western culture are incapable of acknowledging, valuing and sustaining certain important kinds of relationships, and these include. I shall argue, not only the kinds of relationships to others relegated to women's mode of existence but certain important kinds of relationships with nature (nature both within and without). And nature itself is not among humanity's "lowest needs", as western culture has for so long thought, but among its "highest necessities". We need to begin a process of acknowledging and recognising (in the full sense) the feminine and natural processes have been the disregarded and denied "background" to our lives, and to recognise our essential human relationship to the earth, at both the individual and social levels.

Ecofeminism has understood the need for recognition of nature and the feminine, has seen that these projects of reintegration and reclamation must go together. But we have seen some of the reasons to distrust the simple "reversal" model of reintegration and revaluing which has been put forward by some ecofeminist and romantic thinkers. The anti-dualist critique of this reversal strategy has been powerful, but has not yet supplied an alternative model. That problem, of what model we might adopt to reclaim and honour these subordinated and denied feminine/natural aspects of our culture and ourselves, is one of the main ones which I address in the following chapters.
References


5. For example Adrienne Rich op. cit.; Alison Jaggar Feminist Politics and Human Nature, Harvester, Brighton, Sussex 1983; Genevieve Lloyd The Man of Reason, Methuen,

6. Rosemary Radford Ruether *New Woman New Earth*, op. cit. p.188.


15. Ibid p1.


17. Ruether op. cit. p197.


24. Merchant op. cit.


26. See the dispute in Charlene Spretnak The Politics of Women's Spirituality, Anchor New York 1982, and especially Sally R. Binford "Myths and Matriarchies", p541 and following discussion.

27. As in the chapters on hunting in Elaine Morgan The Descent of Woman, Bantam, New York 1972; Andree Collard op. cit, ch 2; Riane Eisler op. cit.


29. Luce Irigaray op. cit, p3.

30. Ibid, p6; see also Gloria Z. Greenfield "Spiritual Hierarchies: The Empress' New Clothes?", in Spretnak (ed) op. cit, p531.

32. Elizabeth Dodson Gray, op. cit., p10, 11.


34. Dodson Gray, op. cit., p111.

35. See Lynne Segal *Slow Motion*, Virago, London 1990.

36. For a critique of the treatment of gender as pure culture found in "sex-role stereotyping" see Moira Gatens "A Critique of the Sex/Gender Distinction", *Intervention*, February, 1983; for a further critique of its treatment as indistinguishable from sex see Val Plumwood "Do We Need a Sex/Gender Distinction?" *Radical Philosophy* 51, Spring 1989; see also Alison Jaggar op. cit., and "Human Biology in Feminist Theory: Sexual Equality Reconsidered", in Carol C. Gould op. cit. Gender has often been understood as pure culture, as if the body was irrelevant. But the alternative is not to treat it as indistinguishable from nature (sex). The distinction may still be useful and viable if treated in non-dualistic ways, and can be used to provide some sensitivity to social and cultural context, rather than to treat gender as reducible to culture.


40. Thus Alison Jaggar defines the socialist feminist conception of freedom in the following terms: "For socialist feminism, freedom consists in transcending the realm of necessity in every area of human life, including sexuality and procreation." *Feminist Politics and Human Nature* op. cit. p306. On some of the problems with such an
account from an ecological perspective see Val Plumwood "On Karl Marx as an Environmental Hero", Environmental Ethics, Vol 3 , Fall 1981. The account defines human freedom by exclusion of nature.


42. We need to ask too how predatory animals fit into this picture, and how a position which treats in this fashion the predation carried out by so many animal species can claim to foster kinship with nature, in which "woman perceived herself as like unto nature " while man "named himself as distinct from nature". If nature is not all "red in tooth and claw" it is not all peace and harmony either, so being like unto nature in this respect should mean some solidarity with predators. Does it mean too that we should aim for a world without predators ?


44. Although their treatment as simply plural , as "masculinities", as in R. W. Connell Gender and Power, (Allen and Unwin, Sydney ,1988), is perhaps too fragmenting and risks their being seen as unrelated and hence loss of a gender perspective and critique .


46. The time-honoured treatment of nature as an "externality" in the market is a scandalous denial of this essential relationship, and treats it as not even accidentally connected to the utility of the market self. Current "reform" attempts to treat nature by "putting a price" on natural amenity treat it as only accidentally related to the self and its interests. But the market is incapable of acknowledging any essential relationships anyway, whether for nature or anything else.
Male-dominant culture, as all feminists have observed, defines masculinity and femininity as contrasting forms. In contemporary society, men are defined as active, women as passive; men are intellectual, women are intuitive; men are inexpressive, women emotional; men are strong, women weak; men are dominant, women submissive, etc; ad nauseam. To the extent that women and men conform to gendered definitions of their humanity, they are bound to be alienated from themselves. The concepts of femininity and masculinity force both men and women to overdevelop certain of their capacities at the expense of others. For instance men become excessively competitive and detached from others; women become excessively nurturant and altruistic. Whether one believes with liberal feminism that men more than women have been allowed to develop their more human capacities or whether one believes with radical feminism that women are more fully human than men, the fact remains that both sexes have been prevented from the full and free development of their productive capacities. Both sexes are fragmented distortions of human possibility. Both sexes are alienated from their humanity.


There is now a growing awareness that the western philosophical tradition which has identified, on the one hand, maleness with the sphere of rationality, and on the other hand, femaleness with the sphere of nature, has provided one of the main intellectual bases for the domination of women in western culture.

There are plenty of good reasons for feminists to distrust both the concept of rationality and the notion of links with nature and the concept of nature. Both of these concepts and their contrasts have been major tools used to inferiorize and exclude women (as well as other groups). The main function of the concept of rationality, which has a confusing array of senses in which it is often hard to discern any precise content, seems to be a self-congratulatory one for the group thought to possess the prized quality and the exclusion and denigration of the contrasting group which does not. Thus the sphere of rationality variously contrasts with and excludes the
sphere of the emotions, the body, the passions, nature, the non-human world, faith, matter and physicality, experience and madness. The masculine rational sphere of public life, production, social and cultural life and rational justice is contrasted with the feminine sphere of the private, domestic and reproductive life, the latter representing the natural and individual as against the social and cultural. Again, the rational masculine sphere is a sphere where human freedom and control are exercised over affairs and over nature, especially via science and in active struggle against nature and over circumstances. In contrast, the feminine natural and domestic sphere represents the area of immersion in life, the natural part of a human being, the sphere of passivity, acceptance of unchangeable human nature and natural necessity, of reproduction and necessary and unfree labour.

In these cases there is not merely a contrast but an unfavourable one; the sphere associated with femininity and nature is accorded lower value than that associated with masculinity and freedom. In all the senses of rationality, the "rational" side of the contrasts is more highly regarded and is part of the ideal human character, so that women, to the extent that they are faithful to the divergent ideals of womanhood, emerge as inferior, impoverished or imperfect human beings, lacking or possessing in a reduced form the admired characteristics of courage, control, rationality and freedom which make humans what they are, and which, according to this view, distinctively mark them off from nature and the animal. Feminine "closeness to nature" in this sense is hardly a compliment. The ideals of the masculine sphere and those of humanity are identical or are convergent. Those of femininity and humanity are divergent. To put the point another way, the ideals of the rational sphere give us a character model of the human which is masculine.
The concept of nature too has been and remains a major tool in the armoury of conservatives intent on keeping women in their place and supporting a rigid division of sexual spheres, or worse. It is allegedly nature, not contingent and changeable social arrangements, which determines that the lot of women will be that of reproduction and domestic arrangements and which justifies inequality. Women have been seen as connected with nature in both its two major different contrast senses, that of nature in contrast to culture or society, the realm of necessity in contrast to that of freedom, of controllable human cultural and social arrangements, and that of nature in contrast to the human world, or what is distinctively human in the world. The first sense, in which what is natural is what is not open to explanation or change, inspires the following conservative comment:

"Nature isn't fair, and never will be - it is not concerned with justice. Nature has made Man with more Assertion, so that he will not willingly let Woman take first place. If she tries to he will always feel his manhood affronted, and he will not like her so much. It isn't fair, but it is a fact. ... Without women men will always fight and drink and live like crows - they are really little savages. It's women who are the homemakers, the civilisers, the gentle, the beautiful ones - and all they require of men is Security and Love. But they get more enjoyment out of the Arts, more fun out of being creative, more love out of little children, more depth out of life. To ask to be equal as well - is it really fair?"


As Genevieve Lloyd has noted in her book The Man of Reason, however, the attitude to both women and nature resulting from the identification has not always been a simple one, and as Carolyn Merchant notes, it has not always been purely negative3. The connection has sometimes been used to provide a limited affirmation of both women and nature for example, in the romantic tradition. But the dominant tradition has been one in which the connection with nature accords women a lower status (even if one that is sometimes
accorded some virtue as a "complement"), and has been used to confine them to limited and impoverished lives.

Given this background, it is not surprising that many feminists regard with some suspicion a recent view, expressed by a growing number of writers in the ecofeminist camp, that there may be something to be said in favour of feminine connectedness with nature, and that there are important connections between the oppression of women and the domination and destruction of the natural world which feminism cannot afford to ignore. The very idea of a feminine connection with nature seems to many to be regressive and insulting, summoning up images of women as passive, reproductive animals, contented cows immersed in the body and in unreflecting experiencing of life.

It is both tempting and common therefore for feminists to view the traditional connection between women and nature as no more than an instrument of oppression, a relic of the bad old days which should simply wither away once its roots in an oppressive tradition are exposed. After all, this is 1990. It seems obvious enough that women must now claim full and equal participation in the sphere of humanity and rationality from which they have been excluded, and to which their traditional sphere of nature has been opposed. Freed of traditional prejudice and of the traditionally enforced tie to the natural, women can at last take their place simply as equal human beings. The connection with nature is best forgotten. Women (especially modern women) have no more real connection with nature than men.

But there are several reasons why this widespread, "commonsense" approach to the issue is unsatisfactory. There are several reasons why the question of a woman-nature connection can't just be set aside, why the question should be examined carefully by feminists. The first of these, which is developed in the first part of the chapter, is that it is essential to give critical examination to the issue because of its repercussions both for the model of humanity and for the treatment of nature.
The second reason, which is developed in the later part of the chapter, is that it is essential for feminism to address the issue because the ecofeminist argument reveals an important ambiguity in feminist theory itself. Examination of the ecofeminist argument can throw valuable light on questions at the heart of feminism itself, and has significant implications for distinguishing different strains of feminism and different associated strategies.

The commonsense approach might better be called the "naive" approach on analogy with naive realism in epistemology, since like naive realism it takes to be unproblematic what is not unproblematic. According to the naive view, the connection of women with nature should simply be set aside as a relic of the past, the problem for both women and men being that of becoming simply, unproblematically and fully human. But the question of what is human is itself now highly problematic, and one of the areas in which it is most problematic is in the relation of humans to nature, to the non-human world.

Another problem is that what is in question is not just a model of feminine connectedness with and passivity towards nature, but also a contrasting and complementary one of masculine disconnectedness from and domination of nature. But the assumptions in the masculine model are not seen as such because the masculine model is taken for granted as simply a human model and the feminine as a deviation from that. Hence to simply repudiate the old tradition of feminine connection with nature and to put nothing in its place, usually amounts to implicitly endorsing an alternative masculine model of the human and of human relations to nature and to implicitly endorsing also female absorption into this model. It is not, as it might at first appear, a neutral position, because unless the question of relation to nature is explicitly put up for consideration and renegotiation, it is already settled -- and settled in an unsatisfactory way -- by the dominant western model of humanity into which women will be fitted.
This is a model of domination and transcendence of nature, in which freedom and virtue are construed in terms of control over, and distance from, the natural sphere. The critique of the domination of nature developed by environmental philosophers in the last 10 years has shown I think that there are excellent reasons to be critical of this model. Unless there is some critical re-evaluation of this masculine model in the area of relations to nature, the old female/nature connection will be replaced by a dominant model of distance from, transcendence and control of nature which is masculine. Some critical examination of the question then has to have a place, and an important one, on the feminist agenda if a masculine model of the human and of human relations to nature is not to triumph by default.

**Feminism and the Inferiority of the Sphere of Nature**

There is another reason then why the issue cannot be set aside in the way the naive view assumes. As a number of ecofeminists have observed, feminism needs to put its own house in order on this issue. If women do not have to fight the battles of other groups in a display of traditional altruism and self-abnegation, to carry the world's ills in recognition of motherly duty, as some arguments from peace and environmental activists suggest, it is also true that they can't base their own freedom on endorsing the continued lowly status of the sphere from which they have lately risen. Moves upwards in human groups are often accompanied by the vociferous insistence that those new recruits to the privileged class are utterly disassociated from the despised group from which they have emerged -- hence the phenomenon of lower middle-class respectability and the officer risen from the ranks. Arguments for women cannot convincingly be based on a similar put-down of the non-human world.

But much of the traditional argument has been so based. For Mary Wollstonecraft for example, what is valuable in the human character ideal to which women must aspire and be
admitted is defined in contrast to the inferior sphere of brute creation. Thus she begins her Vindication by asking: "In what does man's pre-eminence over the brute creation, consist? The answer is as clear as that a half is less than a whole, in Reason." And she goes on:

For what purpose were the passions implanted? That man by struggling with them might attain a degree of knowledge denied to the brutes.

Consequently the perfection of our nature and capability of happiness must be estimated by the degree of reason, virtue and humanity that distinguish the individual and that from the exercise of reason, knowledge and virtue naturally flows . . ."5

In her argument that women do have the capacity to join men in "superiority to the brute creation", the inferiority of the natural order is simply taken for granted. It is certainly no longer acceptable for feminists to argue for equality in this way.

THE MASCULINITY OF THE DOMINANT MODEL

Several critiques converge to necessitate reconsideration of the model of feminine connectedness with nature and masculine distance from and domination of it and to problematize the concept of the human. They are:

(a) the critique of masculinity and the valuing of traits associated with it traditionally;

(b) the critique of rationality: relevant here is not only the masculine and instrumental character of rationality, but also its overvaluation and use as a tool for the exclusion and oppression of the contrasting classes of the non-human (since rationality is often taken as the distinguishing mark of the human) and of women (because of its association with maleness). The overvaluation of rationality is deeply entrenched in Western culture and intellectual traditions, not always taking the extreme form of some of the classical philosophers (for example the Platonic view that the unexamined life was worthless,

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or the neo-Platonic one that rationality was the ultimate value to which all others were instrumental)\(^6\), but appearing in many more subtle modern forms, e.g., the limitation of consideration to rational moral agents.

(c) the critique of the human domination of nature, human chauvinism, speciesism, or anthropocentrism: of the treatment of nature in purely instrumental terms and the low valuation placed on it in relation to the human and cultural spheres. Included in this is a critique of the model of the ideal human character and of human virtue, which points out that the Western human ideal is one which maximises difference and distance from the animal and the natural; the traits thought distinctively human, and valued as a result are not only those associated with masculinity but those unshared with animals.\(^7\) Usually these are taken to be mental characteristics. An associated move is the identification of the human with the higher, mental capabilities and of the animal or natural with lower bodily ones, and the identification of the authentic human individual with the mental sphere.

The critiques converge for several reasons. A major one is that the characteristics traditionally associated with masculinity are also those used to define what is distinctively human, e.g., rationality (and selected mental characteristics and skills), transcendence and activity, i.e., domination and control of nature as opposed to passive immersion in it (consider the characterisation of "savages" as lower orders of humanity on this account), productive labour, sociability and culture. These last characteristics are assumed to be confined to humans but also associated with the masculine sphere of public life as opposed to the private, domestic, and reproductive sphere assigned to women. Masculine virtues are also taken to be human virtues, what distinguishes humans from the sphere of nature, especially the qualities of rationality, transcendence and freedom. Some traditional feminist arguments also provide striking example of this identification of the human and the masculine. Thus Mary Wollstonecraft in the Vindication appeals strongly to the
notion of an ungendered human character as an ideal for both sexes ("the first object of laudable ambition is to obtain a character as a human being")8), but this human character is implicitly masculine. The human character ideal she espouses diverges sharply from the feminine character ideal, which she rejects, "despising that weak elegance of mind, exquisite sensibility, and sweet docility of manners". Instead she urges that women become "more masculine and respectable". The complementary feminine character ideal is rejected -- both sexes should participate in a common human character ideal(p23) which despite some minor modifications (men are to become more modest and chaste and in that respect to take on feminine characteristics) coincides in its specifications with the masculine character. A single "unsexed" character ideal is substituted for the old two-sexed one, where the old feminine ideal was perceived as subsidiary and sexed.

The key concepts of rationality (or mentality) and nature then form a crucial link between the human and the masculine, so that to problematise masculinity and rationality is at the same time to problematize the human, and with it, the relation of the human to the contrasted non-human sphere. The naive approach mistakenly takes the concept of the human to be unproblematic and fails to observe its masculine bias. This dual connection is then another reason why the issue of the traditional connection of women and nature can't simply be ignored, why the problems raised must be considered.

The concept of the human is itself very heavily normative. The notion of being fully or properly human carries enormous positive weight, and usually with little examination of the assumptions behind this, or the inferiorisation of the class of non-humans this involves. Things are deplored or praised in terms of conformity to a concept of "full humanity". But the dignity of humanity, like that of masculinity, is maintained by contrast with an excluded inferior class9.
The concept of the human plays an important but somewhat shadowy role in the problem, and assumptions about the ideal nature of the human often stand silently in the background in discussion on masculinity and femininity, as well as in other areas. Thus for example behind the view that there is something insulting or degrading about linking women and nature stands an unstated set of assumptions about the inferior status of the non-human world. Behind the view that the traditional connection between women and nature can be forgotten stands the assumption that women can now be fitted unproblematically into the current concept of the human, and, again, that this concept itself is unproblematic.

Once these assumptions are made explicit, the connection between the stance adopted on the issue of the woman/nature connection and the different possibilities for feminism becomes clearer. In terms of this framework the main traditional position -- the point of departure for feminism -- can be seen as one in which the ideal of human character is not, as it often pretends to be, gender-neutral, but instead coincides or converges with that of masculine character, while the ideals of womanhood diverge. Included, and indeed having pride of place in this character ideal are the ideals of rationality, self-expression, freedom and control via transformation and domination of the natural. Womanly character ideals of emotionality, passivity, acceptance and nurturance stand in contrast. Thus, as Simone de Beauvoir has so powerfully stated, the tragedy of being a woman consisted not only in having one's life and choices impoverished and limited, but also in the fact that to be a good woman was to be a second-rate human being. So that to the extent that these "neutral" human character ideals were subscribed to and absorbed and the traditional feminine role also accepted, women must forever be forced to see themselves as inferiors and to be so seen. Because women were excluded from the activities and characteristics which were highly valorised and seen as distinctively human, they were forced to be satisfied with being mere spectators of what the
distinctively human business of life was all about, the real business of the struggle with nature.

De Beauvoir's solution to this tragic dilemma is also stated with great force and clarity -- change was to come about by women fitting themselves and being allowed to fit themselves into the dominant model of the human, and women were thus to become fully human. The model itself, and the model of freedom via the domination of nature it is especially based on, are never themselves brought into question, and indeed women's eagerness to participate in it confirms and supports the superiority of the model. Similarly for others, e.g. Harriet Taylor and Mary Wollstonecraft. As this earlier feminism saw it, the tragedy of women was that they were treated as less than fully human, or that, prevented from becoming fully human they were kept at the level of the brutes.

This has been called the first, masculinising, wave of feminism. The problem for women was to claim full humanity, i.e. to conform to the main human character ideal defined by traits characteristic also of the masculine, and to fit into, adapt themselves to, the corresponding social institutions of the public sphere. These might require some minor modification but basically it was women who were to change and adapt (sometimes with help), and women (or what society had made of them) who were the problem. The position can be summed up as that of demanding participation by women in a masculine concept or ideal of humanity, and the associated activist strategy as that of demanding equal admittance for women to a masculine-defined sphere and masculine institutions.

Central to these was the domination of nature. Women, in this strategy, are to join men in participation in areas which especially exhibit human freedom, such as science and technology, from which they have been especially strongly excluded. These areas are especially strongly masculine not only because their style heavily involves the highly valorised masculine traits of objectivity, abstractness,
rationality and suppression of emotionality, but also because of their function which exhibits most strongly the masculine virtues of transcendence of, control of and struggle with nature. In the equal admittance strategy, women enter science, but science itself and its orientation to the domination of nature remain unchanged.

This masculinizing strategy is the one which is being implicitly adopted when the problem of the woman-nature connection is simply sidestepped or set aside. It is assumed that the solution is for women to fit into a masculine model of human relations to nature which does not require change or challenge.

In the last decade this first, masculinizing strategy of feminism has come under strong criticism from several feminist quarters and a number of its problems identified. One problem is that the masculine model of the human and corresponding social institutions has been arrived at precisely by exclusion and devaluation of women and feminine characteristics. Because it has been defined by exclusion, it is loaded against women in a variety of subtle and less subtle ways and women will not benefit from admittance to it as much as they think. As Genevieve Lloyd notes, "Women cannot easily be accommodated into a cultural ideal that has defined itself in opposition to the feminine". Absorption into the masculine model is not likely to be successful.

Other major criticisms come from those who see the need to reject or modify the masculine character ideal as well as (or in some cases instead of) the feminine character ideal rejected or modified in the masculinising strategy. There are several different angles from which this criticism is directed. One is from difference theorists, who reject the masculine character ideal as a model, at least for women and in some cases for both men and women. Another is from ecofeminists, who reject the masculine model especially in the area of human relations to nature, and argue more directly that this masculinizing strategy amounts to having

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women join men in belonging to a privileged class in turn defined by excluding the inferior class of the non-human; that is, it is a strategy of having women equally admitted to a now wider dominating class, without questioning the structure of, or the necessity for, domination. The ecofeminist criticism here is that the conceptual apparatus relating superior to inferior orders remains intact and unquestioned, and what is achieved is a broadening of the dominating class, without changing or challenging the basis of domination itself. And the attempt to simply enlarge the privileged class by extending to and including women not only ignores a crucial moral dimension of the problem, it ignores the way in which different kinds of domination act as models for and as support and reinforcement for one another, and the way in which the same conceptual structure of domination reappears in very different inferiorised groups, e.g. women, inferior humans, slaves, manual laborers, "savages", people of colour -- all "closer to the animals".

What seems to be involved here is often not so much an affirmation of feminine connectedness with and closeness to nature as distrust and rejection of the masculine character model (especially as formed and expressed in the distinctively male public sphere and in its economic structures and its structures of rationality) of disconnectedness from and domination of the natural order. The masculine character ideal is similarly rejected by the broader ecofeminists and by some theorists of non-violence who link the masculine character ideal (and in some cases biological maleness) to aggression against fellow humans, especially women, as well as against nature. They reject the absorption of women into this mould, which is perceived as yielding a culture not of life but of death. This critique is based on the perception that it is not only that women have been damaged and oppressed by assimilation to the sphere of nature, but also that men have been damaged and distorted by their distance, discontinuity and opposition to the same sphere.
A RIVAL FEMININE MODEL OF HUMAN IDENTITY?

One thing that has emerged from the discussion so far is that a critical and thoroughgoing contemporary feminism is and must be engaged in a lot more than merely challenging and revising ideals of feminine character, that it is and must be engaged in revising and challenging as well the ideals of both masculine and of human character. The masculinizing strategy is unsatisfactory and superficial precisely because it does not do this. In the light of this understanding it seems worthwhile to try to compare and evaluate some alternative strategies for revising the human character ideal and to try to spell out more clearly what alternative model the ecofeminist argument is really appealing to, and especially how it differs from conservative positions it is often confused with. It seems clear that the basic common ground of the ecofeminist and non-violence argument is rejecting the masculine model of the human as a character ideal, at least for women, but beyond that there is confusion, ambiguity and indeterminacy, and a number of different alternatives are possible or suggested.

Perhaps the most obvious way to interpret the ecofeminist argument is as one which replaces the masculine model of the human character by a new feminine model. That is, if the masculinizing strategy rejected the feminine character ideal and affirmed a masculine one for both sexes, this feminizing strategy rejects the masculine character ideal and affirms a feminine one for both sexes. The masculinizing wave of feminism is succeeded by a new feminizing wave. Several slogans sum up this feminizing strategy, e.g. "the future is female", "Adam was a rough draft, Eve is a fair copy". There are several different forms the the assertion of a feminine character ideal can take, and it is important to be clear about the differences.

First, a feminine character ideal can be affirmed not as a
rival to the masculine character ideal but as a complement. The masculine model is not really challenged at all in this strategy and may in fact be affirmed and supported) although there may be some degree of upward revaluation of the relative worth of feminine traits (as the quotation on p73 illustrates). For example, the romantic tradition often does this, affirming the value of the feminine but in a way that does not really challenge the masculine ideal, but rather complements it or adds a separate feminine model.

An associated strategy is that of affirming a traditional model of feminine character obtained by reversing the values, so that traits previously regarded as lowly and despised become instead virtues and are given a high value: e.g. closeness to nature, previously used to put women down, is recast as a virtue.

There is a fairly strong tendency for a position which thus simply reverses the value of traditional feminine traits to collapse into a complementary position, and conversely for a complementary affirmation of feminine character to affirm traditional traits. One reason for this is that really traditional feminine traits include appropriate attitudes of subservience or self-abnegation which require a masculine complement. Thus where feminine virtues are developed in a situation of exclusion and complementation there is a problem about how they can stand on their own. The associated social change strategy is that of separate spheres --recognizing and revalorising traditional femininity as a complement to masculinity. This is a conservative pre-feminist or anti-feminist strategy, and is included here for completeness of alternatives, and so that it can be seen in relation to other positions.

A different strategy is that of affirming a feminine character ideal as a rival ideal, attempting to replace the masculine ideal, not merely to complement it. To be a genuine rival, it has to be affirmed as a rival model of the human, displacing or competing with the masculine
model of the human. The human ideal then becomes a feminine rather than, as traditionally, a masculine one, and human virtues are now feminine virtues and character traits rather than masculine ones. Thus a feminine ideal is seen as desirable for both sexes, although there may be doubts as to how far biological males can ever approximate to it. Thus, according to Sally Miller Gearhart,

*It is time to dare to admit that some of the sex-role mythology is in fact true and to insist that the qualities attributed to women (specifically empathy, nurturance and co-operativeness) be affirmed as human qualities capable of cultivation by men even if denied them by nature.*

The "primacy of the female " (i.e. of feminine character traits, not necessarily biological femaleness) would be acknowledged "as primary, the source of all life".

What has come to be called "difference theory" can involve the celebration and articulation of woman's difference from the ideal and actuality of masculine character, and in some forms, can represent another strand of this feminizing strategy. In contrast to the sort of position discussed above, which assumes that the identification of feminine traits is clear and that they can be known to include such traditional traits as nurturance and empathy, this alternative strand takes the form of the celebration of what is proclaimed as the genuinely feminine, which may be "a feminine principle not to be defined." The project of the discovery and emergence of the genuinely feminine, conceptualised not as something whose character has been formed by exclusion from the masculine sphere, but as an independent force, silenced and unable to reach expression under patriarchy, but ready and able to emerge once the barriers of phallocentric society to its expression are removed. Women's bodily experience is often taken as the starting point in the attempt to give expression to the silenced and unknown feminine.

If the strategy associated with the first, masculinizing model is that of equality (in masculine institutions), and
the strategy of the second, complementary feminine form is that of separate (but supposedly equally valued spheres), the strategy of the third, feminizing form is that of separatism, in which feminine virtues can be developed and come to dominate, or the unknown and yet to be discovered true feminine can emerge. Each position faces problems.

Much of the trouble for the third position turns on the question of what the characteristics of the alternative feminine ideal are, and of how the desired traits can be identified as feminine. If the position of the first strand is adopted, some virtues (e.g. nurturance, empathy in Gearhart) are identified as feminine or feminine-associated and put forward as the new ideal for the human. But how is this identification of these traits as feminine arrived at? Are the traits in question taken to be characteristic of all women in all circumstances (which is not very convincing), or only under traditional and complementary circumstances, in which case how can we know that they will survive translation to a different non-traditional and non-complementary context? Or is there some other alternative? Are they really traits of all actual women, (or only some?), arrived at by examining what actual women are like, or are they traits simply traditionally attributed to women? So if traditional traits are affirmed, there is the problem Lloyd points to as to how traits developed in a complementary context (e.g. nurturance) can stand alone as a human ideal.

Gearhart skirts the problem, by referring to the relevant traits as "feminine-associated", an expression which is neatly four-way ambiguous between "attributed to women", "attributed traditionally to women", "occurring with women", and "occurring with women in the traditional context". The ambiguity enables her to assume that those traits attributed to women in fact occur with them unproblematically in a non-traditional context, and thus to argue for transfer of power to women and reduction of male populations.
Gearhart also conveniently overlooks numerous negative traits associated with women under patriarchy and in the traditional feminine, such as subservience, and does not explain what ensures that we will get the desirable characteristics but not the undesirable ones. Are the undesirable ones assumed to be produced by a patriarchal context, and the desirable ones somehow not? There are a host of problems in her proposed matriarchal scenario.

If we examine the second, difference theory strand we encounter a different set of equally serious problems, now turning on specifying what the characteristics of the alternative feminine ideal are. Independent criteria for selection and identification of feminine traits are lacking.

Since these are not traditional virtues or character traits associated with the feminine, what are they? There has to be some way of determining which are to be affirmed in opposition to masculine traits. Often they are not identified or taken as identifiable (e.g. because of silencing), or are treated as to be discovered. The genuinely feminine is either unknowable or as yet unknown, to be brought into existence. In this case there seems no way of showing whether the desired characteristics e.g., alternatives to domination of nature, will or will not be present among the group of traits. Arguments from psychoanalysis may suggest that they will be but are hardly conclusive as they stand; and as Claire Duchen suggests, relying solely on them appears to involve denying the importance of other non-individual and social influences and bases of character.

The problem then is how to say what this concept of "the feminine" is, and what the ideal human character being affirmed is like. It seems that its character cannot be determined by examining the sorts of characteristics actual women now display, to the extent that these have been determined by exclusion under patriarchy. Thus for example it is hardly convincing to suggest that passivity,
insecurity, and the poorly developed sense of self and of independence many women are obliged to develop under patriarchal conditions are genuine but unrecognised human virtues. Again it seems impossible not to recognise that the oppression of women has produced undesirable as well as desirable character traits.

So, since it cannot be actual existing women whose character forms the basis for the ideal, this position sets off a search for some sort of feminine essence which eludes expression in present societies, but appears as an unrealised potential, so much unrealised that it is, in some versions, almost essentially inexpressible. Since it seems that this character can never be instantiated by actual women in existing oppressive societies, the position has difficulty in explaining exactly how the ideal character appealed to "belongs to" women, and which women it belongs to, i.e. what makes it feminine. And it seems inevitably either nebulous or circular, since we are asked to undertake a remaking of the human in the mould of a set of "feminine" characteristics which cannot be specified unless and until that remaking is achieved, and whose relation to actually existing women is, at best, unclear. And the suggestion that we should thus blindly swear allegiance to the nation of the female body, and to whatever characteristics they may develop or display, seems a mere piece of nationalism.

The body is sometimes thus introduced in an attempt to solve the problem of identifying the feminine, in what appears to be a form of reverse dualism. The position apparently accepts the mind/body division and its correspondence to masculinity and femininity, but replaces the masculine notion of identity as based in the mind or in consciousness with the supposedly feminine one of identity as based in -- and apparently reducible to -- the sexed body. To the extent that bodily difference is taken as determining of the feminine, that the feminine is endorsed as the ideal of human character, and that what is involved is the assertion of a rival human ideal which men will
necessarily never be able to participate in, the position seems to have built into it another hierarchy, another exclusion. There may be difference here, but too much remains the same.

In brief the position, whether interpreted according to strand 1 or strand 2, faces a dilemma as a base for the ecofeminist argument. If it follows strand 1 and specifies the traits, selecting only desirable ones such as nurturance, it faces the problem of explaining how these relate to existing women and how they are feminine. If it fails to do so, specifying them only in their relation to female bodies or to the emergence of an unspecified "genuine femininity", it needs to provide a basis for believing, what is needed for the ecofeminist argument, that the desirable traits are included or will emerge. In neither case, it seems, can an adequate ecofeminist argument or alternative model be based in any simple way on women or women's virtues.

But as we shall see, that doesn't mean that women's experience is irrelevant or that they cannot contribute in a very major way to the development of an alternative to the masculine model.

ALTERNATIVES TO THE MASCULINE MODEL

If the ecofeminist argument cannot be based on a simple and indiscriminate affirmation of women and their supposed qualities as an alternative to the masculine model, must it therefore be abandoned? I want to argue that it doesn't have to be, although this simple form of it needs to be. Initially it seems obvious that the ecofeminist and peace argument is grounded on accepting a special feminine connectedness with the natural or with peaceful characteristics, and then affirming this as a rival ideal of the human (or as part of such an ideal). But on closer
The ecofeminist argument doesn't have to take this simple form. The argument basically involves the rejection of the masculine model of the human and of the aggression towards and domination of nature seen as part of that model. But to reject the masculine model of the human is not necessarily to affirm a rival feminine ideal, nor to accept any other special connection between nature and the feminine. To free the concept of the human from the connection to the masculine which has lain behind its guise of neutrality doesn't mean that it has to be replaced by a rival feminine ideal specified in reaction to the masculine ideal. It is open to us to view both men and women as damaged or distorted by the western mapping of the nature/culture distinction onto gender and by the structures of the domination of nature both within and without the human self, as well as by various aspects of current social systems, by patriarchy and the distribution of power along lines of sex and gender, by the division of life into public masculine and private feminine spheres and the resulting connection of masculine identity especially to the structures of market society. This doesn't mean that we should feel equally sorry for both men and women and regard them as equally "victims" or as equally positioned with respect to constructive change, as analyses which neglect the dimension of power and domination suggest we should, but it does mean that neither sex can unproblematically and simply provide a model for a thoroughgoing alternative.

The choice between the masculine model of the human and its feminine rival is, fortunately then, a false choice. This can be seen clearly if we examine the logical options for the human ideal and its relation to a masculine or feminine ideal. They can be set out as follows (using the symbol "R" to mean "reject" and the symbol "A" to mean accept):

(1) A masculine model, R feminine model
(2) A masculine model, A feminine model
This set of alternatives is exclusive and exhaustive of the possibilities for an ideal if the categories are treated as wholes, but of course a further set of options can be generated if they are not or if the necessity for a human character ideal itself is questioned, viz. no character ideal at all. It is apparent from this set of alternatives that the assumption that an alternative to (1) (the traditional model) or (2) (the romantic complementary or separate spheres model) must be (3) (the feminine model) is wrong.

Thus it is open to an ecofeminist to agree in part with the commonsense view and assert that women are in fact no more significantly or essentially connected to nature than men (except as an alleged connection has been used to inferiorise both and has involved exclusion of women from technology and culture) but that what is needed is an account of the human ideal for both sexes which accepts the undesirability of the domination of nature associated with masculinity. This would be a strategy which rejected the masculine concept of the human, but because it denied any special significant connection between nature and women, and because it saw both men and women as damaged, was not committed to a rival feminine ideal. The fact that the concept of the human is up for remaking doesn’t mean that it has to be remade in the mould of either the masculine or the feminine.

Not only can an ecofeminist argument appeal more satisfactorily to the fourth model than the third, that is clearly what it often does. For example, Rosemary Ruether, one of the pioneers of the position, is clearly appealing to model 4, not model 3, when she writes:

Both men and women must be resocialised from their traditional distorted cultures of masculinity and femininity in order to find that humanized culture that is both self-affirming and other-affirming. It is precisely in this creation of a humanity that is truly affirming of all life, both one’s own and that of others, that the writers seek to find the deepest
connections between feminism and non-violence. In some writers the adherence to model 4 over 3 is even more explicit: for example

If the masculine character ideal supports militarism, what can support peace? Femininity? No, for that character ideal also has been shaped by patriarchy and includes along with virtues such as gentleness and nurturance a kind of dependency which breeds the passive-aggressive syndrome of curdled violence. The rejection of the masculine character ideal does not imply acceptance of corresponding feminine traits, and a critique of both masculinity and femininity and their complementary characters may be involved. Further, the rejection of both traditional masculine and traditional feminine character ideals is linked with the rejection of the traditionally associated dualisms of mind/body, rationality/emotionality, public/private, and so on, which are also rejected as false choices, so that the transcendence of the traditional gendered characters becomes part of, is linked with the systematic transcendence of this wider set of dualisms. These dualisms are subject to independent criticism in the ecofeminist literature. From this perspective, the model which simply replaces the masculine by the traditional feminine is a reactive model which fails to take adequate account of the way in which gender is structured as a dualism. It shares in the general inadequacy and criticism of the reverse-value strategy for dealing with dualisms which simply affirms the underside — that to do so is implicitly to accept and to preserve, rather than to challenge, the dualistic structure.

The fourth model for demasculinizing the human character may be developed in various different ways. One of the most obvious and popular ways to develop it is in terms of androgyny. Thus Kokopeli and Lakey continue:

We are encouraged by the vision of androgyny, which acknowledges that the best characteristics now allocated to the two genders indeed belong to both: gentleness, intelligence, nurturance, courage, awareness of feelings, co-operativeness... Many of these characteristics are now allocated to the feminine role which has led some men to conclude that the essential liberating task is to become effeminate. We don't agree, since some desirable characteristics are now allocated to the masculine role.
But androgyny is not the only construction to place on the fourth model, and in turn has its problems. The concept of androgynous human character suggests a recipe analogy, in which the new human ideal is put together from existing ingredients: take good points of each gender and place in bowl, mix gently, throw bad points into dustbin.

But as I argue in Chapter Eight, such a model is also far too simple and shallow, ignoring relations of exclusion, complementation and so on between traits and suggesting that their allocation to their respective sex is arbitrary. It treats the problem as if it could be solved by an amalgam of certain existing characteristics thrown together, just as the androgynous human is pictured as a physical composite of male and female organs. Similarly, the androgynous terminology suggests that no significant character differences should remain between masculine and feminine characteristics, that there will be a single model for both sexes composed of the same set of character traits. And androgyny still leaves the problem of which masculine and which feminine will go to make up the basis for the selection of androgynous traits. If it is to be the traditional masculine and the traditional feminine, then the false choice arguments above apply, and if it is not, we need to be told how the genders involved are selected.

These assumptions are both unsatisfactory and unnecessary, and are not an inevitable part of the fourth model. The androgynous way of developing the fourth model should be distinguished from other ways, e.g. where what is involved is not an amalgam of genders leading to identical gender roles, but a transcendence of the dualistic gender characteristics to produce a third set of characteristics that will often be different from either. The androgynous model overlooks the fact that the gender contrasts of existing character traits are often false contrasts. In fact the gender categories and most associated institutions can be seen as a systematic and related network of false
There are then several further ways of developing the fourth model (discussed in detail in Chapter Eight). One of them is degendered, in that selection of characteristics to be affirmed is not based on association with one sex or the other or exclusively on traditional gender characteristics, but aims to dissolve or move beyond them (transcend them). Another one might be thought of as regendered in that it does not aim to eliminate gender and gender difference as such, but rather to reconstruct it so as to free it from dualistic construction and in particular to dissolve particular dualistically-paired traits such as the pairs dominant/submissive and overemphasised/underemphasised ego boundaries. The regendering alternative would not need to deny difference or assume the neutrality of the body, to deny that differently-sexed bodies might give rise to different experiences and different orientations to the world, although it would resist the attempt to treat such difference as lacking a social context and as giving rise to fixed essences not open to change. Nor does it have to try to create a unique human character ideal, as opposed to a multiplicity of such ideals, or to organise sexual difference along lines of two sharply differentiated sexes.

Such a position can also allow room for certain ways of affirming or valuing the feminine, in at least some senses of this highly ambiguous phrase, that is for affirming as humanly valuable certain traits and areas of life previously treated as of little consequence, traditionally assigned to women and excluded from the masculine character or from more prestigious areas of human life. Such upward revaluing of traits such as nurturance is an important part of the ecofeminist position. But it is important to note the ambiguities and the difference between, first, valuing all and only feminine traits and valuing them because or on the grounds that they are feminine, regardless and in ignorance of what they will
actually turn out to be (the position corresponding to the feminizing strategy discussed earlier), and second revaluing, on a selective basis, certain important traits and areas of life which have been devalued because of their association with women and with nature.

It is important to note the difference too between affirming feminine traits as part of a dualised and patriarchal structure, and affirming them in a way which challenges such a structure. For example affirming feminine traits as confined to women and as exclusively possessed by them leads to an essentially conservative position, and it is important for a radical ecofeminism to show how its position differs from this conservative affirmation of feminine traits and roles, which may involve showing how in affirming them it gives them a different significance from the one they had in a dualised, patriarchal context. Nurturance for example, a trait often affirmed in ecofeminism, has been devalued because of its links to both femininity and animality, and in a patriarchal context where it has been confined to women and the private sphere, is such that women's exclusive nurturance confirms and supports male control of the world. But a critical and non-conservative ecofeminism must affirm it in ways which do not do this, which remove it from the dualised context, making it a virtue for men as well as women, and giving it the significance of nurturing the natural world and others not confined to the nuclear family. By such transformations of context and significance, traits allocated to the feminine in a patriarchal context can develop into real and radical strengths in a non-patriarchal context. But although such traits can develop from traditional feminine traits given an appropriate transformation of social context, they are not identical with them, and representing them as the same traits (as "affirming the feminine" suggests) can be misleading about the sense in and extent to which they are feminine. For they are neither the same as those in the traditional context, and hence "feminine" in that sense of being part of the traditional characteristics and
virtues of womankind, nor feminine in the sense that it is not possible for men to share them or aspire to them.

Where does all this leave the ecofeminist argument and the notion that women are "closer to nature"? Women's historical treatment as aligned with nature has shaped the characteristics of feminine identity and given women and nature a shared status in the eyes of men and as recipients of a masculine selfhood defined against both. But there are problems in embracing such a feminine alternative, to the extent that it has involved the confinement of women to activities such as reproduction and denial to them of capacities for reason, intelligence and control of life conditions, that is, their exclusion from the valued features of human life and culture. So a different concept of closeness to nature from the traditional one has to be invoked if such a position is to be not only ecofeminist but feminist.

The argument that women have a different relation to nature cannot rest on appeal to a single quality of empathy or nurturance or mysterious power shared by all women from Helen Caldicott to Mrs. Thatcher, for there is no such quality. But differences between men's and women's concerns and kinds of selfhood (identity) are real and have arisen from the difference in the experiences, concerns, and areas of life each sex has been taken as responsible for--from the kinds of lives they have tended to lead. Women's lives have on the whole been lived in ways which are less directly oppositional to nature than those of men, and which emphasise as virtues qualities of care and kinds of selfhood which may have much to contribute to the development of an alternative way to relate to nature.

But on the other side of the dualism, women's alignment with nature has been matched by the development of a masculine identity centreing around distance from nature and such "natural" areas in human life as reproduction, and around control, domination and inferiorisation of the natural sphere. Such distance has been obtained by the
location of value in the area of human character and culture that has been taken as both masculine and distinguishing of humans from the non-human world. This is the model of human life and identity ecofeminists reject, as a model both for men and for women liberated from the constraints of the traditional position. It is this model we must try to understand and construct an alternative to.
References

1. For a qualified defence of the distinction and elaboration of some of the issues surrounding it see my "Do We Need A Sex/Gender Distinction"?, Radical Philosophy 51, Spring 1989.


6. For some account of this see Susan Moller Okin, Women in Western Political Thought, Princeton, New Jersey, 1979.


9. Mary Wollstonecraft, op.cit., p.5


11. Ariel Salleh, "Contribution to the Critique of Political

13. This point is made by Elizabeth Dodson Gray, Green Paradise Lost: Remything Genesis, Roundtable Press, Wellesley, Massachusetts, 1979.


15. Although this may be involved in some cases, e.g. Elizabeth Dodson Gray, op. cit.


17. On complementation see Genevieve Lloyd, op. cit. Ch. 7.

18. Sally Miller Gearhart, "The Future — If There is One — Is Female", in McCallister op. cit. p. 271.


20. Christiane Makward, "To Be or Not to Be ... A Feminist Speaker", in Hester Eisenstein & Alice Jardine (eds), The Future of Difference, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 1985, p. 96.


22. Clair Duchin, Feminism in France, Routledge 1986, Ch. 5.


26. Bruce Kokopeli & George Lakey, "More Power Than We Want: Masculine Sexuality and Violence", in P. McCallister, op. cit. p.239.

27. Ibid. p.239

28. The difference between regendering and degendering is explained in more detail in my article "Do We Need a Sex/Gender Distinction?", op. cit, and in Chapter Eight. For telling criticisms of androgyny see Hester Eisenstein Contemporary Feminist Thought, Unwin Paperbacks, London 1984, Ch 6.

29. See Val Plumwood, "Do We Need A Sex/Gender Distinction?", op. cit.

Chapter Four: Dualism and Human Identity

We should think of the most authoritative part of our soul as a guardian spirit given by god, living in the summit of the body, which can properly be said to lift us from the earth toward our home in heaven; for we are creatures not of earth but of heaven, where the soul was first born, and our divine part attaches us by the head to heaven, like a plant by its roots, and keeps our body upright.

Plato, The Timaeus.

I am a poor wayfaring stranger, Travelling through this world of woe There'll be no trouble, toil or danger In that bright land to which I go.

I'm going there to meet my mother I'm going there no more to roam Oh I'm just going over Jordan I'm just going over home.

American Spiritual.

ECOFEMINISM AND HUMAN / NATURE DUALISM

The historical account ecofeminism has provided gives a key role to the concept of dualism. In this chapter I attempt to sharpen up this notion; I argue that a dualism should be understood as a division involving a power relationship which determines a certain kind of logical structure, and as one in which the relation of domination/subordination shapes identity. I focus especially in this chapter on the key role of the concept of the human and the role of dualism in shaping human identity with respect to nature. My thesis is that dualism has systematically distorted the western account of the human self in nature, affecting the account of the human (Chapter Four), the account of the self (Chapter Six), and the account of nature (Chapter Five). The distortion parallels in certain crucial ways that of masculine/feminine dualism, so that the resulting model of human-nature relations can be regarded as androcentric.
I attempt first to clarify the possibilities for ecofeminist positions with regard to nature and the key role of the concept of the human, which I argued in Chapter Three, is thrown up for renegotiation at the same time as the dualism of male and female, masculine and feminine. What is actually being rejected in the various ecofeminist positions can be made clearer and the positions more readily distinguished if the further arguments and assumptions needed to connect the different sorts of dualisms are more fully set out. The historical inferiority of women and nature has been based on a nest of assumptions, but particularly the following key ones (A) and (B), which are complementary.

(A) 1. The identification of the female with the sphere of physicality and nature.
   2. The assumed inferiority of physicality and of nature and the mind/body dualism upon which the division is based, and other dualistic assumptions concerning this sphere.

(B) 1. The corresponding identification of the male with the sphere of the mental or of reason.
   2. The assumption of the superiority of the mental(reason) and the identification of the mental(reason) with humanness.

The fact that there are two parts to each corresponding set of assumptions and not just one helps to explain why a thoroughgoing development of feminism leads in the direction of a critical ecofeminism, and why the attempt to make a radical challenge to the masculine/feminine dualism should also involve challenging and renegotiating the human/nature dualism and the mind/body dualism both are closely linked with. "Feminism is simply a belief in the full humanity of woman and her right to define herself", writes Simone de Beauvoir. But it cannot be quite that simple. For the notion of humanity itself must come up for revision at the same time, along with the notion of human nature and of what it is to be fully and authentically human, the notion of human virtue. And the question of
human relations to nature must come up as part of the re-
examination of what it means to be (fully) human. All
these concepts must be up for re-examination and
renegotiation because the whole notion of humanity itself
has been strongly linked to the masculine/feminine and
mind/body dualisms. And if the model of what it is to be
human is basically masculine, then only a shallow feminism
could rest content with affirming the "full humanity" of
woman without challenging this model. The human/nature
dualism then must be up for renegotiation along with the
masculine/feminine dualism.

Mind/body dualism plays a key bridging and underpinning
role in both of these dualisms. As noted in Chapter Three,
the model of what it is to be human is basically masculine
because the characteristics taken as distinctive of the
masculine are also the ones which are used to define what
is distinctively human; the key human feature is
identified as the possession of qualities assigned to the
masculine identity. Especially important here are the
mental characteristics of mind, of soul, spirit,
consciousness, rationality or intelligence, and this sphere
has been generally identified also with masculinity. Thus
for example the authentic human self is identified in the
Cogito as the thinking substance. The use of the term
"man" and of masculine pronouns to indicate what is human
then is no accident at all. Humanity, in terms of these
characteristics is masculine, and woman, to the extent that
she is identified with the body, must be a lesser, reduced
or imperfect version of humanity.

Thus for Simone de Beauvoir woman is to become fully human
in the same way as man, by joining him in distancing from
and in transcending and controlling nature. She opposes
male transcendence and conquering of nature to woman's
immanence, being identified with and passively immersed in
nature and the body, immersion in the sphere of necessity
as opposed to freedom.¹ The "full humanity" to be achieved
by woman involves becoming part of the superior sphere of
the spirit and dominating and transcending nature and
physicality, becoming part of the sphere of freedom and controllability, in contrast to being immersed in nature and in blind uncontrollability. Woman becomes "fully human" by being absorbed in a sphere of freedom and transcendence conceptualised in terms of both human and male dominance.

The Challenge to the Model of the Human

Thus any really thoroughgoing challenge to the male/female dualism must involve also a challenge to this framework and to other key parts of these intertwined dualisms, especially the human/nature dualism. The challenge must extend in a number of directions; first, it must be a challenge to the assumption of the primacy of the sphere of mind and the rational in contrast to the inferior realm of nature and the feminine, and to the devaluation of qualities associated with this sphere in western culture, as compared to those thought to be associated with the human. But it cannot stop there, for this could then amount to a reverse-value strategy of the sort discussed and rejected in Chapter Three for male/female dualism, in which the dualistic definition of the items so distinguished is not questioned, but only their respective values. Such reverse-value positions are a special case of a group of strategies which aim simply to improve the status of the sphere of nature in relation to that of the human, but without otherwise disturbing matters. They are minimum effort strategies, and usually face serious problems on account of their incompleteness and instability, problems comparable to those faced by the reverse-value strategy for feminine attributes already discussed.

There are a variety of strategies in the area of thinking about wilderness especially which attempt to affirm nature as the dualised other, without challenging its dualised conception or dualised definition in relation to the human.
In the romantic tradition for example wilderness is usually given higher value, especially as compared with an earlier tradition in which it was viewed negatively, but the concept often remains defined in polarised terms, and is affirmed as a complement to the human sphere and in a way which does not challenge its dualistic construction. This reverse-value strategy remains that of much thinking on the environment and even of environmental philosophy eg, the attempt to simply upgrade the value of nature via value theory or ethics. Although this is part of what is needed (as in the case of affirming the feminine) on its own and without an attempt to understand the dualistic process which has led to devaluation, it is inadequate and incomplete.

The challenge to the human/nature dualism must then extend to the conceptualisation of both sides of the division, especially to its conception in terms of an oppositional or polarising structure, and the way this has influenced both the view of the human identity and of what is characteristically human, and the view of the contrasting side of nature and its characteristics. This explanatory framework of dualism can put a number of concerns of environmental philosophy in a new light, especially the account of nature in terms of mechanism, as well as the account of the essence of the human self and of human identity in relation to the natural order.

DUALISM -- THE LOGIC OF HIERARCHY

A central ecofeminist thesis is that Western thought and society has been characterised by a set of interrelated and mutually reinforcing dualisms. The human/nature contrast is one of the most important of these dualisms, and it can only be properly understood in this context, that is, as part of the interrelated set, with crucial connections to other elements, and and having a common structure with other members of the set. The understanding of dualistic structure produced by feminist studies can cast a great
deal of light on these dualisms. The notion of dualism has been used a good deal in epistemology and metaphysics, but usually without getting properly to grips with its central features, which are political, that is, they concern the operations of power and domination.

Key elements in the dualistic structure in western thought are the following sets of contrasting pairs:

- intellect, mind / body, nature
- rationality / materiality, physicality, nature
- mind, spirit / nature
- human / nature
- male / female

A further set is given by the following pairs:
- reason / emotion
- transcendence / immanence
- freedom / necessity
- production / reproduction
- public / private
- culture / nature

Deconstructing these sets of dualistically related pairs is an important task for contemporary philosophy, especially feminist philosophy. The interrelationship of the elements of the structure means that the cultural meaning and characteristics of each of the elements of contrasting pairs is determined not in isolation but at least in part by the other members of the set. They form a web, an interlocking structure.

Not all items in the list are equally closely related. Three which are closely related are the human/nature, masculine /feminine, and mind /body pairs, and these are the pairs my discussion will mainly concentrate upon. Thus for example, the concept and characteristics of masculinity play a key role in delineating the characteristics of the human, which is also taken to coincide with the sphere of mentality or rationality, in contrast to the excluded
contrasting sphere of the feminine, the physical, the emotional, and the natural. Similarly, the mental or rational is treated traditionally as characteristic of the masculine rather than the feminine, so that rationality or (more broadly sometimes mentality) characterises both masculinity and humanity. These pairs are connected then by a series of linking postulates, and when so connected form a web. Linking postulates are assumptions normally made or implicit in cultural grounding which create equivalences or mapping between the pairs. For example, the postulate that all and only humans possess culture maps the culture/nature pair onto the human/nature pair; the postulate that the sphere of mentality is masculine maps the mind/body pair onto the masculine/feminine pair, and the assumption that the sphere of the human coincides with that of intellect or mentality maps the mind/body pair onto the human/nature pair, and via transitivity, the human/nature pair onto the masculine/feminine pair. Most conventional linking postulates are resoundingly false but culturally influential -- hence these webs are not to be understood as linked by entailment and implicational detachment from true premisses, but by conventional (if usually implicit) assumption. It is part of my argument that the concepts of humanity, rationality, and masculinity form such a web, a set of closely related concepts which provide for each other models of appropriate relations to their respective dualised contrasts of nature, the physical or material, and the feminine. They are linked by the shared logical structure of dualism as well as by a number of other features. As I shall argue below, this is one way to interpret some of the insights of ecofeminism.

The connection of these three pairs -- the dualisms of humanity, rationality and masculinity -- appears clearly in many ancient sources. For example Aristotle, in a famous passage naturalising domination, links them together, and gives his version of each hierarchy's place in a chain of hierarchies: 

It is clear that the rule of the soul over the body, and

and
passionate, is natural and expedient; whereas the equality of the two or the rule of the inferior is always hurtful. The same holds good for animals in relation to men; for tame animals have a better nature than wild, and all tame animals are better off when they are ruled by man; for then they are preserved. Again, the male is by nature superior, and the female inferior; and the one rules, and the other is ruled; this principle of necessity extends to all mankind. Where there is such a difference as that between soul and body, or between men and animals (as is the case of those whose business it is to use their body, and who can do nothing better), the lower sort are by nature slaves, and it is better for them as for all inferiors that they should be under the rule of a master. For he who can be, and therefore is, another’s and he who participates in rational principle enough to apprehend, but not to have such a principle, is a slave by nature. Whereas the lower animals cannot even apprehend such a principle; they obey their instincts. And the use made of slaves and of tame animals is not very different; for both with their bodies minister to the needs of life....

Features of Dualism

There are several important characteristics of the relationship between members of contrasting pairs which make it appropriate to call it a dualism rather than just a distinction or a dichotomy. It is not just the fact that there is dichotomy, that distinctions are made between two kinds of things which is important in establishing a dualistic relation—indeed it is hard to imagine how anyone could get along without making at least some of these distinctions— it is rather the way the distinctions have been treated, the further assumptions made about them and the relationship imposed upon them which make the relationships in question dualistic ones. Thus by no means every dichotomy results in a dualism.

A dualism is more than a relation of difference or non-identity, it is a relation of radical exclusion, distancing and opposition, between orders construed as higher and lower, as inferior and superior, and where the appropriate relation, between these orders is taken to be not simply difference but domination. Because the other is treated as not merely different but as inferior, part of a lower
order, it demands not merely distinctness but exclusion. This exclusion relation has special characteristics. For distinctness, for non-identity or otherness, there need be only a single characteristic which is different, possessed by the one but not the other, in order to guarantee distinctness according to the usual treatment of identity (e.g. in Leibniz's Law). Where items are constructed or construed according to dualistic relationship however, such construction tries to magnify, to emphasise, or even to maximise the number and importance of differences, and hence to achieve appropriate separation. The aim of dualistic construction is polarisation, to maximise distance or separation between the dualised spheres and to prevent them coming into contact. Emile Durkheim has noted this radical exclusion relation as important in religious thought in the distinction between things sacred and things profane.

"Sacred things are those which the interdictions protect and isolate; profane things those to which these interdictions are applied and which must remain at a distance from the first." (my italics).

Profane things are thought of as threatening to sacred things, and the power they represent. Such a dualism of sacred and profane often occurs in the context of a powerful priesthood or religious ruler.

Dualistic construal of difference usually treats it as providing not a mere difference of degree within a sphere of overall similarity, but as providing a major difference in kind, even a bifurcation or division in reality between utterly different orders of things. Dualism denies continuity, treating its pairs as comprising "two worlds between which there is nothing in common". Again Durkheim's discussion of the treatment of the sacred/profane distinction reveals some of the character of such construction.

"There is a break in continuity... since we picture a sort of logical chasm between the two, the mind irresistibly refuses the two things to be confounded, or even to be put into contact with each other; for such a promiscuity, or even too direct a contiguity would contradict too violently the dissociation of these ideas in the mind."
Dualism aims to maximise the number, scope or significance of distinguishing characteristics, but it does not do this in a random way, but usually by classifying characteristics as belonging exclusively, as far as possible, to one side or the other.

The polarising treatment of gender characteristics in western culture provides a good model of such dualistic construal, and of how common or bridging characteristics are ignored, discouraged or actually eliminated by such conceptual/social construction. The reason for the intense and ubiquitous social demand for sex marking is insightfully discussed by Marilyn Frye: to the extent that the demand for this sexual dualism of just two sharply differentiated sexes is a social creation unsupported by any natural order (sharp sexual dimorphism does not exist in newborn humans or elsewhere in nature) it requires constant vigilance and that individuals be coerced and bullied in order to maintain it. The function of such polarisation is to naturalise domination:

For efficient subordination, what's wanted is that the structure not only not appear to be a cultural artifact kept in place by human decision or custom, but that it appear natural -- that it appear to be a quite direct consequence of the facts about the beast which are beyond the scope of human manipulation or revision. It must seem natural that individuals of the one category are dominated by individuals of the other and that as groups, the one dominates the other. To make this seem natural, it will help if it seems to all concerned that members of the two groups are very different from each other, and this appearance is enhanced if it can be made to appear that within each group, the members are very like one another. In other words, the appearance of the naturalness of the dominance of men and the subordination of women is supported by anything which supports the appearance that men are very like other men and very unlike women, and that women are very like other women and very unlike men.

As well, the gender example illustrates the way in which the different dualistically construed pairs of contrasts set out above provide conceptual assistance for, and act as models, metaphors and props for each other.

A further important feature of dualistically construed
opposites discussed by a number of feminist writers is that since the superior member of the pair is defined primarily by exclusion of the other and of characteristics associated with it, it requires the other in order to define its boundaries and identity. Thus one member of a dualistic pair, that construed as superior, defines itself against or in opposition to the other, by exclusion of the latter's inferiorised characteristics. Because of this, dualistically construed pairs are logically related and are constructed as complementary, in that each has characteristics which logically require a corresponding and complementary set in the other; for example, a master logically requires a slave and vice versa, and characteristics such as submissiveness require in the other the corresponding complementary characteristic of dominance, its polarised opposite or dual (dualised other). Their relation is constructed in such a way that each is incomplete without, or could not exist without, the other, its complement. Nevertheless, it is essential to note that dualistic opposites normally present false choices— they do not exhaust the alternatives. Their non-exhaustiveness is a result of their polarisation of characteristics, and denial of bridging or common ground. Nevertheless dualistically conceived opposites are conventionally treated as if they were exhaustive, because within the framework of the dualistic classification the common ground is not conceivable, since the polarising classification erases it. Hence escaping a dualistic framework is no easy matter, and usually involves renegotiating the concepts involved. If dualism imposes a polarising conceptual framework, reconceptualising the alternatives involves some sort of conceptual shift, a reintegration, at least into the same order of being. The old dualistic categories are thus often spoken of as transcended in a new single category or characteristic which may combine features of the old dualised pair in a new, non-polarised way; or a distinction may be maintained but be treated differently, not in dualising ways. An example of such transcendence is discussed below in the case of the transcendence of the conventional alternatives.
of egoism and altruism by interrelatedness of interest (see Chapter Six below).

Dualism then imposes a conceptual framework which polarises and splits apart what can be conceptualised in more integrated ways. It is not just that it exaggerates and stresses difference over similarity, although this is a major dualistic strategy, but that it does this in the service of defining the one against or by exclusion of the other, conceived as belonging to a different and lower order. Dualism is intimately related to hierarchy, which provides of course the motivation for the polarising exercise and for the maximisation of differentiating, or supposedly differentiating, characteristics, as well as for the definition of the identity of the one by exclusion of characteristics of the inferiorised other. Dualistic categories naturalise hierarchy and domination. The slave is what he or she is in virtue of his or her nature (thus in Aristotle's account the slave is a slave by nature) as part of a lower order of being, and the appropriate characteristics for a master are those which make him as little like the slave as possible: he should not participate, for example in manual (or in feminine) labour, but should represent culture, cultivation of the mind and controlling rationality. Features such as cleanliness may also reflect such polarising construction; Booker T. Washington in Up From Slavery relates how the exaggerated and genteel cleanliness of the slave owners' establishments served to mark them off from the "animal-like" slaves, whose enforced filthiness (they were provided with no means to wash) served the joint function of marking and justifying their condition, and of linking them to animals. Thus the slave's being is part of a lower order in which other linked inferiors also have their being—the slave is body, the slave is animal, the slave is feminised.
Examples of dualism: dualism and gender

How do these dualistically-construed concepts work out in the case of the pairs mind/body, male/female, and human/nature? One way is through the assumption that there are two quite different sorts of things, e.g., mind and body, humans and nature, male and female. In the case of humans and nature it is assumed that there are two completely different sorts of substances; humans are completely different from everything else in the immediate, known cosmos. Scientists discuss whether we have "company" in some remote reach of the universe or whether we are "alone," ignoring our close relationship to other earth beings. We can see this assumption at work in the passage from William James quoted on p.144, where nature is said to be "a moral multiverse...and not a moral universe", and such that "with her as a whole we can establish no moral communion". I will discuss this dualised view of the human in detail in the next section.

In the case of dualistic construals of the mind/body division, it is assumed again that they belong to quite different orders, so much so as to give rise to the classic problem of how they can interract. The sphere of mind, of rationality and intellect is similarly assumed to be quite different from the sphere of physicality. And in fact it is widely assumed to be the possession of mental attributes which makes humans completely different from animals.

As I argue below, both Platonic and Cartesian accounts of the mind/body relation are examples of dualistic accounts of the sort characterised above. Thus the body is, in Plato's account, a sharply distinct lower realm, to be dominated and controlled by a superior reason. This is pictured in the analogy of the two horses in the Phaedrus, in which one horse (the spirit) is white, noble and easily guided, while the other (the body and natural appetites) is ugly and difficult to control, while the controlling
charioteer himself is Reason. In Descartes' account the gulf between mind and body becomes even sharper as bridging characteristics involving apparently both body and mind such as sensation and perception, get allocated to one or the other as part of the polarisation process. The cultural background to these accounts is one in which the mental and especially the rational, is identified as associated with the masculine, and the contrasting inferior sphere (the body, the senses, the emotions) as feminine, and in which men exercise power over women.

Mind/body dualism provides the basis for a series of further hierarchies which are its offshoots. Thus, as in Aristotle's passage, the gulf between the rational and the non-rational and the inferiority of the latter explains the supposed inferiority not just of women, but also of slaves, people of other races and cultures ("barbarians"), and of those who perform manual as opposed to intellectual tasks, all of whom can be treated as less rational and as closer to the sphere of nature, and especially as closer to animality.

But perhaps the clearest and best documented example of dualistic construction is in the sphere of gender, where the dualistic construction of traditional gender attempts to impose a rigid and polarised division upon a continuum of biological characteristics. Areas of overlapping or common ground and bridging or overlapping attributes are minimised, discouraged, or treated with suspicion. As Marilyn Frye notes:

Persons.....with the power to do so actually construct a world in which men are men and women are women and there is nothing in between and nothing ambiguous; they do it by chemically and/or surgically altering people whose bodies are indeterminate or ambiguous with respect to sex. Newborns with "imperfectly formed" genitals are immediately corrected by chemical or surgical means, children or adolescents are given hormone "therapies" if their bodies seem not to be developing to what physicians and others declare to be the norm for what has been declared to be that individual's sex. Persons with authority recommend and supply cosmetics and cosmetic regimens, diets, exercises and all manner of clothing to revise or disguise the too-hairy lip, the
too-large breast, the too-slender shoulders, the too-large feet, the too-great or too-slight stature. Individuals whose bodies do not fit the picture of exactly two sharply dimorphic sexes are often enough quite willing to be altered or veiled for the obvious reason that the world punishes them severely for their failure to be the "facts" which would verify the doctrine of two sexes. The demand that the world be a world in which there are exactly two sexes is inexorable and we are all compelled to answer to it emphatically, unconditionally, repetitiously and unambiguously. Even being physically "normal" for one's assigned sex is not enough. One must be female or male, actively. Again, the costumes and the performances. Pressed to acting feminine or masculine, one colludes...in the creation of a world in which the apparent dimorphism of the sexes is so extreme that one can only think that there is a great gulf between female and male, that the two are, essentially and fundamentally and naturally, utterly different. One helps create a world in which it seems to us that we could never mistake a woman for a man or a man for a woman. We need never worry.  

Sexual dualism is supplemented by gender dualism. A properly masculine character maximises distance from the feminine and minimises presence of attributes associated with the feminine, such as emotionality (other than anger) and submissiveness. Masculine identity is constructed via exclusion of the feminine, and not merely by its exclusion, but its rejection as inferior. Dualistic genderisation constructs masculinity and femininity in terms of sets of characteristics which are construed as both opposite and complementary, for example dominant/submissive, active/passive, transcendent/immanent. (that is, rising above and being in control of circumstances, nature and life, versus being subject to or immersed in them), rational/emotional, egoistic/altruistic, oriented to self-realisation/oriented to others, autonomy (sharp self boundaries) / relinquishment of self (self-merger). In fact although each requires the other as (dualised) other, the alternatives are not exhaustive, and the result is a set of systematic false dichotomies (see Chapter Eight below). The result, as in dualistic construction generally, is a splitting and a loss of wholeness, a loss of possibility for a more integrated way of being in the world, and an emphasis on hierarchy. As we shall see, this applies also in the case of the human
DISCONTINUITY AND THE RATIONALIST TRADITION

One key aspect of the western account of nature is the view of nature as sharply discontinuous from or ontologically divided from the human sphere. This leads to a view of humans as apart from or "outside of" nature, usually as masters or external controllers of it. Attempts to reject this often speak alternatively of humans as "part of nature", but rarely clarify what is involved and often seem to be affirming what should be obvious, that our fate is interconnected with that of the biosphere, that we are subject to natural laws. On the divided self theory it is the essentially or authentically human part of the self, and in that sense the human realm proper, that is outside nature, not the human as a physical phenomenon. But this also helps explain why ecologists have so often to repeat and stress this "obvious" point, that humans are part of nature and are just as dependent as any other species on a healthy ecosystem. We do not really believe it because Western culture has provided a concept of human identity which locates the truly, essentially or authentically human outside of nature, and treats it as only accidentally connected to or dependent on nature.

In the dualism of human and nature what is characteristically and authentically human is defined against what is taken to be natural, nature or the physical or biological realm. This takes various forms. A major difference in kind is often assumed to exist between humans and nature, and in a situation of both similarities and dissimilarities or discontinuities between humans and non-humans it is discontinuity which is characteristically stressed in western thought. The characterisation of the genuinely, properly, characteristically or authentically human, or of human virtue, in polarised terms to exclude what is taken to be characteristic of the natural is what
John Rodman has called "the Differential Imperative"\textsuperscript{16}, in which what is virtuous in the human is taken to be what maximises distance from the merely natural (of which more below). A key part of this tradition is the maintenance of sharp dichotomy and polarisation, and this is achieved by the rejection and denial of what links humans to the animal. What is taken to be authentically and characteristically human, defining of the human, as well as the ideal for which humans should strive, is not to be found in what is shared with the natural and animal (e.g. the body, sexuality, reproduction, emotionality, the senses, dependence on the natural world) but in what is thought to separate and distinguish them -- especially reason and its offshoots. Hence humanity is defined not as part of nature (perhaps a special part) but as separate from and in opposition to it. Thus the relation of humans to nature is treated as a dualism. The process closely parallels the formation of other dualisms, such as masculine/feminine, reason/emotion\textsuperscript{17}, criticised in feminist thought.

But this is not the only connection, because what is involved here is the rejection especially of those parts of the human character identified too as feminine -- also identified as less than fully human, giving the masculine conception of what it is to be human. Masculinity can be linked to this exclusionary and polarised conception of the human, via the desire to exclude and distance from the feminine and the non-human. The features which are taken as characteristic of humankind and as where its special virtues lie, are those such as rationality, freedom and transcendence of nature (all traditionally viewed as masculine) which are viewed as not shared with nature. Humanity is defined oppositionally to both nature and the feminine. These features are taken as outside the realm of nature, and these are the ones to be maximised; thus, the definition of the authentically human, of the real human self and of human virtue polarises humans and nature and maximises distance from nature. Thus too humans are often viewed in the rationalist tradition as a "paradox" of
a genuinely human, free, godlike mind trapped in an alien, animal body. The situation closely resembles that of male/female polarisation, which has indeed provided a model, and there are further important connections with gender which I shall discuss later. The upshot is a deeply entrenched view of the genuine or ideal human self as not including features shared with nature, and as defined against or in opposition to the non-human realm, so that the human sphere and that of nature cannot significantly overlap. Nature is sharply divided off from the human, is alien, and usually, hostile and inferior. Furthermore this kind of human self can only have certain kinds of accidental or contingent connections to the realm of nature. I shall call this the Discontinuity problem or thesis.

Western thought systems have been remarkable for the strong influence of both dualism and discontinuity since Greek times. Nowhere has it been more influential than in the view of the human relation to nature. It has been especially strong in the rationalist tradition, although not confined to it, because that tradition has chosen to stress as the basis of its account of human virtue and life features which it assumes to be peculiar to the human. In the rationalist tradition nature has been regarded as something not akin to the human sphere, as discontinuous or ontologically divided from the human, something with which humans have no fellowship. Thus St. Thomas Aquinas approvingly quotes St. Augustine:

"When we hear it said "Thou shalt not kill" we do not take it as referring to trees, for they have no sense, nor to irrational animals, because they have no fellowship with us. Hence it follows that the words, "Thou shalt not kill" refer to the killing of a man."... and by a most just valance of the Creator, both in their life and their death [animals] are subject to our use". 18

Aquinas is equally explicit: "irrational creatures can have no fellowship in human life which is regulated by reason." Since Greek times it has been assumed that there are two completely different sorts of things or substances in the world, humanity and the world of nature.
Humans are usually assumed to have a monopoly of mental characteristics, and especially of rationality. Thus Aristotle says "for other animals than men have the power of locomotion, but in none but him is there intellect." 19

**Platonic Dualism**

Plato's views on the nature of the human self, human virtue, and the status of the world of nature, as well as much of the rest of his philosophy, illustrate many of the features of dualism set out above. They emerge in three areas, in his account of the relation of soul or reason to body, in his later theory in his account of the relation of soul (the authentic and enduring aspect of self) to the other lower aspects of the self (nature within), and in his cosmological account of the significance of the sensible world of nature.

The explicit contrast in Plato is not so much between the mind or soul as male and the body as female, but of the mind or soul as divine and the body as human. Thus Socrates is presented as asserting

> the soul is in the very likeness of the divine, and immortal, and intellectual, and uniform, and indissoluble, and unchangeable; and the body is in the very likeness of the human, and mortal, and unintellectual, and multiform, and dissoluble, and changeable.

The identification of these contrasting orders as gendered, (the superior side being male) is not explicitly made in Plato, although it is implicit in the analogy of the Cave and in Plato's treatment of the emotions in the theory of the divided self in the *Republic*, where Plato is explicit in treating the extirpation of "feminine" softness and lack of control as the aim of education. Others in the Platonic tradition do explicitly add the gendered contrasts: thus the Pythagoreans included femaleness on the inferior side of their table of opposites, and Philo explicitly aligns the male / female contrast with the contrasting orders of Plato:

> There is in the soul a male and female element just as
there is in families, the male corresponding to the
men, the female to the women. The male soul assigns
itself to God alone as the father and maker of the
universe and the Cause of all things. The female clings
to all that is born and perishes; it stretches out its
faculties like a hand to catch blindly at what comes in
its way, and gives the clasp of friendship to the world
of created things with all its numberless changes and
transmutations, instead of to the divine order, the
immutable, the blessed, the thrice happy. 22

Sense perception, associated with the body and the realm
of the changeable, is also strongly associated with the
feminine.23 If the body is not explicitly identified as
feminine in Plato himself, it was so identified as part of
the cultural background of his time, and for Plato himself
the body is clearly part of the "region of the changeable"
-- the realm of nature -- and in the earlier theory of the
Phaedo is treated as in opposition to the genuine self, the
soul. In this dialogue the body is treated in highly
negative terms -- the body is a hindrance and a distraction.
The philosopher, who represents Plato's ideal of human
life, desires death because it enables escape from the body
and its entrapment.24 The body is described in entirely
negative terms as a prison for the soul (the true self)
which is fastened to it and as the source of endless
trouble by reason of its requirements and liability to
change and disease.25 It is of no help in the attainment
of wisdom and we are said to "make the nearest approach
to knowledge when we have the least possible intercourse
with or communion with the body."26 It is to be maximally
distanced from, and death is the goal of the philosopher
because it is the ultimate separation from nature.

Plato's treatment of the issue in terms of the more
sophisticated theory of the divided self continues the
dualistic theme, but now as a dualism lying within the
self. Non-rational qualities previously treated as alien
to the self are now treated as properly parts of the self,
which is as much the site of political struggles and
conflict between distinct and opposing elements as is the
state itself.27 But the base elements (represented in the
story of the charioteer in the Phaedrus as the "bestial"
black horse) continue to be those linked to bodily appetite and to animality. And the right relation between the elements, or health, is defined in terms of appropriate distancing, control and subordination of this element—nature within—by reason and its allies within the self, just as the right order in the universe is the control of the world of nature by Reason, the "world soul".

Plato's Cosmogony

Plato's inferiorisation of external nature can be seen in his cosmogony. In the *Phaedo* Plato gives his views on the inferior and corrupt state of the world of nature that we know and see around us. Just as the pure and incorruptible Forms lie beyond the inferior objects which participate in them, so beyond the world we know there is another far, far better, much purer and fairer:

and, if the nature of man could sustain the sight, he would acknowledge that this other world was the place of the true heaven and the true light and the true earth. For our earth, and the stones, and the entire region which surrounds us, are spoilt and corroded, as in the sea all things are corroded by the brine, neither is there any perfect or noble growth, but caverns only, and sand, and an endless slough of mud; and even the shore is not to be compared to the fairer sights of this [other] world. And still less is this our world to be compared to the other.

This other world, which of course lies above our world, and to which ordinary humans have no access, is, he tells us,

decked with various colours, of which the colours used by painters on earth are in a manner samples. But there the whole earth is made up of them, and they are brighter far and clearer than ours; there is a purple of wonderful lustre, also the radiance of gold, and the white which is in the earth is whiter than any chalk or snow. Of these and other colours the earth is made up, and they are more in number and fairer than the eye of man has ever seen. . . . and in this fair region everything that grows—trees, and flowers, and fruits—are in a like degree fairer than any here; and there are hills, having stones in them in a like degree smoother, and more transparent, and fairer in colour than our highly valued emeralds and sardonyxes and jaspers, and other gems, which are but minute fragments of them: for there all the stones are like our precious stones, and fairer still. The reason is that they are pure, and not, like our precious stones, infected or corroded by the corrupt briny elements which coagulate among us, and breed foulness and disease both in earth and stones, as well
as in animals and plants. According to Plato the world of nature is, quite literally, a hole, its condition and status linked to that of the feminine via the metaphor of the Cave, their mutual association with the body, and numerous other features. It is also a dump, a latrine, place where refuse from the higher world above accumulates. Platonic philosophy not only devalues nature, it is profoundly anti-ecological and anti-life, truly a philosophy of death (as Nietzsche says, but for different reasons). Change itself, the basis of life, is proof of inferiority, and only the changeless immaterial Forms can avoid contamination by it. Biological change, the decay of organisms and change into other organisms, is viewed with disgust as disease and foulness.

The Cave

The discontinuity, split or break between two different realms of reality, which appears both as a division within the human self and between the true self and nature, is the theme of the famous Cave Analogy of Plato. In the analogy, Plato sharply contrasts two realms, the cave and the world outside. The split is both ontological and epistemological, and in both of these realms Plato insists on the primacy of Reason (represented by the world outside, and by light, a cultural analogy which persists strongly to this day) over the "entrapment" of the Cave.

The Cave Analogy of course works at a number of levels, which is part of its source of power, and which confirms part of the argument of this chapter of the way in which the key set of dualisms, humans/nature, mind/body, and male/female act as exchanges for and support for one another, forming a web. The Cave is, first of all, the world of the senses, of information coming from the material body, the world of physicality and changeability; it is the world of Appearance. This is contrasted with the blinding light of Reason, with the sublime, eternal and incorruptible world of the Forms contemplated by the
philosopher -- the world of Reality. It is then broadly a contrast, in specifically Platonic terms, between the non-material sphere of mind (reason, Ideas, the Forms) and the material sphere of the body and nature. The division between these spheres is a sharp one. As Irigaray notes, it is significant that the passage between is difficult and hidden:

This is a key passage, even when it is neglected, or even especially when it is neglected, for when the passage is forgotten, by the very fact of its being re-enacted in the cave, it will found, subtend, sustain the hardening of all dichotomies, categorical differences, clear-cut distinctions, absolute discontinuities, all the confrontations of irreconcilable representations.

The Forms are the insubstantial, non-material ideas which underlie and explain what goes on in the world of the senses, of Appearance. This provides the basic element of Transcendental philosophy, that what is basic, important or real transcends the given, the world of materiality, the world of nature, which by implication, is inferior, incomplete, lacking significance of its own, a source of re-entrapment and error. Its meaning and its value, to the extent that it has any, come from outside, from the other sphere.

At another level of interpretation, the Cave is the mother, the feminine. What is to be transcended, left behind, in the journey from the Cave is precisely the feminine and what is associated with it -- traditionally materiality, the body, the senses, "primitive" stages of human and individual existence. What is to be attained, the end of the journey out of the Cave, is the masculine identity, and what is associated with it, reason, (which can also be the contrasting item in the above set of contrasts) and human cultural identity. This level of interpretation connects with the psycho-analytic level. The Cave as Plato describes it is the uterus, and the journey is the oedipal one to the establishment of the masculine identity by differentiation from the inferiorised feminine and all that is associated with it. What is to be reached, the sphere of the eternal, unchanging forms "assure freedom
from the cave, the womb, the unending cycle of birth and death, the realm of necessity and of women (mothers)." 32

At a third level of interpretation what is left behind, transcended, is both nature without and nature within. This applies both in the case of the earlier theory in which nature is external to the real self or soul, and to the later theory of the divided self, in which nature is both external and internal. Later rationalists adapted this story by the identification of the rational or conscious controller (the charioteer in the horse story of the Phaedrus) as the genuine, true or authentic self, and of these features as defining of the human self. To later Platonists such as St. Augustine, the real person, the real carrier of identity and of humanity, is the reasoning part or the soul; the remainder is a trap, (like the Cave) a sphere to be controlled and dominated by Reason. The Cave then represents the division both within and without, between the authentically human sphere and the sphere of nature, the non-human sphere. The Cave Analogy is a powerful and culturally central image which establishes the dualistic division of realms, and important features of the western story of nature and of gender. It sets out the general dualistic structure to which the interwoven dualistic pairs of humans/nature, mind/body, and male/female, can be fitted.

The Differential Imperative: Self, Other and Continuity

The Cave Analogy thus treated establishes the ontological gulf between the human (or the properly human) and nature. It also defines a human task, the accomplishment of which delineates if not the human in the descriptive sense, at least the human in the normative sense, the fully and properly human, the human identity. The task is to rise above and distance from both the feminine and nature within and nature without, and the appropriate human attitude to this sphere is one of distance, control and
domination. The complement to this is a theory of human virtue aptly labelled by the American philosopher John Rodman "the Differential Imperative". He characterises this as follows:

The basic concept upon which the whole edifice of classical thought was built -- the concept of human virtue or excellence -- was defined by isolating the distinguishing characteristics of the human species from those of other forms of being, especially the brute beasts, our next of kin. Human virtue was not only that which all humans shared (however unequally); it was also that which distinguished humans from wolves, sheep and grape vines. All variations on the theme of human virtue -- whether articulated as the ability to think, speak, know justice, choose, know and worship God, or (much later) to create technology -- are rooted in the formal presupposition that, at least at the species level, one becomes better by maximising one's species-specific differentia. To put it more strongly, species differences ought to be maximised, and the most virtuous human being is the one who most fully transcends his animal and vegetative nature. The existence of a paradigmatic presupposition of axiomatic status is demonstrated by the almost universal tendency of mainstream classical writers, both pagan and Christian, to assume the Differential Imperative as self-evident, and by the total absence of any argument for the equally logical alternative, that, given both differences and similarities with other forms of being and given some capacity to go one way or another, humans ought to act so as to maximise characteristics shared with other forms of being.

In accordance with its logically arbitrary assumption that the good life involved the maximisation of species-specific traits, classical moral and political thought, preoccupied with "the good for man", engaged in continual putting down of the animal realm, both within man and without. In this respect, classical philosophy reflects the human ecology of agricultural civilisation. Just as agricultural man feels threatened by wild beasts and seeks either to domesticate or eliminate them, so he is threatened by the stirrings of the wild beast within whose taming (or even, in the Pauline version, whose extirpation) seems essential to achieving the life of virtue. This strand of classical thought has persisted well into modern times, surviving various Primitivist and Romantic rebellions, and becoming increasingly repressive as the area of external wilderness has shrunk under the impact of human expansion, and as human rationality has been reduced from the Platonic conception to the narrower conception characteristic of modern economic/technological society.

The result is an identity which stresses separation of humans from nature, rather than their continuity with it. But the Differential Imperative is not logically arbitrary
nor is it the only tactic involved in the modelling of human /nature relations as analogous to the relations of master and slave, mind and body, male and female, although it is an important one. The Differential Imperative is the result of the dualisation of the human /nature relationship.

The treatment of the human /nature distinction as a dualism continues, as Rodman notes for the Differential Imperative, into post-classical times. Later rationalists, for example, drew the division between the human self and nature even more sharply than the Platonic division. For Descartes the self is pure thought.

From the very fact that I thought of doubting the truth of other things it followed very evidently and very certainly that I existed, while on the other hand, if I had only ceased to think, although all the rest of what I had imagined had been true, I would have had no reason to believe that I existed; I thereby concluded that I was a substance, of which the whole essence or nature consists in thinking, and which in order to exist, needs no place and depends on no material thing; so that this "I", that is to say, the mind by which I am what I am, is entirely distinct from the body, even that it is easier to know than the body, and moreover, even if the body were not, it would not cease to be all that it is. A self defined as pure thought is one which "needs no place" and has no dependence on the body and nature, and indeed is entirely self contained even with respect to other humans. The authentic self so defined has nothing at all in common with the body and nature, since these are treated as totally lacking in mind-like attributes (see Chapter Five below). Nor does it have anything in common with the forms of existence defined as feminine. The authentic human self is defined as alien to both nature and the feminine.

The Differential Imperative continues to influence accounts of what is central to human life and character. For much contemporary European philosophy derived from Lacan, for example, the Symbolic Order is the realm of culture and language definitive of human being, and entry into it is identified with the process of humanisation and the
assumption of social identity. These are features assumed to be not only exclusive of the natural and the feminine but only achievable via their subjugation.\textsuperscript{35} Although ostensibly engaged in deconstructing the rationalist tradition, such a position continues to offer us a definition of human being and culture which is defined in opposition to both nature and women, and to those forms of life associated with them.

Mary Midgley makes a similar point to Rodman in her characteristically succinct style: "\textit{Man grounds all value in attributes unshared with animals.}"\textsuperscript{36} But of course this is not a feature of "Man" but of particular cultures, unshared by others. But Rodman's and Midgley's perception of the Differential Imperative as extending into value theory and involving especially the account of human virtue is important. In these terms the Differential Imperative operates at the level of both ideals of human character and through the selection of characteristics which are to be valued, stressed, and developed as appropriate to the human being, for example, rational self-control as against satisfaction of needs thought of as animal. More often however, the Differential Imperative operates covertly through the concept of the human itself, which is often implicitly normative. The strongly normative character of the concept of the human is indicated by the use of terms such as "fully human","less than fully human". These terms are not descriptive--rather they select some things humans can do as proper to the human and some as not. Or an area discontinuous from the dualised animal is demarcated as authentically human or genuinely human; this move gives an account of the nature of the human which involves implicit value assumptions. As in the Aristotelian case, the account of the nature of human being is closely intertwined with the account of what is proper to humans, and in this space the Differential Imperative grows. What is proper to the human, what expresses the true nature or essence of a human being, what is defining of human identity, is thus conceived of in opposition to the animal or natural, as precisely what is supposedly not possessed by animals--
that is the rational, the spiritual, the transcendent, the area of freedom.

A modern version of the Differential Imperative is found especially in existentialism where the animal, inherited nature is treated as an alien constraint on the true self, which is seen as free. On this view the instinctual, animal part of the nature of human beings represents the sphere of necessity, and limits options and choice; our humanness consists in our ability to get as far away from this as possible, to maximise the area of choice and of culture over the area of nature, and hence minimise and distance from the sphere of necessity. Again, human identity is defined in terms of opposition to and maximising distance from nature, in this case represented not by the body but by instinct. Mary Midgley attempts a resolution of the nature/culture dualism this exhibits, arguing that once we have distinguished two different ways of understanding instinct (open instinct, where an instinctual base is open to cultural elaboration, and closed instinct, which is a fixed and unchangeable pattern of behaviour not open to social mediation), there is no necessary conflict between our human identity as natural, instinctual beings and our human identity as cultural and free beings. The conflict and choice between nature and culture here is the result of the dualistic construction of human identity.

MASCULINITY, DUALISM AND REACTIVE DIFFERENTIATION

Rodman and Midgley have noticed that humans and nature are defined in the tradition outlined above as discontinuous, apart, and even more, as oppositional. We have noticed that the relationship has the features of a dualism -- an oppositional distinction in which nature is inferiorised as well as distanced from and which defines identity accordingly. When we put this together with some further feminist insights we can fill out the picture further. The relationship parallels that of separation as described by certain types of feminist psychoanalysis, rejection of the
other as inferior and definition of the self via exclusion of and distancing from its characteristics. This corresponds closely with the separation process in the formation of masculine identity as theorised by object-relations theory. Nature is "spat out" in the formation of this masculinized-human identity, just as the feminine, the mother is "spat out" in the formation of individual masculine identity. So the account of this dualised human identity as masculinised is justified for two reasons—first that the characteristics ascribed to humanity as so understood are those of masculinity rather than femininity, and second, that the processes of identity formation are parallel. And this should not be surprising. If women are taken to be identified with nature, a masculine identity formed by exclusion of and in reaction to the feminine/natural within will also normally be one formed by the exclusion of the feminine/natural without.

These observations reunite two of the apparently disparate strands of ecofeminism noticed in Chapter Two, the one having its emphasis on difference and the separation of the individual masculine identity from nature and the feminine within, and the other placing its emphasis on dualism and the separation of the human identity from nature (without) and the feminine in cultural construction.

Western culture's stance towards the natural world corresponds closely to that described by feminist psychoanalysis as "false differentiation" in the case of the formation of individual identity. According to object-relations theory, this style of differentiation is also characteristic of the formation of masculine identity in specific social contexts, eg where motherhood is exclusive to women and is devalued. Such an identity is marked by an overemphasis on self boundaries (hyperseparateness), an oppositional or reactive construction of self, and a refusal or inability to recognise the subjecthood or agency of the other. Reactive separation, like dualism, aims to maximise distance, forming character on the principle "I am not like her who nurtures and cares for me." Thus such an identity is
premised on being as little as possible like the opposite identity, which is thus repudiated or "spat out", and it expels characteristics perceived as characterising the other from its own makeup. Because such a separation is never properly resolved, the masculine identity so achieved is precarious and requires constantly to be assured that it is unlike the despised feminine. Thus as Flax explains:

The longings for symbiosis with the mother are not resolved. Therefore, one's own wishes, body, women and anything like them (nature) must be partially objectified, depersonalised, and rigidly separated from the core self in order to be controlled.

False differentiation contrasts with a different type of separation which separates but is able to recognise not only the distinctness of the other, but also the other's continuity with the self, the agency or autonomy of the other. This is a separation which does not separate from the other as an alien being, does not "negate" the other, and the resulting self is distinct from the narcissistic self. As Nancy Chodorow writes

The ability to perceive the other as a self... requires an emotional shift and a form of emotional growth. The adult self not only experiences the other as distinct and separate. It also does not experience the other solely in terms of its own needs for gratification and its own desires.

The psychoanalytic account, although not without its problems, has considerable explanatory scope and unifying power in this context. If the cultural identification of the feminine and the natural which is characteristic of western culture transfers such attitudes from the mother to nature, this early self-formation process determines the stance towards nature, the world, the m/other, in general. The theory is able to provide an explanation of many features of dualism and of both the central features of the formation of western masculine identity and of cultural attitudes to nature of western society which unifies into a single process the key, but apparently disparate, features. These are as follows:

1. Dualism: The account provides an explanation for the
dualistic treatment of nature and women as alien to the human and the masculine self, and the reactive and oppositional formation of both human and masculine identity in terms of polarisation or maximising distance. A consequence is an explanation of the way the resulting gender and human species identity is formed by exclusion of the other's characteristics. This explanation then includes in its scope both the Differential Imperative and the Discontinuity thesis.

2. Human Egoism versus Human Altruism. We can either see the dualist process as an institutional and cultural form of self/other formation, or we can see a certain distorted formation of self in relation to other as a dualism of self and other. And of course they can be seen in both ways. The latter is suggested by Jessica Benjamin, and both she and Nancy Chodorow provide a theory of the self which connects insightfully with the usual account of ego choices as egoist or altruist. Thus self/other dualism yields a false choice: the choice of self as submerged, as relinquished versus self as overseparated (Benjamin), or hyperseparated (Chodorow). The second yields the excessive emphasis on autonomy and self boundaries characteristic of the masculine stance and of egoism, while the first connects with a corresponding distortion, that of self-merger or self relinquishment characteristic of the feminine stance or of altruism understood as the sacrifice or denial of self and its interests. These are mapped by Jessica Benjamin onto the sadism/masochism contrast. The pairs form a false choice, for while the first denies connectedness or relationality of self, the second submerges the self in the other, in relationship. As we shall see, this false choice is a key one and is repeated over a range of areas. It is especially important in determining the dominant masculinized attitude to nature as an egoist-instrumental one, and the false choice of this instrumental approach versus an altruist-non-use one. Both characteristic stances are theorised in object-relations theory as distortions of the adequately separated self conceived in non-dualist terms as
relational, having relations to others which are not merely accidental but are characterising or essential, but not as constituted entirely by such relations or defined purely in terms of relations to others.

3. Objectification and Mechanism: This includes both mechanism, as the treatment of nature as non-agentic and the failure to recognise its capacity for autonomy and for self-directedness, of the possession of independent purposes and goals, and the treatment of women in similar terms as passive and as neither capable of or entitled to self-direction (see Chapter Five below). What is involved here is not so much the recognition of nature as a single, unitary "self", as the recognition of multiple other "selves" in nature, other beings with their own needs, purposes and destinies, distinct from the needs, purposes and destinies of the recogniser (and of humans). The failure to recognise the other as another self is also an important element in backgrounding, the treatment of both women and nature as the unconsidered background to human and masculine life.

4. Instrumentalism: The reactively separated self does not perceive the other as another self, with needs and goals of its own, or as like to itself, continuous with itself. Such a self also lacks essential (as opposed to accidental) relations to others. Hence it must treat the other as an instrument, a means to its own ends, since it does not recognise other ends. Such a self "experiences the other solely in terms of its own needs for gratification and its own desires". This self also corresponds closely to the self-interested individual of market theory, the rational maximiser of interests defined without essential reference to others, as Ross Poole has argued. Instrumentalism is a key feature of the western treatment of nature which connects closely with the treatment of the other in mechanistic terms as lacking agency and goals of its own, and also with discontinuity, the treatment of the other as alien to and non-continuous with self. It is also a key feature of the treatment of
women, whose worth is traditionally assessed in terms of criteria of virtue which turn on usefulness to males, and who are not treated as having autonomy and worth in their own right.

5. Devaluation: Like instrumentalism, this is overdetermined, that is a number of the features listed above lead to devaluation. For example, if an item is devalued, this provides motivation for the sort of separation from it described under "false differentiation", for maximising distance from it, trying to be as little like it as possible, and denying its continuity with the self. Conversely, what better way to achieve maximum separation and distancing than to separate and devalue, defining one's own selfhood against the devalued item. Devaluation is also linked to instrumentalism and to denial of selfhood to the other.

Psychoanalytic theory as developed by Chodorow and others provides a powerful explanatory framework in the case of feminist analysis, helping explain for example, the connections between the masculine identity and the characteristics of the public sphere of life, as well as many other features of note. Here it provides a powerful and unifying explanatory framework for viewing the Differential Imperative and the western approach to nature generally, one which makes the connection to gender central and not peripheral and reveals the important respects in which the formation and structure of dualised human identity parallels the formation and structure of dualised masculine identity.

DISCONTINUITY, HUMAN IDENTITY AND DEATH

The understanding of the meaning of human identity is strongly linked to the understanding of the meaning of death. The treatment of death in a culture reveals
important features of the way in which human identity is understood. The western understanding of human identity as discontinuous from nature is reflected in its understandings of death and the significance of human life.

We have seen that Plato in the Phaedo treats death as welcome to the man of true virtue, as the final separation from the physical realm of the senses, of nature and the body, which is entrapment and pollution for the soul. The real self is the soul, and continuity for the self is provided by its continuation in the world of the forms; in fact if the real self is discontinuous from nature continuity can only be provided by the soul's persistence in a spiritual realm also discontinuous from nature, which furnishes the significance of and locus of continuity in human life. This formation of identity ensures that it is not merely discontinuous from and outside nature, but is oppositional to it, and is in conflict with the basic conditions and fact of its physical existence.

This other-worldly orientation goes down through Christianity and appears in the doctrine of salvation as the true purpose of human life and in many other aspects of Christian doctrine, but especially in the treatment of death as the gateway to a better existence in the form of eternal life. The other-worldly orientation was especially marked in periods of high Platonic influence such as the middle ages. For both Platonic and Christian systems, the meaning of death is that the meaning of human life is elsewhere, not to be found in the earth or in human life as part of nature, but in a separate realm accessible only to humans, (and only to certain chosen of these), the world of the forms and the world of heaven. The salvation awaiting them beyond and above the world of nature, a fate marked out for humans alone, confirms their different nature as separate from the world of nature and their destiny as apart from that of other species -- their status and identity as outside nature.

This of course is no longer the modern view. The modern
humanist view dispenses with another world beyond the earth as the source of significance and continuity for human life. The other world stands revealed as a human reflection and invention; there is no significance outside "man himself":

Alas, my brothers, this god whom I created was man-made and madness, like all gods! Man he was, and only a poor specimen of man and ego: out of my own ashes and fire this ghost came to me, and, verily, it did not come to me from beyond. What happened, my brothers? I overcame myself, the sufferer; I carried my own ashes to the mountains; I invented a brighter flame for myself. But the modern denial of the otherworldly is usually absurdly incomplete; like the affirmation of the underside of a dualism (in this case the dualism of human and divine) it leaves too much of the old structure intact, preserves what it reacts against in the dualised identity of what is affirmed, and fails to construct a real alternative. It has dispensed with the other world, disconnected from and opposed to nature, as the basis for human identity, but this disconnection and opposition itself now becomes the basis of human identity. Science, progress, technology provide an alternative basis for a human identity constructed still as outside nature, in which humans are external controllers and manipulators of it, and in which humanness is now demonstrated by maximising the extent of its control. Science builds an concept of human knowledge in which what is known is taken as object, an alien other to be dominated, seen but never recognised as subject. The original location of masculinised human identity in the sphere of the immutable, divine order has been lost, but it has not been relocated in the opposing, excluded order of the earth and of living things, "with all its numberless changes and transmutations" from which classical thought sundered it.

Modernity has not yielded then a single position on human significance to replace that of otherworldly religion. Rather there are a number of sons contending for the mantle of the Father to confer meaning and identity: science, progress, technological conquest, the economy. They offer different solutions the problem of identity and continuity,
but usually ones as hostile to the natural world as the old identity based in denial of human connection to nature. For example where this identity is based in power over and domination of nature it founds itself in an hierarchical order — one which is only too readily carried over to the human sphere — and creates the religion of progress, the need to express and confirm this identity in an endless and escalating process of conquest of those conditions and beings cast as natural. Where it is based in the conception of human identity as "economic man" whose main identifying feature is the drive to the satisfaction of wants, identity is confirmed and expressed in a process of endless and escalating consumption of commodities. But a human identity based in discontinuity from and opposition to nature and which fails to recognise a larger order persisting over time of which humans are a part has only a tenuous hold on continuity and significance, and often has to abandon any hope of continuity or significance altogether.

In transcendental religions, death confirms and necessitates human continuity in terms of persistence of the human essence in a larger order beyond the world of changeable things. Its meaning is that the decay of the body is of no significance, for the human essence is not tied to the body or to the world of changes, but is embedded in this other spiritual order which persists. Death expresses continuity with this spiritual order, but the discontinuity of the human essence from the contrasting order of nature.

Contemporary western identity has rejected this otherworldly significance and basis for continuity, but has given it no other meaning, provided no other context of continuity or embeddedness for human life. In particular it does not give death the significance of unity with and embeddedness in nature, for the human essence is still conceptualised as discontinuous from nature; and to the extent that death can express a unity with nature, it is a unity with an order of nature conceived as dualised other.
as itself stripped of significance, as mere matter. Death thus has the overall meaning of separation of the individual from any larger order of significance. For contemporary identity, the meaning of death comes to be that human life has no meaning, or often, what is hardly different, that it has any meaning anyone chooses to give it. There is no continuity, and no larger order to which death provides the key. Death is a nothing, a void, a terrifying and sinister terminus, whose only meaning is that there is no meaning, a view expressed frequently enough in contemporary literature:

What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
You cannot say or guess, for you know only
A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,
And the dry stone no sound of water. Only
There is shadow under this red rock,
(Come in under the shadow of this red rock),
And I will show you something different from either
Your shadow at morning striding behind you
Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;
I will show you fear in a handful of dust.

This problematic of a human identity formed in reactive separation from nature and in the denial of connection to a larger containing order of significance parallels here also the separation difficulties of reactively formed masculine identity, for which generational continuity over time as well as non-accidental connection to the other remains problematic. Dualism and androcentrism thus combine in the construction of a contemporary human identity alienated from nature.
References


4. The two are confused in the discussion of Nancy Jay ("Gender And Dichotomy " *Feminist Studies*, 7, no. 1 Spring 1981, pp39-56) with the disastrous result that all attempt to draw distinctions or to use negation comes under suspicion. Although she provides in her discussion ample distinguishing marks between dichotomy and dualism, dualism is treated as A/not A. The problem seems to come about in part because of her attempt to theorise the area not only in terms of negation rather than identity, but in terms of Aristotelian logic, which is a highly insensitive tool for dealing with negation. The treatment of negation is an important issue for the account of otherness, and the negation of classical logic creates problems here as in so many other places. But for relevant negation it is possible to say that the reverse or opposite is not just treated negatively and by exclusion as the *other*, but has an independent and equal role on its own behalf. See R. Routley and V. Plumwood "Negation and Contradiction", *Revista Colombiana de Matematicas*, vol 19, 1985, pp201--231.


10. Ibid, p189.


12. Plato Phaedrus, 270c.

13. Although such an identification was not explicit in Plato (or indeed in Descartes), as Genevieve Lloyd notes Platonic themes were subsequently used by others "in ways that both exploit and reinforce the long-standing associations between maleness and form, femaleness and matter." Lloyd op. cit. p5.


17. See for example on the reason/emotion dichotomy Lawrence A. Blum Friendship, Altruism and Morality Routledge London 1980, and on the contrasts of reason generally Genevieve Lloyd op. cit.

19. Aristotle *The parts of Animals*, Book Five, Ch1, 641a35, 641b10, quoted in Regan and Singer op. cit.


25. Ibid p203.

26. Ibid p204.


28. Ibid p222.


35. For a critique of some of these assumptions see Dorothy Leland "Lacanian Psychoanalysis and French Feminism: Toward an Adequate Political Psychology" Hypatia vol 3 no 3 Winter 1989 pp81-103. Similar tendencies in existentialism are discussed by Mary Midgley Heart and Mind, Methuen London 1981, pp7-8.


37. The basic text in feminist object-relations theory is the work of Nancy Chodorow, especially The Reproduction Of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender, University of California Press, Berkeley 1978.


1989 pp2-11.

42. Benjamin op. cit.


46. Friedrich Nietzsche *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, in Walter Kaufman (ed) *the Portable Nietzsche*, p143.

There exists nothing in the whole of nature which cannot be explained in terms of purely corporeal causes totally devoid of mind and thought.

Descartes

Visible nature is all plasticity and indifference — a moral multiverse ... and not a moral universe. To such a harlot we owe no allegiance: with her as a whole we can establish no moral communion; and we are free in our dealings with her several parts to obey or to destroy, and to follow no law but that of prudence in coming to terms with such of her particular features as will help us to our private ends.


THE CONCEPT OF NATURE

Just as reason and human are problematic concepts, so is the contrasting concept of nature. It is notorious as one of the most complex and many-layered concepts currently in use, and it is even more problematic for feminists, since assimilation to nature has been made the basis for so much of women’s oppression in western culture. Attitudes to the concept range from the view that its multiple meanings indicate its richness and significance to the the view that we should simply abandon the concept, which is widely treated with suspicion anyway, as a relic of the past. I want to suggest instead reasons for retaining it but treating it with care and working to erase its dualistic construction.

"Nature" is defined as one half of a complex set of contrasts: for example it is contrasted in the human case with the unlearned or with the culturally variable (as in "Is competitiveness part of human nature or is it the product of particular and changeable cultures?"), with the domestic or domesticated (where a plant or species is said to be a natural variety), the synthetic ("Is it a natural or synthetic fibre?"), and with what is fabricated by humans or what is the result of human influence or interference. These are all different, for we can ask for
example whether a particular area is in its natural state or whether it has been modified somehow by human intervention, and this is different from asking whether or not it is synthetic, artificial or domestic, and certainly quite different from asking whether or not it is the product of a particular culture or a product of human nature. And these are only some of the senses.

Nevertheless, if we set aside the "human nature" sense, which raises some special problems, there is a common thread to many of these uses, and this thread is that "nature" operates as a contrast term with some particular aspect of the human. This may admit of degrees; "natural yoghurt" is not yoghurt which the cow itself produces and which you can pick up in the fields, but a type which is less processed, or which is produced by a process regarded as "more natural", which involves less human interference with the original state of the thing or less processing. Although decades of use for advertising and promotion purposes has produced a maze of absurd, stretched, vague, fanciful and downright dishonest uses of the concept of the natural, it remains important and indispensable in many areas.

If the key sense and contrast seems to be that in which the non-human sphere counts as "nature" in contrast to the human sphere, it would seem to be simpler and clearer to substitute the term "non-human" for these uses, thus enabling us to dispense with the ambiguity and vagueness of the concept of nature in these cases. But this strategy has its problems, for the contrast class to the human is then defined entirely as the other, by exclusion and negation of what is human. There is then no continuity, overlap or inclusion, and the resulting concept resists analysis in terms which admit the human sphere as embedded in nature. Such a characterisation focusses exclusively on difference from a field of both similarity and difference; it focusses on the human and files nature away as "the rest". And the sphere of "nature" then is a polarity, which has to be seen as entirely lacking in human
influence, as totally separate from the human, as alien. Such a definition of nature is a refuge for the discontinuity account of human relations to nature.

The Discontinuity Thesis typically operates in this context to generate a false choice in which, on the one hand, humans are treated as indistinguishable from nature and totally immersed in it, and on the other as completely separate and opposed to it. The choice takes the form of a dilemma, the two horns of which are:

(1) so emphasising human immersion in the natural or non-human world that no distinction can be made between the human and the natural, and there is no basis for recognising the difference and independence of nature and the non-human world or for viewing humans as capable of despoiling nature or acting against nature.

(2) separating humans and nature so totally in characterising the natural that nothing is really natural which has any human element, so that nature "proper" becomes totally alien, and is defined as "the not-human", as the other. Such a view raises an unbridgeable wall between human and nature, a wall which prevents any real interaction, because interaction results in some kind of modification, and on the exclusion definition any kind of modification of an area causes it to be a human artefact, and hence not natural. Therefore humans can never really interact with nature, because as soon as there is interaction it ceases to be nature. "Genuine" nature remains forever elusive and alien, on the other side of a definitional wall, and all that humankind can really interact with is some reflection of itself. This horn of the dilemma then leads into one form of the problem of alienation. The dilemma then posed is that between an excessive emphasis on continuity and community with nature denying the possibility of difference between the non-human and the human, on the one hand, and of raising an unbridgeable wall between the human and the natural, denying the possibility of continuity and community on the
The dilemma is summed up nicely in two popular arguments. These collapse the distinction, as it were, from different directions, one leading to the conclusion that everything's really natural, the other to the conclusion that nothing is. H. J. McCloskey's *Ecological Ethics and Politics* sums up the first argument: "If man is deemed to be an insider, part of Nature, nothing he can do could be unwise, irrational, wrong, contrary to Nature", and also the second: "Wilderness proper would seem to be that which is completely untouched and unaffected by man. So defined, there probably is little, if any wilderness left." The first argument, that everything's really natural, would only work if humans were not only "part" of nature, but indistinguishable from it; it emphasises human continuity with nature and the non-human to the point of insisting that humans and their works are indistinguishable from nature, thus collapsing the distinction in one direction, and adds the further very dubious assumption that the natural (in human action) is morally good. The second argument, that nothing's really natural, emphasises the apartness of nature to the point of insisting that there can be no human influence at all on the genuinely natural.

These arguments are symptoms of the problem of discontinuity, which underlies the false choice in which humans are treated as either indistinguishable parts of nature or as outside it, completely separate from it. The exclusionary understanding of nature gives rise to a series of problems which bedevil concepts such as wilderness and natural area, especially in relation to the indigenous people whose habitat these areas often are and who, like all species, modify the areas concerned, but usually not in ways which produce the degree of ecosystem simplification characteristic of industrial-technological society. On an account less influenced by discontinuity, we should be able to count an area which is still shaped largely by non-human processes as natural even where there has been some human influence. We do need to be able to recognise nature
as other, but we should not be obliged by definition to treat it as alien.

But it is not the use of "nature" as a contrast term which creates problems so much as the way the contrast is treated — as limited or as unlimited — and this tends to take the form of additional assumption rather than being settled by the established sense of "nature" itself. The crucial issue is how those aspects of the human sphere that are shared with nature are treated, whether the contrast is treated as absolute and rigid or as allowing continuity and overlap between the human sphere and nature. This applies both to nature without and nature within. Is "nature within", those characteristics of humans that are shared with non-humans, to be kept sharply separated, feared, denied, denigrated (as the beast within), kept under control (especially by reason), and not fully admitted to the status of human or not admitted at all, as in the rationalist tradition; or is it integrated, valued and accepted, treated as a vital part of human life and culture?

The use of the terminology "nature" does not settle these questions, unlike the "non-human" terminology, which settles them the wrong way, not admitting the area of common ground. For on the view which admits human continuity, the contrast of human and nature is a limited one; nature is not properly described as "non-human" — it is also human. The concept derives its power precisely from the links it draws between human and non-human spheres, between nature within the human sphere and nature without. Dualism has used the concept of nature to spread devaluation and domination from the non-human sphere to those parts of the human sphere it associates with the non-human, and vice versa. But the concept of nature is not to be blamed for this, and it has potentially a powerful linking and integrative function, which can reverse the process of denial of links and continuity between human and non-human spheres which dualism began, and which we must now end.
Dualism has not only shaped our conception of human identity and the conception of the relations between humans and nature, but has also shaped the western conception of nature as mechanism. The mechanistic conception of nature is the result of a dualising process which has denied to nature any common ground with what are taken to be the salient features of the human sphere, with the characteristics considered to be mental especially. Just as the genuine human self is construed in polarised and oppositional terms as without qualities shared with the animal and natural spheres, so nature is construed as bereft of qualities appropriated to the human. Thus the dualistic process destroys bridging characteristics from both ends, as it were, of the dualism, and writes out continuity. One product of this dualisation is the mechanistic account of nature, and the contrast between the human and non-human realms as absolute and unbridgeable, one which has been aptly described as “consciousness versus clockwork”.

The clockwork account of nature given by mechanism and some forms of materialism represents nature in terms of the lower half of a dualism, the upper half of which (spirit) has been discarded, but the lower half of which (matter) has been retained in its dualised form.

For the earlier rationalist tradition the responsibility for upholding the Differential Imperative lies with the account of the genuine human self as rational and as excluding those feminine-associated characteristics shared with nature or dominating these as representing a baser aspect of self. Thus the Differential Imperative provides an account both of the nature of the human and of what it should strive for, of virtue or of what is to be valued in human society and individual life. With Enlightenment rationalism the emphasis shifts away from this virtue-
based account to a theory of consciousness as the focus of the self, and responsibility for maintaining the Differential Imperative shifts to an account of nature, both within and without, as pure mechanism devoid of elements of mind or consciousness. The Differential Imperative is no longer based in an account of human virtue but rather in the mechanistic view of the world identified with a scientific outlook.

Both environmental philosophy and ecofeminism have recently made moves to challenge the mechanistic model of the natural world. There has been a growing realisation of a serious conflict between this mechanistic model of the world and an ecological outlook, and of a close connection between mechanism and instrumentalism. For if something is conceived in mechanistic terms, as lacking the qualities of autonomy and agency which are required for us to be able to accord respect to it as its own thing, it can be seen as just being our thing. If it lacks its own goals and direction, it can be seen as something utterly neutral on which humans can and even must impose their own goals, purposes and significance, for it has none of its own, exhibiting only "plasticity and indifference". Thus a mechanistically-conceived nature lies open to, indeed invites the imposition of human purposes and treatment as an instrument for the achievement of human satisfactions.

It is no coincidence that this view of nature took hold most strongly with the rise of capitalism, which needed to make nature available as a market commodity and resource without significant moral constraint on availability. A view of nature as passive and without a value or direction of its own often underlies and is implicit in early liberal arguments for the legitimacy of private property. For example, Locke's argument justifying private property in terms of the "mixing" of owned labour with natural resources in the state of nature, basically assumes not only that the natural world is "unowned" (unless so mixed with labour) by other humans, but also that it does not "own" itself, that it is simply available and is without
value or direction on its own account, and that these things are added in by human labour. Without such an assumption, the "mixing" analogy is not at all convincing, for why should the addition of labour make it possible to simply annex the natural world, without constraints other than those arising from the needs of other humans? If nature has value and significance on its own account, the result of "mixing" would be more like the mixing of one person's labour with another's or with what another person owns. There would be thus no case for simple annexation, for claiming the "mixed" human labour to be dominant in giving property rights and overriding the claim of the item to be "its own thing", to its own significance and value.

It is no coincidence either that the mechanistic model often makes use of feminine imagery, of passivity and inviting domination. The history of the replacement by the mechanistic model of an earlier organic model characteristic of some societies is well documented by Carolyn Merchant in her book The Death of Nature and she also begins to explore in that book the complex and interesting connections between views of nature as available for control and manipulation and views of women in similar terms. Her book, which investigates some of the historical connections behind the rise of mechanism and the connections with feminism, has provided some of the motivation for the search for a new account, without however itself providing that account. Some of these connections, between the view of nature as feminine, passive and indifferent, as neutral and lacking agency, and an instrumental view of nature, are strikingly summed up in the illuminating modern passage quoted at the beginning of this chapter.

Mechanism then is increasingly seen as a problem in contemporary environmental philosophy, although it is a position deeply entrenched and little questioned in the modern world view and in mainstream philosophy, where it has not been seen as a problem. Thus for instance Gilbert Ryle in The Concept of Mind, in a brief and remarkably
superficial discussion of the problem, simply dismisses the problem of mechanism as a bogey, a baseless fear, on the grounds that there are other kinds and levels of explanation (in this case for human behaviour) than those in terms of the laws of mechanics. He neither gets to grips in depth with what mechanism is, nor considers whether it might be a problem in the non-human sphere, but this discussion still appears to be the main one in orthodox modern philosophical literature.

I now try to outline in more detail some of the features which go to make up the mechanistic model of nature as a preliminary to going on to discuss some alternatives to it. I want to outline initially just a cluster of characteristics which fall into groups, and then later suggest some conceptual connections between them.

Scientific/mechanistic paradigm of nature
1. **Non-agentic**: nature lifeless, dead, inert, passive, non-conscious, non-agentic, non-autonomous, non-creative, non-initiating, action imposed by external force from without (action the product of *instinct* in the case of animals), motion not in bodies, object not subject.

2. **neutral**: indifferent, meaningless, no interests, significance of its own. Significance, value imposed from outside by human consciousness. (This leads to the instrumental position.)

3. **non-teleological**: lacks all goals, purposes of its own: lacks mind-like qualities. Goals, direction/imposed from outside by human consciousness. Outcomes are indifferent with respect to that item.

4. **non-free**: humans free, nature determined, non-free, non-sentient, no capacity for choice.

5. **evaluative aspects**: characteristics 1-4 enable the contrast of nature as inferior with the superiority of human consciousness or human rationality and human
creativity and freedom (immanence vs. transcendence).

The mechanistic paradigm can be taken as the rational or "scientific" one in the historically descriptive sense that such explanation has characterised what has been thought of as "science", and in the normative one that explanation accepted as rational or scientific is supposed to be in these terms, but its adequacy to account for what goes on in modern physics has been questioned. I will not be concerned with this claim here, which mainly turns on the non observer-independent status of data in quantum theory, and on aspects of the replacement of Newtonian theory which challenge some parts of feature 1 (especially that of motion being imposed from outside) and Newtonian atomism. Rather I will address the issue of teleology and mind-like qualities raised by item 3, which in turn has a bearing on most of the other items, and is, I think, a more central feature for mechanism.

It is evident that most of the terms in which nature is conceived in the mechanistic model are negative and are attributed to nature in contrast to something else. It is also evident that that something else is mind, or what is usually identified with it, the human mind. A large part of the problem of mechanism then seems to be an aspect of the mind/nature dualism (in turn closely connected with the mind/body dualism), that is, the view that the world is sharply divided into two completely different sorts of things or substances, mind and its contrast, nature. Nature is entirely mindless. Thus according to Descartes "There exists nothing in the whole of nature which cannot be explained in terms of purely corporeal causes totally devoid of mind and thought". So it is especially this view of nature as a discontinuous realm totally devoid of mind and mind-like characteristics that an attempt to provide an alternative to the mechanistic model would need to examine. This assumption, along with the supreme value accorded rationality, has been and continues to be a major part of the basis for the assumption of human superiority to nature and rightful domination of it. In its more
extreme form it sets up a total discontinuity between humans, the sole possessors of mind or consciousness, supposedly the sole possessors too of other "mental" characteristics such as purposes and interests, and non-humans, which are conceived in mechanistic terms as lacking all these characteristics. That is, it contrasts the human and mentalistic with the non-human and mechanical, the contrast of consciousness versus clockwork.

The Historical Basis of Mind / Nature Dualism

The historical basis for mind/nature dualism closely parallels that for human/nature dualism discussed above in Chapter Four. This division between the human-mentalistic on the one hand and the natural/mechanical on the other, arising from views which see the human essence as mental and see the mind as sharply distinguished from and as utterly different from the rest of nature, has its source in the Greek rather than the Judeo-Christian tradition.

In Greek Orphic and Pythagorean thought doctrines of the separation of soul and body initially led to stress on vegetarianism, reverence for life and the continuity of human and non-human life forms, because of the influence of the doctrine of transmigration of souls through different life forms. Later however, these positions settled into the more enduring course of rejecting both the body and the world of nature as inferior, as a prison or trap for the soul. For the Pythagoreans, the great separation between the soul and body became a separation between the soul and physical nature generally.8

The Aristotelian tripartite division of the world in terms of the rational mind, which is of course seen as exclusive to the human, the soul, which characterised animate beings,
and the rest of inanimate nature, was less harsh, but still led to a strongly hierarchical order with humans at the pinnacle and the rest as inferior. Thus intellect (taken to be the central feature of mind) was not merely a distinguishing characteristic and the characterising feature of the human, but a superior one and justified the human position at the peak of the natural order, which was conceived in hierarchical terms as an order where the inanimate served plants, plants served animals and animals served man. The purposiveness and teleology discerned in nature was made a part of the hierarchical order or division of nature.

Nevertheless in Aristotelian thought the human sphere was marked out by rationality, and there was a rational order in nature. The form/matter distinction was applied to give a view of nature as consisting of both matter and form, and the form component -- the rational principles which were discernable in and shaped matter -- was mind-like. Thus the rationality of principles in nature paralleled the rationality which was treated as the central feature of the mind. Despite the emphasis on hierarchy, the Aristotelian position left much more room for a sort of continuity than is typically left in the rationalist tradition. It was the Platonic position which had the dominant influence in defining human identity.

The Pythagorean position strongly influenced Plato. For Plato, as we have seen, the sensible world of nature and the body was distinct from and inferior to the world of Ideas (the Forms) just as the body was distinct from and inferior to the mind. The Platonic account of the material world as alien to humanity's true nature in turn strongly influenced Christianity, which was able to develop such extremes of rejection of the world of materiality as that of Gnosticism. Although the position was in conflict with the non-alienated view of creation of the Hebraic scriptures, Gnostics of the Second Century held that human's true or higher nature was not of the sensible world but of the spiritual and originated in Heaven, and the
sensible realm of the body and nature where humans must live as in a prison was a creation of the devil. Origen held that the first and original creation was not material at all, and that material creation appeared only after the fall. Later Neo-Platonic thinkers of the medieval period such as St. Augustine identified the world of nature and of the body as lower, a perishable world of inferior, half-destroyed value, to be treated as an instrument to gain salvation in the immutable and spotless world of heaven, identified with the Ideas. Christianity has, as Rosemary Ruether points out, encompassed two conflicting positions concerning the alienated character of creation, the Hebraic and the Greek, but for most of its history the view of the material world as alienated, as evil or at best having meaning and significance as an instrument to a separate higher spiritual realm, has triumphed. These views of nature are the precursor to later mechanistic views, in which redemption is attained through science, and emphasis on the domination of nature without replaces Christian and Platonic emphasis on the domination of nature within.  

Descartes and Human / Nature Dualism

As far as the Differential Imperative is concerned, Descartes is plainly the heir of the Platonic and rationalist flight from and devaluation of the body, nature and the feminine, and of a number of other rationalist features such as the definition of the real person as alien to the body and nature. But these objectives are now achieved in terms of mind and consciousness, rather than in terms of the earlier conception of human virtue in terms of rationality. His account dispenses with the subtleties of the divided self, of the higher and lower parts of the soul as elaborated by medieval philosophers, and the division between the rational and irrational parts of the soul becomes (as in early Platonic thought) a division between mind and body. The non-rational is no longer part of the soul but pertains to the body.
On this account mind, the inner mechanism which explains the operations of the mechanically-conceived human body, also divides humans utterly from the rest of nature, from which mind is totally distinct. The mind, and its major feature consciousness, is an on/off concept -- it is either fully present or it is not present at all. There is no room for distinctions of kind or for differences of degree, either something "has a mind" or it does not, and having a mind requires consciousness. Cartesian consciousness was (and still is) a confused amalgam of the different concepts of thought, pondering, perception and heeding concepts, such as attention, all run together, and since some of these features (e.g. pondering) appeared to be peculiarly human, the confusion facilitated the belief that the whole apparatus was.

The theme of the Differential Imperative, of the need to divide human nature from mechanistic animal nature and nature more generally, is one Descartes returns to frequently, and is plainly one he took very seriously. He writes:

> For next to the error of those who deny God, which I think I have already sufficiently refuted, there is none which is more effectual in leading feeble spirits from the straight path of virtue than to imagine that the soul of brutes is of the same nature as our own... But initially it would seem that a theory of mind as consciousness would provide some basis for a recognition of human continuity with other sentient beings at least. So one problem for the Differential Imperative given the identification of mind with consciousness is what to do about human characteristics such as perception, experiential characteristics, sensation and emotionality which crucially involve the body and are shared with animals. Descartes solves this problem for the Differential Imperative with a theory of perception which distinguishes between sensations construed as modes of thought, and sensations construed as modes of matter. Sensation is part of the self, of the "I", for "certainly I seem to see, to hear, to feel heat. This cannot be false;
this is strictly what in me is called sensing; but this is strictly speaking nothing else but to think". It is sensation construed as a type of consciousness or thought which gives knowledge, and not sensation as a bodily phenomenon. Thus he writes: "For I now know that, properly speaking, bodies are cognised not by the senses or by the imagination, but by the understanding alone. They are not thus cognised because seen and touched, but only insofar as they are apprehended understandingly". Not only does this free experience of sensation from any commitment to the body, and make possible the dualistic polarisation between thinking mind and mechanical body, but it means that animal sensation can be construed along completely mechanistic lines as purely bodily on the (somewhat question-begging) grounds that animals lack the capacity for thought. The latter claim results from the running together into the notion of "thought" of the different notions of awareness, noticing, consciousness, judgement, pondering, and reasoning, so that it is possible to move from the claim that animals lack the capacity for reasoning (itself construed narrowly as calculation) to the claim that they lack consciousness or awareness. This last claim is clearly false.

What Descartes did then was to apply the polarisation condition of dualism to eliminate continuity by reinterpreting the notion of "thinking" in such a way that mixed mental/physical bridging operations, such perception and emotion, become instead, via their reinterpretation in terms of "consciousness", purely mental operations, thus enforcing a strict and total division between mental and bodily activity, between mind and nature. The intentional, mental level of description is thus stripped from the body and strictly isolated in a separate mechanism of the mind. The body, deprived of such a level of description, becomes an empty mechanism which has no agency or intentionality within itself, but is driven from outside by the mind. The body and nature become the dualised "other" of the mind.

The same Cartesian strategy is applied in the case of the
natural world. Nature is taken to have no agency within itself. Because agency is stripped from a thus mechanistically - conceived nature, it has to be reinserted into the picture from outside by God, who drives nature just as the mind drives and controls the actions of the body. God's position vis a vis nature corresponds to the mind's position vis a vis the body. Thus there is an intimate linkage between the dualism of mind and nature and the dualism of mind and body.

All these features of Cartesianism make for a great and unbridgeable division between the sphere of the mental, identified on the general level with the human and on the individual level with the self, and the sphere of nature. Consciousness now divides the universe completely in a total cleavage between the thinking being (identified with the human) and nature, and between the thinking substance and "its" body. Mind and Nature become utterly different.

**Modern Philosophical Positions**

Both in the romantic reaction and in contemporary and modern philosophy Cartesianism has been under attack. Where do contemporary anti-Cartesian positions and analyses of the mental stand on the mind/nature dichotomy? Unfortunately most do little to bridge the gulf in a satisfactory way and some dig it in even deeper. Many contemporary positions attempt to resolve the division in favour of viewing not only nature but also the human in mechanistic terms (the romantic tendency has always been to go the other way and view nature in humanised terms). These positions, which have been popular and distinctively contemporary positions, attempt to reduce the mental to the bodily or mechanistic, as in physicalism (mind/brain identity theory), to bodily behaviour (various forms of bodily behaviourism and stimulus-response theory), or to complex organisational machine states (functionalism). In these positions the dichotomy is resolved in favour of breaking down the mind/nature and mind/body dualism, but at
the price of a total, and not merely partial mechanistic conception of the world. Needless to say this does little, from the point of view of working out an environmental philosophy, to overcome the basic problem. If these positions remove the basis for the total division between the human and non-human, it is in a way which removes the basis for respect and moral consideration both for the human and for the non-human sphere by the reduction of the characteristics such as possession of goals, purposes and welfare on which that respect may be based. Such positions extend the disrespect accorded a lifeless nature to the human, rather than going the other way and extending the respect due to self-directed beings to the non-human.

Descartes had placed great emphasis, in developing his view of animals as machines, on speech and the supposed inability of animals to speak, for he thought that appropriate speech was the outward sign of reason. A popular modern approach which inherits this disposition also analyses the mental largely in terms of linguistic capacities, and this also strengthens discontinuity. For this approach characterises language in such a way as to make it peculiar to humans (e.g. Davidson, Malcolm and Chomsky). And where basically linguistic accounts of mind are supplemented by conventionalism, as in Wittgenstein, the result can be a total division between the human and non-human which is more thorough even than in Cartesianism, making it not only false but meaningless to attribute mental characteristics to the non-human. Thus Wittgenstein says "We only say of a human being and what is like one that it thinks," suggesting that the central concept is human and that others are applied by a process of extension only. It is a matter of the "language game" then that these concepts are applied to the human and not beyond, or only beyond by extension. This is taken to be a brute fact of language, which radicals and reformers can bemoan but cannot change. The approach is a deeply conservative one. But the line between the human-linguistic and the animal non-linguistic is difficult to draw and even more difficult to hold, and the neat division between these spheres
constantly threatens to break down in the light of further work on animal communication. Both language and mind have such strong analogues in the animal sphere that the attempt to confine them by definition to the human sphere must be seen as invalid, question-begging and prompted by the motive of preserving human-nature discontinuity. Several philosophers recently have challenged this view of animals as incapable of thought and/or language.

But despite attacks in the last forty years, Cartesianism and especially consciousness, its main concept, in the main retains its hold on the philosophical imagination. Thus the defence against the reduction positions is usually undertaken in terms of the privacy of the mental and the immediacy of consciousness, the mysterious inner quality which marks out the mental and which divides the world in the Cartesian view into two completely different sorts of things, the conscious human and the non-conscious non-human.

This model of the human as a conscious being totally disconnected from a dead and soulless nature has of course produced since its rise in the Enlightenment period numerous reactions aimed at overcoming or bridging the gulf, especially in the romantic movement. This attempted to add life to a dead, and meaningless clockwork world, in which humans were seen as forever adrift and homeless, in various ways - e.g. emphasis on aesthetic value of nature and through the reading into the landscape of human emotion, (which could however never be more than a tragic and futile attempt to love what does not respond); or through the discerning of a "hidden presence" in the landscape; in a religious or mystical vision which took nature as sublime; and of course in a spiritualisation of nature through the reduction of matter to spirit, as in German Idealism; or through the view of nature as enspirited through the presence of an immanent deity or through a pantheistic position. Often such positions are unsatisfactory for a variety of reasons. Nature may be treated as fully sentient and as having through its
possession of spirit human qualities i.e. there is no recognition of difference, nature is anthropomorphised in fact or fancy, and the human is taken as the basic model. Such a position does not succeed in genuinely escaping the dualistic model. Or nature itself may still be conceived as a non-agent, and agency and teleology are added from outside, from a god or spirit which acts as an extra ingredient, a hidden presence throughout the whole, which inhabits the shell and animates it. Such a position should be seen as still within a dualistic framework, and as affirming nature as dualised other.

NATURE, PROCESS, AND PANPSYCHISM

I turn now to the examination of some leading contemporary criteria of the mental to see how the issue of mind/nature discontinuity fares. We shall see that for the most important criteria there are difficulties in providing an account which vindicates the discontinuity assumption. It is important to note first that although discontinuity is usually presented as the alternative to panpsychism, that is, the thesis that mind is present everywhere, and present especially in nature, this is only correct if we make the on-off assumption concerning mind, that it is either totally present or completely absent. Such an assumption of course is itself closely tied to the discontinuity assumption. Once this is questioned -- and we will see later that there is good reason to question it -- it is no longer at all clear that the failure of discontinuity leads to panpsychism, rather than to the view that mind-like qualities are to be found in nature, that there is no basis for an absolute break or an unbridgeable gulf marking humans as mind-havers off from the rest of the universe. There has been little explicit discussion of either the discontinuity or the on-off assumption in the literature -- rather both have unquestioned status as desiderata in accounts of mind, such that their absence is taken to
provide a *reductio ad absurdum* of such accounts. These are very major and very questionable philosophical assumptions about the human relationship to the rest of the universe, but so insulated has mainstream philosophy become from such questions that the making of such assumptions passes unnoticed.

A contemporary position which however genuinely attempts to replace the mechanistic model and to break down the mind/nature dichotomy is the Whiteheadian one, which has recently begun to enjoy some vogue in environmental philosophy e.g. in the work of Birch, Gare and some Deep Ecologists. This attempts to argue that mind and nature are of the same stuff or substance and to reject the great cleavage of mind and nature, by arguing both that mind is matter-like and that matter is mind-like. In a suggestive and interesting article Jay McDaniel attempts to synthesize a Whiteheadian perspective with both an ecological approach and recent work in quantum mechanics. He argues that submicroscopic matter should be understood as partly life-like and as creative and sentient, free and capable of decision in the sense that it is able to actualise some possibilities rather than others and sentient in the sense that it is able to "take other things into account", to "feel" the presence of external determinants and thereby be influenced by them.

Thus according to McDaniel submicroscopic matter is partially life-like.

McDaniel, following Whitehead, argues that matter and mind should both be viewed as events or processes, which are continually unfolding or perishing, and thus are not of distinct kinds. The human mind is viewed as a series of energy events, as a quantum. Thus "To speak of the mind as a series of actual occasions or energy events is to say that mind is made of the same "stuff" as matter." This seems to presuppose some sort of reductive account of mind, but this is only part of the argument. McDaniel goes on to argue that matter is mind-like on five grounds.
of alleged similarity between human consciousness or experience and matter. Mind and matter have in common characteristics of freedom and choice, subjectivity i.e. "taking into account" although not necessarily in a conscious way, decision and creativity ("I create my own response to the data affecting me" in subjective experience), emotion and retrospection (memory), and the immediacy or continual perishing of subjective experience.

McDaniel concludes: "Inasmuch as mind involves spatiotemporal properties, it is matter-like. And inasmuch as matter involves creativity and sentience, it is mind-like. "Matter" and "mind" are simple names for different types of actual occasions of experience."25

This is a valiant attempt to present in a clear form a complex position which deserves to be taken much more seriously in the orthodox philosophical world than it usually is, but the position is not ultimately convincing as it stands. I sketch very briefly some reasons why I think this, before going on to outline what I take to be an alternative, more defensible route to the same conclusion that mind and nature are not as utterly discontinuous as the mechanistic paradigm holds.

First, the fact that both mind and matter can be interpreted as events or processes does not as it stands show that they are not of radically different kinds, since such an interpretation seems quite consistent with holding that there are utterly different kinds of processes. That they could both be described as events or processes would not show that they were of the same kind any more than say the fact that both matter and mind could be described as "things" would show they were of the same kind. Some further argument is needed here that is lacking.

Second, it seems that the conclusion depends on a series of low redefinitions of concepts such as "sentience" and "decision". Take "decision" for example. The real basis for the claim that there is "decision" in matter is that
there is actualising of some possibilities rather than others. From this it is argued that something must have made a "decision" even if not consciously. But there is a great deal more packed into the concept of "decision" than the mere actualising of one among several possibilities, notably the notion of agency as well as, more debatably, that of consciousness. Different possibilities come about, but something makes a decision as an agent, (and usually a conscious agent - although perhaps not necessarily as a conscious agent). This further ingredient of agency is not established before the description of the situation as one of "decision" is applied, yet it appears to be crucial to the case. Similar points can be made where the notions of "freedom", "choice", "taking into account", "memory" and "emotion" are concerned. It seems that what has really been shown is that there are non-agentic analogues of certain sorts to these notions which are applied to subjective experience, but which can only in some colourful or extended sense be applied to matter. But this of course is a valuable insight if the point of the exercise is to draw attention to continuity rather than to show that what is involved in each case is exactly the same. (McDaniel is somewhat unclear about his objectives here, a problem he shares with other Whiteheadians.) Yet what is crucial here, and what remains to be clarified is in exactly what sense the matter-attributes one is justified in asserting are analogues of the mental ones. If an account of this can be provided, McDaniel's argument does seem to have shown that even experiential criteria of mind, which seem an unpromising area in which to search for continuity, can provide some basis for continuity with what is usually thought of as unsentient nature. And of course they do provide a substantial basis for continuity with sentient nature, with animals of many kinds, if the Cartesian moves sundering experience into body-experience and mind-experience, and collapsing the latter into rational thought, are rejected.

Another problem is that the position really depends upon buying the Cartesian picture of consciousness and
experience (subjectivity) as the mark of the mental and relies on extending these criteria outwards to matter. In order for matter to be mind-like it must have properties which resemble that of consciousness. This usually leads, as both McDaniel's thesis and those of others such as Birch and Bookchin make clear, to some sort of hierarchy of nature based on richness of experience or orders of consciousness in which the natural world is conceived of as inferior in these respects to the human mind i.e. it has mind-like properties, but only to a very minor degree. (Thus McDaniel asserts "the degree of freedom of an atomic event is practically negligible compared to advanced organisms" 26). This builds in a hierarchy, since it conceives the world of nature as similar to but of less degree than the human mind, rather than as simply different. Such a position seems to offer little likelihood of giving a real challenge to the thesis of the inferiority of the natural world to the human sphere, depending as it does on the mere extension in a weakened form of properties which are exemplified most fully by the human mind. However such a hierarchy does not inevitably emerge from the experiential account of mind, but only if further assumptions assigning value in proportion to degrees of consciousness or experience are made, as in Birch, who employs a "richness of experience" criterion for determining an item's value which is highly favourable to humans.

Intentional Criteria of the Mental

The main modern rival to such experiential accounts relies on a different analysis of and feature of mind from the feature of consciousness identified as central in the Cartesian model, namely the feature of intentionality. This approach also provides, perhaps even more clearly, a basis for the rejection of mind/nature discontinuity. This approach identifies the central characteristic of the mental not in terms of a special, hidden causal mechanism
or mysterious property, consciousness, which accompanies all and only mental activity and nothing else and so divides up the world, but instead in terms of falling into a certain special logical category, that of relation to a content, which makes it intentional\textsuperscript{27}. The intentional is a sub-class of the intensional, an irreducible mode of discourse of a logical type which resists and does not require analysis in terms of its contrasting logical type, extensional discourse. The promise of breakdown of the dualism comes partly from the fact that this intentional logical type is not confined to the mental or to the description of human activity but can also be found elsewhere in nature and is necessary to the understanding not only of mind but of nature. In fact as we shall see, no clear boundary can be drawn between the intentional and the intensional, which can accordingly be viewed as yielding mind-like properties. Furthermore the position makes possible distinctions of kinds and levels of mind-like properties within the total range, in place of the on/off concept of mind emphasised especially by Cartesianism. But so entrenched is mind/nature dualism that these very features of the analysis have been seen as weaknesses because they tend to break down discontinuity. On the sort of account given here these features would be viewed as strengths.

The contrast of mind versus machine is drawn very much in terms of the intensional/extensional contrast. Thus we have a mechanistic description in good Skinnerese if we shear off all intensional elements and confine description, for example of something moving, to movement and extensional terms -- "the hand moved 3 feet to the left, foot 1 inch up etc" and a non-mechanistic one making use of mental concepts if we describe it as action e.g. "She (tried to) turn on the light and fetch the ball". The latter description is both intensional and intentional. The intensional feature seems to be the key one in the cluster of concepts which go to characterise mechanism. Thus the possession by an item of autonomy and agenthood appears to be closely connected with the item's being able
to be described in intensional and especially teleological terms, as the possessor of goals, purposes, or more broadly, directions which make the item particularly its own thing, with its own way of being and ability to initiate action. Teleological (and hence intensional) description appears to be the key to the attribution of agency.

In terms of this model then it is possible to see why the Whiteheadian picture breaks down both mechanism and discontinuity. Description in terms of events and processes is a way of describing the physical universe which allows both for directions and potentialities, for both teleology and the actualisation of possibilities. It is an intensional way of describing the physical universe. Events and processes must be understood teleologically, as having directedness or tendencies in terms of which they unfold, and in terms of the potentialities which they realise i.e. they must be understood intensionally. This is what provides the basis for the further feature in the Whiteheadian description -- agency. Similarly it is the intensional features of submicroscopic phenomena which seem to provide the basis for describing their features as those of "creativity" and "sentience", and shows the operation of "freedom", "choice" and "decision", "taking into account", the terms which McDaniel uses. The solid basis for these description applications, the feature of physical matter which makes it analogous to or continuous with items to which these intensional descriptions apply, is again the teleological feature and the feature of the actualisation of alternative possibilities and the change of behaviour in accordance with a discernible goal, purpose or direction (adaptation or "taking into account"). The feature which the descriptions have in common with their analogues is intensionality, and the fully "mental" analogues appear to differ mainly in displaying further concepts of consciousness and attention. The real basis for continuity in the Whiteheadian picture, to the extent that it does not just depend upon metaphor, seems to be the redescription of both phenomena in terms of suitably corresponding analogues.
which are analogues because they share intensionality, one being perhaps often a more "conscious" or "subjective" description of the same general intensional kind as the other.

On this sort of account the roots of Cartesian mind/body dualism lie in the attempt to conceive the person initially not in the unified, intensional terms in which we often describe him or her as an agent, as the performer of purposive, intentionally-described action, but in terms of a mechanistically conceived body plus a set of separate, hidden interior mental causes. The problem lies in the attempt to conceive the person initially in purely extensional terms, as a body engaged in bodily movement for example, rather than in intensional terms as an agent engaged in purposive action e.g. attempting to jump the gate, earning a living, fixing the light. Mechanistic explanation starts with a stripped down concept of the body, stripped of all but extensional "scientific" characteristics such as moving in certain ways, rather than as expressing mental characteristics or intentions. It becomes necessary to postulate a further set of hidden separate inner mental causes which explain the movements of the mechanistically-conceived body. Because the mechanistic extensional story in terms of movement is patently inadequate, the Cartesian tries to make up the difference by adding an extra hidden ingredient, a separate mind, marked out by a special property, consciousness, also hidden from view. Intentionality becomes concentrated in this alleged organ and stripped out of everything else; e.g. out of "behaviour" of the body, which is then treated as a bare mechanism, instead of being expressed in unified, intentionally-conceived action. There it is treated as a hidden causal agency or mechanism, the mind. But if our basic description of action and agency is not mere "behaviour" but is a unified one in which the agent's action is described intensionally or intentionally, by reference to a content (e.g. as having been done for the sake of something), the Cartesian moves are illegitimate. Intentionality, which is a necessary
condition for the *mental*, is *expressed* in action, but is not the cause of it. The dualistic position also confuses purposes (to be analysed intensionally) with causes (which it assumes are to be analysed extensionally.

The basic notions we operate with, according to this story, are unified ones and resist, if properly analysed, the mind/body split. The fact that we can observe intentional action helps to close the gap which the mechanistic account opened up between externally observable behaviour, conceived of in mechanistic terms as movement, and the unobservable but postulated inner causal mechanism of the mind. On this view mind is expressed in the (often if not invariably) observable, intentionally-describable activity of a unified agent or person.

But the same sort of insight can be applied to mechanistic models of nature, and to the resulting mind/nature dichotomy. The roots of mechanism in each dichotomy, the mind/nature and mind/body, are the same. The deadness or lifelessness of nature, mechanistically-conceived nature, like the deadness of the body, consists in the withholding of intensional descriptions, the stripping off of both intentional and intensional characteristics, and confinement to "neutral" extensional ones which make nature a dull and meaningless affair.

Just as there are degrees and levels of intensionality, so there are degrees of mechanism corresponding to the denial of these. Cartesian mechanism, which denies mind or mind-like qualities to all but humans, is an extreme form outdone only by modern forms of behaviourism and S-R theory which deny intensionality even to humans. Less extreme forms are widespread, for example forms attributing mind-like qualities to sentient beings, including some non-humans, but denying them beyond that. A further position, advocated here, sees mind-like qualities as spread throughout nature, and as necessary to its understanding, but as being of different levels and kinds. These enable distinctions to be made between different sorts of mind-
like qualities, and different sorts of beings which have them. The result, if not properly described as a continuum, is a complex of distinctions, a web of difference within an overall ground of continuity, and the rejection any absolute, cosmic dichotomy or break between the human and natural spheres based on the possession of mind. Nor is this break retained but relocated elsewhere, as in the case of the absolute divorce between animate and inanimate nature, or sentience and the rest, characteristic, for example of utilitarianism and many other modern views.

**ANIMISM, TELEOLOGY AND MIND**

Thus an alternative to mechanism does not need to amount to an animistic "respiritualisation" or "reenchantment" of nature. Although some forms of animism are ways of stressing continuity, animism can also result from basic acceptance of the dualising of the world in terms of consciousness or the spiritual or mental, and then attempting to extend this outwards to cover a wider class, so that nature becomes spiritual or subjective. There are many ways to readmit intensionality and to reconceive nature without dualism, but there is no need for this kind of anthropomorphically-conceived spiritualisation to make the world come alive. The need for an extra, hidden anthropomorphically-conceived spirit to bring the dead machine of nature to life is like the need for an extra hidden mechanism to direct the mechanically-conceived body and make it come alive to explain its movements. The treatment of spirit as an extra ingredient added to nature involves the reflection onto nature of mind/body dualism, the attempt to take up intensionality in terms of the addition of an extra ingredient of spirit to a mechanically-conceived base. Just as in the mind/body case, the necessity arises because the body is treated mechanically and dualistically in the first place, stripped
of its intensional and agentic attributes. Or, it is the result of the application of a dichotomising, on/off conception of mind, together, perhaps, with goodwill towards the natural sphere, which results in the unfortunate consequence of denial of difference, the humanisation of nature.

Just as the alternative to mechanism in the mind/body case is not the addition of a spiritual or mental cause (which position is rather its complement or alter ego) but rather the reassertion of the unified concept of an agent acting intentionally and thus expressing mind, so the alternative to mechanism in the mind/nature case is not the addition of spirit, but rather its conceptualisation in the unified organic (and intensional) terms of directedness and growth, and of teleological concepts generally. The life we try to bring back to nature with the hidden extra ingredient of spirit is already there if we resist the attempt to remove, reduce and replace intensional concepts such as direction, need, potentiality and purpose which we can often easily and naturally apply to it. Thus to see the natural world in non-mechanical terms is already to see something with its own purpose, direction and significance. When these concepts are applied the world is populated not by humans and what is left over, but by a vast variety of other beings which are different from but continuous with the human, including trees, (self-directing beings with an overall "good" or interest), forest ecosystems (interrelated wholes whose interrelationship of parts can only be understood in terms of stabilising and organising principles, which must be understood teleologically, and which are intensely alive with beings engaged in purposive, self-directed activity such as nest-building, chasing, food-seeking, and gathering, preening and so on); and mountains, which are the product of a lengthy unfolding natural process, and with a certain sort of history and direction as part of this process and with a certain sort of potential for change. In fact we also constantly describe nature in terms of the notion of agency as well as that of function, both parts of the non-
mechanistic organic model. To resist mechanism is then partly to resist the insistence that we abandon or reduce such accounts and instead describe the world just in terms like its being "x feet long, coloured brown and containing z board feet of timber", that we refuse to reduce ourselves to a "dead", "neutral" extensional account of nature.

An important part of obtaining alternatives to a mechanistic paradigm and of breaking down mind/nature dualism is the reinstatement of teleology as an important and irreducible set of concepts, but neither an anthropocentric Aristotelian teleology nor an anthropomorphic animistic one is required or desirable for that purpose. Broadly teleological concepts (the concepts of X happening for the sake of something else), like other intensional concepts such as possibility, potentiality and necessity, are applicable fairly generally to the natural world, and are necessary to its proper understanding. There is a family of teleological concepts, and while some of these require consciousness or the capacity to make choices and are only applicable to higher animals (e.g. "it tried to jump the gates") others can be applied without any anthropomorphism or animism to non-conscious beings. Notions of growth, of flourishing for example, are implicitly teleological and applicable without consciousness, and some concepts such as function or direction, are applicable to natural systems and processes generally. e.g. notion of natural processes "doing their own thing", unfolding in their own ways, according to their own internal directions. Thus on this picture there is no great division or break-off point between mind and nature in terms of teleology, but rather a continuity in a family of related intensional concepts applicable at varying levels and in varying ways to the natural world generally as well as to humans.

Similarly the on/off Cartesian concepts of consciousness and the on/off concept of the mental each become problematic on such a theory. It has only been possible to see consciousness as peculiar to the human and as also
peculiar to the mental because it is such a confused amalgam of different concepts. Some of the groups of "consciousness" concepts may apply only to humans or higher animals (e.g. pondering, being able to give a detailed verbal account), while others such as the noticing, heeding and awareness members of the family can be applied fairly generally to animals.

Mechanism and the Intentionalist Program

The on/off concept of mind, as either completely present or as completely absent, and the associated sharp contrast of the human-mentalistic and non-human-mechanistic, is rejected on such an account. But such a development of the intentionalist position would diverge sharply from that of Brentano, Chisholm and others in its identification of intentionality as the mark of the human mind. This identification has in fact proved to be a major problem area for the intentionalists, since it has proved to be extremely difficult to find a logical criterion of intentionality which will pick out all and only mental operations and which do not collapse the notion back into the wider notion of the intensional, thus destroying discontinuity. Successive proposals have failed.

Thus Chisholm in a series of papers published between 1952 and 1967 attempts to make good the Brentano criterion of intentionality, initially characterised as intentional inexistence, as the mark of the psychological. He moves through a series of ever more tortuous modifications of the original criterion of intentional inexistence, relying on increasingly ad hoc and less significant logical distinguishing features all of which ultimately fail and which involve him in a major translation and reanalysis program of the kind only too familiar from physicalistic and reductionistic positions like those of Quine and Smart. The rock that even the more sophisticated later criteria based on scope and quantification constantly perish on is
that of separating the intentional off from the intensional, distinguishing mental and psychological functors from causal dispositional, modal, deontic, alethic and teleological functors, to name a few. Although the search for a logical criterion which separates these is not successful, that does not of course show that there is not such a logical characteristic. What does seem clear however is that the increasingly minor logical differences appealed to cannot be seen as corresponding to any really significant philosophical division, certainly not as cosmic a division as that alleged to hold between mind and nature. So even if a logical feature separating psychological functors from other intentional ones can be found, it does not support the view that there is a major difference in kind between the sphere of the psychological and the sphere of the non-psychological but intensional. Thus far the intentionalist program started by Brentano and carried on by Chisholm and others, in which the reducibility or non-reducibility of mind has been made to seem to depend on finding a feature which sharply distinguishes the mental from the physical, the intentional/psychological from the non-intentional, can be seen as a failure.

This failure of the century-long attempt to conclusively mark off mind from nature via internal logical features is now recognised. As a recent reviewer of the problem, C.B. Martin, writes:

A number of the marks of intentionality including forms of directedness are intrinsic to causal dispositions and are to be found throughout all of nature. Less obviously, use is intrinsic to systems of dispositional states capable of complex, directed, combinatorial, regulative adjustments and control. Such systems are to be found in non-psychological, non-mental things and even in inorganic nature.

Martin treats this as implying panpsychism, and as a reason for abandoning intentionality and for relocating the central features of mind in the senses, but as I have argued this is only compelling if discontinuity is unquestioned. An alternative conclusion is that intentionality, like the experiential criterion itself, provides a basis for the recognition of continuity between
mind and nature, and thus also between the human and natural spheres.

There is no need to abandon intentionality if the attempt to sharply separate off the intentional from intensional is abandoned as misconceived, and as resting on the assumption of the need for a sharp mind/nature dichotomy. Instead the intentional can be thought of as simply a particular relational subclass of the intensional, and as such not sharply divided from but similar to and continuous with the intensionality needed to describe and understand all of nature, and both the human and non-human spheres. The view of the mind as the exclusive property of humanity falls too under such a treatment, along with the dualism between the human-mentalistic and non-human mechanistic. Such a view can distinguish different kinds and grades of intensionality, from complex highly intensional fully psychological activities such as believing Godel's theorem and understanding Wittgenstein, (perhaps confined to the human), to feeling pricking sensations and noticing changes, choosing the wrong way or trying to jump the gate (which are all applicable to non-humans), through to having an overall life-goal, for the sake of which its parts are organised (applicable to living organisms generally), through to the unfolding, development and directedness implicit in natural processes. Intensionality is common to all these things, and does not mark off the human, the mental, or even the animate (although different grades of intensionality may correspond to different types of things), and is just as necessary for the understanding of natural and physical laws as it is to the understanding of the human sphere.

The Differential Imperative has distorted our view of both human similarity to and human difference from the sphere of nature, and the use of criteria which are supposed to distinguish the human and the mental sphere. When this framework of discontinuity is discarded, it can be seen that the intensional criterion, like other criteria of the mental and of what is supposedly distinctive of the human,
does not support a picture in which nature is alien but rather one in which nature can be recognised as akin to the human; human difference, like that of other species, appears against an overall background of similarity, forming a web of continuity. Mechanistic views of nature represent the kind of reactive separation from the other in which the other is treated as alien, a non-self whose kinship is denied and which can only be made non-alien by being brought to reflect the self's own image. We can as humans indeed recognise ourselves in nature, and not only as we do when it has been made over, commoditised and domesticated, made into a mirror which reflects back only our own species' images and our own needs. We can instead recognise in the myriad of beings in nature other selves whose needs and purposes must, like our own, be acknowledged and respected.
References


4. John Locke, Second Treatise of Civil Government, Ch.I.


11. Genevieve Lloyd op. cit p45.

12. Rene Descartes "Animals Are Machines" in Tom Regan and Peter Singer (eds) Animal Rights and Human Obligations,


15. Margaret Dauler Wilson, op. cit. p75.


22. Ibid p300.

23. Ibid. p.305

24. Ibid. p.307

25. Ibid. p.309


27. This criterion was originally stated by Brentano, although a similar distinction is much older. See e.g. selections from Brentano in R. Chisholm, Realism and the Background of Phenomenology, Free Press, Glencoe, Ill., 1960. Chisholm's original modern restatement of Brentano's criterion was "A simple categorical statement is intentional if it uses a substantive expression without implying that there is or isn't anything to which the expression truly applies". (R. M. Chisholm "Intentionality and the Theory of Signs", in Philosophical Studies, vol 3, no 4, 1952, pp56-62, reprinted in Fey, Sellars and Lehrer New Readings in Philosophical Analysis, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1972, p425). Intensionality as non-truth-functionality is defined as in Alfred North Whitehead and Bertrand Russell Principia Mathematica, Oxford, 1924, (4.2): A functor is intensional if it is not extensional. A functor F is extensional iff (p)(p=q <-> (F)(Fp=Fq)), where "=" reads "is truth-functionally equivalent".

28. Most accounts of intensionality make this integration impossible however by attributing intensional characteristics to a different item from the one extensional characteristics are attributed to. See R. Routley and V. Plumwood "The Logical Importance of Not Existing", Dialogue, 18 1979, pp129-165.


"Sentences about Believing", Proceedings of the Aristotelian


30. C.B. Martin "A New View of the Mind", manuscript, pl. See also C.B. Martin and Karl Pfeifer, op. cit.
Chapter Six: Ego and Instrument

Civilised Man says: I am Self, I am Master, all the rest is Other -- outside, below, underneath, subservient. I own, I use, I explore, I exploit, I control. What I do is what matters. What I want is what matter is for. I am that I am, and the rest is women and wilderness, to be used as I see fit.


THE ROOTS OF INSTRUMENTALISM

Western culture characteristically treats nature in instrumental terms, as a mere means to human ends, as a "resource", as expendable where human interests require it, and as having its significance and value conferred by or through human interests. Nature, it is assumed, has no significance and value of its own, unlike humans, who are supposedly ends in themselves, and for whom purely instrumental use is supersededly proscribed. So deeply entrenched is this framework that even many conservationists work unquestioningly within it, and challenges to it often only succeed in extending slightly the class which is to be counted as master.

Instrumentalism is a key feature of the western treatment of nature which connects closely with the treatment of the other in mechanistic terms as lacking agency and goals of its own, and also with discontinuity, the treatment of the other as alien to the self. It is also a key feature of the treatment of women, whose worth is traditionally assessed in terms of criteria of virtue which turn on usefulness to males, and who are not treated as having autonomy and worth in their own right.

The instrumental treatment of both nature and women can be linked to dualism and the reactively-separated self. Such a reactively separated self does not recognise the other as another self, with needs, goals and a value of its own.
which must be considered and respected. It "experiences the other solely in terms of its own needs for gratification and its own desires", in Nancy Chodorow's words, and this is very much how western culture has experienced nature. The reactively separated self also lacks essential (as opposed to accidental) relations to others, and its ends make no essential reference to the welfare or desires of others. Hence a tally of its desires and ends would show that others figured only as instruments, a means to its own self-contained ends, since it does not recognise or incorporate the ends of others, except accidentally and as a means to its own ends, as in enlightened or rational self interest.

What I shall argue here is that instrumentalism is overdetermined, that is, that a number of the factors discussed above are closely linked to it, including the formation of the self through false differentiation, dualism, discontinuity and mechanism. Instrumentalism is intimately related to power, domination and hierarchy. I shall argue also that the instrumental role of nature is shared by women, and that it forms a further feature supporting the thesis that the relation of humanity to nature is masculinised.

Kantian ethics held that no-one (ie no human) should be treated as a mere means, and that one should act to others always as if they were ends in themselves. Kant held that this did not apply to non-human animals however, (and even less to the rest of nature) which lacked judgement (ie reason) and "must be regarded as man's instruments". He writes:

Animals are not self-conscious and are there merely as a means to an end. That end is man. We can ask "Why do animals exist?" But to ask "Why does man exist?" is a meaningless question.

The treatment of all humans as ends became an important part of humanist ethics. But despite the gender-neutral presentation of the humanist doctrine that all humans have intrinsic value, and none are to be treated as mere
instruments or means to the ends of others, in fact the traditional role of women (as well as of other inferiorised groups) is highly instrumental, and this feature forms a further link between the treatment of women and that of nature.

The creation story of Genesis places Eve's being firmly within the instrumental mode. She is created so as to provide various goods for Adam, not to fulfil her own ends. The instrumental treatment of women's existence is however often more heavily disguised, and is written into the notion of what it is to be a good woman. Greek criteria of virtue, for example, are such as to make what is virtuous for women what suits and serves men. Women as wives were valued for their chastity, their frugality and their silence, and were not encouraged to develop personalities. Criteria of excellence might vary according to the different category of usefulness into which a woman was fitted, but were still clearly instrumentally conceived, as the following statement from Demosthenes in the lawsuit Against Naera reveals:

For this is what living with a woman as one's wife means— to have children by her and to introduce the sons to the members of the clan and of the deme, and to betroth the daughters to husbands as one's own. Mistresses we keep for the sake of pleasure, concubines for the daily care of our persons, but wives to bear us legitimate children and to be faithful guardians of our households.

Martin Luther expresses a lengthy Christian tradition of instrumentalism, writing in his Vindication of Married Life that man does not exist for the sake of woman, but that woman exists for the sake of man. Liberal political vision builds theories on the assumption that man's good is his own happiness, and that woman's good is man's. Romantic love works hard to disguise or soften starkly instrumental relations, and few would now admit to a view as explicit as Rousseau's clearly instrumental vision of the ideals of womanhood:

The whole education of women should be relative to man.
To be pleasing in his sight, to win his respect and love, to be useful to him, to make themselves loved and honoured by him, to train him in childhood, to tend him in manhood, to counsel and console, to make his life pleasant and happy, these are the duties of woman for all time, and this is what she should be taught from her infancy.

Nevertheless, instrumental criteria are part of the ideals of womanhood and the traditional female role of service to others, and of finding meaning and significance in and through others. Such criteria assume that some people exist as means to the ends or purposes of others, and write inequality and hierarchy into the very formation of the gendered self and self ideals. Here for example it is very useful to assume that women are naturally passive and lacking in goals and purposes of their own or to induce them to be so, for then there are no conflicting ends to cut across the imposition of male ends. This is not to say though that there is not positive value also in some of these traditional ideals, especially when reinterpreted or transformed as ideals for both sexes of connection to others and of relational selfhood; but they have an ambiguous face, and must serve as at least a warning of the pitfalls of any uncritical or romantic gynocentrism (see Chapter Eight below) based on indiscriminate affirmation of the feminine. But when thus transformed into an equal and symmetrical relation they lose their instrumental character, for the essence of instrumentalism is asymmetry, that one party is by nature merely a means, requiring an end to provide its justification, while the other is by nature an end in itself which, not standing in need of acquiring significance or justification by reference to another, is its own justification and has intrinsic value on its own account.

The meaninglessness and lack of significance modern culture finds in the world is tied both to mechanism and to its conception in instrumental terms. As Ross Poole notes, "the world lacks meaning (is "disenchanted" in Weber's poignant phrase) just because it is conceived as a means
to ends which are independent of it". The assumption of the passive and mechanical character of nature has, as noted earlier, a similar function in promoting instrumentalism in the case of nature as the assumption or production of passivity in women. If the object can be seen as without ends or purposes of its own, arising from its own nature, it can be seen as available for use, as inviting the imposition of human ends and purposes. As Rosemary Ruether puts it:

No internal moral doubts or external demonic fears need inhibit its full exploitation for the ends desired by "man" (ruling males). The world had been thoroughly "thingified" as an object for use.

Thus mechanism paves the way for the "resource" approach to nature characteristic of capitalism, and even more emphatically stressed in much Marxist thought.

Instrumentalism is also closely connected to dualism. The underside of an instrumentally-conceived pair is usually treated as a means to the end of the controlling, dominant side. Theorists of the Frankfurt school have noted that the operation of instrumental reason involves the use of power and control. Thus the lower realm of the body and nature serve the higher realm of intellect or reason, accounted an end in itself, and in much Christian as well as Platonic thought the lower realm is to be used as an instrument to gain salvation, identified with the higher realm. An important exception is one Christian view which takes nature to be valuable not because it is useful for human purposes, but because it is God's creation, and hence valuable on this account. This position still stops short of accounting nature valuable for its own sake however.

Discontinuity connects with instrumentalism via the need to make a sharp separation between the kingdom of means and the kingdom of ends, and to maximally distance them. That the means and ends be seen as of different kinds, as non-continuous, of radically different natures, is essential to maintaining and justifying means/ends dualism. There are then no threatening ambiguities or confusions about
which item belongs where, no chance to find oneself on the wrong side of the boundary, as the eaten instead of the eater, the used instead of the user. A sharp boundary instils the necessary confidence about who is the other, and who is Self, for whose wants and needs the universe is conveniently available. It erases too the possibility of identification or sympathy, as was so clear in the case of Descartes and his followers.

**INSTRUMENTALISM AND THE SELF**

Instrumentalism is, above all, a way of relating to the world which results from a certain kind of selfhood, that of the egoistic individual. The reduction of the world to the status of instrument is, as Marilyn Frye has written, the work of the arrogant eye:

*Woman is created to be man's helper. This captures in myth Western Civilisation's primary answer to the philosophical question of man's place in nature: everything that is is a resource for man's exploitation. With this worldview, men see with arrogant eyes which organise everything seen with reference to themselves and their own interests. The arrogating perceiver is a teleologist, a believer that everything exists and happens for some purpose, and he tends to animate things, imagining attitudes toward himself as the animating motives....the arrogant perceiver does not countenance the possibility that the Other is independent, indifferent. The feminist-separatist can only be a man-hater; Nature is called "Mother".*

The arrogant perceiver does not have to believe nature exists to serve him, to be an Aristotelian teleologist in the sense that he thinks nature is actively imbued with the purpose to serve man. He may merely believe that it lacks purposes of its own so that he is entitled to impose his own upon it, or that if it has purposes of its own that he is entitled to replace them with his own, to annex it and to annihilate its agency, its independence of purpose. What he believes is that nature is available; the purposes of the other are either not conceded or are not conceded any legitimacy or importance compared with his own. Instrumentalism is thus tied to the perception of the
other as inferior, empty of purposes which command respect, as well as to perceptions of it as mechanism, empty of any purpose.

The self which complements the instrumental treatment of the other is one which stresses sharply defined ego boundaries, distinctness, autonomy and separation from others — which is defined against others, lacking essential connections to them. This corresponds to object/relations account of the masculine, falsely differentiated self, which experiences the other solely in terms of its own needs and its own desires. It corresponds also to the self-interested individual presupposed in market theory, as Ross Poole has argued. He has also shown how this kind of self is presupposed by the Kantian moral picture, where desire or inclination is essentially self-directed and is held in check by reason (acting in the interests of universality and speaking in the name of the father). This self uses both other humans and the world generally as a means to its egoistic satisfaction, which is assumed to be the satisfaction of interests in which others play no essential role. If we try to specify these interests they would make no essential reference to the welfare of others, except to the extent that these are useful to serve pre-determined ends. There is no essential or ineliminable reference to the welfare of others, because this welfare does not figure essentially or internally in specifications of the self's desired ends, which is specified in abstract terms as happiness, utility or profit.

Such a reactively-formed self denies dependence on the other, and the other's necessity, contributions and labour are backgrounded, belittled or denied. Thus the falsely differentiated masculine self typically backgrounds the feminine contribution to his life in appropriating achievement as his own, and the market self denies social dependency or backgrounds the social in the appropriation as private goods of what has acquired value only through the unacknowledged contributions of others. Nature
above all is backgrounded, both in its treatment in the market as an "externality" and in its treatment in western culture as the taken-for-granted backdrop to human life and achievement, noticed only when it fails to perform as required. 13

For the egoistic self, others as means are interchangeable if they produce equivalent satisfactions -- anything which conduces to that end is as valuable, other things being equal, as anything else which equally conduces to that end. The interests of such an individual, that of the individual of market theory and the Chodorowian masculine self, are defined as essentially independent of or disconnected from those of other people, and his or her transactions with the world at large consist of various attempts to use others in order to get satisfaction for these pre-determined private interests. Others are a "resource" and the interests of others connect with the interests of such autonomous selves only accidentally or contingently. They are not valued for themselves but for their effects in producing gratification. But of course this kind of instrumental picture, so obviously wrong in the case of relations to other humans, is precisely still the normal western model of what our relations to nature should be. Thus this self which treats the other as an instrument also corresponds closely to the self-interested individual of market theory, the rational maximiser of interests defined without essential reference to others.

THE RELATIONAL SELF

Now this kind of theory has been strenuously criticised in the area of political theory from a variety of quarters, both feminist and in the critique of liberalism, as involving a non-relational "disembedded and disembodied "account of self. 14 It has been objected that it does not give an accurate account of the human self -- that humans are social and connected in a way such an account does not recognise. People do have interests which make essential
and not merely accidental or contingent reference to those of others, e.g. when a mother wishes for her child's recovery, the child's flourishing is an essential part of her flourishing, and similarly with close others and indeed for others more widely ("social others"). But, the objection continues, this not only gives a misleading picture of the world which omits or impoverishes a whole dimension of human experience, but the dimension so omitted is an important and significant one, without which we cannot give an adequate picture of what it is to be human. Instead we must see human beings and their interests as essentially related and interdependent. As Jean Grimshaw writes:

The human self is "embedded" in a network of relationships with others, both at very immediate and intimate and at wider levels. Human needs and interests arise in a context of relationships with other people, and human needs for relationships with other people cannot be understood as merely instrumental to isolable individual ends. For all these reasons, it is right to reject an "individualistic" account of the human self, if by that is meant that the doctrines of abstract individualism or psychological egoism, or the notion that the "interests" of each human being are sharply separable from those of other people, are untenable. 15

People's interests are relational, a fact of which institutions such as the market take no account, but this does not imply a holistic view of them -- that they are merged or indistinguishable, that they cannot exist separately. Although some of the mother's interests entail satisfaction of the child's interests, this does not imply that these interests are identical or even necessarily similar, that she merges with the child or takes the child's interests to be her own. It is important that she does not lose her sense of boundary in such a situation and that she does retain her sense of the child and its interests as independent of her. 16 There is overlap, but the relation is one of intensional inclusion (her interest is that the child should thrive, that certain of the child's key interests are satisfied) rather than accidental overlap, and the child's interests are specified as one of her internal goals, rather than as merely external, instrumental to those goals. 17
Object-relations theory provides an account of the formation of such a relational ego, as well as of the non-relational one. Nancy Chodorow argues that the account of the main task of ego development as separation and the development of ego boundaries is mistaken and results from our cultural preoccupation with separation, and that the main task is the development of a relational ego structure formed by internalisation of aspects of close others.

Along with the earliest development of its sense of separateness, the infant constructs an internal set of unconscious, affectively loaded representations of others in relation to its self, and an internal sense of self in relationship emerges. Images of felt good and bad aspects of the mother or primary caretaker, caretaking experiences, and the mothering relationship become part of the self, of a relational ego structure, through unconscious mental processes that appropriate and incorporate these images.

The more the central core of self, she suggests, is built on relational rather than reactive autonomy, the less it has to define itself against the other in the fashion of the falsely differentiated self.

**Egoism and Altruism**

Such a relational account of self bypasses the traditional false dichotomy, associated with self/other dualism, between egoism and altruism. Egoism and associated qualities such as assertiveness, a drive to self-realisation and competitiveness have been part of the qualities traditionally deemed proper for, and in fact associated with, maleness: they are part of the masculine "public" sphere. In contrast stand "soft" feminine qualities of self-abnegation, self-denial, and putting others first which are an essential part of the traditional private sphere of the family. Many other traditionally feminine characteristics are associated with this e.g. the proscription of self-assertion for women and of confidence, and those qualities flowing from a mode of existence in which achievement and self expression must be obtained through others.
The egoistic mode may be conceived of as one where the self is treated as of primary or intrinsic value, and the altruistic as one where the self is treated as instrumental to the interests of others who have primary (i.e. non-instrumental) value. Usually in liberalism egoism and altruism are presented as an exhaustive set of alternatives. Conventionally egoism, the pursuit of one's own selfish interest, is presented as an unfortunate fact of human nature, the family as a retreat from it. Where possible egoism is to be overcome by altruism; egoism is not seen as a good thing, but it is seen a natural thing and therefore to be accepted. Altruism, the pursuit of the interests of others, and the setting of one's own interests aside in favour of theirs, is conventionally presented as the alternative course of virtue, if indeed one which can only realistically be realised as an exception, owing to "human nature". Egoism then is the dominant mode, altruism a subsidiary one, a praiseworthy exception. There is a glaring exception here however. Altruism is, in the conventional picture, superogation for men, but it is traditionally enjoined for women — it is part of the whole ethos of the traditional instrumental feminine role; and this required renunciation of the self, this expected self-denial is one of the reasons why the traditional role is one which makes women perpetually guilty (about their failures to be good wives, mothers and so on, being able to put others first) 19.

The guilt arises because there is some truth in the egoist's view — the perpetual denial of one's own interests and the putting of the interests of others first as a perpetual way of life would be quite unviable, and it is the difficulty of doing this, of treating oneself as an instrument for others, which helps account for the many problematic features of traditional mothers. e.g. self-sacrificing "Jewish" mothers of much literature who in fact wish to control and live vicariously through their children and other family members. 20 Perpetual self-abnegation, where it can be achieved, is destructive of the self. Such
is the classic complaint of the housewife or mother who feels that she herself has disappeared, that she is nothing. For what does it mean for something to be in one's own interest? If it means anything it must mean that one has some sort of primary attachment to that interest or concern with it -- it wouldn't be one's own interest if one could simply give it away like an old boot with no concern at all. So the traditional feminine ideal of a life based on self-sacrifice and service to others creates severe problems. These problems are logical as well as personal and political, for the supposition that everyone behaves so as to serve the interests of others leads to the same absurd result as the supposition that all values are instrumental. Just as instrumental value requires a non-instrumental goal, an end in itself, so altruism requires a set of primary, non-altruistic interests to sacrifice itself for.

But it is equally unviable to suppose that only egoism exists, and although this is seen as basic to human nature and as underpinning the institutions of public life e.g. the market, and the liberal political system, this mode of existence can only survive because of the invisibility of the basic feminine contribution in the family. Masculine public sphere egoism must be complemented by invisible, feminine altruism in the private sphere. So egoism and altruism are complementary and require one another; the pursuit of self-interest for some requires the denial of self-interest for others, each side being unviable without the other.

Characterising The Relational Self

The relational account of the self breaks this culturally-posed false dichotomy of egoism and altruism of interests (in the sense of altruism in which it means neglecting one's own interests); it bypasses both masculine "separation" and traditional feminine "merger" accounts of
the self. For like other dualistically conceived alternatives, the modes of egoism and altruism are not only complementary and unable to function unless the other exists, they are not exhaustive as supposed. What the conventional choice between egoism and altruism neglects is the third possibility of interdependence of interests, the case where people's interests are conceived relationally, so that one's own interest involves and is bound up with those of others not accidentally as in the case of enlightened self-interest, but essentially. This is especially clear with those one is close to, for example, if you love someone your interests include an interest in their prospering. In this case the satisfaction of one's own interests includes that of relevant others. The question of altruism versus egoism does not arise, because people's interests are not discrete and sharply separated in the way that the altruism/egoism contrast assumes. Hence the pursuit of such interdependent interests doesn't have to be (and in fact can't satisfactorily be) viewed as either egoism or altruism. It is neither pursuing one's own interests (unless the concept of the self is stretched to include those to whom one's interests are essentially related (the Self), a move which seems designed to preserve the appearance of egoism while abandoning its substance and otherwise has little to recommend it), or sacrificing or setting one's own interests aside in favour of others (since in pursuing the other's interest one also pursues, non-accidentally, one's own). Interdependence of interest could become the dominant mode in a different sort of society to one dominated by the market and other institutions of the public sphere which presuppose egoism.21

The exact characterisation of the relational account of self and of what it contrasts with presents several options.

1. The atomistic position cannot be formulated as the position that the atomistic self has no non-contingent relations to others because whether or not relations to another are non-contingent will depend upon what
description is being applied. An alternative possible formulation is that all properties which are defining or characterising of the self are non-relational. Relational properties cannot be among those central to the self; such a self has no internal relations. Conversely, in the relational account of self many core identifying properties would be implicitly or explicitly relational, although not every relation would count as identifying, central to the self, nor would all identifying properties be relational, for the sorts of reasons which emerge from the difficulties feminists have seen in taking the self as defined completely in relation to others, and of the need for an area of self which is definitively one's own, not made over to the service or care of others.  

2. Another way to understand the atomistic position is as the claim that interests can only be contingently related. This position would be unable to accommodate internally related or nested interests, the case where my concern is that you flourish, because this would be non-contingent. This condition would seem to be satisfied by the atomistic individual of the market, and such a contingent relationship of interests or utilities would then be the essential assumption of the "hidden hand" mechanism of the market. The market is a mechanism for adjusting and coordinating a vast set of contingently-related interests.

3. A further way to understand the thesis which connects more directly with instrumentalism is suggested by Ross Poole's work. If we list the ends of the egoistic self, we will find that among these others and their welfare will never figure. This list makes no essential reference to the welfare of others, and others will figure only contingently as means to this set of ends or end, which will turn on pleasure or satisfaction.

We could, following this suggestion, divide a person's interests into primary and essential interests (which may also be identifying) and secondary interests which relate to the primary interests as means to ends and which are only contingently and interchangeably related to the first
set. Then the egoistic thesis would be that the welfare of others can only figure in the secondary set, never the first, primary set of ends. This formulation then encompasses the first two and explains how this form of egoism connects with instrumentalism.

The alternative to atomistic individualism involves not only rejecting this assumption that the welfare of others can only be contingently related to one's own, but also the neat, sharp division presupposed between the kingdom of ends and the kingdom of means, and that means are only contingently related to ends. Instead it would see ends as at least constraining means, and in specific cases as internally related, so that there is no general interchangeability between means which produce a given end, and hence no such rigid division between the two spheres. Such a division is characteristic of instrumentalism, and also reflects the the dualistic division of self (ends) and other (means).

The relational self position which emerges from feminist thought should be distinguished from the accounts of self (or Self) provided by deep ecology, which sometimes and in some respects do resemble it. Deep ecologists provide in this area as in a number of others, a range of different and conflicting accounts and some of these sometimes seem close to that of the relational self while others are substantially different. (Deep ecology's account of self is discussed in detail in the next chapter). For example Arne Naess's version and that of some followers differs in treating all properties as relational, implicitly or explicitly, all relations the individual has as defining or constitutive of self, and the self as defined equally in relation to all other selves. These features of the deep ecological account arise from the mapping into the area of self of holistic ecological models and provide an unnecessarily holistic set of assumptions which despite disclaimers does tend to collapse the account of the individual entity into that of the whole. Such an account participates in the holistic
side of the dualism of atomism and holism, which present a false dichotomy closely related to that of egoism and altruism. To the extent that such an holistic account results in the individual being essentially or internally related to all others indiscriminately it differs substantially from the account of the individual as primarily essentially related to particular others. Deep ecology's account of the ecological self tries to close the substantial gap between biological dependence on ecosystemic wholes (including the global ecosystem) and the individual's identity (which selects relations to particular others as central to self and others as less so or not defining of self at all) by assuming all relations to be (ideally any way) equally involved in the formation of and constitution of self. This creates many difficulties in dealing with particularity and with the self as tied to those particular and close others (and parts of nature) which usually contribute especially to the individual's particular social or individual identity. The difference is crystallised in deep ecology's conception of the problem as one of failure to identify with the cosmos (or to make as wide a set of identifications as possible) in contrast to the bioregionalist view of the problem as the failure to assume care and responsibility for particular areas of land and to form relationships which link aspects of nature to the self.

Another important difference is that the account of self as self-in-relationship given here is not treated, as it is in deep ecology, as a substitute for an ethic of nature or for a recognition of and account of nature as possessing a value and significance of its own, but rather is treated as requiring and as complemented by a different account of ethics and of value. Thus Arne Naess substitutes "the maxim of self-realisation" for an ethical account of care and respect for nature, and Warwick Fox contends that

*The appropriate framework of discourse for describing and presenting deep ecology is not one that is fundamentally to do with the value of the non-human world, but rather one that is fundamentally to do with the nature and possibilities of the self, or, we might*
say, the question of who we are, can become, and should become in the larger scheme of things. So deep ecology emerges as a reductionist position, reducing and replacing questions of the ethics and value of nature to and by questions of the formation and realisation of the human self. This contrasts with the treatment adopted here of the relational self as expressed in an ethic of respect, care and responsibility and as thus providing the foundation of a different account of ethics (as given for example by feminist theorists such as Carol Gilligan) and a different account of value, for example of non-instrumental value assignments to nature as reflective of relational rather than egoistic interest (given below). Apart from the adequacy of such a reductionist account (which is justified in Naess by appeal to good positivist principles of simplification), it is ironic that a position claiming to be anti-anthropocentrist should thus reduce questions of the care and significance of nature to questions of the realisation of the human self.

A number of feminist thinkers (especially Carol Gilligan) have argued that this view of self as self-in-relationship can provide an appropriate foundation for an ethic of connectedness and caring for others. It is an account which avoids atomism but which enables a recognition of interdependence and relationship without falling into the problems of indistinguishability. Now the same account can also be applied to the case of human relations with nature. The standard western view of the relation of the self to the non-human is that it is always accidentally related, and hence can be used as a means to the self-contained ends of human beings. Pieces of land are real estate, readily interchangeable as equivalent means to the end of human satisfaction. But of course we do not all think this way, and instances of contrary behaviour would no doubt be more common if their possibility were not denied and distorted by both theoretical and social construction. But other cultures have recognised such essential connection of self to
country clearly enough, and many indigenous voices from the past and present speak of the grief and pain in loss of their land, as essentially connected as any human other. When Aboriginal people for example speak of the land as part of them, "like brother and mother", this is I think one of their meanings. If instrumentalism is impoverishing and distorting as an account of our relations to other human beings, it is equally so as an account and guiding principle in our relations to nature. An adequate environmental philosophy as well as an ecofeminist account must reject the view of nature as a mere instrument to human ends (including the end of "Self-realisation").

INSTRUMENTALISM AND HUMAN EGOISM

Having set instrumentalism in this gender, political and philosophical context, I now turn to an assessment of the role and justification of instrumentalism with respect to nature. It is commonly held that nature can only have value instrumentally, as a means to human ends, and that the notion that it might have value in some other way, on its own account or as an end in itself, is incoherent, involving a view of nature as having a value which is inherent or objective, located in natural items themselves with no reference to human interest 30. I shall argue in this section and the next that this choice between instrumental value or objective (detached) value is a false one, based on neglect of the relational self and of the possibility of interdependent, relational interests. It is part of a network of false choices which includes that between egoism and altruism, atomism and holism. This network of false choices is generated by self/other dualism.

One very resilient argument which is supposed to demonstrate that values are, or must be, determined through the interests of humans or persons and instrumental to their interests goes as follows:
A. Values are determined through the preference rankings of valuers (the *no detachable values assumption*).

B. Valuer's preference rankings are determined through valuers' interests (the *preference reduction thesis*).

C. Valuers are humans [persons] (the *species assumption*).

D. Therefore, values are determined through human interests [through the interests of persons].

Hence, it is sometimes concluded, not only is it perfectly acceptable to reduce matters of value and morality concerning nature to human interest, there is no rational or possible alternative for doing so. The premises are rarely set out clearly, and when they are this initially persuasive argument can be seen to rest on fallacious assumptions and to be a variant of the argument for egoism. I shall argue that although the argument to conclusion D is formally valid, given only some conventional assumptions such as that the relation of determination is transitive, not all the premises should be accepted and that their plausibility rests on crucial ambiguities and slides in much the same way as the argument for egoism.

The argument can be treated as the major representative of a family of similar arguments, and my criticisms here will transfer to the variations. The first group of variations replaces or qualifies the determining relation. For example "determined through " or "determined by " may be replaced by "answers back to", "reflect", "are a matter of", "can be reduced to ", "are a function of". And "determined" has to mean "fully determined" and not merely partly determined, otherwise the conclusion does not follow. Another variation is already indicated above by brackets -- the replacement of humans as a base class by persons. This increases the plausibility of premise C, which otherwise would be at best contingently true, but
this is not good enough for the argument and should be rejected anyway, since some valuers may not be human and certainly not all humans are valuers. However Premise C is not the main problem. Even if premise C is stated in analytic form, (as for example, valuers are valuers or valuing creatures) it still does not save the argument.

Premise A is also not unproblematic, although there are ways of repairing it 32. The really objectionable premise in the argument is neither premise A nor premise C but premise B. Suspicion of premise B may be aroused by noticing that it plays an exactly parallel role in this argument to that played in the familiar arguments for egoism -- that whatever course of action one adopts it is always really in one's own selfish interests--by the following crucial premise:

BE. A person's preferences or choices are always determined through self-interest.

The argument for egoism runs along the following parallel lines:

AE. Agents always act (in freely chosen cases) in the way they prefer or choose i. e. in accordance with their preference rankings.

BE. Individual preference rankings are always determined through (reflect) self-interest.

CE. Agents are individuals.

Therefore:

DE. Individual persons always act in ways determined by self-interest (that reflect their own interest).

The argument has a popular parallel form in which the conclusion is that anthropocentrism is inevitable, because values must reflect a human outlook, human interests, and are in that sense "anthropocentric". This argument, like its egoist counterpart, depends critically on an ambiguity or slide on "interest", one a weak, indeed trivial sense of "interest" where interest is used as an internal accusative and whatever valuers value is said to be "in their
interest", merely on the grounds that they do value it. The concept of anthropocentrism is similarly and correspondingly ambiguous. The problem for the argument can be stated in the form of a dilemma. In the weak sense of "interest" premise B is trivially true, but the conclusion D must be weakened accordingly, and does not support a conclusion about anthropocentrism in any strong or damaging sense. That is, it licenses the trivial conclusion that human values reflect human values or outlook, but not that this outlook is necessarily species-selfish, or anthropocentric in the strong sense. The other is a stronger sense in which "in their own interest" has something more like its normal meaning of "own self interest", "to their own advantage", and would license a stronger conclusion about anthropocentrism, but in this sense premise B, that preference rankings reflect the valuer's interest, is false. Both this argument and the egoist argument employ the slide from in their own interest to to their own advantage or for their own uses or purposes. The final conclusion of egoism, again parallel to the case for anthropocentrism, is not only that the egoistic and instrumentalist position is perfectly in order and thoroughly rational but that there is no alternative, no other possible analysis of any action.

Thus the argument is a form of human or group selfishness or egoism argument, the argument from Human Egoism one might say. The general criticisms of the Human Egoism argument too parallel those of egoism. Not only is premise B subject to similar objections to premise BE, but Human Egoism is no more acceptable than individual egoism, since it depends on the same set of confusions between values and advantages and slides on such terms as "interests" as the arguments on which egoism rests. This becomes apparent if we recast B and BE and set them side by side:

BE. Individual value rankings are determined through individual self-interest.

B. Valuers' (humans') value rankings are determined through valuers' (humans') interests.
But it does not follow that because people make choices according to their own preference rankings (which amounts to little more than the claim that their choices are their own choices) that these rankings are determined in their own interest; similarly in the human group case, because a group arrives at and chooses according to its own rankings, it does not follow that they merely reflect its own interest, or that it determines them in its own interests. Just as BE is refuted by examples of non self-interested behaviour, so B is refuted by examples of behaviour which does not just reflect the interest of humankind. As with the case of individual altruistic actions however, examples are controversial and egoistic motives of increasingly unlikely or remote kinds can be found. And of course sometimes these really are major or partial motives too -- the drowning man, or the endangered species, is saved through desire for fame or to assuage guilt. But just as in the individual case, such an analysis is not compulsory. The egoist analysis of action trades heavily on the egoism/altruism false dichotomy, and the difficulty of finding purely disinterested action is supposed to show the correctness of a general egoistic analysis. But just as relatedness of interest breaks this false dichotomy in the individual case, so it does in the case of Human Egoism. The actions and desires of the human species and its members can reflect not only their own interest (egoism), or the interest of other species (altruism), but a relationship between their own interest and that of another, and a relationship of a non-contingent kind. And such relationships can hold between humans, both individually and in social groups, and nature, in whole or in part. My welfare or satisfaction may be essentially connected to the thriving of a particular set of ecosystems, to the welfare of particular animals, plants (and ultimately if more distantly to the thriving of global nature), just as much as to the thriving of human kin.
The inevitability of Anthropocentrism

The view that the instrumental treatment of nature, equated with anthropocentrism, is somehow inevitable is however very resilient, and the constant rediscovery or reinvention of arguments for it indicates a number of different sources for it. Another related source is the assumption that because an item has value it follows that the item is one of anthropocentric concern; however it does not follow that it has value in virtue of being an item of anthropocentric concern. There is also a perspectival form of the argument -- that for creatures with perspectives the only non-arbitrary way to set up value is to value intrinsically other creatures with perspectives; thus humans inevitably have a human, and therefore anthropocentric, outlook. There is a lot to question here. We need to ask: why is "Humans, as perspective havers, can only give non-instrumental value to other perspective havers" different from "Australians can only value other Australians, what is Australian" or "Australians inevitably have an Australo-centric outlook."?

One problem with this is that we all belong to a lot of different categories, eg, I'm an Australian, a woman, a human being. We can look at the world from any one of these perspectives, and shift between them. This ability to shift is part of what provides the complexity and richness of perspectival experience; none of the categories so obtained are absolute in perspectival terms, and except in certain cases they don't exclude one another.

Now it's not obvious why we can't treat being human like this. I am a human, but I'm also an animal, a living being, and beyond that again a physical self, and I can adopt all these perspectives -- they are inclusive rather than exclusive. Being an animal means that a lot of the things in my experience are the same as those of other
animals -- being born, living, breathing the air, dying, the experience of drowning and exposure, of enjoying sunshine and warmth. (And are these not also truly human?) So why can't we have the perspective of an animal, or a living being? Why can't we value the things that we share with other animals or living beings both in ourselves and in them? Of course there are limits to this; as perspective havers we can't share the same perspective as a non-perspective haver, e.g. a rock, but as physical beings with a perspective we can have the perspective of being a thing of that sort, for example, a physical object subject to ageing, so there is a sense in which we can "think like a mountain".

But clearly we are not meant, in the above argument, to treat being a human/perspective haver like this -- rather it is treated as an absolute and oppositional category, which overrides all others. If you're a human that's all you are, you can't be anything else. And isn't this part of what might be called chauvinism, treating some categories (e.g. being Australian, being white) as absolute, and being unable to shift between perspectives, as well as treating them as the norm, by comparison to which others are defined as defective. The argument seems to rest then, for one of its supports at least, on the oppositional account of what it is to be human which is part of the Platonic and rationalist legacy. Both these major supports for the inevitability of anthropocentrism, egoism and the oppositional or dualistic account of the human, should be rejected.

We have noted that anthropocentrism has weaker and stronger senses, some unobjectionable and perhaps inevitable, but others stronger and far from inevitable. Anthropocentrism is not the same as instrumentalism, but is very closely tied to it. Neither anthropocentrism nor instrumentalism automatically lead to the destruction of nature, any more than egoism automatically leads to the destruction of the other. For of course we can find many good reasons, in terms of advantage to humans or human goals, for treating
nature with more circumspection and care, and increasingly prominent among these reasons is our own survival as a species. The rejection of the treatment of nature as instrument does not rule out appeal to these reasons, for the same reason as the rejection of the treatment of humans as nothing more than means does not rule out the possibility that they are also sometimes means. I may use a reference from a friend as a means to obtain a job I desire, thus employing my friend as a means to a desired end. But obviously this does not mean that I see or treat my friend merely as a means to my ends. Instrumental trouble sets in when there is reduction to means, the treatment of others as no more than means.

However if these reasons based in human self-interest are seen as exhausting the case for care for nature, they parallel the reasons for enlightened self-interest in the individual case, that one's survival and well-being is contingent upon the survival and well-being of others (for example to preserve trade). But many voices have been urging that, in the case of human egoism as in the case of individual egoism, these reasons drawn from a broadened instrumentalism and a broadened view of self-interest cannot be sufficient, cannot and should not exhaust the reasons for taking care of the other or our possible modes of relationship with it. (I am of course not suggesting that human egoism is a general feature of humankind or some sort of result of "human nature", for certainly there have been cultures which have not had this approach, which is distinctive of western culture. Rather it is that western culture treats the concept of the human in this way.) Enlightened self-interest which is not based on genuine recognition of the other is unstable and always liable to lapse back into naked egoism and domination of the other when enlightened reasons are less in the fore. And even if the preservation of nature (in a suitably instrumental form) is recognised as in human interests, the results of even enlightened self-interest as a basis for our dealings with nature, although better than naked egoism, include a continuation of human arrogance, summed up in the view
that all value and significance belongs in the first instance to humans and that what humans want is what matters, and the continued lack of sensitivity to the other and restriction of understanding of the other to a narrowly instrumental form. The results of an instrumental model are maintenance of the dualism of self and other, and a continuing impoverishment of the human self and its possible ways of relating to nature, as well as its own internal divisions.

Instrumental treatment of nature connects with the lack of certain human virtues such as sensitivity to and recognition of others, and these have figured in the treatment of instrumentalism in ethical theory. But this is not enough; the inclination to instrumentalise or enslave others may indicate a character defect, a certain "lack of excellence", but it would be outrageous to suggest that this was the entire case against it. What has been largely lacking in the recent philosophical treatment of instrumentalism in the non-feminist, ethical literature is recognition or discussion of its political dimension, of its connections with domination. As we have seen, the structures of human domination, the structures of ego and instrument, are reflected, repeated and confirmed in the reduction of non-human nature to an instrument. This feature reveals important ways in which forms of intra-human domination and forms of extra-human domination are linked, not just accidentally but essentially. The domination of nature and the domination of humans are linked not only by the logical structure of dualism and by the exclusions of rationalism, but by the structure of self which flows from these. The same basic structures of self underlie the rational egoism and instrumentalism of the market and the public/private division, the treatment of women as inferior others whose norms of virtue embody a thinly disguised instrumentalism, the treatment of those supposedly less possessed of "reason" as inferior and as instruments for their more "cultured" western neighbours (as in slavery, colonialism and racism), and the treatment of nature as lifeless instrument.
The dominant western mode of relating to nature then maps the masculine/feminine dualism and the self/other dualism onto the human/nature dualism, and these correspond to the ego formation of false differentiation in which the other remains construed as a reflection of the ego's own needs and wants, as instrument. Instrumentalism is part of the masculine model of the human; to escape this masculine model, nature must be recognised as a genuine other with whom one must enter dialogue, and not given the status of being merely a reflection of human interests, even enlightened interests. Its agency and independence must be recognised and respected.

**NATURE AND INTRINSIC VALUE**

One way of elaborating philosophically an alternative model to instrumentalism is in terms of the notions of respect for nature and in terms of nature's having intrinsic value, as well as through non-mechanistic accounts of nature. The spelling out of what such respect means in terms of treatment needs to be elaborated in specific cultural contexts. But at a minimum it means that nature does not count for nothing in the deliberations of ethical, social and political life, and that actions concerning it are not seen as unconstrained except by human interest and human goals.

But this alternative involving the admission of intrinsic values in nature is often seen as highly problematic, indeed counter to the whole spirit of modernity and its view that values are created by the human viewpoint. Instrumentalism is often taken to be inevitable because of the unviability of such accounts of value as inhering in nature itself. Thus, it is objected, either one accepts an instrumentalist account of values or one is committed to an intrinsic, detached or objective value theory which takes values to be completely independent of valuers and in no way determined by them. But, it is concluded, this
position cannot provide a coherent alternative to instrumentalism, and must be seen as mystical or irrational, and the critique of anthropocentrism along with it. 38

This account assumes a choice between seeing value as instrumental or seeing it as detached, having no relation to valuers' or their preferences. The alternative to instrumentalism is claimed to be a detached, objective or naturalistic theory of value (these terms being often but mistakenly identified with intrinsic value). Of course the argument presents a false choice, for precisely the same reasons that I gave earlier in support of the the claim that premise B, that values are determined through valuers' interests, was false. To reject the instrumentalist conclusion is by no means to be committed to the view that valuers and their preference rankings play no role in determining values, and that values are a further set of mysterious independent items in the world somehow perceived or detected by valuers through a special moral sense. Valuers' preference rankings may be admitted to play an important role in evaluations; we are still not committed to the anthropocentric conclusion that values must reflect human interest unless we assume (what amounts to premise B) that these preference rankings reflect or can be reduced to valuers' interests. What is overlooked in the argument is precisely the possibility represented by the relational self, that valuer's preferences do play a role but not in ways that simply reflect their own self interest, and which thus may permit the item to be valued for its own sake and not merely as a means to the valuer's ends.

The dichotomy frequently presented between instrumentalist accounts of value and detached or objective theories in which valuers' perspectives play no role is, for the same reason a false one. Instrumentalist theories are those which attempt to reduce value to what is instrumental to or what contributes to a stated goal. Typically such theories take the goal to be the furtherance of the interest 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. Anthropocentric theories are
characteristically instrumentalist theories. In contrast,
an item is valued intrinsically when it is valued for its
own sake, and not merely as a means to something further;
and an intrinsic value theory allows that some items are
intrinsically valuable. Intrinsic theories then contrast
with instrumental theories, and what "intrins" tells us
is that the item taken as intrinsically valuable is not
valued merely as a means to some goal, that is, is not
merely instrumentally valued. Accordingly detached value
theories are a type of intrinsic theory, but only one type.
Something may be valued non-instrumentally, for its own
sake, without its value being detached from all valuing
experience.

The identification of intrinsic and detached value theories
presupposed in the argument is no more than a restatement
of the false dichotomy non-instrumental, therefore
detached. The assumption that if preference or value
rankings are involved at all the resulting assignments must
be instrumental is a variation of the fallacious premise B
reducing valuations to self-interest which plays a crucial
role in the Human Egoist and Egoist arguments. The
variation is that if valuations are involved they must
reflect valuers' interests; therefore such values are
instrumental because the items valued are valued according
as they reflect valuers' interests; and therefore
according as they are a means to the end of satisfying the
valuers' interests. Because the argument is fallacious, it
follows that intrinsic value theories can allow for a
third way between instrumental and detached theories,
because of the possibility of value rankings which are not
themselves set up in a purely instrumental way, attributing
value to an item only according as it is a
means to some goal.

Instrumentalism, although unthinkingly accepted as a
coherent theory, is not without serious problems of its own, especially given the claim that intrinsic values are incoherent and mystical. Instrumentalist positions take as valuable just what contributes to a stated end. Utilitarianism presents a clear example, with things valued according to their contribution to the single goal of happiness or pleasure. However in the more general case we are concerned with instrumentalist forms of anthropocentrism there may be a set of goals, not just a single goal such as that of maximising happiness, usually of humans. The anthropocentric assumption is that all goals reduce in some way to human goals, or at least can be assessed in terms of human concerns and interests.

Problems for instrumentalism arise when questions are asked about the status of the ultimate goal itself, as Aristotle noticed. Is this ultimate goal itself instrumentally valuable or not? The instrumentalist position which claims intrinsic values to be incoherent relies for its plausibility upon selecting a set of goals which are widely accepted and which are implicitly treated as valuable; it relies at bottom on an implicit valuation which cannot itself be explained in purely instrumental terms. Of course a value assumption is not eliminated in this fashion -- it is merely hidden under the general consensus that such a goal is appropriate, that such an end is valuable. But the strategy of successful instrumentalism is to avoid recognition of the fact that the goal is, indeed must be, implicitly treated as valuable, by selecting a set of so much part of the framework of contemporary thought, so entrenched and habitual as a valued item, that the value attached to the goal becomes virtually invisible to those who accept it.

We cannot rule out the possibility that this is what is behind the comfortable certainties of anthropocentric value theory which holds that goals can only coherently be determined in terms of human interest. Thus it is possible that the "self-evident" character of this assumption rests on nothing more than the shared beliefs of privileged
humans about the paramount and exclusive importance of their own interests and concerns. The consensus features which instrumentalists appeal to (increasingly doubtful these days as more people challenge anthropocentrism) may be nothing more than the consensus of a privileged class about the goal of maintaining their own privilege, that is, a consensus of interests. This sort of agreement would show very little about the well groundedness of the position. In order for instrumentalism to be compelling, the goal must be implicitly treated within the theory as valuable; for how can the value of an item be explained and justified in terms of its contribution to an end not itself considered valuable? If the end is not treated as valuable the theory runs into problems of naturalism, for the statement that something is valuable then simply amounts to the factual/causal claim that it tends to produce a certain result, and it does not make a value claim at all. The special logical and epistemological character of value statements must be supplied by the treatment of the goal itself as valuable.

The fact that the goal of an instrumental account must be taken as itself valuable gives rise to two choices, presenting a dilemma for the position that intrinsic value is incoherent. In the first choice, the goal is taken as itself instrumentally valuable, which creates an infinite regress. For if the end or reason for which other items are instrumentally valuable is itself only instrumentally valuable, then there must in turn be some other end or reason in terms of which it is valuable, by definition of instrumental. A regress is thus begun, and if this regress is not to be viciously infinite, it must terminate in some end or feature which is taken as valuable just in itself, that is, with intrinsic values.

On the second choice, the goal is not taken to be instrumentally valuable but is admitted to be valuable in some other way. This amounts to adding an "except" clause to the original instrumental account so that all values are held to be instrumental with the exception of the goal, and
To sum up, the dilemma for the instrumentalist comes about in the following way. The goal of the instrumental theory must be implicitly judged to be desirable, for otherwise nothing could be justified by reduction to it. But if we ask whether this goal is also instrumentally valuable or not, both possible answers refute the instrumental position. If the answer is yes and the goal is taken to be only desirable as a means to a further goal, then a regress is initiated and the same issue arises with respect to a new goal. But if the answer is no, that it is not only instrumentally valuable, then the instrumental theory is again refuted because intrinsic values have been admitted.

Whichever horn of the dilemma is taken, the outcome is the same. The instrumentalist must rely on treating the goal itself as implicitly valuable in a way not purely instrumental, that is, as intrinsically valuable. The instrumentalist merely has a dishonest version of his or her opponents "logically incoherent" theory, one which makes use of intrinsic values but fails to own up to it. The logical and epistemological status of such a position is no better than that of the one he or she condemns, since the difference in the positions turns not on the logical incoherence or otherwise of intrinsic values, but on what is taken to be intrinsically valuable. From the point of view of the philosophical status of intrinsic values, there is no difference between admitting only one thing (for example human life) to be intrinsically valuable, and admitting a number of things (including nature) to be intrinsically valuable.

The abstract dilemma for anthropocentric instrumentalism is illustrated by Passmore's argument in Man's Responsibility For Nature. Passmore (1) wishes to say that there is no coherent alternative to instrumental values, that an item is valuable insofar as it serves human interest, and (2) wants to explain the unique value
attributed to humans in terms of the production of valuable civilised and cultural items. But (2) involves the admission of values, that of civilised items, which cannot be valuable in the way that (1) states, and indeed (2) amounts to the admission of non-instrumental values. The proposed account is inconsistent because if intrinsic values are admissible in the case of civilised items, they cannot be logically incoherent in the way that (1) claims.42

The sort of problem faced by Passmore is however not a readily avoidable one for the instrumentalist. For if the charge of arbitrary and unjustifiable anthropocentrism is to be avoided, and humans are not themselves to be awarded exclusive intrinsic value -- thus conceding the logical legitimacy of intrinsic values generally -- some explanation must be provided for the exclusive value attributed to humans. But any explanation capable of justifying this valuation in a non-arbitrary way would have to refer to properties of humans and would have to say something like: "Humans are uniquely valuable because they alone have valuable properties x, y, and z...or produce valuable items A, B, and C...". (It is in fact not easy to find such properties which mark out exactly the class to be taken as intrinsically valuable, the class of humans, and are not either morally irrelevant or question-begging43). But this is to admit intrinsic value for the properties which explain the exclusive value of humans. The dilemma for the anthropocentrist is that he or she must either take the exclusive human-value assumption (the goal) as ultimate, which invites the charge of an arbitrary defense of privilege, or must attempt to explain it, in which case they will again end by conceding intrinsic value.

The case for instrumentalism with respect to nature must then be pursued in terms other than those in which it has been pursued, of the logical and philosophical incoherence of any alternative to its instrumental conception and treatment. There is no logical barrier to the treatment of nature as valuable in its own right, not merely as an
adjunct to human life and instrument to human ends, and no barrier to developing ways to conceptualise it and relate to which differ from the arrogance expressed in Ursula LeGuin's phrase: "What I want is what matter is for."

Ethics and Instrumentalism: a Response to Janna Thompson

Alternatives to instrumental ways of viewing nature have been suggested by many recent environmental philosophers, and are also explicit in some versions of deep ecology, as well as being the direction in which many feminist accounts of environmental philosophy point. The issue of intrinsic value especially has been highly contentious however, and looks like remaining so.

Janna Thompson's "A Refutation of Environmental Ethics" (Environmental Ethics 44) raises some important issues and difficulties for intrinsic value theory. I shall argue that the objections she raises are of varying validity, some of them pointing to areas where ethics will not do the job required of it, but others themselves subject in turn to serious objection. The ecofeminist perspective shifts the centre of gravity in environmental philosophy away from ethics; nevertheless an environmental ethic challenging the instrumental treatment traditionally accorded nature must be a part of any adequate account. A refutation, therefore, is a serious matter.

Among the problems in Janna Thompson's argument is that it involves some quite major misrepresentation of the work of many of those criticised in her paper as holding an intrinsic value position with respect to nature. She states(p2):

But at a minimum those who find intrinsic value in nature are claiming two things: First, that things and states of affairs which are of value are valuable for what they are in themselves and not because of their relations to us (and in particular, not because they provide us with pleasure and satisfaction). And second, that this intrinsic value which states of nature have is objective in the sense that its existence is not a
matter of individual taste or personal preferences. Any rational, morally sensitive person ought to be able to recognise that it is there. But in fact there are significant differences between the way in which intrinsic values in nature have been treated in the literature, and while there are some proponents of intrinsic value as objective and as not relative to valuers' perspectives, many of those who have opted for intrinsic value have not wanted to accept any of these propositions. This is especially true in Australia, where, in contrast to America, few of those writing on the area have, to my knowledge, adopted such a position. Her analysis, and most of her argument, equates intrinsic value with objective or detached value, a confusion for which there is little excuse given the numerous explanations in the literature of how they differ. For example, she refers to a paper jointly authored by myself and Richard Routley, "Human Chauvinism and Environmental Ethics" as presenting such an objective account of value, but apparently failed to notice that some twelve pages of the paper (pp154-166) are devoted to showing that the resulting account of value need not eliminate valuers' perspectives, is not realist or objectivist, and concluding "in the end, then, environmental value systems are based on different preference rankings, ... a different group preference ranking and network (emanating from the valuer ...) which is grounded in a different perception and emotional presentation of nature". Janna Thompson also fails to notice that two further papers (one of which she refers to) explain in still more detail how a non-instrumental non-objective account of value is possible. One of these provides a detailed semantics for such a relational theory. This semantics explains how taking something to have intrinsic value involves the valuer's preferring situations/worlds in which the item valued exists or flourishes to ones where it does not. Where this evaluation occurs across the whole range of worlds, it will include ones where the valuer does not exist, as well as ones where his or her interests are in conflict with or are not furthered by the item's existence. In this case the item is not valued as instrumental to the valuer's
interest, but the account does not make value independent of the valuer's perspective. On such an account it would certainly not be plausible to claim either that any rational and morally sensitive person would recognise the intrinsic value of nature. I would want to count sensitivity to the value of nature as a virtue, but one which, like other virtues, is variably distributed among human individuals and societies.

Although, as Robert Elliot notes, there are a number of distinctions which can be drawn in the area of intrinsic value, in my own work (and I think this is true for a good many others) the meaning intended in claiming that an item is intrinsically valuable is that it is not to have its value explained by or reduced to instrumental considerations. What is involved is the distinction familiar from classical philosophy between things considered to be valuable in themselves and things considered to be valuable for the sake of something else which is taken to be valuable, that is as a means to some valued end. Since, plainly, not everything can be instrumentally valuable, every theory must at some point admit intrinsic values, but clearly that does not make every theory an objective value theory. Usually intrinsic worth is assigned, without anyone feeling the need for a proper justificatory basis, to humans and their works; the assignment of intrinsic value to nature (or some part of it) does not have to introduce a somehow new and different account of value as objective, unrelated to valuers or their perspectives.

As I have argued, one important basis for the belief that intrinsic value for nature must equal objective value in nature is that unless an evaluation is somehow reducible to the interests and purposes of the valuer, no valuer-relative preference ranking can be involved. But as I have argued above and elsewhere, this is to employ the same assumptions as are involved in philosophical egoism, ignoring the possibility of non self-interested action and of relatedness of interests, that a valuer's preference
rankings may reflect not just his or her own interests, but those of others, especially others to whom he or she is essentially related, and including non-human others. (Thus too this brand of egoism is closely tied to instrumentalism, as critics of the market have noted). The argument involves a slide on "interests", conflating the egoistic and instrumental senses ("in their own selfish interests") with a much more vacuous sense in which the valuer's interests are involved merely because the valuer's preferences or perspectives are involved. A variation of the argument is that anthropocentrism is inevitable; this is taken to follow from the fact that there are no values without a valuer, but only does so with similar egoistic assumptions.

The quoted passage however gives an indication of another route by which Janna Thompson seems to have arrived at this confused account of intrinsic value and of opponents' positions. Intrinsic value is said to entail "that things and states which are of value are valuable for what they are in themselves and not because of their relations to us...". But what is being rejected is not relationship to us in general but instrumental relationship to us, which is partly recognised in her bracketed addition "and in particular, not because they provide us with pleasure and satisfaction". There is a slide from the intended meaning "not because of usefulness to us" to the unintended meaning "not because relations to us". But unless the question is thoroughly begged right from the start, allowance has to be made for there being other possible relations besides, and not reducible to, that of usefulness -- being valued by, for example. The slide makes it seem as if someone involved in denying instrumental relationship is committed to denying all relation, and hence to an objective account of value.

Thompson's conclusion is that only assignment of moral considerability to creatures with a point of view can be non-arbitrary, and hence that there is no alternative to instrumentalism with respect to the rest of nature. She
is silent on the issue, important given the place of the critique of instrumentalism in the critique of anthropocentrism, of whether the class of perspective-havers is the same as the class of humans. But in any case it seems that such an assignment to perspective-havers still is arbitrary (in the rather unsatisfactory sense in which "arbitrary" is used here, to mean relative to a valuer's point of view), first because it is not determined by considerations drawn purely from the ethic itself and there is room for alternative assignments and disagreement; and second because perspective-havers could, with good reason, also allocate their values to beings other than just their own kind, not just as means to their own ends but as ends in themselves. The only way to show that they could not would it seems be to employ the fallacious argument discussed above, that valuers can only value what is in their interests. The confusion here again is that because she has shown, or thinks she has shown, that valuations involve valuers' perspectives and individuating criteria, they must be reducible to valuers' interests and satisfactions, i.e., cannot be intrinsic. But the kind of anthropocentrism objected to, which leads to instrumentalism, is that of interests, not the mere fact that (human) valuers have their own (human) perspective on the world. This does not lead to instrumentalism unless the question-begging assumptions outlined above are made.

The assumption that intrinsic value entails objective value vitiates a great deal of Janna Thompson's argument, which depends critically on it. Thus she writes in summary of her argument (p17) "The problem, as I suggested before, is that how we view the world, how we divide it up into individuals and systems, what we regard as good for an individual or a system or bad for it is too arbitrary, i.e. too dependent on point of view, interest and convenience, to support an ethic which purports to find value in nature independent of our interests and concerns". Thus too disagreement about where to stop moral consideration is taken to be fatal or at least a serious problem, (p 7), but it would only be so on an objectivist view. On a non-
objective view there is no reason why one should not admit a multiplicity of possible answers here, (as in the case of human virtue), and that choices will reflect valuer's perspectives. Similarly, much effort is put into establishing that "how we divide up the world depends upon context and convenience." (p.11) This is apparently taken to be fatal because "surely an environmental ethic which claims to discover intrinsic values in nature shouldn't depend upon the way we happen to look at things." (p.11), that is it relies again on the confusion between intrinsic and objective value.

The failure of the search for a single, simple and indisputable criterion of all value in nature -- a search which would be equally certain of failure in the human case -- is taken to be fatal to environmental ethics because (p.13) "if they claim to be uncovering intrinsic values in nature, then we are entitled to get an answer to the question, 'What is it about living creatures or wilderness that is valuable?" Why this is so is not clear, since in the human case it is common enough for people to value someone or something without being able to say exactly why or to specify a value-making property everyone would agree on, and people often assume and assign values in human areas without being able to answer such demands. (Here we see another aspect of her criteria at work, the demand that environmental ethics satisfy standards which human-based ethical systems are unable to meet). This criterion also rules out valuing something as a particular, rather than as an example of some property or other. But the demand is taken to somehow follow from the assumption of objectivity in intrinsic value. As work on aesthetic values has shown too, we commonly value items according to a variety of complex criteria which may include their historical origins, (the comparable property in the case of natural items is their naturalness). The criteria of naturalness, stability, harmony, diversity and integrity she criticises are given as examples of bases upon which natural items and ecosystems might be accorded value, and not taken to be an exhaustive account of such
bases, and we do not, as she claims, view environmental systems as the only objects of value in nature.50

In the same vein, Janna Thompson finds the emphasis on the importance of naturalness and on the damage which human beings can bring about to contain "a covert reference to the human point of view, to our interests and concerns" (p16), and is puzzled as to "why an ethic which purports to find objective value in nature should be so concerned about what human beings bring about". She goes on to ask "How can it [such an ethic] justify not being concerned to prevent (if possible) natural occurrences which threaten the stability, diversity, integrity of an environmental system?" But it in no way follows that it is not -- this would involve a case where criteria were in conflict, and it certainly would not follow that naturalness would override all other values or criteria in such a case. And apart from the obvious fact that such an ethic may be concerned with what human beings bring about because it too often damages all these values, it may also be primarily (but not exclusively) concerned with human actions because this is a factor which can be controlled, whereas "storms, floods, volcanoes, glaciers" etc cannot. And in the current social context this focus seems relevant enough. The world's forests have existed for a long time, despite natural disasters; it is not cyclones but human activity which is creating the prospect of a deforested world which is now so close to realisation51. As it stands the ethic tells us little of how much we should intervene to save nature from itself, and is primarily addressed to human action, but it is far from clear why this should be accounted a serious problem, even on objectivist assumptions.

Human action is emphasised for another reason also -- the rejection of instrumentalism with respect to nature is part of a concern to "encourage a better relation between us and our environment" (p16) -- a concern few working in the area have troubled to hide -- and part of the rejection of human arrogance and chauvinism with respect to nature and other
species. The traditional western freedom of action with respect to nature is in part the product of an instrumental view of it; instrumentalism is a close associate of domination, not just for nature but for human groups also, and the rejection of instrumentalism is part of a broader picture of re-evaluating human hierarchy in nature and in human social systems. The challenge to instrumentalism should be viewed in this broader context rather than the mistaken one of the creation of an objectivist value system.

Janna Thompson's discussion of the problem of the extent of moral consideration takes place against the backdrop of her three requirements on an ethic, especially the "Decidability Requirement", that "the criteria of value which an ethic offers must be such that in most cases it is possible to determine what counts as valuable and what does not" (p3). This sounds plausible, but in practice this translates apparently into a demand that we be able to decide cases even where quite insufficient context and detail is provided, as on p 15 where she asks whether trees are of less value than forests. (In all these cases the criteria of diversity, naturalness, integrity under discussion are treated as necessary and sufficient conditions for value when they were put up as jointly sufficient.) But we can ask in the human case too whether individuals or social groups are more valuable, and the disputes and haziness surrounding these issues in the human case are conveniently overlooked. Does the difficulty in answering it, especially without supporting detail, show that no criteria of value are possible there? Another "difficulty" which is supposed to illustrate the problems in taking nature to be valuable concerns possible future recovery of degraded natural ecosystems: why should we be terribly concerned about what we do now to our environment, why not degrade environmental systems if we think there is some chance that they may eventually recover? The argument has the familiar ring of axes and chainsaws, yet no adequate decision-making would sacrifice existing items of great value (however this value is
accounted for) just on the consideration that they may eventually regain some of it. It depends on the gains and the risks, as usual, but in this case these details are not specified. What the "difficulty" seems to be designed to show again is that such considerations are not objective but rely on valuer's perspectives.

Nevertheless, despite the misunderstandings about objectivity, some of the problems Thompson raises for environmental ethics are important and valid. Environmental ethics does face a set of problems about individuation and the extent of moral consideration, as I have argued elsewhere. I think that although Thompson is right in many of her points on the problem of individuation, she draws an unjustifiable conclusion from them -- that environmental ethics is thereby "refuted". But all that it is justifiable to draw in the way of a conclusion from this is that ethics itself is not sufficient to settle these questions, that it is seriously incomplete if taken as an account of how we should relate to nature, and that it is necessary to draw on a network of further background assumptions and criteria, which are taken for granted in the human case. It would hardly be surprising that if we should find that environmental ethics too requires a whole network of further assumptions, practices and individuating criteria which are not themselves ethical. In the case of ethical relations to nature, our society lacks some of these practices, but that does not show we could not develop them, or that other societies do not have them. The objection points to a problem area, but is only fatal if environmental ethics is mistakenly made to bear the entire weight of providing, from scratch, an environmental philosophy and practice.

Janna Thompson is right too in pointing to difficulties about deciding the extent of moral consideration. Stopping moral consideration with sentient beings produces results that are widely seen as problematic -- that the lake, the river, the mountain have value only as means to the ends of sentient beings. But it seems difficult to find other
criteria which do not cast the net of consideration either too widely or too narrowly. Janna Thompson discusses one promising criterion which has been proposed, that of having an interest or having a good of its own. She argues that there is an absence of individuating criteria and that hearts, lungs, livers and kidneys all satisfy the criterion and become objects of moral concern; even rocks and machines satisfy the criterion, she argues. Her claims here are unconvincing though, because the crucial phrase and qualification "of its own" is lost sight of in the discussion and a number of important distinctions are not made. For example it is simply not true that the health of a kidney can be defined without reference to the health of the organism of which it is a part. If the metabolism of humans or other kidney-owners were to change in such a way as to require a different type of functioning from the normal kidney and a different normal state, our notion of what was healthy for a kidney would change accordingly, and similarly for other internal organs. Machines and other artefacts do have purposes and structures and potentials, but they are ones which are built into them by their makers and reflect their goals, and do not satisfy the condition indicated by "of its own". The suggestion that plants do not have a good of their own seems counterintuitive; "prefers sunny, moist position", says the plant label, and none of us have any difficulty in knowing what that means or how to act on it. Plants can be said to have needs, preferences and interests, provided we do not try to pack into these concepts notions of consciousness; they can even be seen as making choices (eg of how best to grow), and respond as individuals to their conditions of life. Their interests are not reducible to or dependent on that of humans. Plants do not have conscious wants or preferences, but the application of these concepts does not require that they do, and the claim that because they are not conscious they cannot want anything begs the question by using an inappropriate sense of "want".

I find no great difficulty with the suggestion that we
should respect rocks, mountains and ecosystems, which Thompson takes to be somehow objectionable, but I think that what is wanted for these cases is not so much the notion of an item's having a good or welfare of its own as the broader one of its having a teleology, a goal, an end or direction to which it tends or for which it strives, and which is its own. (See Chapter Five.) To the extent that rocks and mountains, in particular or in general, are expressions of ongoing processes which have directions, they may satisfy this, while ecosystems clearly do possess broadly teleological properties, e.g., the maintenance of ecosystem stability. Such a teleological approach is increasingly seen as fruitful in understanding biological systems. If an item has teleological properties, this means that there is a way of choosing between the various potential states the item may realize, contrary to Thompson's claim, and that there is something our actions may aid, or turn aside and frustrate, that it is not the case that all states of affairs have equal value with respect to that item, that outcomes are indifferent. This means that the net of such an ethic may be cast very wide, but I do not think that there is any great problem in having a criterion of moral consideration which includes a great deal in its scope, provided we can make distinctions of appropriate treatment within that class. That we have to think a lot harder before we can say "it doesn't matter" is I think one likely consequence of moving out of an anthropocentric perspective and into an ecological one.

Few of these problems seem to be as readily solved by drawing the moral boundary at sentience as Janna Thompson suggests. To begin with, she provides two different and non-equivalent criteria for what is intrinsically valuable, first, being conscious, and second, having interests, needs and preferences. The problem of explaining what it is about consciousness which makes it and it alone intrinsically valuable has to be faced. The explanation Thompson gives -- basically that our actions make a difference where such items are concerned -- will not do.
for, as I've argued, such a making of difference will occur in any case where the item in question can be viewed teleologically, and this teleological class is certainly a much broader class than the class of sentient beings. Of course it does not matter "to" the item unless it is conscious, and we may not be able to create conscious states such as joy and anguish by such a making of difference, but to impose such a condition is surely to beg the question in favour of consciousness, to presuppose the unique value of consciousness rather than to explain it. Individuation is earlier claimed to be relative to context and perspective, but now we are told, that it is a virtue of the sentience criterion that individuation is not relative to context or perspective, because conscious individuals are "self defining". The good of such conscious individuals is said to be similarly not "arbitrary" (where arbitrariness is taken to follow from relativity to context and consciousness, mistakenly in my view) because "they themselves define this by how they feel". But this is only so if we fail to make the normal distinction between what is their good and what they think is their good.

There are similar problems in Janna Thompson's suggestion that an environmental ethic is not needed because a sufficiently broad instrumental ethic will do. First, such an approach misses out on the aspect of challenge to human domination and of revision of the concept of the human self of which the challenge to instrumentalism with respect to nature is an important part. Instrumentalism is part too of the account of the self as disconnected and egoistic, having no non-accidental or defining relations to others and treating others -- whether human or non-human -- as merely means to its independently conceived ends. The strategy of accommodating environmental concerns through a broadening of instrumentalism results from a failure to critique this conception of the self.

Second, it seems that such a broadening is convincing only because it relies on concealed assumptions of intrinsic
value. Thus Janna Thompson writes "We might be able to argue that something is valuable and therefore ought to be preserved because if we learn to appreciate it for what it is, if we learn to live in harmony with it, our lives and conception of ourselves will be enhanced. We will live more abundantly in a spiritual sense."(p19) Appreciating something for what it is sounds remarkably like treating it as intrinsically valuable. And presumably it is a virtue to appreciate something for itself and to treat it with respect only if that thing actually is worthy of respect, is worth appreciation. If it is not, if it is actually something of no real value, then we have simply been deluded -- we do not "live more abundantly". The notion carries a concealed assumption of intrinsic value.

Even such a broad conception of the instrumental value of an item creates problems if it is assumed to be the sole reason for respect (as in her because), or if it is assumed that the reasons for protecting the item reduce to this. We can see these problems from an example in the human case. Friends cause us to live more abundantly, they enhance our lives and our conception of ourselves. But if we value our friends just for this reason, the real benefits of friendship will elude us. Friends must be valued for their own sake, not because they are instrumental to our satisfaction, however broadly conceived. The appreciation of nature can bring great benefits of the sort Janna Thompson indicates, but if we seek to preserve it only because of these benefits to ourselves, we will continue to chase anthropocentric shadows.
References


2. Susan Møller Okin Women in Western Political Thought, op. cit p20.


5. Jean - Jacques Rousseau Emile, Everyman Edition, London 1972, p328. As Moira Gatens notes of Sophie's education "The strongest single factor of what her nature should be is reducible to the question "what would be most useful to Emile both as an individual man and as a citizen?"...She will be formed or deformed, overstimulated in some directions, stunted in others, to make her a useful "helpmeet" to Emile.". See Moira Gatens "Rousseau and Wollstonecraft: Nature versus Reason" in Janna L. Thompson (ed) Women and Philosophy: Australasian Journal of Philosophy. Supplement to vol 64; June 1986, p6.


8. See Val Plumwood "On Karl Marx as an Environmental Hero" Environmental Ethics Vol 3 Fall 1981, pp237-244.


12. This point was made frequently in the anarchist communist critique of private property, for example Peter Kropotkin "Law and Authority" (pp212-213), and "Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles" (pp55-57), both in Roger N. Baldwin (ed) *Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets*, Dover, New York, 1970.


15. Jean Grimshaw op. cit p175.
16. Thus the interests of the other can only ambiguously and with some threat of indistinguishability be described as recognised or assumed as the carer's own, as in Freya Mathews "Conservation and Self - Realisation : A Deep Ecology Perspective", Environmental Ethics Vol 10, Winter 1988. See the discussion in Grimshaw op. cit. p176 ff.

17. Internal/external can be taken literally here as scope indicators -- the internal goal is internal to the psychological functor and included in its scope, the external goal external to its scope and hence referentially transparent and subject to substitution principles. Instrumentalism involves extensionalism, the reduction of intensional functors (such as interest) to extensional ones. Conversely, a non-instrumental position requires an intensional, non-reductive analysis of at least teleological functors.


19. On the traditional requirement of self-abnegation see Betsy Wearing's study The Ideology of Motherhood, Allen and Unwin Sydney 1984, p76-77. Guilt over not putting children first was widespread and the unrealisability of the ideal is indicated by the fact that hardly any of the mothers studied thought that they were good mothers or knew anyone else who was a good mother (p52).


24. The false dichotomy presented by atomism and holism as well as relational interests and alternatives to egoism are discussed in Val Plumwood and Richard Routley “Social Theories, Self Management and Environmental Problems” in Don Mannison, Michael McRobbie and Richard Routley (eds) Environmental Philosophy, RSSS Monograph series No 2, Canberra, 1980, pp217-332.


27. Naess op. cit, p86.


29. See Jean Grimshaw op. cit p183.

32. Preference rankings are not the same as value rankings, since a person can prefer what has less value and can value what is not preferred. The premise can be amended to read, somewhat more tautologically:

A1. Values are determined through the value rankings of appropriate valuers.

Premise B must be adjusted accordingly to read:

B1. Valuers' value rankings are determined through valuers' interests.


35. Enlightened self-interest can be taken as including self-interest theories which work within an instrumental framework but with a broadened concept of interest, and include both the welfare of others and interests which do not figure in the narrow conceptions of for example the market as normally operated. The welfare of others figures only accidentally though, as in the Hidden Hand. I do not want to suggest that there is always a clear or sharp boundary between enlightened self-interest and less self-interested behaviour or motives. The plausibility of the reduction to enlightened self-interest partly relies on the shading-off of one into the other, and partly on the failure to make the distinction between essential and contingent relationship to others.


38. Alternatives to instrumentalism, Passmore suggests, are either incoherent or involve treating nature in mystical ways, as sacred. See chapter 7, Passmore op. cit. See also Mannison op. cit.


40. Not all anthropocentrism is instrumental, but anthropocentric positions which explicitly assign intrinsic value only to humans tend to make the arbitrary nature of their assumptions unusually clear.

41. Aristotle Nichomachean Ethics, Ch 1, Section 1; Metaphysics 994b 9-16.


43. On the problem of arriving at a morally relevant, non-circular and defensible criterion which marks out exactly the class of humans, see R. Routley and V. Plumwood "Against the Inevitability of Human Chauvinism" in K. E. Goodpaster and K. M Sayre (eds) Ethics and Problems of the 21st Century, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame
1979. On the question-begging character of most proposed criteria see Elizabeth Dodson-Gray op. cit Ch 2.

44. This section is a response to Janna Thompson's paper "A Refutation of Environmental Ethics" Environmental Ethics, to appear.

45. R. Routley and V. Plumwood "Human Chauvinism and Environmental Ethics", in Don Mannison, Michael McRobbie, Richard Routley (eds), Environmental Philosophy, Monograph Series 2, Philosophy, RSSS, Australian National University, Canberra, 1980, pp 96-189.


47. Robert Elliot op. cit 1989 claims to find a difference between non-instrumental and intrinsic value, but does not give a clear account of what this is except that the first may be, depending on the account, a more inclusive position than the second.


50. Janna Thompson "A Refutation of Environmental Ethics" op. cit. p7, see also p 16.


Chapter Seven: Environmental Ethics, Deep Ecology and the Critique of Rationalism

As a framework for moral decision, care is grounded in the assumption that self and other are interdependent, an assumption reflected in a view of action as responsive and, therefore, as arising in relationship rather than the view of action as emanating from within the self, and, therefore, "self-governed". Seen as responsive, the self is by definition connected to others, responding to perceptions, interpreting events, and governed by the organising tendencies of human interaction and language. Within this framework, detachment, whether from self or from others, is morally problematic, since it breeds moral blindness or indifference -- a failure to discern or respond to need.

Carol Gilligan "Moral Orientation and Moral Development" 1, p24.

Environmental philosophy has recently been criticised on a number of counts by feminist philosophy. In this chapter I develop some of this critique further and to suggest that much of the issue turns on the failure of environmental philosophy to engage properly with the rationalist tradition which has been inimical to both women and nature. Environmental philosophy, although it has attempted to question some fundamental assumptions of western philosophical thinking concerning the role and value of non-humans, has nevertheless tended to be much less throughgoing than feminist philosophy in scrutinizing and challenging conventional philosophical positions and bases. Thus, it continues to employ damaging assumptions from this tradition in attempting to formulate a new environmental philosophy, and often makes use of or embeds itself within rationalist philosophical frameworks which are not only not neutral from a gender perspective, but which have had a negative role for nature as well. In the first two parts of the chapter I argue that both current mainstream brands of environmental philosophy, that based in ethics and that based in deep ecology suffer from this problem, that neither has an adequate historical analysis, and that both continue to rely implicitly upon rationalist-inspired accounts of the self which have been a large part of the problem. In the later part of the chapter I try to show how
the critique of rationalism offers an better understanding of a range of key broader issues which environmental philosophy as it is currently done has tended to neglect or treat in too narrow a way, and to meet some recent criticism by showing that its insights here are central to the concerns of environmental philosophy.

RATIONALISM AND THE ETHICAL APPROACH

The ethical approach aims to centre a new approach to nature in ethics, especially universalising ethics or in some extension of human ethics. This has been criticised from a feminist perspective by a number of recent authors in Environmental Ethics, and I want to partly agree with and partly disagree with these criticisms; I think that the emphasis on ethics as the central part (or even the whole of) the problem is misplaced, and that although ethics has a role, the particular ethical approaches which have been adopted are problematic and unsuitable. I shall illustrate this claim by brief discussion of two recent books — first Paul Taylor's recent (1986) book Respect for Nature: A Theory of Environmental Ethics published by Princeton University press, and second Tom Regan's 1986 The Case for Animal Rights, published by University of California Press. Both have been significant, and indeed impressive contributions to their areas. Paul Taylor's book aims to provide a detailed working out of an ethical position which rejects the the standard and widespread western treatment of nature as instrumental to human interests and instead takes living things, as teleological centres of life, to be worthy of respect in their own right. Although the book defends a biocentric position, it begins with a dedication to the earth's wild living things but never explains why its ethical position is constantly restricted to wild living things, or what the role of wildness is in the theory. Although the importance of wildness is stressed throughout, it appears tacked on — a restriction which evades a set of serious problems both about the limits of moral consideration and
about how far a different moral approach is necessary for domestic as opposed to wild living things. Even the restriction of ethical consideration to living things is a problem for an environmental ethic, and there is also the problem that teleology does not coincide with life (let alone wild life).

The most serious problem however in the theory is that although it claims to be aiming to present a theory which is life-centred and in which a person's true human self includes his or her biological nature, it attempts to embed this within a Kantian ethical framework and makes strong use of the reason/emotion dichotomy. Thus we are assured that the attitude of respect is a moral one because it is universalizing and disinterested, "that is, each moral agent who sincerely has the attitude advocates its universal adoption by all other agents, regardless of whether they are so inclined and regardless of their fondness or lack of fondness for particular individuals." The essential features of morality having been established as distance from emotion and "particular fondness", morality is then seen as the domain of reason, and its touchstone belief. Having carefully distinguished the "valuational, conative, practical and affective dimensions of the attitude of respect", Taylor goes on to pick out the essentially cognitive "valuational" aspect as central and basic to all the others - "it is because moral agents look at animals and plants in this way that they are disposed to pursue the aforementioned ends and purposes", and similarly to have the relevant emotions and affective attitudes. The latter must be held at an appropriate distance, and not allowed to get the upper hand at any point. Taylor writes:

One further aspect of conduct is needed, however, for it to be a fully adequate expression of the attitude in practical life. The actions must be done as a matter of moral principle. Although one's aim is to preserve and protect the good of wild living things, one must conceive of acting with this aim in mind as something morally required of one and not as the fulfillment of a
particular interest one happens to have at the moment. The end of action, in other words, must be thought of as an ethically obligatory end and consequently as an end that is to be pursued disinterestedly, whether or not one is so inclined. If one seeks that end solely or primarily from inclination, the attitude being expressed is not moral respect but personal affection or love.

It is not that respect for nature precludes feelings of care and concern for living things. One may, as a matter of simple kindness, not want to harm them. But the fact that one is so motivated does not itself indicate the presence of a moral attitude of respect. Having the desire to preserve or protect the good of wild animals and plants for their sake is neither contrary to, nor evidence of, respect for nature. It is only if the person who has the desire understands that the actions fulfilling it are ethically obligatory, and that they would be obligatory even in the absence of the desire, that the person has genuine respect for nature.7

Taylor's negative point is partly correct — respect is a moral matter, is not the same as affection or love, and expressions of respect for others have more to do with treating them as worthy of consideration in their own right and not just as instruments for the satisfaction of humans. But the attempt to give an account in terms of a morality divorced entirely from "inclination", treated as irrelevant or even as a hindrance, is not acceptable, and in no way follows from simply distinguishing respect and love. Furthermore, respect for nature on this account becomes an essentially cognitive matter (that of a person believing something to have "inherent worth" and then acting from understanding of ethical principles as universal).

The account seems to have the consequence too that some of the non-western peoples who seem to provide our best examples of respectful attitudes to nature cannot be said to have such respect unless they subscribe to this Kantian (and essentially western) account of universal moral principles, which is unlikely. The account is based on a
view of reason and emotion as sharply separated and opposed, and of "desire", caring and love as merely "personal" and "particular" as opposed to the universality and impartiality of understanding, of "feminine" emotions as essentially unreliable, untrustworthy, and morally irrelevant, an inferior domain to be dominated by a superior disinterested masculine reason.

Now this sort of rationalist account of the place of emotions has come in for a great deal of well-deserved criticism recently, both for its implicit gender bias and its philosophical inadequacy, especially its dualism and its construal of public reason as sharply differentiated from and controlling private emotion. A further major problem in its use in this context however is the inconsistency of employing, in the service of constructing an allegedly biocentric ethical theory, a framework which has itself played such a major role in creating a dualistic account of the genuine human self as essentially rational and as sharply discontinuous from the merely emotional, the merely bodily and the merely animal elements. For emotions, and the private sphere with which they are associated, have been treated as sharply differentiated and inferior as part of a pattern in which they are seen as linked to the sphere of nature in contrast to reason. And it is not only women but also the "earth's wild living things" which have been denied possession of a reason thus construed along masculine and oppositional lines and which contrasts not only with the "feminine" emotions but also with the physical and the animal. As we have seen, much of the problem (both for women and for nature) lies in rationalist or rationalist-derived conceptions of the self and of what is essential and valuable in the human makeup. It is in the name of such a reason that these other things -- the feminine, the emotional, the merely bodily or the merely animal, and the natural world itself -- have most often been denied their virtue and been accorded an inferior and merely instrumental position.

It is precisely reason so construed which is usually taken
to characterise the authentically human and to create the supposedly sharp separation, cleavage or discontinuity between all humans and the non-human world, and the similar cleavage within the human self. The supremacy accorded an oppositionally-construed reason is the key to the anthropocentrism of the western tradition. The Kantian-rationalist framework then, is hardly the area in which to search for a solution. Its use, in a way which perpetuates the supremacy of reason and its opposition to contrast areas, in the service of constructing a supposedly biocentric ethic, is a matter for astonishment.

Ethical universalisation and abstraction are both closely associated with accounts of the self in terms of rational egoism. Universalisation is explicitly seen in both the Kantian and the Rawlsian framework as needed to hold in check natural self-interest; it is the moral complement to the account of the self as "disembodied and disembedded", as the autonomous self of liberal theory, the rational egoist of market theory, the falsely differentiated self of object-relations theory. In the same vein, the broadening of the scope of moral concern and the according of rights to the natural world has been seen by influential environmental philosophers as the final step in a process of increasing moral abstraction and generalisation, part of the move away from the merely particular, my self, my family, my tribe, the discarding of the merely personal, the merely emotional, and by implication, the merely selfish. It is viewed as moral progress, increasingly civilised as it distances from primitive selfishness. Nature is the last area to be included in this march away from the unbridled natural egoism of the particular and the emotional. Moral progress is marked by increasing adherence to moral rules and a movement away from the supposedly natural (in human nature) and the completion of its empire is, paradoxically, the extension of its domain of adherence to moral rules to nature itself.

On such a view, the particular and the emotional are viewed as the enemy, being seen as corrupting, capricious and
self-interested. And if the "moral emotions" are set aside as irrelevant or suspect, as merely subjective or personal, what could there be to base morality upon but the rules of abstract reason, on the justice and rights of the impersonal public sphere. This view of morality as based on a concept of reason as oppositional to the personal, the particular and the emotional has been assumed in the framework of much recent environmental ethics. But as a number of feminist critics of the masculine model of moral life and of moral abstraction have pointed out, this increasing abstraction is not necessarily an improvement. The opposition between the care and concern for particular others and obedience to universal rules on which it is based is associated with a sharp division between public (masculine) and private (feminine) realms. Thus it is part of the set of dualistic contrasts in which the problem of the western treatment of nature is rooted.

Although there is good evidence that there is an opposition between moralities of care oriented to maintaining relationships and those of justice conceived as abstract rule-following, the opposition between care for particular others and general moral concern is a false one. There can be opposition between particularity and generality of concern, as when concern for particular kin is accompanied by exclusion of others from care or chauvinistic attitudes towards them, but this does not automatically happen, and emphasis on oppositional cases obscures the frequent cases where they work together -- and in which care for particular others harmonises with and forms the foundation for a more generalised morality of care. The morality of care is grounded in particular relationships and responsibility for particular others based on a connection between self and other, but it is also capable of generalisation to a relationship-based but universal concern for others' welfare (as in "another mother for peace"). But its generalisation is based upon recognition of universal interdependence and relationship, rather than on detachment from relationship and devaluation of connection, as in the case of rationalist-influenced
accounts of morality. (As we shall see, this failure to deal adequately with particular relationships is a problem for deep ecology too.)

Special relationships, which are treated by universalising positions as at best morally irrelevant and at worst a positive hindrance to the moral life, are thus mistreated. For as Blum stresses, special relationships form the basis for much of our moral life and concern and it could hardly be otherwise. With nature, as with the human sphere, the capacity to care, to experience sympathy, understanding and sensitivity to the situation and fate of particular others, and to take responsibility for others, is an index of our moral being. Special relationships with, care or empathy with particular aspects of nature as experienced rather than with nature as abstraction, are essential to provide a depth and type of concern which is not otherwise possible. Care and responsibility for particular animals, trees, rivers, which are known well, loved and are appropriately connected to the self, are an important basis for acquiring a wider, more generalised concern. This may involve a recognition that more distant others have special ties to threatened parts of nature and will feel grief and pain on its account, as well as recognition of relationship and interdependence with more distant others (including non-immediate nature).

Concern for nature should not be viewed then as the completion of a process of universalisation and impersonalisation, moral abstraction and disconnection, discarding the self, and detaching from emotions and relationships (in each case what is discarded being associated with the private sphere and femininity). Environmental ethics has for the most part placed itself uncritically in such a framework, although it is one which is extended with particular difficulty to the natural world. Perhaps the kindest thing which can be said about the framework of ethical universalisation is that it is seriously incomplete, and fails to capture the most important elements of respect, which are not reducible to
or based on duty or obligation any more than the most important elements of friendship are, but which are rather an expression of a certain kind of selfhood and a certain kind of relation between self and other.

RATIONALISM - RIGHTS AND ETHICS

An extension to nature of the standard concepts of morality is also the aim of another recent major book in the area, Tom Regan's The Case for Animal Rights. This is the most impressive, thorough and solidly argued book in the area of animal ethics, with excellent chapters on areas such as animal intentionality. But the key concept upon which this account of moral concern for animals is based is that of rights, which requires both strong individual separation of right-holders and to be set in a framework of human community and legality. Its extension to the natural world, as Mary Midgley notes, raises a host of problems.

Even for the case of individual higher animals for which Regan uses it, it is problematic. Regan employs a concept of rights based on Mill's concept, where if a being has a right to something not only should he or she (or it) have that thing but others are obliged to intervene to secure it. The application of this concept of rights to individual wild living animals appears to give humans almost limitless obligations to intervene massively in all sorts of far-reaching and conflicting ways in natural cycles to secure the rights of a bewildering variety of beings. In the case of the wolf and the sheep, an example discussed by Regan, it is unclear whether humans should intervene to protect the sheep's rights or whether in so intervening they violate the wolf's right to its natural food. Regan attempts to meet this objection by claiming that since the wolf is not itself a moral agent (although it is a moral patient) it cannot violate the sheep's rights not to suffer a painful and violent death. But the defence is unconvincing, because even if we concede that the wolf is not a moral agent, it still does not follow that on a
rights view we are not obliged to intervene. From the fact that the wolf is not a moral agent it only follows that it is not responsible for violating the sheep's rights, not that they are not violated or that others do not have an obligation (on the rights view) to intervene. If the wolf were attacking a human baby, it would hardly do as a defence in that case to claim that one did not have a duty to intervene because the wolf was not a moral agent. And on Regan's view the baby and the sheep do have something like the same rights. So on the rights view we do have a duty it seems to intervene to protect the sheep - leaving us where with the wolf?

The concept of rights seems to produce absurd consequences and is impossible to apply in the context of predators in a natural ecosystem where such examples are the rule rather than the exception, as opposed to a particular human social context in which claimants are part of a reciprocal social community and conflict cases can be treated either as exceptional or as settleable according to some agreed on principles. It requires a level and kind of intervention which is inappropriate and disruptive in natural ecosystems, as well as requiring humans to act in a god-like role. All this seems to me to tell against the interventionist concept of rights as the correct one for the general task of dealing with animals in the natural environment (as opposed of course to domestic animals in a basically humanized environment).

Regan of course is mainly concerned, as part of the animal rights movement, not with wild animals but with domestic animals as they appear in the context of and support of human society and culture, although he does not indicate any qualification in moral treatment. Nevertheless, there may be an important moral boundary here, for natural ecosystems cannot be organised along the lines of justice, fairness and rights, and it would be absurd to try to impose such a social order upon them via intervention in these systems. This does not mean of course that humans can do anything in such a situation, just that certain
kinds of intervention are not in order. But these kinds of intervention may be in order in the case of human social systems, and in the case of animals which have already, through human intervention, been brought into these social systems, and the concept of rights and of social responsibility may have far more application here. This would mean that the domestic/wild distinction would demarcate an important moral boundary in terms of duties of intervention, although neither of the books discussed comes to grips with this problem. In the case of Taylor's "wild living things" intervention seems less important than respect for independence and autonomy, and the prima facie obligation may be non-intervention. This issue raises the overall questions of the role of wildness, the problem of the extent of teleology, and the problem of delineating the natural. These have taken up little attention in environmental philosophy so far.

Rights have acquired an exaggerated importance as part of the prestige of the public sphere and the masculine, and the emphasis on separation and autonomy, on reason and abstraction. A more promising approach, and one much more in line too with the current directions in feminism, would be to remove rights from the centre of the moral stage, and pay more attention to some other less dualistic moral concepts such as respect, sympathy, care, concern, compassion, gratitude, friendship and responsibility. These concepts, because of their dualistic construal as feminine and consignment to the private sphere as subjective and emotional, have been treated as peripheral and given far less importance than they deserve for several reasons. First, rationalism and the prestige of reason and the public sphere has influenced not only the concept of what morality is (as Taylor explicates it for example, essentially a rational and cognitive act of understanding that certain actions are ethically obligatory), but of what is central to it or what count as moral concepts. Second, concepts such as respect, care, and concern are resistant to analysis along lines of a dualistic reason/emotion dichotomy, and their construal along these lines has
involved confusion and distortion. They are moral "feelings" but they involve both reason, behaviour and emotion in ways that do not seem separable. As well rationalist-inspired ethical concepts are highly ethnocentric and cannot account adequately for the views of many indigenous peoples, and the attempted application of these rationalist concepts to their positions tends to lead to the view that they lack a real ethical framework. These alternative concepts seem better able to apply to the views of such peoples, whose ethic of respect, care and responsibility for land is often based on special, particular relationship with it and on an account of it in terms of kinship, in which human social and personal identity is linked to particular areas of land via links to kin. Finally these concepts, which allow for particularity and often do not require reciprocity, are precisely the sorts of concepts feminist philosophers have argued should have a more significant place in ethics (at the expense of abstract, male-governed concepts from the public sphere such as rights and justice). The ethic of care and responsibility they have explicated seems to extend much less problematically to the non-human world than those which are currently seen as central. Such an ethic is an expression of self-in-relationship, rather than a discarding or containment of a self viewed as self-interested and non-relational, as in familiar justice and rights accounts which engineer the overcoming of egoism via conditions which impose ignorance of the self's particular conditions of life.

It is not, I think, that we need to or can dispense with the ethical approach, although we do need to reassess its centrality in environmental philosophy. Ethics is not necessarily involved (although as Marti Kheel notes, it often is) in establishing hierarchies of value or centrally in concepts such as rights, and there is a real point in the extension of moral consideration and value beyond the human sphere, especially to the extent that it involves the rejection of the instrumental account of the status of nature. As we have seen, there are important connections
between the ecofeminist account of the self and the rejection of instrumentalism. What is needed then is not so much the abandonment of ethics as a different, richer and less dualistic understanding of it and a richer understanding of environmental philosophy generally than is provided by justice and rights-based ethics -- one which gives an important place to ethical concepts owning to emotionality and particularity, and abandons the exclusive focus on the universal and the abstract associated with the non-relational self and the dualistic and oppositional accounts of the reason/emotion and universal/particular contrasts as given in rationalist accounts of ethics.

This is not the same however as the abandonment of all general ethical concepts and the adoption of a "contextual" ethics based in pure particularity, as Cheney appears to advocate, or in pure emotionality. We do need both to reintegrate the personal and particular and reevaluate more positively its role, but overcoming moral dualism will not simply amount to an affirmation of the personal in the moral sphere. To embrace pure particularity and emotionality in this way is implicitly to accept the dualistic construction of these as oppositional to a rational ethics and to attempt to reverse value. In general this reactive response is an inadequate way to deal with such dualisms. And rules themselves, as Jean Grimshaw points out, are not incompatible with recognition of special relationships and responsibility to particular others. Rules themselves are not the problem -- and hence it is not necessary to move to a ruleless ethics -- rather it is rules which demand the discarding of the personal, the emotional and the particular in line with oppositional construals of reason, and which are oriented to containment of a self construed as disconnected from or as oppositional to others and to nature.

The problem is not just one of restriction in ethical concepts but also in concepts of ethics. Current attempts to add an environmental component as an extra room onto the edifice of justice or rights based ethics fail to engage
critically with the way the tradition of rationalism has influenced conceptions of the human self and, as a result, of human virtue in relation to nature, and fail to address alternative conceptions of virtue. They have been preoccupied with accounts of ecological morality which treat it (in dualistic fashion) as containment of self and selfishness, as opposed to the view of it as expression of self inherent in virtue-based accounts and in the ethic of care discussed above.

Thus in treating instrumentalism for example as a problem just in ethics, a problem solved by setting up some sort of theory of intrinsic value, mainstream environmental philosophers neglect the key aspects of the overall problem which are concerned with the definition of the human self as separate from nature and the resulting account of the ideal for which humans should strive as not to be found in what is shared with the natural and animal (e.g. the body, sexuality, reproduction, emotionality, the senses, agency) but in what is thought to separate and distinguish them (especially reason and its offshoots). What is neglected too is the connection between this account of the self as disconnected from nature and the instrumental view of it, and broader political aspects of the critique of instrumentalism.

The neglect is ethnocentric since many other cultures have had a different conception of identity and a different standard of virtue, stressing as genuinely human virtues what connects us to nature, continuity and not dissimilarity, and stressing also care and responsibility for nature. For example, Bill Neidjie's philosophy may be interpreted as an affirmation of such kinship. "Animal look for food. People look... Bird look... turtle look, everyone look for food. We all the same. Skin can be different but blood the same. Blood and bone... all the same. Man can't split himself."
RATIONALISM AND DEEP ECOLOGY

A significant exception to the neglect of self and virtue perspectives within environmental philosophy seems to be given by deep ecology, which is also critical of the location of the problem within ethics\(^{28}\). Deep ecology also seems initially to be more likely to be compatible with a feminist philosophical framework, emphasizing as it does connections with the self, connectedness and merger. Despite this, deep ecology continues to be unsatisfactory from a feminist as well as an environmental perspective, and recent attempts to overcome this have not been successful. One problem is that deep ecology has not satisfactorily identified what the key elements in the framework it wishes to reject are, or observed their connections to rationalism. As a result it fails to reject adequately or provide alternatives to accounts of the self as non-relational, and indeed often seems to provide its own version of universalisation and the discarding of particular connections.

Deep ecology locates the key problem area in the separation of humans and nature, and it provides a solution for this in terms of the "identification" of self with nature. "Identification" is usually left deliberately vague, and corresponding accounts of self are confused, various and shifting. There seem to be at least three different accounts of self involved -- indistinguishability, transcendence of self, and expansion of self -- and practitioners appear to feel free to move between them. All are unsatisfactory, I shall argue, from both a feminist perspective and from that of obtaining a satisfactory environmental philosophy.

The indistinguishability account rejects boundaries between self and nature. Humans are said to be just one strand in the biotic web, not the source and ground of all value and the Discontinuity thesis is, it seems, firmly rejected. "We can make no firm ontological divide in the field of
existence ... there is no bifurcation in reality between the human and non-human realms.... to the extent that we perceive boundaries, we fall short of deep ecological consciousness "29 says Warwick Fox. This is the central intuition of Deep Ecology according to Fox. But much more is involved here than the rejection of discontinuity, for deep ecology, as it is usually explained, wishes to go on to replace the human-in-environment image by a holistic or gestalt view which "dissolves not only the human-in-environment concept, but every compact-thing-in-milieu concept" -- except when talking at a superficial level of communication30. Deep Ecology involves a cosmology of "unbroken wholeness which denies the classical idea of the analysability of the world into separately and independently existing parts" 31. It is strongly attracted to a variety of mystical traditions and to the Perennial Philosophy, where the self is merged with the other -- "the other is none other than yourself". As John Seed puts it "I am protecting the rainforest" develops into "I am part of the rainforest protecting myself. I am that part of the rainforest recently emerged into thinking"32

I have several problems with this, not with the orientation to the concept of self (which seems to me important and correct) or so much with the mystical character of the insights themselves, 33 as with the indistinguishability metaphysics which is proposed as their basis.

It is not merely that the identification process of which deep ecologists speak seems to stand in need of much more clarification, but that it does the wrong thing. The problem, on the sort of account I have given, is the discontinuity between humans and nature which emerges as part of the overall set of western dualisms. Deep ecology proposes to heal this division by a "unifying process", a metaphysics which insists that everything is really part of, indistinguishable from, everything else. This is not only to employ overly powerful tools, but ones that do the wrong job, for the origins of the particular opposition involved in the human/nature dualism remain unaddressed and
unanalysed. The real basis of the discontinuity lies in the concept of an authentic human being, in what is taken to be valuable in human character, society and culture, as what is distinct from what is taken to be natural. The sources of and remedies for this remain unaddressed in deep ecology. Deep ecology has confused dualism and atomism, and then mistakenly taken indistinguishability to follow from the rejection of atomism. The confusion is clear in Fox, who proceeds from the ambiguous claim that there is no "bifurcation in reality between the human and non-human realms" (which could be taken as a rejection of human discontinuity from nature) immediately to the conclusion that what is needed is that we embrace an indistinguishability metaphysics of unbroken wholeness in the whole of reality. But the problem must be addressed in terms of this specific dualism and its connections. Instead deep ecology proposes the obliteration of all distinction.

This failure to address the specific dualisms involved makes deep ecology unacceptable from a feminist point of view, because it amounts to a failure to recognise the important historical and conceptual connections between the domination of women and the domination of nature, resulting in the feminization of nature and the naturalization of women.

Thus deep ecology's solution to removing this discontinuity by obliterating all division, is far too powerful. In its overgenerality it fails to provide a genuine basis for an environmental ethic of the kind sought, for the view of humans as metaphysically unified with the cosmic whole will be equally true whatever relation humans stand in with nature -- the situation of exploitation of nature exemplifies such unity equally as well as a conserver situation and the human self is just as much indistinguishable from the bulldozer and Coca-cola bottle as the rocks or the rainforest. What John Seed seems to have in mind here is that once one has realised that one is indistinguishable from the rainforest, its
needs would become one's own. But there is nothing to guarantee this -- one could equally well take one's own needs for its.

This points to a further problem with the indistinguishability thesis, that we need to recognise not only our human continuity with the natural world but also its distinctness and independence from us and the distinctness of the needs of things in nature from ours. The indistinguishability account does not allow for this, although it is a very important part of respect for nature, and of conservation strategy.

The dangers of accounts of the self which involve self-merger appear in the feminist context also, where they are sometimes appealed to as the alternative to masculine-defined autonomy as disconnection from others. As Jean Grimshaw[^34] writes of the related thesis of the indistinctness of persons (the acceptance of the loss of self boundaries as a feminine ideal):

> Certain forms of symbiosis or connection with others can lead to damaging failures of personal development, but because care for others, understanding of them, are only possible if one can adequately distinguish oneself from others. If I see myself as indistinct from you, or you as not having your own being that is not merged with mine, then I cannot preserve a real sense of your well-being as opposed to mine. Care and understanding require the sort of distance that is needed in order not to see the other as a projection of self, or self as a continuation of the other.

These points seem to me to apply as much to caring for other species and for the natural world as they do to caring for our own species. Recognition of nature, like recognition of a human other, requires both relationship with the other, that it not be treated as totally alien or disconnected, but also recognition of its distinctness from the self. But in deep ecology, just as dualism is confused with atomism, so holistic self-merger is taken to be the
only alternative to egoistic accounts of the self as
without essential connection to others or to nature.
Fortunately, this is a false choice; as we have seen,
non-holistic but relational accounts of the self, as
developed in some feminist and social philosophy, enable a
rejection of dualism, including human/nature dualism,
without denying the independence or distinguishability of
the other.

To the extent that deep ecology is identified with the
indistinguishability thesis, it does not provide an
adequate basis for a philosophy of nature. Nor is it
compatible with feminist accounts, which have rejected the
self-merger and submergence of self positions as associated
with the oppression of women under patriarchy. But in
fairness to deep ecology it should be noted that it tends
to vacillate between mystical indistinguishability and the
other accounts of self, between the holistic self and the
expanded self. Vacillation occurs often by way of
slipperiness as to what is meant by identification of self
with the other, a key notion in deep ecology. This
slipperiness reflects the confusion of dualism and atomism
previously noted, but also seems to reflect a desire to
retain the mystical appeal of indistinguishability but to
avoid its many difficulties.

THE EXPANDED SELF

Where "identification" means not "identity" but something
more like "empathy", identification with other beings can
lead to an expanded self. According to Arne Naess, "The
self is as comprehensive as the totality of our
identifications....Our Self is that with which we
identify." This larger self (or Self to Deep Ecologists)
is something for which we should strive "insofar as it is in
our power to do so," and according to Fox we should
strive to make it as large as possible. But this expanded
self is not the result of a critique of egoism -- rather it
is an enlargement and an extension of egoism. It does
not question the structure of egoism and self-interest — rather it tries to allow for a wider set of interests by an expansion of self. The motivation for the expansion of self is to allow for a wider set of concerns while continuing to allow the self to operate on the fuel of self-interest (or Self-interest). This is apparent from the claim that "in this light....ecological resistance is simply another name for self defence." Fox quotes with approval John Livingstone's statement "...when I say that the fate of the sea turtle or the tiger or the gibbon is mine, I mean it. All that is in my universe is not merely mine ; it is me. And I shall defend myself. I shall defend myself not only against overt aggression but also against gratuitous insult".

The fact is that deep ecology is not really critical of egoism and continues to subscribe to two of the main tenets of the egoist framework -- that human nature is egoistic and that the alternative to egoism is self-sacrifice. Thus John Seed says : "Naess wrote that when most people think about conservation, they think about sacrifice. This is a treacherous basis for conservation, because most people aren't capable of working for anything except their own self-interest....Naess argued that we need to find ways to extend our identity into nature. Once that happens, being out in front of bulldozers or whatever becomes no more of a sacrifice than moving your foot if you notice that someone's just about to strike it with an axe."

Given these assumptions about egoism plus the desire to obtain some sort of human interest in defending nature, the expanded Self operating in the interests of nature but also along the familiar lines of self-interest makes a good deal of sense. The expanded self strategy might seem to be just another rather pretentious and obscure way of saying that humans empathise with nature and gaining the same effect as a relational theory. However, its strategy of transferring the structures of egoism is highly problematic, for as Cheney notes, it obtains its widening of interest at the expense of failing to recognise unambiguously the
distinctness and independence of the other. And the failure to critique egoism and the non-relational self means a failure to draw connections with other contemporary critiques which have done so.

Because the expanded Self requires that we leave behind the concerns of the self (a relinquishment which despite its natural difficulty we should struggle to attain according to deep ecology), expansion of self to Self also tends to lead into the third position, and to become the transcendence or overcoming of self. Thus Fox urges us to strive for impartial identification with all particulars, the cosmos, discarding our identifications with our own particular concerns, emotions and attachments. Fox presents here the deep ecology version of universalisation, with the familiar emphasis on the personal and the particular as corrupting and self-interested ("the cause of possessiveness, war and ecological destruction").

There are other respects in which deep ecology is problematic from an ecofeminist perspective, some of them identified, although not always completely, by ecofeminist critics such as Cheney. Deep ecology advocates embracing, at the level of rational belief, a grandiose holistic metaphysics in which the self identifies indiscriminately with the whole of nature, the universe, the route to this state being personal mystical enlightenment. Deep ecology's treatment of particularity, its devaluation of an identity tied to particular parts of the natural world as opposed to the whole, the universe, reflects the rationalistic preoccupation with the universal and its account of ethical life as oppositional to the particular -- the analogy in human terms of impersonal love of the cosmos is the view of morality as based on universal principles or the impersonal "love of man", identity with the other in a completely abstract and general form. Thus Warwick Fox, in his defence of deep ecology against ecofeminist criticism, not only ignores the excellent historical scholarship linking conceptions of gender,
especially conceptions of morality in terms of the public and private division to these accounts, but simply reiterates as if it were unproblematic the view of particular attachments as corrupting and as oppositional to genuine, impartial "identification", which necessarily falls short with all particulars. But concern for, and identity based upon, special relationships with particular parts of nature is not an ethically suspect or inferior version of this universalised concern.

Rather a certain kind of embeddedness and responsibility is only possible in relation to particular others. It is not this vague, bloodless and indiscriminate cosmological concern which has generally motivated either the passion of modern conservationists or the love of the indigenous peoples for which deep ecology professes respect and treats as a model, but intimate knowledge of, strong attachment to and responsibility for particular areas of land, and often formation of social and personal identity based upon relationships to country as special as those to kin. The ecological self is expressed especially in connection to and care for particular country, not in the detached contemplation of the abstract idea of the cosmos suggested by some forms of eastern religion. This set of identifying ties emerge clearly in the philosophies of many indigenous peoples, especially in those of Australian Aboriginal people. As Bill Neidjie of the Gagadju people expresses it:

That tree, grass... that all like our father.
Dirt, earth, I sleep with this earth.
Grass... just like your brother.
In my blood in my arm this grass.
This dirt for us because we'll be dead,
we'll be going to this earth.
This the story now.

The same kind of relationship to the land emerges in the moving words of American Indian Cecilia Blacktooth explaining why her people would not surrender their land:

We thank you for coming here to talk to us in a way we can understand. It is the first time anyone has done so. You ask us to think what place we like next best to this place where we always lived. You see the graveyard
there? There are our fathers and our grandfathers. You see that Eagle-nest mountain and that Rabbit-hole mountain? When God made them, He gave us this place. We have always been here. We do not care for any other place...We have always lived here. We would rather die here. Our fathers did. We cannot leave them. Our children were born here -- how can we go away? If you give us the best place in the world, it is not so good as this...This is our home....We cannot live any where else. We were born here and our fathers are buried here...We want this place and no other....

There is no other place for us. We do not want you to buy any other place. If you will not buy this place, we will go into the mountains like quail, and die there, the old people, and the women and children. Let the Government be glad and proud. It can kill us. We do not fight. We do what it says. If we cannot live here, we will go into the mountains and die. We do not want any other home.

The suggestion that one might relate to one's country as real estate, exchanging it for a strange piece when its immediate "resources" had been extracted, is on such a view as foreign and insensitive as the suggestion that one might exchange one's children or other close kin for strangers on the ground of advantage.

The account is also in conflict with the aims of bioregionalism, the view that our social identities need to include connection and attachment to our particular ecological habitats, that we need to identify with, cherish and take responsibility for our own "country" as well as relating to the whole. In inferiorising such particular relationships, deep ecology gives us another variant on the superiority of reason and the inferiority of its contrasts, failing to grasp yet again the role of reason and incompletely critiquing the influence of rationalism.

But it is not necessary to adopt any of the stratagems of deep ecology, the indistinguishable, expanded or
transcended self, or the rationalistic account of ethical rules as functioning to contain the egoistic self, in order to overcome anthropocentrism, or human self-interest. This can be done with the relational account of self, which clearly recognizes the distinctness of nature but also our essential relationship and continuity with it. On this account of the ecological self, respect for nature results neither from the containment of self, nor a transcendence of self, but is an expression of self in relationship, not self as merged with the other but self as embedded in a network of essential relationships with distinct others, which can include all or part of nature. The feminine self, the related, social self and the ecological self emerge in opposition to the egoist account of self which underlies both masculinity and the market and its associated institutions and which has its roots in self/other dualism.

This view of self-in-relationship is, I think, a good candidate for the richer account of self deep ecology has sought and which they have mistaken holistic accounts for. It is an account which avoids atomism but which enables a recognition of interdependence and relationship without falling into the problems of indistinguishability, and it also breaks the culturally-posed false dichotomy of egoism and altruism of interests (in the sense of altruism in which it means neglecting or transcending one's own interests); it bypasses both masculine "separation" and traditional-feminine "merger" accounts of the self. It can also provide an appropriate foundation for an ethic of connectedness and caring for others and for nature.

To show that the self can be essentially related to nature is however by no means to show that it normally would be especially in western culture. What is culturally viewed as alien and inferior, as empty mechanism, and as not worthy of respect or respectful knowledge, is not something to which such essential connection can easily be made. Here the three parts of the problem of human/nature dualism, that of the conception of the human, that of the
conception of the self, and that of the conception of nature, connect again. And normally such essential relation would involve particularity, through connection to and friendship for particular places, forests, animals, to which one is particularly strongly related or attached, and towards which one has specific and meaningful -- not merely abstract -- responsibilities of care.

ANTHROPOCENTRISM OR ANDROCENTRISM?

One of the effects of viewing the problem of human-nature relations as arising especially in the context of rationalism is to provide a rich set of connections with other critiques; it makes the connection between the critique of anthropocentrism and various other critiques which also engage critically with rationalism, such as feminism and some forms of socialism, much more important, indeed essential to the understanding of each. This is, I think, one of the main points of ecofeminism. The problem of the western account of the human/nature relation is seen in the context of the other related sets of dualisms, and these sets are linked through their definitions as the underside of the various contrasts of reason. Since much of the strength and persistence of these dualisms derives from their connections and their ability to mirror, confirm and support one another, critiques which fail to take account of these connections have missed an essential and not merely additional feature. Anthropocentrism and androcentrism in particular are linked, as we have seen, via the rationalist conception of the human self as masculine and the account of the authentically human characteristics as centreing around rationality and the exclusion of its contrasts (especially characteristics regarded as feminine or as animal or natural) as less human. This provides a different and richer context for the notion of anthropocentrism, conceived by deep ecology now 49 in terms of the notion of equality, which is both excessively narrow and difficult to articulate in any meaningful or convincing way in the context of such
diversity of characteristics, needs and interests as is found in the range of beings in nature. 50

The perception of the connection as at best accidental is a feature of some recent critiques of ecofeminism, for example the discussion of Fox on the relation of feminism and environmental philosophy. Fox misses entirely the main thrust of the ecofeminist account of environmental philosophy and the critique of deep ecology which results or which is advanced in the ecofeminist literature which is that it has failed to observe the way in which anthropocentrism and androcentrism are linked. It is a consequence of my arguments here that this critique needs broadening -- deep ecology has failed to observe (and often even goes out of its way to deny) connections with a number of other critiques, not just feminism for example but also socialism, especially in the forms which mount a critique of rationalism and of modernity. Fox for example attempts to argue for the lack of connections to socialism and feminism by presenting a "thought experiment" in which we imagine a socialist (or a feminist) society which is not ecologically aware or benign. This is not at all difficult to do, and in the case of socialism does not even need a thought experiment, but it shows little about connections, since it is compatible with each forming a necessary but not sufficient condition for a non-anthropocentric culture, or with various other connections. Such a "thought experiment" would only be telling if the connection were taken to be that feminism (or socialism) forms a sufficient condition for non-anthropocentrism, a most implausible assumption, and one which virtually no-one has advocated. There are many possible forms of connection other than this. The failure to observe such connection is the result of an inadequate historical analysis and understanding of the way in which the inferiorisation of both women and nature is grounded in rationalism, and the connections of both to the inferiorising of the body, hierarchical concepts of labour, and egoist accounts of the self.

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Fox, ignoring this major ecofeminist argument, instead bases his critique on a different account of the thrust of ecofeminism, first taking it to involve the thesis that it is men and not women who have been responsible for environmental destruction, and second, following Zimmerman that it criticises deep ecology as concerned with anthropocentrism when it should be concerned instead with androcentrism. This account accords poorly with what is found in the now extensive literature. The first account involves again the confusion of sex and gender; men have been more involved in environmental destruction than women (and white men no doubt more than black men), but since men have allocated to themselves the active and controlling role in general and have excluded women from access to technology, including destructive technology, this would not itself show very much. But ecofeminism involves a thesis about masculinity and femininity, and the corresponding construction of humanity and nature, and only secondarily about men and women.

The account of ecofeminism as aiming to replace concern with anthropocentrism by concern with androcentrism has the effect of making ecofeminism a reductionist position, essentially a branch of those sorts of radical feminism which take women's oppression as the most basic and attempts to reduce all other forms to it. The position, as we have seen, has some representatives, but just as reductionist radical feminism cannot be taken as representative of feminism, so this can hardly be taken as representative of ecofeminism. It is essentially a strawwoman, and suffers from the usual problems of such reductionist positions. Fox is right to resist such a reduction and to insist on the ineliminability of the form of oppression the critique of anthropocentrism is concerned with, but the conclusion that the critiques are unrelated should not be allowed to follow. Critiques and the different kinds of oppression they correspond to can be distinguishable, but, like individuals, still related in essential and not merely accidental ways. The choice between merger (reductive elimination) and disconnection
(isolation) of critiques is the same false dichotomy which inspires the false contrasts of holism and atomism, and of self as merged, lacking boundaries, versus self as isolated atom, lacking essential connection to others.

The orientation of at least one major strand of the ecofeminist critique is not towards the elimination and subsumption of the critique of anthropocentrism, but towards its broadening and development. Ecofeminism offers a richer account of anthropocentrism and its connections, a richer account of environmental philosophy, and a richer understanding of the alternatives open in building a culture which respects both nature and women.
References


5. Ibid., p.41

6. Ibid., p.82

7. Ibid., pp.85-86


9. The critique of internal dualism is especially prominent in the work of Mary Midgley. See for example Heart and Mind, Methuen London 1981; Beast and Man, Methuen London 1980.


13. See Blum, Friendship, Altruism and Morality op. cit., Ch.IV.

14. Ibid., especially Ch.IV, Section vii and viii, 78-83.


19. This list is close to that of Francis Cook in his account of Buddhist ethics in Hua-Yen Buddhism: The Jewel Net of Indra, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1977, pp 118-119.

20. L. Blum, Friendship, Altruism and Morality, argues this for some of these concepts.


25. Feminist accounts such as Gilligan's sit more easily with virtue-based accounts than others. In recent times virtue accounts have been championed by Alasdair MacIntyre After Virtue: a study in moral theory, Duckworth, London 1981; and Bernard Williams "Persons, Character and Morality", in Amelie Rorty (ed) The Identities of Persons, University of California Press, Berkeley 1976. Although Aristotle is the source of virtue theories, this does not disconfirm my thesis on rationalism, since in this area, as well as a number of others, his position runs counter to general rationalist tendencies.

26. This is true of both Taylor and Regan, and also of many others. See for example, Richard Sylvan in "A Critique of Deep Ecology", Radical Philosophy 40 and 41, 1985.


28. Although deep ecology's approach to ethics is, like much else, variable and shifting. Thus although Arne
Naess in many papers recognises the intrinsic value of nature, others seem to see such an ethical approach as having nothing to contribute and place the entire emphasis on phenomenology. In more recent work however the emphasis seems to have quietly shifted back again from holistic intuition to a broad and extremely vague "biocentric egalitarianism" which places the centre once again in ethics and enjoins an ethic of maximum expansion of Self. See Warwick Fox "The Deep Ecology-Ecofeminism Debate and Its Parallels" Environmental Ethics Vol 11, 1989, pp 5-25.


34. Jean Grimshaw, Feminist Philosophers, op. cit. p182.

35. As argued in V. & R. Routley, "Social Theories, Self-Management and Environmental Problems", where a relational account of self is also suggested; in Don Mannison, Michael McRobbie and Richard Routley,(eds)Environmental Philosophy, Canberra: ANU Dept of Philosophy Monograph Series, RSSS 1980. Part of the problem lies in the terminology of "holism" itself, which is used in highly variable and ambiguous ways, sometimes carrying commitment to indistinguishability, and sometimes meaning only "non-

37. Fox, *ibid*, retreats to a substantially if unclearly qualified holism or process view, at times suggesting too the relational view. See pp13-19.


40. Ibid. p.60.


42. Cheney, "Neo-Stoicism", op. cit. p320.


44. Ibid. p12.

45. For example Genevieve Lloyd *The Man of Reason*, Methuen London 1984. The thesis links conceptions of gender to conceptions of morality, hence it is not refuted by examples of women who buy a universalising view, and Fox's argument here ("The Deep Ecology Ecofeminism Debate") involves a sex/gender confusion.


When difference means dominance as it does with gender, for women to affirm differences is to affirm the qualities and characteristics of powerlessness. Women may have an approach to moral reasoning, but it is an approach made both of what is and what is not allowed to be. To the extent materialism means anything at all, it means that what women have been and thought is what they have been permitted to be and think. Whatever this is, it is not women's, possessive. To treat it as if it were is to leap over the social world to analyse women's situation as if equality, in spite of everything, already ineluctably existed.


**DUALISM, POWER AND DIFFERENCE**

As Chapter Two notes, the literature of ecofeminism displays an important division between on the one hand, those positions which have been concerned with a 'difference account of gender and the affirmation of feminine values and characteristics in human life and culture, and on the other hand positions which have been largely concerned with an analysis of gender based on power or hierarchy and its application to the understanding of the dynamics of a range of dualisms or oppositional distinctions where one side excludes, dominates and inferiorises the other. Ecofeminism straddles, perhaps somewhat uneasily, power and difference analyses of woman's identity. It is common for ecofeminists to try to make use of both sorts of arguments, appealing for example to difference to explain alternatives to egoism and instrumentalism, and to the dualist analysis to understand the way western culture has treated human identity and nature, as well as the self/other and spirit/matter dualisms.
The dualisms are often seen as forming a system which
defines the structure of our personal, social and political
lives and inhibits the realisation of wholeness
within them. Such an analysis is a power rather than a
difference analysis to the extent that dualisms are seen to
be ideologies which justify and support hierarchy, and that
it shows how such power constructs identity. Thus the
gendered models of nature and reason have shaped the
identity of each and of their contrasts. The model of
women as nature has shaped both their identity and that of
men; the model of reason as male has shaped its treatment
and that of its range of contrasts, femininity,
emotionality, physicality, nature, and so on.

The relationship between these two approaches is usually
unclear, the difference between them is usually not
articulated, and many writers in the area employ both types
of consideration in their arguments without considering
whether they are compatible. But they are associated with
broad types of theories—power and difference theories—which are usually treated as exclusive and competitive
approaches. They are associated too with solutions to the
gender problem which appear to be incompatible, the anti­
dualist approach sometimes being explicitly linked with
androgyne and the difference approach linked with
gynocentrism or the affirmation of the feminine. These
linkages, I shall suggest, are suspect.

Yet some sort of affirmation of the feminine is implicit in
the analysis of the problem in terms of dualism, for the
absence or repression of the feminine is seen as fatally
distorting, in the words of Rosemary Ruether "biassing all
the development of culture in the direction of competitive
aggressiveness rather than social cooperation." The
passage continues:

It is perhaps not too much to say that the Achilles'
heel of human civilisation, which to-day has reached
global genocidal and ecocidal proportions, resides in
this false development of maleness through repression of
the female.

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And at the same time, the "difference" strategy of affirming the feminine needs to address and clarify the questions: which feminine? whose feminine? and how affirmed?

Perhaps when these questions are addressed these positions will not turn out to be as opposed or irreconcilable as they are usually taken to be. I shall argue that there is a great deal of ambiguity in the meaning of both gynocentrism and androgyny, but that when they are understood in terms of their common interpretations, they are indeed incompatible but also equally in need of rejection. More consideration needs to be given to delineating and clarifying the alternatives and to a third set of positions which I call regendering, which combines elements of both positions, affirming the feminine and androgyny, of power and difference analyses. Both the affirmation of the feminine and the dualist or power analysis require significant qualification, and when these qualifications are made they are no longer inconsistent analyses. To put the point another way, if we understand the affirmation of the feminine and androgyny in certain ways -- which are not the usual ways -- these positions can be reconciled. I also consider the question of how far an ecofeminist stress on women's difference and closeness to nature is compatible with a liberatory view of women's nature and future, of how far ecofeminism is feminist, and of whether there are sorts of ecofeminist arguments which are not.

GYNOCENTRISM AND POWER

Androgyny and gynocentrism are the two commonly and popularly contrasted "solutions" to the problem of how to reconstruct gender. Both are presented as alternatives to the androcentric status quo, which Catharine MacKinnon describes as follows:

"Men's physiology defines most sports, their health needs largely define insurance coverage, their socially
designed biographies define workplace expectations and successful career patterns, their perspectives and concerns define quality in scholarship, their experiences and obsessions define merit, their military service defines citizenship, their presence defines family, their inability to get along with each other -- their wars and rulerships -- defines history, their image defines god, and their genitals define sex."

And, I have argued, their identity has defined the western concept of human identity and the human relation to nature. Official gender neutrality disguises this implicit androcentrism, which presents the norm of human virtue by departure from which women are judged other. Traditionally, the sexes have presented two different gender ideals, and one of these, the masculine one, converged with the human ideal, the other, that of femininity, made woman an inferior or merely complementary human being, an exception or afterthought to the truly human story.

As we saw in Chapter Three, the early wave of feminism represented by such writers as Mary Wollstonecraft, Harriet Taylor and Simone de Beauvoir, challenged the character ideal of femininity. The dual character ideals of masculinity and femininity were to be replaced by a single masculine model of human virtue in which women were to participate equally with men, and achieve full humanity within this masculine character ideal and its associated institutions. But this early wave did not challenge this masculine ideal or the institutions of the public sphere, and this first "masculinizing" wave of feminism can be seen as presenting a critique of femininity, or the ideal feminine character, and urging its replacement by participation by women in the masculine ideal. Hence it remains, to a large degree, and in this sense, androcentric.

The last two decades of feminism have brought challenge to this masculine model, and difference varieties of feminism have sought to affirm and reinstate "feminine" values, culture and characteristics seen as having been
excluded and devalued in both social construction and dominant character ideals. Much ecofeminist writing has been of the "difference" variety and called for such an affirmation of feminine values and styles thought to be less damaging to nature. The position calling for a reinstatement of feminine values remains ambiguous between value androgyny — adding the reinstated values onto existing masculine social values — and value gynocentrism — their replacement by feminine values and a feminine model of the ideal human character, as well as being ambiguous with respect to a variety of other options.

Gynocentrism can be seen as presenting a critique not of femininity, (or only to a limited extent) but of masculinity, the masculine character and ideal, as well as of male power over women, and as involving a transfer of power and value to women or to the feminine in cultural and other aspects of life. According to the replacement position, which I shall call the gynocentric position, if masculine character traits and social values could be replaced as a human ideal by the character traits and social values of femininity many of the world's ills would be solved, indeed without such a replacement there is no future at all — "the future, if there is one, is female".

Although the affirmation of the feminine is often assumed to amount to gynocentrism, it is better viewed as a set of strategies among which many distinctions are necessary and which only dubiously includes gynocentrism proper. To see this, we need to make a number of distinctions between kinds of gynocentrism.

In simple sex gynocentrism, women hold power in place of men. In cultural gynocentrism, women's experiences form the basis of culture (in some versions "female experience determines culture"). In value gynocentrism, (which may also be viewed as gender gynocentrism) feminine values, including non-dominance, replace male ones as the dominant ones, and the female model of the human replaces the dominant male one. Value gynocentrism, may on some
interpretations but not on others, be inconsistent. Relations between these positions require clarification, and they are not necessarily consistent with one another or internally consistent. For example, sex gynocentrism is apparently not consistent with value gynocentrism, although may be with cultural gynocentrism depending on how this is elaborated. Cultural gynocentrism is supposed to be distinct from sex gynocentrism, but this is not so clear. Suppose, for example that we replace all the masculine pronouns in Catharine MacKinnon's description of androcentrism by feminine ones. It is hard to imagine how such dominance could come about if women were not in power in the same sense that men are now and had the power to impose their image on the other. The result of this substitution reveals clearly enough that this power reversal is not what most of those calling for a reinstatement or re-integration feminine values want. The only conditions under which such gynocentrism would not involve such a power reversal would be those of separatism.

The substitution reveals the divergence between those positions which hold that the real problem is that the wrong sex is in power, and those which see the problem as power itself, that one sex has such power to impose its image on the other. To the latter, not only is a such a gynocentrism hardly more attractive than androcentrism, but the result is to preserve the male power version with different actors, for the women involved may remain female in sex but have acquired the masculine gender. If power is the basis of gender, then there has been no real change at all, for the women involved have acquired the power which now defines men. And the result of such replacement is not to affirm feminine values at all, but quite the opposite, since to the extent that feminine values are those of powerlessness or are in opposition to power they have disappeared from the scene entirely. And the position confronts too here the paradox of power -- if feminine character and feminine values are shaped by absence of power, how can they become socially dominant and still retain their character?
There are many familiar examples of the situation where the holders of power have changed but not the fact or the structures of power. The third world elite which has in many places taken over the power structures left by colonialism, who ride in air-conditioned cars, work and live in air-conditioned buildings, speak the tongue and admire the culture of their former colonial masters may subjugate their people no less thoroughly. There are plenty of examples too to show us that women have no magic exemption from this capacity to change places with the oppressor. This is one obvious problem with the critical mass or "get enough women into power" strategy for ending women's oppression.

It is principally an anarchist critique which has insisted that merely changing the holders of power while the structures of power remain intact or are reinforced -- the typical revolutionary scenario -- is not enough. The structures too must be changed, the dualisms of dominant/subordinate, master and slave broken. Gender gynocentrism, the affirmation of feminine values, is less liable to the simple "changing places" power objection raised above to sex gynocentrism, but still has to explain how it will deal with power.

There are many issues concerning power such a gender gynocentrism seems to need to clarify. For example there is an important ambiguity between aiming for a gender "liberation" in which power is not distributed along gender lines (which is compatible with hierarchy remaining but being constituted in some non-gendered way as in liberal feminism), thus removing the gendered character of hierarchy, and aiming for one which involves a general dissolution of hierarchies, not only their gendered character. When is gender gynocentrism seen as preserving such hierarchies, and when as challenging and dissolving them? Gender gynocentrism needs to meet too the objection that feminine values and culture which have been formed in subordination cannot take over a dominant social role. In
order to meet these objections it needs to provide qualifications and a more detailed account of which sort of feminine values are to be affirmed and how. However it does seem clear that to the extent that the affirmation of feminine values provides a challenge and an alternative to hierarchical relationships (including those between humans and nature), and hierarchical ways of working, organising and structuring society, it cannot envisage a society which is sex-gynocentric or in which women are culturally dominant in the sense obtained by the substitution. I shall consider below the question of whether such an affirmation of the feminine therefore requires, paradoxically, the death of gender, the dissolution of gender categories.

Qualified Gynocentrism

Unqualified gynocentrism of either the sex or gender variety and the unqualified affirmation of the feminine are difficult to maintain for a number of reasons, but especially because they lead to inconsistency in the affirmation of feminine qualities, affirming both traditional femininity and what replaces or opposes it. The critique of masculinity and of the masculine character of the apparently "neutral" concept of the human and of basic institutions of male culture, has shown the need for the replacement of the masculine model, but the position affirming the feminine is also critical of and rejects, like the early forms of feminism, the traditional model of the feminine as a model for the human. Nevertheless, although a traditionally feminine model is not what is usually called for, in the creation of the new woman (and new human) "crucial ingredients [are to] come from the traditional strengths of women developed during the long period of their subordination."7

Qualification is difficult to avoid because it seems impossible not to recognise that patriarchy and the shaping of women to subordination has produced weaknesses in women as well as strengths. The problem is: how do we select
from the traditional strengths without also selecting the traditional weaknesses? If we do recognise that there are weaknesses as well as strengths in the feminine character so developed, how do we know which are which? A genuinely sex-gynocentric model must claim that it is the association with women which is the basis for selection. But to assume that we can select women's strengths but not weaknesses is to assume that there is some selection principle operating to select those strengths which is not simply based on their being women's characteristics or women's experience, or associated with women's bodies. So the view that the strengths can be selected without the weaknesses is not available to the sex-gynocentrist. But it is available to the gender gynocentrist, who then has to propose some plausible selection criterion which will rule out, presumably, the traditional feminine and other femininities which are problematic for affirmation.

Concepts such as that of being "woman-defined", or exhibiting genuine, authentic womanhood as opposed to a false version and false "colonized" consciousness produced by patriarchy, are sometimes introduced to try to get around this problem of selecting strengths but not weaknesses, and of selecting a "new and authentic" femininity rather than traditional femininity. The colonisation model is appealing in some ways, for example in its ability to explain the devaluation women themselves can practise against women and the feminine, but appears problematic in that it treats the feminine on the model of ethnic culture, as an independently constituted (or once-independently constituted) feminine nature, force or culture, temporarily suppressed or overwhelmed. But there is no good reason not to think that women have always been positioned within patriarchy, and that all femininity is constructed in that context. The treatment of the authentically feminine as an independent nature waiting to emerge and escape a distortion which has caused it not to recognise itself seems to exaggerate its level of independent construction and discount its present social context.
The approach of affirming an ideal, authentic feminine as if it were a reality and then making exceptions to affirmation in terms of the failure to realise genuine femininity carries certain dangers: where women do not seem to be so admirable or sisterly as the affirmation suggests they should be, women who do not conform to the rosy picture can be written off as "male-defined", and hence the thesis of feminine perfection preserved by trivialisation. Another problem in this approach is that of elitism. How is genuine femininity to be recognised? Who is to say who its bearers are? To the extent that qualified gender gynocentrism does not affirm all feminine qualities, or the determinable characteristics of actual women, it has to face the problem of explaining what the relevant feminine characteristics are, how they are selected and how they are associated with women, that is, exactly how they are feminine.

The approach of affirming a difference declared to be genuinely feminine in contrast to the unaffirmed qualities is popular in part because it can be used to disguise the fact and complexity of qualification and to preserve gynocentric appearances; if traditional or other problematic femininity can be said to be not authentically feminine at all, it seems as if the affirmation of the feminine is being made without qualification. But open qualification on the basis of criteria which can be discussed and negotiated is more honest and open than unclear or undisclosed criteria of "authenticity" which can leave everyone feeling inadequate. I shall argue below that the appropriate set of qualifications are those which take account of the way in which power relationships have formed femininity. These also provide a meeting point with the power and dualist analyses.
The critique of dualism also gives rise to difficulties for both qualified and unqualified gynocentric positions affirming difference. Dualism is conceived as a process which distorts both sides of what it splits apart, the master and the slave, the sadist and the masochist, the egoist and the self-abnegating altruist, the masculine and the feminine, through complementary construction. If this is so, clearly we cannot resolve the problem simply by affirming the slave's character or culture, by giving power to the underside, for this character as it is not an independently constituted nature but represents an equal distortion and is a reflection in the dualistic mirror of the master's character and culture. If the feminine is the dualised other of the masculine, the antidualist will see the affirmation of this dualised other as preserving the dualism through the affirmation of the characteristics of femininity, and as equally limiting and distorting of possibilities. Thus for example if women's "closeness to nature" consists in or is mainly a product of their powerlessness in and exclusion from culture and from access to technological means of separating from and mastering nature, affirmation of these qualities or a related set which are the products of powerlessness will not provide a genuine alternative but rather one which reactively preserves and maintains the dualism in the character of what is now affirmed.

The treatment of emotion as constructed by the reason/emotion dualism provides one sort of example. What is contra-indicated by the analysis of reason/emotion dualism is the replacement of the affirmation of reason by the affirmation of emotion as it is constructed as the dualised underside of reason, in which emotion is an unreflective and irrational force. There may still be a distinction, but emotion will not be treated as so unreasonable nor reason as so divorced from emotion as they are in the dualistic construction, nor will they be
The critique of dualism can provide an approach to the specific dualisms of mind/body, human/animal, reason/emotion, culture/nature, masculine/feminine, and dominant/submissive which is systematic and structural and not merely piecemeal, although this does not mean that they will all have exactly the same resolution. Masculine/feminine gender difference can be seen as not only dualistic in character itself but as in part constructed out of other gendered dualisms.

For this sort of reason the critique of dualism is often seen as indicating the need for a complete reconstruction of dualised gendered character rather than the simple affirmation of the underside. Empowerment of the underside is important, but will not result in the affirmation of the underside as it is constructed in the dualistic context, but rather the affirmation of its potential for constructive change and development in a situation of empowerment. Hence the importance of the questions the concept of difference tends to obscure: which feminine should we affirm, how should we affirm it, and how far do the characteristics to be affirmed really belong to women?

The critique of dualism implies a critical and reconstructive approach to gender difference, which is often treated in positions which advocate affirming feminine difference as simply existing, and as being problematic only to the extent that it is inferiorised or not adequately recognised or is not authentic. The dualist critique can agree that this inferiorisation has occurred and the reintegration and revaluing of these excluded and inferiorised areas of human life is an important part of the dualist approach also, but they are not necessarily to be affirmed in their usual expression as or in terms of gender difference. The reconstructive approach does not just accept gender difference, nor does...
it treat all feminine difference as good or as expressive of women's distinctive identity.

The reconstruction implied by the dualist analysis of gender is often taken to amount to androgyny, but I shall argue that androgyny, as it is normally understood, is just one of a set of reconstructive strategies appropriate to overcoming dualistic construction, and in its usual meaning not the best one. I shall try to clarify these alternatives both within the set of reconstructive strategies and in the wider context of alternatives to androcentrism.

Several factors have facilitated confusion and misconception of the general set of alternatives to androcentrism. One is the erroneous assumption, which I have discussed in Chapter Three, that androcentrism and gynocentrism exhaust the logical space, that the only alternative to androcentrism is gynocentrism, so that all arguments that involve rejection of the masculine ideal are assumed to imply gynocentrism. Another potent source of confusion however is the common equation of the regendered position and androgyny, which is often contrasted with gynocentrism as a further logical alternative. Since androgyny is in turn considered only to be quickly dismissed as seriously flawed (with good reason as we shall see), the confusion between the regendered position and androgyny appears to leave the gynocentric model as the sole viable rival to the androcentric model, and to leave no place for reconstruction strategies emerging from the critique of dualism. However, once androgyny and the other regendered strategies are clearly distinguished, this can no longer be assumed. In addition to androgyny, we need to consider among regendering strategies degendering and regendering. There are at least three reconstructive strategies then which differ in crucial but unrecognised respects.

Although the critique of gender dualism implies a critical approach to gender difference, it does not demand its
elimination. It is important to distinguish reconstructive strategies which imply the death of gender difference and the the removal of all structure of social difference and meaning attached to male and female biologies and experience, which aim at degendering or the elimination of gender difference, from those which do not. In contrast regendering is a type of reconstruction which does not imply giving no special significance to specifically female forms of experience. The terminology "degendering" suggests that the body is neutral and passive, devoid of differential social meaning, and that the subject is neutral, although not all those who have used the term have intended this meaning. In contrast, regendering aims at a reconstruction of the social power and meanings attached to differently sexed bodies, which leads to power differences which flow through and determine virtually all areas of social life, and which are expressed in dualistic gender construction as dominant/submissive. A society which was regendered might for example celebrate specifically female experience, for example menstruation, childbirth, menopause, whereas a degendered one would aim to obliterate or minimise their social significance. Both androgyny and degendering assume such a neutral subject and passive body and assume that the subject is to be identified with the mind and that change takes place there. This is an important reason for preferring regendering to degendering, (although in fact the same points apply to androgyny which also assumes a neutral body) and I shall henceforth restrict my discussion to regendering and androgyny. But as we shall see there are other reasons as well for preferring regendering to androgyny.

In androgyny in its usual sense, just as the androgynous human being of mythology combined masculine and feminine sex organs, so the androgynous character is taken to be formed by the combination of existing masculine and feminine traits -- or some selected subset of these -- into a new model of the ideal human character. It is often described as the combination into a single human character of existing good ingredients of masculine and feminine
character. The result is people who, in terms of contemporary views of what is masculine and feminine, could be seen as part masculine and feminine, (because they have positive traits from both sides), or alternatively as neither (because they lack the distinguishing undesirable traits from each side). So in its usual form androgyny involves both a qualified rejection and a qualified affirmation of existing gender categories. A number of further distinctions between kinds of androgyny are found in the literature, but it is not clear how they enable androgyny to escape the major objections brought against it.14

Androgyny enjoyed some popularity in the seventies as a solution to what was called "sex-role stereotyping", the rigid limitation of each sex to the range of characteristics thought proper to it since it permits and even encourages "cross-gendering" i.e. the adoption of characteristics proper to the opposite sex. As Eisenstein notes15 androgyny appealed as a solution because the problem was seen as the limitation imposed on women (and men) by confinement to the appropriate gender characteristics, not the way in which the gender characteristics themselves had been formed or their unsatisfactory nature. This view of the problem as due to the limitations of gender roles and not the content of the "roles" themselves is behind the view of the problems as soluble by "gender-crossing", the deliberate breaking down of gender roles. With the emerging critique not just of the character of femininity but of the character of masculinity, and of the relation between them in terms of power, androgyny in this simple form of gender-crossing appears as having a certain political blandness and is no longer so appealing as a solution.

Androgynous individuals then are formed as a composite, by bringing or mixing together existing ingredients, so that each person is part masculine and part feminine. The new androgynous character is usually taken to be made up of the best qualities of both men and women, or the desirable
traits in existing character ideals, to form a new set of the same characteristics differently allocated. Androgyny as an ideal is close to what is advocated by Jungian psychological theory (as well some positions in eastern thought concerning yin and yang) of the integration of "male" and "female" personality aspects in a single personality. Androgyny is compatible with a very limited affirmation of the feminine, (eg of "best" feminine qualities), but that this is a very weak sense is clear from the fact that it allows for affirmation in just the same sense of the masculine. This is not a sense then compatible with the affirmation of the feminine as it has been understood by those who have called for it.

Androgyny contrasts in these respects with other reconstructive strategies, degendering and regendering which emerge from the critique of dualism. These reconstructive strategies get their momentum from the critique of both masculinity and femininity, and of how they are interrelated. In contrast to androgyny, which seem to see the gender characteristics themselves as satisfactory but is dissatisfied with the limitations of the so-called sex role stereotyping imposed on individuals, especially women, these strategies are typically critical of both sides of the traditional gender contrasts and the associated set of characteristics and of the power relationship between them. The traditional gender categories are perceived as a systematic and related dualistic network of false choices, and the heart of the regendering proposal involves the transcendence or overcoming of these dualisms and the overcoming of the false choices.

For example, the traditional genders of masculinity and femininity basically correspond to and are a composite of a number of specific dualisms including dominant/subordinate, rationality (objectivity) contrasted with emotionality, mind/nature, reason/sense-perception, rationality/physicality (animality), human/nature (non-human), public/private, production/reproduction,
culture/nature, active/passive, transcendence/immanence, sphere of freedom /sphere of immersion in life, struggle with nature / not being in control, transcendence of life conditions /acceptance of life conditions, domination /subordination, egoism/altruism, disconnection from nature /immersion in it, being-for-self /being-for-others, self-realisation /nurturance, and in itself /means to others' ends (instrumental). The list is of course by no means complete.

But these are all false contrasts, although the description and classification of experience in terms of them has written them very deeply into our culture and society, our view of both reality and possibility. Although their establishment has been the central preoccupation of western philosophy since its inception, there are now powerful independent critiques of most of these, and they can be seen as very much in need of healing independently of their connections with gender. What regendering proposes is the basing of a new human character ideal on the overcoming of these false contrasts, and hence the transcending of traditional gender. Transcendence can be seen as a version of a dialectical synthesis. Dualistic gender characteristics are replaced by a third set of characteristics usually different from either. In contrast an androgyny based on reallocating masculine and feminine characteristics retains the dualistic structure of these characteristics, challenging only their gender allocation.

How do regendering and androgyny deal respectively with the case of the dualism of altruism and egoism? Androgyny would suggest that instead of a sexual division of labour along masculine/egoist feminine/altruist lines, each individual would have a combination of egoism and altruism. This sounds simple enough, but when we look harder at it we see some problems. At any one time, for any one individual and for any one piece of behaviour or action, egoism and altruism and incompatible bases for action, i.e. the same action by the same actor cannot both be egoistic and altruistic as that is usually defined -- it can't both be
pursued just for the actor's sake and also for the sake of another, except in the lucky cases where these happily and accidentally coincide as in enlightened self-interest. Egoism and altruism are exclusive modes. How are they to be combined in the androgynous individual? Presumably only by such an individual being sometimes altruistic and sometimes egoistic; perhaps depending on which sphere (public or private) he or she is dealing with. The result does very little to challenge the social institutions of public and private sphere, egoism and altruism, merely altering the allocation by sexual division of labour to the spheres.

The regendering proposal would deal with this case in a very different way. First it would point out, the modes of egoism and altruism are not only complementary, and unable to function in isolation from each other, they also involve a false choice (they are not exhaustive as supposed). As we have seen, what the conventional choice between egoism and altruism neglects is the third possibility of interdependence of interests, the case where people's interests are conceived relationally. Where the satisfaction of one's own interests includes that of relevant others, the question of altruism versus egoism does not arise, because people's interests are not discrete and separated in the way that the altruism/egoism contrast assumes. Hence the egoism/altruism contrast is transcended, by the creation of a further characteristic which is different from each of the old contrasts and synthesises them, dissolves them in it.16

The egoism/altruism example is a key one for political theory and for other linked contrasts, and it is important to understand too how transcending the dualisms works out in specific cases. Other examples of regendering via transcendence of false contrasts related to this one are supplied in feminist literature. Jessica Benjamin for example discusses masculine overemphasis on self-boundaries and feminine merging and loss of self in the case of erotic domination.17 Jean Baker Miller argues for re-examination
and redefinition by women of related concepts such as autonomy, and of power, authenticity and self-directedness, to give characteristics that differ both from the traditionally self-denying feminine ones and also from the masculine ones implying non-relatedness and separation from others. 18

How does regendering meet the objections to androgyny?

Now that the differences between androgyny and regendering are clearer we are in a position to examine a number of objections that have been or can be pressed against androgyny, some of which were touched on at the end of Chapter Three, and to see how regendering fares with respect to them.

1. The mixing strategy of reallocating traits traditionally proper to one sex to the other sex ("gender-crossing") assumes that this can be done unproblematically despite different bodies. Thus it is assumed that possession of different bodies, and of the different experience this gives rise to, plays no essential role in the assignment of different sets of traits. It assumes in short that the body is neutral with respect to the development of different character traits, that sex and gender are basically unconnected except through a readily changeable set of conventions. This is a dualistic assumption, since it assumes determination of gender to proceed entirely on the level of consciousness. 19

This objection seems to have some force against the proposal for androgyny, but it carries little weight against the regendering proposal. The proposal not to determine the ideal human character in terms of traits associated with one sex or the other does not imply that the body is neutral and plays no role in determining such traits or that bodily differences are irrelevant, but only that they do not determine gender characteristics. It is not sexual difference, or even gender difference, as such which is problematic, but rather this particular
traditional set of gender contrasts which have formed the basis for gender differentiation in western culture. The proposal to transcend or dissolve these dualistic gender categories does not imply then the dissolution of all difference, but just that set of differences which are produced by power differences and resulting dualistic construction, and which flow through most aspects of social life. Hence it does not assume the passivity or neutrality of the body, or the inevitability or desirability of a single identical ideal character for people of different sexed bodies.

The proposal for androgyny similarly seems to assume that the category of sex is fixed and biological, not socially determined but natural, in contrast to the variable, socially determined category of gender. But this is as unviable as the simple nature/culture contrast since gender may have bodily determinants in the different experiences created by different bodies, and sex may have social determinants.20

2. There are in many cases a complex set of relations between the character traits which would prevent our simply adding them together. For example some characteristics have been construed or developed so as to exclude or be incompatible with others: rationality is normally taken to exclude emotionality for instance and partly defined by such exclusion.21 Given this situation, the androgynous recipe of simply adding all desirable characteristics together and stirring will not do. A more complex story has to be told. Thus masculine egoism complements and requires feminine altruism and vice versa. Since they are not separately viable, we cannot just select the "good" traits (e.g. altruism) and leave out the "bad" (e.g. egoism).

This sort of objection to androgyny obviously does not apply to regendering, which does not propose to add together existing "good" traits, but to develop new ones transcending the old dualisms.
3. The next objection, which is advanced as a criticism of androgyny by Hester Eisenstein in Contemporary Feminist Thought, also misses its mark as a criticism of regendering. This is that the androgyny proposal is essentially static — it assumes that a satisfactory or viable set of character traits will emerge from simple recombination or addition of existing masculine and feminine traits, whereas what is required is the creation of new ones. To the extent that existing character traits of each gender represent a set of false choices or have deformed and distorted human character, androgyny will do nothing to overcome these false choices or to forge a new set of traits or a new approach to culture. It merely rearranges old ingredients. But one cannot make a whole by putting together two distorted and impoverished halves, as Rosemary Ruether and Mary Daly point out.

But this word [androgyny] is formed out of dualistic origins. Authentic relationship is not a relation between two half selves, but between whole persons, when suppression and projection cease to distort the encounter. We seek a new concept of relationship which is not competitive or hierarchical but mutually enhancing.

This objection is a powerful one against androgyny. But regendering goes well beyond rearranging old components, and reconceptualises the world in a way that leaves "masculine", "feminine" and the associated dualisms behind. The recognition of the problematic character of each traditional "half" and of the false choice that it represents forms the motivation for the anti-dualist reconstruction of gender.

4. Perhaps the leading objection against androgyny is that noted by Hester Eisenstein in Contemporary Feminist Thought and suggested by Catharine MacKinnon's analysis, that it neglects the area of power and domination entirely. Like the talk of sex-roles itself, it suggests a model in which both sexes are equally limited and equally victims of vague "sex roles". The fact that one of those roles is
that of master and the other slave, the fact that key feminine gender characteristics are in fact those of subordination and key characteristics of masculinity those of domination also disappears.

Androgyny not only treats difference as separable from power, and then neglects power entirely, it usually assumes gender symmetry, that men and women are equally placed and positioned in culture, that they can equally change and choose their identities and that these identities are equally and unequivocally theirs.

But men and women are positioned differently within a culture which is male in that it systematically rewards and values the male body and the meanings attached to it over the female body and its meanings. And to the extent that the meanings of women's bodies and resulting characteristics of femininity reflect male power, they are not theirs, so choices drawn from masculine and feminine traits will not reflect symmetrical or equal participation in the new androgynous human model. And if such relations of power obtain, how can the two elements simply be put together? Androgyny tries to adopt a neutral stance politically between the powerful and the powerless, the master and the slave. Each, it is suggested, is to be equally called on in the formation of the new androgyne.

Equally facile is the version of the Divided Self theory associated with androgyny, according to which each person has both male and female aspects or personalities within. Again, the assumption is that these "sides" to a person are equally available to be drawn upon by both sexes, that men and women have equal access to these divided realms of characteristics, that these gendered behaviours have the same significance when thus exchanged. Power relations between them again disappear.

But it certainly is not inevitable that a reconstructive model be set up in this way. In contrast to the androgynous model, the regendering model has recognition of
the domination/subordination relation built into it. The dualist analysis is a difference/power model, treating those aspects of difference which are shaped by power, where difference and power cannot be separated. The characteristics of the oppositional or hostile dichotomy are those of a gendered power structure; discontinuity and the maximisation of distance follow the dynamic of repudiation or "spitting out", of ejection from the self and denial of relatedness, while inferiorising and instrumentalising are major mechanisms of power. The transcendence of the dualisms regendering is concerned with overcoming involve the domination of the feminine side by the masculine side, for example traditionally rationality dominates and controls emotionality, which is confined and bursts out in "outbursts", mind dominates and controls body, human controls nature, public dominates private, and the masculine spheres of egoism, culture, activity, production and transcendence are empowered in relation to their feminine counterparts, which are treated as subsidiary. Much of the momentum of the regendering model comes from perception of the need to move beyond the relation of domination/subordination incorporated in the dualistic structure, and the elements of dualistic distinctions are to be explained in terms of power, as Chapter Four argues. Hence the classic model for transcendence, that of the master/slave dichotomy, is one of power and domination. Regendering can hardly be accused of ignoring the power dimension.

5. A connection objection (again from Hester Eisenstein) is that the proposal for androgyny basically supports the status quo, is in no way radical. It merely proposes an enrichment of character traits for men by the adding on of intuitive, "emotional" and "nurturant" characteristics, without any critical engagement with masculine institutions or masculine character traits. For women, androgyny will equip them to compete in a male sphere, again without a critical scrutiny of the nature of that sphere.

It should be clear that this objection does not apply to
regendering at all. The regendering strategy is highly critical of masculinity. Clearly the proposal to transcend the network of dichotomies involves very radical social change, for example that involved in transcending the public and private sphere associated with masculinity and femininity. This involves transformation of work, the family, and the character of public, political and economic life. In fact the opposite objection seems likely to be raised to regendering, that it involves too much social change and is too utopian. I will discuss some points relevant to this later.

These objections together add up to formidable case against the proposal for androgyny as the aim of ecofeminist or feminist theory and practice and the associated perception of the problem as one of sex-role stereotyping. The objections leave the regendering proposal unscathed however.

Yet despite the important differences between androgyny and regendering, they and other reconstructive strategies have not been adequately distinguished in the literature, and the weakness of androgyny is taken to establish gynocentrism. Hester Eisenstein, despite having herself presented many examples of regendering, the transcending of masculine and feminine traits, takes all this to amount to a case for gynocentrism, a mode of argument which is clearly invalid once androgyny and regendering are adequately distinguished. Similarly Mary Anne Warren, defends a position on "androgyny" which is close to regendering, but without distinguishing it from the usual form of androgyny. Although she advocates a form of transcendence of dualism, her main recommendation for strategy is cross-gendering, the adoption of roles appropriate to the opposite sex. This is a strategy which corresponds to androgyny but not to regendering.

The discussion above indicates not only that androgyny is highly problematic, but that the critique of dualism points much more strongly towards regendering than to
androgyny. Although androgyny is not compatible with the affirmation of the feminine in any meaningful sense, the question of how far regendering is compatible with such difference affirmation remains to be addressed.

REGENERATING AND THE AFFIRMATION OF THE FEMININE

The reconstructive approach outlined above as flowing from the critique of dualism seems at odds with the approach which bases its hopes for the future on women, their characters and culture, which affirms the feminine. Nevertheless I want to suggest that the affirmation of the feminine, of feminine values and characteristics, can be developed in ways which converge with the reconstructive positions and the dualist critique, and that it is compatible if appropriately qualified to take account of the dimension of power.

Ecofeminist and feminist positions have ranged all the way from sex - gynocentrism to positions which query whether the activities and qualities such as closeness to nature to be affirmed are women's at all in any good sense. Gynocentrism affirms a feminine nature conceived as an independent and distinct force or a feminine culture suppressed under patriarchy but ready to flower in its full glory once it has a chance — rather on analogy to ethnic pride and the suppression of independent ethnic culture. The analogy as we have seen is inappropriate, and its maintenance requires — paradoxically for a position claiming to affirm women — repudiation of most or indeed honestly all women as "colonised", the products of male culture. The crucial question here is one of feminine identity, of which feminine and whose feminine to affirm and how far and in what sense such qualities really belong to women.

Thus the defence of the gynocentric model often turns on the search for the authentic feminine which will satisfy these conditions, and attempts to mark it out from the
sphere of the "male-defined". This corresponds to the view of the resolution of the master/slave dualism in which the slave's character and culture is the model for liberation. In contrast the dualist analysis insists that the slave's (women's, working class) characteristics are not determined independently but reflect, depend on and are in balance with those of the master, so that the attempt to base the new culture on the slave's experience alone is bound to mirror the master's nature and reproduce the roots of the problem in a new form.\textsuperscript{28} The slave's character, this position might go on to suggest, is not really the slave's at all, but is what the master found useful and permitted her to have. Thus Catharine MacKinnon writes of the affirmation of difference in the passage which heads this chapter.

But is femininity so entirely constructed by power that when we have rejected such construction there is nothing further to be extracted from it, said about it? And are things really as deterministic, as closely controlled, as this approach claims? What is rejected here as not truly woman's is the dualised feminine, the feminine identity as it is constructed under patriarchy as the dualistic opposite of the masculine identity. The dualised feminine is the extreme form of women's oppression, feminine identity as it would be if it were nothing but what patriarchy made it, were no more than what patriarchy wanted it to be, fantasised that it was.

But, the difference position can reply, patriarchy has been powerful but rarely all-powerful, and the dualised feminine has never been the only feminine. We have to recognise a greater complexity and variety of traditions and social forces than this. Wherever women have been able to resist or escape or subvert total oppression, a different kind of feminine has been able to emerge. There has often been some freedom even in the patriarchal context for women to create their own identities as different from the dualised feminine, and the devalued activities and sphere allocated them under patriarchy include many that are of great value and importance. As both the dualist
analysis and difference theory has stressed, the exclusion from male character and culture of the devalued feminine has fatally riven that culture and set people at odds with the basic conditions of their existence in nature.

MacKinnon's point is overly deterministic but nevertheless raises very important issues and gives a clear and pungent expression to the doubts some other types of feminism hold about ecofeminism and the affirmation of difference. And of course she is at least partly right -- under patriarchy powerlessness is both feminised and naturalised (and, as she notes, also eroticised), and the female body has this powerlessness as one of its central social meanings. Hierarchies of power among males are also hierarchies of the less to the more feminised. Her point requires that careful consideration be given to the question as to which feminine we should affirm and how we should affirm it. These are complex issues, but one thing at any rate is clear: We cannot affirm the dualised feminine; it is a reflection of our oppression. But although this certainly rules out the indiscriminate and unqualified affirmation adopted by extreme gynocentrism, it does not prevent us from drawing on either what women have done in the past or on certain traditional qualities and characteristic activities as a source of pride, identity, strength and hope for the future.

A recognition and discovery of these strengths is also central to the regendering strategy, which also recognises that the areas which have been assigned to women are not secondary or unimportant, and that the splitting off of these areas plus their denigration has created many of the problems western culture faces. Although many characteristics of traditional femininity, with its created characteristics of helplessness, passivity and dependency, are undesirable, women who are moving beyond traditional femininity may now, as Jean Baker Miller argues, be in the best position to reintegrate many of these divisions and to create a new culture and character which has neither the rigid and excessive self boundaries of the masculine nor
the absence of self boundaries of the traditional feminine.

MacKinnon's approach has much in common with the dualistic analysis. On her view, gender difference is not just something that intersects with power, is not something constituted independently of power which happens to be valorised wrongly, and which could just as easily be valued as devalued. Gender is power, power is not detachable from the way it is formed. This parallels the way in which gender identity as described in the dualist analysis is formed reactively by the dualising process.

But the view of gender as pure power, of gender identity as expressive of nothing else, is too limited and results in a number of problems. If feminine identity is just constituted by power, and women's qualities are just what male supremacy has foisted on women for its own advantage, women seeking to escape male power have no basis for an identity they can claim as truly their own. But this lack of an independent and prideful identity is precisely one of the conditions of powerlessness which perpetuate dependence on male definition. If women can only escape by repudiating the false feminine identity associated with women's sphere and activities, they are left in a vacuum. They can only obtain a genuine identity by and as repudiating this false feminine identity, (as "liberated" perhaps) or else by taking on some form of masculine identity. Either way they can have no identity which is truly their own and which connects them with the past, with the history, struggles and being of women, and such an identity defined against, by repudiation of, feminine identity is uncomfortably close to male identity.

It seems that there is a need to make some distinction between those activities themselves which are typical of the feminine and the low status or powerlessness contingently attached to them or attached to them because of their association with women. That their power
status is often contingent can be seen from the way the same activity, for example cooking, is structured as prestigious, powerful and creative when performed by a man (a chef, who is an artist rather than a drudge). The power analysis makes it seem as if we can't reject women's powerlessness without also rejecting the whole content of women's lives and roles because these have been structured as powerless. But the point of affirming these activities is precisely to empower them and to empower these aspects of their lives and these disempowered aspects of culture. These have usually been disempowered and excluded by being treated as part of nature so this affirmation involves an analysis of the dualistic treatment of the nature/culture contrast.

And if power is the only dimension in terms of which we can assess gender, it seems as if we can say nothing useful about the content of gender, about the gendered division of labour and life activities and how this has affected culture, and about the way in which not only women themselves but also this content, these areas of human life taken to be feminine, have been assigned by patriarchy to unimportance and powerlessness. The old femininity was also the expression of a range of human interests, concerns, areas of life and social orientations which cannot just be written off as powerlessness. Their importance is stressed by both the dualist and the difference analysis of ecofeminism, and the dualist analysis also shows us how this division and disempowerment has impoverished and distorted not just the slave but also the master.

Although powerlessness then is an important aspect of femininity and is not detachable from some aspects of difference, it is not plausible to claim that all difference and all qualities characteristic of women are the result of or are imbued with powerlessness. We really need to distinguish those cases where powerlessness is necessary to or inherent in some quality allocated to the feminine from those cases where it is contingent. (Not that the distinction is always clearcut, but in many cases it
is.) Often a characteristic will be ambiguous in an interesting way; for example "nurturance" and "empathy", qualities often affirmed these days by ecofeminists, can mean supporting others, being receptive to their needs and being concerned for their growth and welfare, or it can mean making men feel good, bolstering masculinity and ego massaging, the sensitivity of the slave to the needs and moods of the master. The first is not necessarily a product of powerlessness, the second is. MacKinnon writes as if all the qualities and activities associated with femininity and difference were in the second, necessary group, and if this were true affirming women's difference, their special qualities and characteristic life activities, would indeed be affirming powerlessness.

On the other hand, as we have seen, difference theory has largely ignored the problem of those qualities (including those considered positive) which are necessarily tied to powerlessness or which have other negative features and tended to proceed as if affirmation of any and every kind of feminine difference was in order, to idealise women's qualities and sisterhood. Subordinated women for example were and still are encouraged to distrust, dislike and compete with each other for marks of male favour, and to undervalue both themselves and women in general. This situation is hardly entirely in the past and reveals the ideal character of many properties attributed unproblematically to women in difference theory. Much of the problem stems from the problem MacKinnon identifies, of writing as if women were already empowered and had moved out of the context of subordination which gives "nurturance" the second rather than the first meaning. This may reflect the life climate of particular fortunate groups of women, but hardly accurately reflects women's overall social situation, and reveals the privileged social context of certain kinds of difference theory. This sort of unqualified affirmation of the feminine does not give enough credit to the complexity of women's current situation and preserves gynocentric appearances by being unwilling to admit the extent to which its
affirmations are ideal. As a result it does not recognise clearly enough the ambiguous political face and potential conservativeness of affirmed qualities such as motherhood and nurturance.

The structures of masculinity are implicated at every level in the domination of both women and nature, via the market systems of rationality, psychological structuring and the dynamics of personal and public life, the social structure of work and home, of production, consumption and the structure of human identity. In the attempt to base an alternative in women's identity, we need to recognise that we are affirming what is for many women still a potential expression of that identity. And of course once this has been adequately recognised the strategy of affirming the feminine is much closer to a reconstructive, regendering strategy. Writers such as Jean Baker Miller give a powerful sense both of women's problems in disempowering contexts and of their potential to transform themselves and others, without neglecting the crucial role of their social context which seems to be lost in much celebration of feminine difference. In a situation where there are great differences in women's social context, perhaps one of the most useful things we can do is to maintain such a sensitivity to the possibilities of transition, of the route from the subservient sort of nurturance to the supportive sort, from the self defined by the other and as a means for the other to the connected self of radical social potential.

RECLAIMING FEMININE IDENTITY

Are the qualities the ecofeminist arguments affirm, especially "closeness to nature", ones that this analysis suggests we can and should affirm, that is, are they in the category of contingent powerlessness or the category of necessary powerlessness? Sometimes, as I've already argued, they do seem to be in the last category; to the extent that women's "softer" stance with respect to nature
depends on their exclusion from power both in human society and with respect to nature, their exclusion from culture, and from access to science and technology which provide the means to dominate nature, affirming this stance would amount to affirming women's powerlessness. The affirmation of their closeness to nature in the form of unfreedom, their immersion in the realm of necessity and the body and renunciation of or lack of means of control over their lives and choices via contraception, as expressed for example by Carol MacMillan would also be an affirmation and celebration of their powerlessness. This kind of "ecofeminism" is not a kind of feminism, and especially where such passivity is affirmed for women and not for men is its antithesis. The affirmation of such qualities also runs into the paradox of power discussed above, that qualities which depend necessarily upon subordination will not survive translation to dominant status, and hence cannot be empowered or affirmed in this sense.

Motherhood arguments are diverse and more difficult to classify. Some have pointed to the way in which the disempowerment, dependency and privatisation of motherhood maintain it as a conservative and exclusionary rather than a radical social force, and to its potential for a wider scope and definition in a different, less powerless social context, where it can provide a basis for a broader type of nurturing relationship directed to more than the traditional child and potentially directed to nature as well. It is more common for ecofeminist arguments, such as those of based on women's character as mothers, to treat motherhood not as powerless but rather as unrealistically powerful. Motherhood is defined in ideal terms, overlooking its numerous oppressive manifestations under patriarchy to both women and children, and is treated somewhat in the way that MacKinnon complains of, as if equality already existed and women took on their maternal projects in freedom and security. Women in some ecofeminist arguments remain identified primarily as mothers, rather than as wider beings, and the empowerment
of women is treated as the empowerment or dominance of motherhood and the sphere of reproduction. 36

But the affirmation of a special relation between women and nature has not always or only depended on such arguments or their powerlessness. It does in part appeal to features that women have or are open to developing as a result of not being dominant, of not being so directly enmeshed in the structures of masculinity, but this is not equatable with powerlessness in the sense of being subordinate. The dissolution of power transcends the dominant/subordinate dualism, both the mode of the dualised masculine and that of the dualised feminine, and not all qualities which do not derive from dominance can be ascribed to subordination. To the extent that ecofeminist arguments focus on dominance features of masculinity and to the way in which dualised masculine identity and masculine institutions are damaging to nature and have resulted in an identity and concept of culture defined in terms of alienation from nature, they do not rely on women's powerlessness, since the real alternative to this dominance is not subordination (which dualistically preserves it) but the dissolution of the gender power system. And the alternative to such an alienated identity is not one of passive powerlessness or immersion in nature, but the construction of an identity which is both truly human and which recognises human continuity with and dependence on nature, and which thus breaks the dualism of nature and culture. Thus the dualist analysis is not only a power theory, but a power/difference theory, showing how hierarchy constructs difference.

Ecofeminist arguments can also appeal to the areas which have been excluded from the earth-destroying malestream culture of rationality, production and consumption and which have occupied women's lives as precisely those which are crucial for the construction of such an identity as well as for the practice of an ecological lifestyle. The devaluation of the sphere of women's activities which have mediated nature and taken care of reproduction, human
relationships and affiliations and the "natural" side of the human being, as well as the daily and basic needs of people and households, is of course part and parcel of the devaluation both of nature itself and of what is needed to relate in a better way to it. But this is not to say that such areas should be upgraded but remain the province of women -- indeed it is a consequence of this kind of ecofeminist argument that they should not continue to be excluded from truly "human" identity and culture, remaining the province of those specially "close to nature", but become fully admitted and integrated as the province of both sexes and as a basis for an alternative, less destructive culture. Again this type of argument does not depend on powerlessness.

The reintegration and re-evaluation of "woman's sphere", in some of its aspects at least, can provide the basis for a new human identity; for example one which is both more related to others and more located, incorporating in that identity the ties to particular places and regions which have been so much destroyed in modern industrial capitalist societies which demand mobility of their workers, and which is especially lacking in the footloose lifestyles of male workers. This feminine definition of identity in relationship to place and to particular others, which has always been part of women's orientation to home and to family, has often under patriarchy been overly restricted or exclusionary, and hence a politically conservative force. Nevertheless it contains the seeds of the specific ties and caring relationships which are essential both to an ecological and bioregionalist consciousness and a social identity stressing relationship and community as the basis of political and social life, rather than one based on the lack of relationship to others that is characteristic of modern liberalism.

Once we have made this distinction between characteristics only contingently associated with women's subordination in patriarchy and those necessarily so, and have worked out and felt out both individually and collectively which parts
of the landscapes of our lives and gender identity are thus shaped by subordination, we are in a position to do what many ecofeminist arguments do, affirm selected traditional feminine qualities and life activities as able to provide at least a partial base for women's contemporary identity and at the same time for an ecological identity. Such an identity should be viewed as a home, as an empowering base from which to view and relate to the world, rather than as a fence around that world, a limitation on what women can do and be. And selection is important; we cannot afford to lose sight of the way in which patriarchy has shaped and continues to shape our identities.

Such an identity can provide a degree of continuity with past women, but if we are to avoid the mistake MacKinnon points to of assuming that equality already exists, it is essential to recognise the ideal character of much of this affirmation, that what is affirmed is women as they might be in a context of equality, and that it can't just be assumed that all women as they are in the present context of inequality already have by nature all these positive qualities in the relevant form (the "angel in the ecosystem" position, assuming implicitly a fixed feminine nature abstracted from social context). This is to recognise the transformative and creative aspect of such an identity, that is not just passively to be inherited or to be discovered but also to be created and invented, involving active choice and forging. It is to recognise too its ideal element, that it represents something to which we might aspire and for which we might work rather than a state already completely realised. It is also to recognise that the qualities required, both of individuals and of culture, cannot just be those of the past, of women's immersion in nature, but that a movement beyond the old dualistically-defined boundaries of nature and culture is necessary.

Adoption of these qualifications and recognition of the transformative social character of the affirmation of the
feminine creates conditions for convergence between the regendering strategy and the critique of dualism on the one hand and the affirmation of feminine values on the other. The dualist analysis provided an account of past feminine identity as the product of oppression, but as well points forward to a strategy for moving beyond dualistic identity, both feminine and human. But affirmation must be at least partly seen, not as a reclamation of the past, but as involving a struggle for the emergence of these affirmable qualities which have continuity but not identity with women's past. It suggests too that it is in the context of gender and social equality that the strategy of transcendence of dualism and the strategy of affirming the feminine converge. Both must involve a struggle for the social conditions of equality in which affirmable qualities can be empowered in social structure and transcendence of the dominance/submission dualism can become possible.

We can trace a path for example by which the quality of altruistic self-abnegation occurring in a patriarchal context as part of the egoism/altruism and ends/means and masculine/feminine dualisms, is transformed or transcended in a different political or social context of equality into one of mutual relational selfhood. If the means/ends and egoism/altruism relationship is transformed into an equal and symmetrical relation, what is lost is the instrumental and assymmetrical character which required one identity, the egoist identity, to be defined non-relationally as end and the other, the altruist identity, to be defined entirely in relation to the end. Neither side of this dualism can be universalised and treated as viable in its own right, since each depends for its viability on the other, as in the case of the identity of the master and that of the slave. What must take their place as a universalisable identity in the context of equality and escape from dualism is not androgyny but precisely the sort of relational autonomy Jean Baker Miller describes. She herself explains in terms of many examples how the transformation from
traditional subordinate relational identity to this kind of relational autonomy can occur. These are examples of the transformation of women's qualities developed in subordination into strengths of a different sort in a different context of equality, and of how they can in turn transform these contexts.

Baker Miller views this as the expression of the same qualities in a different context, ("women's strengths developed in their long period of subordination," thus stressing identity with women's past), but as she herself concedes in the claim that women are seeking a different sort of autonomy from men, they can perhaps better be seen, or at any rate can be alternatively seen, as different while still related and continuous. It may not be the same quality as in the past, but what can be shown is how it has developed from and is continuous with the corresponding property of traditional femininity.

For example, women are to take on autonomy in contrast to their traditional lack of it, but in quite a new and different sense from masculine autonomy; she writes "Women are quite validly seeking something more complete than autonomy as it is defined for men, a fuller not a lesser ability to encompass relationships to others, simultaneous with the fullest development of oneself". But this is different from the ideal of traditional femininity developed in subordination. So the contrast between self-realisation at the expense of others and feminine self-abnegation at the expense of the development of the self (a version of the egoism/altruism contrast) is essentially to be transcended in her new proposal. The proposal is critical of and leaves behind traditional masculinity, but it is just as critical and leaves behind just as much its old feminine counterpart of self-abnegation. Her new property of relational selfhood is an analogue of the dualised-feminine quality of being defined by and through others, as a means to their ends, but it is not the same. It is an analogue because it is possible to show how it has developed from the corresponding dualised-feminine quality.
In an altered social and political context.

In a situation of continuity, we can choose to stress either sameness or difference, in this case with different theoretical consequences. Such a choice makes the difference between the dualist-reconstructive approach and the difference-based, feminine-affirming one both small and arbitrary, as can be seen when both are properly qualified. Thus affirmation stresses continuity of the feminine ideal with the past, and the positive value of what has been devalued and excluded from culture as woman’s sphere, while dualist critique stresses reconstruction and the difference between the qualities of past oppression and those of transcending future. Appropriately qualified they are complementary rather than inconsistent viewpoints, and the qualifications, I have argued, are needed and have independent virtue. Both positions illuminate the route beyond the dualism of dominant/subordinate, from the old identity of the dualised feminine to the new feminine and new human identity currently in the making.
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5. The title of a paper by Sally Miller Gearhart in P. McAllister (ed.) *Reweaving the Web of Life*, New Society Publishers, Philadelphia, 1982, pp.266-285. Gearhart's position seems to have elements of both sex and gender gynocentrism, but since her main strategy proposal is the elimination of males it must be seen as primarily one of sex gynocentrism.


op. cit, and a number of feminist and ecofeminist authors.


12. As far as I can trace the term it is due to Nancy Chodorow, who uses it in "Gender, Relation and Difference in Psychoanalytic Perspective" in H. Eisenstein and A. Jardine (eds.), *The Future of Difference*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 1985. Although she does not make any distinction between regendering and degendering, she appears to use "degendering" to mean what I mean by "regendering", the dissolution of the western system of gender as power difference, rather than the removal of all different social significance between differently sexed bodies. See Val Plumwood "Do We Need a Sex/Gender Distinction?" in *Radical Philosophy* 51, Spring 1989, pp2-11. For a critique of degendering see Moira Gatens op. cit.

13. Some writers seem to use the term "androgyny" to cover the whole range of broadly reconstructive strategies; I have not adopted this because it helps to obscure crucial differences.

14. Joyce Trebilcot in "Two Forms of Androgynism", in M. Vetterling-Braggin (ed.), "Femininity", "Masculinity" and "Androgyny", *A Modern Philosophical Discussion*, Littlefield, Adams and Co., Totowa, 1982, distinguishes mono-androgyny (postulating a single human character ideal for both sexes) from poly-androgyny (which does not insist on a single ideal but allows both sexes the freedom to choose the whole range of behaviour without impropriety). Poly-androgyny is clearly closer to regendering, but is still set up as if it were a question of the individual choosing from a smorgasbord of "roles" and masculine or feminine characteristics considered as somehow equally available.
15. H. Eisenstein, *op.cit.*, Ch.6, pp.58-68.


18. Jean Baker Miller, *op.cit.*, Chs. 6, 8 - 10.

19. This objection adapted from one made by Moira Gatens in "A Critique of the Sex/Gender Distinction", *op. cit.*. In that paper she directs this objection against the sex/gender distinction as such and against what she calls "degendering", where it seems to me to miss its mark, but it is a sound objection against the usual way of understanding androgyny. See my "Do We Need Sex/Gender Distinction?", *op. cit.*.


26. Hester Eisenstein *op.cit.*, Ch.6, pp.58-68.

28. See Jean Baudrillard, The Mirror of Production, Telos Press, St. Louis 1975, for the development of this sort of critique in the specific case of Marx and labour.


30. See Lynne Segal Is The Future Female?, Virago, London 1987, for a stimulating discussion of difference theory in general and affirmations of motherhood in particular.

31. Although Jean Baker Miller is ambivalent about the context of women's oppression, and about whether "strengths" are new or old qualities.


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