ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: FOR THE END IS A LIMIT: THE QUESTION CONCERNING THE ENVIRONMENT

Ozguc Orhan, Doctor of Philosophy, 2007

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This dissertation argues that Aristotle's philosophy of praxis (i.e., ethics and politics) can contribute to our understanding of the contemporary question concerning the environment. Thinking seriously about the environment today calls for resisting the temptation to jump to conclusions about Aristotle's irrelevance to the environment on historicist grounds of incommensurability or the fact that Aristotle did not write specifically on environmental issues as we know them. It is true that environmental problems are basically twentieth-century phenomena, but the larger normative discourses in which the terms "environmental" and "ecological" and their cognates are situated should be approached philosophically, namely, as cross-cultural and trans-historical phenomena that touch human experience at a deeper level. The philosophical perspective exploring the discursive meaning behind contemporary environmental praxis can reveal to us that certain aspects of Aristotle's thought are relevant, or can be adapted, to the ends of environmentalists concerned with developmental problems. I argue that Aristotle's views are already accepted and adopted in political theory and the praxis of

the environment in many respects. In the first half of the dissertation, I explore the common ground between contemporary theorizing on the ethical and political aspects of environmental issues and Aristotelian ethics and politics. The second half of the dissertation locates the contemporary relevance of Aristotle in the recently emerging studies of "environmental virtue ethics" as well as "environmental citizenship" and "conservative environmentalism."

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By

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Dedication

To my parents,

Leman and Bedrettin Orhan,

and to my sister and brother,

Evrim and Devrim,

who have encouraged me to pursue learning first and foremost.

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Abbreviations of Works by Aristotle

De An.	*De Anima* (*Peri Psychēs*): *On the Soul*
EE	*Ethica Eudemia* (*Ethika Eudēmeia*): *Eudemian Ethics*
GA	*De Generatione Animalium* (*Peri zōōn geneseōs*): *Generation of Animals*
HA	*Historia Animalium* (*Peri tōn zōōn historiai*): *History of Animals*
NE	*Ethica Nicomachea* (*Ethika Nikomacheia*): *Nicomachean Ethics*
Meta.	*Metaphysica* (*Ta meta ta physika*): *Metaphysics*
Ph.	*Physica* (*Physikē akroasis): Physics*
Pol.	*Politica* (*Politika*): *Politics*
Rh.	*Rhetorica* (*Rhētorikē technē*): *Rhetoric*

Chapter 1: Recovering Aristotle for Nature

> It is necessary to leave everything open and questionable; only thus will we be capable of freeing and keeping alive Aristotle's unresolved innermost questioning, and thereby the questioning of ancient philosophy and accordingly our own.[1]

1.1 Introduction: The Question Concerning the "Environment"

This dissertation revisits Aristotle's philosophy of praxis to provide insight into our understanding of the contemporary question concerning the "environment." I challenge the opinion that Aristotle has nothing significant to contribute to the contemporary theorizing of the "environment" by showing how Aristotelian insights can actually illuminate the current debates among environmental scholars and activists on the meaning and significance of the conceptual category of the "environment." Rather than trying to locate environmental awareness in Aristotle's writings, I shall execute my task somewhat indirectly. The nature of the question of the environment can be better grasped, I argue, if we situate it within a larger socio-cultural context of "modernity." Hence, I shall discuss the environmental significance of Aristotle's writings in relation to the rise and development of "modernity," and urge a more thoughtful reflection on the Aristotelian account of the human condition as opposed to the one built on the premises of the modern scientific view.

To this purpose, I shall explore Aristotle's discussions of the concepts of *praxis* (action), *phusis* (nature), and *technē* (art) spread through his writings on ethics, politics, physics, metaphysics, and biology and show that reading Aristotle through the lenses of these three organizing concepts, while considering his practical philosophy in relation to the critique mounted against it in the modern era, can bring out the philosophical import of the

[1] Martin Heidegger, *Aristotle's Metaphysics Θ 1-3*, trans. Walter Brogan and Peter Warnek (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 39.

contemporary question concerning the "environment." In Aristotle's view, *phusis* is superior to *techne*, and *poiesis* (making) is subordinate to *praxis* (*NE* 1106b13-4). The transformation of this nexus in modernity, I argue, is fundamental to conceptualize the contemporary question of the "environment" and Aristotle's relationship to it.[2]

To avoid any misunderstanding concerning the purpose of this inquiry, let me state at this point that I do not intend to portray Aristotle as a proto-environmentalist. As one scholar observed, "It is a common practice for philosophers who wish to involve themselves in environmental affairs to write apologies on behalf of one or another historical figure, defending him or her for the environmentalist cause."[3] My treatment of Aristotle in relation to contemporary environmentalism tries to avoid this apologetic pitfall. The present inquiry is not concerned with portraying Aristotle as an ancient environmentalist or precursor of environmentalism, but to make the more modest claim that Aristotle's philosophy of praxis can improve our understanding of the normative basis of contemporary environmentalism and, in certain ways, can help re-orient it.

Central to this reorientation is the realization that the contemporary question of the environment cannot be understood apart from the perennial quest for the "good life" and happiness in and through "religion," "philosophy," and more recently "ideology." My

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[2] I shall occasionally use the transliterations of these three terms and a few other Greek terms that will frequently appear in the text in place of their English equivalents. I shall omit their diacritic marks after the first occurrence. My rationale for this practice is that most of these terms have been part of the Western philosophical terminology and that the originals can conjure certain connotations unlike their English equivalents. An example is the translation of the term *techne* as "art" into English. Today, the English term "art" (derived from Latin *ars*) is used more often than not in the sense of "fine arts" as opposed to "mechanical arts." *Techne* is better than "art" as it reminds us of both "technology" (which is an outgrowth of "mechanical arts") and its original meaning in Aristotle—the mental faculty employed in the process of making things, be it a statue or a hammer. The word "praxis" is similarly richer than its English equivalent "action" (derived from the Latin *actus* which translates the two central terms of Aristotle's philosophy *energeia* and *entelecheia*). For this reason, *praxis* will be frequently used in the original and without italics since it has now become part of the English vocabulary. I shall say more on the richer connotations of *praxis* and *phusis* in Chapter 3.

[3] Robert Kirkman, *Skeptical Environmentalism: The Limits of Philosophy and Science* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 45.

working assumption is that this quest is both cross-cultural and trans-historical and that every literate human society in history, in one way or another, grappled with the underlying reasons of this quest. The aforementioned three categories are outcomes and mediums of this quest and the question of the environment cannot be studied in isolation from the history of this quest. This question has a special relationship with the premises and ends of modernity. This is no accident as the degradation of the physical environment(s) are by and large the unintentional by-products of the industrial mode of production, which in turn has become possible and sustained by modern science and technology. Although pre-modern societies also had an environmental impact—and some quite possibly had collapsed due to their impact, the scale of modern impact on the environment is incomparably higher.[4] For one thing, the scope of the affected area is no longer local or regional but global.

The ethos of modernity rests on the physicalist conception of reality or being and the historicist view of society and human being. The former sets the goal of the scientific enterprise as "objective" knowledge of reality. Hence, the epistemological concept of "objectivity" and the ontological category of "reality" are correlated, and the practical status of "subjectivity" is consigned to limbo. The culture of modernity is further defended and justified on the basis of the historicist notion of "progress." Historical progress promises quantitative "increase" in four dimensions: theoretical knowledge, technological sophistication, material prosperity, and morals. All four, it is assumed, works in tandem to deliver the human condition from bondage to caprice (of fate and nature) as well as necessity (of scarcity or authority). The universal historical process in which this has taken place and will continue or ought to continue is called "progress." As I shall argue, the question concerning the environment sits at the intersection of these two pillars of modernity: the

[4] See Richard York, Eugene A. Rosa, and Thomas Dietz, "Footprints on the Earth: The Environmental Consequences of Modernity," *American Sociological Review* 68.2 (2003): 279-300.

modern scientific view of reality and its technological application to relieve the human estate.[5]

As Jared Diamond notes, "all of our current environmental problems are unanticipated harmful consequences of our existing technology."[6] Fair enough, but how can we guard ourselves against the harmful consequences of existing technology? Would it be sufficient to invent environmentally friendly technology and replace the old with the new? This would be the least complicated route to take but it would ignore the socio-cultural situated-ness of what we conveniently call "technology." What is "technology"? Can we explain the genus of technology by pointing at its instances, that is, the artificial products and the whole manufacturing infrastructure of these products, and manage their undesirable effects on an individual basis? What about the intellectual "software" that sustains them all? One apt exponent of technology is the German philosopher Martin Heidegger whose work I shall draw on in later chapters to illuminate the question concerning the environment via his discussion of modern science and technology. If the nature of modern technology is fundamentally implicated with "the modern physical theory of nature," as Heidegger suggests, then we must understand the premises and implications of the modern scientific project.[7] Our attitude toward this project must be subtler than taking a pro or con position. I will take up this theme in the fourth section of this chapter and again in the next chapter.

Statements regularly issued by environmental organizations and scientists regarding a particular environmental problem or the state of the environment in general often evoke a

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[5] See also David W. Orr, "In the Tracks of the Dinosaur: Modernization and the Ecological Perspective, *Polity* 11.4 (1979): 562-87.

[6] Jared Diamond, "The Last Americans: Environmental Collapse and the End of Civilization," *Harper's Magazine* (June 2003): 44.

[7] Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 21-3.

sense of urgency. In a sense, environmentalists share the impassioned Marxist impulse for change: the point is not to interpret the world but to change it. The general feeling is that there is not much time left for idle speculation.[8] The sentiment that we are running out of time with respect to issues such as global warming may not be unwarranted, but we also need to understand that environmental problems are not discrete "technical" problems awaiting readily available solutions. "The so-called environmental crisis," notes one environmental scholar, is "a visible manifestation of a much deeper and broader problem involving nearly every facet of modern life."[9] If this is true, environmental problems or the "so-called environmental crisis" cannot be resolved simply by a combination of administrative rationality and technological innovation. Worse, no one can know or guarantee whether it can be resolved at all. Simply focusing on practical solutions would hide the "much deeper and broader problem involving nearly every facet of modern life."

The larger normative dimension is beginning to be understood in environmental theory literature. In a recent collection of essays on environmentalism, for instance, it is recognized that environmentalism is not purely concerned with solving environmental problems, but is also "concerned with an analysis of the nature of such problems."[10] Some even go further and suggest that "the ecologist patterns of thought (diagnoses, values,

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[8] Max Oelschlaeger, an environmental scholar, explicitly invokes Marx while questioning the usefulness of Habermas's theoretical bent toward the environment: "Does Habermas's political theory make a practical difference . . . . Does it help citizens engage the consequential environmental issues that threaten sustainable living in particular places? . . . [or] does Habermas's theorizing succumb to the criticism of philosophy . . . that Marx made, namely, being little more than speculation that changes nothing in the world? . . . . Pragmatism makes me impatient with theory that does not have (perhaps too obvious) potential for transforming the problematized contexts in which human beings live and move and have their being." See Max Oelschlaeger, "Habermas in the 'Wild, Wild West,' " in *Perspectives on Habermas*, ed. Lewis E. Hahn (Chicago: Open Court, 2000), 388-89.

[9] Lynton K. Caldwell, "Is Humanity Destined to Self-Destruct?" *Perspectives*, September 4, 1998, http://www.indiana.edu/~speaweb/perspectives/humanity.pdf, 3.

[10] Marcel Wissenburg and Yoram Levy, eds., *Liberal Democracy and Environmentalism: The End of Environmentalism?* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 4.

strategies) have become outdated and have been abandoned" as "late modern societies neither can, nor really want to, remove" their unsustainable mode of life.[11] Environmental indicators of many industrialized countries have shown considerable improvement, possibly as a result of a combination of public awareness, political action, legislative changes, and ecological modernization. This should not blind us, however, to the fact that, in the context of a globalizing world, improvement in one locale can be gained at the expense of deterioration in other parts of the world. Indeed, despite positive gains recorded in industrially advanced countries, the high domestic consumption rates in these countries have an increasing impact on less industrialized countries.[12] The overall result of the environmental efforts of the last few decades can at best be characterized as a mixed bag.[13]

Whether environmental problems can be eradicated or merely managed, thinking about them still requires a thoughtful framework of analysis, as any in-depth discussion on the "environment" soon goes beyond the physical dimension and veers into social, political, ethical, and psychological dimensions. Hence, the "normative and moral dimension determining the way in which the whole environmental issue makes sense to us" is prior to its technical dimension of solving environmental problems.[14] If there is any hope for the latter, the former holds the key. Environmental problems can perhaps be mitigated and

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[11] Ingolfur Blühdorn, "Unsustainability as a Frame of Mind and How We Disguise It," *Trumpeter* 18.1 (2002), http://trumpeter.athabascau.ca/content/v18.1/bluhdorn.pdf, 2. See also his *Post-Ecologist Politics: Social Theory and the Abdication of the Ecologist Paradigm* (London: Routledge, 2000); and "Post-ecologism and the Politics of Simulation," in *Liberal Democracy and Environmentalism: The End of Environmentalism?*, eds., Marcel Wissenburg and Yoram Levy (New York: Routledge, 2004), 35-47. Blühdorn's thesis—unsustainability is a permanent feature of modern societies—is the main theme of *Environmental Politics* 16.2 (2007).

[12] See Mary M. Berlik, David B. Kittredge, and David R. Foster, "The Illusion of Preservation: A Global Environmental Argument for the Local Production of Natural Resources," *Journal of Biogeography* 29 (2002): 1557-68.

[13] For these results and predictions of probable shortages in life sustaining elements of water, land, and forests in the future, see United Nations Environment Programme, *One Planet, Many People: Atlas of Our Changing Environment* (Nairobi: UNEP, 2005).

[14] Wissenburg and Levy, 4.

managed by sound scientific analysis, technological innovation, and legislative reforms, but these can neither show us the best way to deal with them nor help us in making sense of what we are doing by fighting environmental crisis or problems. What is needed for this purpose is practical understanding traditionally known as "prudence." Prudence is especially needed to communicate environmental ideas effectively to those who need more convincing and guide those who are convinced. For, as I shall discuss in Chapter 6, environmentalists need to revise their naive view that "the provision of information" alone will "promote sensitivity to environmental degradation."[15]

Those who are already persuaded by the mounting evidence of environmental degradation are still in need of finding the right language to frame, justify, and defend their endeavors to protect the natural environment. Despite years of environmental ethics literature, leading environmentalists observe the inadequacy of the moral vision of American environmentalism. American environmentalists have been reluctant to incorporate "values" into their public discourse because they have associated this discourse with conservatism:

> Environmental groups have spent the last 40 years defining themselves *against* conservative values like cost-benefit accounting, smaller government, fewer regulations, and free trade, without ever articulating a coherent morality we can call our own. Most of the intellectuals who staff environmental groups are so repelled by the right's values that we have assiduously avoided examining our own in a serious way. Environmentalists and other liberals tend to see values as a distraction from "the real issues"—environmental problems like global warming.[16] (emphasis original)

In addition to developing practical solutions to environmental problems, communicating the larger discursive context of the question of the environment in the public sphere is equally important. This is especially needed to sustain and nurture the beneficial actions of public in

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[15] James G. Cantrill, "Perceiving Environmental Discourse: The Cognitive Playground," in *The Symbolic Earth: Discourse and Our Creation of the Environment*, eds. James G. Cantrill and Christine L. Oravec (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 79.

[16] Michael Shellenberger and Ted Nordhaus, "The Death of Environmentalism: Global Warming Politics in a Post-Environmental World," September 29, 2004, http://www.thebreakthrough.org/images/Death_of_Environmentalism.pdf.

general or more committed environmental agents toward the environment. Once we leave behind the assurance of natural science and the technocratic view of politics, we begin to face the dilemmas of normative thinking. Environmental problems are caused by human factors, but which factors are most relevant? We can certainly deal with environmental problems in different ways, but which responses are most desirable? Most environmental scholars agree that the question of the environment is one with social, political, ethical, and psychological implications, but disagree as to the specific nature of these implications and what needs to be done about them. Consequently, there have come to be competing ways of theorizing the "environment" or "ecology" as a socio-political issue.[17] I shall discuss these competing approaches in the next section.

The non-technical dimension of the question concerning the environment is implicit in the link between "ecological" issues on the one hand and other social and political issues on the other. Murray Bookchin, for instance, is well-known for his view that "our present ecological problems arise from deep-seated social problems."[18] This viewpoint, shared in broad terms by all environmental theorists, suggests that environmental problems are fundamentally symptomatic of more general human aspirations and activities. Hence, a deep response to ecological problems must deal with those aspirations and activities. This view is intimated in the commonly used phrase "environmental values" and is also presupposed by those who urge that we need to change our values to deal adequately with environmental problems. Even though this is not the most dominant strain of contemporary environmentalism, the values dimension of environmental problems has been emphasized

[17] See, for instance, John S. Dryzek, *The Politics of the Earth: Environmental Discourses* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[18] See Murray Bookchin, "What is Social Ecology?" in *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*, ed. Michael E. Zimmerman (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993).

throughout the history of contemporary environmental movement. Dale Jamieson observes that a persistent minority position in the contemporary environmental movement has interpreted the environmental problems as "fundamental problems of the human heart and spirit." They "pivot not on new technologies or the reform of economic or legal systems, but rather on fundamental human values." To fully understand "the behavior that produces these problems," notes Jamieson, we need to appreciate "the value systems that generated them."[19]

Two former Greenpeace activists similarly emphasize the priority of "values change," which they call a "shift of consciousness," about "the way that our species relates to the Earth and all her creatures (including ourselves)."[20] They further add that "this shift will never be accomplished through legislative, policy or regulatory victories—rather it is this shift that will enable those tangible, political gains."[21] The present inquiry shares this normative orientation in contrast to the technical approach and claims that the question concerning the environment cannot be understood apart from the perennial question of political philosophy—the "good life" and the "good regime." The philosophical investigation of the question of the environment in relation to the theme of the good life is opposed to two inter-related ways of thinking about the environment. One is historicist which I shall consider at length in Chapter 2, and the other is sociological or structural which I shall discuss here briefly.

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[19] Jamieson goes on to give Aldo Leopold, Rachel Carson, E. F. Schumacher, and Vaclav Hável as examples to these "small voices" championing values. See Carnegie Council, "Can Cultural Values Save the Environment?," September 13, 2006, http://www.cceia.org/resources/transcripts/5393.html.

[20] Steve Kretzmann and John Sellers, "Environmentalism's Winter of Discontent," *Social Policy* 35 (Spring 2005): 38.

[21] Ibid.

The proposition that environmental problems and sensibilities must be viewed normatively as matters of human agency is denied by the strain of environmental theory employing sociological or structural analysis. This type of analysis overemphasizes the structural dimension of human action prior to individual human choice and human nature.[22] When this analysis is used to study environmentalism, the objective element, environmental problems, can be simply represented as an unintentional by-product of a flawed mega-structure or framework—be it industrialism, capitalism, over-population, or technology. The subjective element of agency, environmentalism or environmentalists, in turn may be interpreted sociologically as a frivolous middle-class preoccupation. This view looks plausible especially considering that there are many more serious problems in the world today, such as hunger, poverty, oppression, discrimination, and ethno-religious conflict.[23] In this macro-level analysis, environmental damage would appear to be stemming from the way economic and political institutions are designed. The solution would then point toward a combination of technological innovation, institutional reforms, and social change/transformation. A corollary of this view is the belief that it is futile, or at best inadequate, to invoke personal virtue in the public sphere since what is first and foremost needed is structural social change. Jamieson takes note of this dilemma in relation to contemporary environmental politics:

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[22] This is a form of the classic agent/structure problem debated in the social sciences. The Marxist infrastructure/super-structure problem which downplays the role of human agency is one variant. See Dennis H. Wrong, "The Oversocialized Conception of Man in Modern Sociology," *American Sociological Review* 26.2 (1961): 183-93.

[23] See, for instance, the left critique of the early ecology movement by Richard Neuhaus, *In Defense of People: Ecology and the Seduction of Radicalism* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1971); and Hans Magnus Enzensberger, "A Critique of Political Ecology," in *Critical Essays*, ed. Reinhold Grimm and Bruce Armstrong (New York: Continuum, 1982), 186-223. A similar view is presented affirmatively and/or neutrally in the "new social movements" literature and the affiliated post-materialist values thesis of Ronald Inglehart; see Luke Martell, *Ecology and Society* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1994), 108-37.

> One consequence of framing the problems in this way [as technical problems] is that ordinary citizens are excluded as responsible agents from this discourse. *If the problem is seen as the tragedy of the commons, for example, then there is no question of individual responsibility in producing the problem, because, after all, people are simply behaving as people do; it's a structural problem*. Similarly, when problems are framed in this way, the idea that human agency may be involved in finding solutions to these problems also tends to drop out. When we talk about the possibilities of hydrogen cars or of sequestering carbon, where are people in this story?[24] (emphasis added)

The major problem with the macro-level analysis of environmental problems and environmentalism is its neglect of the subtle interplay between ethics and politics. Yes, structural factors, situations, and collective action problems such as the "tragedy of commons" or the structural conditions underlying population increase play a role in the creation of environmental problems, but human beings continually make decisions, which are partially voluntary, that lead to, support, and reproduce these structures and situations. In a city which is not designed to promote biking, walking, or reliable public transportation, one would be forced to own a private car regardless of one's environmental sensibilities. Still, those living conditions are created and sustained by human decisions and can in turn be modified through individual agency. The extent to which this individual agency can be effective will still depend on external factors but the relevant structural factors should not distract our attention away from motives or ends inspiring action.

Another insight we can gain from viewing the question of the environment philosophically and normatively is showing healthy skepticism toward technical solutions. Being an environmental technophile would perpetuate the mistaken belief that all we need is a keen eye for the right technical "solution" in tackling environmental problems. A research program in environmental sociology called "ecological modernization" argues, for instance, that "environmental problems can best be solved through *further* advancement of technology

[24] Carnegie Council, "Can Cultural Values Save the Environment?"

and industrialization."[25] Technological innovation can certainly be helpful to an extent, but promoting it as *the* solution obviates even raising the question of the "environment." For the technological way of thinking does not tell us what course of action needs to be taken. Neither does it satisfy the longing for understanding the question of the environment.

The usefulness of the technological option for environmental problems has been questioned by various environmental scholars. William Ophuls, for instance, openly positions himself against technological optimists when he bluntly remarks that "those seeking merely practical cures to our collective ills are doomed to frustration, because the real remedy is political, not technological."[26] Another environmental scholar, David Orr, similarly questions the viability of "technology" as a long-term solution. Orr observes that the physical disorder which has been called "environmental problems" or more gravely as "ecological crisis" is actually indicative of a more subtle disorder in the intellectual priorities and commitments of the present age, and he questions the widespread hope that "environmental problems" can be coped with through further technological innovation:

> It is widely assumed that environmental problems will be solved by technology of one sort or another. Better technology can certainly help, but the crisis is not first and foremost one of technology. Rather, it is a crisis within the minds that develop and use technology. The disordering of ecological systems and of the great bio-geochemical cycles of the earth reflects a prior disorder in the thought, perception, imagination, intellectual priorities, and loyalties inherent in the industrial mind. Ultimately, then, the ecological crisis concerns how we think and the institutions that purport to shape and refine the capacity to think.[27]

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[25] Dana R. Fisher and William R. Freudenburg, "Ecological Modernization and its Critics: Assessing the Past and Looking Toward the Future," *Society and Natural Resources* 14.8 (2001): 701-09.

[26] William Ophuls, "The Rousseauean Moment," *The Good Society* 11.3 (2002): 91.

[27] David W. Orr, *Earth in Mind: On Education, Environment and the Human Prospect* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 1994), 2.

Orr's emphasis on thought rather than technology is "motivated by an ethical view of the world and our obligations to it."[28] This view requires "to recognize limits." The next section outlines the contours of contemporary environmentalism and the specific cross section of environmental issues that the present inquiry takes as a reference point. In the third section I examine the views that are either dismissive toward Aristotle or argue for his incompatibility with contemporary environmental sensibilities. I develop my response to this critique in the forth section arguing that the theme of the good life is the best way to conceptualize Aristotle's relevance to the question of the environment. The fifth and the last section is a review of the existing literature on the Aristotle-environment connection.

1.2 Contemporary Environmentalism

The term "environmentalism" and its cognates in this dissertation denote "the ideas and activities of those concerned with the protection or proper use of the natural environment or natural resources."[29] This is a broad enough definition to cover a whole range of positions from environmental scholarship to environmental advocacy and from "radical environmentalism" to its mainstream cousin "reform environmentalism." We must also note that the term environmentalism "has referred in the past to the many varieties of geographical determinism" but it has now "firmly established itself . . . as referring principally to questions concerning the physical environment."[30] Even though the term environmentalism in this latter sense is relatively new as it dates back to the 1950s,

[28] Ibid., 3.

[29] For this definition, see Joseph M. Petulla, *American Environmentalism: Values, Tactics, Priorities* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1980), x.

[30] Ibid., ix-x.

environmental historians have suggested that the roots of environmental sensibilities go back to the nineteenth century and even earlier.[31]

To be sure, environmental ideas and activities vary so much that a single catchall term such as "environmentalism" and the "environment" is insufficient to capture a wide range of different ideas, intentions, and activities. Both "environmentalism" and "the environment" can at best serve as shorthand for a number of (and often competing) narratives which have a family resemblance to one another. To make the diversity of environmental terrain somewhat manageable for the purposes of my inquiry, I will primarily be engaging with environmental theory literature that has grown out of the overlapping sub-fields of environmental studies: "environmental ethics," "environmental philosophy," and "environmental political theory."[32] None of these disciplines subscribe to a definite position. What is common to much of the work in these fields is their non-technical approach the question concerning the environment which emphasizes the important role of ideas in bringing about both negative and positive environmental change.

An important distinction that needs to be mentioned at the outset is the relationship between the cognates of the term "environment" and those of the term "ecology." There is no convention in environmental theory literature on this issue as some scholars emphatically distinguish the two terms while others use them interchangeably. I will be consistently using

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[31] The pre-modern and modern roots of contemporary environmental thought have been explored, *inter alia*, in the following works: Clarence J. Glacken, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore: Nature and Culture in Western Thought from Ancient Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967); Donald Worster, *Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, [1977] 1994); Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980); Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England, 1500-1800* (New York: Oxford University Press, [1983]1996); Anna Bramwell, *Ecology in the 20th Century: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); and David Pepper, *Modern Environmentalism: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1996).

[32] These three subfields of environmental studies have much in common, but the distinctions among them reflect the background disciplines of their practitioners. Environmental political theory is linked with political science and the other two with philosophy. Environmental philosophy has a more comprehensive scope than environmental ethics. Whereas the primary focus of environmental ethics has been axiology (value theory), environmental philosophy covers other philosophical inquiries such as ontology and technology.

the term "environment" throughout the dissertation without necessarily implying that they are identical or different. For I believe that behind the terminological disagreement lies a more substantive issue. Those who prefer to see a distinction between "environment" and "ecology" use the term "ecology" and its cognates "ecological" and "ecologism" for "radical" or "revolutionary" stance on the question concerning the environment. It is the nature of this stance that we must focus on. We should ask what makes a stance "radical" or "revolutionary" rather than how "ecology" is "radical." For what makes "ecology" radical is not anything inherent to the scientific discipline known as "ecology." It is rather the ideas of those who seize on the term "ecology" to communicate their radicalism to public.

The term "ecology" appears in the schools of thought "deep ecology"—associated with the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess and adopted by his followers in the US—and "social ecology"—associated with the left-wing activist and author Murray Bookchin—in this radical sense.[33] Although these two approaches disagree about many things, they are at one in their opposition to and critique of managerial and technical approach to environmental problems which are common in mainstream environmentalism. These two competing approaches similarly believe that environmental problems are not merely technical matters that can be resolved with the tools of science, conventional politics, policy-making, and legislation, let alone mere technological ingenuity. What is important to them is effecting a fundamental change in values, attitudes, and institutions.[34]

Like other modern social movements and ideologies, environmentalism comes in various shades. There are numerous forms of environmental, ecological, or green politics in

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[33] See, for instance, Murray Bookchin, "Ecology and Revolutionary Thought," in *Post-Scarcity Anarchism* (Montreal: Black Rose, [1971] 2004), 19-40; and Arne Naess, "The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement: A Summary," *Inquiry* 16 (1973): 95-100.

[34] Institutional change is more emphasized by "social ecology" though.

both theory and praxis. To illustrate the diversity in contemporary environmental theory literature, let me enumerate a dizzying number of approaches which are at times competing and at times overlapping: deep ecology, social ecology, political ecology, ecofeminism, ecosocialism, ecoliberalism, ecoanarchism, ecocentrism, ecohumanism, eco-authoritarianism, ecofascism, animal liberation, conservationism, preservationism, bioregionalism, survivalism, free market environmentalism, civic environmentalism, environmental justice, ecological democracy, sustainable development, and ecological modernization.[35]

A number of spectrums, taxonomies, and typologies have been constructed by environmental scholars to make intelligible the diversity of environmental theory and praxis. Among them are several variations of the aforementioned contrast between radical and reformist stances on the question of the environment: dark-green versus light-green; Green versus green (with lower case "g"); ecologism versus environmentalism; and radical environmentalism versus reform/mainstream environmentalism.[36] The following figure[37] neatly captures these variations on a spectrum ranging from denying the salience of environmental problems on the one end (left) to judicious use and management of environmental values at the center to their interpretation as a civilizational challenge on the other end (right):

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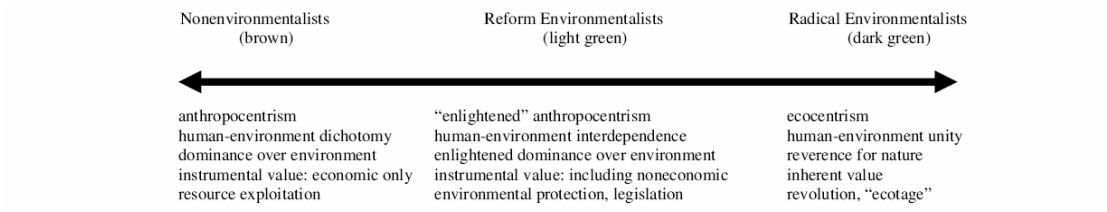
[35] For a longer list, see Stephen C. Young, "The Different Dimensions of Green Politics," *Environmental Politics* 1.1 (1992): 9-44; Andrew Vincent, "The Character of Ecology," *Environmental Politics* 2.2 (1993): 248-76; Marcel Wissenburg, "A Taxonomy of Green Ideas," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 2.1 (1997): 29-50; and Peter R. Hay, *Main Currents in Western Environmental Thought* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 35-6.

[36] See, for instance, Timothy O'Riordan, *Environmentalism*, 2nd ed. (London: Pion, 1981); Andrew Dobson, *Green Political Thought: An Introduction*, 4th ed. (London: Routledge, [1990] 2007); and Robyn Eckersley, *Environmentalism and Political Theory: Toward and Ecocentric Approach* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992).

[37] This figure is borrowed from Paul Nadasdy, "Transcending the Debate over the Ecologically Noble Indian: Indigenous Peoples and Environmentalism," *Ethnohistory* 52.2 (2005): 300.



The Spectrum of Environmentalism

Those who use these distinctions often value the opinions and actions that gravitate to the right end of the spectrum. The common dichotomy between the "reform" and "radical," which rests on a normative presupposition (i.e., the latter is better than the former), has led to the criticism that these abstract ideal types distort the more nuanced reality on the ground. The critique is warranted as it is too often forgotten that the map is not the territory. For single-spectrum binary theoretical constructs such as these cannot truly account for the geographical differences, temporal changes, and rhetorical nuances of real people and groups which all together make up the "environmental movement" or its different streams.

What we find in the real world are often hybrid cases of these ideal type constructs. Some of these hybrids may combine features of the very same dichotomous pair and others may require a second or even a third point of comparison such as "spiritual" versus "materialist" and "localist" versus "globalist" to be truly distinguished from one another.[38] For instance, both "deep ecology" and "social ecology" are considered schools of radical ecology or environmentalism but the former is non-materialist whereas the latter is materialist.[39] If one goes further and examines the views of "deep ecologists" and "social

[38] For a critique of this spectrum, see Nadasdy, 295-301.

[39] Michael E. Zimmerman, for instance, treats both schools under "radical ecology" in his *Contesting Earth's Future: Radical Ecology and Postmodernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

ecologists," one can even find many differences among those who are lumped together under the same category.[40]

As "environmentalism" is constituted by diverse strands of thought and praxis, so are environmental problems and issues. There is a large variety of them: land, air, water pollution, deforestation, erosion, desertification, deforestation, species extinction, global warming, depletion of natural resources, epidemics, urban sprawl, mistreatment of animals, genetically modified crops and so on and so forth. Grouping all these socio-ecological phenomena wholesale under a single category of "environmental problems" or "environmental issues" is admittedly a gallant oversimplification. Theoretical categorizations naturally compromise the vividness and distinctiveness of empirical conditions on the ground. Despite this great variety of environmental issues, it is desirable to discern common features that apply to at least some of them. For the present inquiry, environmental issues and problems will be limited to those that I believe to emerge from the interface of conflicts between the exigencies of "progress" and "conservation," that is, between social interests advancing "progress" or "development" on the basis of growth in material production and consumption per capita (either nationally or globally) and those defending the conservation of cultural and ecological heritage (either nationally or globally). I will hereafter refer to this subset of environmental issues as "developmental," which will serve as the backdrop of my argument for the environmental relevance and significance of Aristotle.

A few words on what is meant by "environmental problems." As John Passmore notes, environmental or ecological problems are not like scientific or mathematical problems. An environmental problem is rather similar to a social problem such as

[40] See, for instance, Andrew Light, ed., *Social Ecology After Bookchin* (New York: Guilford Press, 1998); and Eric Katz, Andrew Light, and David Rothenberg, ed., *Beneath the Surface: Critical Essays in the Philosophy of Deep Ecology* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000).

alcoholism, crime, and traffic accidents which "we believe that our society would be better off without it." [41] Hence, there is an immediate normative implication in identifying certain things in the world as "problems." There is an assumption that societies can be arranged in such a way that we can live without them, that they are not our fate. Passmore is certainly right about the normative implication of framing "features of our society, arising out of our dealings with nature, from which we do not regard as inevitable consequences of what is good in that society" as "ecological problems."[42] But there is always an inherent danger in using an inherently mathematical idiom for matters of praxis. One critic of environmentalism notes that framing these features as "problems" can mislead us into technocratic or social engineering view of environmental politics:

> speaking of "solutions" to environmental problems is a kind of category mistake. It treats environmental problems as if they were problems in mathematics or engineering: if we know the right technique, or if we have the proper information, we can find a finite and definitive solution. Of course, environmental policies do have large scientific and technical components, and it is absolutely necessary to develop policies with the best such information available—including knowledge of the disagreements on the science. But at root, environmental problems are *political problems, involving divergent priorities and diverse or competing visions of the kind of world we want to live in.*[43] (emphasis original)

We cannot possibly know at present (and it is doubtful whether we can ever know) if it will ever be possible to actualize the open-ended promise of modernity—freedom and equality for all—without causing serious environmental problems. As I have mentioned earlier, the research project of ecological modernization is an attempt to prove that this is

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[41] John Passmore, *Man's Responsibility for Nature: Ecological Problems and Western Traditions* (New York: Scribner, 1974), 43.

[42] Ibid., 44.

[43] Charles T. Rubin, "The Principle of Compromise," 2001, http://www.marshall.org/article.php?id=20.

possible based on the evidence gathered from some advanced industrialized societies.[44] Modern societies can perhaps retain and even keep increasing their material wealth via technological innovation without forsaking their material comforts and amenities along the way. This has been the classic Enlightenment proposition as well. Today this position is known as "technological optimisim" and is premised on the thesis that a win-win situation is conceivable. According to this position, progress does not have to involve a trade-off. We can have our cake and eat it. The critic of technology, Ivan Illich, observed this trend in 1973: "It has become fashionable to say that where science and technology have created problems, it is only more scientific understanding and better technology that can carry us past them. The cure for bad management is more management. The cure for specialized research is more costly interdisciplinary research, just as the cure for polluted rivers is more costly nonpolluting detergents."[45] A proponent of this view affirms that "scientific or technological remedies can be found for most of the hateful and unintended misadventures or miscarriages associated with the advance of technology."[46]

The California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has recently committed himself to demonstrate the truth of this view. He aims to show that environmentalism and hedonism can coexist, that environmentalism can attain its ends without marketing "guilt and limits," that environmentalism can rather be "muscular" and "sexy." Having converted one of his two hummers to biofuel and the other to hydrogen, Schwarzenegger embraces the technology option enthusiastically:

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[44] For a sympathetic discussion of ecological modernization by its foremost proponents, see Arthur P. J. Mol and David A. Sonnenfeld, *Ecological Modernisation Around the World: Perspectives and Critical Debates* (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2000).

[45] Ivan Illich, *Tools for Conviviality* (Harper & Row Publishers, 1973).

[46] P. B. Medawar, *The Hope of Progress* (London: Methuen, 1972), 16.

> Protecting the environment does not require us to be against large SUVs or trucks. Instead we should develop technology to cut down greenhouse gas emissions because that is where the action is—it's not about what the size of the car is. We just have to redo the vehicles.[47]

This sort of technological optimism, as I have alluded to above, is recently called into question.[48] Technological tools can certainly solve some of our problems. There is no doubt about that. The question is "is this what we all need?" There is also an ignored aspect of the increasing use of science and technology to fight off environmental and other kinds of problems. The definitive solution of environmental problems necessitates the increase of scientists' and technical experts' political influence as the aforementioned scientist implies: "I have more faith in scientific than in political man if only because the solution of the scientific element of the problem is much easier, being so much less handicapped by the inertia of bigotry and self-interest."[49] This is a sentiment many environmental scientists would share today. However, the increasing dependence on expert knowledge contradicts other cherished ideals of modernity: democratization and individual autonomy.[50] This very dilemma is a good reason to turn to Aristotle for insight.

1.3 Skeptics on Aristotle's Relevance to the Environment

Yet, there are certain obstacles to seeking insight into a subject that was almost a non-issue to the ancients. Although Aristotle has been recognized through the ages as a great philosopher, what can he possibly have to say on the contemporary issue of the

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[47] "We Should Be Saying: Keep the Luxury Car," *Spiegel Online International*, March 12, 2007, http://www.spiegel.de/international/spiegel/0,1518,471152,00.html; "The Green Giant," *Newsweek*, April 16, 2007, http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/17996834/site/_newsweek/.

[48] See footnote 5 above.

[49] Medawar, 17.

[50] See Frank Fischer, *Citizens, Experts, and the Environment: The Politics of Local Knowledge* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000).

"environment"? Although environmental problems surely had existed then and even much earlier, they were nowhere near as serious and complex as those we experience today. Furthermore, Aristotle never wrote on the issue of the "environment" or "ecology," worse, he held that the word and species were eternal. We now know that both Earth and species were non-existent about five billion years ago. A skeptic would be naturally inclined to think that with their meager knowledge of ecology and geology and little experience of environmental problems the ancients cannot reasonably be expected to be of much help to us today with respect to our environmental predicaments.

Richard E. Hart, for instance, dismisses the relevance of classical ethics and Aristotle to the question of the environment because the ancients do not even possess the right vocabulary and orientation to deal with them. Theirs was oriented to the individual:

> The thrust of classical ethics was on the self, on its personal excellence and on its happiness and fulfillment. And even though, for Aristotle, ethics was a branch of politics, his ethics centered on ways for the individual to achieve "eudaimonia" or specifically *human* excellence. [51]

"In sharp contrast," Hart goes on to argue, "Environmental Ethics is a group ethics, centered not on the self but on the human community as it interacts with a shared physical world. Its central concern is with the results of group choices which fall on all collectively." [52] By "group choices," Hart probably means "policies" and uses "choice" in a metaphorical sense otherwise societies hardly make consensual choices as a single entity. Seen this way, it is clear that Hart means "laws" by "group ethics." To continue, Hart further claims that environmental ethics differs from ancient ethics in that the former "forgoes the luxury of pursuing happiness, recognizing the stark fact that physical survival takes precedence over all

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[51] Richard E. Hart, ed., *Ethics and the Environment* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1992), 5.

[52] Ibid.

else in the order of ethical concerns."[53] Hart encapsulates the fatal flaw of environmentalists looking up to the motivation of fear, after Hobbes, to control or guide praxis. Hart's objection, which I shall address more extensively in Chapter 5, is flawed for assuming that we can speak of "ethics" without touching on the question of human excellence and perfection—a common problem with all environmental ethicists who single out anthropocentrism as a moral vice and insist on creating a new environmental ethics or ethic.

Another scholar, John Poulakos, on the other hand, notes that "the Greek thinkers" did not address the issue of *physis* in the modern sense possibly because they did not experience environmental degradation.[54] Hence, "the notion of responsibility" stemming from environmental problems cannot be expected to be found in their philosophy. Primarily for this reason, "the Greeks cannot be said to have developed a philosophy of ecology or an environmental ethics in the contemporary sense." Although Poulakos is far from claiming the total irrelevance of the ancients—as he finds an alternative "point of entry into the Greek understanding of the natural environment" and "clues that can lead us to a sound environmental awareness" in the *physis/nomos* debate—his remark that the ancients lacked "the notion of responsibility" nonetheless casts doubts on the relevance of Aristotle. True, environmental degradation was less of a nuisance for the ancients.[55] But what is "responsibility" if not a new substitute term for the traditional notions of "duty" and

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[53] Ibid.

[54] John Poulakos, "The *Physis-Nomos* Debate and the Modern Discourse on the Environment," in *Philosophy and Ecology*, Vol. II, eds. Konstantine Boudouris and Kostas Kalimtzis (Athens: Ionia Publications, 1999), 184.

[55] Environmental problems such as deforestation, land erosion, and water pollution dogged many ancient geographies including the Greek peninsula. See, for instance, J. Donald Hughes, *Ecology in Ancient Civilizations* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1975); J. Donald Hughes, *Pan's Travail: Environmental Problems of the Ancient Greeks and Romans* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994); Patricia Jeskins, *The Environment and the Classical World* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1998); and Livio Rossetti, "The Oldest Known Ecological Law in Context," in *Thinking About the Environment: Our Debt to the Classical and Medieval Past*, ed. Thomas M. Robinson and Laura Westra (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002), 43-57.

"virtue"? It is well-known that the lack of a specific term in another culture is not tantamount to the absence of the concept itself. Responsibility is merely the precondition of virtue and vice. Furthermore, Poulakos treats the "philosophy of ecology or an environmental ethics in the contemporary sense" as monolithic and uncontested, ignoring the frequent disagreements among environmental philosophers and scientists on several points, and the further possibility that the notion of responsibility may be the wrong concept in conceptualizing the question of the environment.[56] The present inquiry differs from that of Poulakos less in offering an alternative point of entry—mine is Aristotle's reflections on the triad of *praxis*, *phusis*, and *techne*—than in claiming that the contemporary environmental theorists too are in need of correction in certain ways.

In a similar vein, Daryl M. Tress vitiates her otherwise insightful comparison of the classical view of nature with contemporary ecology.[57] She notes certain points of contact between ancients and contemporary ecology/environmentalism but then concludes that "the classical views of Plato and Aristotle differ markedly from contemporary ecology in several important respects." Despite the shared elements, Tress enumerates three major differences:

> [1] From the classical point of view, nature's unity is the result of *psyche* and formal and final causes. Ecology, on the other hand, explains nature's interconnection by way of an evolutionary framework and modern material causality. [2] Furthermore, their characterizations of holism differ: From the classical perspective, nature is a stable, everlasting whole of (more or less) stable kinds arranged hierarchically. Ecology views nature and natural entities as shifting populations in a benign, non-hierarchical "network" of relations, forced into a constant process of struggle for survival—a struggle that now is primarily against the damage inflicted by human beings. [3] And while ecology and environmentalism share with classical philosophy a deep respect for the intrinsic value of nature, their views diverge about the responsibility for the maintenance of nature's integrity.[58] (emphasis original)

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[56] Poulakos, 185, 183.

[57] Daryl M. Tress, "The Philosophical Genesis of Ecology and Environmentalism," in *The Greeks and the Environment*, eds. Laura Westra and Thomas M. Robinson (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997).

[58] Ibid., 42.

All three points—nature's unity, holism, and responsibility—may well be true. But both Poulakos and Tress commit a historicist-positivistic error by failing to raise questions over the validity of ecology and the popular discourse on the environment. Why do we need to understand the question of the environment according to the most recent opinions of ecologists? What if they are wrong? Tress exemplifies the error of assuming unity among contemporary environmentalists and ecologists as if there is a mutually agreed set of scientific principles guiding human relationship with nature. If this were true, there would be no need for calls for a new environmental ethic.

The preceding objections to Aristotle's or ancient Greeks' relevance on the basis of the cultural and historical specificity of environmental issues miss the point that environmental issues are not merely "technical" problems awaiting scientific solutions. Things that we identify as "environmental" issues or problems actually possess a non-technical aspect of human experience transcending the particularity of disparate cultures and historical periods. The question of the "environment" invites us to reflect not only on how to tackle it but more importantly on why environmental degradation occurs in the first place and why we should care. Human beings do not destroy their environments for pleasure. They do it indirectly when they engage in productive and consumptive activities, leisure, or wars. Without considering these everyday activities, technical solutions will remain ineffective in the long term. Hence, the question of "how" is secondary to and dependent on the questions of "why." The "why" question on the other hand is not simply specific to the present time or modern culture.

True, we should not underestimate the difficulties attending the introduction of ideas from one historical period, culture, or language into another. I will discuss in Chapters 2 through 4 how Aristotle's discussions of *praxis*, *phusis*, and *techne* differ from those that have

gained ground in the modern era. The ancient and modern conceptions of nature are indeed different:

> The nature to be mastered [in the modern era] was no longer the Greek *physis*, or the living and even reasonable center of order in man and the world, but a lifeless and so unreasonable extension in the void, moving in accordance with the laws of mechanics but blind to the rational purpose of the human soul. Nature in the sense of matter was thus sundered from soul or mind in God and man.[59] (emphasis original)

Yet, we cannot affirm the truth of the modern conception of "nature" without considering its ancient alternative. Aristotle, unlike the modern discourse on nature, does not reify nature as matter. All natural beings for Aristotle are ensouled. The Greek *physis* is not an extended realm of objects to be conquered or dominated. "*Physis* is never that 'nature' out there where people make Sunday excursions, 'in' which this and that occurs or this and that is such and such."[60] Aristotle treats nature rather as an indestructible source of motion and speaks of entities which move on their own as natural. In this regard, nature is an agent and different from the modern scientific interpretation of nature as the totality of everything material or as an extended realm of landscape. As I discuss in Chapter 3, Aristotle's account of "natural beings" allows agency or subjectivity to non-human beings and can be at an advantage to deal with environmental issues for this reason.

A premise of this dissertation is that there is today need for deep thinking on the philosophical import of environmental matters which will pay heed to the psychological and the socio-political response to the empirical dimension of the environment. It is this need for reflection that justifies re-visiting Aristotle in search of practical wisdom in our dealings with the rest of nature. It is a persisting dimension of human experience that elicits our

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[59] Stanley Rosen, *The Ancients and the Moderns* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 22.

[60] Wolfgang Schadewaldt, "The Concepts of *Nature* and *Technique* According to the Greeks," *Research in Philosophy and Technology*, Vol. 2, (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1979), 160.

thinking beyond the day-to-day environmental problems and solutions, and raises the *meta*-physical questions with respect to ethics and politics. Hence, the way forward in recovering Aristotle for environmental purposes does not lie in tracing the anachronistic traces of environmental concern or sensibilities in his writings but in his philosophy of praxis as it speaks to the contemporary problematic relationship of technology with nature.

If read from this angle, Aristotle's philosophy has the capacity to illuminate the normative and ideological bases of contemporary environmentalism. Considering the recent debates among American and European environmentalists as to what the goals and methods of environmentalism should be, bringing in Aristotle might be timely. There is a growing feeling and recognition among environmentalists that environmentalism is losing ground despite sporadic victories registered in courthouses and legislatures. In the US, this condition is a consequence of a broader problem, namely, the loss of political vision and direction of environmentalism. In Europe, the situation is slightly different. There, the partial success of environmental reforms has led to the gradual dilution of greens' core commitments.[61] I shall discuss this issue in Chapter 6.

1.4 Aristotle's Contemporary Relevance

> Only a rash man would say that Aristotle's view . . . has been refuted. But whatever one might think of his answers, certainly the fundamental questions to which they are the answers are identical with the fundamental questions that are of immediate concern to us today. Realizing this, we realize at the same time that the epoch which regarded Aristotle's fundamental questions as obsolete completely lacked clarity about what the fundamental issues are.[62]

Leo Strauss is here referring to the offhanded dismissal of Aristotle in the modern era by the likes of Hobbes who boldly attempted to dethrone Aristotle from his position in

[61] See footnote 10 above.

[62] Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 23.

the universities as the flaws in his natural philosophy was revealed by modern scientists. Hobbes claimed that we could have no benefit from following Aristotle any more as his works are used by the Scholastics to spread fallacies and ignorance: "I believe that scarce anything can be more absurdly said in natural philosophy than that which now is called *Aristotle's Metaphysics*; nor more repugnant to government than much of that he hath said in his *Politics*; nor more ignorantly, than a great part of his *Ethics*."[63] Yet, I shall argue that no figure in the history of political philosophy is more qualified than Aristotle to speak to the socio-political and normative dimension of the environment.

Aristotle's contemporary relevance comes out especially with respect to the disappearance of "quality" as an ontological category from modern scientific discourse and its resultant effect on social sciences. This may sound too abstruse but the everyday implications of this transformation can be observed in the invasion of the lifeworld by monetary calculations.[64] We should also note that things termed as moral, aesthetic, or cultural "values" which are not measurable by monetary means are ultimately based on "quality." Today, we are grappling with the difficulty of assigning non-monetary value (such as aesthetic beauty or intrinsic value) to nature because modern science tells us that the realm of "is" (nature) or the objective reality has nothing to do with "value" which corresponds to the subjective or inter-subjective realm of humanity.

This is a major conundrum and we witness its practical implications every day especially in the conflict between "economics" and "ecology." Modern discourse of progress

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[63] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch. 46.

[64] For the prevalence of quantitative outlook in contemporary everyday life and possible modes of resistance to it, see Robert M. Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: An Inquiry into Values* (New York: William Morrow, 1974); Albert Borgmann, *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life: A Philosophical Inquiry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); Leon R. Kass, *The Hungry Soul: Eating and the Perfecting of Our Nature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); and Christopher Alexander, *The Nature of Order,* 4 vols. (Berkeley, CA: The Center for Environmental Structure, 2005).

or development rests on the discipline of economics which mimics the mathematically oriented natural science. This view of science has become conceivable only after the rejection of Aristotelian teleology in the early modern era. Aristotle's teleology primarily applies to the organic processes of coming-to-be or becoming. Natural beings move toward an "end" (*telos*) to come to completion (*Meta.* 999b9-12). For beings or processes that change, the end operates as a limit on them and define them (*Meta.* 994b8-16). For Aristotle, "everything that in itself and by its own nature is good is an end, and a cause in the sense that for its sake the other things both come to be and are." But "in the case of unchangeable things this principle [of change] could not exist, nor could there be a good-itself." For this reason, the mathematical sciences which pertain to unchangeable things "take no account of goods [*agathōn*] and evils [*kakōn*]" (*Meta.* 996a21-36).

As Koyré notes, Aristotle's account of nature is non-mathematical because mathematical physics abstracts from "secondary qualities" such as color and Aristotle's physics is qualitative:

> Aristotelian physics is based on sense-perception, and is therefore decidedly non-mathematical. It refuses to substitute mathematical abstractions for the colorful, qualitatively determined facts of common experience, and it denies the very possibility of a mathematical physics on the ground (a) of the nonconformity of mathematical concepts to the data of sense-experience, (b) of the inability of mathematics to explain quality and to deduce movement. There is no quality, and no motion, in the timeless realm of figure and number.[65]

The mathematization of nature wrought by modern physicists has since then given rise to the quantitative study of human behavior as methodological debates over positivism, behavioralism, and rational choice in social sciences throughout the twentieth century bear witness to. Aristotle gives primacy to qualitative changes in explaining human behavior.

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[65] Alexandre Koyré, "Galileo and the Scientific Revolution of the Seventeenth Century," *The Philosophical Review* 52.4 (1943): 338. See also Richard Falckenberg, *History of Modern Philosophy, from Nicolas of Cusa to the Present Time*, trans. A. C. Armstrong (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1897), 56-63.

Human beings have ends by virtue of their being naturally generated. Their coming-to-be toward their ends involve qualitative modifications. Some of these are moral qualities (*hexeis*) and are more specifically called virtues (*aretē*) and vices (*kakia*):

> Virtue and vice fall among these modifications [*pathēmatōn*]; for they indicate differentiae of the movement or activity, according to which the things in motion act or are acted on well or badly; for that which can be moved or act in one way is good, and that which can do so in another—the contrary—way is vicious. Good and evil indicate quality [*to poion*] especially in living things [*epi tōn empsuchōn*], and among these especially in those which have purpose [*epi tois echousi proairesin*]. (*Meta.* 1020b18-25)

Aristotle's position here contrasts with the subjectivism of modern philosophy. Thus, Hume compares moral qualities to secondary qualities which are not to be found in the objective realm of nature:

> [W]hen you pronounce any action or character to be vicious, you mean nothing, but that from the constitution of your nature you have a feeling or sentiment of blame from the contemplation of it. Vice and virtue, therefore, may be compared to sounds, colours, heat and cold, which, according to modern philosophy, are not qualities in objects, but perceptions in the mind.[66]

It is critical to note that this passage appears right before where Hume makes his famous "is/ought" distinction, which is the successor to the modern "objective/subjective" as well as the antecedent of Max Weber's "facts/values" distinction.

Quantitative relationships, on the other hand, cannot institute or support immanent normative constraints. This is especially true for the pursuit of wealth:

> just as expertise in medicine has no limit with respect to being healthy, or any of the other arts with respect to its end (for this is what they particularly wish to accomplish), while there is a limit with respect to what exists for the sake of the end (since the end is a limit in the case of all of them), so with this sort of expertise in business [*chrēmatistikēs*] there is no limit with respect to the end, and the end is wealth of this sort and possession of goods. (*Pol.* 1257b25-30)

The question of the environment today is ultimately an upshot of the epistemological and political changes which resulted in the prevalence of quantity over quality in both natural

[66] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, edited by L. A. Selby-Bigge, 2nd ed. revised by P.H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 469.

sciences and economics. The convergence of physics and mathematics in the modern era has led to the de-emphasis of qualitative processes in natural beings.[67] As Guénon points out, "the claim to reduce quality to quantity is most characteristic of modern science."[68] And as a contemporary sociologist points out, wealth is seen today as "a superior and adequate substitute for symbolic impoverishment" of cultural milieu. Quantity has replaced quality and "the answer to all questions of 'what for?' is 'more.' "[69]

This difference has become particularly salient in our era due to the increasing role of the modern discipline of economics. Contemporary environmentalism can be roughly characterized as a reaction to this distortion of perspective by quantitative economists. Economics since its inception in the eighteenth century has attempted to mimic the success of physics in discovering and prescribing the immutable laws of nature.[70] In doing so, it has basically excluded the social relationships of quality from its scope. The view of economics as an exact science still prevails today as economics enjoys a privileged status as the only social science deemed worthy of a Nobel Prize. Since the early nineteenth century, a number of economy theorists such as Simonde de Sismondi have raised objections to this view.[71] Among twentieth century critics, we can count Ralph Borsodi, Karl Polanyi, E. F.

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[67] For the mathematization of physics at the hands of the sixteenth and seventeenth century scientists such as Galileo and Newton, see Edwin A. Burtt, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science*, 2nd revised ed. (Mineola, NY: Dover, [1924] 2003).

[68] René Guénon, *The Crisis of the Modern World* (Hillsdale, NY: Sophia Perennis, [1927] 2001), 84. See also René Guénon, *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Time*, trans. Lord Northbourne (Hillsdale, NY: Sophia Perennis, [1945] 2001).

[69] Philip Rieff, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic: Uses of Faith After Freud* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, [1966] 2006), 54.

[70] Deborah A. Redman *The Rise of Political Economy As a Science: Methodology and the Classical Economists* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997).

[71] Simonde de Sismondi, *New Principles of Political Economy: Of Wealth in its Relation to Population*, trans. Richard Hyse (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1991). For other early critics of classical political economy, see Gerald Alonzo Smith, "The Purpose of Wealth: A Historical Perspective," in *Valuing the Earth: Economics, Ecology, Ethics*, ed. Herman E. Daly and Kenneth N. Townsend (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), 183-210.

Schumacher, and Herman Daly. All of these figures are heavily influenced by the Aristotelian distinction between *chrēmatistikē* (business expertise) and *oikonomia* (household management) which is alluded to in the above quote by Aristotle and which I shall discuss further below.[72]

Karl Marx similarly thought it to be misguided and deceptive to speak of economics in terms of the immutable laws of nature. He knew that human reality was changeable but looked for the origin of change in another abstraction which he borrowed from Hegel—"history." And he tried to explain this change through necessary laws of history. Both were major errors but his methodological critique of abstractionism in classical political economy was otherwise sound. At the base of this critique, which is Aristotelian to a degree, is the reduction of use-value to exchange-value. The Aristotelian influence on Marx is not incidental. It stems from the fact that Marx, like Aristotle, views human beings communally rather than atomistically. Marx also adds a historical dimension to human communities which is not found in Aristotle. Still, it is difficult to understand Marx's critique of modern society without understanding the Aristotelian element in his thought.[73] Marx's critique of capitalism is directed at the fact that under capitalism what matters utmost is the quantitative measurement of exchange-values. This fixation obliterates the distinction between use-value, which allows for qualitative differences, and exchange-value, which does not. The result of living under the rule of exchange-value, according to Marx, is fetishism, commodification,

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[72] See Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1944), 53-5; Herman E. Daly and John B. Cobb, Jr., *For the Common Good: Redirecting the Economy toward Community, the Environment, and a Sustainable Future*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 138-58.

[73] At the outset of his unpublished work *Grundrisse* (1857-58), Marx cites Aristotle's well-known expression *zoon politikon*: "The human being is in the most literal sense a *zoon politikon* [typed in Greek], not merely a gregarious animal, but an animal which can individuate itself only in the midst of society." In his major work *Capital*, Marx discusses Aristotle's discussion of use-value and exchange relations in *NE* V.5 even though he twists Aristotle for his purposes. Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (New York: The Modern Library, [1867] 1906), 68-9. For Marx's indebtedness to Aristotle, see, for instance, George E. McCarthy, *Marx and the Ancients: Classical Ethics, Social Justice and Nineteenth-Century Political Economy* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1990); and George E. McCarthy, ed., *Marx and Aristotle: Nineteenth-Century German Social Theory and Classical Antiquity* (Savage, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1992).

and alienation of life. In the end, Marx's critique targets the modern subordination of quality to quantity, or more accurately, the neglect of quality in social relationships of production.

The reign of quantity is implicated with the Baconian "great undertaking" of progress in the modern era "to extend more widely the limits of power and greatness of man" and "the effecting of all things possible."[74] The role of the Baconian creed in contemporary environmental problems has already been extensively discussed in the scholarly literature.[75] What is less explored is that this technological imperative has accompanied the rejection and/or dilution of Aristotelian philosophy of *praxis*—a theme discussed by many German scholars such as Leo Strauss and Hannah Arendt.[76] Environmental scholars have barely explored the modern break with the ancients on the conceptualization of the nexus of *techne*, *phusis*, and *praxis*. The prevailing or invasive role of *techne* has been noticed and discussed by some environmental scholars but the implications of the expanding role of *techne* for praxis has not been adequately discussed.[77]

There is an extensive literature on the critique of "progress" but not many considered the question of what this notion superseded in pre-modern philosophy. The most common line of critique developed against the notion of "progress" has been the charge of Eurocentrism or Western, and at times American, neo-colonialism particularly

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[74] Francis Bacon, *The New Organon and Related Writings*, ed. Fulton Anderson (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1960), 106; and *The Major Works*, ed. Brian Vickers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 480.

[75] See, among others, Lewis Mumford, *The Pentagon of Power* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1970); William Leiss, *The Domination of Nature* (New York: G. Braziller, 1972); Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980), 164-90; and Pepper, 135-48.

[76] See Franco Volpi, "The Rehabilitation of Practical Philosophy and Neo-Aristotelianism," in *Action and Contemplation*, eds. Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins (New York: SUNY Press, 1999), 3-25. This theme runs through German philosophy since Hegel. Among other major figures who contributed to this discussion are Marx, Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer and other contemporary German scholars associated with the Marxian Frankfurt School such as Habermas.

[77] Habermas calls this intrusion "the colonization of the life-world." The term "life-world" is a translation of the German term "lebenswelt" which is central to the philosophical school of phenomenology.

toward the Third World countries and indigenous people.[78] This line of argument, which is advanced both in and outside environmental literature, is confronted with the counter-charge of cultural relativism—the idea that diverging prevailing standards of different societies are incommensurable with one another. Paul Feyerabend, for instance, deployed his critical skills to undermine the claims of modern science to universalism and objectivity in a series of writings.[79] His attack on modern science led to the charge of relativism. Indeed, he was so as he explicitly defended this position in some of his early writings. However, he retreated from this position in his later writings.[80]

In the midst of all these debates over his relativism, what is forgotten is Feyerabend's assessment of the modern transformation of the aforementioned nexus of *techne*, *phusis*, and praxis. Feyerabend's attack on dogmatism of science was motivated by his practical interest in undermining the privilege granted to *episteme* in guiding human praxis. Even though he is recognized as a post-modern due to this critique, he is very much different from the type of post-modernists who lump together all Western tradition. Indeed, Feyerabend was very much influenced by Aristotle. It was Aristotle's empiricism and qualitative approach to reality that particularly attracted Feyerabend:

> For Aristotle knowledge was qualitative and observational. Today knowledge is quantitative and theoretical . . . . Many people, without much thought, prefer technology to harmony with Nature; hence, quantitative and theoretical information is regarded as 'real' and qualities as 'apparent' and secondary. But a culture that centres on humans, prefers personal acquaintance to abstract relations . . . and a naturalists' approach to that of molecular biologists will say that knowledge is

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[78] See, for instance, Richard B. Norgaard, *Development Betrayed: The End of Progress and a Co-Evolutionary Revisioning of the Future* (London: Routledge, 1994); Richard Peet, *Theories of Development* (New York: Guilford Press, 1999), Chapter 5; and Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *Development Theory: Deconstructions/Reconstructions* (London: Sage, 2001).

[79] Paul Feyerabend, *Science in a Free Society* (London: New Left Books, 1978); *Farewell to Reason* (London: Verso, 1987); and *Against Method*, 3rd ed. (London: Verso, [1975] 1993).

[80] See his Postscript to Against Method, 268-72; and *Conquest of Abundance: A Tale of Abstraction versus The Richness of Being*, ed. Bert Terpstra, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 33, 215-16.

> qualitative and will interpret quantitative laws as bookkeeping devices, not as elements of reality.[81]

The influence of Aristotelian empiricism on Feyerabend was mediated by the studies of the French philosopher of science Pierre Duhem on pre-modern science:

> An overriding respect for experts tends to blur the distinction between the political . . . and the scientific elements of our notions of reality: we are inclined to believe that the pronouncements of the experts are knowledge of the purest kind, without any admixture. A study of Aristotle, aided perhaps by a study of Duhem's exposition, restores clarity and returns to the citizens a power they relinquished by mistake.[82]

Feyerabend then goes on to praise "the holistic features of Aristotle's physics" against the "crudely reductionistic attitude" of modern physics. He notes that Aristotle's physics is "a general theory of change" and allows for "qualitative change such as the transfer of information from a wise teacher to an ignorant pupil."[83] He then concludes his defense of Aristotle on the following note: "we can learn a lot from Aristotle about knowledge, research, and the social implications of both."[84]

Given Feyerabend's later position, it is clear that his critique of progress or development is far from a simple one of bashing the West. Unlike many Western and non-Western critics of the West, he does not overlook the modern break with the ancients. His preference for Aristotle in defense of If studied closely, one can identify much common ground between Aristotelian philosophy of praxis and contemporary non-Western cultures which are not yet thoroughly modernized. This is true especially with respect to the importance of moral qualities for happiness. Virtue—the crux of *praxis* for Aristotle—has been replaced in the modern era by the twin notions of "progress" and "freedom" as a cure

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[81] Feyerabend, *Against Method*, 236.

[82] Feyerabend, *Conquest*, 217-22.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid., 222.

for the existential angst. Contemporary understanding of morality relies heavily on the presupposition that there is universal progress of humanity indexed to the progress of science: "It is probably not too much to say that the hope of progress—moral and intellectual as well as material—in the future is bound up with the fortunes of science, and that every obstacle placed in the way of scientific discovery is a wrong to humanity."[85]

The sentiment of optimism in this statement was shaken in the first half of the twentieth century after the shock of two consecutive major wars. Yet, the technological sophistication and prosperity of the industrialized countries in the second half has certainly reignited the faith in progress.[86] This faith is reflected primarily in technological optimism known in the environmental literature as cornucopianism or prometheanism.[87] The most problematic aspect of the notion of "progress" is the comforting illusion it provides to many—that scientific and technological advancement translates into "moral and political progress" of all mankind. This can be seen in Kant: "In man . . . those natural capacities which are directed towards the use of his reason are such that they could be fully developed only in the species, but not in the individual."[88] But Kant also knows that "progressive improvement" is not tantamount to "an ever increasing quantity of morality" or that "the basic moral capacity of mankind will increase in the slightest."[89] Kant's ambiguity is anticipated among the earlier French *philosophes* of the Enlightenment era. Some like Condorcet believed in progress more single-mindedly. He came closest in confusing "the

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[85] James G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1922), 712.

[86] For contemporary defense of Bacon's call for progress as "the effecting of all things possible," see, for instance, Medawar, 110-127.

[87] Dryzek, *The Politics of the Earth*, 45-60.

[88] *Political Writings*, ed. H.S. Reiss, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 42.

[89] Ibid., 188.

improvement of techniques with advances in virtue and happiness."[90] Others such as Diderot recognized that "progress in one area did not automatically produce progress in all others."[91] Rousseau was the most ambivalent. He were both a part of and a critic of the Enlightenment view of progress. He brought on himself Voltaire's ire for making the counter-argument against this central supposition of the "Enlightenment": "The daily rise and fall of the Ocean's waters have not been more strictly subjected to the course of the Star that illumines us by night, than has the fate of morals and probity to the progress of the Sciences and Arts."[92] But then his notion of perfectibility of man would justify, at Condorcet's hands, the idea that "nature has set no limit to the perfection of human faculties," that humankind is "capable of indefinite extension."[93]

A corollary of this debatable thesis—that morality improves with technological advancement—is the further fantasy that the progressive enlightenment of humankind can take the place of the ancient ideal of happiness which depends primarily on individual's own resources. The discourse of "progress" and "freedom" is employed today in almost every modernizing country to justify the building of large-scale development projects. It is hoped that the necessary destruction of natural habitats for these purposes will be compensated by greater material benefits and amenities of the projects once they are completed. It is presumed but, of course, not stated explicitly that the amount of morality in the world will increase with every new watt added to the stock. The consequence of abandoning the ancient ideal is the weakening of Aristotelian understanding of *praxis* in the modern era. This

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[90] Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, Vol. II (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996), 122.

[91] Ibid., 123.

[92] *The Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, edited and translated by Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 9.

[93] Gay, 120. The first part of the quote is Condorcet's words quoted by Gay.

is what Agnes Heller means when she says that "Marx designs his 'city on earth' without reference to the 'city in the soul'. . . . he subsequently substituted the development of forces of production for the 'city in the soul.'"[94] Marx simply followed the pioneers of modernity such as Francis Bacon in replacing *praxis* with *techne*.

The human life partakes of both *techne* and nature. We are at one and the same time natural and artificial beings. The proper relationship between *techne* and nature sets the parameters of the good life that we naturally strive for. Although the contemporary question of the environment has been part of this perennial philosophical question, it has not been always acknowledged in the environmental literature in this way. Instead, survivalism has been a dominant discourse through which environmentalists understood and communicated their concerns to the public.[95] The discourse of survivalism attempts to induce political action by appealing to self-preservation instincts of human beings. However, this framework is insufficient because human beings are not only driven by the instinct of self-preservation. They are also motivated by what they consider as "noble" and "good" which might at times conflict with the instinct of self-preservation. The discourse of the "good life" and happiness can accommodate and articulate these motivations much better than that of survivalism.

As Ernest Callenbach—the author of the popular environmental fiction *Ecotopia* (1975)—notes, "We're not going to save the world by beating on people and making them feel guilty and ashamed. We're going to save the world . . . by making it clear that living better is the aim and not amassing goods …. This is what all religions have been telling us

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[94] Agnes Heller, *Beyond Justice* (New York: Blackwell, 1987), Ch. 2.

[95] "Survivalism" as an environmental discourse is associated with the nineteeth century English economist Thomas Malthus as well as the neo-Malthusian revival in the twentieth century led by, among others, Garrett Hardin and Paul Ehrlich. For a brief overview of survivalism, see Dryzek, 23-44. For a critique of "survival mentality" in modern society in general and in environmental movement in particular and how this is related to the loss of moral imagination, see Christopher Lasch, *The Minimal Self: Psychic Survival in Troubled Times* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1985).

since time immemorial about living well."[96] The geographer Yi-Fu Tuan concurs: "In the Western world the good life is envisaged, historically, in a limited number of ways. One of them is environmentalism, which sees the good life as a consequence of a special type of physical setting."[97] Neil Evernden, another environmental scholar, similarly notes that the debate between environmentalists and industrialists, which appears to be over physical pollution, is actually about the *good life*:

> To the environmentalists, what is at risk is the very possibility of leading a good life. To the industrialists, what is at risk is the very possibility of leading a good life. The debate, it appears, is actually about *what constitutes a good life*. The instance of physical pollution serves only as the means of persuasion, a staging ground for the underlying debate.[98] (emphasis original)

According to Evernden, industrialists believe that further industrialization and technological innovation is the key to the greatest happiness of the greatest number, whereas (certain) environmentalists downplay the role of material goods and technology in securing human happiness and emphasize the non-material dimension of happiness instead. Another scholar, commenting on environmentalism in France, likewise detects a broader theme behind the popular use of the word "écologie," which "was not merely about protecting species and habitats, but encompassed a broader, more expansive meaning: the critique of industrial modernity itself. It entailed . . . a choice about what kind of society one wants to live in."[99]

Hence, if there is anything new about environmental politics as "a new social movement" or a "new ideology" it consists in its departure from the bureaucratized and

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[96] In Bart Brodsky, "In Conversation with Environmentalists Ernest Callenbach and Joseph Petulla," *Open Exchange Magazine*, March-April 1999, http://www.openexchange.org/archives/Classics/callenbach_petulla.html.

[97] Yi-Fu Tuan, *The Good Life* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986), 4. See also Kirsten Meyer, "Der Schutz der Natur und das gute Leben," *Philosophia Naturalis* 39.1 (2002): 173-86.

[98] Neil Evernden, *The Social Creation of Nature* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1992), 5.

[99] Michael Bess, *The Light-Green Society: Ecology and Technological Modernity in France, 1960-2000* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 12.

centralized form of modern politics, whose only interest is to increase and/or distribute the spoils of economic growth, and harking back to the long-standing perennial teaching which has been—wittingly or unwillingly—pushed under the rug in the modern era. The theme of the good life is underemphasized in environmental theory literature and often remains buried in discussions over environmental ethics and politics. In this respect, the Aristotelian distinction between mere living (*zēn monon*) and living well (*eu zēn*) can be instrumental in bringing out this aspect of contemporary environmentalism (*Pol.* 1280a31-4).

The idea of living in harmony with nature, no matter how metaphorical or unrealistic it sounds, inevitably brings up the question of happiness, technology, and modernity. The premodern societies, or contemporary societies with significant premodern elements, were certainly not deprived of technology. But whereas *techne* has been cast mostly in an auxiliary role in the pursuit of good life in the premodern era, the relationship between *techne* and nature has been reconfigured in the modern era in a way that favors the technological use, control, domination of "nature" conceived as matter. Simply put, the role of *techne* in the modern era has overshadowed those of *praxis* and *phusis* in the pursuit of the good life. We owe the mind-boggling speed of technological innovation to this reset in the early modern period. Today, technophiles hold that there can or ought to be no limits to technological innovation. Not only is it commonly held that technological change is impossible to arrest—which may be true—but also that it is not *right* to do so—which is questionable. This implicit assertion of "rightness" is where technological thinking founders at, for it has no way of ascertaining or defending its validity. The technological imperative, "the effecting of all things possible," is a normative philosophical question that cannot be treated as manifestly *right*. How to interpret "technology" and "nature" individually and in their proper relationship to one another is still a legitimate and salient question to be debated.

1.5 Survey of Environmental Theory Literature on Aristotle

Parallel to the renewed interest in Aristotle in contemporary moral and political philosophy, ancient Greeks in general and Aristotle in particular have begun to receive increasing attention in the environmental theory literature although the acceptance of Aristotle as an environmentally relevant figure is far from a mainstream position.[100] The sympathetic interpretation of Aristotle's thought is mostly concentrated in the growing subfields of "environmental virtue ethics" and "environmental political theory" although there are other individual authors who are not necessarily associated with either of these academic fields. I shall first review the individual contributions and then the academic works from these two fields that touch on Aristotle's relevance and significance to the environment. I will point out the points that I find helpful as well as the ones I differ from for being either inadequate or too narrow for the purposes of this dissertation.

This dissertation is closest in approach to an almost forgotten article by Mulford Q. Sibley on classical political philosophy in relation to contemporary environmental concerns.[101] Sibley's article contrasts the ethical and contemplative ethos of classical political philosophy of Plato and Aristotle with that of modernity shaped under the influence of the seventeenth century European philosophy. He traces the contemporary "problems of economy, technology, and ecology" (or "the modern crisis" as he alternatively puts it) to the "repudiation of much of the classical tradition" in the modern era.[102] The critical turning point in world history, according to Sibley, was "the rejection of Aristotle in the seventeenth

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[100] For a brief introduction to the environmental appropriation of Aristotle's philosophy, see Gabriela R. Carone, "The Classical Greek Tradition," in *A Companion to Environmental Philosophy*, ed. Dale Jamieson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 67-80.

[101] Mulford Q. Sibley, "The Relevance of Classical Political Theory for Economy, Technology, and Ecology," *Alternatives: Perspectives on Society and Environment* 2.2 (1973): 14-35; see also Mulford Q. Sibley, "Utopian Thought and Technology," *American Journal of Political Science* 17.2 (1973): 255-81.

[102] Sibley, "The Relevance," 15.

century by the likes of Bacon and Hobbes." The seventeenth century anti-Aristotelian rebellion of modern philosophers paved the ground for the ensuing "great confidence that all technological development was good." Sibley's analysis is full of insight but sketchy.

Another environmental author who appreciated Aristotle is Murray Bookchin, who appropriated two particular elements of Aristotle's philosophy. The first is Aristotle's analysis of the Greek polis and characterization of human beings as "political animals." This aspect of Aristotle's analysis and the ancient Greek democracy in general underlies Bookchin's political program of "municipal confederalism" proposed to overcome the impetus of centralization in modern nation-states. The second idea that Bookchin borrows from Aristotle is "potentiality" (*dunamis*) and "development" (*entelecheia* and *energeia*). This Aristotelian insight was used by Bookchin to articulate his evolutionary view of nature and society, which he calls "dialectical naturalism." But Bookchin blends Aristotle with Hegelian historical analysis mixed with left-wing revolutionary politics. The present inquiry will argue that "revolutionary politics" is not compatible with Aristotle's political philosophy.[103]

More recently, Lewis P. Hinchman and Sandra K. Hinchman have proposed a thesis similar to mine: "the appropriate conceptual system for clarifying the aims and rationale of ecological politics is a modernized version of the classical 'natural right' tradition as understood by Aristotle and his successors."[104] The argument of this dissertation agrees with this thesis in bringing out the relevance of Aristotle to contemporary environmental discourse and praxis, but I depart from Hinchman and Hinchman's analysis in three respects. First, I look at the question of the environment as it pertains to environmental

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[103] See Murray Bookchin, *The Philosophy of Social Ecology: Essays on Dialectical Naturalism*, 2nd ed. (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1995).

[104] Lewis P. Hinchman and Sandra K. Hinchman, "'Deep Ecology' and the Revival of Natural Right," *The Western Political Quarterly* 42.3 (1989): 201.

thought and action with respect to developmental concerns whereas Hinchman and Hinchman focuses on a single subset of environmentalism, namely, "deep ecology." Second, Hinchman and Hinchman are ready to give up the hierarchical orientation of classical thought to reconcile it with the inter-species egalitarian principle of "deep ecology." I take rank-ordering as essential to the normative perspective of Aristotle, since, as Leo Strauss notes, Aristotle considered "moral and political matters in the light of man's perfection." As men differ in their opportunities, desires, and accomplishments with respect to this goal, "it is the hierarchic order of man's natural constitution which supplies the basis for natural right as the classics understood it."[105] Third, I prefer to steer clear of the language of "natural right" or "natural law" as they come with a certain historical baggage. I would rather distinguish Aristotle's own views from later neo-Aristotelianisms and focus primarily on Aristotle's own works since certain semantic refractions have taken place in the course of the transmission of Aristotle's teaching, especially due to its Latin translations and assimilation into Christian teaching. Indeed, Martin Heidegger claims that "the rootlessness of Western thought" begins with translations of certain Greek words into Latin "without a corresponding, equally original experience of what they say."[106]

Another major difference with Lewis P. Hinchman and Sandra K. Hinchman is due to their recent article in which they defend the Enlightenment project and criticize the anti-modern or anti-Enlightenment tendency in the environmental theory literature.[107] Hinchman and Hinchman seem to have had a change of heart as they now offer Aldo Leopold's land

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[105] Strauss, *Natural Right*, 134, 127. See also Leo Strauss, *The City and Man* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964), 38-40.

[106] See "The Origin of the Work of Art," in *Basic Writings*, ed. David F. Krell (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), 149. Heidegger's remark should not be taken as defense of incommensurability though as he himself attempted to capture and recreate this original experience in his own language.

[107] Lewis P. Hinchman and Sandra K. Hinchman, "Should Environmentalists Reject the Enlightenment?" *The Review of Politics* 63.4 (2001): 663-92.

ethic rather than "the classical 'natural right' tradition" as a model to follow. Leopold's ethic, on their view, is "a version of environmental ethics that powerfully echoe[s] Enlightenment themes."[108] What Hinchman and Hinchman especially find striking in Leopold's account of land ethic is its "progressive and evolutionary assumptions", namely, Leopold's historicist view of ethics. As I shall argue in Chapter 2, historicism is insufficient to generate and sustain concern for nature which environmentalists are calling for.

Aristotle's discussion of economic matters in the first book of *Politics* has been re-visited by ecological economist Herman E. Daly and the theologian John B. Cobb, Jr., who recover the communitarian element in Aristotle's normative conception of *oikonomia* (household management) for an ecologically oriented post-capitalist model of economics. Daly and Cobb contrast *oikonomia* with the prevailing model of modern economics which, they think, resemble Aristotle's *chrematistics* (business expertise):

> *Oikonomia* differs from *chrematistics* in three ways. First, it takes the long-run rather than the short-run view. Second, it considers costs and benefits to the whole community, not just to the parties to the transaction. Third, it focuses on concrete use value and the limited accumulation thereof, rather than abstract exchange value and its impetus toward unlimited accumulation.[109]

The Aristotelian distinction between *chrematistike* and *oikonomia*, which also found positive reception in the Christian tradition, allows us to situate the consumptive and productive activities of human communities within an ethical framework according to their respective ends. Another environmental scholar who also found Aristotle's conception of economic activities relevant and helpful for environmental purposes is the environmental scholar John O'Neill who similarly locates an environmentally friendly notion of human well-being in Aristotle's emphasis on "living well." He offers the "Aristotelian conception of well-being"

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[108] Ibid., 666.

[109] Daly and Cobb, *For the Common Good*, 139.

as an alternative to market-based approaches to environmental policy on the one hand and those who develop more radical critiques of anthropocentric human behavior, policies, and institutions on the other.[110] In Chapter 4 I will draw on the Aristotelian distinction between *chrematistike* and *oikonomia*, and the centrality of the notion of "good life."

Another popular point of entry into Aristotle's philosophy among environmental theorists has been the distinction between artifacts and natural beings. Keekok Lee employs Aristotle to emphasize "the crucial issue in environmental philosophy," which is an ontological rather than axiological (value-oriented) one: "the systematic supercession of the natural by the artefactual."[111] Lee, influenced by Heidegger, emphasizes that the ontological question is prior to the axiological question of value discussed by environmental ethics scholars. She also distances herself from the virtue ethics approach.[112] Trish Glazebrook similarly finds Aristotle's *techne-phusis* distinction helpful "to conceptualize the priority of the natural over the artifactual" in order to evaluate human practices "on the basis of the extent to which they work *with* rather than *against* nature."[113] I will draw on the same distinction in Chapter 2, but my analysis will differ from those of Lee and Glazebrook in paying more attention to Aristotle's analysis of praxis and the role of virtue in this analysis. The question of virtue does not feature much in these scholars' otherwise insightful analyses.

Aristotle's philosophy of biology too has been appealing to environmental theorists despite its anti-Darwinian preference for the static and eternal existence of natural species.

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[110] John O'Neill, *Ecology, Policy and Politics: Human Well-Being and the Natural World* (London: Routledge, 1993), 1-4; and "Environmental Virtues and Public Policy," *Philosophy in the Contemporary World* 8.2 (2001): 125-36.

[111] Keekok Lee, *The Natural and Artefactual: The Implications of Deep Science and Deep Technology for Environmental Philosophy* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 1999), 223.

[112] Ibid., 189-194, 219-21, footnotes 89 and 91.

[113] Trish Glazebrook, "Art or Nature?: Aristotle, Restoration Ecology, and Flowforms," *Ethics & the Environment* 8.1 (2003): 25, 27.

Certain environmental scholars came to Aristotle's defense against, on the one hand, those who claim that Aristotle's biology has been superseded by Darwin and other developments in modern biology, and, on the other hand, those who claim that Aristotle's teleology is not only hopelessly outdated but pernicious as well.[114] I will leave out this discussion from the scope of this dissertation as I am more interested in Aristotle's practical philosophy.

After these individual contributions to Aristotle's environmental relevance and significance, I now turn to the treatment of Aristotle in the academic fields of "environmental virtue ethics" and "environmental political theory." Environmental virtue ethics is a relatively recent development within the academic sub-field of environmental ethics in the United States.[115] Environmental virtue ethics scholars have examined the virtues that are conducive to living a fulfilling life that is at the same time environmentally conscious. Environmental virtues enable human beings to be protective and pro-active toward the environment as well as appreciative and respectful of the well-being of the natural environment. Some of these scholars recreate the lives of exemplary figures who have had major impacts in environmentalism such as Henry D. Thoreau, Aldo Leopold, and Rachel Carson.[116] Others make a case for certain character traits which are conducive to "an environmentally good life" like benevolence or friendship.[117]

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[114] See the articles by C. W. DeMarco, Laura Westra, and Mohan Matthen in *The Greeks and the Environment*, eds. Laura Westra and Thomas M. Robinson (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997).

[115] For an introduction, see Ronald Sandler, "Introduction: Environmental Virtue Ethics," in *Environmental Virtue Ethics*, ed. Philip Cafaro and Ronald Sandler (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 1-12; and Geoffrey B. Frasz, "What is Environmental Virtue Ethics that We Should be Mindful of It?" *Philosophy in the Contemporary World* 8.2 (2001): 5-14.

[116] See Philip Cafaro, "Thoreau, Leopold, and Carson: Toward an Environmental Virtue Ethic," *Environmental Ethics* 23 (2001): 3–17.

[117] For this categorization, see Robert Hull, "All about EVE: A Report on Environmental Virtue Ethics Today," *Ethics & the Environment* 10.1 (2005): 89-110.

Just as their predecessors in moral philosophy reacted to the reduction of ethics to law-like rules, scholars of environmental virtue ethics react to the prevailing deontological approach in environmental ethics, namely, arguments defending our obligations to non-human beings and/or their rights (or intrinsic value). A major feature of these otherwise diverse approaches to environmental obligations and rights has been their practitioners' predilection for abstract system-building. This trend of abstractionism in the field of environmental ethics has put off some environmental scholars who have complained of a growing divide between real world environmental politics and the academic study of environmental ethics.[118] Environmental virtue ethics scholars on the other hand attempt— though not always successfully— to circumvent this dead-end by paying more attention to the rich texture of everyday life context. Instead of launching an external critique of human beings for their lack of environmental sensitivities, they begin with the virtues no one can reasonably reject. In a sense, they attempt to breathe new life into old-fashioned virtues.

Although not all environmental virtue ethics scholars follow Aristotle's conception of ethics, those who do follow it do so with some adjustments and modifications. Acknowledging Aristotle is in a sense inescapable for environmental ethicists who approach their subject matter in terms of the "good life" rather than "right action." So Eugene Schlossberger looks to Aristotle's "normative account of human nature" to ground "the need for a partnership with nature,"[119] and Richard Shearman draws upon Aristotle's conception of friendship and self-love to make a case for the protection of non-human

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[118] See Joe Bowersox, "The Legitimacy Crisis in Environmental Ethics and Politics," in *Democracy and the Claims of Nature: Critical Perspectives for a New Century*, eds. Ben A. Minteer and Bob P. Taylor (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 71; Avner de-Shalit, *The Environment Between Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3-6; and Max Oelschlaeger, "Introduction," in *Postmodern Environmental Ethics*, ed. Max Oelschlaeger (New York: SUNY Press, 1995), 8-10.

[119] Eugene Schlossberger, "Environmental Virtue Ethics: An Aristotelian Approach," *Philosophy in the Contemporary World* 8.2 (2001): 15-26.

beings.[120] Louke van Wensveen attempts to modify Aristotle's ideas on temperance by situating them "within an ecological framework as moderation of desire for the sake of ecojustice," and Lisa H. Newton stresses the role of simplicity for good life and sustainability.[121] Still another scholar uses Aristotle's "biological and ethical works … to provide an adequate environmental ethic."[122]

A major flaw in this new area of environmental ethics is the temptation of theory construction. Environmental ethics scholars often seem to pass over the praxis dimension of virtue. Robert Hull's recent article on environmental virtue ethics makes note of this trend and urges more attention to the praxis dimension of virtue.[123] Aristotle's discussion in *NE*, in which he examines several theoretical questions regarding the nature of virtue, types of virtue, and the relationship of virtues to the ultimate human good of happiness, is interspersed with reminders that ethics is not a purely theoretical matter. However important it may be to examine these theoretical questions, it is no less important for Aristotle to consider the question of how to acquire virtues. Aristotle reprimands those who lose sight of the praxis dimension of ethical issues:

> It is well said, then, that by performing just actions one becomes a just person and by performing temperate actions one becomes a temperate person, and no one is going to become good by not performing these actions. (*NE* 1105b9-13)

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[120] See Richard Shearman, "Self-Love and the Virtue of Species Preservation in Aristotle," in *The Greeks and the Environment*, eds. Laura Westra and Thomas M. Robinson (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997), 121-32; and Richard Shearman, "Can We Be 'Friends of the Earth'?" *Environmental Values* 14.4 (2005): 503-12.

[121] Louke van Wensveen, "Attunement: An Ecological Spin on the Virtue of Temperance," *Philosophy in the Contemporary World* 8.2 (2001): 67-78; Lisa H. Newton, *Ethics and Sustainability: Sustainable Development and the Moral Life* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003).

[122] Susanne E. Forster, "Aristotle and the Environment," *Environmental Ethics* 24.1 (2002): 411.

[123] On this point, see Robert Hull, "All about EVE: A Report on Environmental Virtue Ethics Today," *Ethics & the Environment* 10.1 (2005): 100-08.

Later in the same text Aristotle brings up this practical dimension of ethical issues again: "it is not sufficient to know about virtue, but one must try to have it and use it, unless there is some other way that we become good" (*NE* 1179b1-4).

Robert Hull's similar reminder that there is greater need to make stronger "connections between human well-being and preserving and conserving nature" deserves our consideration.[124] This connection can be better established if we can bring environmental virtue ethics into dialogue with environmental political theory which I shall do in Chapter 6. As John P. Anton notes, "the moral foundation of ecology in relation to the effective protection of the environment is a corollary of correct political theory and action."[125] In this sense, Laura Westra's consideration of ethics of integrity (derived from Aristotle's ideas on good life and teleology) in view of influencing public policy is right-headed.[126] However, there are different ways of influencing politics. Rather than seeking to make an immediate impact on present public policy makers, one can also attempt to educate the future generations of activists and policy makers through civic education.

The next chapter discusses the notions of *techne* and nature in more detail and compares Aristotle's view with the modern view. The burden of Chapter 3 is to present Aristotle's conception of nature through Heidegger's analysis. In Chapter 4 I shall adumbrate Aristotle's conception of *praxis*. In Chapter 5 I discuss the contemporary search for a new environmental ethic with special attention to Hans Jonas's work and argue that there is no need to invent a new ethic. Then I shall present the recent scholarly work in environmental virtue ethics in more detail and engage with Holmes Rolston's neo-Kantian critique of

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[124] Ibid., 102.

[125] John P. Anton, "Aristotle and Theophrastus on Ecology," in *Philosophy and Ecology*, Vol. I, eds. Konstantine Boudouris and Kostas Kalimtzis (Athens: Ionia Publications, 1999), 15.

[126] See Laura Westra, *An Environmental Proposal for Ethics: The Principle of Integrity* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1994) 134-42.

environmental virtue ethics. Rolston targets environmental virtue ethics specifically for ignoring the priority of moral value over ethical virtue. I will then present another line of critique advanced by environmental scholars such as Avner de-Shalit and Andrew Light. Their critique is aimed at academic environmental ethicists engaged in abstract non-anthropocentric ontology or axiology of nature without paying attention to the political dimension of environmental praxis. I argue that this criticism is sound and can be extended to environmental virtue ethics as well. In Chapter 6, I will discuss the twin concepts of ecological citizenship and civic environmentalism to suggest some practical ways that can bring out the praxis dimension of environmental virtue ethics more effectively.

In Chapter 7, which is the concluding chapter of the dissertation, I will argue that "conservation" and "conservatism" share more than an etymological connection and that the ethos of ecological citizenship is closer to the spirit of traditional conservatism, which can be traced back to Aristotle, than that of liberal progressivism, whose origins can be traced back to Francis Bacon. The angle on environmental issues taken here—environmental virtue and ecological citizenship—can remind us of the conservative dimension of environmentalism. I argue that re-visiting Aristotle provides us with a richer vocabulary in understanding politics beyond the opposition of liberalism and conservatism, and, consequently, more insight into contemporary environmental political theory and praxis. Recovering the conservative aspect of environmentalism can be a corrective to the common misguided opinion that anthropocentrism is the root cause of our "ecological crisis," and help in re-channeling the intellectual energy from fighting against a nebulous concept of anthropocentrism into the more worthy cause of "ecological citizenship" or "civic environmentalism."

Chapter 2: Nature or History?

> [T]he classical distinction between nature and convention, according to which nature is of higher dignity than convention, has been overlaid by the modern distinction between nature and history according to which history (the realm of freedom and of values) is of higher dignity than nature (which lacks purposes or values).[1]

As has been recently noted by some environmental scholars, "the ancient understanding of nature as normative and prescriptive . . . seemed to have returned, even if through the back door."[2] A classics scholar also observes that "nature as a basic concern, as a power not to be disregarded, has come back with the environmental movement."[3] But why the "back door" or "come back"? I argue in this chapter that the notion of "nature" has been in exile due to a deeply entrenched suspicion and hostility integral to modernity. The contemporary resurgence of interest in environmental politics, on the other hand, justifies re-visiting the pre-modern conception of nature and praxis rejected by modern science and repressed by faith in technology. The grounds for this rejection have been twofold: (1) The pre-modern view does not fit into the new model of mathematically oriented science, and (2) it is an impediment to technological invention and scientific discovery. Both reasons bear on what we today call "environmental problems" stemming from zealous pursuit of technological progress and economic development.

The ambiguity of "nature" as a concept has long been noted. Most question its coherence to open space for other purposes. For example, Robert Boyle—one of the pioneers of modern science—took notice of this ambiguity and recommended the

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[1] Leo Strauss, *The City and Man* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964), 16.

[2] Bruce V. Foltz and Robert Frodeman, eds., *Rethinking Nature: Essays in Environmental Philosophy* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), 4.

[3] Walter Burkert, "On 'Nature' and 'Theory': A Discourse with Ancient Greeks," *Michigan Quarterly Review* 38.2 (1999): 192. See also Lewis P. Hinchman and Sandra K. Hinchman, "'Deep Ecology' and the Revival of Natural Right," *The Western Political Quarterly* 42.3 (1989): 201-28.

substitution of alternative terms for the various senses of "nature."[4] Similarly, John S. Mill in his essay "Nature" (1874) expressed his misgivings about the way "nature" is used in a normative sense by philosophers. Analyzing its multiple meanings, he concludes that none of these senses can be said to have moral import: "conformity to nature has no connection whatever with right and wrong."[5] More recently, Arthur O. Lovejoy and George Boas plowed through the Western literature and philosophy, and unearthed an "extraordinary multiplicity of meanings latent in the term in its normative uses."[6] Influenced by these precursors as well as similar studies of the British cultural critic Raymond Williams,[7] contemporary cultural and social theorists hold that the notion of "nature" is historically and culturally variable, and it is irresponsible or even pernicious to speak of nature at large or human nature in particular in a normative fashion.[8] Its semantic ambiguity and historical variability are believed to show its heuristic vacuity and ideological threat to progressive liberalism.

The observation that "nature" is semantically ambiguous and historically bound is not unfounded as its meaning is far from being self-evident. Aristotle was the first to discuss its several senses. Yet, he did not try to purge the Greek language of *phusis* (the Greek antecedent of "nature") for that reason. The ambiguity of meaning or the

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[4] Robert Boyle, *A Free Enquiry into the Vulgarly Received Notion of Nature,* eds. Edward B. Davis and Michael Hunter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [1686] 1996), 19-25.

[5] John S. Mill, *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, Vol. 10, ed. J.M. Robson (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963-1991), 400.

[6] Arthur O. Lovejoy and George Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, [1935] 1997), 11-14, 103-116, 447-456.

[7] See Raymond Williams, "Ideas of Nature," in *Problems in Materialism and Culture: Selected Essays* (London: Verso, 1980), 67-82; and *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, [1976] 1985), 219-24.

[8] This viewpoint seems to be especially prevalent in the field of "cultural" or "social" theory. See *The Moral Authority of Nature*, ed. Lorraine Daston and Fernando Vidal (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 11.

possibility of "undesirable" consequences do not prove that something does not exist in reality or that it is not worthwhile to understand and illuminate it if it is not straightforward. After all, ambiguity is not exclusive to the concept of "nature." Every big concept such as "equality," "freedom," "justice," or "culture" signifies multiple meanings depending on individual, society, culture, or historical period. In different periods of human history or among different contemporaneous societies or even within the same society, these concepts vary widely both in meaning and practical significance. Yet, no one apart from devoted nihilists and relativists would be willing to discard these concepts due to their semantic or historical variation. It is actually due to the fact that they are "contested" that further inquiry on these concepts is called for.

To be sure, the category of "natural" is elusive especially in an age of technological hybrids. As practical and intuitive as the distinction between "natural" and "artificial" may appear to us, once we look into the hybrid realm of bio-engineered products or cloned animals we become baffled and begin to doubt the usefulness or validity of the distinction between the "natural" and the "artificial." For the same reason, environmentalists who tend to overlook the "urban environments" for falling outside the scope of proper environmental concern have invited criticism—not only from outside environmentalism but also from environmentalists with a broader vision of what environmentalism should be. According to these critics, there is no reason why cities should not qualify as part of the "environment," and the urban problems or social justice issues be excluded from environmentalism.

These are legitimate complaints as human activity has always mixed the natural with the artificial. A natural park within an urban area or out in the wilderness is at one and the same time both natural and artificial. But, as Aristotle would remind us, they do

not carry these two qualities in the same respect. These are not either/or cases. A natural park with trees and animals created by human beings cannot be totally artificial simply because it involves human element. Borderline cases do exist but they should not blind us to what the border is meant to separate. Just as the categories of time and space or matter and energy, long held to be separate, has turned out to be a single continuum of space-time or matter-energy equivalence according to modern physics but are still experienced as distinct within the context of everyday life, we do not have to rush to banish the common sense categories of "natural" and "artificial" from our vocabulary just because we now have too many hybrid entities.

This chapter consists of three sections. In the first section, I lay out the commonalities between Aristotle's and contemporary environmental views of nature. I point out two inter-related themes—harmony and limits—that stand out among these commonalities and are central to our understanding of the underlying claim of contemporary environmentalism—that "living well is the catching of certain natural rhythms."[9] In the second section, I discuss the nature of developmental problems and their broader implications for the understanding of modernity. The third section explores the modern trend of skepticism, denial, or hostility toward "nature." One may suppose that skepticism about the *concept* of nature is different from the hostility shown to "nature" but I will argue otherwise. Interwoven with this trend is another tendency to circumvent "human nature." I argue that the reluctance to speak of "nature" or "human nature" is due to the modern turn to "history," "freedom," and "progress."

[9] Holmes Rolston III, *Environmental Ethics: Duties to and Values in the Natural World* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1988), 42.

2.1 Nature, Harmony, and Limits

Outside natural sciences, the concept of nature today figures primarily in the contemporary discourse of environmentalism. Although substitute terms such as "environment" or "ecology" are also used regularly, both of these words ultimately rest on the category of "natural" as opposed to that of "artificial" or "man-made." Hence, environmentalists often qualify their statements on the "environment" by distinguishing between the "natural environment" and the "human environment." Their concern is particularly with "the *natural* environment or *natural* resources."[10] The qualifier "natural" is considered indispensable by environmentalists to distinguish the real object of their concern from the kind of environment and resources that owe their existence to human creativity especially in urban areas.

Contemporary environmentalists are concerned with the "natural" not merely for human survival—although this is certainly part of the environmental rhetoric—but also out of a transcendental need to connect with something not made by human beings.[11] Liberty H. Bailey, an early 20th century American horticulturalist and a precursor of contemporary environmental ethics, expresses this somewhat spiritual sentiment as follows: "Verily, then, the earth is divine, because man did not make it . . . . If the earth is holy, then the things that grow out of the earth are also holy. They do not belong to man to do with them as he will."[12] The now forgotten American naturalist Joseph W. Krutch similarly observes that we need nature for reminding and providing us with a context

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[10] Joseph M. Petulla, *American Environmentalism: Values, Tactics, Priorities* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1980), x, italics mine.

[11] See, for instance, Stephen R. Kellert and Timothy J. Farnham, eds., *The Good in Nature and Humanity: Connecting Science, Religion, and Spirituality with the Natural World* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2002).

[12] Liberty H. Bailey, *The Holy Earth* (New York: Scribners, 1915), 14-16.

larger than our lives.[13] This point has been picked up more recently by the political theorist Robert Goodin in his argument that the property of naturalness can serve as a source of value for Greens in the public arena. Goodin suggests that "the products of natural processes" are valuable because they provide a larger context through which human beings can experience "some sense and pattern to their lives."[14]

The "sense and pattern" is needed in every period of history and culture. But this order is barely experienced when nature is merely regarded as a reservoir of energy. Something more than this is required for a deeper experience of meaning according to some environmental theorists: "We stop exploiting nature and become a member of a human and a biotic community, residing on a richer, more meaningful Earth."[15] We find an expression of this longing in John Steinbeck's remarks on the majestic redwood forests of California:

> The redwoods, once seen, leave a mark or create a vision that stays with you always . . . From them comes silence and awe. It's not their unbelievable stature, nor the color which seems to shift and vary under your eyes, no, they are ambassadors from another time. They have the mystery of ferns that disappeared a million years ago in to the coal of the carboniferous era. They carry their own light and shade. The vainest, most slap-happy and irreverent of men, in the presence of redwoods, goes under a spell of wonder and respect. Respect—that's the word. One feels the need to bow to unquestioned sovereigns.[16]

The themes of respect, reverence, wonder, and awe toward nature, all of which betray the spiritual undertones of environmentalism, run through both environmental theory and praxis. It would not be farfetched to claim that one major driving force

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[13] Joseph W. Krutch, *The Best Nature Writing of Joseph Wood Krutch* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1995), 245-46.

[14] Robert Goodin, *Green Political Theory* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1992), 37.

[15] Holmes Rolston III, *Conserving Natural Value* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

[16] John Steinbeck, *Travels with Charley: In Search of America* (New York: Penguin Books, [1962] 1997), 188-89.

behind contemporary efforts to protect the "natural" environment is the feeling of "disenchantment" brought to our attention in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century by a number of Germans.[17] This is the discomforting thought that the sense of "sacred" or "mystery" has been irretrievably lost in the modern age under the influence of technological change, secularization, and modern scientific rational outlook based on efficiency principle. In a world increasingly dominated by artifacts, an imaginary untouched "wilderness" is seen as the only way of reviving the sense of awe before the sacred. Particular political strategies employed by environmental organizations in the public arena may seem to contradict this interpretation. However, all ideas when put to practice adopt some sort of realism to have an effect. The discrepancy between thought and practice in environmentalism should not deter us from looking beyond its thin surface. For behind "the public face of environmentalism," there is a deeper "concern with humans' relation to the universe," which touches the "fundamental questions to human life."[18] The British botanist Eric Ashby expresses this concern in his reflections on an environmental ethic which, he thinks, can revive the experience of the "sacred" toward the evolutionary process—although he adds, inconsistently I believe, that it must be understood in a secularized sense:

> an ethic which regards as sacred (in a secular sense of that word) not the *products,* but the creative *process* of evolution. It would, according to such an ethic, be vandalism, and therefore immoral, to destroy unnecessarily something which we cannot create.[19] (emphasis original)

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[17] Max Weber calls it *Entzauberung* whereas Martin Heidegger prefers to express the same transformation poetically through Hölderlin's imagery of the "withdrawal of gods."

[18] Thomas R. Dunlap, *Faith in Nature: Environmentalism as Religious Quest* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004), 14, 19.

[19] Eric Ashby, "The Search for an Environmental Ethic," *The Tanner Lecture on Human Values*, 1979, www.tannerlectures.utah.edu/lectures/ashby80.pdf, p. 28.

As various environmental historians have formerly noted, contemporary environmentalism has diverse historical roots, one of which is the nineteenth-century Romantic movement to which the notion of the "sublime" was central. In an early work, which had a major influence on the Romantic movement, the British philosopher Edmund Burke suggested that nature is one of the sources for the experience of the sublime which is one of "astonishment" (or as some others would opt to say "awe"):

> The passion caused by the great and sublime in nature, when those causes operate most powerfully, is astonishment; and astonishment is that state of the soul, in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror. . . . Astonishment . . . is the effect of the sublime in its highest degree; the inferior effects are admiration, reverence, and respect.[20]

For Holmes Rolston, a prominent figure in environmental ethics, for instance, "aesthetic properties in nature push the beholder toward the experience of the sublime, something larger than beauty."[21] Rolston further remarks that "an ecological perspective often approaches a religious dimension in trying to help us see the beauty, integrity, and stability of nature within and behind its seeming indifference, ferocity, and evil."[22]

The connection between religion and the environment has two aspects. On the one hand, existing religions can be and have been reinterpreted to bring out their environmental sensibilities.[23] On the other hand, environmentalism can be seen as a new

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[20] *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, [1757] 1998).

[21] Holmes Rolston, *Environmental Ethics: Duties to and Values in the Natural World* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), 243. For more on the notion of "sublime," see Marjorie H. Nicolson, *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory: The Development of the Aesthetics of the Infinite* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, [1959] 1997); Christine L. Oravec, "To Stand Outside Oneself: The Sublime in the Discourse of Natural Scenery," in *The Symbolic Earth: Discourse and Our Creation of the Environment*, eds. James G. Cantrill and Christine L. Oravec (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 58-75; and Holmes Rolston, "Caring for Nature: From Fact to Value, from Respect to Reverence," *Zygon* 39.2 (2004): 277-302.

[22] Rolston, *Environmental Ethics*, 43.

[23] Roger S. Gottlieb, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Ecology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

neo-pagan religion. When the latter observation is made, it is made either in a critical or affirmative spirit. Speaking of the Earth First! organization in the US influenced by "deep ecology" perspective, the environmental scholar Bron Taylor notes the underlying religious attitude of the members of this organization:

> Indeed, in field research conducted since 1990, I have yet to find an active participant in Earth First! who is not animated by one form or another, one experience or another, of what can fairly be labelled "nature mysticism." By this I mean that, *deep ecology activists conceive of the natural world as a sacred place, as the source of all meaning and value.* A central and ubiquitous exhortation by movement activists, consequently, is that humans must "resacralize" their perceptions of the Earth if they are to reharmonize human lifeways with the rest of the natural world.[24] (emphasis added)

Taylor's attitude to his observation is positive. Another environmental scholar affirming this link notes "the reverential thinking" of eco-philosophy and sees "ecological thinking emerging as quasi-religious thinking."[25]

Hence, the non-technocratic strands of contemporary environmental discourse must be interpreted in the light of this perennial human quest for "meaning and value," if we want to understand its deeper character and its trans-historical connection to the premodern or not-yet-modern cultural frames of reference. These frameworks can be found either in real life settings in which tradition and religion set the pace of life or contemporary intellectual analyses that take issue with the modern worldview based on the promise of attaining worldly happiness by relentless acquisition of wealth and power.

The intellectual roots of contemporary environmentalism, environmental historians tell us, antedate the modern era. Two particular pre-modern ideas on "nature" have gained currency in contemporary environmental thought: the idea of harmony and

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[24] Bron Taylor, "Ecological Resistance Movements; Not Always Deep But If Deep, Religious: Reply to Devall," *The Trumpeter* 13.2 (1996): 98-103.

[25] Henryk Skolimowski, *Living Philosophy: Eco-Philosophy as a Tree of Life* (London: Arkana, 1992), 2-3.

the idea of limits. Both of these ideas have been either abandoned or re-formulated during the transition to modern science. As contemporary pursuit of technological progress and economic development is justified on the basis of the predictive success of modern science, it is important to understand the normative implications of the trans-valuation of these ancient ideas. These ideas, which have been explored previously by environmental historians in a genealogical fashion, need our attention to bring out their philosophical significance.

The idea of harmony and the related ideas of "organicism," "holism," "balance," and "integrity" are generally taken to be fundamental principle of nature revealed by ecology—the new interdisciplinary science of the 20th century: "Ecology, as a philosophy of nature, has roots in organicism—the idea that the cosmos is an organic entity, growing and developing from within, in an integrated unit of structure and function."[26] The organic vision of ecology also holds true for the normative ethos of environmentalism. Another environmental historian Clarence J. Glacken points out that not only "the ecological point of view"—which is "the idea of a close and interlocking relationship in nature"—but also the new "conservation ethic and philosophy, a moral and aesthetic attitude toward nature" can be "traced to the idea that nature was a divinely arranged harmony."[27]

The cosmological idea of "harmony" in the Western tradition, derived from ancient Greeks, entails two other interrelated themes: "the essential unity of man and

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[26] Merchant, 100. The pre-modern idea of harmony has often been contrasted with the modern mechanistic and atomistic conception of nature; see David R. Griffin, "Introduction: The Reenchantment of Science," in *The Reenchantment of Science*, ed. David R. Griffin (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988).

[27] Clarence J. Glacken, "The Origins of the Conservation Philosophy," *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* 11.2 (1956): 66.

nature" and the balance of nature.[28] The ancient Greek word *kosmos* (the origin of our word "cosmos") itself meant an orderly reality with moral and aesthetic connotations of fitness and beauty.[29] That *kosmos* constitutes an inter-locking order is an idea we see in Aristotle: "all things are ordered together somehow, but not all alike—both fishes and fowls and plants; and the world is not such that one thing has nothing to do with another, but they are connected" (*Meta.* 1075a17-19). And again the holistic view—the view that the emergent whole is not reducible to its constituent parts—central to the study of ecology or life sciences in general is a tenet of Aristotle's philosophy of politics and nature: "the whole must of necessity be prior to the part" (*Pol.* 1253a20) and "the whole is one, not like a heap but like a syllable" (*Meta.* 1041b12-13).[30]

Most environmental theorists presuppose this classical idea of harmony in their normative critique of environmental problems. Their numerous differences notwithstanding, most of these critiques have targeted the radical (Cartesian) ontological dualism positing two substances; one strictly for humanity (*res cogitans*), and the other for nature (*res extensa*).[31] The common criticism is that the illusion of ontological dualism are more likely to induce human beings to be indifferent to the natural world and/or inflict harm on non-human beings without scruples. Consequently, these theorists have

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[28] See Samuel Sambursky, *The Physical World of the Greeks*, trans. Merton Dagut (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956), 40; and M. T. McClure, "The Greek Conception of Nature," *The Philosophical Review* 43.2 (1934): 118-19.

[29] W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Greek Philosophers: From Thales to Aristotle* (New York: Harper & Row, [1950] 1960), 37. See also Louis Dupré, *Passage to Modernity: An Essay in the Hermeneutics of Nature and Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 17.

[30] See also *Meta.* 1035b2-1036a26.

[31] In fact, Aristotle too posits two kinds of substance (*ousia*) as actuality (*energeia*) and potentiality (*dunamis*) but these are related to one another (*Meta.* 1039b20, 1042b9-11).

emphatically insisted on the need for recasting humankind as part of nature rather than above, against, or apart from it.

As a critic of environmentalists' uncritical use of the notion of harmony observes, "The central theme of modern environmentalism may well be the idea that humanity's separation from nature lies at root of the ecological crisis."[32] A quick survey of recent environmental literature can show that the harmony or unity of "man and nature" is indeed a recurring motif.[33] Aldo Leopold, a prominent figure in the American environmental movement, defines conservation as "a state of harmony between men and land."[34] "Modern man," according to the economist E. F. Schumacher, "does not experience himself as a part of nature but as an outside force destined to dominate and conquer it."[35] Victor C. Ferkiss, a scholar specialized in philosophy of technology, proposes naturalism as a new philosophy of human existence whose central tenet takes human species as "part of nature rather than something apart from it."[36] Robyn Eckersley, a scholar sympathetic to deep ecology, defends ecocentrism for its "recognition that humans are part of, rather than separate from or above, nature."[37] For Holmes Rolston III, "a better culture" is one that is "harmonious with nature."[38] And

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[32] Martin W. Lewis, "On Human Connectedness with Nature," *New Literary History* 24.4 (1993): 797.

[33] See David Pepper, *Modern Environmentalism: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1996), 11.

[34] See Aldo Leopold, *Round River* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 145.

[35] E. F. Schumacher, *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered* (New York: Harper & Row, [1973], 1989), 14.

[36] See Victor C. Ferkiss, *Technological Man: The Myth and the Reality* (New York: Braziller, 1969), 205-6.

[37] See Robyn Eckersley, "Habermas and Green Political Thought: Two Roads Diverging," *Theory and Society* Vol. 19.6 (1990): 748.

[38] See Rolston III, *Conserving Natural Value*.

according to the "ecological humanism" that Henryk Skolimowski advances, "the human person" is "simply a part of a larger scheme of things: of nature and the cosmos."[39]

The philosophical thrust of contemporary environmentalism evidently seeks to re-establish the lost balance and harmony with nature—a project consciously pursued in the Western philosophical tradition at least since Goethe and Hegel.[40] The idea of harmony expresses the intuitive sentiment that humans are natural beings or, in more formulaic terms, humanity is part of rather than stands apart from the order of nature. Yes, "the proposed solutions for reconnecting people to nature vary . . . significantly from one wing of the environmental movement to another."[41] Still, what do environmentalists' statement of the "harmony between man and nature" actually amounts to? Are we here speaking of a *cognitive* or ideological error when we say that those of us who see ourselves above or apart from nature are misled by our perceptions, judgment, and learning? Or is it a normative judgment of a *moral* failure that we are trying to articulate through the idea of balance/harmony? The moral failure implies that one is fully conscious of the fact that human beings ought to be living in harmony with the natural world. The sin or vice of denying this reality is often expressed in the words "arrogance" and "hubris"—the rejection of humility and finitude.[42]

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[39] Skolimowski, 80.

[40] Both Goethe and Hegel attempted to overcome the modern conception of nature by returning to Aristotle. For Hegel, see Alfredo Ferrarin, *Hegel and Aristotle* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001). For Goethe, see Henri Bortoft, *The Wholeness of Nature: Goethe's Way Toward a Science of Conscious Participation in Nature* (Hudson, NY: Lindisfarne Press, 1996); and David Seaman and Arthur Zajonc, eds., *Goethe's Way of Science: A Phenomenology of Nature* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1998).

[41] Lewis, 798.

[42] See David W. Ehrenfeld, *The Arrogance of Humanism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978); and Skolimowski, 80-111.

The positions held by environmental theorists often reflect a blend of both cognitive and normative failure. The conclusion drawn by most of these scholars from the thesis of the ontological unity and harmony between humanity and nature is the moral obligation to adjust our individual and political behavior accordingly. This combination suggests the synthesis of ontology with ethics: "When humans awaken to their presence in such a biosphere, finding themselves to be products of this process . . . they owe something to this beauty, integrity, and persistence in the biotic community."[43]

The theme of "harmony" seems to have an irresistible appeal in the environmental theory literature possibly because of our increasing dependence on technology. The technological penchant of modernity implies that nature is dispensable or at best secondary. The human species can do, if necessary, without nature or even go against it through infinite technological ingenuity. This counter-intuitive idea that humanity is artificial or apart from nature has come about through the modern conception of nature. The latter should not be confused with the pre-modern sense that human beings are somehow different from other living beings because in the pre-modern sense human beings still occupy the same natural order.[44]

But what is wrong with imbalance or disharmony? What is the normative basis of seeking harmony with nature? Is it our concern for the survival of the human species? Or is it our sense of unfairness to future generations, the contemporary poor, or non-human beings in the world? Environmental theorists do certainly differ in their answers to these questions but the debate is mostly polarized between anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric justifications of environmental concern. The anthropocentric form of

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[43] Rolston, *Environmental Ethics*, 188.

[44] Marvin Zetterbaum, "Human Nature and History," in *Human Nature in Politics*, eds. J. Roland Pennock and John William Chapman (New York: New York University Press, 1977), 233.

justification foregrounds instrumental or human-specific reasons for nature's value whereas the latter emphasizes the intrinsic value of non-human nature. There is growing dissatisfaction with this polarization, however, as it has become a major roadblock in environmental theory.[45] The discontent is due to the insufficient attention to the "political" dimension of environmentalism or, as one of these critics puts it, "the public reception of ethical arguments over the value of nature."[46] This is particularly visible among anti-anthropocentric environmental theorists who operate as if in a political vacuum in which human aspirations do not count. The turn in environmental theory toward weak anthropocentrism on the other hand, which most of these critics defend, is consistent with the "good life" perspective of Aristotle in which "nature" figures as a normative concept.[47] I will return to this discussion in Chapters 5 and 6.

Although the "balance of nature" metaphor has come under attack recently, the notion of balance still holds its ground within the normative analysis of environmentalism. According to a recent debate among ecologists, the "balance of nature" metaphor can be misleading both scientifically and politically. The opponents of this metaphor have offered alternative models to represent the ecological phenomena. According to one such model called "hierarchical patch dynamics," ecological

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[45] See Andrew Light, "Contemporary Environmental Ethics from Metaethics to Public Philosophy," *Metaphilosophy* 33.4 (2002): 426-449; see also Bryan G. Norton, *Toward Unity Among Environmentalists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Andrew Light and Eric Katz, eds., *Environmental Pragmatism* (London: Routledge, 1996); Tim Hayward, *Political Theory and Ecological Values* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998); and Andrew Light and Avner De-Shalit, eds., *Moral and Political Reasoning in Environmental Practice* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003).

[46] Light, 427.

[47] For enlightened anthropocentrism, see Hayward, *Political Theory and Ecological Values*, 42-57. For weak anthropocentrism, see Eugene C. Hargrove, "Weak Anthropocentric Intrinsic Value," *Monist* 75.2 (1992): 183-207.

phenomena are marked by temporal and spatial heterogeneity.[48] A forest, for instance, is depicted from this point of view as "a hierarchical mosaic system of dynamic patches of different sizes and successional stages."[49] Despite all this heterogeneity and dynamism, however, a forest maintains its identity over time. The fact that the identity of a forest persists in the face of heterogeneity and flux is an indication of "ecological metastability, possibly the closest technical equivalent to 'balance of nature.'"[50] It is not that harmony does not exist but it is "embedded in the patterns of fluctuation," and the "ecological persistence" indicates "order within disorder."[51] Hence, even the critics of this metaphor invoke the "harmony between humanity and nature" as a normative goal.[52]

The second Aristotelian idea that runs through contemporary environmental thought is the moral imperative to live within ecological limits. In ancient Greek culture, the idea of limits appears in multiple cultural expressions of mortality and finitude. The myths of Prometheus and Daedalus reminded the ancients of the tragic dimension of life: hubris brings about nemesis.[53] In ancient Greek philosophy, the ontological notion of "limit" (*peras*) and the "unlimited" (*apeiron*) carried ethical overtones. According to this view expounded by Pythagoras, the phenomena of the world are ordered and limited as they result from the continual imposition of a limit on the unlimited.[54] Beings in a sense

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[48] See Jianguo Wu and Orie L. Loucks, "From Balance of Nature to Hierarchical Patch Dynamics: A Paradigm Shift in Ecology," *The Quarterly Review of Biology* 70.4 (1995): 439-66.

[49] Ibid., 450.

[50] Ibid., 459.

[51] Ibid., 460.

[52] Ibid., 466.

[53] See Luigi Zoja, *Growth and Guilt: Psychology and the Limits of Development*, trans. Henry Martin (London: Routledge, 1995), 130-41.

[54] Guthrie, 39. The concept of *apeiron* is first used by the Milesian philosopher Anaximander however.

are generated as they become delimited. Our ability to define things rests on their delimitation as the verb "to define" itself means "to delimit." The late Pythagorean philosopher Philolaos of Croton intimates the harmony underlying this constant interaction between the one and the many: "Nature in the ordered universe was composed of [*harmochthē*] unlimited and limiting elements, and so was the whole universe [*kosmos*] and all that is therein."[55] These ideas were influential on the study of medicine both in classical antiquity and during the medieval era. According to the ancient view of health, the wholeness of the world and human body depend "on a right mingling (*krasis*) of the elements" of which they are composed.[56]

We see the classical theme of limit, which is at one and the same time ontological and ethical, again in Plato's dialogue *Philebus*. Socrates, the lead character of the dialogue, discussing the role of pleasure in the good life with a young interlocutor, is trying to persuade him that pleasure on its own cannot be the best thing in this world. For this purpose he appeals to the teaching of the ancients: "whatever is said to be consists of one and many, having in its nature limit and unlimitedness." Socrates interprets this teaching not only in relation to the physical coming-into-being on earth but also to the medical, aesthetical, and ethical conditions that we encounter in the course of everyday life. Measure and proportion in these qualities are equally outcomes of the imposition of limit on the unlimited: "With health there come beauty and strength, and again in our soul there is a host of other excellent qualities. It is the goddess herself [i.e., Aphrodite] . . . who recognizes how excess (*hubris*) and the overabundance of our wickedness allow

[55] Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, Vol. II, trans. R. D. Hicks (Loeb Classical Library, 1931), 401.

[56] Guthrie, 41; see also Glacken, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore*, 14-18. This view of right mixture anticipates Aristotle's ideas on virtue as we will see in Chapter 4.

for no limit in our pleasures and their fulfillment, and she therefore imposes law and order as a limit on them."[57] The classical theme of limit reappears in Aristotle's recurring phrase "the end is a limit." The unlimited for Aristotle too represents an imperfection whereas nature ever seeks perfection and determination: "But Nature flies from the unlimited, for the unlimited is imperfect [*ateles*], and Nature ever seeks an end [*telos*]" (*GA* 715b14).[58] The souls of complex beings put together by nature are marked by their limit and logos (*De An.* 416a15-18).

The idea of limits figures in contemporary environmentalism in a somewhat different but not totally unrelated way.[59] Contemporary environmentalists draw our attention to the physical limits of earth's carrying capacity and to the fact that we are overshooting the natural resources available to us. The contemporary concern with ecological limits to growth has a normative tinge to it despite its scientific quantitative garb. Environmental scholars have drawn out the normative implications of the "limits to growth" thesis in one of two ways. Some have appealed to the principle of fairness to future generations, and others to that of global intra-generational justice. The latter approach has been lately revived under the name of "ecological footprints"—the idea that those with relatively large ecological footprints (i.e., high levels of consumption) must acknowledge the natural limits of the earth, and allow others with substandard

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[57] Plato, *Philebus*, trans. Dorothea Frede, in *Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 16d, 26b-c.

[58] The standard translation is slightly revised.

[59] See H. Fairfield Osborn, *The Limits of the Earth* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1953); Donella H. Meadows et al., *The Limits to Growth* (New York: Universe Books, 1972); Garrett J. Hardin, *Living within Limits* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Donella H. Meadows et al., *The Limits to Growth: The 30-year Update* (White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2004).

levels of consumption to enlarge their ecological footprints.[60] The classical idea of limits can be instrumental in reinvigorating the normative implications of the ecological footprints idea, which I discuss in Chapter 6 in relation to environmental citizenship.

2.2 Modernity and History

The Aristotelian conception of nature needs re-assessment today in the light of the modern conception of nature which originated with the so-called Scientific Revolution of the seventeenth century. The rejection of *telos* in nature has developed parallel to the turn from a world of "finitude" to the quest for "unlimited" growth and expansion. Another way of interpreting this historical change is that moderns have committed themselves to the eradication of the tragic dimension of human life, which, according to the classical perspective, was all too human.

Simply put, modernity is "the new civilization developed in Europe and North America over the last several centuries and fully evident by the early twentieth century."[61] One of the most distinguishing feature of modernity is the deep-seated belief in progress. This belief is both empirical and normative. It says equivocally that progress in sciences and arts occurs and this is the only way to expand in morality and happiness. The initiators of this re-organization such as Machiavelli, Bacon, Hobbes, Galileo, and Descartes were conscious of the new era they were ushering in. They all intended, in their own ways, to break with the ancients and lay the groundwork for a new beginning. Their predilection for change and innovation has set the tone for what has come to be known as "modernity" in retrospect.

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[60] See, for example, Mathis Wackernagel and William E. Rees, *Our Ecological Footprint: Reducing Human Impact on the Earth* (Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers, 1996).

[61] Lawrence Cahoone, introduction to *From Modernism to Postmodernism: An Anthology*, ed. Lawrence Cahoone. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 11.

Modernity can be studied in its various aspects. In philosophical and practical terms, two features particularly stand out. The conscious attempt to introduce innovations is one of the two features which distinguishes modernity from preceding history. This can be called "consciousness of novelty."[62] A second feature is the increased interest in and appreciation of "active involvement in the world."[63] The latter reverses the order between *theoria* and *praxis* and produces an optimistic or, what we may call, an untragic view of reality which I shall discuss later in this section.[64]

The fascination with the "new" can be seen clearly in Machiavelli's proclamation of "a new route, which has not yet been followed by any one."[65] He explains his intent more explicitly in *The Prince* as follows: "my intent is to write something useful" by examining "the effectual truth of the thing." This remark was meant to distinguish his worldly practical approach from that of ancient Greek, Roman, and medieval Christian philosophers, all of whom busied themselves, according to Machiavelli, with the otherworldly "imagination" of human affairs.[66] What was new about Machiavelli's approach was not his "realism" but his instruction of "realism." For unscrupulous pursuit of power was surely common to all ages and peoples. The need for a new beginning was most strongly felt in natural philosophy though. Galileo's second great work was entitled *Discourses on Two New Sciences* (1638). Most telling of all is the title of

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[62] Dante Germino, *Modern Western Political Thought: Machiavelli to Marx* (Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1972), 8. See also Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. Frederick G. Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, [1985] 1990), 1-22.

[63] Ibid.

[64] The historian Peter Gay calls the modern activist attitude toward nature "the recovery of nerve" and notes that "the word *innovation*, traditionally an effective term of abuse, became a word of praise" for the moderns. See Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, Vol. II (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996), 3.

[65] *The Prince and the Discourses*, trans. Christian E. Detmold (New York: Random House), 103.

[66] *The Prince*, trans. Harvey Mansfield (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 61.

one of Francis Bacon's major works—*Novum Organum* (1620). Although unfinished, it was intended to replace the revered collection of Aristotle's works on logic known as *Organon*. In his Preface, Bacon explicitly pits himself against the ancients: "I open and lay out a new and certain path for the mind to proceed in . . . . my object being to open a new way for the understanding, a way by them untried and unknown."[67]

It is well known that both the Cartesian rationalist and the Baconian empiricist methods aim at epistemic certitude. This is not radically different from the goal of theoretical knowledge known to the ancients, both Plato and Aristotle, as *epistēmē*. For them too, *episteme* is the type of knowledge which aims to discover "what is" or the principles (*archai*) and causes (*aitiai*) of unchanging things, both of which imply some high standard compared to mere "opinion." Today, what we mean by "science" is comparable, if not identical, with the ancient epistemology.[68]

But Aristotle, departing from Plato, argued that there is another sphere of knowledge applicable to human praxis which he identified as *phronēsis*.[69] The term was not invented by Aristotle. It was used by Plato and others without the specific meaning which Aristotle assigned to it. This type of knowledge was known to the Romans and medieval Christians as *prudential*, and to us as "prudence," or alternatively as practical wisdom, practical reason, or practical knowledge. But the meaning of prudence has been transformed after Kant's contrast between "prudential" (calculative self-serving) and "moral" (showing concern for the good of others for its own sake) behavior. Hence, the

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[67] *The New Organon*, ed. Fulton H. Anderson (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1960), 34-5.

[68] There is of course a major difference. Aristotelian *episteme* was restricted to demonstrative syllogism whereas modern science initiated by Galileo and Bacon are based on a synthesis of mathematical and experimental methods.

[69] For Plato *episteme* is always contrasted with *doxa* (opinion). Regarding human affairs, one can at best aim at right opinion (*orthe doxa*) or true opinion(*doxa alethes*). Aristotle employs *phronesis* to this purpose.

normative sense of *phronesis* has been lost along the way. It is important to note that the identification of science and knowledge with *episteme* on the one hand and the convergence between *episteme* and *techne* on the other has brought about the depreciation of *phronesis*. The aforementioned Kantian distinction, so as to save morality from the mechanistic plane of nature, has further contributed to its fall from favor. If *phronesis* indeed exists as Aristotle conceives it cannot of course disappear into oblivion but can certainly get obscurer. For it is an intellectual virtue which cannot be detached from human beings. In a society in which cleverness is recognized as wisdom, it should not be a surprise if *phronesis* becomes endangered over time.[70]

The fundamental question at the heart of contemporary environmental thought can be broadly conceived as the proper relationship of technology with nature.[71] The nexus of *techne* and nature is inadequate without considering praxis or *phronesis*. Restoring the imbalance or distorted relationship between *techne* and nature is the task of *phronesis* but this task in the modern era has been usurped by *episteme* and *techne*. The overshadowing of praxis guided by *phronesis* by praxis guided by the marriage of *techne* and *episteme* has been noted by many scholars as a fundamental feature of modernity.[72]

Techne, for Aristotle, was important but ancillary to *praxis* in the context of everyday life. Although the distinction between *praxis* and *poiesis* is first clearly drawn by Aristotle, we can see its traces even in the Platonic dialogue *Epinomis*. The leading

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[70] Human reality is historical (time- and/or culture-bound) only in this specific sense. Certain decisions made in the past can restrict the scope of available options in the future.

[71] For the questions that have arisen from the interface of technology and the environment, see Victor C. Ferkiss, *Nature, Technology, and Society: Cultural Roots of the Current Environmental Crisis* (New York: New York University Press, 1993); and Jeffrey K. Stine and Joel A. Tarr, "At the Intersection of Histories: Technology and the Environment," *Technology and Culture* 39:4 (1998): 601-40.

[72] For this literature, see Franco Volpi, "The Rehabilitation of Practical Philosophy and Neo-Aristotelianism," in *Action and Contemplation*, eds. Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins (New York: SUNY Press, 1999), 3-25.

character in the dialogue is openly doubtful of the depth of wisdom acquired from productive arts such as agriculture, building, or metallurgy: "these arts enable us to possess the necessities of life, but . . . none of them makes anyone wise."[73] We see Aristotle's position when he states that "life [*bios*] is action [*praxis*], not production [*poiēsis*]" (*Pol.* 1254a6-7).[74] His advice against the inclusion of the artisan class in the political decision-making process due to the degrading effect of these arts on their practitioners is also based on the fact that those who do not exercise their capacity of *phronesis* would fail to be good judges of political affairs (*Pol.* 1329a19-20).

In *Politics* II.8, Aristotle discusses a reform proposal made by Hippodamus—an ambitious and flamboyant Greek intellectual who flourished about a century before Aristotle. His proposal was to enact laws to institute a tradition of bestowing honor on the inventors of a city in order to make the pursuit of invention more appealing. Aristotle first cautiously points to the possible risks of establishing such a tradition, and then moves on to a related question of changing laws to the better. Aristotle acknowledges that "it is not best to leave written [laws] unchanged" since it is not always possible to foresee the particular exigencies of *praxis* ahead of time (*Pol.* 1269a7-8). But he also advises caution [*eulabeia*] in this regard as law, unlike art, requires a framework of stability to hold its effect on people (*Pol.* 1269a20). Art, on the other hand, can afford constant innovation and experimentation. The analogy between arts and political expertise, Aristotle believes, must not be pressed to the point that progress in arts is taken as a model for laws. Political instability that may stem from a revolutionary

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[73] *Epinomis*, trans. Richard D. McKirahan, Jr., in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 975d1-2. Though Plato's authorship of this dialogue is contested by scholars, it is still illustrative of the classical position.

[74] Hannah Arendt's *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958) is based on Aristotle's this position. I will discuss this work shortly.

approach to laws can counteract the slight marginal gains to be gained from reforms. Aristotle shows his conservative face here but does not necessarily revere tradition for its own sake as he comments in the same context that what is sought after is the good and "not the traditional" (*Pol.* 1269a2).

In the modern era, on the other hand, *techne*, assuming a critical position in the form of technical reason and *poiēsis* (making), has become paradigmatic, and the role of nature has been thereby reduced to that of "a furnisher of energy and raw materials."[75] The shift in the respective roles of *techne*, *praxis*, and *phusis* has come about through the activist re-orientation of theory that modern science has taken following the lead of Francis Bacon. For so long as *theōria* (contemplation) and praxis were held separate from and superior to *poiesis*, as we see in Aristotle, *techne* could not appear in the forefront of human life (*NE* 1140a1-20). Virtue—which is the core of *praxis* for Aristotle—is "something more precise and better than any art, just as nature is" (*NE* 1106b13-14).[76] It is also important to remember that the superiority of *theoria* to *praxis* for ancients was an indication of privileging nature over *techne*. "The primacy of contemplation over activity," noted Hannah Arendt, "rests on the conviction that no work of human hands can equal in beauty and truth the physical *kosmos*, which swings in itself in changeless eternity without any interference or assistance from outside, from man or god."[77]

The productivist paradigm of modernity and the concomitant devaluation of nature have ultimately sprung from the "tangled and blurred" "lines separating theory,

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[75] Wolfgang Schadewaldt, "The Concepts of *Nature* and *Technique* According to the Greeks," *Research in Philosophy and Technology*, Vol. 2, (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1979), 168.

[76] See Joseph Dunne, *Back to the Rough Ground: 'Phronesis' and 'Techne' in Modern Philosophy and Aristotle* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), 237-74.

[77] Arendt, 15.

action, and production."[78] Knowledge would attain a more dignified and exalted state, said Bacon, "if contemplation and action may be more nearly and straitly [i.e., tightly] conjoined and united together than they have been."[79] Happiness, the prime end of *praxis* according to Aristotle, is reduced by Hobbes to a transient feeling we get from the satisfaction of our endless desires: "Felicity is a continual progress of the desire, from one object to another; the attaining of the former, being still but the way to the latter."[80] With Locke, the unlimited pursuit of wealth ceases to be a source of opprobrium to become the defining feature of *praxis*.

The productivist paradigm has struck a blow to the ancient ideal of what it means to be a human. A critical casualty in this sense has been the emasculation of virtues within *praxis*. Virtues almost disappear as praxis is first reduced to *poiesis* and then ultimately to labor. Hannah Arendt identifies three steps of this momentous transformation. First is the reversal of the hierarchical order between thinking and doing. Thinking became the "handmaiden of doing" while "contemplation itself became altogether meaningless."[81] The second step consists of a reversal within the *vita activa* (active life)—Arendt's collective word designating labor, work, and action. It is the activities of *homo faber*—making and fabricating—together with its instrumental worldview that first "rise to the position formerly occupied by contemplation" and

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[78] Stanley Rosen, "*Techne* and the Origins of Modernity," in *Technology in the Western Political Tradition*, eds. Arthur M. Melzer, Jerry Weinberger, and M. Richard Zinman (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 74.

[79] Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, in *Francis Bacon: The Major Works*, ed. Brian Vickers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 148.

[80] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch. XI.

[81] Arendt, 292.

displacing praxis in the meantime. The third step, finally, is "the elevation of laboring to the highest position in the hierarchical order of the *vita activa*."[82]

A corollary of the productivist paradigm is the radical separation of man from nature, as its instrumental worldview and motif of mastery entail the rejection of the teleological or animistic view of nature: "without a common teleology that integrates humanity with nature, the mastery of nature becomes its own end."[83] The teleological view of nature associated with Aristotle and his scholastic followers was perceived as an impediment to the productivist paradigm. Robert Boyle, one of the pioneers of the seventeenth century science, questioned the teleological view on this basis:

> the veneration wherewith men are imbued for what they call nature has been *a discouraging impediment* to the empire of man over the inferior creatures of God. For many have not looked upon it as an impossible thing to compass, but as something of impious to attempt: the removing of those boundaries which nature seems to have put and settled among her productions. And while they look upon her as such a venerable thing, some make a kind of scruple of conscience to endeavor so to emulate any of her works, as to excel them.[84]

The mastery of nature has been an integral part of the modern project which found in Francis Bacon its most enthusiastic advocate and exponent.[85] The modern interpretation of nature as inert matter was closely related to the humanitarian spirit of relieving humanity from the realm of necessity. Bacon's modern project can best be described as a double move: the progress of humankind through increasing control of nature. The theoretical re-conceptualization of "nature" as passive and inert matter—subject to the mathematical laws of local motion—enabled the practical goal of

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[82] Ibid., 294, 306.

[83] Dupré, 74.

[84] Boyle, 15, emphasis mine. Bacon's complaint is similar: "the handling of final causes" led to "the great arrest and prejudice of further discovery," see *The Advancement of Learning*, 198.

[85] See Robert K. Faulkner, *Francis Bacon and the Project of Progress* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1993).

harnessing it for "charity" (i.e., the mutual benefit of humankind).[86] The Aristotelian formal and final causes are rejected: "Matter rather than forms should be the object of our attention, its configurations and changes of configuration, and simple action, and law of action or motion; for forms are figments of the human mind, unless you will call those laws of action forms."[87]

The task of Bacon's new science is the creative or fruitful disquisition of nature with a view to the production of useful works for human life. It is contrasted with the passive or barren contemplation of the ancients. We should not invoke "occult properties and specific virtues" in nature, Bacon prescribes, but "dissect her into parts" and unleash the "power of generating or transforming natural bodies."[88] The promise, appeal, and ultimate success of the new scientific method has lain in its potential "to extend more widely the limits of power and greatness of man."[89] To this purpose, (natural) philosophy or science is assimilated to *techne* in the name of humanitarian charity. Whereas *techne* and nature are complementary in Aristotle, Bacon sets them against each other: "among things artificial those are to be preferred which either come nearest to an imitation of nature, or on the contrary overrule and turn her back." Bacon's method ultimately seeks to achieve and secure "the victory of art over nature."[90]

The works of several leading figures of the modern scientific ethos—Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, Galileo, and Newton—expounded the new mechanistic conception

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[86] See Ivor Leclerc, *The Philosophy of Nature* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1986), 19-104.

[87] Francis Bacon, *The New Organon*, ed. Fulton H. Anderson (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1960), 1.51; see also 1.65 and 1.66.

[88] *The New Organon*, 1.66, 1.51, 1.5, 1.75.

[89] Ibid., 1.116; see also 1.81, 1.73, 2.31, and 2.52.

[90] Ibid., 2.31, 1.117.

of nature modeled after physics as opposed to biology.[91] By leaving out the formal and final causes, the modern conception of nature has ignored the secondary qualities of nature which, on ancient perspective, had to be considered to do justice to its working.[92] The new science stopped asking "Why?" or "For what purpose?" and took upon itself the task of describing "How?" things happen.[93] This methodological reorientation of natural science has paved the way to controlling natural processes. Natural scientists and philosophers who accomplished this intellectual transformation have unwittingly driven a wedge between human experience and the rest of living nature. The modern scientific view of nature has divested nature of its organismic elements and agency.

An early exponent of this historic transformation, Alexandre Koyré, calls it "the destruction of the Cosmos." According to Koyré, the pre-modern conception of the world as "a finite, closed, and hierarchically ordered whole" was replaced by "an indefinite and even infinite universe." Whereas the pre-modern Cosmos was of diverse constitution, the modern universe is "bound together by the identity of its fundamental components and laws." The consequences of this transformation was nothing but phenomenal. To Koyré, the new outlook brought about "the utter devalorization of being" by divorcing the subjective ground of "value" from the objective realm of "facts": "all considerations based upon value-concepts, such as perfection, harmony,

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[91] The philosophical premises and implications of the new science are discussed, among others, in Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, [1936] 1970); Edwin A. Burtt, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science*, 2nd revised ed. (Mineola, NY: Dover, [1924] 2003); Alexandre Koyré, *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 1957); and Richard Kennington, *On Modern Origins: Essays in Early Modern Philosophy*, eds. Pamela Kraus and Frank Hunt (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2004).

[92] McClure, 121.

[93] Sambursky, 83-4.

meaning and aim" were thrown out by the new science.[94] Another critic, Alfred N. Whitehead, who is also one of the staunch critics of the Cartesian dualism in early twentieth century, used the phrase "the bifurcation of nature" to refer to the same transformation. Nature as an inanimate realm (Descartes' *res extensa*) is thoroughly disenchanted and becomes "a dull affair, soundless, scentless, colourless; merely the hurrying of material, endlessly, meaninglessly."[95] The environmental consequences of the modern view of dead nature are bluntly drawn out by Jacques Monod. Writing around the time that the environmental movement was beginning, Monod observes that behind the contemporary protests against the destruction of nature is

> the refusal to accept the essential message of science. The fear is the fear of sacrilege: of outrage to values; and it is wholly justified. It is perfectly true that science attacks values. Not directly, since science is no judge of them and *must* ignore them; but it subverts every one of the mythical or philosophical, ontogenies [i.e., narratives] upon which the animist tradition, from the Australian aborigines to the dialectical materialists, has based morality: values, duties, rights, prohibitions.[96]

It is against this reductive and dualist view of nature that most environmental scholars and activists, knowingly or unknowingly, are directing their critique at. This is most evident in the ethics of "intrinsic value" of nature which I will discuss in Chapter 5.

To be sure, even pre-modern societies had to make use of other natural beings to serve their various needs and wants. However, the link between the use of nature and the emancipation of humanity had not been so self-consciously and forcefully asserted prior to the modern era. The ancient Greek myth of Prometheus and the "Ode to Man" in

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[94] Koyré, 2. See also M. T. McClure, "The Greek Conception of Nature," *The Philosophical Review* 43.2 (1934): 115.

[95] See *Alfred North Whitehead: An Anthology*, eds. F. S. C. Northrop and Mason W. Gross (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1961), 412. See also Schadewaldt, 164.

[96] Jacques Monod, *Chance and Necessity: An Essay on the Natural Philosophy of Modern Biology* (New York: Knopf, 1971), 172.

Sophocles' *Antigone* celebrate man's ingenuity against hostile fate or nature but they are ambivalent as they stress "the perilous problematic of technique."[97] Varied environmental problems such as species extinction or global warming caused by population, technology, and consumption are actually an off-shoot of the surge of confidence in the project of human emancipation through the promethean conquest of nature. The modern project in a nutshell promises to "progressively" free humanity from "material constraints" and "the misleading servitudes of animism."[98] Yet, such progressive techno-optimists overlook or do not want to acknowledge that the drive toward emancipation may bring about an opposite effect of more oppression as C. S. Lewis astutely observed: "What we call Man's power over Nature turns out to be a power exercised by some men over other men with Nature as its instrument."[99]

As noble as it may sound, the progressive emancipation of humanity comes only with a hefty price. The price is continually paid first and foremost by unprivileged members of living or future generations within the modernized or modernizing countries who are, for instance, obliged to make room for development projects for the greater good of all.[100] Indeed, some environmental theorists have pointed at modernity as bearing responsibility for contemporary environmental problems. William Ophuls, for

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[97] Schadewaldt, 169. For an interpretation of the "Ode to Man" along these lines, see also James H. Nichols, Jr., "Technology in Classical Thought," in *Technology in the Western Political Tradition*, eds. Arthur M. Melzer, Jerry Weinberger, and M. Richard Zinman (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 27-45; Albert A. Anderson, "Why Prometheus Suffers: Technology and the Ecological Crisis," *Techné* 1.1&2 (1995); and David E. Tabachnik, "Techne, Technology and Tragedy," *Techné* 7.3 (2004): 91-112.

[98] Monod, 180.

[99] C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, [1944] 2001), 69.

[100] See John H. Bodley, *Victims of Progress*, 4th ed. (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Co., [1975] 1999); Claude Alvares, *Science, Development and Violence: The Revolt against Modernity* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992), 1-32; Barbara R. Johnston, ed., *Who Pays the Price? The Sociocultural Context of Environmental Crisis* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 1994); Paul R. Josephson, *Industrialized Nature: Brute Force Technology and the Transformation of the Natural World* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2002).

instance, locates the ideological roots of environmental problems in the Enlightenment tradition.[101] Joel J. Kassiola similarly brings up the theme of tragedy to draw attention to the "self-defeatist nature of modernity."[102] However, overcoming modernity should not be presented as an easy matter nor desirable before we truly understand what it entails—especially if the diagnosis of one of the most acute observers of modernity holds true for today: nihilism, "this uncanniest of all guests," standing at the door.[103]

The idea that further "modernization" is necessary to resolve its undesirable side-effects is essential to the survival of the modern project. Those who celebrate the benefits of modernity or progress but protest its excesses have not really come to terms with the antinomies of "modernity." Certain environmental theorists, for example, suggested that green politics must be conceived as "an immanent critique rather than a rejection of modernity" so as not to abandon its democratic achievements.[104] But the expansion of the qualitative dimension of "modernity" (i.e., universal/categorical freedom and equality) depends on the quantitative economic growth and constant technological advancement, as classical economists and old-fashioned Marxists are quick to point out, regardless of the extent to which this growth is shared.[105] Those who ride on the bandwagon of modernity—the progressive camp consisting of people with

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[101] See William Ophuls, *Requiem for Modern Politics: The Tragedy of the Enlightenment and the Challenge of the New Millennium* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997).

[102] Joel J. Kassiola, "The 'Tragedy' of Modernity: How Environmental Limits and the Environmental Crisis Produce the Need for Postmodern Values and Institutions," in *Explorations in Environmental Political Theory: Thinking about What We Value*, ed. Joel J. Kassiola (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), 14.

[103] See Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1968), 9-84.

[104] John Barry, *Rethinking Green Politics: Nature, Virtue and Progress* (London: Sage, 1999), 250. Robin Attfield makes a similar qualified critique of progress in *The Ethics of Environmental Concern*, 2nd. Ed. (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1991), 67-87.

[105] See Gregg Easterbrook, *The Progress Paradox* (New York: Random House, 2003); and Benjamin M. Friedman *The Moral Consequences of Economic Growth* (New York: Knopf, 2005).

classical liberal or Marxist persuasion—the demand for ecological sustainability or preservation is nothing short of a "reactionary" or "primitivist" stumbling block especially when there are hungry mouths to be fed somewhere in the world. [106]

Technological innovations aimed at increasing economic productivity, curing diseases, lowering mortality rates, and lengthening longevity are paradoxically capable of producing counterproductive effects: turning poverty—the age-old adversity of human life—into destitution, various natural causes of sorrow—death, illness, and old age—into a "joyless quest for joy," and practical wisdom into ignorance.[107] Paradoxically, the increasing ignorance is accompanied by an increasing reliance in modern politics and social sciences on the scientific form of knowledge.[108] The upshot of this drive toward technological control over fate and nature is the dismissal and marginalization of "traditional ecological" knowledge of human communities handed down through generations.[109] This form of knowledge—found to be quite effective in dealing with

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[106] We should, of course, not be misled by the so-called conservatives with a classical liberal economic agenda who are much more adamant about continuing "progress" than some of their contemporary liberal cousins. For the critique of environmentalism from a laissez-faire perspective, see Ayn Rand, *The Return of the Primitive: The Anti-Industrial Revolution* (New York: Meridian, [1971] 1999); and George Reisman, *Capitalism: A Treatise on Economics* (Ottawa, IL: Jameson Books, 1996), 63-122. The left-view critique, see Donald Gibson, *Environmentalism: Ideology and Power* (Huntington, NY: Nova Science, 2002).

[107] The phrase "joyless quest for joy" is used by Leo Strauss in *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 251. For the ethical implications of medical advances, see Leon R. Kass, *Toward a More Natural Science: Biology and Human Affairs* (New York: The Free Press, 1985).

[108] See James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); and Stephen Toulmin, *Return to Reason* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

[109] See Mark Hobart, ed., *An Anthropological Critique of Development: The Growth of Ignorance* (London: Routledge, 1993); Ladislaus M. Semali and Joe L. Kincheloe, *What is Indigenous Knowledge? Voices from the Academy* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1999); and Fikret Berkes, *Sacred Ecology: Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Resource Management* (Philadelphia, PA: Taylor and Francis, 1999). For a more critical assessment, see Roy Allen, Peter Parkes, and Alan Bicker, eds., *Indigenous Environmental Knowledge and its Transformations: Critical Anthropological Perspectives* (Amsterdam: Harwood, 2000); Roy Ellen, "Local Knowledge and Sustainable Development in Developing Countries," in *Global Sustainable Development in the Twenty-first Century*, eds. Keekok Lee, Alan Holland, and Desmond McNeill (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000); and John Briggs, "The Use of Indigenous Knowledge in Development: Problems and Challenges," *Progress in Development Studies* 5.2 (2005): 99-114.

ecological and economic issues on a local level—revives experiential knowledge whose two forms are *techne* and *phronēsis* in Aristotle.[110] In a recent international project on protecting the drylands through preserving the pastoral way of life, it has been recorded that the pastoralists' traditional knowledge is superior to the imported expert knowledge which is forgetful or ignorant of particulars:

> There is considerable experience of trying to introduce new animal husbandry techniques and new genetic material into pastoral systems. Most experiments have failed. Replacing local breeds or cross-breeding with high productivity stock, introducing new management systems which try to eliminate the need for nomadism, cultivation of fodder crops, introduction of mixed farming, and many other interventions have rarely brought benefits to herders. More often they have caused land degradation or become unsustainable, and have been abandoned. On the other hand, we now better understand the extensive knowledge and skills of herders, the genetic qualities of local breeds, and the rationality of local pastoral livelihood systems. Improvements can certainly be made, but the starting point should be existing livestock management systems, knowledge and skills, not an imported model.[111]

Another pillar of modernity is the promise of "commodious living." Yet, it is not obvious if human living can continually grow in comfort without limits. What we truly mean by inherently qualitative terms such as "commodious" or "comfortable" is in the end measured by indicators that always correspond to quantities.[112] Statistics describing increases in GDP per capita cannot however tell the whole truth about human well-

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[110] Aristotle distinguishes the knowledge of particular and contingent things—*phronēsis* (practical wisdom)—from the knowledge of universals and unchanging reality, which is *epistēmē* (science). I shall discuss this point further in Chapter 4.

[111] See http://www.iucn.org/wisp/myths-misconceptions.html. The World Initiative for Sustainable Pastoralism (WISP) is a temporary joint project funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), implemented by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and executed by The World Conservation Union (IUCN). It is estimated that there are 100 to 200 million pastoralists—nomadic people who frequently change places to find pasture for their livestock. Drylands—terrestrial areas where the mean annual rainfall falls short of the amount of total evaporation—cover %41 of Earth's land surface.

[112] For the increasing use of the language of comfort in the modern era by the literati justifying luxury and consumption, see John E. Crowley, *The Invention of Comfort: Sensibilities and Design in Early Modern Britain and Early America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

being as recent critics of this welfare indicator have pointed out.[113] Conflated with ordinary forms of poverty—which is partially "relative deprivation"—is a peculiar kind that cripples those whom it afflicts. We may call this condition "destitution" comparable to what Ivan Illich has called the "modernization of poverty," and which is similar in effect to Aristotle's description of tyranny that produces "incapacity for activity" among people (*Pol.* 1314a23).[114]

This condition has been universally experienced and is still being experienced around the world wherever the supportive fabric of traditional society has been undermined or collapsed under the pressure of increasing monetary relationships and technologically sophisticated devices. What goes out the window with increasing modernization (i.e., monetarization and technological sophistication) is a social security network that is capable of regenerating what has been recently discovered as "social capital." The loss of social capital often follows in the wake of geographical dislocations caused by development projects—quite similar to the social transformation in Western Europe discussed by the historian of economics Karl Polanyi.[115]

The preceding discussion is not meant as a denunciation of the use of technology in contemporary society but is directed at its uncritical celebration as if technology is the key to the riddle of the universe. What techno-optimists do not want to acknowledge is

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[113] See Partha Dasgupta, *Human Well-being and the Natural Environment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[114] Ivan Illich, *Toward a History of Needs* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977). For a contemporary analysis of destitution, see Stephen Devereux, "Conceptualising Destitution," (Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies, 2003), http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/bookshop/wp/wp216.pdf.

[115] See Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1944). For a contemporary interpretation of Polanyi's analysis in relation to developmental projects, see Smitu Kothari, "Social Movements, Ecology, and Justice," in *Earthly Goods: Environmental Change and Social Justice*, eds. Fen O. Hampson and Judith Reppy (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 154-72.

that *techne* relies on praxis to be useful at all. This cannot happen however in a social context where *techne* is seen as the crown of human achievement. It is this modern ethos that possibly lies at the root of varied kinds of environmental destruction stemming from developmental projects. If it is true that we should seek the origin of our contemporary environmental woes in the modern break with ancient wisdom (be it of the Western or non-Western kinds), it would be sensible to reconsider Aristotle's conception of the relationship of *techne* with praxis and nature, which the founders and disciples of the modern project from Machiavelli to Marx have, in varying degrees, attempted to reverse. The flagship of this reversal has been Progress and History. The modern project of "the conquest of nature" required the conquest of human nature because, as Leo Strauss points out, "an unchangeable human nature might set absolute limits to progress."[116]

2.3 Historicizing Nature

Val Plumwood recently has drawn our attention to the "deep contemporary suspicion and skepticism" about the notion of "nature," and speculated that this attitude "may play some role in the contemporary indifference to the destruction and decline of the natural world around us."[117] I believe this is a plausible suggestion and I will base the following discussion on this assumption. But I beg to differ from Plumwood's emphasis on "progressive politics" as I will try to show in this section that the roots of contemporary suspicion toward nature must be sought in the transformation that the concept of nature underwent in the early modern era which eventually brought about the intellectual current of historicism in the late modern era. The notion of progress is a relic

[116] Strauss, *The City and Man*, 7. See also Dunne, 371-4.

[117] Val Plumwood, "Toward a Progressive Naturalism," in *Recognizing the Autonomy of Nature: Theory and Practice*, ed. Thomas Heyd (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 25.

of historicism which cannot be reconciled with an affirmative attitude toward nature—unless we are willing to view "progress" as something local both temporally and geographically.[118] To the nexus between the modern concept of nature and historicism I now turn.

Liberals are often reluctant to speak of an independent (human) nature. Speaking of a fixed "nature" almost immediately raises eyebrows among those who believe that evoking an unchanging "nature" is reactionary. Their stock proof against it is the historical and cultural variability of the concept of nature and human attitudes toward nature. If it can be shown that our ideas of (human) nature, like all other ideas, are socio-historically constructed, it is thought, we can always negotiate and transform them. It is feared that positing nature can justify an undemocratic closure of freedom.

History is posited in the modern era as a rival to Nature as the new source of meaning and stability. The historian R. G. Collingwood articulates the modern historical spirit with the following expression at the conclusion of his book *The Idea of Nature*: "no one can answer the question what nature is unless he knows what history is . . . I answer the question, 'Where do we go from here?' by saying, 'We go from the idea of nature to the idea of history.'"[119] But what exactly is this thing called History? As Leo Strauss points out in the opening quote, the "classical distinction between nature and convention" was replaced by the modern antithesis of nature and history. Whereas *phusis* was commonly held to be the superior element in the classical pair, nature was

[118] On this theme, see the collection of articles in Leo Marx and Bruce Mazlish, eds., *Progress: Fact or Illusion?* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1996); and Christopher Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991).

[119] R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of Nature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, [1945] 1972), 177.

subordinated to the role of history in the modern worldview. A legacy of the 19th century historicism is the premise that we can only know what we ourselves make.[120]

The influence of historicism carried onto the 20th century through disparate progressive intellectual currents such as existentialism, neo-Marxism, feminism, and postmodernism, all of which have influenced environmental theory in one way or another. The Hungarian Marxist scholar Lukács, for instance, defines "nature" as a societal category: "Nature is a societal category . . . nature's form, its content, its range and its objectivity are all socially conditioned."[121] A contemporary feminist scholar explains the rationale behind the progressive bent toward social constructivism: "most feminists today are suspicious of any appeal to the notion of 'human nature' in normative or political theory" and attributes this typical feminist position to the fear that "appeals to nature have been used historically, and continue to be used, to rationalize and justify the perpetuation of oppressive gender roles."[122]

The Spanish existentialist philosopher José Ortega y Gasset, similarly, takes note of the modern conception of nature and discovers nothing but History beneath this conceptual change:

> Is it not surprising that the term 'nature' should have come, with unbroken continuity, from meaning what it meant to Aristotle to mean the law of phenomena? Is not the distance between the two phenomena enormous? That distance, be it noted, implies nothing less than the whole change in our way of

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[120] For a critical analysis of the 19th century background of historicism, see Maurice Mandelbaum, *History, Man, & Reason: A Study in Nineteenth-century Thought* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971). A precursor of historicism in the 18th century is the Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico who countered Descartes' subjectivist *cogito ergo sum* principle with a historicist principle: *verum ipsum factum* (one can know what one can make). A contemporary scholar sums up Vico's innovative principle as follows: "[F]or Vico there is no a priori essence for the self: one is what one makes of oneself, and one makes of oneself what one knows, so that being, knowledge, and making are ceaselessly interwoven in an endless recirculation." See Giuseppe Mazzotta, *The New Map of the World : The Poetic Philosophy of Giambattista Vico* (Princeton University Press, 1998), 27.

[121] György Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, [1923] 1971).

[122] Louise M. Antony, "Nature and Norms," *Ethics* 111.1 (2000): 8.

> thinking of the universe from ancient to modern man. What then, down this long evolution, has remained constant in the concept of nature?[123]

His historicism notwithstanding, Ortega y Gasset accepts the modern conception of nature as *res extensa* just as Kant does in order to save the moral dignity of man against the threat posed by the deterministic worldview of modern science: "Nature is a thing, a great thing, that is composed of many lesser things." But humanity is not part of this realm of things because human beings are defined by their freedom. The thing, on the other hand, possesses "a given, fixed structure or consistency" accessible to physical examination and manipulation. Man has no such nature because "the strange reality of human life" is not a thing to be grasped by manual or even mental techniques: "man is not his body, which is a thing, nor his soul, psyche, conscience, or spirit, which is also a thing. Man is no thing, but a drama—his life, a pure and universal happening which happens to each one of us and in which each one in his turn is nothing but happening." It is historical Becoming that defines man: "Man is an infinitely plastic entity of which one may make what one will, precisely because of itself it is nothing save only the mere potentiality to be 'as you like.'" In short, human nature is ultimately protean.[124]

Ortega y Gasset's principle "man has no nature but history"—derived from the late 19th century German scholar Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911)—is the decisive principle

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[123] José Ortega y Gasset, *Toward a Philosophy of History*, trans. Helene Weyl (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, [1941] 2002), 191.

[124] Ortega y Gasset, 183-84, 199-204. A postmodern representative of historicism and proponent of man-as-a-protean-animal is Richard Rorty: "We are coming to think of ourselves as the flexible, protean, self-shaping, animal rather than as the rational animal or the cruel animal." See Rorty's essay "Human Rights, Rationality, and Sentimentality," in *On Human Rights: The Oxford Amnesty Lectures, 1993*, eds., Stephen Shute and Susan L. Hurley (New York: Basic Books, 1993) 111-35. As an aside, the American psychiatrist Robert Jay Lifton promotes the "protean self" as a desirable model for today arguing that the contemporary phenomenon of a fluid, manifold selfhood is something to be capitalized on in order to cope with various dislocations stemming from a constantly changing world; see *The Protean Self: Human Resilience in an Age of Fragmentation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [1993] 1999).

of our times.[125] Another major representative of existentialism, Jean-Paul Sartre, wholeheartedly concurs: "there is no human nature . . . . Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself." Sartre opposes human freedom to the determinate influence of nature and professes his faith in the Kantian project: "One will never be able to explain one's action by reference to a given and specific human nature; in other words, there is no determinism—man is free, man is freedom . . . . Our aim is precisely to establish the human kingdom as a pattern of values in distinction from the material world."[126] "Progressive humanism," the French literary critic Roland Barthes similarly reminds us, "must always remember to reverse the terms of this very old imposture [i.e., of taking Nature as the ground of History], constantly to scour nature, its 'laws' and its 'limits' in order to discover History there, and at last to establish Nature itself as historical."[127] The historian Carl N. Degler summarizes the rationale behind the two-century old modern resistance to nature in the name of freedom which is attributed to the realm of History:

> The very emphasis upon a resistant, enduring "nature" . . . implied an embeddness in nature, a characteristic of all living things, of something that was not only beyond the will of animals but in many ways beyond the will and hopes of human beings, too. Human beings, along with animals, were controlled, rather than being in control. The very word "nature" emphasized naturalness, implicitly denying to a large degree humankind's independence of the natural world. The very similarities between animals and human beings proclaimed the power of

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[125] Ortega y Gasset, in his essay "History as a System," refers to Wilhelm Dilthey as "the writer to whom we owe more than to anyone else concerning the idea of life, and who is, to my mind, the most important thinker of the second half of the nineteenth century." Gasett ends this essay with the following statement: "Man, in a word, has no nature; what he has is—history. Expressed differently: what nature is to things, history, *res gestae*, is to man." See also Ortega y Gasset's essay "A Chapter from the History of Ideas: Wilhelm Dilthey and the Idea of Life," in *Concord and Liberty*, trans. Helene Weyl (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1946) where he attributes the view "man has no nature but history" to Dilthey (pp. 166-7).

[126] "Existentialism is Humanism," in *Existentialism: From Dostoevsky to Sartre*, ed. Walter A. Kaufmann (New York: Plume, 1975), 345-68.

[127] See Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), 101.

nature even as human beings simultaneously asserted their superiority over their fellow creatures of nature.[128]

The upshot of locating freedom and value in history contrasted with a deterministic and valueless realm of nature is the physical and spiritual distancing of humanity from nature.[129] Karl Marx's historical materialism is taken by certain environmental theorists as environmentally friendly for his considering nature as "man's inorganic body" in the *Manuscripts of 1844*.[130] This opinion is questionable however as Marx accepts the modern materialist devaluation of nature. This we can see in his criticism of Feuerbach in the *German Ideology*, where he says it is unrealistic to speak of a pristine nature. Feuerbach, according to Marx, nostalgically mistakes "the nature in which he lives" for an untouched "nature which today no longer exists anywhere (except perhaps on a few Australian coral-islands of recent origin)." Hence, holding a romantic view of nature, Feuerbach closes his eyes to the reality of History, or the inescapable fact that Man is a collective, transformative agent. Pristine nature, "which has not yet been subdued by men," notes Marx, is rapidly becoming history. It "is steadily shrinking" with "every new invention, every advance made by industry." Marx then cites the case of the cherry-tree, which, "like almost all fruit-trees," was "only a few centuries ago transplanted" into Europe to make the point that what we are left with now is merely "historical nature" modified by "the activity of a whole successions of generations." [131]

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[128] See Carl N. Degler, *In Search of Human Nature: The Decline and Revival of Darwinism in American Social Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 4. See also Steven Pinker, *The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Human Nature* (New York: Viking, 2002).

[129] See Shane Phelan, "Intimate Distance: The Dislocation of Nature in Modernity," *The Western Political Quarterly* Vol. 45.2 (1992): 385-402.

[130] See *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: Norton, 1978), 75.

[131] Ibid., 168-171.

Marx's critique of Feuerbach's position—that "nature" exists independent of humanity's material intercourse with it—has contemporary resonance in environmental theory. The controversy that broke over "wilderness" among environmental theorists in the mid-1990s can be situated within this context. Environmentalists (sympathetic to "deep ecology" perspective) firmly believe that patches of "wilderness" still exist in the world today and deserve to be protected from human encroachment, while others dispute the idea of "wilderness" in general and point out that natural parks that are touted as wilderness in the US or Africa were once inhabited by human beings. Only after their forceful evacuation from those lands have they become what they now appear as "wilderness" to ahistorical eyes.[132] Steven Vogel, for instance, employed the historicist-constructivist position in his critique of what he takes to be the authoritarian tendency among radical environmentalists due to their "naturalism." The radical environmentalists' appeal to "nature" as a category outside society and history, according to Vogel, disguises the underlying power relationships behind environmental problems and shuts off the legitimate democratic process of deliberation. Vogel claims that "the way in which the environment that surrounds us and that we take for granted as 'natural' turns out on investigation to be the product of human labor and hence *literally* socially constructed." To reject this view can lead to the abdication of "moral responsibility," because "the social realm" is "the only source of normative justification."[133]

The position represented by historicist environmental theorists is described by Kate Soper as "nature-skeptical discourses" to be found not only within postmodernist

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[132] For this debate, see William Cronon, *Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995). The response to this volume came in Michael E. Soulé and Gary Lease, *Reinventing Nature? Responses to Postmodern Deconstruction* (Washington, D.C: Island Press, 1995).

[133] See Steven Vogel, *Against Nature: The Concept of Nature in Critical Theory* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996), 7-10.

theory but also in "Marxist, socialist, or feminist positions that are highly critical of the postmodernist resistance to any realist or foundationalist metaphysics."[134] Environmental theorists holding nature-skeptical arguments, who are "committed to postmodernist anti-realism," nonetheless, "subscribe to the general aims of the ecological movement and view themselves as pursuing emancipatory projects consistent with it."[135] Marx's discredited but still implicitly and widely shared progressive (if not dialectical) view of "History" transfers onto History the role of Nature that we find in pre-modern societies as a framework of order and meaning. The logical conclusion of prioritizing Progress or History over Nature is radical freedom and egalitarianism (i.e., communism) as Marx rightly understood and defended. But paradoxically more of the same thing can lead to the abolition of that very thing. As John H. Randall points out, there is no single thing or universal process that we can generalize under the name of History: "Histories are plural, adjectival and determinate. They are always histories *of* something, involving a selection, from the infinite objective relatedness of past events, of those events and relations that have been important and significant for making that thing what it is."[136]

> It is by no means obvious what sort of entity can be regarded as underlying the specific changes with which historians deal. There are many histories—of

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[134] Kate Soper, *What is Nature?* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 4.

[135] Soper, 5. For other examples of "nature skepticism" from environmental theory literature, see Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991); Phil Macnaghten and John Urry, *Contested Natures* (London: Sage, 1998); Jozef Keulartz, *Struggle for Nature: A Critique of Radical Ecology*, trans. Rob Kuitenbrouwer (London: Routledge, [1995] 1998); Ingolfur Blühdorn, *Post-ecologist Politics: Social Theory and the Abdication of the Ecologist Paradigm* (London: Routledge, 2000); Alan Marshall, *The Unity of Nature: Wholeness and Disintegration in Ecology and Science* (London: Imperial College Press, 2002); Andrew Biro, *Denaturalizing Ecological Politics: Alienation from Nature from Rousseau to the Frankfurt School and Beyond* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005). Although Neil Evernden's *The Social Creation of Nature* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1992) can be considered to belong to this genre, I believe his argument in the book is much subtler than its title otherwise suggests.

[136] John H. Randall, Jr., *Nature and Historical Experience: Essays in Naturalism and in the Theory of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), 35, emphasis original.

> nations, of epochs, and of civilizations, of science or of industry, of the various arts, of legal institutions, etc.—and the question of where one can find *the* subject of history seems to be almost senseless.[137]

The notion of universal history is a deeply flawed legacy of Enlightenment universalism. "For those who stood closer to the Enlightenment tradition, as did Comte, that which developed was Humanity, which transcended all national boundaries, and which shaped itself through progressive intellectual and moral development."[138]

[137] Mandelbaum, 129-30.

[138] Ibid., 130. For Mandelbaums' critique of this conception of History as a single developmental process of a single substantival entity, that is, Humanity, see 130-34.

Chapter 3: Aristotle's Conception of Nature

Aristotle's conception of nature resonates with contemporary environmental thought in a peculiar way. Both Aristotle and some environmental theorists valorize "nature" with regard to the attainment of the good life. "Nature knows best," according to a common environmentalist maxim introduced by Barry Commoner, a major figure in the early phase of American environmental movement.[1] "Nothing contrary to nature is noble" says Aristotle (*Pol.* 1325b10). We may think that Aristotle's nature is different from that of contemporary environmentalists. This is true to a certain extent but the underlying motives of the appeal to nature are similar. Norms are sought in both cases to make human life better. In both cases, "anything goes" attitude toward life is rejected.

The most important and relevant linkage between the contemporary Western conception of "nature" and the ancient Greek *phusis* derives from the distinction that is immediately observable between artifice and nature. That such a distinction exists, no one can deny even though certain things may be both natural and artificial such as a bonsai tree. But what is more important it the significance and meaning of this distinction. In this, there is too much controversy. As Frederick J. E. Woodbridge notes, "the great problem of Aristotle's system" was "how is nature to be construed so that both the similarity and dissimilarity between its products and the products of art to be understood?" This is why Aristotle's physics is so different from modern physics:

> Modern physics with all its achievements, could not . . . modify that problem as a problem. It would certainly modify many of the particulars which Aristotle employed and modify some of them very radically indeed. But I cannot see that the problem itself would thereby be altered . . . . This problem . . . is just as

[1] Barry Commoner, *The Closing Circle: Nature, Man and Technology* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1971), 41.

> statable today as it ever was. And I doubt if we are any wiser about the solution of it than he was.[2]

So what was Aristotle's solution? There were at least two versions of the contrast between artifice and nature among ancient Greeks. In one case, *nomos* (custom, law) was contrasted with *phusis*; and, in the other, the contrasting pair of *phusis* is *techne*. In late modern thought, *nomos* and *techne* were merged into "culture" and "history" in contradistinction to nature. While the sophists of ancient Greece made much of the *nomos/phusis* contrast, Aristotle took more interest in the one between *techne* and *phusis*.[3] Aristotle observed that whereas artificial products are made by an external agent, *phusis* is an endogenous principle of motion and rest in beings that are generated. Natural beings are those that grow from within. Human beings on the other hand can bring about things into this world through their technical expertise. While some products of *techne* are purely artificial (e.g., a chair), some others are partially so. A bonsai or a garden, for example, is both natural and artificial. These are examples of things that come about with cooperation between *phusis* and *techne*. A bonsai *qua* tree is natural insofar as its source of growth lies within. To the extent its characteristic stunted growth is given by art, is artificial. As this example shows, Aristotle's conception of nature does not justify the attempt to draw boundaries around a pristine realm of nature. But this is not because there is no such realm of nature left (as Marx and many other contemporary scholars claim), but because nature does not stand for an extended space (*res extensa*) within which human beings do not reside. The contrast between the natural and the artificial is rather a matter of agency that is responsible for the generation of beings enveloping us.

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[2] Ibid., 55.

[3] For a brief exposition of the *nomos/phusis* contrast, see John Burnet, "Law and Nature in Greek Ethics," *International Journal of Ethics* 7.3 (1897): 328-33.

Human beings depend on both *techne* and *phusis* to exist. We need both culture—whose constitutive elements are *techne*, *nomos*, *ethos*, and *paideia*—and the cooperation of nature to become fully human. But art and education need to be coordinated with nature: "all art and education wish to supply the element that is lacking in nature" (*Pol.* 1337a1-2). Again in another context Aristotle emphasizes the secondary and complementary role of *techne*: "art in some cases completes what nature is unable to finish off, but in others imitates nature" (*Ph.* 199a16-7).

Nature can be lacking in some respect because Aristotle holds a more flexible view of causality unlike the modern physicalist view depicting nature through iron laws of material necessity. In Aristotle's teleological view, there is place for a conditional type of necessity in addition to the absolute or simple (*haplōs*) necessity at work in nature: "natural things . . . come about in a given way" either invariably or for the most part (*Ph.* 198b35-36). Absolute necessity reigns in inanimate things that remain in the same condition such as the motion of the planets: "That which is necessary without qualification [absolute necessity] is present in the eternal things, while that which is conditionally necessary [hypothetical necessity] is also present in all generated things." These things are explicable strictly through their antecedent causes.

Conditional or hypothetical (*ex hupotheseōs*) necessity, on the other hand, operates in naturally generated beings as well as in *techne*. Living nature and *techne* both give birth to things that are yet to become (*PA* 639b20-640a10). Aristotle's specific examples to the kind of things under conditional necessity are health and man (*PA* 640a5). For both examples, the existing condition does not pre-determine what has yet to come about in the future. "What will be" in relation to these can be spoken of only when certain conditions are met. Under suboptimal circumstances, nature as well as *techne* can "miss

the mark" in realizing their respective ends (*PA* 639b20-640a9; *Ph.* 199a33-199b5). For instance, a healthy body can lose its health if it is not taken care of. In the case of *techne*, if the material is flawed the craftsman might fail in producing his planned product.[4]

The same hypothetical necessity must be present in the realm of praxis although Aristotle never explicitly states this. If a good natured child turns out to be a rogue later in life who is to blame? Aristotle says that we "become good and excellent through three things. These three are nature [*phusis*], habit [*ethos*], and reason [*logos*]" (*Pol.* 1332a40-41). The last two elements are clearly within the power of human beings but nature introduces into praxis an element in the order of hypothetical necessity. For we too are living beings and engage in *techne*. We should note that *ethos* here can also mean custom or culture, while a secondary meaning for *logos* is language. This reminder is necessary as Aristotle does not subscribe to an exclusively individualist or communitarian position in human affairs. He always sees human beings capable of developing their individuality from within the constraints of a political community rather than despite or against them. Hence, *ethos* and *logos* are both constraining and constitutive features of human beings.

Aristotle does not consider human behavior purely a product of culture, for he believes that virtues have a natural basis in human soul, which he calls *phusikē aretē* (natural virtue) (*NE* 1144b1-16). Yet, these capacities have to be cultivated through *phronesis* (practical judgment) within a political setting to transform into genuine ethical virtue.[5] In his biological works, Aristotle clearly recognizes our kinship with other living

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[4] Aristotle elaborates the distinction between hypothetical and absolute necessity at *PA* 642a1-642b3 and *Ph.* 199b34-200b11. For a more detailed discussion of this distinction in Aristotle's thought, see John M. Cooper, "Hypothetical Necessity and Natural Teleology," in *Philosophical Issues in Aristotle's Biology*, eds. Allan Gotthelf and James G. Lennox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 243-74.

[5] For an analysis of this point, see James G. Lennox, "Aristotle on the Biological Roots of Virtue: The Natural History of Natural Virtue," in *Biology and the Foundation of Ethics*, ed. Jane Maienschein and Michael Ruse (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 10-31.

beings (*PA* 645a3), and observes that rudimentary forms of human ethical and intellectual faculties are spread throughout the animate world—though unevenly:

> In the great majority of animals there are traces of psychical qualities or attitudes [*psuchēn tropōn*], which qualities are more markedly differentiated in the case of human beings. For just as we pointed out resemblances in the physical organs, so in a number of animals we observe gentleness or fierceness, mildness or cross temper, courage, or timidity, fear or confidence, high spirit or low cunning, and, with regard to intelligence [*dianoian*], something equivalent to sagacity [*suneseōs*]. Some of these qualities in man, as compared with the corresponding qualities in animals, differ only quantitatively: that is to say, a man has more or less of this quality, and an animal has more or less of some other; other qualities in man are represented by analogous and not identical qualities: for instance, just as in man we find knowledge [*technē*], wisdom [*sophia*], and sagacity [*sunesis*], so in certain animals there exists some other natural potentiality akin to these. The truth of this statement will be the more clearly apprehended if we have regard to the phenomena of childhood: for in children may be observed the traces and seeds of what will one day be settled psychological habits [*hexeōn*], though psychologically a child hardly differs for the time being from an animal; so that one is quite justified in saying that, as regards man and animals, certain psychical qualities are identical with one another, whilst others resemble, and others are analogous to, each other.[6]

His well-known saying on the graduated differentiation of natural beings from the inanimate to the animate—*scala naturae* ("great chain of being")—immediately follows the above statement: "Nature proceeds from the inanimate to the animals by such small steps that, because of the continuity, we fail to see to which side the boundary and the middle between them belongs" (*HA* 588b4-6). True, Aristotle considers human beings as a distinct type of animals species but "even things that differ in species are capable of being related as more and less" (*NE* 1155b15-6).

Teleological statements attributing human characteristics or purposeful action to non-human beings faces the charge of anthropomorphism. The fallacy of anthropomorphism resides in its illegitimate attempt to interpret non-human nature through human categories. This stricture against anthropomorphism retains the

[6] *HA* 588a18-b3.

Cartesian division between an objective realm of nature which lacks subjectivity or agency and the human realm of subjectivity. Although teleology, anthropocentrism, and anthropomorphism are not the same thing, they are closely related and are often employed together by the modern critics of the Aristotelian view of the world.[7] The debate over anthropomorphic language continues unabated in the contemporary study of animal behavior for instance.[8] Interestingly, the concept of anthropomorphism, a product of scientific positivism, is itself norm-laden. As one scholar points out, to say someone's statement is anthropomorphic is to suggest that it is primitive and naïve.[9] This type of charge meshes well with the prevailing modern scientific worldview built on the fact/value distinction and a physicalist picture of the world. Yet, the fact/value or the is/ought distinction leads to a dubious view of the world particularly in relation to the living world. It certainly is possible to construct abstract sentences that separate "facts" and "values" neatly but this abstraction is itself problematic when we confuse the domain of mathematics with that of animate beings. The subtleties of the living world can hardly be captured in abstraction. We might say the real world is not a vacuum but full of friction. The critics of anthropomorphism or the proponents of fact/value distinction are themselves guilty of being forgetful of the reality of *Lebenswelt* (everyday

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[7] The critique of Aristotle's teleology is rebutted in Richard J. Cameron, "Teleology in Aristotle and Contemporary Philosophy of Biology: An Account of the Nature of Life" (Ph.D. diss., University of Colorado, Boulder, 2000); and Monte R. Johnson, *Aristotle on Teleology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2005).

[8] See, for instance, John S. Kennedy's *The New Anthropomorphism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), who warns of the new "creeping" anthropomorphism in contemporary ethology. For a general discussion of anthropomorphism, see Robert W. Mitchell, Nicholas S. Thompson, and H. Lyn Miles, eds., *Anthropomorphism, Anecdotes, and Animals: The Emperor's New Clothes?* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997); and Lorraine Daston and Gregg Mitman, *Thinking with Animals: New Perspectives on Anthropomorphism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

[9] Walter Cerf, "The Physicomorphic Conception of Man," *The Journal of Philosophy* 48.11 (1951): 345-56. Aristotle's alleged "anthropomorphism" is anything but naïve as it rests on a certain principle of inquiry which he mentions at *NE* 1095b2-3, *Ph.* I.1, and *Met.* 1029b3-12: "the natural road [i.e., procedure] is from what is more familiar and clearer to us to what is clearer and better known by nature" (*Ph.* 184a17-18).

life) which is ever always a "rough ground."[10] Hence, it would be ill-advised for scientists other than those examining the physical and chemical structure of reality to approach and portray the living world through deterministic causality of physics.

3.1 Aristotle's Anthropocentrism

There is a philosophical objection to the relevance of Greek philosophy to our times on the grounds that ancient Greek philosophy is incompatible with contemporary environmental thinking. Aristotle has been largely neglected and at times criticized in environmental theory literature partly because of the prevalent view that Western philosophy in general is devoid of favorable teachings to formulate a theoretical and practical response to our present environmental predicament. Its roots in ancient Greece are typically perceived as suspect. One scholar notes, for instance, that "environmental philosophy is dominated by largely negative appraisals that view Greek thinking more as an obstacle to overcome than a source for constructive thinking" and that he himself previously "dismissed the relevance of Greek philosophy to these times."[11]

Negative appraisals of ancient Greek philosophy actually are made both inside and outside the environmental theory literature. As there are no clear-cut demarcation lines between academic fields, we should take note of criticisms from both environmental and non-environmental scholarly literature. These critics proceed in different ways. Some of them single out a single philosopher or a certain school of thought for critique. And some others make general statements as to the overall negative

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[10] The metaphor of "rough ground" for the 19th-20th century German phenomenological concept of *Lebenswelt* is borrowed from Dunne, *Back to the Rough Ground*, 377.

[11] Max Oelschlaeger, foreword to *The Greeks and the Environment*, eds. Laura Westra and Thomas M. Robinson (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997), ix. The editors of the volume concur with Oelschlaeger on the prevalence of negative judgment in the literature (p. 3).

effect of ancient Greek philosophy and/or culture on the subsequent history of philosophy and culture in the West. The problem with the latter kind of sociological analysis, looking at the impact of the whole Greek culture, is that it often results in sweeping generalizations and blanket judgments that fail to take account of subtle differences among individual philosophers of classical antiquity or the different competing strands within the Western tradition such as the ancients versus the moderns.

Robert Renehan, a classics scholar, raises the stock charge of anthropocentricism with respect to the whole ancient Greek culture. He believes that the ancient Greek definition of man as a rational animal has led to the arbitrary bias against animals in the Western tradition: "the Greek view of man as intelligent being, set apart from the animals" is an arbitrary "elevation of men over animals."[12] For the adverse subsequent influence of this "erroneous" belief on Western culture, Renehan holds responsible first and foremost the ancient Greek philosophers. This deeply entrenched anthropocentric view, according to Renehan, is "an exceptional mode of thought in the history of man," which has only recently come under scrutiny:

> The pronounced dichotomy, whereby man is rigidly opposed to other animals, has scarcely any rival as a characteristically Greek concept. Its significance can be appreciated if one reflects that only in the present century, with its increased interest in the scientific study of animal intelligence and communication, has a different attitude toward animals really begun to impose itself upon the consciousness of educated men.[13]

Michael Soupios agrees with the above assessment of the ancient Greek attitude toward nature.[14] He too discovers a "lack of ecological interest" among them so much so

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[12] Robert Renehan, "The Greek Anthropocentric View of Man," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* Vol. 85 (1981): 257, 258.

[13] Ibid., 240.

[14] Michael Soupios, "Greek Philosophy and the Anthropocentric Vision," in *Ethics and the Environment*, ed. Richard E. Hart (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1992).

that they "display a general philosophic indifference toward the natural environment. What has become a global concern for modern man appears not to have been a question for the Greeks." Granting that ancient Greeks did not face serious environmental problems, Soupios nonetheless argues that "there was a powerful cultural idiom that mitigated against such orientations and . . . it may be that this same cultural perspective contributed, at least in part, to today's ecological dilemma." This cultural idiom lay in that the Greeks took man as "the unassailable center of their cultural consciousness" and "a unique and separable entity from the rest of phusis." Aside from confusing the line between popular opinion and the opinion of philosophers by reducing all to one single culture, Soupios' analysis also suffers from self-contradiction for he goes on to say that "the Greeks did not see man's teleological involvement as unique. They recognized a series of such relationships at various levels in nature."[15]

David Sedley, a professor of ancient philosophy, argues more specifically that "Aristotle's world is an anthropocentric world," and concludes that "Aristotle is not a twentieth-century thinker." He goes on to add that "Aristotle would not have found our world *entirely* alien" either. Behind these seemingly contradictory suggestions is Sedley's view that the present "domination of the planet" to "serve man's needs" is guided by an anthropocentric outlook that can be traced back to Aristotle. If Aristotle were living with us today, he would approve the conquest of nature and feel at home in our modern world. Hence, Sedley implies, our present environmental problems demand an anti-anthropocentric vision, which cannot be found in Aristotle.[16]

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[15] Ibid., 13, 14, 15, 17, 18. As Soupios himself admits, Aristotle's teleological view of nature allows for the continuity of natural species in their faculties.

[16] David Sedley, "Is Aristotle's Teleology Anthropocentric?" *Phronesis* 36.2 (1991): 196.

Certain environmental theorists joined ranks with above scholars in blaming Greek philosophy or, more specifically, its course after the Socratic turn from the investigation of nature to human affairs. John Passmore singles out Aristotle as one of the major sources of the hubristic attitude toward nature. According to Passmore, the modern domineering attitude originates with the Greeks or, more specifically, during the period of the "Greek Enlightenment" "with its rejection of the concept of *hubris*":

> One then finds it explicitly maintained that animal life exists purely and simply for man's sake. Aristotle argues in his *Politics* that 'plants are created for the sake of animals and the animals for the sake of men; the tame for our use and provision also, or for some other advantageous purpose, as furnishing us with clothes, and the like'. He takes this conclusion to follow necessarily from the premise that 'nature makes nothing either imperfect or in vain'—as indeed it does follow if the test of a thing's 'perfection' and 'usefulness' is first presumed to be its suitability for man's purposes.[17]

George Sessions, a deep ecologist, also argued that the "Socratic-Platonic-Aristotelian counter-revolution in philosophy" led to an "exaggeration of the importance of man in the natural scheme of things."[18] Citing Bertrand Russell's statement from *History of Western Philosophy* (1945)—"What is amiss, even in the best philosophy after Democritus, is an undue emphasis on man as compared with the universe"—Sessions praises the Pre-Socratic investigation of nature for avoiding anthropocentricism. Eugene C. Hargrove, surveying Greek philosophy from the Pre-Socratics to Aristotle, similarly reaches negative conclusions regarding the overall Greek influence on environmental thinking. Their approach to natural phenomena, according to Hargrove, "prevented the development of an ecological perspective," "discouraged the aesthetic appreciation of

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[17] John Passmore, *Man's Responsibility for Nature: Ecological Problems and Western Traditions* (New York: Scribner, 1974), 13-4.

[18] George Sessions, "Spinoza and Jeffers on Man in Nature," *Inquiry* 20.4 (1977): 483-4. For a more balanced analysis of the Socratic turn from investigation of nature to human affairs, see Catherine Zuckert, "The Socratic Turn," *History of Political Thought* 25.2 (2004): 189-219.

the natural world," and "promoted a conception of reality that made the idea of nature conceptually difficult, if not impossible."[19]

The above criticism is too hasty in attributing the "anthropocentric" bias of the Western tradition to Aristotle and lumping him together with the rest of "Western" culture or philosophy. In response, two points can be made. First, such blanket condemnations of the Western tradition writes off the differences within this tradition such as between classical and modern (political) philosophy. As the environmental historian Clarence Glacken noted long ago, "the historic juxtaposition of man against nature depends much more on modern thought and on more secular ideas."[20] The neglect of this critical fault line leads then to questionable generalizations such as "the Aristotelian-Cartesian-rationalist tradition."[21]

Leo Strauss pointed out the importance of the distinction between ancients and moderns throughout his writings.[22] The philosophical differences between ancient and modern philosophers can help us to understand what is at stake in the transition from pre-modern to modern philosophy as well as their corresponding practical implications. The fundamental difference, as Strauss sees it, is that the guiding question of classical political philosophy for ancients was "the question of the best political order." For moderns, it was "the question of method."[23] The practical implication of this change was

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[19] Eugene Hargrove, *Foundations of Environmental Ethics* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1989), 21.

[20] "Man against Nature: An Outmoded Concept," in *The Environmental Crisis: Man's Struggle to Live with Himself*, ed. Harold W. Helfrich, Jr. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 130.

[21] Peter G. Brown, "Are There Any Natural Resources?" *Politics and the Life Sciences* 23.1 (2004): 14.

[22] See, for instance, "On Classical Political Philosophy," in *The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism: An Introduction to the Thought of Leo Strauss*, ed. Thomas L. Pangle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 49-62; and *The City and Man* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964), 1-12.

[23] Strauss, "On Classical," 50-2; cf. Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 78-80.

that "the questions of whether or not science is essentially theoretical and whether or not technological progress is in need of strict moral or political control" were set aside by "the modern project" "to enable man to become the master and owner of nature through the intellectual conquest of nature."[24]

Second, the *locus classicus* of Aristotle's "anthropocentric teleology," the well-known passage from Book I of *Politics*, is often taken out of context. Aristotle notes that

> for grown [i.e., natural] things as well one must suppose both that plants exist for the sake of animals and that the other animals exist for the sake of human beings—the tame animals, both for use and sustenance, and most if not all of the wild animals, for sustenance and other assistance, in order that clothing and other instruments may be got from them. *If, then, nature makes nothing that is incomplete or purposeless, nature must necessarily have made all of these for the sake of human beings.*[25] (italics mine)

We need to first note that Aristotle's use of the term "nature" in the last sentence similar to God is an exception in view of the rest of his corpus. Soupios takes heed of this fact: "the Greeks seem to have approached the concept of nature in a fundamentally different way than modern man. Specifically, the Greeks did not possess a holistic view of nature as the sum total of all things in time and space, i.e., nature as the entire physical universe, including plants, animals, and man." But he draws a questionable conclusion: "In short, the Greeks had nothing analogous to the modern notion of 'Mother Nature.' "[26] This is questionable because it can be taken to mean that our modern notion of nature superseded the Greek notion.

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[24] Strauss, *Natural Right*, 23; and Strauss, *The City*, 3-4, 42-3.

[25] *Pol.* 1256b15-23.

[26] Soupios, "Greek Philosophy," 14.

The term "nature" in contemporary usage carries "a collective sense for the sum total or aggregate of natural things" outside mind.[27] In this regard, it is quite similar to Descartes' *res extensa* opposed to *res cogitans*. Neither Aristotle nor other Greek philosophers used the term *phusis* primarily in an aggregate sense or when they seemed to have used it in this sense, it was meant as "the region of mutability and generation" in the sublunary world which included the human beings as well.[28] A recent commentator notes that, "Nature with a capital *N*, a quasi-person circumspectly and wisely arranging the world" does not feature in Aristotle.[29] *Phusis* was much more commonly used as a principle of explaining the phenomena of generation, change, and destruction that characterize non-artificial beings: "the noun *physis* . . . does not mean some object or material thing, but a coming-to-pass, an event, a directing activity."[30] The Greek philosophers disagreed among themselves in their accounts of *phusis* but they were at one in not using it in an aggregate sense.

To qualify what I have just said, it is not totally true that the word *phusis* was not used by the Greeks in a broader sense at all. For example, in the sentence quoted in the previous chapter from Philolaos—"Nature in the ordered universe was composed of unlimited and limiting elements"—the usage of *phusis* has a collective and spatial connotation. But this was not the primary sense in which it was commonly put to use. For the broader sense of nature, the Greeks rather employed the word *kosmos*.[31] Yet,

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[27] James A. Weisheipl, *Nature and Motion in the Middle Ages*, ed. William E. Carroll (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1985), 2.

[28] Arthur O. Lovejoy and George Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, [1935] 1997), 451.

[29] Otfried Höffe, *Aristotle*, trans. Christine Salazar (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2003),75.

[30] Schadewaldt, 160.

[31] See Dupré, 17-8; and Weisheipl, 2-3.

kosmos does not render *phusis* irrelevant for our purposes since our notion of nature is still partially derived from the Greek *phusis*.

Second, it is often forgotten that Aristotle makes the above statement incidentally within the context of his discussion of *chrematistike* and *oikonomia*. Aristotle observes here that nature has to "furnish subsistence for each being brought into the world" (*Pol.* 1258a35-6; see also 1256b7-15). Aristotle is here talking about the food chain (or web). No one can deny that all living beings including human beings are entitled to make use of plants and animals for their survival. Aristotle's words must be interpreted as acknowledging this natural reality.[32] Aristotle certainly concerned himself, following Socrates, with the "human things." But in Aristotle, as Leo Strauss observes, "the 'human things' were distinguished from the 'divine things' or the 'natural things' and the latter were considered absolutely superior in dignity to the former."[33] Aristotle questions the common view that regards human beings as "the highest thing in the cosmos" (*NE* 1141a23). If anything, Aristotle's view can be labeled as "cosmocentric" whereas the modern turn from the classical tradition is actually truly "anthropocentric."[34] The classical worldview shares a lot in common in this sense with other non-Western pre-modern traditions. Tu Weiming, for instance, describes the Confucian tradition as an "anthropocosmic worldview, in which the human is embedded in the cosmic order" in

[32] For a more nuanced interpretation of this passage, see Richard Shearman, "Aristotle the Environmentalist? Reconsidering Politics I.8," in *Philosophy and Ecology*, Vol. I, ed. Konstantine Boudouris and Kostas Kalimtzis (Athens: Ionia Publications, 1999), 163-75.

[33] Strauss, "On Classical," 60. One passage that Strauss cites from Aristotle for this interpretation is *NE* 1141a20-b9.

[34] See Leo Strauss, "Progress or Return?" in *The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism: An Introduction to the Thought of Leo Strauss*, ed. Thomas L. Pangle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 243-45.

contrast to "an anthropocentric worldview, in which the human is alienated . . . from the natural world."[35] In Plato's *Laws*, the leading character defends a similar view:

> The supervisor of the universe has arranged everything with an eye to its preservation and excellence, and its individual parts play appropriate active or passive roles according to their various capacities. These parts, down to the smallest details of their active and passive functions, have each been put under the control of ruling powers that have perfected the minutest constituents of the universe. Now then, you perverse fellow, one such part—a mere speck that nevertheless constantly contributes to the good of the whole—is you, you who have forgotten that nothing is created except to provide the entire universe with a life of prosperity [*eudaimôn*]. *You forget that creation is not for your benefit: you exist for the sake of the universe.*[36] (italics mine)

Max Oelschlaeger now rightly cautions us against neglecting the ancients: "By denying any constructive role to the Greeks, environmental philosophy appears to sunder itself from the intellectual roots of philosophy."[37] Similarly, the editors of a recent volume on environmental ethics note that scholars in this field actually attempt to revive "the ancient understanding of nature as normative and prescriptive, as providing material or *content* for moral reflection."[38] The present study follows in the steps of current scholarship in environmental theory that re-visits its neglected or underemphasized roots in the Western tradition of moral and political philosophy. As environmentalists deplore the loss of natural and human habitats in the countryside, they must likewise be concerned with this kind of intellectual amnesia. Although major ideas are not ultimately determined by historical incidents, nonetheless they have historical

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[35] See "The Ecological Turn in New Confucian Humanism: Implications for China and the World," *Daedalus* 130.4 (2001): 243-44.

[36] In *Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 903b-c. See also Hannah Arendt's argument against the anthropocentrism of Plato in *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), 157-59, 166-67.

[37] *The Greeks and the Environment*, ix-x.

[38] Bruce V. Foltz and Robert Frodeman, *Rethinking Nature: Essays in Environmental Philosophy* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), 4.

backgrounds as they are not invented out of thin air. We do not begin to think on fundamental questions *ab initio*. We rather *re*-form our thinking in relation to the antecedent ideas we inherit from the past. The contemporary body of thought on environmental ethics and politics is inescapably implicated in the perennial and trans-cultural debate over our place in the great scheme of things with respect to *techne* and nature. For clarity on the "fundamental questions" of this debate that the opening quote from Leo Strauss refers to, ironically, there could be no philosopher timelier than Aristotle.

The word "nature," and probably its equivalents in non-European languages too, clearly has different senses. One of these is "essence" or the distinctive quality of something. When we encounter things in the world that we are not familiar with, we naturally tend to ask "what is it?". The answer that we seek for this question is an attempt at distinguishing the "essence" of what we are seeing. Yet, some answers may fail to capture the essence of our object. They may be totally off the mark or half-way true. In the opening quote, the German philosopher Heidegger is cautioning us against a less essential conception of *phusis* that overemphasizes its material dimension. One of the exponents of this sense of nature in classical antiquity was, as we learn from Aristotle (*Physics* II.1), was Antiphon the Sophist.

Heidegger hints that the materialist conception has been revived in the modern age by Antiphon's successors. He further implies that there is a more essential sense which has been lost in the course of Western philosophy after Aristotle. The task of the rest of this chapter is to attempt at a recovery of this lost sense of nature through special attention to Aristotle's concepts of *energeia* and *entelecheia*. Heidegger's analysis can help our understanding of Aristotle's conception of nature in contrast to the Antiphonian one

that has gained ground in the modern era. The twin concepts of *energeia* and *entelecheia* are central to Aristotle's attempt to construe nature in a dynamic and unitary fashion. They also hold the key to the harmony of nature and man. A clear understanding of the historical shift from Aristotle's conception to that of Antiphon, as Heidegger frames it, is critical to our understanding of the contemporary environmental praxis. The contrast is not meant as an exercise in nostalgia but in understanding which, I hope, will show us the question concerning the environment at its roots.

To retrieve Aristotle's relevance for contemporary environmental politics, we need to piece together his conception of nature from his writings on ethics, politics, physics, biology, and psychology. What, I hope, will eventually emerge from this inquiry is Aristotle's natural conception of human life that does not alienate human beings from the rest of nature. This conception, I argue, can be based on Aristotle's ontological concepts of *energeia* (actuality) and *entelecheia* (actualization) both of which are central to his conception of nature as well as praxis. We can see the normative relevance of these concepts in Aristotle's characteristic definition of human beings in terms of their *energeia* of the soul in accordance with virtue (*NE* 1098a17-8) and of soul in general as "the first entelechy of a natural organized body" (*De An.* 412b25). Their political relevance is also implicit in Aristotle's remark that "one who is skilled in politics needs to know in some way the things that concern the soul" (*NE* 1102a18-9).

I must say a few words regarding the objection raised against Aristotelian ethics and politics because of the alleged "metaphysical biology" underlying or informing it.[39]

[39] This is a common interpretation in contemporary Aristotle scholarship but by no means uncontested. For example, Alasdair MacIntyre makes this observation in his *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 139, 152. In this influential work, MacIntyre tries to "supply a teleological account which can replace Aristotle's metaphysical biology" (p. 152). He retracted this view, however, in his later work *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues*

For, there is much historical confusion around the word "metaphysics" that is needless to introduce into our discussion. Suffice it to say that the calls for a "post-metaphysical" anything in our day can have no clarity as to what this thing "metaphysics" that needs to be overcome is. I rather hold the minimalist position that Aristotle's works outside ethics and politics—such as *De Anima*, *Physics*, and *Metaphysics*—can be helpful in illuminating his discussions of ethics and politics at certain points. But one should not go as far as disregarding the relative autonomy of these fields. In an attempt to clarify Aristotle's "biological motivation," another scholar points out rightly that key concepts of Aristotle's theory such as potentiality and actuality, final cause, as well as the notion of *phusis* do not necessarily indicate a strong predilection toward biology but rather Aristotle's "pretheoretical interest in the characteristics of living things."[40] The fact that he widely makes use of these concepts in his writings does not mean that he smuggles biological concepts into other fields of study but that he sees the world "like an animate individual or a biological ecosystem."[41]

True, Aristotle holds different domains of philosophical inquiry such as ethics, politics, logic, physics, and biology separate so it would be a mistake to reduce Aristotle's discussions in one field to those in other fields. This would violate the relative autonomy of each field that Aristotle himself respects and emphasizes. Two responses can be made to this objection. First, we should not overlook the fact that these fields are not completely autonomous content-wise as Aristotle's frequent references to *energeia* in several of his writings including ethical ones indicate. So the degree of disciplinary

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(Chicago, IL: Open Court, 1999): "I now judge that I was in error in supposing an ethics independent of biology to be possible" (p. x). Still, he holds to the position that Aristotle's ethics presupposes "metaphysical biology."

[40] Daniel W. Graham, "Some Myths about Aristotle's Biological Motivation," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 47.4 (1986): 545.

[41] Ibid., 544.

autonomy is determined according to the purposes of our inquiry which is something Aristotle repeatedly emphasizes. Now, the burden of the present inquiry is on praxis, which, according to Aristotle, calls for persuasion rather than demonstration. But we live in an age in which we face a greater challenge in this regard than Aristotle himself faced in his day. Aristotle could easily assume familiarity among his audience with his other writings, the Greek language, other Greek philosophers, and the whole historical background they are situated in. As we live in a different time period, we cannot afford to do that however. Not only that but also Aristotle's approach has to now compete against its modern rivals like those of Hobbes, Locke, Kant, and Marx. To meet the greater challenge of persuasion then, we need to be more explicit about his discussions on praxis. One area that needs extra emphasis for this purpose is to explain why Aristotelian ethics and politics can be less alienating than its modern counterparts. The key to this task lies in a better grasp of his key concepts *energeia* and *entelecheia*, which are "at the heart not only of his definition of motion, but of all his thought."[42]

Understanding the role of these concepts in Aristotle's ethical and political thought can be useful in other respects as well. First, we can counter the modern critique that neither Aristotle nor other ancient Greek philosophers were aware of modern morality.[43] Second, these concepts can be instrumental in learning how to handle ethics without opposing it to "nature" interpreted as the realm of inert matter and determinism.

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[42] See Joe Sachs, "Aristotle: Motion and its Place in Nature," *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, June 15, 2006, http://www.iep.utm.edu/.

[43] See the discussion in Julia Annas, "Ancient Ethics and Modern Morality," in James E. Tomberlin, ed., *Philosophical Perspectives* 6, Ethics (1992): 119-32. As a critic of the modern depreciation of the ancients, Annas observes that "there is a fairly widespread attitude that ancient theories of virtue and the good life are concerned not with what we take to be morality, but with something different, an alternative which can be labelled ethics" (p. 119). This sense of radical difference can either be employed to valorize the modern perspective or criticize it. Hegel, one of the early claimants of this difference, claims that the Greeks were "ethical without being moral" for not knowing what "conscience" is. See Hegel, *The Philosophy of Right*, trans. Alan White (Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing, 2002), Supplement to Par. 144.

Third, we can gain insight into the inconclusive debate in environmental theory over nature's "intrinsic value." As one scholar notes, speaking of "nature as having intrinsic value" is foreign to ancients since "the separation of nature's 'value' from nature is unintelligible—they do not exist separately in this metaphysical landscape."[44]

Aristotle's dynamic conception of nature founded on *energeia* and *entelecheia* is much more open to the qualitative dimension of nature, and can throw more light on our environmental sensibilities than the physicalist model of nature we have inherited from the modern scientific worldview. The environmental usage of the concept of "nature" often attributes subjectivity or agency to "nature" which is not reconcilable with the materialist conception of nature.[45] The contemporary desire expressed in environmental theory to re-connect with nature is more compatible with Aristotle's conception of nature. To this purpose, I will introduce a not well known essay of Heidegger on the concept of nature in Aristotle.[46] My discussion of Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotle will remain limited to the notions of *phusis* and *energeia*. Hence, I will not try to venture into Heidegger's own philosophy of Being or his interpretation of the Western tradition of philosophy.

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[44] Michael Bonnett, "Notions of Nature," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 37.4 (2003): 581. This point will be discussed in Chapter 5.

[45] Some environmental theorists insist that nature can have subjectivity or agency; see Thomas Heyd, ed., *Recognizing the Autonomy of Nature: Theory and Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

[46] Martin Heidegger, "On the Essence and Concept of in Aristotle's *Phusis* Physics B I," trans. Thomas Sheehan, in *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998). See also his *Aristotle's Metaphysics Θ 1-3*, trans. Walter Brogan and Peter Warnek (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995); and *Plato's Sophist*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz and Andre Schuwer (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997), 15-129. These works have been discussed formerly in environmental theory literature by Bruce V. Foltz, *Inhabiting the Earth: Heidegger, Environmental Ethics, and the Metaphysics of Nature* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1995); Nancy J. Holland, "Rethinking Ecology in the Western Philosophical Tradition: Heidegger and/on Aristotle," *Continental Philosophy Review* 32 (1999): 409-20; and Trish Glazebrook, "From *Phusis* to Nature, *Technē* to Technology: Heidegger on Aristotle, Galileo, and Newton," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 38.1 (2000): 95-118; and Richard Rojcewicz, *The Gods and Technology: A Reading of Heidegger* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006).

3.2 The Manifold Senses of Nature

Aristotle defines *phusis* in *Ph.* II.1 as an immanent source of motion and rest in beings which can move by virtue of themselves as opposed to deriving their source of movement from an external impulse as artifacts do. It is important to note that motion, according to Aristotle, includes not only local motion (*phora*) but also qualitative changes as alteration, growth, and decay, and quantitative changes as increase and decrease. In *Meta.* V.4, Aristotle presents us with six inter-related senses of *phusis*. One of them is "the genesis of growing things [*hē tōn phuomenōn genesis*]." As Aristotle notes, the word *phusis* shares the same etymological root as the passive verb *phuesthai* (to grow) in the preceding definition as well as the transitive *phuein* (to bring forth, to make grow).[47] It is also noteworthy that *phusis* in this sense is closest to the Latin *natura* (derived from *nasci*) as the latter shares the same Proto-Indo-European root *g'ene-* or *g'nē/g'nā* (to give birth, to be born) with the Greek word *genesis*.

According to a second sense, *phusis* is the immanent part of a growing thing such as a seed. The third sense is similar to the one Aristotle provides in *Ph.* II.1. It refers to the source of the immanent movement in each natural being. A fourth and common sense is *hulē* (the primary thing out of which a natural being grows or an artifact is made). The fifth is *ousia* (being*ness*) of natural beings. By this, Aristotle is referring to *eidos* (form) and *morphē* (shape) which defines *hulē* into a natural being (e.g. animals and their parts). The sixth sense, according to Aristotle, is derived from a metaphorical extension of the

[47] Similarly, the Greek word *phuton* (plant, tree) derives from the same root. According to etymologists that *phusis* had originated from the Proto-Indo-European root *bheu-* which had given rise to numerous words in various Indo-European languages with the meanings of "to exist," "to dwell," "to grow," and "to be." See Julius Pokorny, *Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Bern: Francke, 1959), 146-150; see also Giovanni Monastra, "Nature," trans. Harold S. Reeves, *Interdisciplinary Encyclopaedia of Religion and Science*, http://www.disf.org/en.

fifth. According to this, every *ousia* is in a certain way *phusis* because *ousia* is *phusis*.[48] In the end, Aristotle sums up all these six senses under a primary and governing one which is similar to the one he provides in *Ph.* II.1: "the *ousia* of things which have in themselves, as such, a source of movement." Hence, *phusis* is "the source of the movement of natural objects, being present in them somehow, either potentially [*dunamei*] or in complete reality [*entelecheia*]" (*Meta.* 1015a13-19).

3.3 Energeia and Entelecheia

Aristotle often uses *energeia*, and occasionally *entelecheia*, in juxtaposition to *dunamis*— another critical concept of his philosophy rendered into English as "potentiality" or "potency" both of which are derived from the Latin term *potentia*. Both *dunamis* and *energeia* (or *entelecheia* for that matter) are central to Aristotle's account of motion and change, and consequently to his notion of *phusis*. Aristotle frequently resorts to the ontological terms *energeia* and *entelecheia* in his discussions on ethics, animals, and beings in general. These two concepts are central to understanding the plurality and unity of nature at one and the same time. Aristotle scholars have taken note of the difficulties posed by the translation of these terms as well as their relationship to one another. Part of the difficulty stems from the fact that these words were Aristotle's own coinage as they do not appear in the extant Greek literature prior to Aristotle. The most typical translations for *energeia* as "activity" or "actuality" and for *entelecheia* as "actualization"—all of which are derived from the Latin term *actus*—have been found deficient or misleading by some scholars.

[48] This last sense is the source of the much dreaded notion of "essentialism" as *ousia* is typically rendered into English as "essence" (derived from the Latin *essentia*) and at times as "substance" (derived from the Latin *substantia*). As we will see below, Heidegger rejects both of them arguing that the separation of *essentia* and *existentia* has no basis in Aristotle.

Heidegger has been especially critical of the legacy of the Latinization of the original Greek terms claiming that this event has shaped the subsequent (mis)understanding of the Greek philosophy.[49] Another critic, Joe Sachs, points out that the word "actuality" can misleadingly suggest to English readers "reality" rather than "activity," whereas the word "activity" can reduce Aristotle's broader understanding of activity to one kind of activity in which only external motion is observable. Thinking, which appears to most of us as the epitome of passivity, is on Aristotle's account a type of *energeia*. So Sachs renders *energeia* as "being-at-work," possibly following Heidegger's earlier unorthodox German translation as "Im-Werk-Stehen" (standing-in-the-work).[50] "Being-at-work," although sounds somewhat awkward, allude to the etymological, and possibly the conceptual, connection of *energeia* to another Greek word *ergon* (deed, work) as Aristotle himself points to this derivation (*Meta.* 1050a21-23).

The problem with using "actualization" for *entelecheia*, on the other hand, as one scholar puts it, is that the term "actualization" not only is unclear as to whether *entelecheia* in Aristotle's thought is referring to the process or product of a motion, but also does not help our thinking through the subtleties of Aristotle's conception of motion.[51] Unlike *energeia*, Aristotle does not give us a clue as to the etymological origin of *entelecheia* or its definition. Still, it is apparent that Aristotle derived it from a combination of Greek

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[49] Heidegger's choice of words for this historic event is somewhat dramatic: "with one blow the Greek world was toppled;" see "On the Essence," 218. When necessary, I will occasionally cite Heidegger's original article "Vom Wesen und Begriff der Φύσις Aristoteles' Physik B 1," in *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1967) with the shorthand "*Wegmarken*."

[50] See Heidegger, *Wegmarken*, 354. The translation "being-at-work" also appears in Jacob Klein's 1964 essay "Aristotle: An Introduction," in *Lectures and Essays* (Annapolis, MD: St. John's College Press, 1985), 171-195. Klein was familiar with Heidegger as he attended Heidegger's seminars on Aristotle in the 1920s back in Germany before he emigrated to the United States. For Sachs' explanation and justification for his translation, see Joe Sachs, "Aristotle: Motion and its Place in Nature."

[51] See L. A. Kosman, "Aristotle's Definition of Motion," *Phronesis* 14 (1969): 40-62.

words. According to one possibility, these words are *en* (in), *telos* (end), and *echein* (to have) and its translation would be "having an end within."[52] Joe Sachs, on the other hand, translates *entelecheia* as "being-at-an-end" as he believes Aristotle possibly derived the word by adding the adjective *entelēs* (complete) to the verb *echein* (to continue to be) to underlie the combined force of "completeness" and "continuity."[53] The question of the conceptual relationship between *energeia* and *entelecheia* similarly has been subject to debate in Aristotle scholarship. The prevailing view is that Aristotle uses these terms to signify the same thing from different aspects. At one point, Aristotle uses them within the same sentence: "For the *ergon* is the *telos*, and the *energeia* is the *ergon*. And so even the word *energeia* is named from *ergon*, and extends toward [*sunteinei pros tēn*] *entelecheia*" (*Meta.* 1050a21-23). When Aristotle uses both terms earlier in the same book, he relates the two terms with the verb *suntithēmi* (to put together) suggesting their affinity (*Meta.* 1047a30).[54]

3.4 Heidegger's Interpretation of Aristotle's Conception of Phusis

Heidegger's relevance to us in this context is not directly on the ethical and political aspects of Aristotle's thought. As well-known, Heidegger directed most of his philosophical attention to an ontological question. His primary concern was to understand the Being (*Sein*) of beings (*Seiende*) or the obscure unity underlying the manifoldness of beings which he thought was a fundamental question to be examined before throwing ourselves into the midst of beings. In this endeavor, he drew upon the Pre-Socratics as well as Aristotle. Although his fascination with the Pre-Socratics is well

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[52] See George A. Blair, "The Meaning of 'Energeia' and 'Entelecheia' in Aristotle," *International Philosophical Quarterly* VII (1967): 101-117, p. 110; see also George A. Blair, *Energeia and Entelecheia: "Act" in Aristotle* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1992).

[53] Sachs, "Aristotle: Motion and its Place in Nature."

[54] See Chung-Hwan Chen, "The Relation between the Terms *Energeia* and *Entelecheia* in the Philosophy of Aristotle," *Classical Quarterly* 8.1/2 (1958): 12-7.

established in Heidegger scholarship, his interest in Aristotle's thought has remained relatively underemphasized until recently—at least in the English speaking world. With the recent translation of his essays on Aristotle into English, Heidegger scholars have begun to pay more attention to Aristotle's profound influence on him.[55]

Heidegger's philosophical debt to Aristotle should not come as a surprise though, as it is well-known that it was Franz Brentano's work on Aristotle which set Heidegger on his philosophical path.[56] Heidegger praises Aristotle highly so much so that he considers Aristotle to be the last great philosopher: "Aristotle was not followed by anyone greater."[57] Heidegger shows a special fondness for Aristotle's works *Physics* and *Metaphysics*; the former is the "foundational book of Western philosophy."[58] And in his exegesis of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, he remarks, "With Aristotle the greatest philosophical knowledge of antiquity is expressed, a knowledge which even today remains unappreciated and misunderstood in philosophy."[59] Heidegger's high regard for Aristotle stems from his view that Aristotle brought the wisdom of the Pre-Socratics to its completion.[60]

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[55] See, for instance, Thomas Sheehan, "Heidegger, Aristotle, and Phenomenology," *Philosophy Today* 19 (1975): 87-94; Franco Volpi, *Heidegger e Aristotele* (Padova: Daphne Editrice, 1984); Theodore J. Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 227-308; Ted Sadler, *Heidegger and Aristotle: The Question of Being* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Athlone, 1997); William McNeill, *The Glance of the Eye: Heidegger, Aristotle, and the Ends of Theory* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999); and Walter Brogan, *Heidegger and Aristotle: The Twofoldness of Being* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2005).

[56] In an autobiographical essay, Heidegger mentions Franz Brentano's dissertation *On the Manifold Meaning of Being According to Aristotle* (1862) as an early determining influence on him. See his "My Way to Phenomenology," in *On Time and Being*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 74.

[57] Heidegger, *Plato's Sophist*, 8.

[58] Heidegger, "On the Essence," 185.

[59] Heidegger, *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, 188.

[60] Heidegger, "On the Essence," 186.

Heidegger prefaces his essay on Aristotle's conception of *phusis* first by noting that the Romans translated *phusis* as *natura*, and then surveying the different ways the word "nature" has been put to use within the Western tradition. Immediately after these prefatory remarks, Heidegger warn us against being swept away by the historiographic pedantry of tracing the etymologies without noting fundamental shifts in meaning. The importance of Latin *natura* and its Greek predecessor *phusis* for us does not stem from our curiosity into their diverse historical usages but lies in the fact that they frame our understanding of, and relationship to, beings as a whole: "this fundamental word of Western metaphysics harbors within itself decisions about the truth of beings."[61] Here, Heidegger is alluding to his view that truth is a matter of ontology rather than of "logic" as we understand it. According to this unconventional view, which should not preoccupy us here, truth is not the correspondence of our statements with the outside world but the ever-present ground of Being. For our purposes, it is more important to note that Heidegger is trying to make the point that the way we understand and represent "nature" shapes our attitude toward other beings. For instance, technological approach to nature, according to Heidegger, "renounces any claim to knowing and grounding *truth* as such".[62]

Heidegger begins his painstaking exegesis by pointing out the connection Aristotle makes between *phusis* and *kinēsis* (motion). Heidegger prefers to render *kinēsis* into German as *Bewegtheit* ("state of movedness") rather than as what one would expect, namely *Bewegung*. The latter term corresponds to "motion" or "movement" in German. Heidegger's rationale in coining a new word for *kinēsis* is that *Bewegung* (or "motion" in

[61] Ibid., 185.

[62] Ibid., 198, emphasis original. For an elaboration of this cryptic remark, see Heidegger, *Plato's Sophist*, 28-31.

English) does not account for the fact that a living being, according to Aristotle, can still be at work even when it remains in state of rest.[63] This point, as we will see below, is crucial for Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotle's conception of *phusis*. The import of Aristotle's making the connection between *phusis* and *kinēsis*, as Heidegger emphasizes, is that being moved (*Bewegtsein*) is not an external attribute of natural beings but integral to their mode of being. Before examining this connection in more detail, Heidegger briefly takes up the question of "natural beings." How does Aristotle identify "natural beings"? Aristotle's well-known quick answer is that some beings such as animals, plants, the parts of their bodies, as well as the four elements of earth, air, fire, and water are natural because their cause (*aition*) is *phusis* (*Ph.* 192b8-11). Heidegger points out that Aristotle's word *aition* should not be taken lightly, especially not in terms of an efficient cause. Aristotle rather means by *aition*, according to Heidegger, something to this effect: "that which is responsible [*verschuldet*] for the fact that a being is *what* it is."[64] *Aition* in this broad sense refers to "the origin of things" (*archê*), which includes but is not reducible to the modern notion of causality.

Heidegger translates and interprets Aristotle's next sentence "all of them obviously differ from the things not put together by nature" in a very unusual way. He renders the Greek verb *sunestōta* ("put together") in German through his own terms *Stand* (stand) and *Bestand* (stability). According to Heidegger, *das Ständige* (the stable)—the common element for both terms—is key to the Greek understanding of beings and suggests two things: (1) whatever, of and by itself, stands on its own, and (2) the

[63] The power of Heidegger's interpretation of ancient Greek philosophy stems from his unorthodox and provocative translations of the original Greek terms, which almost always depart from their Latin-derived contemporary equivalents. I shall continue to give Heidegger's German translations of the Greek terms side by side with the English translations of the German as well as the more conventional English translations of the Greek terms.

[64] Heidegger, "On the Essence," 188, emphasis original.

enduring. The former meaning was carried into the Latin term *substantia*. *Das Ständige*, Heidegger warns us, should not be confused withmodern notion of "object" (*Gegenstand*). For the latter term of ours implicated in the subject/object distinction is foreign to the Greek thinking of being according to Heidegger. This point is central to Heidegger's analysis of modernity: "beings can be experienced as objects only where human beings have become subjects, those who experience their fundamental relation to beings as the objectification—understood as mastery—of what is encountered. For the Greeks, human beings are never subjects, and therefore non-human beings can never have the character of objects [*Gegenstandes*]."[65]

Next, Heidegger turns his attention to Aristotle's use of *archē* in his characterization of natural beings being moved on their own (*Ph.* 192b13-5). This word, according to Heidegger, not only means "source" or "origin," but also "control" (*Herrschaft*) or "ordering" (*Verfügung*). To emphasize this interplay of meaning between these two sets of meaning, Heidegger comes up with the interchangeable phrases "originating ordering" and "ordering origin" to characterize *phusis*. Heidegger's lexical wizardry bears fruit immediately in his acute observation that, "plants and animals are *in* movedness [*Bewegtheit*] even when they stand still and rest." This is so "because rest is a kind of movement [*Bewegung*]; only that which is able to move can rest."[66] Heidegger then points out the richness and fullness of Aristotle's notion of motion, which is not exhausted by the concept of "locomotion" (*phora*) as we noted earlier, and contrasts it with "the mechanistic thinking of the modern natural sciences" in which locomotion is

[65] Ibid., 189. Heidegger further comments on the human domination of the globe later in the text (197). Here, he notes the goal of "modern humanity" to produce itself technologically in contrast to the ancient vision of *techne* as cooperating with *phusis*.

[66] Ibid.

treated as the basic form of movement.[67] Furthermore, Aristotle's notion of locomotion is different from the modern conception of locomotion in that Aristotle takes note of the peculiar configuration of places around beings as opposed to the "infinite space" of Newton's modern science "that is everywhere homogeneous and nowhere distinctive."[68]

These are interesting but preliminary discussions for what is to come in the rest of the essay. The decisive point Heidegger is heading toward with these points is that *phusis*, according to Aristotle, must be understood in terms of *ousia* as "a kind and mode of presencing [*eine Art und Weise der Anwesung*]."[69] By *Anwesung* ("presencing"), Heidegger means "coming forth into the unhidden, placing itself into the open."[70] Presencing is of the same nature as Being (*Sein*). We see this equation when he later rephrases the same point: *phusis* "is not a being [*Seiende*] but a manner of *being* [*eine Art des Seins*]."[71] Hence, *phusis* through natural beings always points to or refers back to *ousia*. At this point, we may wonder whether Heidegger is reading into Aristotle rather than trying faithfully to explain him. Heidegger is ready to answer our objection. He holds the view that every translation is already an interpretation.[72] To pretend that translation does not involve interpretation is worse than admitting its inevitability beforehand. Understanding cannot take place, Heidegger insists, if we merely carry over Aristotle's words into our language

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[67] See also Leclerc, 37-39.

[68] Heidegger, "On the Essence," 190. See also Sambursky, 94-96; Alexandre Koyré "Galileo and Plato," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 4.4 (1943): 400-28, and "Galileo and the Scientific Revolution of the Seventeenth Century," *The Philosophical Review* 52.4 (1943): 333-48. This contrast has been the subject of Edward S. Casey's *Getting Back Into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993).

[69] Heidegger, "On the Essence," 200.

[70] Ibid., 208.

[71] Ibid., 215.

[72] Ibid., 188.

without placing ourselves into the Greek. "An interpretation must go beyond what can be found in the text at first glance." [73]

Heidegger then makes a cryptic reference to Antiphon the Sophist: "The doctrine of Antiphon and of his successors, who have continued in an unbroken line down to today, seizes upon the most extreme non-essence of *phusis* and inflates it into the real and only essence. In fact, such inflation remains the essence of all nonessence . . . . But let us leave this nonessence to its own ruin."[74] This comment is made in relation to Heidegger's understanding of *phusis* as *ousia* in Aristotle. According to Antiphon, the *phusis* of a being is nothing but its *hupokeimenē hulē*—the material substratum out of which it grows or is made (*Ph.* 193a9-29). If the being in question is an artifact, say, a bronze statue, its *phusis* is bronze or if there is a still more basic element underlying bronze then *phusis* or *ousia* is that indeterminate element. The determinate form (*eidos*) or shape (*morphê*) of a being does not add anything substantial to its *phusis*. Likewise, the *phusis* of a natural being lies in its elemental composition rather than in its superficial form. Aristotle, however, argues against Antiphon by noting that if the form of bronze statue comes from art and is considered to be art, then the form of a human being comes from, and must be likewise considered as, *phusis*. What is noteworthy in this disagreement is that whereas Antiphon does not heed the distinction between an artifact and a natural being, Aristotle does as he recognizes Antiphon's illegitimate move from an artifact to natural beings. As Heidegger notes, Antiphon's erasure of the difference between artifacts and natural beings was adopted by modern metaphysics, which "conceives of 'nature' as a 'technique' such that this 'technique' that constitutes the

[73] Heidegger, *Plato's Sophist*, 53.

[74] Heidegger, "On the Essence," 228, 229.

essence of nature provides the metaphysical *ground* for the possibility, or even the necessity, of subjecting and mastering nature through machine technology."[75]

Heidegger pays considerable attention to Aristotle's disagreement with Antiphon as he believes this is of decisive importance. What is at stake, as Heidegger sees it, is nothing less than the question of the Being of beings. Heidegger points out that Antiphon's position is tantamount to what we today know as "materialism."[76] As Heidegger notes, Antiphon misses Aristotle's insight that *kinesis* is integral to natural beings and distinguishes them from artifacts. This neglect in turn leads to a major error or distortion regarding the question of the Being. This blind spot, also shared by Antiphon's modern successors, is the forgetfulness of the being*ness* that *phusis* ever always presupposes. Both Antiphon and his modern successors try to explain (away) Being through beings as opposed to what Heidegger takes to be Aristotle's correct reverse procedure of understanding beings through Being.[77]

Heidegger then draws our attention to Aristotle's emphatic point that *morphe* corresponds to *phusis* to a greater degree than *hule* because "a thing is more properly said to be what it is when it has attained to fulfillment [*entelecheia*] than when it exists potentially [*dunamei*]" (*Ph.* 193b6-8). Heidegger translates Aristotle's key term *entelecheia* as *das Sich-im-Ende-Haben* (having-itself-in-its end) and points out that it is the fundamental word of Aristotle's thinking.[78] The same thing goes for *energeia* as Heidegger sees no

[75] Ibid., 220, emphasis original.

[76] Ibid., 204-06.

[77] Ibid., 208.

[78] Ibid., 216, 217; 354 in the *Wegmarken*.

crucial conceptual distinction between the two in Aristotle other than showing *kinesis* from different aspects.[79]

Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotle's conception of *phusis* in terms of *kinēsis* and *ousia* can appear to be stretched at times, but this should not detract from the significance of the refreshing interpretation he is attempting to provide us with in place of the long-standing ossified sedimentation of Aristotle scholarship. Heidegger's task is particularly important as the rejection of Aristotle in the modern era is largely based on this inadequate Latin interpretation. I believe the most important insight that we can learn from Heidegger's interpretation is his emphasis on Aristotle's rich and dynamic characterization of *phusis*. As Heidegger observes, this way of understanding *phusis* has been lost or neglected after Aristotle. Although there might be exceptions to his overstatement judging the two-and-a-half millennia of Western philosophical tradition, it still rings true with respect to the modern conception of nature.

Nature in Aristotle is not an extended realm. It can only be metaphorically spoken of as the domain of natural beings or natural generation (i.e., "the region of mutability and generation"). Yet, we can hardly set the boundaries of this domain except in speech. The realm of human art and nature are increasingly mixed together, but this is not the dreaded "end" of nature. According to Heidegger, to say that nature is conquered, despoiled, or destroyed is to misunderstand and misrepresent what "nature" truly is. If we understand "nature" the way Aristotle interprets *phusis*, then "nature" cannot be seen as a *being* to be changed or destroyed. Nature as *ousia* is indestructible whereas natural beings are not. Since our lives are relatively dependent on the well-being of other natural beings—either an individual one, say, a cow, or a collective one, say, a

[79] Ibid., 217, 219, 230.

forest or a lake—we have natural interests in taking care of their well-being. But we also have an interest in nature as *ousia* to the extent we admire and revere other natural beings without their immediate benefits to our physical well-being.

The debate over anthropocentricism or the intrinsic value of nature in environmental theory literature can take a different color if seen in the light of Aristotle's conception of *phusis*. What is at work in nature, according to Aristotle, is not simply inanimate matter moving through chance and necessity. There is rather an underlying order behind the way *phusis* unfolds or presents itself as Heidegger puts it. From this perspective, we are not in a position to assess the "value" of nature—be it intrinsic or instrumental. The importance of nature as *ousia* cannot be captured through the word "value" borrowed from the vocabulary of classical economists. We can certainly judge the instrumental "value" of other natural beings to us, which is not altogether possible to avoid if we are to survive. Yet, we should not be forgetting to pay our respects to nature as *ousia*, which is central to lead a good life. It is this forgetfulness or blindness that lies at the core of Heidegger's criticism of modernity as embodied in its technological drive to see everything natural as ready-to-hand for production.

Let us now briefly attend to ethical and political implications of *energeia* and *entelecheia*, which will be examined in the next chapter in more detail. Aristotle's well-known saying "man is a political animal" (*zôon politikon*) not only exemplifies Aristotle's rejection of a radical discontinuity between the human realm and the rest of animate existence, but more importantly hints at Aristotle's dynamic view of human life.[80] Despite our connection with animals, Aristotle does not ignore the distinctive nature of

[80] For a more detailed discussion of this saying, see Wolfgang Kullman, "Man as a Political Animal in Aristotle," in *A Companion to Aristotle's Politics*, eds. David Keyt and Fred D. Miller, Jr. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 94-117.

human beings. On many occasions, he remarks that only human beings are capable of *nous* (intellect) and *dianoia* (thinking). *Logos* and *nous* constitute the *telos* of human nature (*Pol.* 1334b14-15). These qualities are superior to sense-perception and physical motion which we share with other natural beings. Aristotle poses the unique nature of human beings in terms of "the work [*ergon*] of a human being," which, he believes, must distinguish them from other animal kinds. Aristotle claims that this special work can be seen in the "being-at-work [*energeia*] of the soul in accordance with virtue [*arēte*]" (*NE* 1098a17-18). *Aretē*, which can also mean excellence, can only be achieved within a group of people united under the commitment of mutual benefit and justice. Hence, Aristotle's characterization of human beings takes into consideration not only our natural features but also ethical and political ones. Both ethical and political aspects of human life are natural in a secondary sense, namely, human beings can complete their natures only through an ethical life lived within a political setting.

The superiority of human beings vis-à-vis other animals is not unconditional for Aristotle. Only when guided by a true sense of justice we become truly human: "Man, when perfected, is the best of animals; but if he be isolated from law and justice he is the worst of all" (*Pol.* 1253a31-33). Here, we can see the role of *energeia* in Aristotelian conception of ethics. Human beings are born potentially human but they are yet to achieve their full actualization. This should be compared with the modern view that human faculty of freedom and morality makes them superior to other animals. One of the precursors of historicism, Johann G. Herder, in his *Reflections on the Philosophy of the History of Humankind* (1784–91), declares man as the king for his capacity of morality rather than its exercise: "Even when he most despicably abuses his freedom, man is still

king. For he can still choose, even though he chooses the worst."[81] This statement reflects the modern reification of *dunamis* and contradicts Aristotle's natural understanding of human beings through *energeia*.

[81] Book IV, Chapter 4. Quoted from Frederick M. Barnard, "Culture and Civilization in Modern Times," in *The Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, Vol. I, ed. Philip P. Wiener (New York: Scribner's, 1973), 616.

Chapter 4: Aristotle's Conception of Praxis

This chapter introduces Aristotle's normative account of praxis with a special emphasis on his discussion of virtue.[1] My goal is to lay the groundwork for next chapter in which I take issue with the use of "value" as a moral notion in contemporary environmental theory.[2] The notion of virtue has been at the center of moral and political philosophy throughout the premodern era since Socrates. With figures in the early modern era such as Machiavelli and Hobbes, we witness the sidelining of "virtue" due to the increasing belief in the futility of virtue in conducting political affairs. Today, Aristotle's conception of praxis is generally considered to be superseded by the modern conception of morality and politics protecting, respecting, and nurturing individual "autonomy."

The progressive historicist argument against Aristotle's contemporary relevance at best acknowledges that his ideas were perhaps feasible in a bygone era which featured the now obsolete institutions such as city-state and repugnant customs such as slavery and sexism.[3] A recent commentator on Aristotle has noted the contemporary skepticism, with which he disagrees, as follows: "We expect to find a world alien to us in Aristotle's ethics and political philosophy, because we assume that the subject matter treated in it—

[1] Since the word "praxis" exists in the English language, I will not hereafter italicize it.

[2] I shall argue in the next chapter that "virtue" rather than "value" is more conducive to the cause of protecting the natural environment.

[3] I use the term "progressive" in a general sense, as discussed in Chapter 2, to designate those who believe that humanity as a collective entity has improved itself both morally and intellectually in successive stages of history. Progressives also think that it is morally imperative to continue this movement of history by further scientific discoveries and technological innovation. To be "progressive" in this general sense, one does not have to identify himself as "progressive." In the general sense, progressives can be found in any ideology or country.

morals, right, and politics—has changed radically since antiquity."[4] Part of the skepticism stems from Aristotle's "outdated theoretical premises such as a teleology of nature, theories about the cosmos, and other 'metaphysical' elements."[5]

The initial departure from Aristotle, as we observed in previous two chapters, can be traced back to the scientific developments in the seventeenth century. It continued in the eighteenth century with the Enlightenment movement, and culminated in positivism and historicism in the last two centuries. Immanuel Kant's work represents the prime example of the Enlightenment opposition to Aristotle on the basis of moral universalism (or cosmopolitanism) and the fact/value distinction or, in Kantian terms, phenomena/noumena. As we shall see later, those who subscribe to these two tenets of modern philosophy—universalism and positivism—are not unjustified in their skepticism toward Aristotle's ethics and politics because Aristotle's conception of praxis contradicts both of these views. But sidestepping Aristotle neither invalidates nor refutes his account of human praxis; it can rather lead to blind spots in the conduct of praxis.

Today, progressives seem to forget that Aristotle had a comeback in the post-Kantian period in the works of Hegel, Marx, and later, Heidegger.[6] True, these figures

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[4] Otfried Höffe, *Aristotle*, trans. Christine Salazar (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2003), 129. In his book *The Invention of Autonomy: A History of Modern Moral Philosophy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), J. B. Schneewind takes a historicist approach and makes this argument. He argues that the modern (Kantian) conception of morality based on autonomy was invented in response to the changing socio-political circumstances in the history of modern Europe and replaced the older "conception of morality as obedience." The new morality "centered on the belief that all normal individuals are equally able to live together in a morality of self-governance" (pp. 4, 5).

[5] Höffe, 129.

[6] For Aristotle's influence in post-Kantian German philosophy, see, for instance, George E. McCarthy, *Marx and the Ancients: Classical Ethics, Social Justice and Nineteenth-Century Political Economy* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1990); George E. McCarthy, ed., *Marx and Aristotle: Nineteenth-Century German Social Theory and Classical Antiquity* (Savage, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1992); Alfredo Ferrarin, *Hegel and Aristotle* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Gary Pendlebury, *Action and Ethics in Aristotle and Hegel* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006); and Franco Volpi, "In Whose Name?: Heidegger and 'Practical Philosophy'," *European Journal of Political Theory* 6.1 (2007): 31-51.

did not try to revive Aristotle in full but rather borrowed from him selectively to develop their own accounts of praxis. Still, the fact that they could not ignore Aristotle after a hiatus of almost three centuries attests to the endurance of Aristotle's account of praxis. Two centuries after Hegel and Marx, it is to Aristotle's account of praxis again that scholars are turning as the Hegelian and Marxist views of history have been largely discredited except for small pockets of resistance throughout the world.[7] The blind spots of modern conceptions of morality and politics have been most recently discussed in the literature of "postmodernism" as well as in the context of the communitarian/liberalism debate. The critics of universalism and positivism have based their arguments on a neo-Aristotelian conception of praxis emphasizing the role of the contingent and the particular in human affairs. Some of the following discussion will necessarily overlap with these debates but my immediate aim is to bring out the relevance of Aristotle's account of praxis with respect to contemporary environmental theory.

As the discussion of what is right has overshadowed the notion of the good in modern moral discourse, the notion of "virtue" has fallen through the cracks. The superfluity of virtue found expression in Kant's saying, "As hard as it may sound, the problem of setting up a state can be solved even by a nation of devils (so long as they possess understanding)."[8]

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[7] For revival of interest in Aristotle's account of praxis in the twentieth century, see Franco Volpi, "The Rehabilitation of Practical Philosophy and Neo-Aristotelianism," in *Action and Contemplation*, eds. Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins (New York: SUNY Press, 1999), 3-25.

[8] See *Kant: Political Writings*, ed. H. S. Reiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 112. What Kant means by this dramatic saying is something similar to the position that James Madison defends in the *Federalist* No. 10 regarding the institutional checks on self-seeking behavior (i.e., factionalism): "the *causes* of faction cannot be removed and that relief is only to be sought in the means of controlling its *effects*." Both Kant and Madison similarly hold that "the moral improvement of man" is not needed for a peaceful and prosperous society to sustain itself (Ibid., 113). This question is something Aristotle himself addresses in *Pol.* III.4. Aristotle too distinguishes good man and good citizen, as Kant does, but, unlike Kant, he does not exempt the rulers or founders of a political community from the requirement of "goodness."

> Many classical liberals believed that a liberal democracy could be made secure, even in the absence of an especially virtuous citizenry, by creating checks and balances. Institutional and procedural devices such as the separation of powers, a bicameral legislature, and federalism would all serve to block would-be oppressors. Even if each person pursued her own self-interest, without regard for the common good, one set of private interests would check another set of private interests.[9]

For Aristotle, however, the attainment of good governance in politics is inseparable from the attainment of civic virtue: "Whoever takes thought for good management [*eunomia*], however, gives careful attention to political virtue and vice. It is thus evident that virtue must be a care for every city, or at least every one to which the term applies truly and not merely in a manner of speaking" (*Pol.* 1280b5-8). Aristotle puts great weight on virtue because, unlike Kant, he does not believe that good governance can take place "where the laws have been well enacted yet are not obeyed" (*Pol.* 1294a3-4). It can only take place when the institutional hardware of politics is complemented by the civic software of virtues.

As one critic of liberalism observes, the "talk of 'virtue' immediately strikes the modern ear as somehow illiberal, certainly antiquated, perhaps perverse."[10] Virtue, for us, is at best supererogatory—something nice to have but not really mandatory to dwell on. This neglect has been interpreted as a major weakness of modern liberal democracy by its friendly critics identified somewhat crudely as "communitarians." One commentator expresses the basic message of the communitarian critique of liberalism: "liberalism depends on virtues that it does not readily summon and which it may even

[9] Will Kymlicka and Wayne Norman, "Return of the Citizen: A Survey of Recent Work on Citizenship Theory," *Ethics* 104.2 (1994): 359.

[10] Ronald Beiner, *What's the Matter with Liberalism?* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 39.

stunt or stifle."[11] Most communitarian critics attack liberalism because they think that the reluctance or resistance to "virtue" to protect individual autonomy is self-defeating. The resulting social problems resulting from anomie are much worse than the oppressive nature of character-building.

The obedience that Aristotle talks about can be brought about through compulsion (fear), incentives (utility), or virtue (choice). Among them, virtue is the rarest possibility as Aristotle himself recognizes, and yet it would be a mistake to ignore the decisive role of those members of every society who are willing to take the noble route to attain their ends. These members, present in every human society, hold ideals or ends above the acquisition of wealth and power. Virtue is the guiding star for these high-minded individuals. Without attending to the concrete virtues of individuals—whether public or private—a general, universal, or abstract recognition of or dedication to universal rights, equality, and freedom can neither guide nor illuminate human praxis. The modern skepticism toward virtue is understandable since there is always an element of hypocrisy in vacuous moralistic posturing; and hypocrisy is the surest way to bring discredit on ethical conduct as Aristotle himself notes: "words that concern things in the realm of feelings and actions are less believable than deeds are, and when they are discordant with what is perceived, those who say them are despised and discredit the truth along with themselves" (*NE* 1172a34-1172b2). Still, words are of "great benefit" to those who are willing and ready to be instructed in these matters (*NE* 1095a10-12).

Virtue-skepticism is also prevalent among (liberal progressive) environmentalists as we witness much rights-talk but barely any serious engagement with virtue in their

[11] Peter Berkowitz, *Virtue and the Making of Modern Liberalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), xiii. See also William A. Galston, *Liberal Purposes: Goods, Virtues, and Diversity in the Liberal State* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

quarters with the exception of environmental virtue ethics which will be discussed in the next chapter. Writing on environmental virtue ethics, an environmental scholar notes that although environmentalism is deeply infused with "virtue language," environmentalists who consider themselves as progressives are not comfortable with being associated with an old-fashioned tradition so much so that they express surprise to find themselves in the same camp with preachers of virtue: "Those of us who count themselves among the still largely countercultural activists who cultivate respect and love of nature in their daily lives—in other words, those who provide the practical base of environmental ethics—will more likely experience shock at this realization."[12] Indeed, most environmental scholars nowadays prefer to speak of "attitudes" and "values" to draw attention to the normative dimension of environmental issues. For instance, the environmental scholar J. Baird Callicott claims that "anything short of a philosophical overhaul of prevailing *attitudes and values* toward nature" would fail to the address the roots of ecological disease that afflicts our civilization.[13]

The concepts of "attitude" and "value," however, are merely impoverished and residual versions of the ancient vocabulary at the center of which lies the concepts of "virtue" and "vice." This can be seen in the way the term "attitude" is commonly defined. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, for instance, the word "attitude" describes "settled behaviour or manner of acting, as representative of feeling or opinion." An environmental scholar further defines it as "a cultural stance, a position

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[12] Louke van Wensveen, *Dirty Virtues: The Emergence of Ecological Virtue Ethics* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2000), 6.

[13] J. Baird Callicott, ed., *Companion to A Sand County Almanac: Interpretive & Critical Essays* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), ix, italics mine. The notion of "value" or "values" appear especially in environmental economics and sociology literatures; see Stephen Cotgrove and Andrew Duff, "Environmentalism, Values, and Social Change," *The British Journal of Sociology* 32.1 (1981): 92-110; and John Foster, ed., *Valuing Nature? Economics, Ethics and Environment* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1997).

one takes vis-à-vis the world. . . . Attitudes imply experience and a certain firmness of interest and value."[14] Aristotle uses two terms that are similar to the term "attitude" in meaning: *diathesis* and *hexis*. The former is typically translated as "disposition" and the latter as "habit." The difference between *diathesis* and *hexis* lies in that the former is a condition that can be easily and quickly changed whereas *hexis* suggests more stable and long-lasting behavior of a certain quality (See *Cat.* 8b25-9a9). According to Aristotle, both virtue and vice are kinds of *hexis*.

The reason for contemporary predilection for the term "attitude" and "value" is modern skepticism toward the connotations of "virtue." There is "the stigma of sounding old-fashioned, preachy, and self-righteous" and the hypocritical equation of *virtue* with (or its reduction to) female chastity throughout history.[15] As we shall see below, Aristotle uses, in his discussion of virtue, certain terms corresponding to both "attitude" and "value." The term "value" or "values," on the other hand, is an extremely ambiguous one that can be a substitute for a number of more traditional terms such as "good," "ends," "mores," "ideals," and "norms."

Revisiting Aristotle's account of *praxis* and recovering his vocabulary in light of environmentalism can help us in three ways. First, we can situate the language of environmentalism within a tradition. It is important to remember that environmentalism has a "conservative" mission even if it is spearheaded by progressives: to preserve, protect, and save the natural and cultural heritage. This mission can hardly be accomplished if we do not see ourselves as part of an existing tradition of thought and practice. The second problem with adopting the vocabulary of "attitudes and values" in

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[14] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values* (New York: Columbia University Press, [1974] 1990), 4.

[15] van Wensveen, 6-7.

environmental discussions is not simply the fact that they render "virtue" and "tradition" invisible, but there is a hollow ring to them when they are employed in a survey analysis mode.[16] Environmental scholars (mostly sociologists) attempt to capture empirically the fluctuation of public attitudes toward environmental issues without defending the normative conceptual framework of assessing whether these attitudes are sound or showing how they can be made sound if they are unsound.

A third point of environmental interest in Aristotle's analysis of *praxis* can be found in the fact that environmentalism actually promises to enact this account in a more fundamental way by providing meaningful real-life venues for the development of certain virtues such as moderation, justice, and prudence. Aristotle puts a premium on performing rather than preaching virtues: "by performing just actions one becomes a just person and by performing temperate actions one becomes a temperate person, and no one is going to become good by not performing these actions" (*NE* 1105b9-13). Whether it is lifestyle environmentalism or environmental activism in the public sphere, people do and can find opportunities to learn and enact virtues of moderation, justice, and prudence through informed environmental choices that they make on a daily basis. The fact that this aspect of environmentalism has been missed by so many environmental theorists, who rather insist on inventing a *new* environmental ethic, justifies the present attempt to redress the balance. Again, I shall discuss this proactive aspect of civic environmentalism in Chapter 7.

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[16] See, for instance, P. Wesley Schultz et al., "Values and Their Relationship to Environmental Concern and Conservation Behavior," *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 36.4 (2005): 457-75. Paradoxically, this terminology is predominantly in use in environmental studies conducted in two logically opposite academic fields at the same time. I have in mind the subjectivist field of psychology and the anti-subjectivist field of sociology. A possible reason for this coincidence of opposites is the artificial separation between "individual" and "society" in the name of academic specialization. What falls through the cracks is the perspective of "individual-in-community" that we find in Aristotle.

To recall the opening quote from Heidegger, the task of environmentalism should not be seen or set as inventing a new ethic but rather as altering the "relationships which actually appear regularly in living morality." For the explicit normative outlook of a collective must not be treated as something that can be engineered or detoured overnight. It can rather be reformed from within, and this requires patient engagement with the "living morality" of a collective. In short, what we need is not a wholly new set of values for any given collective—be it a certain society, the West, or humanity—but re-invigoration and re-orientation of traditional virtues in every society. I have more to say on this topic in the following chapters. In this chapter, I shall start with a general overview of Aristotle's account of *praxis*, and address its major components—ethics and politics—separately afterwards with a particular focus on their psychological orientation.

4.1 What is Praxis?

As pointed out in previous chapters, Aristotle is recognized as the first philosopher in the Western tradition to suggest certain guidelines to distinguish praxis, *poiesis*, and *theōria* (contemplation) from one another.[17] Corresponding to these different domains of human activity are the intellectual faculties that these activities require: *phronēsis* (practical judgment/wisdom), *techne*, and *sophia* (wisdom), respectively.[18] To be sure, the terminology is not Aristotle's; it was already in use in the Greek philosophy and

[17] As I have briefly discussed in Chapter 2, one major contemporary political theorist who capitalized on this aspect of Aristotle is Hannah Arendt. For a discussion of *praxis* in Aristotle's conception of political science, see also Stephen G. Salkever, *Finding the Mean: Theory and Practice in Aristotelian Political Philosophy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), Ch. 2.

[18] The recurring Greek terms will be written without diacritic marks after their first appearance.

literature before him. Aristotle's contribution in this regard was to consider their distinctive purposes and relationships with one another.[19]

These distinctions are essential to Aristotle's understanding of praxis. The typical English translation of praxis as "action" or more literally as "practice" is merely preliminary to recover the rich meaning it has for Aristotle. The term "action" is more limited than Aristotle's usage of the term praxis—in a way similar to the reductive assimilation of Aristotle's *kinesis* into the modern notion of "motion" as mentioned in the previous chapter. The term praxis carries an additional sense of "doing" or activity derived from the Greek verb *prattein* ("to do"). Hence, the activities of "living well" (*eu zen*) and "doing well" (*eu prattein*) would not count as "action" in current usage, but they do in the broader sense of praxis.

Without going into the details of each of the aforementioned activities and their corresponding faculties, suffice it to say that these distinctions allow Aristotle to treat ethics and politics independent of the demands of scientific exactness and technical expertise. The faculty of *episteme* (science) is a part of *sophia*—the other part being *nous* (intuitive intellect)—seeking precise theoretical understanding of invariable things, whereas the faculty of *phronesis* (from the verb *phroneō*—to think) deals with "things that are so for the most part" (*NE* 1094b20; see also 1104a1-10). This quintessential Aristotelian phrase "for the most part" suggests that "a thing done [*prakton*]," unlike the object of *episteme*, can be expected to be regularly occurring but not *aei* (ever present) like planetary motion or gravity. For what is done is "capable of being otherwise" (*NE*

[19] The question of whether Plato, before Aristotle, had drawn similar distinctions and respected their differences is debated among Plato scholars. On this question, see Stanley Rosen, "*Technē* and the Origins of Modernity," in *Technology in the Western Political Tradition*, eds. Arthur M. Melzer, Jerry Weinberger, and M. Richard Zinman (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993); and David Roochnik, *Of Art and Wisdom: Plato's Understanding of Techne* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996).

1140b3). For instance, a certain course of action which may achieve its goal at a certain time may fail on another occasion due to the ever changing circumstances.[20] Aristotle's conception of *phronesis* and praxis in this manner underscores two things: (1) that human affairs are constituted by contingent decisions, conditions, and actions, and cannot for this reason be approached in a scientific or technocratic spirit, and (2) that human beings are willing authors of their own (non)actions:

> For what results from the necessary is necessary; but the results of the contingent might be the opposite of what they are; what depends on men themselves forms a great portion of contingent matters, and men themselves are the sources of such contingent results. So that it is clear that all the acts of which man is the principle and controller may either happen or not happen, and that their happening or not happening—those at least of whose existence or non-existence he has the control—depends on him. But what it depends on him to do or not to do, he is himself the cause; and what he is the cause of depends on him. (*EE* 1223a1-9)[21]

Phronesis differs from *techne* in another way. *Techne* too is concerned with things that can be otherwise, but praxis carries its end or outcome within itself whereas *poiesis* seeks an external result or product: "For the end of making is different from itself, but the end of action could not be, since acting well [*eupraxia*] is itself the end" (*NE* 1140b6-7; see also 1139b1-3). It is easy to envisage this difference when we think of a house built by an architect. House-building or architecture clearly represents a case of *poisesis*/*techne* for Aristotle. But what about the case of a sick doctor healing herself? Assuming the treatment is successful, would her recovered health still be considered an external result? Aristotle says, "yes, indeed, it would" (*Ph.* 192b22-32). In this ambiguous case, the

[20] Aristotle enumerates these circumstances of human action in *NE* III.1: "who is acting, what it is concerned with or consists in, and sometimes also with what (such an instrument), for the sake of what (such as saving a life), and in what manner (such as gently or violently) it is done" (1111a2-7).

[21] To overlook this difference would be tantamount to a category mistake, possibly, with serious practical consequences. See James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); and Stephen Toulmin, *Return to Reason* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

patient happens to be a doctor at the same time; but the cured illness or the regained health is external to her being a doctor and internal to her being a patient. So by "external" Aristotle does not necessarily mean physical separateness but one that is seen logically separate or held in speech. Although illness and treatment co-exist in the same person in this example, the state of illness is nonetheless external to the art of medicine. It is not due to her medical expertise that the doctor falls sick but rather for being a living being already vulnerable to illness. This is also partially true for the healing process. If nature does not cooperate, the art cannot bring about the healing on its own.

Aristotle often connects *phusis* and *techne* in a teleological way: "For example, if a house were something that came into being by nature, it would come about in just the way it now does by art, and if things by nature were to come about not only by nature but also by art, they too would come about in exactly the same way as they do by nature" (*Ph.* 199a12-15). However, *phusis* differs from *poiesis* in having the source of motion in itself. In this regard, *phusis* is closer to praxis. Aristotle's differentiation of praxis from *poiesis* with respect to the locus of its end suggests that praxis replicates *phusis* in a way that *poiesis* does not. To be sure, all three—*praxis*, *phusis*, and *poiesis*—are purposive for Aristotle but the first two, unlike *poiesis*, are identified as having their sources and ends within.

We should note however that Aristotle does not observe these distinctions strictly throughout his work. He occasionally lumps together praxis proper and *poiesis*/*techne* under the broader category of intelligent human action in contrast to *phusis*. These passages especially occur in contexts when he wants to stress the goal-directedness of nature contra the Pre-Socratic philosophers who rather portray nature in terms of chance and necessity. To that purpose, Aristotle seems to drop the subtle distinction

between praxis and *poiesis* in terms of where their ends are located. A relevant passage in this regard in which the above quote is also located is *Ph.* II.8-9. Arguing against Empedocles in this passage, Aristotle concludes that "in the way that one performs an action, so also are things by nature, and as things are by nature, so does one perform each action unless something interferes. But one acts for the sake of something, and therefore what is by nature is for the sake of something" (*Ph.* 199a10-11). After saying this, as an example of human action, Aristotle mentions the construction of a house, which clearly falls into the category of *techne/poiesis*. The reason for this occasional lapse must be sought in the irrelevance of the internal/external distinction (between the ends of praxis and *poiesis*) to Aristotle's purposes in this context.[22] Hence, this is a generic or broader sense of *praxis* in relation to *phusis*.

Yet, there are further difficulties in Aristotle's usage of praxis even when we consider it in the limited sense of ethical and political actions. There are at least two ways Aristotle uses praxis in this limited sense. Although he himself never says so explicitly, we can infer from his discussions that one of these uses is paradigmatic and primary for Aristotle, and the other is derivative of the former. Aristotle gives us a hint of paradigmatic actions in *Meta.* Θ 6. In this passage, praxis is distinguished from *kinesis*: "that movement [*kinesis*] in which the end [*telos*] is present is an action" (1048b22-23). Hence, praxis is subsumed under the more general category of *kinesis*. There are complete and incomplete motions. Certain forms of movement such as "making thin, learning, walking, building" are incomplete at any instant in the process of their coming

[22] Although Aristotle frequently compares *techne* with *phusis* and vice versa, his analogy is meant to emphasize the intelligibility underlying both nature and human action in a broader sense. See Herbert Granger, "Aristotle on the Analogy between Action and Nature," *The Classical Quarterly* 43.1 (1993): 168-76.

into being during which their end is not realized yet. These activities have to be brought to a terminus to attain their goals.

Hence, all sorts of *poiesis* are incomplete motions for they do not possess the kind of internal ends that we see in the case of praxis. Productive processes are incomplete (*atelēs*), which is to say, they aim at a yet-to-be-realized product or result (1048b28-33). As examples of paradigmatic action, Aristotle mentions cognitive or psychic activities such as seeing, understanding, thinking, living well, and being happy.[23] For all these actions, the activity is indivisible and complete at any instant. They do not have to come to a halt in order to accomplish something: "at the same time we are seeing and have seen, are understanding and have understood, are thinking and have thought . . . we are living well and have lived well, and are happy and have been happy" (1048b23-27). The work of all these things—eye, mind, soul—is nothing more than their own activity. Nothing further issues from them. They have their effect immanently and simultaneously with their activity.[24]

But what about ethical and political actions? Which category do they belong to? Aristotle frequently refers to ethical and political actions as praxis in both *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*. On several occasions, Aristotle points out that for an action to be virtuous, it has to be chosen for its own sake: "And those activities are chosen for their

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[23] Cf. Ronald Polansky, "*Energeia* in Aristotle's Metaphysic IX," in *Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy V: Aristotle's Ontology*, ed. Anthony Preus and John P. Anton (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1992), 211-25. Polansky notes that Aristotle's examples all pertain to the psychical activities of living things (pp. 216-17).

[24] The fact that we would hardly call Aristotle's paradigmatic activities such as seeing and thinking "action" today should not count against Aristotle's account of human action. For we, like Aristotle's contemporaries, tend to think of action in terms of its *concrete* effects. Even back then effective *erga* (deeds) were contrasted with *logoi* (words) in common usage. Aristotle is not unaware of this; yet, he believes it to be mistaken: "the active way of life is not necessarily being in relation to others, as some suppose, nor those thoughts alone as being active which arise from activity for the sake of what results, but rather much more those that are complete for the sake of themselves, and the sorts of study and ways of thinking that are for their own sake" (*Pol.* 1325b15-20). This statement is one of the earliest expression in the history of political philosophy that asserts the primacy of *vita contemplativa* over *vita activa* which has retained its influence on intelligent minds until modernity.

own sake from which nothing is sought beyond the being-at-work; and actions in accord with virtue seem to be of this sort, performing actions that are beautiful and serious is something chosen for its own sake" (*NE* 1176b6-8).[25] However, in the latter parts of both *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, we witness a puzzling shift in Aristotle's argument—relatively more pronounced in *NE* 10.7-8 but is not absent from *Pol.* 1325a15-31. Towards the end of each text, after spending so much time with noble or beautiful (*kalos*) actions chosen for their own sake, which we today label as "moral," Aristotle asserts somewhat unexpectedly the superiority of contemplation to ethical and political actions and the instrumentality of the latter to the former in view of the ultimate end, namely happiness. Aristotle's this move has generated much debate among contemporary scholars. Its implications are often interpreted as contradicting the notion of modern morality and politics as autonomous spheres.[26]

It is important to note that the puzzle can be partially resolved if we take into account the fact that Aristotle has two limited senses for *praxis* one of which is derivative of the other and he switches back and forth between them without warning us. Aristotle scholars have noted Aristotle's use of praxis in two senses but my interpretation differs from them. Heinaman tries to sever the link between the two limited senses of praxis whereas I suggest that they remain related. Heinaman errs, I believe, when he says that Aristotle could not be saying that "contemplation is a *praxis*" because Aristotle makes this very assertion in *Politics* VII.3: "Happiness is a sort of action" (1325a31) and "is to

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[25] See also Arendt, 153-59, 206-07; and Joseph Dunne, *Back to the Rough Ground: 'Phronesis' and 'Techne' in Modern Philosophy and Aristotle* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), 262-74.

[26] For commentary on this point, see, for instance, the articles by Thomas Nagel, J. L. Ackrill, and John McDowell on *eudaimonia* in *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*, ed. Amélie O. Rorty (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980). Some scholars have attempted to reconcile these two seemingly conflicting tendencies in Aristotle. See, for instance, Amélie O. Rorty, "The Place of Contemplation in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*" from the same collection.

be regarded as acting well" (1325b13) and if "acting well is the end, so it [*theōrias kai dianoēsis*] too is a certain action [*praxis*]" (1325b21).[27] O'Connor, on the other hand, explains Aristotle's referring to *eudaimonia* and *theoria* as praxis through Aristotle's political purposes. According to him, Aristotle's assimilation of activity to action is rhetorical as he is trying to mediate "the conflict between the 'hyperactivist' partisan of politics and the 'quietist' partisan of philosophy."[28] However, O'Connor ignores the fact that Aristotle uses this analogy even in his non-political writings.[29] I am more in agreement with Ronald Polansky's explanation. Polansky avers that the indivisibility and completeness of paradigmatic actions apply to the derivative actions as well: "Since our choice and action presuppose the cognition of the form of what is to be done, there is indivisibility and completeness as with cognitive *energeiai*."[30]

Ethical and political actions are derivative of paradigmatic actions on the one hand and resemble productive actions on the other. Although they have—unlike *poiesis*—their sources within, their ends still partially lie outside them. Although virtuous actions are done for their own sake, we are still moved to those actions because of external conditions that we find ourselves in. In a sense, we are obliged to choose those ends as ends. Both derivative actions and productive activities—natural and technical—are types of coming-into-being. Unlike paradigmatic actions, such as seeing and thinking, these are not complete nor self-sufficient. Understanding of this point is central to make

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[27] Robert Heinaman, "Activity and *Praxis* in Aristotle," in *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy*, Vol. XII, ed. John J. Cleary and William C. Wians (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1996), 98.

[28] David K. O'Connor, "The Ambition of Aristotle's Audience and the Activist Ideal of Happiness," in *Action and Contemplation*, eds. Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins (New York: SUNY Press, 1999), 124.

[29] See *Ph.* II.6 and *Meta.* Θ 6.

[30] Comment on Robert Heinaman in *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy*, Vol. XII, ed. John J. Cleary and William C. Wians (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1996), 219-21.

sense of Aristotle's purpose in both works, which is ultimately to show that derivative actions—ethical and political ones—will always be one step short of the self-sufficiency or completeness of paradigmatic actions that they naturally strive after. This may not be happy news for us as happiness is one of these paradigmatic actions but, unlike us, Aristotle does not underestimate the difficulty of living a truly fulfilling life.

Two important conclusions can be drawn from Aristotle's distinction between *phronesis/praxis* and *techne/poiesis*. First, whereas the former pair conveniently comes under the rule of instrumental logic, even the derivative type of *praxis* does not fully abide by this logic. This is because they are more in tune with paradigmatic actions. Their coming-into-being aims to partake in the *energeia* of paradigmatic actions. Conflating *praxis* with *poiesis* may result in ethical and social confusion such as seeing others as mere means to our ends. Now, Aristotle did not explicitly pose the Kantian categorical imperative of humanity in this way. He does not actually think that human beings can be considered as ends except on one occasion (i.e., *Ph.* 194a33-6). The talk about treating others as "ends in themselves" would be a category mistake for Aristotle. Yet, his account of human action discourages instrumental behavior toward others by suggesting that there is a social relationship of nobility in addition to that of necessity or use. To be sure, some degree of instrumental behavior is inevitable as most of our superficial daily interactions with other human beings are necessarily tinged with instrumentality. In our hectic lives, we seldom have the time or will to move beyond it. But we would make a major mistake, Aristotle would say, if we think that we would be living a truly human life without ever acting according to the non-instrumental logic of praxis: "life is action, not production" (*Pol.* 1254a6-7); "life is a certain kind of being-at-work [*energeia*]" (*NE* 1175a11). The true

pleasure that we humanly strive after can only result from praxis rather than instrumental interactions.

Aristotle registers this point when he compares three ideal-types of friendship in *NE* VIII and *EE* VII, which are distinguished teleologically according to what one seeks in a friend: utility, pleasure, or virtue. To sum up Aristotle's rich discussion on this issue, as every sensible person would concur, only the friendship based on virtue must qualify as genuine friendship. The major feature of this type of friendship is its consistency, completeness, and continuity. Short of physical separation or death, there is hardly any reason for the cessation of this type of friendship. The one based on utility, on the other hand, falls farthest away from it as friends of such kind can easily get sour on their relationships if they realize that they are not profiting from it as much as they once used to. The friendship of pleasure has an element of each of the other two. It resembles true friendship in being motivated by pleasure that comes from an immanent *energeia* as opposed to the satisfaction dependent on an external product of utility (*NE* VIII.4).[31]

The second important lesson of *poiesis*/praxis difference is that praxis in its immanent mode shares something in common with the natural activity of living beings.[32] As J. A. Stewart notes, it is "the relation of *phusis*, rather than that of *technē*, to the Good" which Aristotle examines in *NE*:

> Human life at its best is no mere device, or means, adopted by man for the sake of something beyond itself and better. The *eudaimōn lives*, and there is nothing better than his life. His nature is a *logos*, or organism, *orthos*, balanced in all its

[31] What is most interesting about Aristotle's typology of friendship is that we tend to confuse today "morality" with what Aristotle takes to be genuine friendship. The realm of ethical action for Aristotle is much more qualitatively nuanced than our contemporary understanding of morality. I shall return to this in the next chapter.

[32] Now, Aristotle compares *techne* to *phusis* in a positive manner much more frequently than he does with praxis (see, for instance, *GA* I.22, *PA* 639b15-, *Ph.* 199a10-199b34). By doing so, he does not however erase their differences. He is clear on the major difference between them which is the fact that *phusis* has an internal whereas *poiesis* an external origin and end.

> parts, and containing like the nature of a tree, its own *archē* and *telos* within itself—freely initiating functions, in the performance of which it treats itself 'always as an end and never merely as a means.'[33]

Praxis can be characterized as *entelecheia* (having-itself-in-its-end) peculiar to human beings. Indeed, Aristotle throughout the *Nicomachean Ethics* characterizes (paradigmatic) praxis as *energeia* (being-at-work), which, as we saw in the previous chapter, is a very close equivalent of *entelecheia*. Praxis is not something that animals are capable of—although animals too have their own *entelecheia*—since sense-perception (*aisthēsis*) on its own is not adequate to engage in it (*NE* 1139a19-20). It rather requires *phronesis*, which is discernment that is acquired from long hands-on experience concerning deed (*prakton*), and belongs to those capable of deliberating about "the sort of things that are conducive to living well as a whole" as opposed to a part of it such as health or strength (*NE* 1140a25-30). Aristotle's well-known sayings "man is a political animal" and "the city is by nature" must be interpreted in the light of this continuity between *phusis* and praxis. Man extends his *entelecheia* or *energeia* beyond the level of perception, which other higher-level animals as well possess, into a realm that is necessitated by the human possibility of choice. Now I turn to a more detailed discussion of the psychological elements of Aristotle's account of praxis.

4.2 The Psychological Underpinnings of Praxis

In this section, I shall address the meaning of "ethics" and "politics" for Aristotle and suggest that there is a psychological dimension to them that have lately attracted many contemporary scholars. Two initial clarifications are in order before we begin. Since Aristotle's treatment of ethics has not gone unchallenged after him, there

[33] John A. Stewart, *Notes on the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle*, Vol. I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892), 4; all the Greek words that occur in the passage have been transliterated.

have come to be in the history of philosophy several models of ethics—grouped according to the name of the schools of thought they belong to (e.g., Stoicism, utilitarianism), or their founders (e.g., Epicureanism, Kantianism), or their central concerns (e.g., consequentialist, deontological). As a result of this proliferation, Aristotle's account has become one among others, which, today, is often classified as eudaimonistic or virtue ethics because of the centrality of these notions to Aristotle's discussion. Furthermore, Aristotle's version of virtue ethics is one among many. There have been since then competing or complementary versions of virtue ethic—ancient and modern. The fact that there are different approaches does not, however, mean that their subject matter is different. They all attempt to give an account of the same thing, namely, what we mean by "morality." In one way or another, they all address questions like what it means to be "moral" or "ethical" and why it is important. In this section, I shall attempt to outline Aristotle's take on these questions.

In his ethical works *Eudemian Ethics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle situates "the ethical" (*ēthikos*) within the context of human aspiration for good life. This aspiration was commonly identified by ancient Greeks as living well (*eu zēn*) and doing well (*eu prattein*).[34] This is how Aristotle also defines *eudaimonia*—often translated as "happiness" or alternatively as "flourishing."[35] He observes that there must be something sweet even in mere living that makes human beings desire it so long as life does not become too

[34] Although these two works of Aristotle cover almost the same ground, scholars have noted certain differences between them in terms of detail or emphasis. I will make use of both of these texts insofar as they can illuminate one another. I do not, however, intend to get into the contemporary scholarly debate over the question of which of these works represent Aristotle's mature work and definitive statement on ethics. Suffice it to say that the scholarly consensus leans toward *NE* but the British scholar Anthony Kenny has lately questioned this consensus; see his *The Aristotelian Ethics: A Study of the Relationship Between the Eudemian and Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978); and *Aristotle on the Perfect Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

[35] Although "happiness" may not be an exact equivalent, I shall follow the common usage here.

painful for them (*Pol.* 1278b25-30). Yet, mere living is never enough for human beings except under dire circumstances. Aristotle point this "extra" spice of life by repeatedly qualifying the activity of living (*zen*) and doing (*prattein*) with various normative adjectives like *kalos* (beautiful, fine, or noble), *agathos* (good), *eu* (well), or *eudaimon* (happy).[36] As Woodbridge puts it, ethics for Aristotle is "the knowledge of that practice which mediates the passage from living to living well."[37]

Happiness is not an unsurprising point of departure in a treatise on praxis—although it is for Kantianism as Kant takes "duty" rather than "natural inclination" as the proper focus of morality—since this is how most ordinary and wise people would characterize human aspirations. In this way, we are not obliged to begin our inquiry into "ethics" by postulating a transcendental nowhere as Kant does to save morality from the incursion of empiricist science. We are natural beings born into political groups with more or less similar desires and expectations. Hence, our beginning must not be estranged from such commonplace dynamics of everyday life.[38] Aristotle's dialectical method always begins with the reputable opinions (*endoxa*) of his time period and proceeds with successive phases of the refinement of these opinions. At the beginning of his treatise *Topics* (100a30-100b23), Aristotle describes his dialectical method as follows:

> reasoning . . . is 'dialectical', if it reasons from opinions that are generally accepted [*endoxa*] . . . . Those opinions are 'generally accepted' which are accepted by every one or by the majority or by the philosophers—i.e. by all, or by the majority, or by the most notable and illustrious of them.

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[36] For the occurrence of these adjectives, see, for instance, *Pol.* 1252b30, 1256b32, 1278b22, 1323b1, 1323b31-32; *NE* 1095a19, 1098b22-4.

[37] Frederick J. E. Woodbridge, *Aristotle's Vision of Nature*, ed. John H. Randall, Jr. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 95.

[38] As Stephen G. Salkever notes, this difference from Aristotelian ethics applies not only to Kantian deontology but also to Benthamite/Millian utilitarianism: "the assertion of a special and autonomous moral point of view, a perspective quite different from the world in which we ordinarily live, one which defines a separate and autonomous moral sphere governed by special moral motives" (p. 116).

Aristotle often pays respect to even the common opinions of ordinary people, as he believes that we learn things concerning *praxis* by deriving the universals from our experience of particulars: "one ought to pay attention to the undemonstrated statements and opinions of people who are experienced or old . . . for by having an eye sharpened by experience, they see rightly" (*NE* 1143b10-14). For the same reason, Aristotle says, the inexperienced young (in heart or in age) are not good in the actions of life with which ethics and politics are concerned (*NE* 1095a1-11, 1142a13-19).

In *NE* I.4, Aristotle says that the common opinions of his time—refined or not—are all agreed in singling out happiness as the most desirable good that *praxis* can aim at. The agreement stops there however. Regarding what this most desirable good consists of or how it is attained, there are numerous conflicting versions. Even the same person can—knowingly or not—commit to different accounts of happiness in different periods of her life or even within the same time frame. Yet, leaving aside their minor differences, most answers—and we should add that this must hold not only for Aristotle's time but all times and places that human beings have lived together—can be categorized into three ideal-types: pleasure, wealth, and honor.[39] In *NE* I.5, Aristotle quickly knocks out wealth and honor in their claims for holding the key to happiness. Wealth is ruled out because money-making is clearly an instrumental activity for something else such as pleasure and prestige.

[39] Spinoza, for about two millennia after Aristotle, would make the same observation: "For most things which present themselves in life, and which, to judge from their actions, men think to be the highest good, may be reduced to these three; wealth, honor, and sensual pleasure." See *A Spinoza Reader*, ed. Edwin Curley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 3. In case "honor" may sound to our ears archaic—from a bygone age of chivalry—we should only reconsider what we possibly mean today by terms such as "prestige," "status," or "recognition." Needless to say, apart from technical nuances among them, they refer more or less to the same social good of one's "standing" or "reputation" relative to others in a shared community.

What about honor and pleasure? First, Aristotle notes that honor and pleasure—compared to wealth—can more justifiably be viewed as ends. Aristotle initially has nothing but harsh words for pleasure-seekers. It is a slavish lifestyle that "belongs to fatted cattle." Yet, Aristotle revisits the question of pleasure in *Nicomachean Ethics* on several occasions but most importantly in VII.11-14 and X.1-5. I shall revisit this important discussion of pleasure below. Regarding honor, Aristotle remarks that among more refined people the pursuit of honor is believed to be the ultimate rewarding experience. Yet, Aristotle disagrees with them because the fact that even honor-seekers prefer to be honored by those who are better in virtue and wisdom betrays otherwise. Based on their actions, Aristotle points out, they themselves implicitly accept that there is still something higher than honor, namely, virtue. The cue Aristotle takes from the social recognition of honor as an end is *aretē* (virtue or excellence). From this point on, Aristotle leads us into an extensive discussion of what virtue is, what sorts of virtue there are, and their relative rank-ordering.

Aristotle provides us with an "aretaic" definition of happiness. Happiness is the "*energeia* of the soul in accordance with *arete*" (*NE* 1098a17-18). How does Aristotle settle for this definition? This is the task of *NE* I.7. After mentioning that happiness is admitted to be the highest good of *praxis* by almost everyone, Aristotle gets more specific about the nature of this good. So he introduces his well-known natural "function" argument.[40] This is an inquiry into the distinctive "work [*ergon*] of a human being" that sets human beings apart from other natural beings (*NE* 1097b25). After noting that plants are distinguished by nutrition, growth, and animals by their faculty of

[40] When it is translated as "function," as it is usually done, the term *ergon* loses its connection with Aristotle's central concept of *energeia*. It is important to keep this connection in mind when we try to understand Aristotle's conception of ethics.

sense-perception, Aristotle asks, "Is a human being by nature idle [*argon pephuken*]?" (*NE* 1097b30).[41] He then goes on to suggest that only the activity of *logos* can properly distinguish human beings from other natural beings.[42] *Logos* is typically translated as "language" or "reason," but we should not forget that its etymological root is that of *legein* (to speak). As Aristotle points out, *logos* serves a disclosive role in human affairs: "speech [*logos*] serves to reveal the advantageous and the harmful, and hence also the just and the unjust" (*Pol.* 1253a14-15).

Immediately after bringing up *logos*, Aristotle subtly moves our attention to *energeia*. *Logos* is certainly important but the point of human distinction is not the possession of *logos* but rather its active use (*NE* 1098a7-8; see also 1098a30-1099a6). It is at this point that Aristotle introduces *energeia* and *arete* into his definition of happiness. The distinctive human way of life is the *energeia* of *logos* in the most excellent way. To be serious about virtue, we need to know what exactly we are trying to perform well. As we have said formerly, our goal is the practice of *logos*. But how do we enact *logos*? In two ways, Aristotle says: character (*ēthos*) and thinking (*dianoia*). Their respective virtues are named *ethike aretē* (virtues of character) and *dianoētike* (intellectual virtues). Human beings, according to Aristotle, necessarily need both types of the active states of soul to bring their nature to its naturally possible completion or perfection, which is happiness.

Happiness for Aristotle is not a matter of feeling elated now and then. It is rather a natural end that preoccupies human beings in the course of their lives. Happiness is not something we can bring about like virtues. It is a paradigmatic action which is not

[41] Although Aristotle repeatedly provides examples, in this passage on the distinctive work of human beings, from different types of *techne* (e.g., carpentry, tannery, music) to highlight the ubiquity of *ergon*, the way he formulates his question and answers it hints at nature as the fundamental framework of defining human beings.

[42] There is no need to settle for any of these meanings, for *logos* implies all of them, and it is important to have them all in view.

subject to choice because it is an end, and ends are not chosen or deliberated but wished according to Aristotle (*NE* 111a20-30). We rather deliberate and choose things that tend toward the ends that come into our horizon: "no one chooses to be in health, but to walk or to sit for the purpose of keeping well; no one chooses to be happy but to make money or run risks for the purpose of being happy" (*EE* 1226a8-11; see also *NE* 1112b10-20).

This wording—for the purpose or for the sake of—may suggest that Aristotle offers us an instrumental view of happiness contradicting what I have said about the non-instrumental logic of *praxis*. According to this objection, Aristotle is telling us that we set our sights on whatever means conduce to our ends. As long as our ends are good, are the means we employ are justified as Machiavelli says? Is Aristotle Machiavellian in this respect? In a way, yes. Perhaps, we should say Machiavelli is half-Aristotelian, but half of certain things are no good. Indeed, Aristotle and Machiavelli share the same view that ends justify the means. Machiavelli departs from Aristotle, however, by abandoning idea of standards outside the realm of politics. Unlike Machiavelli, Aristotle does not consider political rule as the ultimate standard of human action. In Aristotle's view, political rule—as a derivative *praxis*—must be subject to the still higher end of *eudaimonia*—the paradigmatic *praxis*. This is true both individually and collectively. In this regard, Aristotle's criticism of the Spartan regime for its exclusive attention to martial virtues can be applied equally to Machiavelli (see *Pol.* VII.14-15).

Another reason why Aristotle is not a Machiavellian when it comes to happiness is that, as several commentators of Aristotle have noted, there are two ways of reading Aristotle's words *heneka* and *charin* ("for the sake of"): "(A) the relation *x* bears to *telos y* when *x* will bring about *y*, and (B) the relation *x* bears to *y* when the existence of *x* will

itself help to constitute *y*."[43] The first of these relations is instrumental or productive and the latter constitutive. While the former can be much more viable in technical contexts, the latter is the only possible way to work toward happiness. So when Aristotle says in his ethical works that happiness is the end of all (derivative) human actions, this is an immanent end and the relationship of happiness to virtues must be understood as an immanent rather than an external one.

Derivative types of *praxis* originate from the peculiarly human capacity to choose among alternative ways of acting (*NE* 1139a32). By choice (*prohairesis*), Aristotle does not mean 'freedom" or "free will." These terms, as we understand them as innate capacities of human beings, are alien to Aristotle. Choice is not an inborn capacity of willing but is rather developed over the course of human life through active exercise of deliberation and desire guided by virtue. Aristotle defines choice as "deliberate desire [*orexis bouleutikē*] of things that are up to us" (*NE* 1113a11-12). Choice is made possible by our unique capacity of *logos* and animate characteristic of desire (*orexis*). Animals too are desiring but they can barely choose one course of action over another because they lack the language to deliberate. Of course, choice is not always present even for human beings. There is luck as well as necessity which, in determining human life, co-exist with choice. We may also desire things which do not lie within our reach—which is a wish—but we only deliberate about things which we can influence. Aristotle's conception of ethics rests on these two legs: desire and deliberation.

[43] David Wiggins, "Deliberation and Practical Reason," in *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*, ed. Amélie O. Rorty (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980), 224.

Both virtues of mind and character fall into the class of what Aristotle calls *hexis* (active condition).[44] Aristotle makes it clear in *NE* II.1 that we are not born with virtues as with our senses. They are not acquired from nature, but they are not contrary to nature either: "the virtues come to be present neither by nature nor contrary to nature, but in us who are of such a nature to take them on, and to be brought to completion by means of habit" (1103a24-25). The reason they cannot be contrary to nature is that virtues deal with pleasures and pains, which are somatic processes (*NE* II.3). Virtues of character are abiding qualities of soul analogous to the somatic conditions of health (*Met.* 1022b12-3). They are similarly affected by excess and deficiency (*NE* 1104a11-20). The purpose of virtues is twofold: refinement of the sources of pleasure and increasing the endurance capacity against pains. For this reason, "the whole concern both of virtue and politics is about pleasures and pains" (*NE* 1105a10-12).

Virtues determine how we comport ourselves towards sources of pleasures and pains, which may be feelings such as fear or anger, or actions such as handling wealth (*NE* II.5). Virtues are established in the soul gradually through practice as *logos* balances emotions and actions according to their specific circumstances. To develop any kind of *hexis*, one should actively seek and participate in social contexts where they are most likely practiced. Battlefield, politics, household, and friendship are considered by

[44] Here we have another case of inadequate translation at our hands. *Hexis* is often rendered as "habit" or "disposition." I find both of them, following Joe Sachs, inadequate to capture Aristotle's meaning; see Joe Sachs, "Introduction," in Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Joe Sachs (Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing, 2002), xi-xvii. Aristotle uses *hexis* (from the verb *echein*—to hold, to have) to signify an "abiding" or "enduring" condition in the soul (see *Cat.* I.8). Although its Latin precursor *habitus* (from the verb *habeo*) once fulfilled this meaning, the contemporary use of "habit" now implies "a doing unconsciously and often impulsively" (see Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary). This is far from Aristotle's explanation for *hexis* as an informed and abiding condition. The word "disposition" is similarly misleading as there is a different term corresponding to it, namely *diathesis*, which Aristotle reserves for more volatile conditions than *hexis* (see *Cat.* 8b25-9a9). As Sachs notes, *hexis* for Aristotle imply "activity." Hence, "active condition" would be a less literal but more accurate translation.

Aristotle as real life venues to provide for the growth of active conditions.[45] I shall argue in Chapters 5 and 6 that civic environmentalism practiced in the household or public arena likewise offers similar occasions to practice and develop virtue. In particular, environmentalists' efforts to change wasteful habits of individual consumption and economic production allow for the much needed opportunities for practicing the ethical virtues of moderation, prudence, and justice.

For Aristotle, the meaning of ethics can be summed up as desires and pleasures rightly understood. He also surmises that "the active condition [*hexis*] belonging to most people" falls in between unrestraint and self-restraint (with respect to pleasures) and softness and endurance (with respect to pains), but most are closer to the worse side, that is, unrestraint and softness (*NE* 1150a15-16). These four dispositions of human soul (unrestraint, self-restraint, softness, and endurance)—discussed extensively in *NE* VII—concern the same things that the virtue of temperance and the vice of dissipation are concerned with, i.e., bodily desires and discomforts stemming from the sensual senses of touch and taste. The possibility of *akrasia* (unrestraint but also commonly translated as "weakness of will" or "incontinence" in the scholarly literature), and self-restraint for that matter, is a significant departure of Aristotle from the Socratic/Platonic view which equates virtue with knowledge (*NE* VII.2-3).

According to the Socratic view, one who acts contrary to what is best acts out of ignorance without knowing the "good." On this view, it is not possible to draw a distinction between unrestrained and vicious behavior as all such behavior is spun by lack of knowledge, that is, ignorance of the good. According to Aristotle, on the other hand, the ignorance in these matters can in some case pertain only to the particulars of a

[45] See *Pol.* 1334a25-26, *Eth. Nic.* 1169b28-1170a12, 1177b6-7.

given situation but does not have to have an effect on the individual's opinion of the good and bad on a general level. So, on Aristotle's view, a shameful act done knowingly does not have to qualify as a vice if the ignorance pertains to the particulars and if the person in question believes in a universal counsel against it. The individual may nonetheless be acting contrary to the counsel because he may err in his practical judgment of the particular case for either not seeing it as a subset of the universal rule or being in a state of passion like rage. Hence, one may know on a general level a certain course of action is bad but does it nonetheless because of failure of judgment or weakness of will (*akrasia*). Aristotle's difference from the Socratic/Platonic view in this regard is related to his giving greater latitude to the world of empirical reality and the intellectual faculty that corresponds to it, i.e., *phronesis*. More importantly, Aristotle's teaching can have a moderating effect on moralistic posturing or zealotry that we are all susceptible to from time to time. In Christian terms, we tend to focus on the saw-dust in others' eyes before or without being concerned with the plank in our own eyes.

The challenge of being human is basically to gain a right perspective on desires and pleasures, and living happily within it. A distinctive aspect of Aristotle's approach to praxis is the prominent role he assigns to *psychē* (soul) in its explanation. A serious student of politics, according to Aristotle, has to familiarize himself with "the things that concern the soul" (*NE* 1102a15-25). Without such understanding, neither can one discriminate the good from the bad nor lead others in action. The fact that the term "soul" carries today an archaic, religious connotation should not deter us from using the concept that the term itself is referring to. For we still frequently resort to substitute terms such as "self" or "psychology" when we feel the need to refer to the motivational source of human behavior.

Aristotle takes *psyche* as the principle (*archè*) of life. This means that for living beings the form (*eidos*) of their bodies is the *psyche*. In his famous characterization, Aristotle remarks that "suppose that the eye were an animal, sight would have been its soul" (*De An.* 412b19-20). Only through reference to their *psyche*, can we understand the attributes of living beings such as knowing, perception, desiring, and motion. Desiring (*orexis*) is one of the elements of *psyche*, and, according to Aristotle, is the most fundamental one possessed by all living beings capable of even the simplest sense-perception (*De An.* 402a6, 414b16).[46] For human *psyche*, however, there is also the presence of thinking, which makes us a compound being with diverging tendencies (*to suntheton*). So human beings are characterized by Aristotle as "either intellect fused with desire [*orektikos nous*] or desire fused with thinking [*dianoētikē orexis*]" (*NE* 1139b3-5). In either case, mind on its own is not the source of *praxis* (*De An.* III.9). Although mind (*nous*) itself is not susceptible to natural changes of body—since it is basically incorporeal according to Aristotle—the power of thinking is, as it can slip away under the bodily influence of drunkenness, sickness, or old age (*De An.* 408b18-32).[47]

Aristotle bridges over the natural realm and the human realm without reducing one to the other through his attention to *psyche*. It is in this respect that he differs from the prevalent conceptions of ethics and politics in the modern era which purport to be autonomous of nature. The desiring nature of human beings shared by other animals is critical to Aristotle's conception of *praxis*. It would not be inaccurate to say that when

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[46] *Orexis*, Aristotle's general term for "desire," has three kinds: appetite (*epithumia*), passion or spiritedness (*thumos*), and wish (*boulēsis*) (*De An.* 414b2).

[47] Aristotle's discussion of *nous*—also translated as "intellect"—has puzzled commentators. It is an unanswered question whether Aristotle believes *nous* is separable from body or not. Some of his assertions characterize *nous* as *energeia* (being-at-work) of *eidos* (form): *nous* is "separable, impassible, unmixed, since it is in its essential nature [*ousia*] activity [*energeia*]" (*De An.* 2430a17-18). Aristotle's account of *nous* is beyond the scope of this inquiry, but one thing is sure; Aristotle did not equate the totality of soul with mind.

Aristotle reckons with the affective and desiderative dimension of human soul and draws out the ethical implications of the specific human emotions such as anger, envy, fear, or affection, as well as, desiring in general, he is dealing, at least partially, with the natural basis of human beings. Not completely though because for us desires are also implicated with the question of meaning.

We cannot accomplish anything without the factor of desiring, but desiring is blind without the deliberative function of *logos*. The guidance of *logos* is needed as there is always the possibility of error in our sense-perceptions. Erring is affecting things that we have not intended to. Just as we sometimes say things that we do not mean, we can similarly do things we do not mean to. Hence, one can err in *praxis* when one's knowledge and desires stand in dissonance (*De An.* 433b5-10). The truth of *praxis* is established or attained when *logos* and *orexis* coincide. Aristotle calls this happy conjunction "truth that stands in agreement with right desire" (*NE* 1139a20-30). Desires become meaningful when they are defined, that is to say, when they are limited by and directed to proper ends through practical reasoning. If desiring is not limited and ordered, conflicting desires due to the compound nature of human beings can easily impede the search for order and meaning.

Desires can be rendered meaningful only if they are right. The crucial question is when or how we can know whether we have the right desires. Where do we get our bearings from in this regard? What is the criterion of the "rightness" of desires? To this question, Aristotle has two answers both of which will sound arbitrary and inadequate if we expect too much epistemic or technical certainty from *praxis*.[48] The first is that we get our desire right when we steer a middle ground according to right reason (*orthos logos*)

[48] The following discussion partially follows Leo R. Ward, "Aristotle on Criteria of Moral Good," *The Review of Politics* 30.4 (1968): 476-98.

between two possible extreme conditions of soul in relation to actions and feelings. Good character arises from the ordering and habituation of emotions as practical reason tries to make proper choices to hit the right proportion (*NE* II.6). This is his well-known doctrine that virtue is a mean between two vices in relation to an actions and emotions (*NE* 1109a20-30). [49] By actions—i.e., *praxis* in the limited derivative sense—Aristotle means things like acquisition and use of property. By feelings, he means a number of things that originates in our souls and affects us as well as others in our vicinity some of which are lust, fear, envy, anger, spite, and hostility. Although we derive these inclinations from nature, they are modified by each society in a certain way. Still, it can safely be said that they are more or less common to all humankind.

Aristotle calls the balanced or mediated position of soul in relation to actions and emotions *mesotēs* or *meson*, both of which are most commonly translated as "the mean," or alternatively as "the middle," or "the midpoint." The word "mean" has unfortunate secondary meanings or connotations as dull, average, mediocre, or even contemptible, which are quite unfitting to convey Aristotle's meaning in contemporary English. The alternative renderings as "the middle" or "the midpoint" are better but they may also be misleading with their connotations of mathematical precision which overlook the experimental and dynamic nature of virtue. The most reasonable way to approach the meaning of *mesotēs* or *meson* is through the analogy of health that Aristotle often employs throughout his writings. Seen in light of this analogue, it could mean a "balanced condition" or "dynamic equilibrium" of opposing forces or constituents that act upon a

[49] The doctrine of mean was already implicit in the Greek literature and everyday life as it is attested in the proverbial sayings of the time such as *mēden agan* (nothing in excess) and *metron ariston* (moderation is the best thing) as well as in the Pythagorean philosophy and the Hippocratic corpus; see Eliza G. Wilkins, "Mēden Agan in Greek and Latin Literature," *Classical Philology* 21.2 (1926): 132-48; and Whitney J. Oates, "The Doctrine of the Mean," *The Philosophical Review* 45.4 (1936): 382-98.

compound being.[50] This meaning is more explicit in a second set of related terminology that Aristotle occasionally uses: *metriotēs*, *metrion*, and *metron*. All three words similarly mean the "middle condition" but they also carry the helpful secondary meanings or connotations of due measure, proportion, limit, and moderation that are absent from *mesotēs* or *meson*. Seeking proportion in virtue means seeking mental and emotional steadiness away from extremities in our lives. The extremes are unlimited (*aperas*), hence bad: "for what is bad belongs to what is unlimited, as the Pythagoreans conjectured, and what is good belongs among what is limited" (*NE* 1106b29-30).[51]

Aristotle's second answer to the question of what is right in ethical matters builds on the former but admittedly appears to be circular. Aristotle raises this question again in *NE* VI.1. What is the right reason (*orthos logos*) according to which we determine the mean condition that befits us? And what does define the right reason?[52] These two questions lead Aristotle to the treatment of intellectual virtues with special attention to *phronesis* in the rest of the Book VI. But Aristotle refuses to consider *phronesis* as a disembodied faculty the way Kant postulates a pure practical reason. For Aristotle, there are individuals in flesh and blood who embody this faculty. Hence, he says that only an exemplary figure in ethical and political matters, whom he calls *spoudaios* (morally serious person) or *phronimos* (someone with practical wisdom), can show us the criterion of rightness. This person is someone to whom the most excellent way of life belongs to (*NE* 1098a14-5). In his *Poetics* (1448a2-5), *spoudaios* appears as one of the two human

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[50] Cf. Theodore J. Tracy, *Physiological Theory and the Doctrine of the Mean in Plato and Aristotle* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1969), 254.

[51] J.A. Stewart notes that Aristotle is following the Pythagoreans and Plato (*Philebus*) here (pp. 13-14).

[52] For the latter question, Aristotle uses the word *horos*, which is close to the meaning of *peras* (limit) and means "boundary," "standard," "criterion," or "definition" (*NE* 1138b33-34); see Sandra Peterson, "'Horos' (Limit) in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*," *Phronesis* 33 (1988): 233-50.

characters whose actions are represented in Greek tragedies.[53] It can be said that such a person, for Aristotle, is the avatar of the good as he alone is capable of seeing the true nature of things: "a thing is what it shows itself to be to a person of serious moral stature" (*NE* 1176a15-6; see also 1113a25-1113b1).[54]

But how do we recognize such people? Aristotle does not provide us with any clue as to how we should go about identifying this unique person in our own lives. The only name that he gives as an example of *phronimos* is the 5th century Athenian statesman Pericles who played a major role in the democratization of Athens as well as the devastative Peloponnesian War with Sparta (*NE* 1140b8).[55] Today, we may justifiably feel lost where to look for *spoudaios* because we no longer live in a tightly knit city-state nor in a time where the authority of our superiors is eagerly sought. Be that as it may, another textual clue can be found at the beginning of Aristotle's second extensive analysis of pleasure: "It belongs to one who engages in philosophic inquiry about politics to examine what concerns pleasure and pain, for he is the master craftsman of end to which we look when we speak of each thing as bad or good simply" (*NE* 1152b1-3). Although Aristotle does not use the word *spoudaios* here, he assigns the role of *spoudaios*—i.e., the criterion of goodness and badness—to the political philosopher.

Aristotle repeatedly mentions *spoudaios* as an exemplar to follow. How can we emulate the *spoudaios*? Again, Aristotle does not discuss anywhere in his writings so explicitly the sufficient conditions of becoming *spoudaios*, but he usefully points at its necessary condition which is practicing virtue within a political setting. Good life can

[53] The other is someone who is *phaulous* (base).

[54] In *Pol.* III.4, Aristotle uses the terms *agathos* (good) and *spoudaios* interchangeably.

[55] We should note that Socrates, in Plato's *Gorgias* (503c-519d), refuses to recognize Pericles as well as some other notable Greek statesmen, as a good citizen. The reason Socrates gives for his opinion is that the Athenians overall did not become better in terms of character during Pericles' leadership.

come within reach for human beings only within a political setting (*Pol.* 1252b27-1253a1, 1278b15-30, 1280a25-1281a11). We need virtue because virtue brings about the completion of human beings and we are not born self-sufficient:

> For just as man is the best of animals when completed, when separated from law and adjudication he is the worst of all. For injustice is harshest when it is furnished with arms; and man is born naturally possessing arms for [the use of] prudence and virtue which are nevertheless very susceptible being used for their opposites. This is why, without virtue, he is the most unholy and the most savage [of the animals], and the worst with regard to sex and food. (*Pol.* 1253a30-38)

What is of interest to us in the above quote is that human being [*anthrōpos*] is defined in terms of virtues to become completed. We are born with certain tendencies that can develop in differing ways. Just as we can be completed, we can also, under certain unfavorable circumstances, be arrested, stunted, or distracted in our development. Aristotle uses the verb *teleoō* (to make perfect, complete) in the above passage which is cognate with the word *telos*. *Telos* has several interrelated meanings. In this context, it basically means the end through which we can bring about the completion (i.e., fulfillment, perfection) of what we take to be the human form: "And excellence is a completion; for each thing is complete and every substance is complete, when in respect of the form of its proper excellence it lacks no part of its natural magnitude" (*Meta.* 1021b21-24).[56] Ethics is the practical cultivation of ends proper to live as a human being within a political setting. What is essential to the process of completion, according to Aristotle, is the awareness of the end or several auxiliary ends like prudence and virtue and their hierarchical relationships to one another. Something that attains its excellence shows itself in its natural state: "It is in things whose condition is according to nature

[56] See also *Ph.* 247a2.

that one ought particularly to investigate what is by nature, not in things that are defective" (*Pol.* 1254a35-38).[57]

It is in this sense that human beings are political animals according to Aristotle. Aristotle views every natural species as destined for the best possible condition of its capacities, and for human beings this can be achieved only within a political association. Hence, the end of political association cannot merely be a (Hobbesian) security alliance or a (Lockean) commercial compact (*Pol.* 1280a35-b11). The end of political association must be rather conceived as attaining the "good life."[58] Aristotle's account of the origin of political associations is twofold. He says that a political community forms from a necessary desire for survival but continues to exist because of another natural striving to reach the end of self-sufficiency (*Pol.* 1252b27-1253a1). The first step toward the formation of the city, the household, is brought about by the natural desires of reproduction and preservation. The former is a natural striving (*phutois phusikon*) of both sexes "to leave behind another that is like oneself" (1252a25-b1). But self-preservation is not enough for human beings. The goal is rather self-sufficiency (*autarkeia*). The principle of autarky within a political community is aimed at—and this is a limiting and ordering factor on both the individual and the political association—because human beings are driven to this goal by their natural desire for a good life in accordance with their form and, what is the same thing, nature (*kata phusin*). As attaining and living the

[57] See also *Ph.* 246a15.

[58] Aristotle certainly recognizes the essentially contested nature of what constitutes "good life," but he also thinks that this debate does not warrant total skepticism or denial of this end. Indeed, skepticism or denial in this regard is not even possible. The explicit denial of ends in liberalism only masks its implicit ends as the critics of liberalism since Marx have pointed it out. Whatever is esteemed publicly within a political association automatically turns into an end for that group of people. A political association that esteems wealth creation implicitly sets its end as material prosperity while the one that honors military action chooses courage as its ideal. These ideals or ends naturally become the standard of "good life" for the people who look and live up to them.

good life is impossible for individuals to accomplish on their own, they naturally form families and political groups. The underlying motive of state's origin, according to Aristotle, must be this natural inclination of sociability even if it might get obscured to some or most of its citizens over time after its foundation.

Although desire makes virtue possible, it can also be an impediment by distorting practical reason. Both aroused emotions and appetite can weaken our critical judgment, and make us susceptible to (self-)deception (*De Somniis* 460b9-11). Strong desires can impede sound reasoning, according to Aristotle, because desire is of indeterminate nature. There is no internal control mechanism. Aristotle thinks that desiring must be both limited and sublimated toward loving virtue. It can only be limited by being habituated to observe the right proportion in our emotions and external behavior. Unless practical reason rules over desires, desires are more likely to produce vices than virtue as it is difficult to hit the target in these respects (*NE* 1106b31-32). The whole ethical and political problem that human beings face, according to Aristotle, is the question of what to do with the desiring element in human nature within a political context. Aristotle considers these two domains of human action—ethics and politics—as closely related around the natural element of desiring. Ordering desires in the individual constitutes the domain of ethics and in the group the domain of politics.

The troublesome aspect of desires becomes especially acute in the realm of wealth acquisition. *Epithumia* (appetite) is Aristotle's term for the kind of desire oriented to the acquisition and possession of material objects as well as the satisfaction of bodily pleasures connected to the senses of touch and taste. When desires are channeled into and concentrated in this realm, people develop appetite for "what is productive of unlimited things" since appetite is naturally without limit (*Pol.* 1257b41).

> For the nature of appetite [*epithumia*] is without limit, and it is with a view to satisfying this that the many live. To rule such persons, then, [requires] not so much leveling property as providing that those who are respectable by nature [*epieikeis tē phusei*] will be the sort who have no wish to aggrandize themselves, while the mean [*phaulous*] will not be able to, which will be the case if they are kept inferior but are done no injustice. (*Pol.* 1267b4-10)

This very brief statement encapsulates Aristotle's view of the reciprocal relationship between ethics and politics. There are four kinds of people in Aristotle's ethico-political universe three of which are mentioned here: the decent (*epieikēs*), the base (*phaulos*), and the many (*hoi polloi*). The fourth group is the morally serious (*spoudaios*) mentioned earlier.

Decent people are the ones who are willing to look up to the morally serious as their guides. Such people can be misled, however, especially in the absence of favorable conditions. According to Plato, for instance, vigorous souls with philosophical tendencies can easily be lured into power games unless given proper training (*Republic* VI). The ambitious young people in pursuit of honor, among which we can count Alcibiades and Alexander from that period, are especially tempted by the prospect of wielding political power. The lure of power over other people is so irresistible that such people are not even troubled by transforming into a tyrant in the end. According to the joint perspective of Plato and Aristotle, the greatest injustices are committed as a result of this post-materialistic drive toward enjoying the pleasure of political power. As Aristotle points out, the feeling of power has an appeal which goes beyond securing the necessities of life: "no one becomes a tyrant in order to get in out of the cold" (*Pol.* 1267a13-4). But the distinguishing characteristics of a truly decent person is contrary to the tyrannical frame of mind. It requires forbearance and mildness of temper. Such a person is reluctant to exercise political power and is not "rigidly precise about justice to a fault, but is inclined to take less, even when he has the support of the law" (*NE*

1137b34-1138a2).[59] We call this person today "equitable"—someone who can rise above the strict rules of distributive or corrective justice especially when the issue at hand affects him personally.

As we have noted earlier, political associations grow initially from natural desiring of individual households, but they can survive if desires are ordered through practical reason. But people are of different sorts as there are disparate kinds of activities in the city that allow people to exercise their rational capacities in varying degrees. As the exercise of faculties—moral and intellectual—are essential to their development, "different things appear worthwhile to people of a low sort [*phaulois*] and to decent people [*epieikesin*]" (*NE* 1176b24). This variation in the capacity of reasoning demands political rule if the end of self-sufficiency is to be attained for the city, and marks Aristotle's transition from ethics based on choice to politics based on somewhat impersonal laws and necessary compulsion in *NE* X.9.

In the larger context of the above quote, Aristotle is questioning the soundness of economic reform policies proposed by a certain intellectual of the time, Phaleas of Chalcedon, who believed that leveling the inequalities in wealth between the rich and the poor would end the factional strife afflicting the Greek cities of the time. Aristotle's criticism of such egalitarian proposals is that they mistakenly assume that men are predisposed to criminal behavior—either as individuals or groups—solely on account of their lacking the basic necessities of life. "The greatest injustices are committed out of excess . . . not because of the necessary things" (1267a13-14) and "the wickedness of human beings is insatiable" (1267b1). As these utopian reformers overlook the ineradicable element of desiring rooted in human nature that extends beyond the basic

[59] The reluctance of exercising political power is a major theme of Plato's *Republic*, noticeable in the allegory of the cave (519d-520d).

necessities of life, they fail to factor into their proposals a hierarchy of goods that desiring points to. Aristotle's reflections on ethics and politics on the other hand attempt to reckon with this hierarchy of goods.

Aristotle is no categorical opponent of economic equality as he explicitly recognizes that "poverty produces factional conflict and crime," which are great dangers to the stability of political community (*Pol.* 1265b11).[60] He nonetheless considers putting exclusive focus on the material dimension of human life simplistic and counterproductive. All benevolent egalitarians would agree with Rousseau that "men are wicked . . . yet man is naturally good." [61] This view stems from a shallow understanding of human nature ignoring the power of desiring. The depravity of human behavior, according to this naïve outlook, is solely due to the unjust medium of the society that forcefully corrupts the original goodness of man and injustice is (primarily) a function of the institutional context. This has been the underlying premise of most progressive and left-wing agendas for political reform or revolution to modern day in every area of human life including the contemporary issue of the environment. It is this prevailing "left" outlook in environmental thinking that Aristotle can help us to reconsider.

Aristotle, on the other hand, argues that oppressive and exploitative behavior stems from desiring without limits which is not something determined definitively according to social class positions in terms of sex, ethnicity, or wealth. This is not to deny the fact that the content of such behavior might partially be affected by the

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[60] For Aristotle's discussion of factional conflict in his *Politics*, see Kostas Kalimtzis, *Aristotle on Political Enmity and Disease: An Inquiry into Stasis* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2000). This middle-of-the-road view was commonly accepted until modern times by most philosophers who tried to moderate the class conflict between the poor and the rich. Another crucial representative of this view who had a substantial influence on subsequent republican political thought with his emphasis on social harmony (*concordia*) was Cicero; see his *De Officiis* II.78-85.

[61] *Second Discourse*, Note IX.

accidental circumstances of one's social position. Aristotle does not deny that "the rich" or "the powerful" are especially tempted to commit injustice by claiming more than their share. To come back to the above quote, the chances of oppression especially increase, according to Aristotle, when the potentially noble-minded members of society are not educated to desire with limits, and the mean-spirited are allowed to rule or induced to revolt because of the offenses they are subjected to. Because the unethical behavior of oppression and exploitation is not merely an accident of class position, the revolutionaries have always confronted—before or after a given revolution—the dilemma of what to do with the type of men who are poor in means but oppressive in heart. It would be foolish to overlook, as the "left" perspective tends to, the element of desiring among the materially unprivileged simply because these are not actively wreaking havoc in society. In Aristotle's view, portraying the ethical and political problem simply in terms of the actively powerful oppressing the actively powerless is nothing but a distortion of human reality. For the unprivileged might one day come to power and do no less in terms of injustice as many tyrants of humble origins in history have shown disturbingly.

Aristotle's ethical insight is that "the poor" as well as "the rich" can be afflicted by similar psychic maladies that typically induce injustice beyond the understandable limits of all men to provide for themselves and their families:

> Nor do human beings commit injustice only because of the necessary things—for which Phaleas considers equality of property a remedy, so that no one will steal through being cold or hungry; they also do it for enjoyment and the satisfaction of desire. For if they have a desire beyond the necessary things, they will commit injustice in order to cure it—and not only for this reason, for they might desire merely the enjoyment that comes with pleasures unaccompanied by pains.[62]

[62] *Pol.* 1267a2-8.

Leaving aside the crimes committed under the compulsion of survival, this passage mentions two other motivations for unethical behavior: "enjoyment and the satisfaction of desire," and "the enjoyment that comes with pleasures unaccompanied by pains." These two sound very similar and yet they are different. The remedies Aristotle proposes for these maladies gives us a clue as to their difference. The remedy that Aristotle proposes for the first kind is moderation (*sōphrosynē*). For the other who enjoys fortune, abundance, and leisure the cure is philosophy (1267a9-12):

> the enjoyment of prosperity [*eutuchia*], and leisure accompanied by peace, is more apt to make people overbearing [*hubristēs*]. A great deal of justice [*dikaiosunē*] and a great deal of temperance [*sōphrosunē*] is therefore required in those who appear to be faring exceptionally well and enjoying all that is generally accounted to be happiness, like those, if there are any, who dwell in 'the happy isles' of which poets sing; and the greater the leisure which these people enjoy, when they are set among an abundance of blessings, the greater too will be their need of wisdom [*philosophia*], as well as of temperance and justice. (*Pol.* 1334a25-34)

In *NE* (1153a1-3) too, Aristotle speaks of "pleasures that are without pain or desire, such as those of contemplating, that belong to a nature which is not deficient." The role of pleasure is very important to understand Aristotle's psychological approach to ethics and politics. True pleasure stems from *energeia* and brings it to completion (*NE* X.4). He sees pleasure as central in driving all animate beings into an active state. In the case of human beings, given the fact that instincts are substituted by intelligent reflection the pursuit of pleasure can exceed the limits of what is naturally healthy. Animals in the wild are ordered to their ends through their instincts. For human beings, the task of ordering is delegated to thinking. But thinking often has the effect of frustrating bodily pleasure through repression or deferring. How can human beings be brought to the recognition of ends if the means to do this is antithetical to the natural impulse to pleasure? The only feasible way out of this dilemma is to find sources of pleasure other than touch and taste.

According to Aristotle and many other major figures in world history, there are such sources of pleasure. What is primarily pleasurable, according to Aristotle, is actually the enduring condition of the body rather than its being restored to this condition (*NE* VII.14). Health rather than the recovery of health is the true source of pleasure. Textual support for this interpretation can be found in *NE* VII.12 and X.4. In these crucial passages, Aristotle first examines the philosophical views on pleasure and then offers his own account of pleasure as an alternative. As an aside, Aristotle's discussion of pleasure represents his typical procedure that is previously mentioned: the dialectical refinement of common opinions. He begins with observing a similarity between "seeing" and "pleasure":

> the activity of seeing seems to be complete over any time whatever. For there is nothing it lacks which would complete its form by coming about at a later time; pleasure is like something of this sort. For it is something whole, and there is no time at which one could take a pleasure, the form of which would become complete after it went on for a longer time. Hence pleasure is not a motion, since every motion is in time and directed at some end, as housebuilding is, and is complete when it brings about that at which it aims—that is, in the whole of the time, or at that time. But all the motions that are in parts of the time are incomplete, and are different in form from the whole and from one another . . . . but the form of a pleasure is complete in any time whatever.[63]

Aristotle certainly subordinates ethical virtues to intellectual ones, but this should not suggest that his understanding of ethics devalues morality. We can draw two conclusions from this hierarchy. First, ethical virtues alone do not guarantee ultimate happiness but provides only glimpses of it. Contemplation comes closer to attain it, yet, one cannot even dream about happiness if ethico-political life were not to exist in the first place. Second, ethical virtues depend on certain forms of thinking in order to come about: *phronesis*, and two other types—*sunesis* (astuteness) and *gnōmē* (thoughtfulness)—that Aristotle mentions in *NE* VI.10-11. Unlike deontology, no foolish person can be

[63] *NE* 1174a14-1174b6.

consistently moral according to Aristotle. They certainly can appear to act with virtue (i.e., morally) but fall short of being virtuous. An act of virtue or a moral act is different from being virtuous or moral as the latter demands a considerable period of time for the proper development of *hexis* through *energeia*.

The ethical and political problem all human societies face, as Aristotle sees it, is what to do with the human reality of desiring within a political community. As we have noted before, according to Aristotle's four-fold division of human temperaments there are four kinds of human beings. The most common (*hoi polloi*) can be satisfied by a "minimum of property and work." But those respectable by nature (*epieikeis tē phusei*) must become truly decent and the base (*phaulous*) must not be given an opportunity to gain the upper hand in society. The task of educating the respectable belongs to the public but the exemplary role of the serious members of society (*spoudaioi*) must not be forgotten. This is a difficult task, and given the numerous structural factors that are involved there is no one recipe for success. Yet, the prerequisite to the possibility of success, as Aristotle sees it, is the proper education of those "respectable by nature" so that they will not be tempted by *pleonexia* (claiming more than one's due).

Chapter 5: Virtue and Nature

This chapter introduces "environmental virtue ethics" as a new subfield of environmental ethics literature, and responds to the internal critique that "environmental virtue ethics" is not an adequate "environmental" ethic. Although "environmental virtue ethics" is far from being perfect—as my friendly critique will make clear shortly—the stress on "virtue" is promising in its potential to re-orient contemporary environmentalism toward a political (as opposed to a technocratic) direction. I have briefly discussed in Chapter 2 that "environmentalism" can be viewed, at the ideational level at least, as a revival of certain perennial sensibilities (such as harmony and limits) overshadowed in modernity. I shall pursue this line of thought here and in the following chapters by further pointing out that the stress on "virtue" alerts us to the "conservative" and "political" dimension of contemporary environmentalism which stems from its uneasy relationship with "modernity." My argument defends the political significance of the concept of "virtue" for its drawing salutary attention to this neglected but essential aspect of environmentalism. It is through "virtue" that we can bring out the true conservative and political character of non-technocratic environmentalism.[1]

This argument takes issue with the position popular among certain environmental scholars who have found the theoretical orientation of environmental virtue ethics inadequate to meet the practical challenge of nature protection. This inadequacy stems from the conformity of environmental virtue ethics to traditional

[1] The phrase "non-technocratic environmentalism" refers to all sorts of "environmentalists" who believe that technical solutions or "fixes" to the so-called "environmental problems" are subordinate to ethical, political, philosophical, or spiritual responses that need to be taken. By "technocratic," I mean something close to "managerial" or "command" as in "command economy" both of which ignore or dismiss the inescapable and irreducible "human condition of plurality" which Hannah Arendt considers as the primary characteristic of "all political life" in *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), 7-8. Arendt owes this insight to Aristotle who opens his *Politics* with a statement on the essential plurality that characterizes human life.

ethics of the West. Since the early 1970s, environmental theory scholars have been arguing that we urgently need a "new" environmental ethic that can guide and restrain our precarious relationship with nature. This plea often comes along with the wholesale criticism of pre-existing morality in the Western tradition—both classical and Christian—either for letting us down in this task or for contributing directly to environmental problems, particularly because of its anthropocentric bias. Although the current literature contains a whole array of—somewhat diverging—positions on what this "new" ethic might be, most of them find the default anthropocentric attitude of human beings, practices, and institutions toward non-human beings as morally wrong.[2] Central to their non-anthropocentric critique is the classic philosophical distinction between instrumental means and intrinsic ends, or, in other words, between what is good for something else and what is good in itself. Instead of using the term "good" however, the literature has picked up the term "value." A recent study in environmental ethics presents the questions central to the environmental ethics literature of the last few decades as follows:

> Ethics of nature is an inquiry into the value of nature: Is nature's value only instrumental value for human beings . . . or does nature also have intrinsic value . . .? Can traditional anthropocentrism be defended or must we move to a new, physiocentric moral position?[3]

One long-standing position in environmental ethics arguing for a *new* non-anthropocentric ethic centers on the "intrinsic value in nature" argument—the idea that

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[2] For a schematic overview of various positions in contemporary environmental ethics literature, see Angelika Krebs, *Ethics of Nature* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999); and J. Baird Callicott, "Non-Anthropocentric Value Theory and Environmental Ethics," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 21 (1984): 299-309. We should note that there are also "anthropocentric" and/or "anthropogenic" arguments within environmental ethics literature which defend the protection of nature in the name of basic human needs or higher aspirations such as concern for future generations or aesthetic appreciation. However, these arguments are questionable from a non-anthropocentric point of view for advancing "prudential" as opposed to "moral" reasons in defense of nature.

[3] Krebs, 1; italics removed.

non-human natural beings (individual animals, plants, species, or ecosystems) possess an intrinsic value irrespective of their usefulness to the needs and wants of present or future generations.[4] The recent emergence of "environmental virtue ethics" on the environmental ethics scene is perceived as an unnecessary distraction from this "radical" or "revolutionary" position. Holmes Rolston III, a major proponent of a new ethic of "intrinsic value," flatly warns us that we would be ill-advised to pursue *virtues* at the expense of *values* in environmental ethics. "Environmental virtue ethics," according to Rolston, if "taken for the whole, is a misplaced ethic, a displaced ethic."[5] Rolston sees the emphasis on "virtue" to be a distraction from (intrinsic) "value" arguments in environmental ethics. His concern is that if human beings do not recognize the "intrinsic value" of non-human beings, our efforts to protect wilderness or endangered species would have no moral force or legitimacy. Curiously, Rolston deems it "unexcellent—cheap and philistine—to say that excellence of human character is what we are after when we preserve these endangered species."[6] What are we after then? Rolston would probably say that the task of a proper environmental ethic is the recognition of the "autonomous intrinsic value" in nature irrespective of its usefulness to human purposes.

Similar opinions have been expressed by other liberal environmental scholars. According to one environmental scholar, "the prospects of a virtue-based environmental ethic seem dim." The main reason is that the discourse of virtues and vices toward

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[4] The proponents of the "intrinsic value in nature" argument such as Holmes Rolston III, J. Baird Callicott, and Robert Elliott hold different versions of this argument. Their differences basically revolve around the question whether "values" are objectively residing in nature or subjectively created by human beings.

[5] Holmes Rolston III, "Environmental Virtue Ethics: Half the Truth but Dangerous as a Whole," in *Environmental Virtue Ethics*, eds. Philip Cafaro and Ronald Sandler (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 70.

[6] Ibid.

nature presupposes but does not explicitly acknowledge the fact that "nature in itself is of intrinsic value."[7] Another scholar, James Sterba, sees the prospects a little bit better for "Aristotelian environmental ethics" but nonetheless finds it inadequate on its own: it "needs to be supplemented by certain liberal, Kantian or biocentric-inspired constraints and arguments if it is to be morally defensible."[8] Sterba's worry is that the prohibition or prevention of certain morally reprehensible behavior or policies that can endanger "nature" cannot be effectively achieved in the public sphere simply by relying on virtue. What is rather needed is some kind of unwavering public commitment to the inviolable "value" of non-human beings. Leaving aside Rolston's narrow conception of environmentalism, limiting it to species extinction, his position that the recognition of "intrinsic value" in nature is more fundamental than nurturing virtue for environmental purposes is problematic. This problem, I shall argue, stems from the residual Kantian elements in his position which has turned the axis of moral philosophy from *virtue* to *value* in the last two centuries. To the extent this shift is accomplished, environmental "politics" remains within the orbit of a managerial or technocratic approach.[9]

Much of what goes on in environmental ethics literature in relation to the notion of "value," presented as the ground of a "new" environmental ethic, can be rather viewed as the rehashing of old debates in the history of philosophy. The notion of "virtue," in contrast, has no claim for novelty for it explicitly continues the tradition of ethics (not only of the West but of the non-Western world as well, if only we can look

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[7] Robert Elliot, "Normative Ethics," in *A Companion to Environmental Philosophy*, ed. Dale Jamieson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 190.

[8] See James P. Sterba, "A Morally Defensible Aristotelian Environmental Ethics," *Philosophy in the Contemporary World* 8.2 (2001): 64.

[9] Such an approach is not bad *per se*, for it is inevitable given the state of complexity that modernity has brought about in all spheres of human life, and yet it is not without its own problems. Willful ignorance or negligence of these problems can undermine the very goodwill of people who turn to it.

beyond the linguistic and other surface-level cultural differences).[10] I will specifically argue that the invention of "value" in modern moral philosophy is due to the modern scientific worldview that drains nature of meaning, and the "values-talk"—the roots of which can be traced back to the neo-Kantian theory of values in the 19th century—actually perpetuates this very worldview when trying to counter it by re-injecting meaning into nature through the notion of "intrinsic value." The language of "values" must be seen as part of the alleged separation of facts and values in modern philosophy. For this reason, we cannot reasonably expect that it can bridge the gap between humanity and nature which environmentalism at a philosophical level is trying to accomplish. Hence, the notion of "values" would be a poor and wrong-headed substitute for "virtues" both in (environmental) theory and in (environmental) practice.

What follows is first a brief discussion of the history of the filed of environmental ethics, particularly its claim to break with the pre-existing conceptions of ethics. The second section introduces the new subfield of environmental virtue ethics briefly, and discusses the political weakness that it inherits from the rest of the environmental ethics literature. In the third section, I will present an objection made against environmental virtue ethics by Holmes Rolston III. The final section is a response to his objection and discusses what, I believe, is wrong with the use of the terminology of "value" or "values" when we discuss issues of morality in general or environmental ethics in particular.

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[10] See, for instance, Roy W. Perrett and John Patterson, "Virtue Ethics and Maori Ethics," *Philosophy East & West* 41.2 (1991): 185-202; Donald N. Blakeley, "Neo-Confucian Cosmology, Virtue Ethics, and Environmental Philosophy," *Philosophy in the Contemporary World* 8.2 (2001): 37-49; and Yon Huang, "Cheng Brothers' Neo-Confucian Virtue Ethics: The Identity of Virtue and Nature," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 30.3 & 4 (2003): 451-67.

5.1 A New Environmental Ethic?

> The fact that daily and even hourly we move within and encounter half-truths, lies, and even worse things (indeed at times we seem to encounter nothing else) is well known, too well known to be used as an occasion for proclaiming to our contemporaries *a new philosophy.*[11]

The above quote from an unpublished early work of Heidegger cautions us against attempting to set up a new philosophy just because we feel dissatisfied with the way world appears to us. This may sound too conservative to some. After all, innovation is inevitable for human survival and perhaps even for the sake of mere pleasure to avoid ennui. Be that as it may, it is something most applicable in the field of technology, natural science, jurisprudence, as well as fine arts and literature. Einstein's theory of relativity, for instance, is novel compared to the Newtonian physics and the latter with respect to the Aristotelian physics. But how plausible is innovation in moral and political philosophy? There can certainly be different approaches to the same questions or ideas. But philosophical arguments on praxis cannot be considered as constituting a self-contained theory. The calls for "new philosophy" or "new ethic" often make the mistake that they will be superior to the older versions by virtue of their historical novelty.

The infatuation with "novelty" in praxis and the presumption that one can construct or discover a *new* "theory" or "philosophy" is peculiarly modern and stems from confounding the activity of theorizing or philosophizing with its content. There is an intimate relationship between "radicalism" and "innovation." As conservative author Russell Kirk notes, "the radical . . . is a neoterist, in love with change."[12] We do not see this interest among the ancients although they too disagreed with one another and were

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[11] Martin Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001), 124, italics mine.

[12] Russell Kirk, *The Conservative Mind* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing Inc., [1953], 1985), 10.

dissatisfied with the actuality of ethics and politics.[13] Aristotle's ideas differed from Plato in certain respects (e.g., *eidos* and *phronesis*) but Aristotle did not claim to have a different philosophy or theory than Plato. One might even say that the Epicureans and the Stoics differed from the earlier schools—the Academics and the Peripatetics—and we can duly assign each philosophical school a distinct "philosophy." But the word "philosophy" is used here metaphorically to mean "account" or "explanation." What differs among these schools are the competing accounts for the same thing or question such as "justice." Today, when someone offers a new theory of justice it is more often than not assumed that it is to be implemented to change the world based on the assumption that there is a radical gap between the theory and the practice of justice.

This distinction may sound pedantic but it basically relates to the most fundamental philosophical question, namely, the relationship between theory and practice. To see theory or philosophy as a category separate from everyday praxis reinforces the impression that philosophy is a non-activity, and this leads to the false view that the philosophical way of life is parasitic or unmanly.[14] Philosophy for the ancients is primarily an activity or a way of life which is better thought of as a verb, "philosophizing." One cannot have a philosophy or construct one but only engage in it. Certain modern political philosophers and contemporary political scientists, in contrast, have approached "theory" or "philosophy" like a construction project. An example to this hubristic language from environmental theory literature is the following assertion: "Aristotle's framework does not supply sufficient tools for the construction of . . . an

[13] See, for instance, Aristotle's strictures against some of the reigning practices of his time such as the mistreatment of females as slaves, the despotic treatment of slaves on the assumption that they are irrational, the political regimes which glorify domination, and the practice of private education (*Pol.* 1252b5-10, 1260a5-8, 1324b2-1325a5, 1333b5-1334a10, 1337a21-31). For his critique of Plato in matters of ethics and politics, see *Pol.* II.1-6 and *NE* I.6.

[14] See Callicles' attack on Socrates in Plato's *Gorgias* (484c-486c) and Aristotle *Pol.* VII.3.

adequate environmental theory of action."[15] The problem here is not that Aristotle's "framework" is found inadequate; it is rather the false promise of "constructing an adequate theory" in its place. This language popular in the academia is deeply flawed as it reifies what is essentially an activity. The academic who sees his task as theory construction forgets, in Heidegger's terminology, his or her being-in-the-world.

A corollary of this presumption in environmental theory is forgetfulness of the relationship to the pre-existing intellectual tradition.[16] This modern temptation of innovation has been at work in environmental ethics since its inception in the early seventies.[17] As one critic of this trend observes, "one general view" in environmental ethics "is that ecology and the awareness of nature . . . necessitate the development of a fundamentally new ethic, a new, non-human-centered, nature-centered morality."[18] The environmental ethics literature in its first decade debated the question of whether there is a need for a new environmental ethic in response to environmental problems. What we need, according to one exponent of this view, is "a new metaphysics, epistemology, cosmology, and environmental ethics of the person/planet."[19] Such calls have subsided since then but the "newness" or the alleged difference of the true "ecological" or "environmental" thinking from the "traditional" or "mainstream" line can still be

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[15] See Toshio Kuwako, "The Possibility of Environmental Discourse in Aristotle," in *Philosophy and Ecology*, Vol. I, eds. Konstantine Boudouris and Kostas Kalimtzis (Athens: Ionia Publications, 1999), 113.

[16] See Andrew Brennan, "Philosophy," in *Environmental Thought*, eds., Edward Page and John Proops (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2003), 16.

[17] On this characterization of the early period of environmental ethics, see Ben A. Minteer, *The Landscape of Reform: Civic Pragmatism and Environmental Thought in America* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 190-1.

[18] H. J. McCloskey, *Ecological Ethics and Politics* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield, 1983), 29, 52-61.

[19] Bill Devall, "The Deep Ecology Movement," *Natural Resources Journal* 20.1 (1980): 299.

detected as a subtext even in more recent environmental publications. Environmental ethics, according to one account,

> moves ethics for the first time from a personal and interpersonal context to a physical and global one. With that move a new unprecedented player, the physical world, appears on the ethical stage. The physical world itself takes on ethical significance and plays a moral role.[20]

Environmental ethics, according to Hart, "is a discipline with few precedents and less history."[21] I will hereafter provide a brief background of this view in environmental literature to prepare the groundwork for my discussion of environmental virtue ethics in the next section.

The first major influence on the proponents of a new ethic is Aldo Leopold's "land ethic" which Leopold discusses in an essay with the same title in his widely read book *A Sand County Almanac*.[22] Leopold explains his aim in this book as bringing out the ecological and cultural value of land and to influence "a shift of values" so that "land is to be loved and respected." The term "land" is used by Leopold in reference to both the biotic and abiotic natural environment—"soils, waters, plants, and animals."[23] An appreciation and conservation of land requires, according to Leopold, an extension of traditional ethics since this goal is incompatible with the "Abrahamic concept of land" which treats "land as a commodity" of human beings.[24] This plea for expanding our moral circle or family to include non-human beings is not as far-fetched as it may first

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[20] Richard E. Hart, ed., *Ethics and the Environment* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1992), 6, 8-9.

[21] Ibid., 10.

[22] Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac, and Sketches Here and There* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949), 201-26.

[23] Ibid., 204.

[24] Ibid., viii.

sound, on Leopold's view, if only we would consider how the boundaries of our current moral community have expanded through history to include previously outcast social groups. This historicist belief in "moral progress" is implicit in Aldo Leopold's proposal for re-appraising our relationship to the natural environment:

> The first ethics dealt with the relation between individuals; the Mosaic Decalogue is an example. Later accretions dealt with the relation between the individual and society. The Golden Rule tries to integrate the individual to society; democracy to integrate social organization to the individual. There is as yet no ethic dealing with man's relation to land and to the animals and plants which grow upon it. Land, like Odysseus' slave-girls, is still property. *The land-relation is still strictly economic, entailing privileges but not obligations. The extension of ethics to this third element in human environment is, if I read the evidence correctly, an evolutionary possibility and an ecological necessity. It is the third step in a sequence.* . . . I regard the present conservation movement as the embryo of such an affirmation.[25]

Despite his objections to the modern creed of "salvation by machinery," Leopold upholds here the quintessential Enlightenment view of "moral progress," that is, morality improves through history.[26]

A second major influence on the advocacy of a "new environmental ethic" was a highly influential and widely circulated essay by an American historian, Lynn White, Jr. titled "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis." Published in the prestigious *Science* journal in 1967, White's article argues that the modern technological conquest of nature has been sanctioned and even sanctified by the anthropocentric creation dogma of Judeo-Christianity, and points the finger at the Western European strand of Christianity (as opposed to the Eastern Christianity which, according to White, is more contemplation-oriented) for providing the intellectual and religious basis for today's

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[25] Ibid., 223-24, italics mine.

[26] For Leopold's phrase "salvation by machinery" by which he means the modern view that the good life can be attained by "the distribution of more machine-made commodities to more people," see *The River of the Mother of God and Other Essays*, eds. Susan L. Flader and J. Baird Callicott (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 188.

impending "ecological crisis."[27] According to White, the immediate cause for the "ecological crisis" is modern science and technology. But modern science and technology itself derives its assertive attitude toward nature from "the Christian dogma of man's transcendence of, and rightful mastery over, nature."[28] Removing the pre-Christian animist inhibitions to the exploitation of nature, mainstream Christianity has established a rigid man/nature dualism and, by doing so, has given free rein to the mastery of nature first in the West and later wherever modernization has taken hold in other parts of the world. Expressing his skepticism over using more or better science and technology to resolve these issues, White instead entertains the options of creating "a new religion" or re-thinking the old one.

Ruling out the "viability" of foreign beliefs and practices such as Zen Buddhism, White concluded his article with a paean to the medieval Christian saint Francis of Assisi for his exemplary ecological teaching of humility toward creation. By proposing St. Francis as a patron saint of ecologists—which was fulfilled by Pope John Paul II in 1979—White evidently preferred the second route, that is, of re-thinking the Western tradition, but his blanket incrimination of Judeo-Christian dogma due to its fundamental axiom that "nature has no reason for existence save to serve man" has stuck in the minds of most people. It has reinforced the widespread impression and suspicion among the anti-systemic radicals (from which the Greens emerged during the seventies) that the Western tradition is corrupt from its beginnings and the Western world should turn to non-Western traditions instead of trying to reform itself from within. "This was ironic,

[27] See Lynn White, Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science* 155 (1967): 1203-7.

[28] Ibid., 1206.

for White thought there were currents in the Christian tradition that could provide solid ground for environmental ethics."[29]

After Lynn White, a major push for a "new environmental ethic" came from an Australian scholar, Richard Sylvan (formerly Routley), who, in a brief but influential essay, rhetorically asked if there is "a need for a new, an environmental ethic" and answered in the affirmative: "as the important Western traditions exclude an environmental ethic, it would appear that such an ethic . . . would be new all right."[30] Although Sylvan doesn't make it quite clear in his essay what this new ethic entails, he faults the Western traditions of Greco-Roman and Biblical origins for their bias toward the human species, namely, their "species chauvinism." Sylvan begins his essay with a review of Leopold's call for a new land ethic. As I have briefly mentioned above, the prevailing ethics, according to Leopold, is insufficient to order our interaction with the natural world. Hence, he called for "extension of ethics" to cover these relationships. Sylvan agrees with Leopold's diagnosis but disagrees with his timid solution: "If Leopold is right in his criticism of prevailing conduct what is required is a change in the ethics, in attitudes, values and evaluations." Hence, Sylvan argues for a more "radical" position to overcome what he calls the "human chauvinism" of Western morality.

Despite his radical rhetoric, Sylvan does not say more than that we need to respect non-human species. His argument relies on a hypothetical "last man" scenario in which a single human survivor of a global catastrophe would have done an obvious wrong on "environmental grounds," if he deliberately destroyed the surviving non-

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[29] Bron R. Taylor, Introduction to *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Bron R. Taylor et al. (London: Thoemmes Continuum, 2005), xv.

[30] Richard Routley, "Is there a need for a new, an environmental ethic?" *Proceedings of the 15th World Congress of Philosophy*, Vol. 1 (Varna: Sophia Press, 1973), 205-10. Although first published by an obscure press, this article has been reprinted in several anthologies on environmental ethics since then.

human species. By this hypothetical example, Sylvan claimed to have demonstrated that our intuitions imply that we deep inside care for the well-being of non-human species on non-anthropocentric grounds. Hence, a true environmental ethic must not appeal to anthropocentric reasoning. Sylvan's reasoning not only turns out to be question-begging but more importantly historicist, which can be seen in the reason he provides for the wrong-doing of the Last Man. As he claims, "Mr. Last Man" would be "behaving badly" because "*radical thinking and values* have shifted in an environmental direction in advance of corresponding shifts in the formulation of fundamental evaluative principles." That is to say our theoretical formulation of what morality demands has to catch up with this historical shift in *radical thinking and values*.[31] This view presupposes the Hegelian view of reality that theory can only catch up with praxis only after "the falling of dusk." It falls short of explaining of course why theory is needed if praxis is already there.

A fourth proponent of a new environmental ethic, the German scholar Hans Jonas, is an outsider to the Anglo-American circle of environmental ethics to which the previous figures belong. In an article on technology, originally written in 1973, Jonas defends on historicist grounds the need to conceive a "new ethic," which has to justify "man's duties toward himself, his distant posterity, and the plenitude of terrestrial life under his dominion."[32] Historicism, as I have discussed in Chapter 2, is a modern way of understanding human reality. But Jonas' "new ethic" has also an explicit metaphysical

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[31] Sylvan's reasoning begs the question because he has to justify this very "radical shift" rather than base his justification on it.

[32] "Technology and Responsibility: Reflections on the New Tasks of Ethics," *Social Research* 40.1 (1973): 31-54. This essay was later incorporated into the first chapter of Hans Jonas' book *The Imperative of Responsibility: In Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age*, trans. Hans Jonas with David Herr (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, [1979] 1984). The following references are to this book. See also Jacques Ellul, "The Search for Ethics in a Technicist Society," trans. Dominique Gillot and Carl Mitcham, *Research Philosophy and Technology*, theme issue on "Ethics and Technology," vol. 9 (Greenwich, Con: JAI Press, 1989), 23-36.

dimension. It is purported to be an ontological ethics, based on "a doctrine of general being," that is, metaphysics. Jonas aims to re-unite metaphysics with ethics, and derive the "objective imperatives for man in the scheme of things." This project has to overcome the Humean problem by bridging "the alleged chasm between scientifically ascertainable 'is' and morally binding 'ought.'" [33] In other words, the "good" or "value" needs to be grounded in being.[34]

Putting it thus, we may think that Jonas is harking back to the pre-modern idea of teleology whose major spokesperson was Aristotle. He indeed does appeal to Aristotle to a certain extent.[35] But it would be difficult to identify Jonas' "new ethic" as neo-Aristotelian, for Jonas believes that "all previous ethics" including Aristotle's is ineffective in view of "modern technology," which unleashes on earth an unprecedented magnitude of power with unforeseeable consequences. Jonas is rather trying to reach a new synthesis that contain elements from both pre-modern and modern philosophy. His synthesis certainly goes against the grain of modern science in its attempt to recover "metaphysical teleology" from pre-moderns but the modern element in his synthesis, the historicity of being, is much more essential for his "new ethic." I will skip over for now the "metaphysical teleology" part and briefly discuss what makes the historicist view so important for his purposes.[36]

Jonas brings to our attention the growing gap between the exponential increase of technological power at our disposal and our collective capacity of foresight into the

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[33] Jonas, x.

[34] Ibid., 79.

[35] For Jonas' attempt to ground ethics in teleology and ontology, see Jonas, 51-78; and Hans Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life: Toward a Philosophical Biology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966).

[36] In section 5.5 below, I will return to the "metaphysical" aspect of Jonas' position.

possible effects of this power. This *de facto* discrepancy in modernity between an increasing magnitude of power and a shortening range of human foresight, Jonas believes, calls for a new ethic of responsibility and foresight: "Our thesis is that the new kinds and dimensions of action require a commensurate ethic of foresight and responsibility which is as novel as the eventualities [that arise out of the works of *homo faber* in the era of technology] which it must meet."[37] According to Jonas, the concept of "responsibility" has largely been ignored in traditional ethical theory—both modern and pre-modern or religious and secular—because of these obsolete premises: "that the human condition, determined by the nature of man and the nature of things, was given once for all; that the human good on that basis was readily determinable; and that the range of human action and therefore responsibility was narrowly circumscribed."[38]

All three premises point to one single truth: the triumph of *homo faber* over *homo sapiens*. The aforementioned premises are no longer tenable in our technological age because "the nature of human action" has changed with "the realm of making [i.e., technology]" invading the space of human action.[39] This statement, which has an Arendtian ring to it, reflects a deeply historicist view of reality despite the occurrence of the word "nature" in it. An indication of this is Jonas' repeated use of the phrase "human condition" in place of "human nature." The choice of word reveals Jonas' understanding of being in terms of "historicity," that human beings can no longer claim to have a definite nature but only an evolving history increasingly shaped by *techne*. With our increasing use of and reliance on technology, we have "opened up a whole new

[37] Jonas, *The Imperative*, 18.

[38] Ibid., 1.

[39] Ibid, 1, 9.

dimension of ethical relevance for which there is no precedent in the standards and canons of traditional ethics."[40] Jonas is not a champion of the Baconian dynamism wrought by modern technology, but believes that it will last for an indefinite period of time with increasing influence on the human condition. For this reason, its effects cannot be left out of "ethics." Traditional ethics cannot help us with its emphasis on virtue because it took for granted that the category of "man" is "constant in essence and not itself an object of reshaping *techne*."[41] An unchanging "human nature" can no longer be spoken of in our age, the defining feature of which is "the law of perpetually self-generating change"[42] or, put differently, "the idea of potentially infinite progress."[43]

Jonas' analysis of the modern condition is quite insightful but his "new" theory of responsibility reflects the inescapable circular reasoning on which all proponents of "new ethics" must rely. For the recognition of a new dimension of being as ethically relevant has to presuppose what constitutes "ethical relevance" under traditional ethics. One cannot radically stand outside the received categories of thinking inherited from the past. Indeed, Jonas' "ethics of responsibility" is merely a historicized version of the Kantian categorical imperative. Jonas' neo-Kantian take on "ethics" is evident in the title of his work. Not only that, Jonas explicitly brings up the Kantian "categorical imperative" throughout his work on several occasions. Some of these references are meant to distinguish the forward-looking dimension of his approach from Kant's but it is clear form his emphasis on "categorical imperative" that Jonas sees "ethics" through Kantian lenses.

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[40] Jonas, *The Imperative*, 9.

[41] Ibid., 4, italics original.

[42] Ibid., 124. For more extensive discussion of this point, see ibid., 123-8.

[43] Jonas, *The Phenomenon*, 207.

The Kantian conception of categorical imperative is modified in two respects. First, it need only to be reconsidered in light of the fact that in the technological age the lasting imprint of human action will be carried into "the indefinite future."[44] Our new "duty" is hence future-oriented; it is to assure that "man's presence in the world" is not imperiled, that is, "to preserve this physical world in such a state that the conditions for that presence remain intact."[45] This time-horizon aspect of categorical imperative differs from Kant on two points. Jonas believes that "Kant's categorical imperative" is outdated because it "was addressed to the individual, and its criterion was instantaneous." The new imperative, on the other hand, "addresses itself to public policy rather than private conduct" and "adds a *time* horizon to the moral calculus which is entirely absent from the instantaneous operation of the Kantian imperative."[46]

Jonas thinks that correcting Kant on these two points can justify his "new ethic." But he does not tamper with the most distinguishing features of the Kantian conception of "morality": "duty" or "imperative" and its universalistic scope. Jonas' falling back on previous conceptions of morality indicates that the "new ethic" that he is seeking cannot be all that new after all.[47] In a critical section of the book, Jonas distinguishes the substantive sense of responsibility from a formal sense of responsibility (pp. 90-93). The latter is simply "being accountable 'for' one's deeds, whatever they are" (i.e., the

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[44] Jonas, *The Imperative*, 10-2. Hans Jonas, in an interview, reveals that Kant's *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* (*Foundation of Metaphysics of Morals*) had a "determining influence" on him in his fixation with the idea of "a philosophical ethics," moderated only by his later introduction to Aristotle. See Harvey Scodel, "An Interview with Professor Hans Jonas," *Social Research* 70.2 (2003): 339-68.

[45] Jonas, *The Imperative*, 10.

[46] Ibid., 12, italics original.

[47] Jonas' reliance on traditional ethics is also clear from his statement that "ethics is concerned with action"—an incomplete reference to Aristotle who delimits the scope of the "ethical" as "feelings and actions" (*NE* 1106b16). Leaving out natural "feelings" from among the objects of ethics follows from Jonas' privileging of the transient historical "human condition" over permanent trans-historical "human nature."

presupposition of free will) and the former is for "particular objects that commits an agent to particular deeds concerning them" (p. 90). The ethic of responsibility that he advances for the technological age refers to the substantive sense. It is clear however from his exposition that the substantive sense does not add anything to the venerable "duty" or "obligation." The latter concepts are derived from the Latin word *officium* (which is Cicero's translation of the Greek word *kathekon*—appropriate action, befitting). According to Cicero's usage, duties presuppose virtues and virtues are derived from human nature of sociability and innate desire for perfection. Scholars point out that there is a change of meaning from *kathekon* to *officium* in that the latter reflects the existence of a variety of social relationships better than its Greek equivalent. Such change of meaning is also likely from Latin *officum* to Kantian *Pflicht* (duty/obligation) and from the English duty/obligation to responsibility. The subsection discussing "Substantive Responsibility" on page 93 is subtitled "The Positive Duty of Power" and in this subsection Jonas repeatedly uses the words "obligating," "commanding," "binding," and even "duty," all of which are indicative of the Kantian conception of duty. According to Kant, duty is constraining, limiting, and necessitating. Its function is to restrain the arbitrary exercise of our willing which is a strong possibility due to our natural propensity to give priority to our desires.[48]

Second, What Jonas is trying to find an answer to is how "obligation" or an "ought" (Jonas's expressions) can possibly arise out of human "willing." His answer is that "this transition is mediated by the phenomenon of power" (p. 129). In a convoluted

[48] See Roger J. Sullivan, *Immanuel Kant's Moral Theory* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 121. To compare with Aristotle's view of ethics, Aristotle too offers examples which do not admit exception or preference (adultery, theft, and murder). The prohibition on these acts are not dependent on contingent circumstances surrounding them. In this sense, Aristotle would not object to the commanding character of rules identified as "moral." However, according to Aristotle, this domain of categorical rules do not exhaust ethical conduct as his concern with virtues and happiness indicates.

argument, Jonas is trying to say that our power over nature is accompanied by duties. The reason that he says this in so many words is his attempt to bridge "the alleged chasm between 'is' and 'ought'" according to the "reigning theory" of ethics without resorting to either human or divine fiat (pp. 130-31). Jonas claims to have found an "ontic paradigm" that promises to connect the two realms and finds an instance of this paradigm in "the newborn" (pp. 131-35). I am not going to get into details further, but suffice it to say that Jonas's argument at this point is more relevant for the abortion debate than technology.

Although Jonas remained outside the Anglo-American circle of environmental ethics throughout his career, his approach nonetheless resonates with this literature. Jonas too finds "all traditional ethics" limited in scope for its "anthropocentric" focus and believes that the ethical change must be more radical than a mere application of "received rules of conduct;" it should rather consider "the condition of extrahuman nature" "for its own and in its own right."[49] These ideas bear striking similarity to those of Holmes Rolston III, who is widely recognized as the founder of the environmental ethics field. Rolston is a major advocate of a new environmental ethic as well and stresses the same point that Sylvan and Jonas make: what is needed is not merely an extension or recycling of old ethic but the construction of a new one. In an early article, Rolston rhetorically raises the question of whether there is an ethic that we can truly call "ecological," and reviewing the environmental writings in the late sixties and early seventies, he comes to the conclusion that there is none yet worthy of the name.[50] Turning to Leopold's "land ethic," Rolston draws out the radical implication in

[49] Ibid., 1, 8.

[50] Homes Rolston III, "Is There an Ecological Ethic?" *Ethics* 85.2 (1975): 93-109.

Leopold's writings: "What is proposed here is a broadening of value, so that nature will cease to be merely 'property' and become a commonwealth."[51] In a later work, Rolston admits that what he is proposing goes against the existing views of what ethics is:

> This is perhaps not what ethics normally is, but that protest is not enough, because the question is whether ethics as normally conceived covers the whole field that properly belongs to it. Appeal to normal or familiar usage does nothing to settle revolutionary claims. We may want to change the meaning and scope, the connotation and denotation, of ethics.[52]

My skepticism of the idea of a new ethic is clear in the above remarks for I believe that inventing or designing a theory or system of morality anew not only is impossible but also highly deceptive and misguided. What is philosophically possible is merely a re-interpretation of what passes as "morality" or "ethics" in the living world or among the learned. This is what, for instance, Kant did despite his radical disagreement with pre-modern ethics. Rather than inventing a wholly new ethic, Kant tried to reveal the true bounds and nature of "morality." For this reason, Kant remarks that it would be false to say that there can be more than one "ethic."[53] That codes of conduct vary according to different times and societies is no proof to the contrary. What differs from one individual, community, or period to another is the particular delimitation of the "ethical" domain from unethical and non-ethical domains. The historically or culturally varying scope of inclusion in the ethical domain (i.e., the question of who or what deserves moral consideration) does not justify the conclusion that there can be different forms of ethics. That conclusion may be justifiable only under the assumptions of "historicism," "constructivism," or "conventionalism" all of which deny the constants of

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[51] Ibid., 101. I will return to Rolston's idea of the "intrinsic value in nature" later on.

[52] Holmes Rolston III, *Environmental Ethics: Duties to and Values in the Natural World* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1988), 96.

[53] See his Preface to *The Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 6: 207.

human nature. What the proponents of a "new ethic" may be trying to say is that we need a new way of thinking or conceiving what constitutes "ethics" or "morality." If this were so, there would be not much of a problem in speaking of a "new ethic." But this is not so because underlying the call for "new ethic" is historicism, which contradicts the idea of a single ethic that can be valid despite historical change and cultural difference.

Some environmental scholars have already questioned the idea of conjuring up a new ethics. John Passmore pointed out that almost all ethical codes of conduct in the world—whether religious or philosophical—have been established on the basis of pre-existing ones by extending or slightly modifying them rather than rejecting them totally. An ethical vocabulary must have its seeds in the already existing *praxis* and teachings of the past and now. The *literati* can at best nurture these seeds selectively and, we may add, prudently. Passmore argues that recovering the fertile aspects of existing ethical traditions is a much more feasible option for effective social change than pursuing a completely new environmental ethic:

> Important changes in moral outlook can occur, have occurred; in producing some of these changes, individual reformers, whether statesmen or prophets, have played an important part. But the degree to which their reforms have been in the long run successful depends on the degree to which they have been able to appeal to and further develop already existing traditions. The fact that the West has never been wholly committed to the view that man has no responsibility whatsoever for the maintenance and preservation of the world around him is important just because it means that there are 'seeds' in the Western tradition which the reformer can hope to bring into full flower.[54]

Another environmental scholar also agrees that devising or inventing a new ethic from scratch is not a viable option. Rather than demanding a complete break with the past, an extension of the existing patterns of moral thought should be sought: "The case for a new ethic should rather consist in exhibiting principles which have not always been

[54] John Passmore, *Man's Responsibility for Nature: Ecological Problems and Western Traditions* (New York: Scribner, 1974), 40.

recognized but which are nevertheless implicit in our moral traditions, or, perhaps, in morality itself, and which it is important now to acknowledge."[55]

The British writer C. S. Lewis's polemical remarks in his well-known book *The Abolition of Man* are noteworthy in this regard. Lewis opposes, in this book, what would later be known as "emotivism"—the subjectivist view in contemporary moral philosophy that describe the statements on morality or moral judgments in terms of personal feelings, preferences, and attitudes. Lewis claimed that this view would eventually bring about "the destruction of the society which accepts it."[56] This view mistakenly implies in its emphasis on universalism and progressivism that received traditional morality (which he curiously calls the *Tao* for convenience) is simply one among "a series of possible systems of value."[57] The *Tao*, according to Lewis, is rather the sole origin of "all value judgements." One cannot ignore it and then try to replace it with a completely new theory of value:

> The effort to refute it and raise a new system of value in its place is self-contradictory. *There has never been, and never will be, a radically new judgement of value in the history of the world.* What purport to be new systems or (as they now call them) 'ideologies', all consist of fragments from the *Tao* itself, arbitrarily wrenched from their context in the whole and then swollen to madness in their isolation, yet still owing to the *Tao* and to it alone such validity as they possess. If my duty to my parents is a superstition, then so is my duty to posterity. If justice is a superstition, then so is my duty to my country or my race. If the pursuit of scientific knowledge is a real value, then so is conjugal fidelity. The rebellion of new ideologies against the *Tao* is a rebellion of the branches against the tree: if

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[55] Robin Attfield, *The Ethics of Environmental Concern* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 4.

[56] C.S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001 [1943]), 27.

[57] Lewis's view is trans-cultural as the name *Tao* itself indicates: "The Chinese also speak of a great thing (the greatest thing) called the Tao. It is the reality beyond all predicates, the abyss that was before the Creator Himself. It is Nature, it is the Way, the Road. It is the Way in which the universe goes on, the Way in which things everlastingly emerge, stilly and tranquilly, into space and time. It is also the Way which every man should tread in imitation of that cosmic and supercosmic progression, conforming all activities to that great exemplar. 'In ritual', say the Analects, 'it is harmony with Nature that is prized.' The ancient Jews likewise praise the Law as being 'true'. This conception in all its forms, Platonic, Aristotelian, Stoic, Christian, and Oriental alike, I shall henceforth refer to for brevity simply as 'the Tao'."

> the rebels could succeed they would find that they had destroyed themselves. The human mind has no more power of inventing a new value than of imagining a new primary colour, or, indeed, of creating a new sun and a new sky for it to move in. (emphasis added)

I do not necessarily agree with Lewis' use of the term "value" or "objective value" but I find his questioning the radical aspirations of "progressive" thinking as salutary. Lewis helps us to see that what passes as a "new" doctrine, ideology, or ethics appears so only after the "difference" part of (social) reality is isolated and overemphasized, ignoring thereby the dialectical interplay of the principle of "unity-in-difference." The quote from Heidegger above similarly reminds us that we cannot *will* a new "ethic," "philosophy," or even "ideology" *de novo*. We always build on and work within the ideational framework we have inherited from the past. What some may deplore as "conformism" or "reformism" in matters of ethics is not only inescapable but desirable as well. In other words, what we need in the study of "ethics" is not an outright rejection but a careful revision of the received opinions in an Aristotelian manner.[58] It is true that what is proposed here is in the spirit of traditional conservatism which takes notice of the need for inter-generational continuity for the health of social relationships: "As the sanity of the individual lies in the continuity of his memories, so the sanity of the group lies in the continuity of its traditions; in either case a break in the chain invites a neurotic reaction."[59] The revival of interest in virtue that we witness in the literature of "environmental virtue ethics" is a much needed correction to the penchant for innovating ethics.

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[58] This is the venerable dialectical method that Aristotle explains at the beginning of his treatise *Topics*: "reasoning . . . is 'dialectical', if it reasons from opinions that are generally accepted [*endoxa*] . . . . Those opinions are 'generally accepted' which are accepted by every one or by the majority or by the philosophers—i.e. by all, or by the majority, or by the most notable and illustrious of them" (100a30-b23).

[59] Will Durant and Ariel Durant, *The Lessons of History* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1968), 72.

5.2 Environmental Virtue Ethics

Environmental virtue ethics is a newcomer in the field of environmental ethics, which is a nascent subfield of the contemporary moral philosophy itself. Although the tradition of virtue ethics goes back to Aristotle and the Christian Aristotelianism of Thomas Aquinas, environmental virtue ethics scholars have also found inspiration in the lives and writings of more contemporary nature loving visionaries such as Henry D. Thoreau, John Muir (founder of the Sierra Club), Aldo Leopold, and Rachel Carson (author of *Silent Spring*).[60] These figures embody virtues such as simplicity, frugality, humility, compassion, and integrity. Although environmental virtue ethics is a new synthesis, the major element of this synthesis, "virtue ethics," is relatively an established strand within contemporary moral philosophy along with the other two main approaches—deontology and consequentialism.[61] What follows is a brief account of environmental virtue ethics followed by a discussion of its weakness in addressing the political task of environmentalism.

Several contemporary students of moral philosophy have stressed Aristotle's praxis-oriented and agent-centered discussion of ethics to call attention to the weaknesses in the act-centered and/or rule oriented moral perspectives of the two predominant schools of modern moral philosophy, namely deontology and utilitarianism associated with Immanuel Kant and J. S. Mill respectively. A major weakness of these otherwise divergent perspectives has been found to be in their common emphasis on

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[60] See, for instance, Philip Cafaro, "Thoreau, Leopold, and Carson: Toward an Environmental Virtue Ethics," *Environmental Ethics* 23 (2001): 3-17.

[61] Deontology, coined from the Greek term *deon* (duty or obligation), is one conception of ethics often associated with Immanuel Kant, but its origins go back to the Roman antiquity. Consequentialism is a recent term coined by G. E. M. Anscombe to distinguish the modified version of the British utilitarianism in Anglo-Saxon philosophy after the English philosopher Henry Sidgwick.

capturing the procedural criteria of morally right conduct in a simple formula like the categorical imperative of Kantian deontology or the greatest happiness principle of utilitarianism. Such emphasis leads to formalist viewpoints with tenuous contact with the pre-philosophical *lebenswelt* (everyday life) in which most human beings spend their lives. The contemporary English philosopher Elizabeth Anscombe, argued in a significant essay "Modern Moral Philosophy" (1958)—which has been quite influential in reviving interest in virtue ethics—that moral philosophers should turn their attention away from abstract and indefinite expressions such as "morally right" or "morally wrong" in explaining ethical behavior to concepts such as "just" or "unjust" which are more fruitful due to their thicker descriptive content.[62]

A similar motive—dissatisfaction with abstractionism and formalism of academic moral philosophy—can be observed in the emergence of environmental virtue ethics. The concern with formalism and abstractionism in environmental ethics stems from the widespread feeling that environmental ethics is failing to connect with people outside the academia.[63] The critique of the environmental theorist John O'Neill in this regard is quite similar to that of Anscombe. O'Neill points out that the emphatic focus on the "intrinsic value" of non-human beings in environmental ethics literature diminishes the political relevance of environmental thought by overlooking the motivational sources of "environmental concern" in public as well as by reducing the richness of normative vocabulary stemming from a diversity of situations in ordinary experience:

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[62] G. E. M. Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy," *Philosophy* 33.124 (1958): 1-19. This essay is considered as a major stimulus for and influence on the contemporary school of virtue ethics. Other prominent figures in this school are Philippa Foot and Alasdair MacIntyre.

[63] See Lisa H. Newton, *Ethics and Sustainability: Sustainable Development and the Moral Life* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003), 28-42.

> A feature of a great deal of theorizing in environmental ethics of which the search for "intrinsic value" is typical is that it loses sight of what moves environmental concern. There is a stark contrast between the richness in the normative vocabulary that informs our appraisal of the environments with which we live and the austerity of the vocabulary that environmental philosophers employ to theorize about it . . . . References to intrinsic value only have power insofar as they call upon more specific reason-giving concepts and corresponding claims about the ways in which natural objects are a source of wonder, the sense of proportion they invoke in us of our place within a wider history, the care we feel called upon to give as we develop our understanding of the lives of fellow creatures, the diversity of forms of life of which we respond, and so on. Robbed of that more specific content, one is left with concepts adrift that lend themselves to the kind of abstract metaphysics of value often to be found in environmental philosophy.[64]

Just as the recent revival of interest in "virtue ethics" has been in reaction to the gridlock between deontology and consequentialism over speculative ethical dilemmas, the interest in environmental virtue ethics is also motivated by a practical concern to turn scholars' attention from the arcane question of "the intrinsic value or moral considerability of non-human nature" to the more practical "questions concerning human happiness and flourishing."[65] This is no surprise as both Kantian and utilitarian perspectives have been a staple of environmental theory literature since its inception in the 1970s. Modified Kantianism figures in non-anthropocentric environmental views such as eco-centrism and intrinsic value of nature. Utilitarianism, on the other hand, is most common in environmental economics and policy-making which weigh competing social interests. The emergence of the literature of environmental virtue ethics is a response to the gridlock of environmental discourse between these two opposing alternatives.

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[64] John O'Neill, "Meta-ethics," in *A Companion to Environmental Philosophy*, ed. Dale Jamieson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 174.

[65] Philip Cafaro, "Environmental Virtue Ethics: An Introduction," *Philosophy in the Contemporary World* 8.2 (2001): 1.

An early attempt in relating "virtue ethics" to environmental issues was made by Thomas Hill in a 1983 article taking issue with the "intrinsic value" argument in environmental ethics literature.[66] Hill justifies his objection to the "intrinsic value" position on practical grounds by noting that the task of determining the "wrongness" or "rightness" of human conduct toward the natural environment through the alleged "rights" or "value" of non-human nature embroils us in endless difficulties. A more fruitful way of conceiving our normative relationships with the natural environment could instead be found in "the ancient task of articulating our ideals of human excellence."[67] In the context of the environment, it has to be shown how being concerned with the destruction of the natural environment on non-instrumental grounds can be related back to human virtues such as humility and gratitude. Hill presents his thesis on this question of establishing a link between virtue and nature as follows: "though indifference to nonsentient nature does not *necessarily* reflect the absence of virtues, it often signals the absence of certain traits that we want to encourage because, they are, in most cases, a natural basis for the development of certain virtues."[68] Hence, according to Hill, showing indifference (as opposed to sensitivity or concern) to the abuse, misuse, or destruction of natural beings other than animals is not a vice in itself but a great impediment to the cultivation of certain virtues.

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[66] Thomas Hill Jr., "Ideals of Human Excellence and Preserving Natural Environments," *Environmental Ethics* 5 (1983): 211-24. Reprinted in *Environmental Virtue Ethics*, eds. Philip Cafaro and Ronald Sandler (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 47-59. The subsequent references are to the reprinted version.

[67] Hill, 50.

[68] Hill, 51, italics original. Hill's thesis bears striking resemblance to Kant's position on this matter in Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 6: 443: "A propensity to wanton destruction of what is beautiful in inanimate nature . . . is opposed to a human being's duty to himself; for it weakens or uproots that feeling in him which, though not of itself moral, is still a disposition of sensibility that greatly promotes morality or at least prepares the way for it: the disposition, namely, to love something (e.g., beautiful crystal formations, the indescribable beauty of plants) even apart from any intention to use it."

I will not evaluate the merits of Hill's thesis here.[69] Instead, I want to point out an aspect of Hill's his essay which, I believe, exemplifies a certain general weakness in environmental (virtue) ethics, namely, paying scant attention to the political implications of normative theory. Hill believes that those who do not show sincere "environmental concern" must be lacking in receptivity to virtues such as humility and gratitude. Those who lack these virtues would not only risk their relationship with other human beings but would also be impeded in understanding their place in the great scheme of things. Hill wants to suggest that since we do not want to live among arrogant and ungrateful people, we should see to it that the other people that we share our lives with also foster a sense of appreciation for nature. Supposing it is true that gratitude and humility are desirable moral virtues, and they naturally flow from one's proper sense of finitude, what follows?

Hill raises this question himself: "Suppose these conjectures prove to be true. One may wonder what is the point of considering them? Is it to disparage all those who view nature merely as a resource?"[70] He goes on to reject this negative conclusion and offers a more positive interpretation: "The point is not to insinuate that all antienvironmentalists are defective but to see that those who value such traits as humility, gratitude, and sensitivity to others have reason to promote the love of nature."[71] But is this not a case of preaching to the converted? Those people who value humility, gratitude, compassion must already be leading more or less virtuous lives, and if "the love of nature" is a prerequisite of these virtues, then they must already be lovers of

[69] A critical discussion of Hill's argument can be found in Geoffrey B. Frasz, "Environmental Virtue Ethics: A New Direction for Environmental Ethics," *Environmental Ethics* 15 (1993): 259–74.

[70] Hill, 57.

[71] Ibid.

nature. To whom are they going to sell the virtues of loving nature? Certainly to those who are lacking in this regard. But how can one communicate effectively with those who lack such virtues? In this brief article, Hill does not address this crucial political question.

In the only book-length discussion of environmental virtue ethics currently available, Louke van Wensveen raises this question but her response is far from being satisfactory.[72] Before discussing this issue, however, I shall briefly explain the framework in which van Wensveen approaches the question of environmental virtue. She observes that although the terms *virtue* and *vice* seem to be conspicuously absent in the environmental theory literature, they have always been implicitly at work therein. Two books from this literature are selected for analysis: Murray Bookchin's *The Ecology of Freedom* (1982) and Thomas Berry's *The Dream of the Earth* (1988). So we are told by van Wensveen that although these eco-authors seldom use the terms "virtue" and "vice" in their works and have not attempted to develop a "theory of virtue," their writings nonetheless champion certain positive attitudes, and warn against certain negative others which can best be understood in terms of traditional virtues and vices respectively.

For instance, Bookchin writes about "cooperation, mutual support, and love" approvingly, and criticizes "domination, self-interest, and exploitation" in human history and modern society.[73] If anything, on van Wensveen's view, the former should be identified as "virtues" and the latter as "vices" appropriate for the ecological age we are

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[72] Louke van Wensveen, *Dirty Virtues: The Emergence of Ecological Virtue Ethics* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2000). Her explanation for why she calls the ecological virtues is as follows: "dirty" because "this language expresses a preoccupation with the earth (read: dirt = soil), and also because many ecological virtues would have been considered not particularly praiseworthy, or even vicious, during most of Western history (read: dirty = bad, taboo)" (p. 4).

[73] Ibid., 48. On van Wensveen's view, Bookchin's book mentions 44 virtues and 39 vices. The list of virtues and vices she comes up with, apart from a few true ones, has ideas which actually has nothing to do with virtues or vices. To give an example, she counts interdependence, spontaneity, or rebelliousness as virtues, and elitism, blindness, alienation as vices (pp. 48-49). The same confusion goes for her list of virtues and vices that she culls from Thomas Berry (pp. 73-74).

living in. Putting aside the fact these things cannot by any stretch of imagination stand in for virtues and vices as we know them—they at best describe human interactions like ruling and being ruled except "love" which is a passion—how do van Wensveen determine that these things are substitute terms for "virtues" and "vices," if Bookchin himself does not identify them as such? Is it simply because of Bookchin's approval of some and disapproval of others? How can the preferences of a single author pass as virtues and vices for the whole human race?

Van Wensween errs, I believe, because of her enthusiasm to reform the traditional virtue language to make it acceptable to the "progressives" among us. As she herself observes, the language of virtue has remained obscure within environmental theory literature because those environmentalists who identify themselves as progressives are uneasy with this old-fashioned tradition so much so that they would be shocked to hear that they share a common language with their ideological polar opposites: "Those of us who count themselves among the still largely countercultural activists who cultivate respect and love of nature in their daily lives—in other words, those who provide the practical base of environmental ethics—will more likely experience shock at this realization."[74] Van Wensveen is aware of the "progressive" misgivings about virtue, but she nonetheless believes that it is high time to call a spade a spade. So far, so good. However, in trying to moderate the skepticism and opposition to "virtue" among progressive environmentalists, she waters down the traditional understanding of virtue greatly. This may be considered a pragmatic move to make "virtue" more acceptable to our constituency, but we also need to consider the internal coherence of the revisions made to the traditional understanding of virtue lest it all falls

[74] Ibid., 6.

apart. Indeed, the center does not hold, if there were a center to begin with. I believe van Wensveen's efforts (and this can be said of many other scholars of environmental virtue ethics as well) are ultimately vitiated by the temptation of "constructing" an ethic or a theory of virtue, though, unlike the proponents of a "new ethic," it is one with traditional roots.[75]

The lack of political perspective mars van Wensveen's efforts of reconciling the questions virtue and the environment even though she is explicitly critical of this gap in the rest of the environmental ethics literature. The problem she finds in this literature is the inability or unwillingness to connect a social change program on an institutional or structural level with a stress on personal transformation of consciousness. At the outset, she distinguishes how "ecologically minded people" differ from "Aristotle and many of his followers" with respect to their interest in teaching virtue. Whereas the latter is "interested in character development for the sake of achieving personal harmony within an existing social system," the interest of the former in virtue lies in their commitment to "a social vision for the future, a vision of ecologically sustainable societies."[76] In other words, whereas Aristotle's use of virtue serves the status quo, environmental visionaries such as Bookchin appeal to virtue to produce social change: "Even though virtue ethics may have acquired an image of conservatism, a virtue ethic based in the lived discourse of the environmental movement could have surprisingly radical effects."[77] So our author believes that Bookchin aptly focuses at the same time on "social change" and "social

[75] Van Wensween is well aware of the futility of previous attempts to break with tradition in environmental ethics (pp. 22-42), so she repeatedly emphasizes the "roots and wings" of ecological virtue language, which stands for "its connections with the past and its promises for the future" (p. 22). And yet, the "ecological virtue discourse" is "more like a bird than like a plant" though it feeds off "familiar plants" (p. 36).

[76] Ibid., 16-7.

[77] Ibid., 18.

ethic" without opting for one or the other. Bookchin's approach, unlike that of Berry, does not put all its eggs in one basket but operates simultaneously on both individual and institutional levels of change.[78]

But what method does Van Wensveen's propose for achieving the social change that she believes is necessary? Her only response in this respect centers on cataloguing a list of virtues which she claims to have discovered in the writings of major environmental authors, and reforming the traditional virtues for the ecological age. But why is there a need to write a whole new book to recommend these two books of Bookchin and Berry to other people? We get a hint to this question from van Wensween's interest in the "veritable revaluation of values" that she attributes to the ecological literature.[79] The first half of her book (Chapters 1 through 4), as she notes, is descriptive; it describes the emergence of virtue language within contemporary "ecoliterature" as a new phenomenon. The second half of the book (Chapters 5 through 9) explores the "practical problems" or "goals" that underlie this language.[80] What are these problems? It is the fact that this language shows so much "richness and diversity" that we may get lost in its maze. So "we need to be able to get back to some basic criteria, some clear reminders of what the whole exploration is all about." Indeed, we need a compass for the table of virtues and vices, which she presents in an appendix, with 189 virtues and 174 vices collected from the "post-1970 environmental literature."[81] For this purpose, she admits that she has to "construct elements of an ecological virtue theory." Then she qualifies her intent:

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[78] Ibid., 52-5.

[79] Ibid., 110.

[80] Ibid., 87.

[81] Ibid., 163-67.

> elements, not a complete theory, as practical questions tend to arise in a haphazard manner and it seems more worthwhile to stay close the practical questions than to risk losing touch with reality for the sake of systematizing (much as I admit loving the latter).[82]

Van Wensveen is well aware of the intellectuals' penchant for "theory construction" as she explicitly assures us that her efforts to bring coherence to the emerging ecological virtue language stems from "a desire to achieve greater moral clarity rather than from a desire to build the ultimate intellectual system."[83] But her constant reminders of "the dynamism of ecological virtue ethics" notwithstanding, she does present us with a theory of ecological virtue.[84] Yes, she does not go down the route of inventing a radically new ethic, as she claims that she does not "see the process of constructing ethical theory as a *creation ex nihilo*, but rather as a creative correlation of existing moral resources."[85] Yet, she describes her task in the end as follows: "I will critically select and connect, weaving threads of theory that I hope will have practical value as we search to live out an ecological virtue ethic."[86] So she proposes some "boundary conditions" or "tests" that can function as a guide in our ecological age to distinguish genuine virtues and vices from fake ones. These criteria can be gleaned, according to van Wensveen, from Bookchin's *The Ecology of Freedom*—a work which does not discuss virtue and vice—as well as from some contemporary feminist teachings and experiences which are opposed to traditional "virtues" for their patriarchal bias.

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[82] Ibid.

[83] Ibid., 16.

[84] Ibid.

[85] Ibid., 87; see also pp. 22-42.

[86] Ibid.

The criteria put forth by van Wensween in response the "practical problems" of "modern critical consciousness" actually amounts to a political program along the Nietzschean or Machiavellian lines—re-evaluating all values—as we learn that "in ecological virtue language, traditional virtues may be treated as vices, and traditional vices may be treated as virtues."[87] So, for instance, in place of the virtue of temperance prescribed by the ancient Greeks as a safeguard for prudence, "a modern critical consciousness would prescribe self-examination, informed by critical social consciousness and followed by therapeutic as well as social corrective measures."[88] Similarly, "from the vantage point of ecological consciousness, the Seven Deadly Sins of pride, envy, anger, sloth, greed, gluttony, and lust no longer mean what they used to mean."[89] Consequently, some emotions such as anger (wrath) and lust should not be considered exclusively as productive of vice as they can now be put usefully into the service of the progressive struggle against internal repression and external oppression.[90] Van Wensween's alchemical operation turns "courage" into "a virtue of benevolence" for instance.[91] The motive for being courageous is no longer that of the noble, as we find in the Western tradition that goes back to Aristotle, but "our being comfortable with our animal characteristics."[92] And then there is "the creation of new virtues and vices." An

[87] Ibid., 32.

[88] Ibid., 95.

[89] Ibid., 102.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Ibid., 141-42.

[92] Ibid., 136.

example of a new virtue would be "attunement"—adapting to the needs of the "other"—that has been neglected in "the history of western ethics."[93]

Now, I have remarked above that van Wensveen seems to lack a political perspective, but then I have claimed to have uncovered a Nietzschean theme in her writing. This is not a contradiction for I do not think our author is a conscious executor of Nietzsche's legacy of the reevaluation of all values. Second, she, like Hill, directs her remarks to the converted: "the practical base of a viable ecological ethic is the environmental movement."[94] If, as she claims, she has derived her table of virtues and vices from environmental movement, then her constituency is not in need of any change in behavior or thinking. This is why I believe she lacks a true political perspective. She does not explain how it is possible that this new ecological table of virtues and vices will be accepted by those outside the core base of environmental movement, which remains to be a small minority in every country. Despite her constant reminders to the contrary, van Wensveen shares the political naiveté of the "modern critical consciousness" which confounds "social critique" with "politics."

The neglect of, or the failure to bring out, the "political" significance of "virtue" in relation to the question of the environment in environmental (virtue) ethics literature has been subject to criticism lately. In a recent article, Robert Hull submits the environmental virtue ethics literature to a reconstructive critique in this regard.[95] Hull points out that almost all scholars in the environmental virtue ethics literature have

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[93] Ibid., 32.

[94] Ibid., 125.

[95] Robert Hull, "All about EVE: A Report on Environmental Virtue Ethics Today," *Ethics & the Environment* 10.1 (2005): 89-110.

emphasized that environmental virtue ethics must have "*some* practical function."[96] Invoking Aristotle from the *Nicomachean Ethics* on the practical dimension of ethics, Hull agrees with this view.[97] Yet, as he observes, "thus far the potential EVE [environmental virtue ethics] has for 'teaching us our duty' remains somewhat unfulfilled." One reason for this failure, according to Hull, is that "EVE theorists tend to reduce human excellence to green virtue or to ignore or misinterpret its connection to other excellences."[98] This we have seen clearly in van Wensween as she is almost anxious to transform every traditional virtue into something unrecognizable.

The rush to develop and focus on a number of new "environmental" or "ecological" virtues at the expense of traditional virtues restricts the possibilities of environmentally active people to engage people with different priorities or convictions such as religious people, the unemployed, or people who might have a particular stake in developing the natural environment. As it has been noted by recent critics of environmental ethics, environmental activists must be able to speak to "the opposition in the opposition's own largely anthropocentric terms or fail to be granted a hearing at all."[99] Yes, "courage" in its traditional sense does not have much to offer in addressing environmental issues, but this does not mean that it is obsolete or can safely be disregarded. As I see it, the virtues of temperance, justice, and prudence can be recovered in relation to environmental issues, but not by casting off their traditional interpretations, rather by getting into conversation with them. Hull comes closer to truth

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[96] Ibid., 100, italics original.

[97] The "end" of ethical discourses, Aristotle remarks, "is not knowing but action" (*NE* 1095a4-5).

[98] Ibid., 101.

[99] See Andrew Light and Avner de-Shalit, "Environmental Ethics: Whose philosophy? Which practice?" in *Moral and Political Reasoning in Environmental Practice*, eds. Andrew Light and Avner de-Shalit (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 7; see also Minteer, 193-7.

when he comes up with a new virtue that he calls "ecocitizenship" and the vices of which is, on the excess side, "ecomisanthropy," and, on the defect side, "bad ecocitizenship":

> A person who possesses this excellence recognizes clearly the close connection between human flourishing and appreciating and understanding wild nature, and a portrait of her fundamental values must reflect this awareness. Thus the core values embraced by a person who possesses this excellence begin with the recognition that we are all plain citizens of our planet, that we for our own physical, intellectual, and moral benefit share it with other forms of life. Further, to flourish we must cultivate at least a generalist's knowledge of the natural world, particularly the bioregion in which we live.[100]

Now, the problem with Hull's view is that "ecocitizenship" cannot be the name of a single virtue. What is described with it is a more comprehensive political vision because Hull suggests that human beings, as civic members of their societies, should come to adopt this wider perspective of ecological view. This vision cannot be attained at the beginning but through a political process. Second, citizenship—whether ecologically oriented or not—is not a virtue but a political activity in itself. And yet, it is supported by a number of virtues such courage, prudence, and justice. The practice of ecologically responsible citizenship requires paying particular attention to the virtues of temperance, justice, and prudence.[101] To be fair, Hull is aware of the overarching nature of "ecocitizenship" as he refers to other virtues such as generosity and moderation which are implied by "ecocitizenship."[102] Still, Hull's view is suggestive for its due emphasis on the practical dimension of "virtue" in relation to the question of the environment, and specifically for its tying "virtue" into the notion of citizenship.

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[100] Ibid., 103.

[101] A fruitful theme that can bring together these virtues in relation to the environment is "consumerism," an old theme in political economy which has been revived in environmental circles under the name of "ecological footprints." This theme will be discussed in Chapter 6 in relation to the concept of "environmental" or "ecological" citizenship.

[102] Ibid., 104-05.

In the remaining part of this section, I shall introduce a recent critique raised by environmental theorists Avner de-Shalit and Andrew Light against the apolitical approach of environmental ethics scholars to environmental issues.[103] Their critique will ease us into the next section in which I shall elaborate on the aforementioned critique of environmental virtue ethics by Holmes Rolston III. Rolston's exclusive focus on "intrinsic value" represents the tendency that de-Shalit and Light submit to critique. The apolitical propensity of environmental ethics scholars, according to de-Shalit and Light, is largely due to their categorical rejection of "anthropocentrism" and upholding an uncompromising stance vis-à-vis human interests, that is, the insistence on the non-instrumentalist recognition and valuation of nature. They maintain that environmental philosophers have been preoccupied exclusively with the arcane issue of ascertaining the moral grounds of an environment-friendly attitude or the meta-ethical questions of "intrinsic value theories" and "bio-centrism." Due to this narrow focus, they have failed to work out the political ramifications of their ethical doctrines. And yet the divide between ethics and politics is problematic "since the types of problem discussed are mostly public and policy-related, environmental philosophy is, ultimately, a *political* philosophy."[104]

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[103] Andrew Light writes from the perspective of "environmental pragmatism" whereas Avner de-Shalit's approach to the environment is a democratic socialist or a communitarian one. Light's "pragmatism" harks back to Aristotle's emphasis on "praxis." The word "pragmatism" comes from the Ancient Greek *pragma* (deed) which is related to *prattein* (to do) and *praxis* (action). For their respective positions, see Andrew Light, "Environmental Pragmatism as Philosophy or Metaphilosophy?" in *Environmental Pragmatism*, eds. Andrew Light and Eric Katz (London: Routledge, 1996), 325-38; and Avner de-Shalit, *The Environment: Between Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[104] Avner de-Shalit, *The Environment Between Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3, italics original. The same point has been made by other environmental theorists as well. See, among others, Bob P. Taylor, "Environmental Ethics & Political Theory," *Polity* 23.4 (1991): 567-83; and Joe Bowersox, "The Legitimacy Crisis in Environmental Ethics and Politics," in *Democracy and the Claims of Nature: Critical Perspectives for a New Century*, eds. Ben A. Minteer and Bob P. Taylor (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002).

The gist of their joint criticism is that environmental philosophers spend most of their time speaking to one another and thereby completely ignoring the question of how their discussions can effect behavioral and institutional change in relation to the environmental issues.[105] To address this lacuna, de-Shalit and Light propose an intellectual device which they call "public reflective equilibrium" patterned after the earlier reflective equilibrium models of contemporary political theorists John Rawls and Michael Walzer.[106] This model departs from Walzer's by opening the scope of the engaged scholar's constituency to national and global communities of environmental activists. To attain the "public reflective equilibrium," the political philosopher must attend to "the intuitions and theories" commonly held in his or her society, and analyze them "with a view to *refining* them." After critical scrutiny, the philosopher must then "search for an equilibrium between the intuitions, principles, or theories."[107]

The weakness that de-Shalit and Light uncover in environmental ethics or philosophy ultimately stems from the split of "moral" from "political" philosophy after Kant. The main characteristic of this divorce is that "moral" and "prudential" reasons belong to different spheres, that is, ethics/morality and politics respectively. This view is to a certain degree understandable as we tend to associate "politics" with social phenomena which includes conflict, compromise, power, or self-interests, and "ethics" with social phenomena characterized by opposite tendencies such as cooperation, principled conduct, humility, self-sacrifice, and altruism. When we view human reality

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[105] Light and de-Shalit, 5-10.

[106] Ibid., 10-8. The reflective equilibrium models used by Rawls and Walzer, according to de-Shalit and Light, are instructive but nonetheless fail to give due consideration to the intelligent voices of the public outside the academia. The problem with Rawls' "private reflective equilibrium" is that it is exclusively directed at philosophers whereas Walzer's more promising model of "contextual reflective equilibrium" takes into account the national intellectual context only.

[107] Ibid., 31.

through these dualisms, it is not much of a surprise that we end up with two separate domains of human action. Accordingly, our systematic study of moral and prudential phenomena are organized under different disciplines, that is, moral philosophy and political (or social) science. This view of human reality owes much to the break of the moderns with the ancients in removing prudence from its ethical framework: "Only with incipient modernity . . . prudential came to be understood technically as mere knowledge of the proper means. Therewith it came in the end to be indistinguishable from that which according to Aristotle is not *aretē*, but rather a dubious capacity (*deinotēs*)."[108]

Inheriting this artificial split, environment (virtue) ethics scholars do not go beyond a superficial discussion of which virtues are conducive to environmental awareness or who among environmental pioneers exemplify these virtues. They do not follow Aristotle's transition from ethics to politics in *NE* X.9. As I have mentioned earlier, Aristotle issues repeated reminders in his ethical treatises that "it is not sufficient to know about virtue, but one must try to have it and use it, unless there is some other way that we become good" (*NE* 1179b1-4). Aristotle's point warns us against reducing ethics to intellectual exercises such as casuistry. Hypothetical reasoning or persuasive speech may be necessary in philosophical discussions but we cannot afford to ignore the need for the sustainability of the political context in which such reasoning and speeches can find a hospitable environment. Seeing this need, Aristotle turns his attention to politics which is basically the whole set of activities through which various groups in a society decide and contest the distribution of power and goods through laws and institutions with an eye on what justice requires.

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[108] Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Aristotle and the Ethic of Imperatives," trans. Joseph M. Knippenberg, in *Action and Contemplation*, eds. Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins (New York: SUNY Press, 1999), 53-67.

In the midst of competing loyalties and ever-shifting opportunistic alliances that characterize politics in all times Aristotle is not unaware that there is little room left for virtue and virtuous people. Since "most people are more obedient to compulsion than to argument, and are persuaded by penalties than by what is beautiful" (*NE* 1180a3-4), philosophers cannot merely concern themselves with discourses directed to the receptive: "discourses appear to have the power to encourage and stimulate open-natured [*eleutherious*] young people, and would make a well-born [*eugenes*] character that loves what is truly beautiful be inspired with virtue, but they are unable to encourage most people what is beautiful and good" (*NE* 1179b6-11).[109] Hence, Aristotle refers to Plato's views on laws affirmatively. Both see two major roles for laws. One is to inspire the love of virtue among the potentially decent people and encourage them toward virtuous actions, and the other is to restrain "those who are disobedient or lacking in natural capacity" through punishments and penalties, and banish the incurable altogether (*NE* 1180a5-10).

5.3 The Critique of Environmental Virtue Ethics

In this section I discuss and criticize Holmes Rolston's critique of environmental virtue ethics in a recent article.[110] In this article, Rolston gradually reveals what he believes to be the inadequacies of constructing environmental ethics on the concept of "virtue." He first seems to be open to the idea of employing the concept of virtue in

[109] One may think that Aristotle is defending the rich and the powerful here as these Greek words—*eleutherious* and *eugenes*—were especially used for the established families back then. Aristotle's position is not that simple however. In his discussion of the virtue of greatness of soul, he explicitly rejects the unwarranted claim of the rich to virtue: "those who, without virtue, have the sort of good things that come from fortune consider themselves worthy of great things unjustly, and are not rightly called great-souled, since there is no worth or greatness of soul without complete virtue" (*NE* 1124a20-30). These terms rather describe all those "people whose lives are conducted with some intelligence and right ordering" (*NE* 1180a17-8).

[110] See above, footnote 5.

environmental ethics but eventually believes that "value" rather than "virtue" must be the organizing concept. Rolston gives two main reasons in support of his misgivings on the usefulness of the concept of virtue. First, emphasizing virtue ethics may inadvertently disguise the natural prerequisites of human flourishing. This is undesirable because human life is normally shaped in a dialectic of nature and culture:

> An inclusive moral virtue, well-rounded excellence of character, comes in significant part, although by no means in the whole, from . . . natural attunement. Here living well requires that we be properly sensitive to the flow of nature through us and its bearing on our habits of life. Otherwise, life lacks propriety; we do not know our place under the sun. We need caution. Human virtues are multileveled. That nature builds character is but half the truth and absurd if taken for the whole. That would omit all the civic virtues, without which we could not be human. Character is developed in a dialectic of nature and culture.[111]

Hence, on Rolston's view, an adequate environmental ethic must put equal emphasis on the natural and cultural bases of character and virtue. The flawed common tendency, according to him, is to overstate the cultural superiority of human virtue over its natural elements. Hence, Socrates was wrong in the *Phaedrus* 230d to ignore the instructive role of "nature" in its contribution to our understanding the good life.[112] "The good life is lived in a place of symbiosis between humankind and nature."[113] Human life to be worth living must be embodied in its natural surroundings:

> Human virtues lie in defending the self, aloft and transcendent over nature, but they also lie in fitting ourselves into the natural environment that transcends us. If we wish to call this an *environmental* virtue ethics, then we have to recognize that any such virtues, lodged in humans, require for these humans to be well placed in their worlds. The better name for such an ethic might be an *ecological* virtue ethics, for human virtues of this kind always require an ecology.[114]

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[111] Rolston, "Environmental Virtue Ethics," 61-62. See also Rolston, *Environmental Ethics*, 42.

[112] Rolston, "Environmental Virtue Ethics," 63.

[113] Rolston, *Environmental Ethics*, 40.

[114] Rolston, "Environmental Virtue Ethics," 66, italics original.

A second indispensable feature of an adequate environmental ethic, according to Rolston, is respect for the "other," that is, the non-human denizens of nature:

> A human virtue is generated, actualizing a uniquely human capacity and possibility for excellence, when a person respects a wild animal's life for what that life is in itself, a different and yet related form of life. This triggers awareness of otherness and feeds back into our own sense of identity and integrity.[115]

Rolston is telling us here that showing respect for an animal for its own sake allows for a "human virtue." It is not clear what virtue Rolston has in mind. Does he mean "awareness of otherness" or "integrity"? We cannot answer this question because Rolston is not interested in a careful exposition of virtues at least in this article. At this point in the article Rolston begins to assert more explicitly the priority of "value" over "virtue." His reasoning goes as follows. If caring for non-human beings for their own sakes must count as an integral part of being virtuous, then the ground of this duty of "caring" or respect must be something other than their utility to us—be it as resources or its positive contribution to human character. This something else is the "intrinsic value" of natural beings *qua* species according to Rolston. In reference to an endangered species of desert fish, Rolston insists on the priority of "value":

> Excellence of human character does indeed result from a concern for these fish, but if this excellence of character really comes from appreciating otherness, then why not value that otherness in wild nature first? *Let the human virtue come tributary to that*. It is hard to gain much excellence of character from appreciating an otherwise worthless thing . . . . To prohibit the *needless* destruction of fish species seems to depend on some value in the species as such, for there need be no prohibition against destroying a valueless thing. The excellence of human character depends on a *sensitivity* to excellence in these marvelous fish flourishing in the desert. The human mind grows toward the realization of its possibilities (excellences) by appropriate respect for nature (fish), but that respect is the end and the growth is the by-product.[116]

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[115] Ibid., 67.

[116] Ibid., 68, all italics mine.

Rolston eventually concludes that "such an ethic is best called a value-based ethic, not a virtue-based ethic."[117] Rolston's objection is a familiar one in the history of moral philosophy: the presupposition of "value" or "duty" in the concept of virtue. The Kantian elements of Rolston's conception of environmental ethics is clear from his privileging the notions "value," "duty," and "respect" to define the domain of the "moral" phenomena separate from an extra-moral domain characterized by "expedient," "instrumental," and "prudential" human behavior. Rolston departs from Kant only on the point of Kant's exclusion of non-human beings from the moral domain.

According to Rolston, a proper environmental ethic, or any ethic for that matter, presupposes intrinsic "value." All duties, including the ones we owe to non-human beings, are derived from an objective source of value: "Whatever has such resident value lays a claim on those who have standing as moral agents when they encounter such autonomous value."[118] For Rolston, the recognition of an independently existing value (i.e., good) in non-human natural beings is the fundamental step toward thinking of a new environmental ethic. "Nature is an objective value carrier; humans cash in on, and spend, what is naturally given."[119] Rolston believes that "the anthropocentric, personalistic ethics now prevailing in the Western world" unjustifiably denies the intrinsic value of nature, and consequently is ignorant of the duties we owe to nature.[120] So the prerequisite of human virtues and the fulfillment of duties toward nature is the recognition of intrinsic value in nature.

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[117] Ibid., 70.

[118] Rolston, *Environmental Ethics*, 96.

[119] Ibid., 4.

[120] Ibid., 1.

Against Rolston's attempt at prioritizing the concept of value, I argue that his neo-Kantian construal of environmental ethics/morality in terms of intrinsic value has to rely on the question of what is good for human beings. The italicized terms in the above quote, "needless" and "sensitivity," give away the unwarranted step that Rolston takes in his claim that the source of our attempt of extending morality to nature resides in the "species" rather than in human virtue. The term "sensitivity" clearly implies a distinct quality or capacity of soul. There are people with different degrees of sensitivity to their place in the great scheme of things. This type of sensitivity arises only in the pursuit of virtue. And what is to be done with people—whom I suspect is the majority—lacking in this particular sensitivity? Rolston cannot get around the question of how to nurture this capacity among human beings in the first place. His proclaiming the objectivity of "intrinsic value" of animal and plant species in itself does not address the political question of what to do about it and how. As I have argued in the previous section, the political implications of "morality" in environmental issues can neither be ignored nor taken care of properly without an eye on its reciprocal connection with morality. In other words, ethics and politics are linked but they are not the same thing. We can neither reduce ethics to politics nor politics to ethics. They are yin and yang of human reality. However, Rolston skips over the political question too easily by relying on legislation and enlightened policy-making.[121] Both of these are necessary instruments of politics and yet there is a third dimension that has become prominent in the democratic age: civic participation. It is in this crucial dimension of politics that Rolston's neo-Kantian approach falters for it abstracts from the highly complicated psychological and political

[121] Ibid., 246-89.

dimension of ethics as found in Aristotle, and reduces it to a narrow moralistic point of view to be enforced by public law.

Rolston's reliance on the qualifier "needless," on the other hand, implies that human beings can make use of animals and plants to the extent that they thereby meet their essential needs. Where basic needs end and where superfluous wants begin is certainly another controversial issue. But the fact that the "prohibition" against the instrumental use of animals and plants can never, realistically speaking, be unconditional shows that the relevance of morality is tied to the human purposes that these beings are put to. It is the "wanton" destruction that is judged as immoral. Reasonable environmentalists would agree with Eric Ashby's view in this regard:

> a distinction needs to be made between vandalism—the wanton and unnecessary destruction of living things or natural objects or ecosystems—and the disciplined exploitation which is necessary to sustain society.[122]

If it is the "unnecessary" harm and suffering to non-human beings that we are obligated to avoid, then the parallel between human beings and non-human beings breaks down, for we are not allowed to make exceptions to the categorical imperative of treating humans as ends in themselves within the framework of Kantian morality.[123] Implicit in Ashby's related phrase "necessary to sustain society" is the notion of human flourishing at the center of which lies the questions of human good and virtue. Without a teleological understanding of what constitutes the good life for human beings, one cannot make a meaningful distinction between "necessary" and "unnecessary" use of non-human natural beings. It is the teleological understanding of the good life that

[122] Eric Ashby, "The Search for an Environmental Ethic," *The Tanner Lecture on Human Values*, 1979, www.tannerlectures.utah.edu/lectures/ashby80.pdf, 28-9.

[123] This does not mean that all human interaction have to fall under the categorical imperative, for Kant would allow the extra-moral instrumental interactions in society—these he calls "prudential." It means however that all interactions that deserve the epithet of "moral" have to be categorical as opposed to, for instance, hypothetical.

allows Aristotle to assert the distinction between *oikonomia* (the household-management) and *chrematistike* (the art of acquisition) in Politics I.8-13: "household management gives more serious attention to human beings than to inanimate possessions, to the virtue of these than that of possessions (which we call wealth), and to the virtue of free persons rather than that of slaves" (*Pol.* 1259b18-21).[124]

When environmental ethics scholars such as Holmes Rolston urge us to expand our moral community to include non-human beings through "bio-centrism" or "intrinsic value," we are asked to grant "dignity" or the status of "personhood" to them.[125] These (Kantian) modern notions imply the "absolute," "unconditional," or "categorical" duties as opposed to the "empirical," "hypothetical," or "contingent" aspects of human life. Human dignity is not, according to the widely accepted (Kantian) modern view, conditional on the social status or relative virtues and vices a person may happen to possess. It is rather transcendental (i.e., *noumenal*) and non-negotiable:

> a human being regarded as a *person*, that is, as the subject of a morally practical reason, is exalted above any price; for as a person (*homo noumenon*) he is not to be valued merely as a means to the ends of others or even to his own ends, but as an end in himself, that is, he possesses a *dignity* (an absolute inner worth) by which he exacts *respect* from all other rational beings in the world.[126]

Mimicking Kant's defense of human dignity above any prudential calculation is the Rolstonian line of argument which sees the objectivity of "intrinsic value" in nature as the necessary pre-condition of protecting natural beings:

> Because the intrinsically valuable is that which is good as an end in itself, it is commonly agreed that something's possession of intrinsic value generates a *prima*

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[124] This distinction has been lately revived by Herman E. Daly and John B. Cobb, Jr. in their *For the Common Good: Redirecting the Economy toward Community, the Environment, and a Sustainable Future*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994).

[125] See, for instance, Suzanne L. Cataldi, "Animals and the Concept of Dignity: Critical Reflections on a Circus Performance," *Ethics & the Environment* 7.2 (2002): 104-26.

[126] Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 6: 434-5, emphasis original.

> *facie* direct moral duty on the part of moral agents to protect it or at least refrain from damaging it.[127]

One leading scholar in environmental ethics acknowledges the paradigmatic role of the Kantian principle concerning the "intrinsic value" of human beings: "Human beings, we believe, have intrinsic value. Therefore, we think that to enslave human beings is wrong . . . . Similarly, other species, we are beginning to believe, are also intrinsically valuable."[128] Kant himself would balk at the suggestion of granting moral standing to non-human beings for they are not free to obey the moral law to begin with. The lack of autonomy deprives them of the status of a moral being or intrinsic value. Non-rational beings can only have instrumental worth to human purposes for Kant: "Beings the existence of which rests not on our will but on nature, if they are beings without reason, still have only a relative worth, as means, and are therefore called *things*."[129]

Hence, Kant would consider extending moral "dignity" or "value" to the rest of nature—no matter how noble it may sound—as a serious mistake, for that move would abolish the whole ground for morality. When Kant speaks of the "dignity" of persons, it is always contrasted with "things" which cannot have this privileged status as it is evidenced in his elevating human "dignity (prerogative) . . . over all merely natural beings."[130] In other words, the contrast between "persons" and "things" is vital to the

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[127] Andrew Brennan and Yeuk-Sze Lo, "Environmental Ethics," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2002 Edition)*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2002/entries/ethics-environmental.

[128] J. Baird Callicott, "Intrinsic Value in Nature: A Metaethical Analysis," *The Electronic Journal of Analytic Philosophy* 4, Spring 1995, http://ejap.louisiana.edu/ejap/1995.spring/callicott.1995.spring.html.

[129] Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 4: 428; see also Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 6: 442-44.

[130] Kant, *Groundwork*, 4:438.

coherence and viability of the Kantian view of "morality."[131] Against Kant's objection, the proponents of "intrinsic-value-in-nature" position often argue that we should not be burdened by Kant's anthropocentric bias, for it is a contradiction on Kant's part to banish non-human beings from the universal kingdom of "ends." Hence, there is no reason that we cannot or should not expand the scope of Kantian morality. As Callicott observes, "Kant's intellectual descendents in environmental ethics" believe that they "can do better than the master himself."[132] This attitude, however, conveniently ignores the Kantian ground of morality—autonomy (i.e., being the sole author of the rules one follows in life) and makes use of its universalistic dimension.[133]

Callicott himself does not subscribe to the thesis of the objectivity of "intrinsic value" as Rolston does, but his analysis of the Kantian dimension of Rolston's position is illuminating for our purposes. According to Callicott, Kantian environmental ethicists believe that "[t]o possess 'objective' intrinsic value . . . according to Kant, seems to require that a being be capable of (1) valuing itself as an end in itself and (2) realizing that other beings value themselves in the same way."[134] This interpretation is a serious

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[131] Domesticated animals can and must be treated humanely in Kant's view not because of our direct duties to them but because of "a duty of the human being *to* himself" (*The Metaphysics of Morals*, 6: 443). For a discussion of these issues, see Allen W. Wood "Kant on Duties Regarding Nonrational Nature: Allen W. Wood," *Supplement to the Proceedings of The Aristotelian Society* 72.1 (1998): 189-210; and Onora O'Neill, "Kant on Duties Regarding Nonrational Nature: Onora O'Neill," *Supplement to the Proceedings of The Aristotelian Society* 72.1 (1998): 211-28.

[132] Callicott, "Intrinsic Value in Nature."

[133] According to Kant, "*autonomy* is . . . the ground of the dignity of human nature and of every rational nature" (*Groundwork*, 4: 436). How is the Kantian autonomy different from the Aristotelian *prohairesis* (choice)? After all, Aristotle too considers the capacity of making choices the most essential human attribute distinguishing us from non-humans. The major difference, I believe, is this: whereas Kantian morality presupposes the potentiality of autonomy in human beings, Aristotle takes a developmental approach and claims that the potential capacity of making choice becomes active with the growth of the active condition of character (*hexis*). The possibility of this growth in turn depends on the political context in which the individual is born into. Hence, Aristotle is more awake to the existence of numerous inherited constraints that are beyond the individual's control in its natural aspiration toward autonomy.

[134] Callicott, "Intrinsic Value in Nature."

misunderstanding of Kant's grounds for assigning the "end-in-itself" status to human beings however.[135] Kant would not hold either of these two propositions. Humans are intrinsically valuable for Kant not because they are capable of *valuing* themselves, but because they are capable of acting from *duty*, that is, following universal maxims in their actions irrespective of the possible self-disadvantages that these actions might bring about. This autonomous capacity of action—contrasted with acting from "inclination," concern for reputation, or in obedience to an external authority such as God or state, all of which would result in "heteronomy" rather than "autonomy"—confers incomparable "value" on humanity. In other words, it is the exclusive human capacity of "willing" duties freely that deserves the privileged status of "intrinsic value." This status necessarily implies the contrasting "instrumental value" of things as means to human purposes. It would be a sign of naivety to argue that we should not consider other natural beings as "things" or "means" while trying to hold onto the Kantian morality in other fundamental respects.

5.4 Values or Virtues?

The argument of this section is that the notion of "value" in Rolston's "intrinsic value" argument is a poor choice in conceptualizing the ethical relationship between human beings and nature. The notion of "value" is not totally irrelevant to ethics but is subordinate to "virtue." The problem with the notion of "value" is that it is often used as a generic term for so many disparate things that not only it borders at vacuity. It impoverishes the rich vocabulary available to us in examining and expressing diverse ethical and social relationships that characterize human life. So, for instance, different

[135] Whether this is Callicott's own flawed reading of Kant or his misinterpretation of Kantian environmental ethics scholars' understanding of Kant is difficult to tell from this particular text.

concepts such as "democracy," "friendship," "goodness," "truth," "beauty," "freedom," and "equality" can all be named as "values" today because they are valued by some, most, or all people.[136] The exclusive reliance on "values" impoverishes our ethical resources so much so that we cannot even awake to the problem we are facing. With "value" replacing all these disparate aspects of human life, we may be unknowingly going through the nihilism that Nietzsche saw at the end of the course of Western civilization.

Interrelated to this is the second but more important problem that the notion of "value" is inextricably entangled with the premise of "fact/values" distinction underlying modern (social) science. If "values" merely function as the mirror image of "facts," it is possible that, as one critic observed, "the destiny of the language of values . . . is to reproduce the nihilistic will-to-will of technology."[137] The acceptance and use of the term "values" (either by conservatives or progressives alike) in place of "virtues" reinforce and inescapably reproduce the message of modern science that "truth" and "morality" have become divergent "values."

We need to be first clear on what we mean by the word "value." It can be used as a noun both in the singular and in the plural to mean the "object" of our valuing. It can be used as a verb—"to value." It can also be used in the plural in relation to different objects such as cultural, aesthetic, social, and moral. Are these related usages? How is the singular use of the word "value" in the phrase "intrinsic value" related to its plural use in "moral values"? These are not separate but interrelated usages connected by

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[136] Whether the language of "values" leads to or stems from deeper sociological currents at work in human history is not our problem here. The latter may very well be the case. This why "ethics" needs a hospitable socio-political setting. Aristotle was well aware of the "contextual" problem posed by different "political regimes." See also Alasdair MacIntyre's critique of "emotivism" in *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 22-34.

[137] Peter C. Emberley, "Values and Technology: George Grant and Our Present Possibilities," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 21.3 (1988): 478.

the modern perspective that sees human beings as creators of values. Let us begin with the dictionary definition of "value" to figure out what this too familiar word means. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, in one of its senses that is of immediate concern to us here, the word "value" suggests "the relative status of a thing, or the estimate in which it is held, according to its real or supposed worth, usefulness, or importance." The dictionary further adds that when used in the plural, for instance, in philosophy and social sciences, in relation to an individual or group, it means "the principles or standards of a person or society, the personal or societal judgment of what is valuable and important in life." These are actually two connected senses of "value" which exist in reciprocal relationship. Individuals typically learn to esteem the implicit and explicit valuations that they are exposed to. Collective standards are in turn shaped and changed in the long run by cumulative effect of individual valuations.

Today, the word "values" is the first thing that comes to mind when we speak of morality in both popular and academic contexts. In a public discussion of his book, the political scientist Alan Wolfe affirms the disappearance of the word "virtue" from American everyday life.[138] For his book Wolfe conducted more than two hundred nation-wide interviews with Americans posing them questions such as "What does virtue mean to you? Is this a word that is important? How do you try to live by it?" Interview results, notes Wolfe, confirm the conservative social diagnosis and critique that "the word virtue is no longer in American vocabulary." He humorously relates his personal experience as follows:

> *The word virtue has indeed disappeared from people's vocabulary*. When I sat down with people and I said, "Well, there is this word 'virtue' that people use a lot. What

[138] "Moral Freedom: The Search for Virtue in a World of Choice," The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, 12 June 2001, http://pewforum.org/events/print.php?EventID=11. The book is Alan Wolfe, *Moral Freedom: The Search for Virtue in a World of Choice* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001).

> does it mean to you?" I would get just absolute blank stares. The very first person I interviewed scratched his head and said, "I don't know. What does it mean to you?" And then he sort of coughed and said that he wasn't a very literate person and so he didn't know the meaning of the word. He actually was a literate person. The interviews didn't get off to a good start. "Virtue is returning library books on time," someone said, which is actually not a bad way to begin. But vice got a little better response. People knew about "Miami Vice." Students I interviewed in the University of North Carolina at Greensboro—that was the first thing that came into their mind was the television program "Miami Vice." The people—mostly gay and lesbian—that I interviewed in San Francisco, they knew what vice was. Vice was vice squads, and they didn't have those any more in San Francisco so they were glad about that. *But virtue and vice were just not at the center of people's vocabularies.* [139] (italics mine)

The historian Gertrude Himmelfarb—whom Wolfe mentions as one of the conservative critics of these trends in American society—similarly observes that the word "virtue" has dropped from public discourse. She notes that "virtues" are being replaced by "values," and traces the origins of the popularization of "values" discourse to the election campaigns in England during the mid-eighties and in the US about a decade later.[140] Underlying the discursive shift from "virtues" to "values" in the Western world are the deeper currents of moral relativism and subjectivism:

> "Values" brought with it the assumptions that all moral ideas are subjective and relative, that they are mere customs and conventions, that they have a purely instrumental, utilitarian purpose, and that they are peculiar to specific individuals and societies . . . . Values, as we now understand that word, do not have to be virtues; they can be beliefs, opinions, attitudes, feelings, habits, conventions, preferences, prejudices, even idiosyncrasies—whatever any individual, group, or

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[139] After making these remarks, Wolfe goes on to add that he soon came to realize that it was better to speak of "virtues" in the plural such as loyalty, honesty, forgiveness, and self-discipline rather than "virtue" in the singular to appreciate the place of virtue in contemporary American society. By this move toward plurality, Wolfe aims to undermine the conservative critique of society. He claims that he has found certain virtues in the lives of some Americans. But those virtues he comes up with are questionable as, if interviewed, even gang or mafia members would profess to the significance of loyalty for them. Accepting the importance of virtues is only a beginning step in committing oneself to a life devoted to virtue. Otherwise, to be virtuous it would be enough to express our faith in virtue verbally when asked, and do a few good things now and then. But virtue, as Aristotle notes, is a more permanent settled condition of human soul, which takes time and long practice to develop fully.

[140] Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The De-moralization of Society: From Victorian Virtues to Modern Values* (New York: Knopf, 1995), 3-18. See also MacIntyre's *After Virtue; Cameron Lee, Beyond Family Values: A Call to Christian Virtue* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998); and Chantal Delsol, *Icarus Fallen: The Search for Meaning in an Uncertain World*, trans. Robin Dick (ISI Books, 2003).

> society happens to value, at any time, for any reason. One cannot say of virtues, as one can of values, that anyone's virtues are as good as anyone else's, or that everyone has a right to his own virtues. Only values can lay that claim to moral equality and neutrality.[141]

Himmelfarb notes that the concept of "virtue" has an overtone of "gravity and authority," whereas a sense of indifference or neutrality accompanies the notion of "values." Lamenting the loss of "values" as conservatives typically do or regretting the substitution of "virtue" with "values" will not take us far enough in making sense of what goes in the world today. The concept of "value" is linked to the modern eclipse of "quality" by "quantity," which I have discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. The talk about values actually reflects the human concern with qualities which are irreducible to quantification and manipulation. Values are the sort of things that can induce personal and social conflict by stirring human emotions such as anger, envy, and hatred. It is not possible to elicit such emotional reaction from disputes over quantifiable "facts" as Socrates brings to our attention in Plato's dialogue *Euthyphro* (7b-d). But disputes over "the just and the unjust, the beautiful [*kalon*] and the ugly [*aischron*], the good and the bad" easily cause hostility among men. The stakes are commonly perceived as higher with respect to these spiritual intangibles of human life, and the language of "values" is trying to give expression to these things, which we often presuppose in our everyday life to continue to live as human beings.

Does it matter which generic name we use to refer to the intangible goods of human life? I believe it does as the term "values" obscures the nature of human relationships that we collectively bring under the name of "ethics" or "morality." The nature of these relationships are already variegated and convoluted enough. Although there is need for an organizing concept such as "virtue" or "duty" to bring some order

[141] Ibid., 11-2.

to their multiplicity and complexity, "values" seem to bring more incoherence than coherence to the table. "Values" can be used almost for anything that is not fact-based or materially present in human life. According to one account, for instance, "value" can be a substitute for all these things: preferences and avoidances, desire-objects and aversion-objects, pleasure and pain tendencies, goals, ideals, interests and disinterests, right and wrong, good and evil, beautiful and ugly, useful and useless, approvals and disapprovals, criteria of taste and standards of judgment.[142] But what is the basis of these things called "values"? Is it the fact that humans "value" them in word and/or deed? Both of these possibilities are problematic. An individual or collective valuation in speech on its own cannot conjure up a "value." Then, there would be no end to the proliferation of "values." How about the "valuation" implicit in the actual pursuit of certain things? This leads to absurdity too. As we all know, hypocrisy is something human beings commonly practice but seldom admit to themselves or others. Shall we infer from this widespread practice that hypocrisy is a value? This would go against our common sense, which suggests to me that what we call "values" actually relies on the traditional concept of the "good." We have to conclude that we cannot affirm anything as a "value" simply because it is *valued* by someone or some group of people.

This particular problem with the notion of "values"—its semantic vacuity—may be a harbinger of a more serious problem though. There is a possible connection between the prevailing "values-talk" today (whether coming from the camp of conservatives or progressives) and nihilism as we see in Nietzsche's repeated and

[142] Abraham Edel, "Concept of Values in Contemporary Philosophical Value Theory," *Philosophy of Science* 20.3 (1953): 198.

conscious use of the term "values" in the context of nihilism.[143] The terminological shift from "virtue" to "value," clearly visible in Nietzsche, for instance, is no small matter according to Himmelfarb. It rather represents "the great philosophical revolution of modernity, no less momentous than the earlier revolt of the 'Moderns' against the 'Ancients'"[144] Unlike the earlier revolt, Himmelfarb observes, this most recent one has been attempted without an awareness of its full implications—with the exception of Nietzsche who was among the first to use the word "value" in the plural to refer to "moral beliefs and attitudes of a society" and for whom the "transvaluation of values" was the single most worthwhile project to undertake.[145]

Heidegger too took notice of Nietzsche's role in the rise of the language of "values": "It was in the nineteenth century that talk of values became current and thinking in terms of values became customary. But only after the dissemination of the writings of Nietzsche did talk of values become popular." Heidegger further adds that "value and the valuable become the positivistic substitute for the metaphysical. The frequency of talk about values is matched by a corresponding vagueness of the concept."[146] I will return to Nietzsche's role and Heidegger's discussion of this connection later.

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[143] Cf. Leo Strauss's discussion of the nihilism that Max Weber's "facts/values" distinction leads to in the *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 42-9.

[144] Himmelfarb, 11.

[145] The First Essay of *On the Genealogy of Morality* concludes with Nietzsche's proclaiming "the problem of value"— "the determination of the order of rank among values"—as a future task for the philosopher. We may as well add to Himmelfarb's observation that the Nietzschean project of transvaluation fulfills Bacon's creative vision of "modernity."

[146] Martin Heidegger, "The Word of Nietzsche: 'God is Dead,' " in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, translated by William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 70-1.

Apart from this quibble with the current state of moral discourse, there is a more important reason for concern. This has to do with the challenge of modern science to the human understanding of reality. When we raise the perennial question of the nature of reality within the framework of modern science, we get an answer that is likely to create and reinforce a split reality. What we get with the acceptance of modern science is not merely a dispassionate differentiation between the objective and subjective realms of reality corresponding to facts and values respectively. What is at stake is the questionability of this whole subjective realm of human reality for its being non-real. To recall Alexandre Koyré's assessment of the impact of modern science from Chapter 2, the modern scientific thought discarded "all considerations based upon value-concepts, such as perfection, harmony, meaning and aim." For the outcome of this quantitative reduction of reality has been "the utter devalorization of being, the divorce of the world of value and the world of facts."[147] But it is not, as one commentator claims, that modern science avoids "the normative aspect of values."[148] It is the reality of "values," anything that is not measurable, which is actually being denied by modern scientific worldview. "The scientist's world was not a world of values . . . . He dealt with a world of mass and motion—things that could be measured and predicted."[149]

Although this conclusion is not explicitly drawn out by modern science, bold spokesmen for positivism have not been in short supply. The "essential message of science," according to one champion of modern science, is nothing short of "sacrilege" to values. Its effect is the subversion of mythical or philosophical narratives on which

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[147] Alexandre Koyré, *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 1957), 2.

[148] Hart, 30.

[149] Theodore T. Lafferty, "The Dualism of Means and Value," *The Journal of Philosophy* 28.15 (1931): 395.

moral notions (values, duties, rights, prohibitions) are based.[150] Curiously, the objective realm devoid of "meaning" and "value" is considered superior to the subjective realm housing "meaning" and "value." This is so because modern (social) science *values* what is accessible to measurement and quantification. The notion of "intrinsic value" in nature must be seen basically as a desperate attempt at the re-enchantment of the world, making it meaningful again. As long as we live by the premises of modern science, however, these theoretical attempts will come to naught. The present modern condition cannot be countered by holding onto one side of the dichotomy—values—and elevate it to the prestigious status of "facts" as is implied in the coupling of "value" with various descriptors such as "objective," "universal," or "absolute." Such moves would implicitly recognize the priority and superiority of "facts" and reinforce the assertive modern impulse of observing and manipulating "facts" in nature.

The concept of "values" presupposes the modern scientific break with the pre-modern (teleological and metaphysical) view of the world. Under the pre-modern view, there are neither independent "facts" nor "values" residing in reality prior to their analytical separation.[151] Modern science departed from this understanding in ascribing the status of "reality" only to "objectivity." The "objective" was defined in terms of accessibility through systematic observation, experiment, and mathematical representation. The primary qualities of natural bodies such as "number, figure, magnitude, position, and motion" constituted the objective reality. What could not fit into objectivity—the transient features of natural bodies such as colors, tastes, sounds, and odors—was abandoned to the sphere of "subjectivity" as they are "relative,

[150] Jacques Monod, *Chance and Necessity: An Essay on the Natural Philosophy of Modern Biology* (New York: Knopf, 1971), 172.

[151] Samuel L. Hart, "Axiology: Theory of Values," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 32.1 (1971): 30.

subjective, fluctuating, and sensible."[152] Hence, the use of "subjective" as a qualifier has come to gain the connotation of unreliability. This partition of reality or Being was the beginning of the "value problem" that has taken a few centuries to sink in. The historian of science E. A. Burtt notes that the Galilean distinction between primary and secondary qualities had two inter-related effects.[153] First, it has led to the radical separation of humans from nature as the subjective world of humanity has been considered to belong predominantly to the realm of secondary qualities and the external world (*res extensa*) has been taken as the sole constituent of objective reality. Second, the external world has been given "greater dignity and value" due to its "reality." This may appear to be contradicting the preceding remarks but the external world assumes its value only in its quantitatively measurable respects, i.e., objectivity.

A major question on "values" is whether we re-cognize the "value" as an objective quality that independently inheres in things or we ourselves confer "value" on them. There is an allusion to this dilemma in the above dictionary definition. Are we speaking of the *real* or *supposed* value of things? This has been the decisive, and the divisive, question of *axiology* which emerged as a new field of philosophy in the latter half of the nineteenth century.[154] This question is merely a continuation of the older debate in

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[152] See Edwin A. Burtt, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science: A Historical and Critical Essay*, 2nd ed. (New York: Dover, [1932] 2003), 83-90.

[153] Ibid., 89-90. According to Burtt, Kepler was the first modern to promulgate the primary/secondary distinction, but it was Galileo who presented it later more effectively (ibid., 63-71).

[154] The philosophical discipline of "axiology" has its origins in the Austro-German philosophy. It was pioneered by neo-Kantians such as Hermann Lotze, Wilhelm Windelband, and Heinrich Rickert. Among other leading figures of this new discipline (also known as *Wertphilosophie* in Germany and *Werttheorie* among the Austrians) were the psychologically oriented philosophers Christian von Ehrenfels, Alexius Meinong, and Franz Brentano. Outside these two groups, other major European figures interested in "values" were Friedrich Nietzsche, Nicolai Hartmann, and Max Scheler. In the US, the precursors of value theory included John Dewey, Wilbur Marshall Urban, and Ralph Barton Perry. For a comprehensive survey of the history of this discipline, see W. H. Werkmeister, *Historical Spectrum of Value Theories*, 2 vols. (Lincoln, NE: Johnsen Publishing Co., 1970).

the history of philosophy between realism and idealism with respect to the nature of reality. The "intrinsic value" position of Rolston sides with (moral) realism and claims that "humans value Earth because it is valuable, and not the other way round."[155] Rolston's original contribution to this debate lies in his interpretation of biological striving of living beings as some sort of "valuation." Hence, when they show desire for certain things and turn away from others they are valuing their lives. The fact that they are capable of valuing themselves render them valuable regardless of human opinion: "the organism is an axiological system, an evaluative system . . . the physical state the organism seeks . . . is a valued state. *Value* is present in this achievement. . . . the living individual . . . is per se an intrinsic value."[156] So "values" in nature would be objective qualities independent of human cognition and perception. On the one hand, Rolston wants to revive the Aristotelian teleological view of organisms as his explicit reference to Aristotle's "formal and final causes" suggests and his conclusion that "each organism has its own good."[157] Aristotle would agree with this conclusion. On the other hand, the resemblance of Rolston's view of the creation of values to that of Nietzsche, as we will see shortly, is striking.

If we accept the metaphysical foundations of the modern scientific view, then the phrase "objective values" must be a contradiction in terms.[158] For how can the

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[155] Rolston, *Environmental Ethics*, 4.

[156] Rolston, *Environmental Ethics*, 99-100, emphasis original.

[157] Ibid., 98, 101.

[158] The German philosopher Max Scheler, among others, held the thesis of "objective values." By asserting the objectivity of values, Scheler was responding to and trying to overcome the modern divorce of being and value. See his *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik* (1913-16) translated by Manfred S. Frings and Roger L. Funk as *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973). Rolston is basically trying to do the same thing with his notion of the intrinsic value of nature.

"values" be in the order of "facts" which acquires their "objective" status from their predictable and reversible relationships of determinism? One possible answer is that the term "objective" in this phrase is meant to apply to the society of human beings only, i.e., inter-subjectivity.[159] According to this view, the objectivity of a given value derives from its practice among past and present humankind. The phrase "objective values" in this sense is intended to draw attention to their universally valid and binding character.[160] We can count, among others, freedom, equality, justice, and humanity as examples of such universal values. Yet, if we further ask "where do these values derive their original value from?" we shall face the original difficulty of the opposition between the "objective" and the "subjective." We want to claim (deep down in our hearts perhaps) that these values merit our respect objectively, that is, not because they are valued subjectively by a collective group or an individual but because of their intrinsically necessary quality. The status of their value must differ from that of the value of external goods. Money or gold possesses extrinsic and contingent value whereas these "objective values" must have intrinsic and unconditional value. One must be obliged to affirm their value unconditionally and act in accordance with them. They must be, in Kantian terms, "ends-in-themselves" rather than "means-to-ends" as gold and money are. Just as the objective laws of nature possess necessity, these values are objective because they command obedience out of universal and absolute necessity.

The history of the philosophical debate over the "objectivity" of values is certainly more complicated than this brief outline but I do not intend to get into this

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[159] See, for instance, Joseph Raz, *The Practice of Value* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

[160] George R. Geiger, "On the Meaning of Objective in Ethics," *The Journal of Philosophy* 34.11 (1937): 292-301. "just as subjective has seemed to imply individual and limited, with the resulting need for some correction, so objective in ethics has traditionally suggested universal and—going a short step farther—absolute" (p. 293).

objectivity/subjectivity question here, for we would get entangled in the modern scientific paradigm by trying to answer it. The dialectic between the *real* good and the *apparent* good in human life is not a matter to be settled theoretically and non-dialectically once and for all. The question is a living one and has to be continually raised and addressed under particular circumstances. As Aristotle notes, "different things appear worthwhile to people of a low sort and to decent people" (*NE* 1176b24). The differentials of "valuation" cannot be resolved by philosophical fiat. It is this discrepancy of valuation—which has both natural and conventional roots—that gives rise to politics. We should rather turn our attention to the question of why "value" has come to replace "virtue" in contemporary moral philosophy. How can we explain the relatively recent discovery of this concept that has fast become an essential part of our moral vocabulary? If "value" is so central to morality, how can we explain the fact that such an important category has been missed by millennia of philosophical activity? If we are not ready to ascribe blindness to so many past philosophers for overlooking an essential aspect of ethics, we should seek a different answer.

Actually, the concept of "value" was not unheard of in the premodern era. "Values" are , for instance, taken to mean "ideals," and are found by Nicolai Hartmann to be akin to the Platonic Ideas.[161] What happened in the nineteenth century was basically the recognition and assertion of "value" as the central concept of ethics or morality. The term "value" is translated from the Greek term *axios* (worth).[162] We see Aristotle using the term *axios* in the sense of "worthy of," for instance, while discussing the virtue of greatness of soul: "the person who seems to be great-souled is one who

[161] See Hart, 31-2.

[162] Another Greek word with a similar meaning is *timē* (honor) and its cognate *timaō* means "to value" or "to honor."

considers himself worthy of great things, and is worthy of them" (*NE* 1123b3-4). This remark indicates the agent-centered dimension of "value." Another remark Aristotle makes in the same context is more crucial for understanding why today's use of "value" remains shallow: "worth [*axios*] is spoken in relation to external goods" (*NE* 1123b16). This observation, though made in passing, is suggestive as to why Aristotle would not place the term "value" at the heart of his ethics. For if "value" is indexed to external goods instrumentally rather than intrinsically, they must have a fickle nature. External goods are valuable but their values are largely conventional and conditional on circumstances.[163]

More significantly though, the concept of "value" is affiliated with the older philosophical terminology of "good" and "end."[164] When Aristotle asks, for instance, at the outset of *Nicomachean Ethics* (1094a18) whether there is "some end of the things we do that we want on account of itself," he is calling attention to what we would today call the activity that is "intrinsically valuable." The act of "valuing" or "valuation" from which "value" and "values" are derived also exist in Aristotle as *kataphasis* (aversion) and *apophasis* (attraction) (*NE* VI.2). These are the two fundamental modes of "desiring" that we share with all natural beings. It is only natural that we value certain things by pursuing them and disvalue others by avoiding them. It is common to all natural beings which pursue pleasure and refrain from pain. But does this mean that pleasure is a value (i.e.,

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[163] See Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), 163-7. The German classicist Kurt von Fritz recognizes the lack of emphasis on the notion of "values" among the ancient Greeks and attributes this lack to the ancients' understanding of the shifting nature of what is often meant by "values." See Kurt von Fritz, "Aristotle's Anthropological Ethics and its Relevance to Modern Problems," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 42.2 (1981): 192. Another classicist Whitney J. Oates, on the other hand, believes that ancients were ignorant of "the problem of value;" see his *Aristotle and the Problem of Value* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963).

[164] See Hans Joas, *The Genesis of Values*, trans. Gregory Moore (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 21.

something perceived as valuable) and pain is a disvalue? At the surface, yes. But the simple fact that certain things are pursued and avoided by certain individuals and groups is only a beginning of the inquiry into the true "worth" of these things. All philosophical inquiry into human things is actually a deliberation of the relative worth of what is valued. Aristotle's inquiry into ethics is prompted by the "three ways of life" that are valued differently by different people (*NE* I.5). So the concept of "value" is not totally irrelevant or meaningless in ethics because of its disguised connotations of "good" and "ends," but should not be allowed to dominate our understanding of the domain of *praxis* for the sake of intellectual clarity. As I have argued above, the notion of "value" is too vague and circular to provide this clarity.

Let us now turn to the early period at the turn of the twentieth century when the notion of "value" made its public debut, and try to understand the possible reasons behind the gradual eclipse of "virtue" in the course of the last century. According to one scholar, the increase of interest in axiology can be attributed to the following reasons: "the divorce of ontological and valuational questions, the ever-widening gap between physical and humanistic studies, the vogue of relativistic beliefs, and the literary influence exercised by Brentano, Ehrenfels, and Meinong."[165] We have briefly discussed the first—the split of reality into the objective and subjective realms—above. The latter three reasons are historically related. These three figures cited in the quote were influential Austro-German psychologist-cum-philosophers of the late nineteenth century. They found the subjective act of "valuing" critical to the discovery of the domain of subjectivity. One of the early leading figures of value theory in America, from the

[165] Hart, 30.

Deweyan school of progressive pragmatism, draws attention to the subjectivist aspect of "value" in his account of the origins of value theory:

> The problem of goods, good and the Good, is an ancient one for philosophy, but it was not until comparatively recently that psychology became interested in it. Apparently it did not like the terms "good" and "goods," perhaps because of their metaphysical and theological connotations, perhaps because of their "objectivity," so it adopted and adapted terms which were better suited to its purposes, namely, "value" and "worth."[166]

What is noteworthy in this account is that the notion of "value"—which was originally used by economists in the late modern period as in the Marxist contrast between the "use" and "exchange" value of commodities—was of psychological interest because of its subjectivist association. As Hans Joas notes, "attached to the concept of 'value' [is] an ineradicable reference to the valuing subject."[167] The shift toward "values" in the understanding of morality must have something to do with the nineteenth century subjectivist turn in the human/moral/social sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften* in the German) which found itself in the shadow of the naturalistic causality of natural sciences.

Philosophical controversies erupted soon after Descartes as the implications of the Cartesian dualism was drawn out for the study of human beings. Two kinds of related problems have emerged. What could be the source of freedom in a realm of causal determinism? This is basically the revival of the venerable question of free will and morality which was raised in previous times in the context of religion. The second problem was methodological. How could we best study human beings—in terms of their primary objective qualities or secondary subjective ones? Can the latter approach provide us with a definitive knowledge of human reality? These questions became pressing

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[166] Herbert W. Schneider, "The Theory of Values," *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods* 16.4 (1917): 141.

[167] Joas, 21-2.

especially in the nineteenth century. Kant tried to address the first problem. His motivation was to protect the sphere of "freedom" and "morality" from the threat posed by modern science. His notion of human dignity was an attempt to save the reduction of human life to the deterministic causality of natural objects or things.

If the original source of the "intrinsic value" notion was Kant's response to the first problem with his secularized notion of "dignity," the immediate origin of the contemporary "values" discourse was the neo-Kantian response to the methodological problem posed by the increasing prestige of natural sciences felt in the second half of the nineteenth century. The rapid progress of natural sciences in this period discredited much of previous philosophy, including Hegel's most ambitious philosophical attempt to synthesize human knowledge early in the century, and struck a fatal blow to the philosopher's traditional claim to wisdom. As natural scientists have committed themselves increasingly to the pursuit of "is" or what "exists," traditional philosophical speculation has come to be perceived deficient in scientific "rigor" and the technological imperative of "efficiency." Pressured also by the exigencies of socio-economic "modernization," "science" slowly but firmly drifted away from "philosophy" while at the same time assuming its authoritative mantle. It is in the context of this mid-century crisis of philosophy that the neo-Kantian "philosophy of value" intervened to recover the dignity of humanity in the spirit of Kant.[168]

Another clue as to why the term "values" might have gained recognition at the expense of "virtue" in recent times can be gathered from our current understanding of the ontological roles of "subject" and "object." Strangely, although the "subjective" ranks lower than the "objective" in science, it is believed to be better to be a "subject"

[168] See Herbert Schnädelbach, *Philosophy in Germany: 1831-1933* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

than an "object" in real life because the latter implies manipulation and no one would want to be in such a position. Being on the active rather than the passive side of life has its counterpart in Aristotle in the preference for *energeia* over *dunamis*. In modern philosophy, however, activity is defined in terms of efficiency. The revolutionary changes in natural science have been extrapolated to the historical realm in which humankind could take an active role to decide its destiny. In this activist sense of subjectivity, the ambiguity of "values" can play an important role.

The Deweyan pragmatist Herbert Schneider further remarks that "values" have served and must continue to serve progress: "Values are instruments of progress, and without change in the direction of progress they lose their function and meaning."[169] Values serve progress, according to Schneider, when individuals are taught how to evaluate the social affairs rather than are indoctrinated with the pre-existing values of society: "Education must not merely impress and impose on the individual ready-made social valuations as standards; it must seek to develop in him the technique of true valuation."[170] What is meant by "true valuation" is what Aristotle would call "hitting the mark." But there is a major difference here. For Aristotle, the desire must be of the *right* kind to reflect truth that pertains to human action (*NE* VI.2). Schneider and others progressives of his view believe that the *rightness* of desires are irrelevant to the truth of the matter: "If an object desired as a value turns out upon reflection or experience to fail to measure up to the situation, it is recognized as valued falsely. Strictly speaking values, like facts, are neither true nor false, they simply *are;* it is valuation which is true or

[169] Schneider, 154.

[170] Ibid., 153.

false."[171] If "values" are meant here as "ends," then Aristotle would also say that we do not deliberate ends but only means to ends. Still, ends are comparable with respect to their intrinsic desirability and contribution to living well according to Aristotle.

Formalistically speaking, Schneider's "true valuation" has more of an echo of Nietzsche's transvaluation of values. His statement exemplifies the essence of progressive liberal individualism which represents human beings as individuals who have a right to choose and change their values as they please. The rejection of the pre-modern hierarchical Cosmos by modern science, the Protestant Reformation, and the rise of capitalism in the period between fifteenth to nineteenth centuries have been instrumental to the emancipation of the "individual" or the "self." As Alasdair MacIntyre notes, the "loss of traditional structure and content" was seen from an Enlightenment point of view necessary for achieving individual autonomy casting off the shackles of tradition, prejudice, necessity, and authority: "The self had been liberated from all those outmoded forms of social organization which had imprisoned it simultaneously within a belief in a theistic and teleological world order and within those hierarchical structures which attempted to legitimate themselves as part of such a world order."[172] This traditional conservative critique of "individualism" brings us to the Nietzsche's diagnosis of the nihilistic implications of modern science.[173]

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[171] Ibid., 150-1.

[172] MacIntyre, 58. See also Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989); and Adam B. Seligman, *Modernity's Wager: Authority, the Self, and Transcendence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

[173] The translations of the following quotes are from Friedrich Nietzsche, *Writings from the Late Notebooks*, ed. Rüdiger Bittner and trans. Kate Sturge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). The citations are made according to the dates provided in Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke, Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1988). Most of these notes were posthumously edited under the title of *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage, 1968).

Nietzsche's diagnosis of nihilism and his project of the trans-valuation or re-valuation of values is based on the success and widespread acceptance of modern natural science.[174] Nietzsche defines nihilism in terms of lacking of meaning and value: "the goal is lacking; an answer to the 'Why?' is lacking. What does nihilism mean?—*That the highest values devaluate themselves*."[175] We should note that nihilism is not something Nietzsche deplores after the Romantics, but accepts as a necessary stage of the Western history given its initial conditions. Nietzsche argues that nihilism has come about as a necessary consequence of the Socratic and the subsequent Christian quest after "truth" and "truthfulness." Modern science is driven by the *will to truth* derived from the example set by Socrates who contributed to the dissolution of the hold of art and tragedy in Greek society. The trace of Socratic influence could still be found in Christian valuation of "truthfulness."

As Nietzsche sees it, the Socratic seeds of Western culture could not but clash at some point in history with another ancient element of the Western heritage. This second element of the Western heritage was the postulate of another world or afterlife. Both Platonism and Christianity rested on the presupposition of a transcendental realm separate from this world in which we live. The teachings based on the presupposition of this imaginary world, according to Nietzsche, were devised to shield the weak in their life struggles against pessimism, despair, and the violence of oppressors. But as modern science from Galileo to Darwin have debunked the existence of another world, the sole

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[174] It is commonplace among left-leaning intellectuals to condemn or criticize Nietzsche for his irrationalism. See, for instance, George Lukács, *The Destruction of Reason*, trans. Peter Palmer (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, [1962] 1980), Chapter 3; and Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. Frederick G. Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, [1985] 1990), 83-105. However, most of them (with the exception of Habermas) would still adhere to the instrumental reason which is indifferent to the questions of right and wrong. If instrumental reasoning is all we are capable of, the difference between rationalism and irrationalism is practically irrelevant.

[175] Notebook 9 [35], Autumn 1887.

origin of meaning and value for this life appeared to be merely a comforting fiction. This world or existence can no longer be interpreted in terms of the categories of "aim," "unity," "truth," or "being," all of which refer to the non-existent fictitious world in providing the comfort of meaning and value:

> All the values by means of which up to now we first tried to make the world estimable to us and with which, once they proved inapplicable, we then *devaluated* it—all these values are, calculated psychologically, the results of particular perspectives of usefulness for the preservation and enhancement of human formations of rule, and only falsely *projected* into the essence of things. It's still the *hyperbolic naivety* of man, positing himself as the meaning of things and the measure of their value. . .[176]

It was from this inevitable conflict between the valuations of "truth" and "other-worldliness" that nihilism, which is world-weariness for Nietzsche, arose. Nietzsche concludes that this outcome is no surprise as the Christian morality was flawed from the beginning for denying the *will to power* that gave rise to Christendom, and teaching a doctrine that negated it. So nihilism is a product of Christianity's own making, and modern science, humanism, socialism, and all types of modern democratic movements are simply the estranged children of Christianity. All life including human, according to Nietzsche, is nothing but the product of the *will to power*. This instinctual movement of life is not satisfied with mere survival or existence but wills continual growth and enhancement. The *will to truth* of philosophers, scientists, and scholars, and the piety of priests are merely masks for the fundamental *will to power* that drive them subconsciously. The denial of this most basic drive, according to Nietzsche, brings about cultural decadence and exacerbates nihilism.

With the loss of an ultimate ground, "morality" was left without rational justification or foundation. Hence, the ring of Gyges reappears in the decisive question

[176] Notebook 11 [99], November 1887-March 1888.

of our times "Why ought I be moral?"—the answer to which has turned into the Holy Grail of contemporary moral philosophy. Nietzsche claims—and MacIntyre agrees with him on this point[177]—that outside the pre-modern socio-political and metaphysical framework, it is not possible to give a (rationally) defensible answer to this question. All attempts since Kant to prove otherwise have failed to advance the understanding of morality beyond the Christian emphasis on "conscience" and the imperative form of Biblical injunctions.[178] Instead of beating a dead horse, Nietzsche presents his active nihilism of *Umwethung aller Werthe* (revaluation of all values) in overcoming the passive nihilism of the Western civilization induced by Christian morality. This task is self-consciously driven by the will to power: "*values and their changes* stand in relation to *the growth in power of the value-positer*."[179] With this aphorism, Nietzsche gestures at the connection between enhancing power and positing values.

In his commentary on Nietzsche's pronouncement of "the death of God," Heidegger draws our attention to this connection.[180] According to Heidegger, thinking in terms of values (*Wertdenken*) is problematic not only because of its subjective relativism but also especially noteworthy for the nihilism implicit in the subjectivist ground of value-positing as will to power. Heidegger agrees on a fundamental level with

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[177] See MacIntyre, Chapter 2.

[178] See Notebook 9 [43], Autumn 1887. One recent attempt to provide rational justification for moral conduct was made by Alan Gewirth in *Reason and Morality* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1978); and *The Community of Rights* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1996). In these works, Gewirth argued that a supreme moral principle (of generic consistency) can be shown dialectically necessary given the purposive nature of human agency, and consequently must be held obligatory for all moral agents. As of today, Gewirth's argument is yet to gain wide acceptance from the philosophical community. For objections to Gewirth and a defense of his position against these objections, see Deryck Beyleveld, *The Dialectical Necessity of Morality* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991).

[179] Notebook 9 [39], Autumn 1887.

[180] Heidegger, "The Word of Nietzsche: 'God is Dead,'" in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, translated by William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 53-112. The following discussion relies mainly on this article but I will make occasional references to Heidegger's other writings as well.

Nietzsche's account of nihilism emerging immanently from the historical course of the Western philosophy. He also agrees with Nietzsche in not taking nihilism lightly but as a phenomenon that will determine the course of world history for centuries to come. He disagrees with Nietzsche, however, in the explanation of the specific historical roots of nihilism, its essence, as well as Nietzsche's recipe for the overcoming of nihilism.

Heidegger thinks that Nietzsche's critique of the Platonic metaphysics (which was inherited by Christianity) does not do away with metaphysics in itself. Nietzsche's emphatic denial of a transcendental realm inverts rather than overcomes Platonism. Hence, the central motif of Nietzsche's thinking—the will to power—underlying the project of revaluation of values, according to Heidegger, is still indicative of residual metaphysics. Heidegger interprets Nietzsche's expression of *will to power* as a response to "the ancient guiding question of philosophy, 'What is being?'"[181] This interpretation represents at the same time Heidegger's critique of Nietzsche as well as the Western tradition to which, Heidegger thinks, Nietzsche is tied to on a fundamental level. In contrast to this guiding question of the Western tradition, Heidegger raises the grounding question of the essence of Being. As I have briefly mentioned in Chapter 3, Heidegger's main philosophical claim is that there is an ontological difference between Being (*Sein*) and beings (*Seinde*). Although Heidegger has been very elusive and enigmatic about what this Being is, he insists that it cannot be known through the received categories of logic (i.e., Aristotle) or mind (i.e., Kant), i.e., reason.[182] For Heidegger, Nietzsche's notion of "will to power" remains within the framework of post-Socratic

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[181] Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. I, trans. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: HarperSanFranciso, 1991), 3-4.

[182] Heidegger maintains a distinction between Aristotle's use of *logos* and the modern understanding of *ratio* in that *logos* in Aristotle "was not characterized as the subjectivity of the subject" unlike the "*cogito-sum*" principle. See Martin Heidegger, "Modern Science, Metaphysics and Mathematics," in *Basic Writings*, ed., David F. Krell (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), 304.

philosophy in passing over this greater question, and consequently contributing to the grand forgetfulness and withdrawal of Being in Western history. The thinking that gives precedence to beings and turns away from Being is what the metaphysics of Western tradition basically is.

Although Heidegger associates Nietzsche with the whole Western tradition of metaphysics from Plato onwards, he also thinks that Nietzsche's characterization of being or *what is* in terms of "willing" defines the essence of modernity in a peculiar way. Hence, this grand critic of modernity was unknowingly in the company of the moderns. The *will to power* constitutes "the metaphysical ground of the consummation of the modern age."[183] Nihilism enters into its activist/subjectivist phase with modernity culminating in Nietzsche. Needless to say, it is not necessary for Heidegger that Nietzsche's doctrines are consciously and affirmatively accepted by public. Nietzsche rather gives voice to the past, present, and the future of world history without necessarily being the agent of history's unfolding in this peculiar way.[184] In this sense, Nietzsche becomes "the *last metaphysician* of the West."[185] Heidegger understands the metaphysics of modern science in terms of "willing" and "power." The ambitious Cartesian/Baconian project of the conquest of nature for the relief of man's estate is closely related to the object/subject distinction and the subsequent rise of "values" discourse out of the anthropocentric subjectivism that this distinction gives rise to. This project necessarily assigns the title of the "subject" exclusively to human beings and views things as passive "objects." Consequently, human life assumes a "subjective" and

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[183] Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. II, trans. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: HarperSanFranciso, 1991), 7.

[184] See Heidegger, "The Word of Nietzsche," 92.

[185] Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. II, 8.

things an "objective" character. Heidegger interprets this transformation in metaphysics, which he characterizes as "objectifying" or "representing," as man's "insurrection" against Being:

> Man enters into insurrection. The world changes into object. In this revolutionary objectifying of everything that is, the earth, that which first of all must be put at the disposal of representing and setting forth, moves into the midst of human positing and analyzing. The earth itself can show itself only as the object of assault, an assault that, in human willing, establishes itself as unconditional objectification. Nature appears everywhere—because willed from out of the essence of Being—as the object of technology.[186]

Heidegger does not deny that the Latin word *subjectum* was derived from the ancient Greek notion of *hypokeimenon* (literally, underlying). But the moderns, beginning with Descartes, have reinterpreted it as exclusively indexed to human beings: "the *ousia* (beingness) of the *subjectum* changes into the subjectness of self-assertive self-consciousness, which now manifests its essence as the will to will."[187] The modern project, according to Heidegger, is now becoming "conscious of its own truth about itself" and is now "willing the will to power as the Being of whatever is."[188] At this point of modern metaphysics, comes the relevance of "values":

> In the willing of this will, however, there comes upon man the condition that he concomitantly will the conditions, the requirements, of such a willing. That means: to posit values and to ascribe worth to everything in keeping with values. In such a manner does value determine all that is in its Being.[189]

Heidegger thinks that Nietzsche was mistaken in his expectation that the revaluation of the old values and the creation of new values would hold and ultimately reverse the tide of nihilism. The thinking in terms of values (*Wertdenken*) makes things worse because it

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[186] Heidegger, "The Word of Nietzsche," 100, italics original.

[187] Ibid., 79-80, italics original.

[188] Ibid., 101-2.

[189] Ibid., 102.

degrades Being into a value and completely obliterates "every way to the experiencing of Being."[190] The "values" serve as the "objectification of needs as goals" to sustain the modern project:

> Value appears to be the expression of the fact that we, in our position of relationship to it, act to advance just that which is itself most valuable; and yet that very value is the impotent and threadbare disguise of the objectivity of whatever is, an objectivity that has become flat and devoid of background.[191]

As I have remarked earlier, the modern project values the role of "subject" on the one hand and devalues that of "object" on the other. Strangely enough, however, the "subjective" point of view is considered unreliable whereas the "objective" point of view is glorified in natural and social sciences today. What shall we make of this discrepancy? Heidegger takes note of "the necessary interplay between subjectivism and objectivism" of modernity, and thinks that "this reciprocal conditioning of one by the other" has deep significance for understanding the anthropocentric character of modern age:

> the more extensively and the more effectually the world stands at man's disposal as conquered, and the more objectively the object appears, all the more subjectively, i.e., the more importunately, does the *subjectum* rise up, and all the more impetuously, too, do observation of and teaching about the world change into a doctrine of man, into anthropology. . . . The modern freedom of subjectivity vanishes totally in the objectivity commensurate with it.[192]

On a collective level, Heidegger suggests, human beings try to better their conditions by projecting their subjectivity forcefully onto the world, but only at the price of turning themselves into objects in the very process. If value-positing is inescapably tied to the modern project, then insisting on the "intrinsic value" of nature may not be the best way to approach human relationship to the world. For even if we assume that there is such a

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[190] Ibid., 102-4, 108.

[191] Martin Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture," in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, translated by William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 142.

[192] Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture," 128, 133, 152-3, italics original.

thing, it is obvious that not everyone sees and appreciates the intrinsic value of nature. Their theoretical formulation would still need the constant protection of policies and laws. We may indeed manage to do that for certain reserves or species in each country but as human beings and their needs multiply there will be growing pressure even on these last refuges. Another problem with "intrinsic value" is that it is less applicable to the kind of environmental issues that stem from the nexus of economy and ecology. As I will discuss in the next section, virtues find their practical implementation in the context of "environmental citizenship." This praxis-oriented concept is much more promising in bridging over ethics and politics that "values" fail to achieve on their own.

Although Heidegger never spoke of "virtues" or "ethics" in his works, his analysis of "values" is nonetheless illuminating to understand what is dormant in the prevailing "values" discourse both in and outside the academia. Heidegger is notorious, however, for his fateful resignation toward history through which, he thinks, Being reveals itself: "Man cannot, of himself, abandon this destining of his modern essence or abolish it by fiat." One rather must wait patiently the passing of this "fleeting cloud" shadowing over "a concealed land."[193] I believe "virtues" occupy a middle ground between the assertive value-positing of Nietzsche and Heidegger's passive resignation to the historical unfolding of nihilism. Virtues in Aristotle's conception allow human beings to fulfill their potential nature. Unlike values, virtues are not entangled in the objective/subjective or fact/value dualisms.

Most importantly, one cannot posit or impose virtues willfully. We can debate what virtues there are, their relative importance, and how best to attain them, but we

[193] Ibid., 153.

cannot posit or impose virtues the way we do posit or impose values.[194] The reason for this is that whereas "values" correspond to nothing more than desires or interests, virtues are products of deliberated desires. The process of virtue cultivation is not as whimsical as the process of "valuing." The deliberation requires not only individual's input but also the people he is connected to in everyday life—family, peers, neighbors, colleagues, and various fellowships from other spheres of life. To give an example, we often see the kinds of following statement (made in the context of "nature restoration" projects) on the premise that there is no single, neutral, or interest-free scientific definition of "nature" or "naturalness":

> Because many possible natures exist, which nature is chosen to serve as the goal of restoration requires imposing human values and preferences for one time period and one set of initial, perhaps random, conditions. Such a decision may not be arbitrary, but it will no doubt reflect the values and preferences of the decision maker.[195]

The authors are equivocating here as a result of their commitment to the metaphysics of "becoming" in lieu of that of "being." Their argument is that since everything in nature or nature itself is in flux, there is not an original or authentic condition to restore spoiled or degraded landscapes to. What are the implications of admitting "randomness" but not "arbitrariness" of such a decision. The authors want to suggest that which form of natural conditions to choose in restoration projects is not given outside public negotiation. The decision reached will not be arbitrary because it will be based on the equal participation of stakeholders. This approach sounds democratic in contrast to the dreaded elitism of scientists and experts. But why should it not be arbitrary? Because the

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[194] This needs some qualification though. To call anything we like as virtue makes a mockery of virtue. One is rather obliged to show how a specific virtue contributes to human perfection and why its lack is a serious matter.

[195] R. Bruce Hull and David P. Robertson, "The Language of Nature Matters: We Need a More Public Ecology," in *Restoring Nature: Perspectives from the Social Sciences and Humanities*, ed. Paul H. Gobster and R. Bruce Hull (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2000), 102.

notion of "arbitrary" connotes the exclusive exercise of the "will" of the decision-maker. If the "will" is generalized to include all others (but whom exactly?), it will cease to be "arbitrary." We hear the voice of "social contract" here. The problem is in the globalizing world, nothing short of including all humankind in the decision-making process can satisfy this democratic rule of general will. The language of "imposing values" in the above quote implies the radical separation of humanity from nature (hence "randomness") on the one hand and the metaphysics of "will to power" on the other.

Chapter 6: The Civic Approach to the Environment

This chapter examines the nascent discourses of "civic environmentalism" and "environmental citizenship" in contemporary environmental theory literature.[1] I aim to accomplish two things. First, I will bring out the partial indebtedness and commitment of these discourses to an Aristotelian conception of praxis, which is especially discernible in their common emphasis on justice, civic virtue, the common good, and civic action. In reference to this Aristotelian dimension, I will show how these two discourses share a common ground and can be considered as a complement to environmental virtue ethics explored in the previous chapter. Rendering the Aristotelian influence on these discourses more explicit will support the overall argument of this dissertation that Aristotle is not only relevant to contemporary environmental thinking but can also clarify our thinking through the question concerning the environment.

Second, I will examine these discourses with an eye to the discursive context in which they have arisen and argue that their context-dependence is integral to understand them. To understand, for instance, why the terms "citizen," "citizenship," or "civic" are attached to the terms "environmentalist" and "environmentalism," we should consider the recent debates in contemporary environmentalism taking place primarily in the United States but also in Western Europe to a lesser extent. An increasing number of environmentalists in both contexts are dissatisfied with the current state of environmentalism and are apprehensive about its future prospects. This is despite the environmental gains made over the last three decades and the evidence of high

[1] Hereafter, I shall use the expressions "the civic approach" (to the environment) or, alternatively, "the civic environmental approach" to refer to their common ground. While referring to the relevant scholarly literature, however, I shall retain the terms "civic environmentalism" and "environmental citizenship." We should note that the terms "ecological democracy" and "civil ecology" are also used for similar purposes.

environmental concern and awareness in Western societies. The discontent concerns the widely shared opinion that mainstream environmental groups in the United States have long treated the environment narrowly and independent of other spheres and concerns of human life. This narrow focus has given rise to a disconnect between environmentalists and everyday life concerns both materially and discursively. The civic emphasis of "civic environmentalism" and "environmental citizenship" is related to these debates by virtue of their intent and their promising potential to bridge this gap.

Before we get to this common ground, we should attend to the particular emphases in these discourses. We should consider their specific conceptions and the particular issues they are directed to. We will then note that the parameters and the terms of these discourses are colored by specific theoretical and historical influences important to their proponents. But more importantly, we shall see that both discourses are essentially put forth to address the inadequacies of environmental movement in spreading its gospel. In what follows, I shall first discuss the contingent differences between "civic environmentalism" and "environmental citizenship" based on how they are conceptualized in their respective scholarly literatures.[2] The second section situates these discourses in the context of contemporary environmental debates.

6.1 Civic Environmentalism and Environmental Citizenship

I shall argue in this section that, despite some differences, civic environmentalism and environmental citizenship are not two separate discourses. Before we get to their more important common ground, however, we should first attend to the contingent differences between them. It is important to first note that the phrase "civic

[2] Due to their short history, it would be too early to speak of them as "concepts." In exploring their meaning, I will rather refer to them interchangeably as "discourses" and "projects" since they are intellectual discussions with the intention of affecting how things are in the real world.

environmentalism" is mainly used among American scholars, whereas the phrase "environmental citizenship" has been the preferred idiom in the rest of the English-speaking world.[3] Admittedly, this geographic difference might appear insignificant, and this is true to a certain extent as I shall argue shortly but this difference is not irrelevant to their other contingent differences.

The fact that scholars writing on either discourse share a common perspective may give the impression that the two discourses pursue different objectives. For instance, most scholars of civic environmentalism typically emphasize the importance of the local scale of environmental praxis whereas the proponents of environmental citizenship highlight the global context of environmental problems. This difference would suggest that each discourse is offering us a different path to environmental protection or is interested in different environmental issues. This impression is not fully accurate, however, as there are critical differences even among authors commenting on the same discourse. For instance, there are two versions of civic environmentalism. One is more private market-oriented and the other is more community-oriented.[4] Similarly,

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[3] This terminological variance is also noted in Julian Agyeman and Bob Evans, "Justice, Governance and Sustainability: Perspectives on Environmental Citizenship from North America and Europe," in *Environmental Citizenship*, eds. Andrew Dobson and Derek Bell (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 187. The term "civic environmentalism" was first used by DeWitt John in his *Civic Environmentalism: Alternatives to Regulation in States and Communities* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1994). The term "environmental citizenship," on the other hand, was coined and first defined by the department of the Government of Canada in charge of environmental policies and programs (i.e., Environment Canada).

[4] The two versions are not necessarily at odds but we can surmise that they can conflict in certain cases. The market-oriented or libertarian version is associated with the working group in George C. Marshall Institute among whom are Charles T. Rubin, Marc Landy, and Brent Haglund and the Progressive Policy Institute (PPI), a democratic think-tank affiliated with the "Third Way" politics trying to find polices that synthesize public and market tools. The community-oriented or communitarian approach is defended in William A. Shutkin, *The Land That Could Be: Environmentalism and Democracy in the Twenty-first Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000). Shutkin, for instance, distinguishes his approach by pointing out that his "conception of civic environmentalism shares a lot with the PPI's but expands on and enriches this and other notions of civic environmentalism by viewing the issue primarily through the lens of civic engagement and democracy rather than environmental regulation per se" (p. 16).

there are localist and globalist interpretations of environmental citizenship.[5] There is no point in trying to define either of these two discourses in abstract terms by privileging one interpretation. A better approach to the ideas advanced by these discourses can be obtained by paying attention to their practical purposes. Both discourses can be interpreted in more general terms elucidating the broader empirical and conceptual frameworks of analysis in which they are situated and the practical goals of their proponents in advocating these frameworks. I shall return to this common ground in the next two sections.

As I have remarked earlier, civic environmentalism is peculiar to the American context with a bent toward local solutions to environmental problems. The historical trajectory of the United States vis-à-vis federalism and the vast land it occupies has certainly shaped the local focus of American civic environmentalism. One major source of inspiration must be the Jeffersonian and Tocquevillian vision of decentralized, self-governing small communities and civic associations.[6] The main claim repeated in this literature is that a decentralized, community-based, participatory approach to certain environmental issues such as land conservation, preservation of endangered species, or

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[5] The localist interpretation of environmental citizenship—by which I mean authors discussing the interrelated themes of "sense of place," "community," "bioregionalism," "place-based education," and "new urbanism"—has been developed particularly in the American context. Even though "environmental citizenship" is not systematically explored in this literature, strong connection is drawn among themes of citizenship, sense of community, and care for one's immediate natural and urban environment. See, for instance, David W. Orr, *Earth in Mind: On Education, Environment and the Human Prospect* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 1994); Daniel Kemmis, *The Good City and the Good Life: Renewing the Sense of Community* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1995); Mark Luccarelli, *Lewis Mumford and the Ecological Region: Politics of Planning* (New York: Guilford Press, 1995); Timothy Beatley and Kristy Manning, *The Ecology of Place: Planning for Environment, Economy, and Community* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 1997); J. Ronald Engel, "The Faith of Democratic Ecological Citizenship," *The Hastings Center Report* 28.6 (1998): 31-41; Joan G. Engel, "Who are Democratic Ecological Citizens?" *The Hastings Center Report* 28.6 (1998): 23-30; Kirkpatrick Sale, *Dwellers in the Land: The Bioregional Vision* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2000); Wendell Berry, *Citizenship Papers* (Washington, DC: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2003); David Sobel, *Place-based Education: Connecting Classrooms & Communities* (Great Barrington, MA: The Orion Society, 2005); and Timothy Beatley, *Native to Nowhere: Sustaining Home And Community In A Global Age* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2005).

[6] Shutkin, 19-26.

nonpoint pollution prevention can be more effective than the prevailing command-and-control model that both federal government and mainstream American environmentalism have relied on.[7] The civic approach in this sense reflects the characteristic populist or libertarian aversion to bureaucratic centralism and technocratic regulation. Most civic environmentalists view the role of the predicate "civic" as one of signifying the importance of self-governance at the state and local levels as they view the exercise of political power at the federal level with suspicion.[8]

Another point of criticism in this literature is the litigious approach used by environmentalists preoccupied with finding faults with the political system but less willing to come up with a positive vision. It is claimed that the lack of a positive program that can systematically produce pragmatic anticipatory solutions to problems prevents environmentalism's being an integral part of the political culture. The conventional approach of regulation and litigation is not rejected by civic environmentalists outright but deemed insufficient since certain type of environmental problems are impervious to

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[7] In addition to the previously cited works by DeWitt John and William A. Shutkin, the literature on civic environmentalism includes Marc Landy, "Frederick Law Olmsted: Civic Environmentalist," in *Conservation Reconsidered: Nature, Virtue, and American Liberal Democracy*, ed. Charles T. Rubin (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 207-28; Lewis A. Friedland and Carmen Sirianni, *Civic Innovation in America* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001); Charles F. Sabel et al., eds., *Beyond Backyard Environmentalism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000); Charles T. Rubin, "Civic Environmentalism," in *Democracy and the Claims of Nature: Critical Perspectives for a New Century*, eds. Ben A. Minteer and Bob Pepperman Taylor (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 335-51; Christopher S. Beach, Richard William Judd, *Natural States: The Environmental Imagination in Maine, Oregon, and the Nation* (Washington, DC: RFF Press, 2004); Ben A. Minteer, *The Landscape of Reform: Civic Pragmatism and Environmental Thought in America* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006); and Jeremy Bendik-Keymer, *The Ecological Life: Discovering Citizenship and a Sense of Humanity* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006).

[8] See, for instance, Marc Landy and Charles T. Rubin, "Civic Environmentalism: A New Approach to Policy," December 15, 2001, http://www.marshall.org/article.php?id=87; Daniel Kemmis, *This Sovereign Land: A New Vision for Governing the West* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2001); Robert B. Keiter, *Keeping Faith with Nature: Ecosystems, Democracy, and America's Public Lands* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003); and Brent M. Haglund and Thomas W. Still, *Hands-On Environmentalism* (San Francisco, CA: Encounter Books, 2005). For an analysis of how Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) responded to these criticisms, see Michael E. Kraft and Denise Scheberle, "Environmental Federalism at Decade's End: New Approaches and Strategies," *Publius* 28.1 (1998): 131-46.

the conventional methods of environmental activism.[9] The ineffectiveness of regulation and confrontation is clear, for instance, in the case of non-point pollution—the principal remaining cause of water pollution in the US and Europe.[10] This type of pollution occurs when runoff water washes off the dispersed waste particles on the soil surface and introduces them into rivers, lakes, or groundwater. The challenge of preventing this type of pollution is that it has no distinct origin.[11] This pollution is basically an aggregate result of our day-to-day consumptive habits as well as the prevailing industrial and agricultural production patterns. Due to its diffuse, unidentifiable origins, conventional means such as regulation, litigation, or even protest that environmentalists typically rely on prove ineffective. Proponents of civic environmentalism claim that grassroots or local efforts have a comparative advantage in modifying behavior and practices for environmental problems such as this one and in making better use of local skills and knowledge for similar environmental problems.[12]

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[9] See, for instance, Marc K. Landy, Megan M. Susman, and Debra S. Knopman, "Civic Environmentalism in Action: A Field Guide to Regional and Local Initiatives," *Progressive Policy Institute Policy Report*, January 1, 1999, http://www.ppionline.org/documents/Civic_Enviro_Full_Report.pdf.

[10] Environmental Protection Agency, "Nonpoint Source Pollution: The Nation's Largest Water Quality Problem," http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/facts/point1.htm. See also Carmen Revenga and Greg Mock, "Dirty Water: Pollution Problems Persist," http://earthtrends.wri.org/features/_view_feature.php?fid=16&theme=2.

[11] As the EPA website points out, the responsibility is shared: "We all play a part. Nonpoint source pollution results from a wide variety of human activities on the land. Each of us can contribute to the problem without even realizing it." Environmental Protection Agency, "What is Nonpoint Source (NPS) Pollution?: Questions and Answers," http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/qa.html.

[12] A major theme in this and affiliate environmental literature is local knowledge and skepticism of expert knowledge. See, for instance, Frank Fischer, *Citizens, Experts, and the Environment: The Politics of Local Knowledge* (Duke University Press, 2000). In their epistemological critique, civic environmentalists come very close to the traditional conservative criticism of social engineering and technocracy. This critique, which can be found in the works of Edmund Burke and, more recently, Michael Oakeshott, has been reinvented by contemporary scholars of different persuasions as varied as libertarianism, communitarianism, and postmodernism. See, for instance, James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

Some scholars have suggested caution for civic environmentalism because "its touted benefits are likely to materialize only in particular circumstances."[13] Unfavorable conditions for civic approach exist, according to Layzer, especially when the disparity of power relations between local communities and economic developers is exacerbated by financial constraints faced by local governments. Although this view might be valuable in cautioning us against embracing the civic approach overenthusiastically as a panacea to all kinds of environmental ills, it suffers from overlooking the fact that financial difficulties and the power disparity, which allegedly puts the weaker environmental interests at a disadvantage, is true for all levels of government. Layzer claims that this is not the case at the regional and state levels but she does not provide any evidence for her position: "Collaborative approaches to ecological problem solving may be more likely to succeed at the national or regional level, where the resource disparity among interests is less profound and the political-economic context less limiting than at the community level."[14] The contestation of interests among political actors with unequal material resources—regardless of the level of authority—will naturally produce varying outcomes depending on the contingent circumstances in which it takes place. Such empirical variation from one case to another does not in itself justify a serious objection to the civic approach for, as I shall discuss next, it receives its justification essentially on practical rather than technical grounds.

Civic environmentalists also claim that delegating environmental responsibility to local communities contributes to the political capacity of communities by increasing the opportunities of attaining self-sufficiency (e.g., farmer's markets, community gardens,

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[13] See Judith A. Layzer, "Citizen Participation and Government Choice in Local Environmental Controversies," *Policy Studies Journal* 30.2 (2002): 193.

[14] Ibid., 205.

and city farms) and neighborliness. They emphasize the civic returns in protecting open urban spaces and paying heed to city design in general because these structural aspects are important to the experience of living together in cities.[15] Civic environmentalists aim at building public trust and sense of place in the process of addressing environmental concerns. These constructive sentiments—typically expressed through the notion of "social capital"—are seen as both valuable side-products and essential ingredients of civic environmentalism: "The more social capital a community possesses, the greater is its ability to solve problem and achieve positive environmental outcomes."[16] In short, the civic approach to environmental issues brings together people and provides them with a feeling of security, confidence, joy, partnership, and achievement that their otherwise isolated lives would fail to (re)generate for them.

It would be a mistake, however, to put too much weight on this particular historical background of American civic environmentalism. For the underlying spirit of American civic environmentalism—the valuation of the local in dealing with environmental problems—is far from being limited to the American environmentalism or the American context in general. For one thing, what is at stake between the political tug-of-war between the pull of localism and the push for centralism is something of more universal character. The emergence of the themes of the local, difference, diversity, culture, history, beginning with the early nineteenth century, and most recently in the last

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[15] See Randolph Hester, *Design for Ecological Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006).

[16] Shutkin, 76. The term "social capital" is often attributed to Robert D. Putnam, particularly his *Bowling Alone* (2000), but Putnam actually borrows it from Jane Jacobs as he himself credits her in a footnote. (The first use of the term in this sense dates back to 1916). Jacobs was an influential urban planner whose first book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, [1961] 2002) offered a harsh critique of the government-run "urban renewal" projects aimed at clearing slum dwellings in inner cities. Her writings gave rise to the "new urbanism" movement in city planning which aims to make cities more hospitable to social interactions by diversifying the social functions and structural components of cities. For a comparative analysis of "new urbanism" to ancient political philosophy, see Philip Bess, *Till We Have Built Jerusalem: Architecture, Urbanism, and the Sacred* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2006).

three decades in post-modern as well as globalization literatures can best be understood as reactions to the universalizing and homogenizing drive of modernization. Although never mentioned explicitly, civic environmentalism belongs to this conservative reaction to modernity and attempts to enact the ambivalent principle of "subsidiarity" or "devolution" which prescribes that social functions must be delegated to the lowest possible level of authority. This principle, which at the same time has both libertarian and communitarian supporters, emphasizes the interlocking order of communities, their proper relationships to one another, and the need of community for human flourishing, and cautions against the threat of homogenization and centralization that may result from either political or economic motives.[17]

That civic environmentalism is not peculiar to the American context can also be seen in the fact that the term "civic environmentalism" has been borrowed by some to conceptualize environmentalism in the developing world.[18] There are close similarities between the communitarian conception of civic environmentalism in the American context such as that of William Shutkin and a certain strand of environmentalism in the

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[17] The principle of "subsidiarity" is traced back to Edmund Burke's "little platoons," Tocqueville's civic analysis of early nineteenth-century American democracy, and ultimately to Aristotle. It has been given serious consideration by Catholic social thought in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a third way between the totalistic socialism/nationalism and individualistic liberalism. For the lineage of this idea, see Kenneth L. Grasso, Gerard V. Bradley, and Robert P. Hunt, eds., *Catholicism, Liberalism, and Communitarianism: The Catholic Intellectual Tradition and the Moral Foundations of Democracy* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1995); Jonathan Chaplin, "Subsidiarity: the Concept and the Connections," *Ethical Perspectives* 4.2 (1997): 117-30; and Yves Soudan, "Subsidiarity and Community in Europe," *Ethical Perspectives* 5.3 (1998): 177-87.

[18] See, for instance, Paul F. Steinberg, *Civic Environmentalism in Developing Countries: Opportunities for Innovation in State-Society Relations* (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2002). The term "civic environmentalism" has not been used consistently to characterize the environmentalism practiced in the developing world. Alternative names such as "livelihood approach," "popular environmentalism," or "environmentalism of the poor" are also in use. See, for instance, Bron Taylor, ed. *Ecological Resistance Movements: The Global Emergence of Radical and Popular Environmentalism* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1995); Ramachandra Guha and Juan Martinez-Alier, *Varieties of Environmentalism: Essays North and South* (London: Earthscan, 1997); Ranjit Dwivedi, "Environmental Movements in the Global South: Issues of Livelihood and Beyond," *International Sociology* 16.1 (2001): 11-31; Ching-Ping Tang , "Democratizing Urban Politics and Civic Environmentalism in Taiwan," *The China Quarterly* 176 (2003): 1029-51; and Joanne Bauer, ed., *Forging Environmentalism: Justice, Livelihood, and Contested Environments* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2006).

developing world.[19] Shutkin, for instance, uses the term "civic environmentalism" to refer to the kind of American environmentalism which "fundamentally entails a holistic approach to environmental problems in that those problems and their solutions are seen as inextricably linked to social, political, and economic issues."[20] Scholars of developing world similarly observe that people partaking in environmental struggles often "forge [ties] between the values they attach to nature and the values they attach to historical tradition, communal identity, meaningful work, and other aspects of their lives."[21]

Environmental citizenship, on the other hand, is theorized mainly by scholars responding to the academic discussions of citizenship in liberal, republican, and cosmopolitan schools of political thought. [22] Environmental citizenship borrows from both republican and cosmopolitan conceptions. The dissatisfaction with the instrumental

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[19] According to Paul F. Steinberg, the author of *Civic Environmentalism in Developing Countries*, civic environmentalism in the developing world differs from American civic environmentalism due to the libertarian overtones of the latter, defending minimal state and private enterprise. Steinberg appropriates the term "civic environmentalism" for the developing world context without presupposing a stark state/society dichotomy and *prima facie* antagonism between civil society and state. Steinberg argues that civic environmental initiatives in the developing world does not really run against governmental regulation. He rather uses the concept to emphasize the potential of synergistic relations between state and non-state actors in environmental governance. Steinberg cites DeWitt John's *Civic Environmentalism* (1994) as an example of American civic environmentalism from which he distances himself. But despite the strong subtitle of DeWitt John's book—*Alternatives to Regulation in States*—John too conceives civic environmentalism as a complement to, rather than a full substitute for, governmental regulation. However, Steinberg's assessment applies more to the market-oriented and libertarian conception of "civic environmentalism" mentioned earlier.

[20] Shutkin, 22.

[21] Clark A. Miller, "Framing Shared Values: Reason and Trust in Environmental Governance," in *Forging Environmentalism: Justice, Livelihood, and Contested Environments*, ed. Joanne Bauer (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2006), 377-394, p. 380.

[22] For this growing literature, see Mark J. Smith, *Ecologism: Towards Ecological Citizenship* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1998), 91-100; Peter Christoff, "Environmental and Ecological Citizenship" in *Rethinking Australian Citizenship*, eds. Wayne Hudson and John Kane (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Deane Curtin, "Ecological Citizenship," in *Handbook of Citizenship Studies*, ed., Engin F. Isin and Bryan Turner (London: Sage, 2002), 293-304; Andrew Dobson, *Citizenship and the Environment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Andrew Dobson and Derek Bell, eds., *Environmental Citizenship* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005); Andrew Dobson and Ángel Valencia Sáiz, eds., *Citizenship, Environment, Economy* (New York: Routledge, 2005); and Sherilyn MacGregor, *Beyond Mothering Earth: Ecological Citizenship and the Politics of Care* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006).

and atomistic view of citizenship inherent in the liberal contractarian view of society has led some contemporary scholars in the last few decades to seek an alternative tradition in the history of Western political thought. They claim to have located this alternative conception of citizenship in various periods of Western history such as ancient Greece, Roman Republic, Renaissance Italy, seventeenth-century England, and the American founding in which the civic duty to the fatherland and collective liberty is cherished and individualism is downplayed.[23] The cosmopolitan tradition, on the other hand, conceives moral duty, human belonging, and loyalty in universal terms. These noble sentiments must be extended to all humanity regardless of the contingent accidents of birth such as geography, nationality, and religion.[24] This current debate among contemporary scholars of liberalism, republicanism, and cosmopolitanism forms the backdrop of the growing scholarly literature on environmental citizenship.[25] Cosmopolitanism is of particular interest to environmental citizenship, unlike the decentralist focus of civic environmentalism, as so many environmental issues such as global warming physically and politically transcend the territorial boundaries of states.

The central themes found in environmental citizenship literature are duty and belonging to a larger entity. According to one definition, "Environmental Citizenship is an idea that each of us is an integral part of a larger ecosystem and that our future

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[23] See, among others, Martin van Gelderen and Quentin Skinner, eds., *Republicanism: A Shared European Heritage*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[24] For an overview of cosmopolitanism in the Western tradition, see April Carter, *The Political Theory of Global Citizenship* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

[25] See, for instance, Elizabeth Jelin, "Towards a Global Environmental Citizenship?" *Citizenship Studies* 4.1 (2000): 47-63; Sherilyn MacGregor, "Reading the Earth Charter: Cosmopolitan Environmentalism or Light Green Politics as Usual?" *Ethics, Place and Environment.* 7.1–2 (2004): 85-96; Ángel Valencia Sáiz, "Globalisation, Cosmopolitanism and Ecological Citizenship," in *Citizenship, Environment, Economy*, eds. Andrew Dobson and Ángel Valencia Sáiz (New York: Routledge, 2005), 7-22; and Patrick Hayden, *Cosmopolitan Global Politics* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 121-52.

depends on each one of us embracing the challenge and acting responsibly and positively toward our environment. It's about making changes in our daily lives to be environmental citizens all day, every day."[26] What is new in this definition in relation to the environmental literature of the past is neither the notion of "unity" (being an "integral part of a larger ecosystem") nor "acting responsibly" but "citizenship." Environmental scholars have conceptualized the agents of transformation as anything but citizens until recently. They have considered "the new middle class, the working class, the unemployed, new social movements or universal agency" but not ordinary people *qua* citizens.[27]

The following statement expresses the instrumental interest in citizenship for environmental purposes: "environmental citizenship is about the active participation of citizens" to move "society from unsustainability towards greater sustainability."[28] In this educational primer on environmental citizenship, it is also claimed that "environmental citizenship is not a new concept." It is rather "a simple reiteration of a known fact—that the preservation of the environment is an obligation entrusted upon everyone and all governments by virtue of the inherent relationship between people and nature and between citizens and their governments."[29] For instance, as the primer further points out, the 1992 Rio Declaration states in its Tenth Principle that "environmental issues are

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[26] The Center for Environmental Philosophy, "Environmental Citizenship," http://www.cep.unt.edu/citizen.htm.

[27] See Luke Martell, *Ecology and Society* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1994), 184.

[28] Sherilyn MacGregor and Simon Pardue et al., "Environmental Citizenship: The Goodenough Primer," May 2005, http://www.environmentalcitizenship.net/pdf_files/environmental_citizenship_primer.pdf, 1.

[29] Ibid. This statement is quoted with approval from a UNEP document. See United Nations Environment Programme, "Environmental Citizenship: An Introductory Guidebook on Building Partnerships between Citizens and Local Governments for Environmental Sustainability," *Integrative Management Series* No. 5, 2003, http://www.unep.or.jp/ietc/publications/integrative/ims5/index.asp.

best handled with participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level."[30] It may be true that the documents crafted in international negotiations during the 1990s have acknowledged the role of citizens in protecting the environment. Environmental theorists, however, are only recently taking up the theme of "citizenship" because they have been for long reluctant to refer to an undiscriminating entity, "citizen," which they associated with unjust power relationships upheld in the Western tradition.[31] Now that environmental scholars are interested in relating environmental protection to citizenship, they need to conceptualize the content of the relationship "between citizens and their governments." That the content of environmental citizenship is not self-evident is clear from the following statement from the same document: environmental citizenship "challenges the model of the 'self-interested rational actor' which pervades policy, government thinking and economic modeling—by acknowledging that the rational citizen has wider social and environmental interests and concerns."[32] The authors of this document apparently disagree with centuries of liberal political theory and practice in the

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[30] Quoted in MacGregor and Pardue et al., 5.

[31] See, for instance, Curtin, 293. Curtin attributes the lack of interest in "citizenship" discourse at the margins of contemporary theory to its affiliation with Western colonialism, capitalism, or patriarchy. This is also true for environmental theorists most of whom follow in the footsteps of Marxist and feminist analysis of the Western intellectual history, attributing the ills of contemporary society to the historical legacy of a biased ideology of anthropocentrism dominating the Western tradition. Because "citizenship" was considered to be at the center of this discriminatory legacy, environmental theorists kept their distance from it and looked for a more definitive transformation of the misguided worldview prevailing in the West. The *locus classicus* of the radical skepticism of bourgeois "citizenship" is Karl Marx's essay "On the Jewish Question." In this essay, Marx criticizes the liberal conception of citizenship (as found in the American founding and the 1789 French Revolution) which creates an abstract opposition between civil society and political state or between individuals as men and as citizens. Marx concludes that political emancipation or attainment and protection of civil rights is rife with contradiction: "Human emancipation will only be complete when the real, individual man has absorbed into himself the abstract citizen; when as an individual man, in his everyday life, in his work, and in his relationships, he has become a species-being." See *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), 46. Marx borrowed his view of citizenship partially from Hegel's analysis of "civil society" and bourgeois citizenship in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* in which Hegel considered the bourgeois citizen as a "private person" and "civil society" as the realm of particularity.

[32] MacGregor and Pardue et al., 5.

Western tradition based on self-seeking individuals since Hobbes. This surely needs more argument which is not provided in this short document. So I will turn to a more detailed discussion of environmental citizenship in *Citizenship and the Environment* (2003) whose author Andrew Dobson has written much on the subject and is also one of the organizers of the academic seminar series leading to this document as a summary report.

6.1.1 Environmental Citizenship

The main purpose of Dobson's book is to enlist the concept and praxis of citizenship to improve "democracy's chances of producing sustainable outcomes."[33] Dobson claims that democratic citizenship and environmental sustainability are compatible goals and this can be seen in a new form of citizenship emerging under the influence of globalization. Post-national environmental politics, according to Dobson, signals a new praxis and conception of citizenship.[34] The practical basis for this new form of citizenship—which Dobson calls "post-cosmopolitan"—is being prepared by the asymmetrical processes of globalization. Transnational material exchanges (as in commodity chains) which sustain "the material production and reproduction of daily life" in the wealthy industrialized societies result in uneven global distribution of ecological and economic benefits and harms. Most of these exchanges bring about some kind of "actual harm" to those in the developing world who lack negotiation or decision-making power over global policies affecting their lives. Citing Vandana Shiva's critique of the uncritical celebration of globalization, Dobson stresses the uneven outcomes of

[33] Dobson, *Citizenship*, 7.

[34] Environmental politics is considered by many as post-national due to the fact that many environmental problems overflow the territorial boundaries of nation-states. For a discussion of how environmental politics transcends the state boundaries and its implications for state sovereignty, see Thomas Kuehls, *Beyond Sovereign Territory: The Space of Ecopolitics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); and Karen T. Litfin, "Sovereignty in World Ecopolitics," *Mershon International Studies Review* 41.2 (1997): 167-204.

globalization: "some states and agents are globalizing while some are globalized."[35] A typical example of this material asymmetry is the fact that the poor nations carry an unfair share of the environmental burden because of the material problems caused by the rich nations (e.g., global warming).[36]

Dobson claims that this asymmetry in power relationships "always already" generates non-reciprocal duties for people who benefit more from globalization. The discharge of these non-reciprocal duties, according to Dobson, would constitute their "post-cosmopolitan citizenship" and "ecological citizenship" is a specific conduit of this new form of citizenship. "Post-cosmopolitan" or "ecological citizenship" exists today "both logically and in actual political fact."[37] Ecological citizenship differs from the two competing models of citizenship in the Western tradition: the civic republican and liberal. Dobson points out that despite their differences both liberal and civic republican citizenship share some core features which are challenged by the nascent ecological citizenship: they are similarly territorial or state-centric, exclusively public sphere oriented, and conceive rights/duties in contractual or reciprocal terms.

Ecological citizenship modifies each one of these elements. First, the community of citizens occupies a non-territorial space rather than a contiguous territory.[38] Second, the context of civic obligation is no longer between citizens and states but among

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[35] Ibid., 21. Dobson criticizes a certain kind of globalization literature exemplified by David Held's work for its one-sided description of globalization (pp. 10-22). Dobson's objection is that Held depicts globalization predominantly in neutral terms as "the widening, intensifying, speeding up and growing impact of world-wide interconnectedness" without showing its darker side (Held quoted in Dobson, 10). Although he does not cite, Dobson would also be critical of the cozy term "global village" and Thomas Friedman's relatively enthusiastic account of globalization in *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005).

[36] Dobson, *Citizenship*, 17-9, 24, 30-1.

[37] Ibid., 39. I will explain later why Dobson prefers the term "ecological citizenship" to "environmental citizenship."

[38] I shall discuss what Dobson means by non-territoriality of ecological citizenship shortly.

citizens who cohabit an ecological space by virtue of the effects of their actions. So ecological citizenship brings in parts of the private sphere and civil society excluded completely from the scope of others.[39] Third, the obligations of ecological citizens are neither contracted as in liberal citizenship nor owed in reciprocity as in republican citizenship but are "unreciprocated and unilateral."[40] This is to say that *A* may owe certain duties to perform for *B* without *B* being responsible to reciprocate.[41]

Dobson's ecological citizenship borrows heavily from republicanism, especially the latter's emphasis on duties but departs from it in so far as the republican view relies on the reciprocity of obligations between citizens and states. A second similarity between the two is the common emphasis on civic virtue. The difference in this regard is that whereas republicanism emphasizes "masculine" virtues such as "courage, leadership, service, sacrifice" aimed at "saving cities," ecological citizenship promotes "feminine" virtues such as care and compassion practiced "in the relations between citizens themselves."[42] Despite their differences, civic and ecological forms are unified in their opposition to the rights-centered focus and the underemphasis of virtue in liberalism.[43] Ecological citizenship is inspired by civic republicanism's commitment to "the idea of

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[39] Ibid., 51-6; see also 116.

[40] Ibid., 47.

[41] It is clear that the only domain where this can be possible is unconditional love which is what Dobson seems to have in mind as I shall discuss shortly.

[42] Ibid., 59-61, 62. Feminism, according to Dobson, furnishes post-cosmopolitanism and ecological citizenship with its ideological framework. Of particular importance to Dobson is the feminist emphasis on "the ethics of care, such as attentiveness, responsiveness and responsibility" which rests on the premise of the interdependence of private and public spheres (p. 64).

[43] Ibid., 40-3. The target of Dobson's criticism is the prevailing account of citizenship in political theory based on T. H. Marshall's conception of social citizenship which became influential in Britain after 1945 until the Thatcher government in the 1980s.

the public and, more specifically, to the idea of the common good."[44] This ideal has been wanting in the liberal tradition: "What is mostly absent from the liberal conception of anything, including liberal citizenship, is the ideal of a common good beyond that which emerges from the essentially uncoordinated actions of masses of individuals."[45]

Differentiating ecological citizenship from liberal and republican versions, Dobson further distinguishes it from cosmopolitan citizenship with which he thinks it is likely to be confused.[46] As mentioned earlier, "post-cosmopolitanism" or "ecological citizenship" shares the post-national orientation of contemporary "cosmopolitanism" in challenging the territorially defined nation-state model. Dobson defines the post-national character of ecological citizenship as "non-territoriality."[47] Unlike the liberal and republican citizens, ecological citizens are not marked by their "membership to a defined, usually contiguous, political space."[48] Still, Dobson stresses that ecological citizens cannot be subsumed under the two main conceptions of cosmopolitanism—

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[44] Ibid., 59, 95-6. Aristotle is the first philosopher who is credited with the notion of "the common good." In his *Politics*, he remarks, "The Political good is justice, and this is the common advantage" (*Pol.* 1282b16-17). Admittedly, attaining the common good in real life is elusive, but this should not lead us to the conclusion that it is not possible to discern or want the common good. Aristotle has no illusions about the fact that the common good is difficult to attain short of the best regime in which decisions are made on the basis of virtue. However, even in a less-than-perfect regime, the common good can be discerned and factored into deliberation by contrasting it with private gain. The latter is less difficult to see. One need only look at the difference in the historical accounts of the reigns of Caligula and Aurelius. For the pluralist interpretation of Aristotle on "the common good" and its reception in contemporary political theory, see Bernard Yack, *The Problems of Political Animal: Community, Justice, and Conflict in Aristotelian Political Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

[45] Dobson, *Citizenship*, 58. To be fair to liberalism, Dobson, citing contemporary liberal theorists such as Stephen Macedo, Will Kymlicka, and Amy Gutman, agrees that liberal citizenship is not inherently rights-oriented as it has its own set of virtues such as "public reasonableness" (i.e., giving reasons for one's political demands) or tolerance (pp. 56-7).

[46] Ibid., 31.

[47] Ibid., 67-80. Except that Dobson thinks ecological citizens would not share the deracinated characteristics of "the global manager and the global capitalist" who belong to nowhere (pp. 98-9).

[48] Ibid., 67-8.

dialogic and distributive—both of which, he thinks, is unsuitable for accommodating the transient and indeterminate political community of ecological citizens.[49]

This is primarily due to the cosmopolitan presupposition of an undifferentiated common humanity with certain fixed characteristics on which rest a thin, non-material "account both of the nature of the transnational community and of the obligations at work in it." In contrast, ecological citizenship is produced by "historical obligation" of actual harm and the scope of its obligation "varies with case."[50] A primary implication of the non-territoriality of ecological citizenship is the issue of non-contractual duties incurred among transnational agents who affect one another through their material relationships of consumption and production.[51] The prefix *post-* is meant to draw attention to this difference in the formation of the political space/community of ecological citizenship and its emphasis on the non-contractual character of responsibility stemming from the asymmetrical relationships of power across national borders.

Proponents of cosmopolitanism, according to Dobson, regard every human being on planet as entitled to equal rights and bound by similar duties. By being undiscriminating, they fail to give sufficient consideration to the differentials of globalization implicit in the political space of ecological citizenship. Ecological citizenship treats human agents differentially by observing their differentiated responsibility in causing ecological harm. Hence, Dobson distinguishes ecological citizenship from cosmopolitanism primarily in terms of the political space it occupies. Whereas the political space of cosmopolitanism is the whole world as its ideal

[49] Ibid., 9, 80-1.

[50] Ibid., 81.

[51] Ibid., 89.

community is the whole humanity, that of ecological citizenship is "the ecological footprint" due to its relevant community of only the "globalizing and globalized individuals."[52] By "globalizing," Dobson means those individuals in predominantly rich countries who exceed their fair share of earth's biological capacity and the "globalized" refers to those predominantly in the developing world who fall short of their equal share. The ecological footprint is an increasingly used sustainability indicator for measuring the absolute and relative environmental impact of individuals, cities, regions, and countries by calculating the amount of land and water (measured in hectares) needed to produce the natural resources that support them and assimilate the wastes they create.[53] The asymmetry in the usage of biocapacity gives rise to the "the principal ecological citizenship obligation" which "is to ensure that ecological footprints make a sustainable, rather than an unsustainable, impact" on the "daily lives of strangers near and far."[54] To those who might ask him what this obligation actually "means in terms of individuals' daily lives," Dobson responds that "the obligation is evidently radically indeterminate"

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[52] Ibid., 99, 115.

[53] The idea of ecological footprints has been formulated by Mathis Wackernagel and William E. Rees in early 1990s; see their *Our Ecological Footprint: Reducing Human Impact on the Earth* (Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers, 1996). There are many websites that calculate individuals' ecological footprint; see, for instance, http://myfootprint.org/. The primary achievement of this very popular tool is its ability to make a very abstract idea such as sustainability concrete and measurable to ordinary people, policy makers, and especially children. *Ceteris paribus*, the more a certain unit of analysis eats food, buys commodities, and uses electricity or gas in a given period, the larger its ecological footprint will be. But in addition to these consumptive activities that most people engage in, what matters is the type of food one eats. Animal based diet, and food that is packaged, processed, or transported from long distances create larger footprints. According to the latest report, the world consumption exceeds the regenerative capacity of earth by about 25 per cent. The United Arab Emirates has the largest footprint at 11.9 gha (global hectares per capita) currently followed by the United States of America at 9.6 gha. The biological capacity of earth is believed to fluctuate around 1.8 gha depending on the annual productivity of land. By comparison, China's footprint is 1.6 gha and that of India is 0.8 gha. The prospect of these two countries to increase their consumption rates to the lowest footprint of a European Union member, Latvia, at 2.6 gha can have serious consequences for the planet. See Living Planet Report, http://assets.panda.org/downloads/living_planet_report.pdf.

[54] Dobson, *Citizenship*, 118-9.

and it is important that it remains so because the more important lesson of ecological citizenship is to recognize the normative dimension of sustainability.[55]

Dobson is aware that his account of ecological citizenship can run against the prevailing liberal ethos in liberal societies which is suspicious of the idea of constraining individual preferences on the basis of a single blueprint of the good life. To overcome this stumbling block, he claims that the liberal neutrality vis-à-vis the good life debate does not exclude commitment to keeping open a variety of options for future generations to pursue their own plans of good life.[56] Part of what needs to be protected for this task is "material wherewithal" which is "the environment that provides the physical context through which views of the good life come to be determined, and through which they are enacted."[57] The task of achieving sustainability for present and future generations will depend on the availability of ecological citizens. Dobson hopes that formal education systems in liberal societies will be conducive to producing ecological citizens through experiential learning.[58] There are serious problems with Dobson's account of ecological citizenship of which I shall consider three. The first is his historicism. The second is his understanding of the "moral" and the "political" and their proper relationship. The third is the account of ecological citizens.

Dobson's ecological "post-cosmopolitanism" suffers heavily from its historicist premises which he is forced to cast aside to recover some elements of civic republicanism (such as duty and civic virtue) for ecological citizenship. Let me first

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[55] Ibid., 119.

[56] Ibid., 161-4. In formulating his answer, Dobson borrows from Brian Barry's work on future generations and sustainability in this context.

[57] Ibid., 163.

[58] Ibid., 174-207.

discuss his commitment to the historicist view. In order to make his conception of ecological citizenship realistic against the tide (as he is well aware), Dobson needs to shake the foundations of the prevailing liberal praxis and conception of citizenship in liberal societies. The primary motive to appeal to historical change is to show the increasingly historical obsolescence of the nation-state and the corresponding conception of citizenship held by both liberals and republicans in terms of exclusive membership to a territorial entity. Dobson wants to argue that the changing social and material conditions driven by globalization today are taking us away from this old world toward the practice and idea of ecological citizenship.

It is not difficult to see the similarity between Dobson's view and Marx's historical materialist analysis of capitalism heralding the birth of the proletariat and the next phase of history as socialism. The justification for the new world is premised on the historical obsolescence of the old world. Of course, Dobson is not Marxist but he clearly adopts the materialist view of history as his multiple references to his "material approach to defining the community of ecological citizenship" indicate.[59] The feasibility of ecological citizenship is based on deploying "historical sensibility when considering the shape—and particularly future shape—of citizenship." If we do so, he says, we can see "the evolution of republican forms of citizenship into what we now regard as the liberal form of citizenship, in which rights-claiming comes to take precedence over civic virtue."[60] We similarly must be open to the idea that the liberal view will be replaced by something else, which, according to Dobson, is ecological citizenship.

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[59] Ibid., 110.

[60] Ibid., 35.

Later, however, Dobson rejects the progressive historicism that he relies on to destabilize the commitment to the national citizenship: "In fact what we find in the historical record is not so much evolution, as the coexistence of competing views as to the proper realm or sphere of citizenship practice."[61] Why is this change from historical evolution to the perennial co-existence of historical possibilities? This is because Dobson needs to recover certain elements of civic republicanism (civic virtue and duty) for ecological citizenship which to many would sound defunct. Dobson knows this so he appeals to the possibility of recovering "the idea of citizenship virtue—a notion that may not be present in most contemporary understandings of citizenship, but which has most certainly been a feature of historical citizenship experience."[62] So Dobson tries to have recourse to two strategies in constructing his conception of ecological citizenship and making it look as a realistic option: to appeal to (1) the past historical record, and (2) the changing conditions.[63] These are two different approaches to the study of ideas. The former treats ideas as having trans-historical validity whereas the latter sees ideas as reflections of the historical reality.[64] The former strategy is similar to the approach taken

[61] Ibid., 71.

[62] Ibid., 36.

[63] Ibid., 73.

[64] Let me illustrate the latter with an example. Writing about Aristotle's political ideas, the historian of political thought George Sabine evaluates Aristotle as follows: "In 343 he [Aristotle] became the instructor of the young prince Alexander of Macedon, but one looks in vain in his political writings for any effect of his Macedonian connection upon his ideas. *He seems to have lacked the imagination necessary to see the revolutionary importance of Alexander's conquest of the East*, with the consequent mingling of Greek and oriental civilization. The choice of such a policy was directly contrary to everything that he must have taught his royal pupil about politics." George H. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1937), 95, italics mine. Sabine seems to be suggesting that Aristotle failed in his task as a political philosopher which is to evaluate the significance of the political actuality rather than to inform those who act politically. In this, Sabine follows the Hegelian view that "philosophy always comes too late for that [teaching how the world should be] . . . . the owl of Minerva begins its flight only with the falling of dusk." See Hegel, *The Philosophy of Right*, trans. Alan White (Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing), 10.

in this dissertation and I am quite sympathetic with it but the latter is equally critical to Dobson's project.

The latter strategy is questionable because, as Dobson is well aware, this may lead to the outcome of emptying the content of citizenship.[65] If a concept starts to mean anything to anyone, there is really no analytical or practical value left to defend. We see Dobson grappling with this question throughout the text when he tries to sift through the unessential (i.e., historically limited) components of citizenship and refill it with the new ones that he says are traceable in historical record and observable in present actuality. He claims to be only capturing the practical transformation of citizenship which is already happening in the real world: "the conditions in which we find ourselves 'demand' this new and additional articulation."[66] This is implied in his emphatic insistence that the community or political space of ecological citizenship is prepared by transnational material processes. But material processes by themselves cannot mean anything without preconceived ideas of harm, duty, and justice which are not self-evident. For instance, it is not clear whether the following statement is describing the actuality or an ideal definition: "The ecological citizen does the right thing not because of incentives, but because it is the right thing to do."[67] Given his earlier claim that "ecological citizenship" exists today "both logically and in actual political fact,"[68] one would think that this is how anyone who qualifies as an ecological citizen in the world actually acts. But the next sentence indicates that Dobson actually wants to say that this is how they ought to act logically: "In this sense the idea of ecological citizenship is one

[65] Ibid., 53.

[66] Ibid., 33.

[67] Ibid., 129.

[68] Ibid., 39.

of the resources on which a society might draw to make itself more sustainable."[69] Dobson is certainly free to conceive ecological citizenship in ideal terms in this manner but this is exactly what he denies to be doing throughout the book and criticizes other scholars for doing it and thus remaining "in the idealist tradition."[70]

The second problem with the book is Dobson's accounts of the "moral" and the "political" both of which are extremely ambiguous. At the heart of Dobson's contradiction lies his attempt, at one and the same time, to unite morality and politics and keep them separate. There are suggestions that support both intentions but an explanation as to how they might cohere is absent. Let me begin with the textual evidence that indicates his intention to bring morality and politics closer. In the context of his discussion of liberal and civic republican forms of citizenship, Dobson states his purpose thus:

> A defining feature of the post-cosmopolitan citizenship towards which I am working here is that it swims against the tide in this respect. This citizenship is part of the palpable shift taking place in the Western world regarding the 'remoralization' of politics. Fundamentally, this remoralization has to do with the rehabilitation of virtue in the image and practice of politics.[71]

The word "tide" here is referring to the dominant liberal conception of citizenship in liberal democratic countries emphasizing rights, and the word "shift" is referring to the Third Way of previous Clinton administration in the US and the Blair government in Britain both of which tried to inject more "social duty and responsibility" into their

[69] Ibid., 129.

[70] Ibid., 108.

[71] Ibid., 43; see also 128-9.

policies.[72] Dobson goes on to cite approvingly Will Kymlicka's explanation of the recent resurgence of interest in citizenship among liberals. One of the reasons for this revival is

> the growing awareness that the unadulterated pursuit of self-interest undercuts the kinds of conditions that make a reasonable pursuit of self-interest possible, and that some commitment to the intersubjectivity of social life is desirable: "the health and stability of modern democracy depends, not only on injustice of its 'basic structure' but also on the qualities and attitudes of its citizens."[73]

I should note that these two statements explain the previously quoted statement at the end of the previous subsection that environmental citizenship "challenges the model of the 'self-interested rational actor'." Dobson seems to be suggesting that the dominant liberal interpretation of citizenship and politics divorces morality from politics by excluding the notions of "virtue" and "obligation" from public sphere and reducing citizenship to the activity of securing social entitlements from the state.[74] He intends to show that post-cosmopolitan or ecological citizenship rides on the coattails of the recent trend toward connecting morality with politics. His lengthy discussion of "citizenship virtues" follows in the footsteps o this trend.[75] I have no objection to this project but there is another parallel strain in Dobson's argument which undermines it.

Dobson seems to be also advocating the separation of morality from the realm of citizenship and politics as he repeatedly refers throughout the book the difference "between the moral community and the community of citizens." This is a difference "between the Good Samaritan and the Good Citizen."[76] The former stands for humanitarian "obligations that it would be benevolent to fulfil" and the latter for civic or

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[72] Ibid., 42-3.

[73] Ibid., 43.

[74] Ibid., 40-1

[75] Ibid., 56-67.

[76] Ibid., 113-4; see also 26-8, 67, 98, 105, 123-5.

political ones "that it would be wrong not to fulfil."[77] One wonders why benevolence is characteristic of moral community without any relation to the public sphere of citizenship. This view also goes against his own objections to the liberal exclusion of virtues of care and compassion from the public sphere. Why is there such a double standard between benevolence and compassion which are actually very close to one another? It seems that Dobson's primary objection to charity or benevolence is its unreliability contrasted with the demanding character of justice.[78] But are they mutually exclusive? Why can we not keep them both? The answer seems to be that Dobson wants to keep the obligation of ecological citizenship minimal and realistic. But this is exactly what liberalism calls for. The political concern of liberalism is, to borrow from Kymlicka's allusion to the Rawlsian view, primarily with the injustice of its "basic structure" in the public sphere. As we shall see, Dobson unwittingly replicates the liberal Rawlsian view in spite of his explicit intention of remoralizing politics in a manner the liberal communitarian critics of Rawls want to.

We may explore these difficulties by looking into the distinction that Dobson is trying to retain "between the moral community and the community of citizens." This distinction has two important references in the history of philosophy other than Machiavelli: Aristotle and Kant. In another related passage, Dobson approvingly cites Aristotle's discussion at *Politics* III.4-5 to support his distinction "between the Good Samaritan and the Good Citizen":

> Aristotle is quite clear that the condition of citizenship is different from the condition of 'humanity', and this is reflected in the distinctive virtues associated with each condition. This has its analogue in my conception or the different

[77] Ibid., 47.

[78] Ibid., 27.

> kinds or relationship that give rise to humanitarian obligations on the one hand, and to citizenship obligations on the other.[79]

Now, Aristotle's discussion in the cited chapters is not tantamount to a distinction between ethics/morality and politics for Aristotle clearly thinks that these two domains of praxis are neither separable nor reducible to one another.[80] Yes, Aristotle thinks that the virtue of the good man (*aretēn andros agathou*) does not necessarily overlap with that of the serious citizen (*politou spoudaiou*) and this is primarily because there is a number of different political regimes each of which has different expectations of its citizens. The deviant regimes particularly would not allow for complete virtue (*aretēn teleian*) to arise (*Pol.* 1276b30-5). Neither is it possible for all citizens of the best regime to be virtuous as men for "it is impossible for all citizens to be similar" (*Pol.* 1277a1). But being ruled as a citizen is not exhaustive of the political praxis since its more consequential component is being a ruler and Aristotle reminds us that "the virtue of the good ruler and the good man is the same" (*Pol.* 1277a21-2).[81] This suggests that anyone who aspires to be a good ruler in politics must also acquire the virtues that constitute a good man—the complete opposite of what Machiavelli would later advise in *The Prince*. The implication of his view is that the failure to possess those qualities would cost him the title of ruler regardless of whether he or anyone else is aware of it. Hence, Aristotle's discussion of the relationship between ethical/moral and political excellence with an eye on the type of regimes and political role is far from the absolute distinction that Dobson is trying to make.

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[79] Ibid., 66.

[80] Political art or science, according to Aristotle, has an architectonic role but always in tandem with ethics: "the highest good is the end of politics" (*NE* 1099b30).

[81] See also *Pol.* 1278a40-b5.

Dobson's differentiation of moral obligation from political obligation is closer in spirit to Kant's discussion of imperfect, wide duties of virtue/ethics and narrow duties of right/justice even though Dobson does not quote or cite Kant in this relation.[82] To repeat, the moral obligation, for Dobson, "would be benevolent to fulfil" but the political one "would be wrong not to fulfil."[83] This is very similar to how Kant distinguishes the external and internal dimension of morals (between right and virtue): "Fulfillment of them [imperfect duties of virtue] is *merit* . . . but failure to fulfill them is not in itself *culpability* . . . but rather mere *deficiency in moral worth*."[84] The implication of Kant's distinction is that whereas duties of right can coercively extract obedience from citizens, the duties of virtue cannot. For the former kind of duties, external legislation or coercion is both possible and permissible but this is not the case for ethics/morality as we understand it.[85]

It is the domain of ethics or virtue that Dobson is referring to with the symbolism of the charitable act of the Good Samaritan from the New Testament: "A moral relationship is like that between the Good Samaritan and the poor unfortunate on the side of the road. The Samaritan had nothing to do with the man's plight, but he was in a position to alleviate it. This is a neighbourly act, not an act of citizenship."[86] The act of citizenship comes into play if there is an injustice which cannot be ignored. Charity on

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[82] Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 6: 390-1.

[83] Ibid., 47.

[84] Ibid., 6:390.

[85] Ibid., 6:239, 383.

[86] Dobson, *Citizenship*, 67.

the other hand is a supererogatory moral obligation which is often unreliable and, worse, paternalistic:

> Charity is a notoriously weak basis for obligation—it is easily withdrawn . . . and the structure of giving contained within it both cements and reproduces the vulnerability of the recipient. Contrast this with justice. The actual act of compensation or the avoidance of justifiable harm can be halted, of course, but the obligation to do justice remains. Similarly, relations of justice are relations between putative equals.[87]

Hence citizenship is based on "more binding and less paternalistic forms of obligation" between "the causers and the victims of harm."[88]

This distinction between "right" or "justice" and "virtue" or "good" has been revived in contemporary political theory with John Rawls. Dobson seems to be unwittingly in agreement with the drift of Rawls' neo-Kantian conception of justice as "the first virtue of social institutions."[89] It is telling that Dobson repeatedly emphasizes the fact that "the first virtue of ecological citizenship is justice."[90] By this, Dobson means that "ecological citizenship virtue aims at ensuring a just distribution of ecological space."[91] He is also forced to admit that there are correlative rights to these duties: "The duty to reduce the size of an overlarge footprint is, however, driven by the correlative right to sufficient ecological space."[92] Dobson also believes that "accounts of ecological

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[87] Ibid., 27.

[88] Ibid., 28.

[89] John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 3. Dobson does not specifically cite or refer to John Rawls but relies on Brian Barry who is sympathetic to Rawls' interpretation of justice. The Rawlsian element has been noted by one of Dobson's critics. See Derek R. Bell, "Environmental Citizenship and the Political" (paper presented to ESRC Seminar Series on "Citizenship and the Environment," Newcastle upon Tyne, Britain, November 27, 2003), pp. 3-4. Available at http://www.environmentalcitizenship.net/research.html.

[90] Dobson, *Citizenship*, 132.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Ibid., 121.

virtue expressed in the Aristotelian idiom" as "disposition of character" are not appropriate to "the political context of citizenship."[93] As he continues to explicate what he means while raising objection to John Barry's work, he claims that "the dispositions of character of which commentators on green politics often speak are usually more appropriately predicated of the former [the Good Samaritan] than they are of the latter [the Good Citizen]."[94] The real remedy is "more justice as well as more democracy."[95]

This move of course forces him to retract much of what he previously argued in regard to the unwarranted relegation of the feminist ethics of care to the private sphere.[96] To avoid this contradiction, Dobson announces that "candidates such as care and compassion, might be regarded as ecological citizenship virtues *in the second instance*. This is to say that they might turn out to be important to the effective exercise of the first virtue, justice."[97] One wonders why justice would need these secondary virtues. Dobson does not answer this question directly but gestures at an Aristotelian conception of praxis. According to Aristotle's discussion of friendship in Book VIII of *Nicomachean Ethics*, "when people are friends there is no need of justice, but when they are just there is still need of friendship, and among things that are just, what inclines toward friendship seems to be most just of all" (1155a27-8).[98] And it turns out that Dobson has "love" and

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[93] Ibid., 132-3.

[94] Ibid., 133. See John Barry, *Rethinking Green Politics: Nature, Virtue and Progress* (London: Sage, 1999).

[95] Dobson, *Citizenship*, 22.

[96] Ibid., 51-67.

[97] Ibid., 133, italics original.

[98] For a recent exploration of this subject, see Lorraine S. Pangle, *Aristotle and the Philosophy of Friendship* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

"friendship" in mind when he referred earlier to "unreciprocated and unilateral" obligations owed by ecological citizens:

> We do not love our children because we want something in return from them, any more than we stop buying gifts for friends because they do not buy us one in return. The connection between this and ecological citizenship should be clear. I argued earlier in the chapter that a characteristic feature of the obligations of ecological citizenship is their non-reciprocity. Since this is also a definitional feature of relationships normally associated with the private sphere, the relationship between ecological citizenship and the private sphere is a tight one.[99]

But voluntary friendly relationships cannot be "wrong not to fulfil"—which is Dobson's characterization of political or citizenly obligations. It is clear that Dobson's argument is torn between premodern and modern conceptions of praxis. The dilemma is that when the priority of "right" or "justice" is given prominence, the rest of virtues are relegated to the private sphere. This inevitably leads to the impoverishment of politics and citizenship. Hence, Dobson's project of remoralizing politics conflicts with Rawls' neo-Kantian insistence on the "priority of the right over the good."[100] Dobson is aware of this difficulty (without mentioning Rawls) as he tries to show that the liberal neutrality vis-à-vis the individual plans of good life requires, by its own logic, protecting the environment for future generations so that they can freely pursue their own plans of good life.[101] This is to show that liberalism's focus on procedural justice can be used to produce substantive outcomes such as environmental protection. That this would be a weak argument in practice is obvious for two reasons. In order to protect whatever is worthy of protection, one must put into effect an elaborate system of management which is already partially in place both in the US, Europe, and in parts of the world. But

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[99] Dobson, *Citizenship*, 137.

[100] Rawls, 31, 396.

[101] Dobson, *Citizenship*, 161-4. As I have remarked earlier, Dobson relies on Brian Barry's work on future generations and sustainability in this context.

this type of environmental policy has a tenuous connection with civic participation which spurs the recent revival of interest in citizenship. Second, the liberal social system is also obliged to preserve the hedonist way of life and the life committed to the pursuit of wealth which can easily conflict with the environmental way of life marked by simplicity and moderation. Political compromises among these plans of life will certainly be tilted toward policies that answer to stronger desires so long as they remain within the bounds of law.

These two difficulties, I believe, stem from the attempt to come up with a radically new concept of citizenship. This brings me to the third difficulty with Dobson's argument: his account of ecological citizenship. Not only is he not satisfied with the liberal, republican, and cosmopolitan conceptions of citizenship but also with, what he calls, "environmental citizenship." Dobson controversially reserves the term "environmental citizenship" for "the discourse and practice of rights-claiming into the environmental context."[102] According to Dobson, environmental citizenship can be accommodated within the modern liberal conception of citizenship as the latter's primary feature is its emphasis on securing individual rights within a territorially defined state. Environmental citizenship simply adds a new category of right (to a clean and healthy environment) to the existing rights in civil, political, and economic spheres. Even though Dobson assures us that environmental citizenship and ecological citizenship can be politically complementary, he clearly privileges the latter due to its potential of transforming the Western tradition of citizenship.[103] As an example of an account of "environmental citizenship," Dobson has in mind especially but not exclusively Tim

[102] Ibid., 89.

[103] Ibid., 90.

Hayward's work on constitutional enshrinement of environmental rights.[104] He also refers to the environmental justice movement in the United States as "environmental citizenship." Referring to an academic article which interprets this movement as an example of ecological citizenship, Dobson objects to the language used: "Apart from a quibble with their vocabulary—I regard environmental justice activists as 'environmental' rather than 'ecological' citizens—I endorse Reid and Taylor's view that the environmental justice movement is a form of environmental citizenship."[105]

Is it warranted to draw clear-cut theoretical distinctions based on an ambiguous practical reality which is at best embryonic? Are there really environmental and ecological citizens in the world the way Dobson defines them? Dobson might reply that he is engaged in an ideal-type reconstruction of one form of civic activity. But how coherent is his conception of ecological citizenship? After all, it is in fundamental agreement with the quintessential liberal view of society too. Furthermore, Dobson's ecological citizens are not only strangers to one another as he himself admits but also

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[104] Ibid., 89-90, 91-3. For Hayward's work, see, for instance, Tim Hayward, *Constitutional Environmental Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). For Hayward's response to Dobson's distinction, see Tim Hayward, "Ecological Citizenship: Justice, Rights, and the Virtue of Resourcefulness," *Environmental Politics* 15.3 (2006): 435-46. For Dobson's response and Hayward's rejoinder to this response, see Andrew Dobson, "Ecological Citizenship: A Defence," *Environmental Politics* 15.3 (2006): 447-51; and Tim Hayward, "Ecological Citizenship: A Rejoinder to Dobson," *Environmental Politics* 15.3 (2006): 452-3. The distinction that Dobson draws between environmental citizenship and ecological citizenship seems to mirror his earlier distinction between mainstream "environmentalism"—which represents anthropocentric and technocratic responses to environmental problems—and the more radical ideology of "ecologism"—which defends a new worldview. The basis of that distinction, similarly, was that "ecologism" is a self-standing green ideology challenging the Western tradition in many ways whereas "environmentalism" can be subsumed under the modern worldview. We should note a difference however. Dobson considers "ecological citizenship" as an enlightened anthropocentric notion (pp. 111-4) whereas anti-anthropocentricism (i.e., ecocentricism) is central to "ecologism." See Andrew Dobson, *Green Political Thought: An Introduction*, 4th ed. (London: Routledge, [1990] 2007), 13-5.

[105] Dobson, *Citizenship*, 93. For the work Dobson is referring to, see Herbert Reid and Betsy Taylor, "Embodying Ecological Citizenship: Rethinking the Politics of Grassroots Globalization in the United States," *Alternatives* 25 (December 2000): 439–66. See also Herbert Reid and Betsy Taylor, "John Dewey's Aesthetic Ecology of Public Intelligence and the Grounding of Civic Environmentalism," *Ethics & the Environment* 8.1 (2003): 74-92.

rootless: "By definition, then, ecological citizenship is a citizenship of strangers."[106] Ecological citizenship is "an *unbounded* citizenship."[107] At one point, Dobson assures us that ecological citizens will not resemble the estranged rootless businessmen who travel around the world without belonging anywhere: "The earth citizen possesses a sense of local and global place, while world citizens [i.e., businessmen] make their deracinated way around an undifferentiated globe."[108] This is not convincing however. For how will ecological citizens acquire their "sense of local and global place"? Dobson takes up environmental education which must have a serious experiential component but this is exactly what American civic environmentalism is championing which he distances his conception of ecological citizenship from.[109]

Upon closer scrutiny it becomes clear that these ecological citizens that Dobson has in mind are really strange. Who are the ecological citizens? Dobson would say that ecological citizens are those who incur debt in ecological footprints mostly in the industrialized world and want to (or "ought to"?) either pay back by direct or indirect payments or try to scale back their consumption to the world average. In his view then, no one who has an ecological footprint lower than the world average can be an ecological citizen: "People who occupy less than their quota of ecological space have no such duty, except as a general injunction against wanton harm."[110] This is indeed an asymmetrical form of citizenship which does not necessarily paint the state of

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[106] Dobson, *Citizenship*, 106.

[107] Andrew Dobson, "Ecological Citizenship and Global Justice: Two Paths Converging?" in *Future As Fairness: Ecological Justice and Global Citizenship* eds. Anne K. Haugestad and J. D. Wulfhorst (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004), 1-16, p. 9, italics original.

[108] Dobson, *Citizenship*, 99.

[109] Ibid., 174-207.

[110] Ibid., 115.

environmental stewardship in the developing world fairly. Dobson seems to be putting the cart before the horse by turning the focus of citizenship to the global domain. It is certainly conceivable that individuals can care about faraway lands or the future but this concern would hardly arise among those who do not care about their local attachments or environments. The practice of citizenship must begin with one's immediate circle. Without growing such affectionate ties to place or people, individuals cannot develop a sound understanding of the political dynamics behind globalization and environmental damage. Any one of the two dimensions of environmental care—global and local—cannot be forsaken but care must be first practiced at home to develop as an enduring sensitivity with global reach. [111]

The question of privileging either the local or the global domain is not as decisive as the question of agency as we have seen Dobson's post-national ecological citizens need to go through an environmental education that cannot bypass the local orientation of civic environmentalism.[112] The proper relationship between local and global domains of environmental action has been debated for long. It is basic knowledge that global environmental changes such as global warming or transnational ones such as acid rain can and does affect distant habitats regardless of how well those places are taken care of by people dwelling in them. We know that any feasible environmental program of action must incorporate both global and local aspects of environmental problems. The question is how to go about it. Shall we promote "unbounded citizenship" as Dobson suggests or one that begins with a "sense of place" as the following alternative suggests?

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[111] See Christopher Lasch, *The Minimal Self: Psychic Survival in Troubled Times* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1985), 16-8.

[112] The same is true for other differences. One of these is the fact that some proponents of civic environmentalism are more engaged with the policy world whereas those of environmental citizenship remain more theoretical. Again, this is not a major issue dividing them as the former partially engages in theory as well and the latter aims to be practical.

> Democratic ecological citizens are . . . persons who think in regional terms, meaning that they understand that their neighborhoods, locales, and cities, and any and all aspects of them, are nested in a larger reality of meaningful exchange; and they are persons who, recognizing existing inequalities of wealth and power, work to extend more fully and more equitably both the opportunities to experience nature and the opportunities to shape the way humans exist in nature.[113]

Are post-nationalism and localism mutually exclusive? If both are needed, what is the best way to conceive their relationship? The core issue that these discourses raises is what discursive practices can mobilize and energize environmental awareness and sensitivity to address environmental problems. I turn now to William A. Shutkin's book *The Land That Could Be* at the center of which lies this theme of "sense of place" lacking from Dobson's book.

6.1.2 Civic Environmentalism

It is important to note at the outset that Shutkin's discussion of civic environmentalism is tailored to the American context. Hence, part of what he says might not be applicable outside the American experience. Still, the general drift of his argument—that there is an essential linkage between civic and environmental health—is a universal claim that can be observed and even tested outside the United States. Shutkin begins by drawing our attention to the reality of the "adverse societal conditions" affecting America today. Among them are the much recorded indicators such as "declining social capital, political disaffection, rising economic inequality, racial segregation, and excessive privatization."[114] His observations in this regard are based on the work of civic-minded American scholars such as Robert Putnam, Christopher Lasch, Michael Sandel, and Benjamin Barber, all of whom lament in different ways the decline

[113] Engel, "Who are Democratic," 23.

[114] Shutkin, 238.

of civic engagement and interactions in contemporary America, and warned about the threat that withdrawal from public life poses to the well-being of American democracy.

Shutkin agrees with the premise of Putnam and Barber that the ills of democratic regimes are solvable through more democratic participation. This is of course an article of faith, or an assumption that can never be conclusively demonstrated, but perhaps a last hope for the recovery of democracy in America. Shutkin's contribution to this scholarship lies in his recognition that one major reason for American civic decline is "the deterioration of the American environment, both built and undeveloped."[115] His thesis is based on the premise that there is an "inextricable bond between nature and nation,"[116] between "nature and culture," and between "the idea of democracy and environmental protection."[117] According to Shutkin, the environmental deterioration is brought about by aggrandizing technological and commercial forces that have corroded "our sense of place and self" by dividing communities and preventing their access to "safe, unspoiled places." But "the physical condition of America's communities is a critical factor in the nation's success as a robust democratic republic."[118]

As a result of these destabilizing forces, the American society has lost its "traditional moorings and the accompanying sense of confidence about who we are as a people and where we are headed."[119] This is how the American environment and society look at the beginning of the twenty-first century according to Shutkin. He finds these conditions unacceptable fundamentally because it falls apart from the promise implicit in

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[115] Ibid., 3.

[116] Ibid., xv.

[117] Ibid., xvi.

[118] Ibid., 5.

[119] Ibid., 4.

the American founding: "America was founded on the belief that the health of democracy is inextricably bound up with the bounty and extent of the nation's physical environment."[120] He also observes an irrepressible yearning for community: "One of the many ironies of American life at the end of the twentieth century is that the disaffection so many Americans feel is increasingly being matched by an aroused longing for community and a strengthened value of place, for attachment to people and the environment that can restore a sense of purpose and meaning to their lives."[121]

So Shutkin wants to fulfill the unrealized potential of American democracy. This can be achieved according to him through civic environmentalism as environmental issues "provide an opportunity to realize the ideal of community" to individuals who are moved by "a vision for the common good."[122] Civic environmentalism can provide what elitist and bureaucratic environmental managerialism cannot: a vision of ecological and civic renewal co-dependency. Shutkin's civic environmentalism "represents a response to the failure of traditional environmentalism to articulate and act on a democratic social vision."[123] Traditional environmentalism could not contribute to civic renewal because it relied "overwhelmingly on legal and policy tools to address environmental problems, dismissing the need for and rich history of grass-roots organizing and constituency building." This managerial approach "rendered it largely irrelevant to the day-today lives of most ordinary Americans."[124]

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[120] Ibid., 1.

[121] Ibid., 14; see also 17-8.

[122] Ibid., 5.

[123] Ibid., 6.

[124] Ibid., 18.

Shutkin's views are in line with other environmental critics who have wanted to broaden the scope of the environment and environmentalism.[125] On this view, there should be no distinction between urban places and wilderness:

> the environment is the sum of all those places in cities, suburbs, and rural areas that play an essential part in constituting our sense of ourselves as individuals and members of a community and that demand our care and attention if they are to enhance, rather than diminish, that sense.[126]

A second point of critique is that the task of securing a healthy environment belongs to all "ordinary citizens." Environmentalism "is nothing less than about our conception of ourselves as a social and political community." Shutkin's view is clearly communitarian and contains an explicit critique of contemporary liberalism:

> Liberalism lends itself to privatization; its core precept is the priority of the individual to the state and the notion that the state must remain neutral among competing conceptions of the good held by its citizens.[127]

The connection between land and people that Shutkin draws our attention to is not new but a recurring expression of a trans-cultural and trans-historical experience. Most recently, in the American context, this connection ("sense of place") has been discussed by Wendell Berry an other neo-Agrarians.[128] Shutkin acknowledges his debt to Berry as his book opens with a quote from Berry's *Unsettling of America* (1977). We should note that despite Shutkin's attempt to reclaim "sense of place" for the communitarian strand of liberalism, Berry's thought is in more harmony with traditional conservatism.

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[125] I shall discuss these critics later in section 6.3.

[126] Ibid., xv.

[127] Ibid., 41.

[128] See, among others, Wendell Berry, *Unsettling of America: Culture & Agriculture* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, [1977] 1996); Eric T. Freyfogle, *The New Agrarianism: Land, Culture, and the Community of Life* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2001); Allan Carlson, *The New Agrarian Mind: The Movement Toward Decentralist Thought in Twentieth-century America* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2000); and Norman Wirzba, *The Essential Agrarian Reader: The Future of Culture, Community, and the Land* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2003).

Considered to be a neo-Agrarian, Berry has continued the conservative American tradition of Southern Agrarianism.[129] Similar pastoral sentiments can also be found in Nazi Germany as well as among ethnic nationalist politics in contemporary Europe.[130] "Ecology" certainly had a history before it acquired a name for itself as.[131]

The connection between land and culture is a trans-cultural and trans-historical motif fundamentally because the typical effects of commerce and industry inhibit and undermine the noble aspirations of the soul and social stability. As Aristotle reminds us in the context of his discussion of citizenship, "In Thebes there used to be a law that one who had not abstained from the market for ten years could not share in office" (*Pol.* 1278a24-5). Needless to say, neither commerce nor industry is peculiar to modernity but both activities and the technological application of natural science merged in the modern era to create industrial capitalism and became the defining feature of modernity as numerous critics since Rousseau have observed. Consequently, this theme ("sense of

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[129] For Wendell Berry's relationship to the Southern Agrarian tradition, see Norman Wirzba, ed., *The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry* (Washington, DC: Counterpoint Press, 2002); and Kimberly K. Smith, *Wendell Berry and the Agrarian Tradition: A Common Grace* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2003).

[130] See, for instance, Anna Bramwell, *Ecology in the 20th Century: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Jonathan Olsen, *Nature and Nationalism: Right-wing Ecology and the Politics of Identity in Contemporary Germany* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999); Axel Goodbody, ed., *The Culture of German Environmentalism: Anxieties, Visions, and Realities* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002); and Franz-Josef Brüggemeier, Marc Cioc, and Thomas Zeller, eds., *How Green Were the Nazis? Nature, Environment, and Nation in the Third Reich* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005). We should note that some left intellectuals critical of ecologism (such as Anna Bramwell) and social ecologists' critique of deep ecology resort to fallacious reasoning that runs as follows: since the Nazis were green or held certain green ideas, similar ideas held by contemporary ecologists now are inherently illegitimate and dangerous. See, for instance, the social ecology critique in Janet Biehl and Peter Staudenmaier, *Ecofascism: Lessons from the German Experience* (San Francisco: AK Press, 1995).

[131] The environmental historian Donald Worster, in his *Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, [1977] 1994), connects the late 18th century naturalist Gilbert White, the author of *The Natural History of Selborne* (1789), with antiquity when he interprets White as celebrating "the ancient arcadian dream of reanimating man's loyalties to the earth and its vital energies" (p. 9). According to Worster, the arcadian motif of idyllic pastoral harmony, which originated with the ancient Greeks and Romans (as captured in the poetry of the Greek poet Theocritus and the Roman poet Vergil), re-emerged in the contemporary ecology movement (pp. 21-25). The term "arcadian" derives from a mountainous district of Peloponnese in ancient Greece which was represented and often celebrated in literature since Vergil.

place") is often accompanied with a critique of modernity. The effects of commerce and industry are perceived as "unsettling," "uprooting," and "alienating." More often than not, these effects add to the natural anxieties accompanying the human condition. In the rest of this chapter, I will engage more with their commonalities, making only occasional references to their differences when these differences are of particular significance.

6.1.3 The Civic Approach to the Environment

It is clear from above discussion that both discourses are influenced by contemporary critique of liberalism affiliated with republicanism or communitarianism.[132] The political theorist Richard Dagger, for instance, maintains that "civic environmentalism is better understood as part of a more comprehensive theory than as free-standing, self-sufficient philosophical position . . . it borrows its emphasis on the civic environment from the tradition of classical or civic republicanism."[133] Other scholars too offer a "classical republican" conception of environmental citizenship due to its emphasis on obligations to community and expectation of citizens to actively participate in community affairs.[134] Yes, each discourse and each author may address

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[132] Other prominent communitarian critics of liberal proceduralism are the sociologists Amitai Etzioni, Peter Berger, Robert Nisbet, Philip Rieff, and Robert Bellah. There are two other related strands of scholarship critical of contemporary liberalism. The first is the school of "communitarianism" which is an umbrella term to categorize the work of scholars such as Benjamin Barber, Michael Walzer, Michael Sandel, Charles Taylor, and Alasdair MacIntyre. The other is an earlier strand represented by scholars such as J. G. A. Pocock and Quentin Skinner, unofficially known as the Cambridge School in the study of the history of political thought. This second strand has not emerged as a direct response to the works of Rawls and Nozick but they are nonetheless critical of liberalism in a way quite reminiscent of Hannah Arendt's work. The influence of the Cambridge school on communitarianism can be seen in Michael Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent: America in Search of a Public Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1996), 5-7.

[133] Richard Dagger, "Stopping Sprawl for the Good of All: The Case for Civic Environmentalism," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 34.1(2003): 40.

[134] See John Barry, "Resistance is Fertile: From Environmental to Sustainability Citizenship," in *Environmental Citizenship*, eds. Andrew Dobson and Derek Bell, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005), 21-48; and Andrew Light, "Ecological Citizenship: The Democratic Promise of Restoration," in *The Humane Metropolis: People and Nature in the 21st Century City*, ed. R. Platt (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), 169-82.

some specific questions and come up with somewhat different proposals but their surface differences should not be overrated to the point of treating them as separate. Despite their varying emphases, we can speak of a shared conceptual and practical ground between civic environmentalism and environmental citizenship. Some environmental scholars even prefer to use them interchangeably.[135] To begin with, scholars who have advanced these concepts draw upon similar themes on civil society, republicanism, and participatory democracy.

The terms "civic" and "citizenship" betray an ancient conception of politics which foregrounds virtue more than the classical liberal conception of politics allows for. According to the premodern tradition of Western political thought going back to the ancient Greeks, and above all to Aristotle, politics is constituted by collective striving of citizens to attain the common good of their communities through civic or political virtue.[136] Good laws and institutions, according to Aristotle, are not enough by themselves. Their effectiveness fundamentally depend on citizens who are committed to live together in accordance with virtue. In Book III, where Aristotle discusses the notions of "city" and "citizenship" at length, he says, "Whoever takes thought for good management [*eunomia*], however, gives careful attention to political virtue and vice. It is thus evident that virtue must be a care for every city, or at least every one to which the term applies truly and not merely in a manner of speaking" (*Pol.* 1280b5-8). Aristotle's teleological conception of praxis is often contrasted with an instrumental approach which Aristotle mentions in the same context. The city can be alternatively conceived as

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[135] See, for instance, Andrew Light, "Urban Ecological Citizenship," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 34.1 (2003): 44-63.

[136] For an overview of recent literature on recovering Aristotle for citizenship, see Susan D. Collins, *Aristotle and the Rediscovery of Citizenship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

providing security and/or protection of property for its members. These two goals underlie Hobbes' and Locke's social contract positions respectively. Aristotle is aware of these possibilities but thinks that the political regime cannot be defined either as a military or trade alliance (*Pol.* 1280a35-b11). For these functions do not account for the ultimate purpose of political association, which, for Aristotle, is providing its members the conditions of living well.[137]

Behind a façade of contingent differences, I suggest, we can discover a common underlying practical concern uniting these two discourses: to make environmentalism more relevant to the lives of ordinary people beyond a small coterie of committed environmentalists/ecologists so that intractable environmental problems can be handled more systematically in ways that can at the same time improve the living conditions of people. As I shall discuss in the next section, I take the emphasis on "civic" or "citizenship" in both discourses as an indication of a growing awareness among environmental scholars for the need to formulate a new strategy which is less "radical" and more "pragmatic." This can be seen, for instance, in Dobson's distancing himself from the radicalism of deep ecology. As I have remarked earlier, ecological citizenship is patterned after Dobson's earlier account of ecologism except that the former is anthropocentric and the latter is ecocentric. Whereas Dobson defended ecocentricism of

[137] The city cannot make all its members to live the good life but it can at best facilitate their striving or at least not obstruct them. Admittedly, happiness or the good life is a very general goal but is no less ambiguous than the goals of security and wealth since most realistic policies purportedly aiming at these goals turn out to be counterproductive. The rationalist "insanity" of nuclear arms race of the Cold War era and the on-going Iraq War are the most recent examples of this dilemma. The ambiguity stems from the fact that both security and wealth are means to another goal and have socio-psychological dimensions that are seldom accounted for in most hard-headed policies. The Aristotelian conception of praxis oriented to happiness or the good life allows for the questioning of this oversight in contemporary politics.

deep ecology as characteristic of green ideology (or "ecologism") in his earlier work,[138] he now seems to think that we need a more pragmatic discourse: "One argument for making ecological citizenship an anthropocentric idea . . . is expedience."[139] By "expedience," Dobson probably means to refer to "prudence" associated with Burkean conservatism with classical origins which can generate discourses that are "action-orientated" or can supply "reasons for action."[140] Ecological citizenship, according to Dobson, if interpreted in an ecocentric direction can be impractical: "For all its superficial radical attractions, then, I do not endorse explicitly ecocentric accounts of ecological citizenship."[141]

To recall from previous chapter Andrew Light's critique of environmental ethicists who refuse to consider anything short of "intrinsic value" as worthy of environmental consideration, Light believes that this supposedly principled stance on the intrinsic value of the natural world leads to the widening of the gap between theory and practice in environmental matters. Just because intrinsic value can be defended rhetorically on paper does not guarantee its application in real life. Moral philosophy has

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[138] Dobson clearly endorses ecologism in his earlier work: "ecologism's being informed by deep ecology is precisely what (partly) helps distinguish it from environmentalism." See Dobson, *Green Political Thought*, 40. It is not clear to me whether Dobson has switched from ecocentrism to enlightened anthropocentrism of ecological citizenship or he deploys them strategically to different purposes. One remark from the same book suggests the second possibility: "The private ecologist, in conservation with like-minded people, will most likely place the intrinsic value position ahead of the human-instrumental argument in terms of priority, suggesting that the latter is less worthy, less profoundly ecological, than the former. The public ecologist, however, keen to recruit, will almost certainly appeal first to the enlightened self-interest thesis and only move on to talk about intrinsic value once the first argument is firmly in place" (Ibid., 19).

[139] Dobson, *Citizenship*, 112.

[140] Ibid., 21. Students of rhetoric have begun to pay more attention to forms of knowledge that are not strictly scientific. See, for instance, Robert Hariman, ed., *Prudence: Classical Virtue, Postmodern Practice* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2003).

[141] Dobson, *Citizenship*, 113.

to reach over to political philosophy to secure its relevance in the real world.[142] It is important to consider, according to Light, what reasons and practices motivate people to change their behavior to minimize their environmental impacts or to be more actively involved in environmental efforts.[143] The civic discourse, as Light and many others suggest, can be used as a moral discourse to broaden and spread environmental sensibilities as it banks on moral-psychological experience of community, belonging, and care.[144] Encouraging community participation in local projects such as nature restoration in urban areas (as opposed to contracting these projects to private business) can enhance the sense of stewardship among people. Getting to know what is going around them first-hand will decrease the chances of people's apathy or resistance toward such environmental plans.

The praxis-oriented civic approach favors more community involvement in responding to environmental issues. The civic approach creates a "proactive" (as opposed to "reactive") vision for environmentalism by allowing ordinary people, especially the young, to learn and exercise the skills of active citizenship. Instead of being passive subjects of what the political system delivers or does not deliver to them, people learn to direct their lives through civic environmentalism. The diminishing returns and impoverishing effects of technological progress are noted in the following testimony by a civic environmentalist:

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[142] See Bob Pepperman Taylor, *Our Limits Transgressed: Environmental Political Thought in America* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1992), 133-51.

[143] Andrew Light, "Ecological Citizenship: The Democratic Promise of Restoration," in *The Humane Metropolis: People and Nature in the 21st Century City*, ed. R. Platt (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), 169-82.

[144] For moral-psychological aspects of citizenship, see Richard Dagger, "Metropolis, Memory, and Citizenship," *American Journal of Political Science,* 25. 4 (1981): 715-37; and Edward B. Portis, "Citizenship & Personal Identity," *Polity* 18.3 (1986): 457-72.

> The modern technological world has made its people its subjects; it has made them ignorant and keeps them in ignorance. We are basically ignorant, ignorant of the basics—where does our food come from? Where does our water come from? And importantly, where do our wastes go? We live cut off from ourselves because of this lack-of-touch with the natural things. And our foundation is weakened, and there is no way we can build onto the self in such a state.[145]

A young environmentalist recognizes the positive aspect of civic environmental initiatives: "volunteering makes you feel better about yourself . . . Your self-esteem builds and you grow in front of other people."[146] The India scholar Richard Franke, describing the environmental/developmental activities of village communities in the state of Kerala, similarly points out the creative potential of the civic approach as opposed to the confrontational methods:

> One aspect of this [civic approach] is that it generated a tremendous amount of enthusiasm and activity, all kinds of projects. A lot of people became involved. But at another level, it really signals the process of transforming previously class-based and caste-based protest organizations—trade unions, associations of all kinds, workers' organizations, and so forth—from being protest organizations, primarily, trying to win things from the state, to becoming actual actors in carrying out the development of their own communities.[147]

Concerned over the slow progress of environmental agenda or the urgency of environmental problems, some environmentalists have begun to emphasize the need to weave "environmental sensitivity" into all spheres of life to make it an enduring part of the political culture. They have realized that it would be better to induce deep-rooted cultural changes at individual and collective levels rather than to treat the environment as a separate technical issue-area. The latter impression whether caused by marginal "radicals" or mainstream "reformists" reinforce the popular image of environmentalism

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[145] Jules Dervaes, http://www.pathtofreedom.com/insights/archives/1973/01/thoughts_from_1.html, (1973).

[146] "Saving Lebanon's War-Damaged Beach," *BBC News*, December 4, 2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/middle_east/6189064.stm

[147] See Carnegie Council, "Can Cultural Values Save the Environment?," *Forging Environmentalism*, September 13, 2006, http://www.cceia.org/resources/transcripts/5393.html.

as a special interest of privileged classes or nations who are exempt from the day-to-day struggles of low socio-economic groups.

This partially inaccurate representation of environmental concern is also found in developing countries.[148] There too environmental concern is typically perceived and portrayed as "luxury" especially when more serious problems like war and poverty are continuing.[149] Although environmental movement—both in the US and Europe—appeared as a popular cause holding out the promise to unite conflicting interests around it, in the ensuing decades environmentalism has come to be seen as another special issue. This is especially true in the United States. Although they have not yet explored the full potential of these two discourses in this respect, the civic-minded environmentalists can play a critical role in overcoming the image of environmentalists as distanced from everyday life issues. This image hinders the understanding of the question concerning the environment as it reinforces the committed environmentalists' reluctance to communicate with conservative and religious cultural symbolisms that ordinary people cherish. The following section explores this failure of communication in more detail.

6.2 The Political Conjuncture of the Civic Approach

In this section, I shall explore in more detail the growing discontent among environmentalists as to the purpose and direction of environmentalism both in the United States and Western Europe. It would not be farfetched if we liken these debates to an identity crisis or alternatively as the birth pangs of a perhaps more mature form of

[148] See Mona Mårtensson and Ronny Pettersson, "Everyday Life Contexts and the Environment," in *Individual and Structural Determinants of Environmental Practice*, ed., Anders Biel, Bengt Hansson, and Mona Mårtensson (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), 26-65.

[149] This view is especially supported by some sociological analyses of the environmental movement in the West that indicates affluence as a decisive factor in being an active or passive environmentalist. Similarly, the environmental Kuznets curve argues that environmental conditions get better in a country after a period of economic growth during which environmental problems inevitably arise.

environmentalism. I shall argue that these concepts, or the civic approach in general, must be understood within this strategic context. Although they are not directly linked, they nonetheless speak to the on-going debate among environmentalists over practical and conceptual matters. The civic approach is indirectly related to a continuing practical and theoretical debates within contemporary environmentalism—taking place both in the United States and Western Europe. On the practical side, the debates reflect the erosion of purpose and loss of direction among environmentalists who are dissatisfied with the business-as-usual methods of organized mainstream environmentalism.[150] On the conceptual side, the terms "environment" and "nature" are contested. These debates have been going on since the onset of environmentalism in the seventies but they have peaked recently with much publicized debates over the "death" of environmentalism.

There are two main sides of the debate. First, there are "essentialists" or "objectivists" who believe that "nature" exists independent of human projects, politics, and interests, and, second, there are "constructivists" who denies that the discourse of nature can be separated from its politics.[151] According to the objectivist view, "the environment" designates basically the natural world outside human culture or civilization. The primary concerns of this group of environmentalists are related to the protection of endangered species, or biodiversity in general, protecting or restoring ecosystems such as rivers, wetlands, forests, and preserving or expanding natural parks. Their efforts to protect the environment are informed by life sciences such as zoology, botany, and conservation biology. Members of this group are either scientists in these

[150] See, for instance, Mark Dowie, *Losing Ground: American Environmentalism at the Close of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995).

[151] For one episode of this debate, see William Cronon, *Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995). The "objectivist" response to this "constructivist" approach is made in Michael E. Soulé and Gary Lease, *Reinventing Nature? Responses to Postmodern Deconstruction* (Washington, D.C: Island Press, 1995).

fields or NGOs who rely heavily on these sciences.[152] "Environmentalism," on this view, serves the well-being of the natural world either for its own sake or for its subsidiary benefits to human beings.

The proponents of this view are often criticized for being insensitive to the needs of human beings, especially the economic needs of social groups situated low on the ladder of economic and political clout, such as labor, Third world, indigenous people, peasants, and minorities living in inner cities.[153] This insensitivity implicit in misguided ideology (such as ecocentrism) and practices (such as natural park preservation) is considered to be both rooted in the history of environmentalism and a continuing bias of the socio-economic background of mainstream environmentalists, namely, their affluent, white, middle-class, and Western origins.[154] If the critic comes from or identifies with the Third world, the cultural aspect of the bias is noted as well. In his critique of "deep ecology," the Indian scholar Ramachandra Guha notes that equating "environmental protection with the protection of wilderness" is a "distinctively American notion, borne out of a unique social and environmental history."[155] Many studies in environmental history have similarly argued that the colonial roots of

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[152] For a comparative analysis of the relationship between ecologists and environmental politics in Great Britain, United States, and Canada, see Stephen Bocking, *Ecologists and Environmental Politics: A History of Contemporary Ecology* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997).

[153] One niche in this group is occupied by "environmental justice" movement—a decentralized network of grassroots initiatives in response to the disproportionate concentration of environmental hazards around low-income and/or ethnic minority neighborhoods. Although the movement first emerged in the US, it now exists also in other countries. Eco-social perspectives such as social ecology, ecofeminism, and third world ecology can also be considered under this view.

[154] See, for instance, Kevin DeLuca and Anne Demo, "Imagining Nature and Erasing Class and Race," *Environmental History* 6.4 (2001): 541-60.

[155] "Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation: A Third World Critique," in *Varieties of Environmentalism: Essays North and South,* Ramachandra Guha and Juan Martinez-Alier (London: Earthscan, 1997), 99-100. In a postscript to his 1989 article, Guha extends his critique to the conservation biologists who espouse the ecocentric view and goes on to argue that "Western wilderness lovers and biologists" betray an imperialist attitude in their efforts to protect nature in the Third World countries (pp. 92-108).

environmentalism can explain the current penchant for wilderness protection and accompanying insensitivity.[156] Protests from environmental justice groups have forced big environmental NGOs like Sierra Club to reconsider their priorities. A former president of the Sierra Club conceded, for instance, that the environmental movement is "not just about rocks and trees anymore."[157] According to the second view, "the environment" must be conceived broadly in terms of both geographical space and issue-areas to include in the industrialized world the urban places where the poor or ethnic minorities are most concentrated. These critics also argue that social (in)justice issues facing these groups such as unfair distribution or imposition of environmental damage and hazards—both nationally and globally—must be given more attention.[158]

This debate is a special instance of the History versus Nature debate covered in Chapter 2. Some of the contemporary critics of the essentialist view of nature argue that all attempts to protect some supposedly "natural" place are actually ideological or political in character. They would agree with Marx that an untouched nature today "no longer exists anywhere (except perhaps on a few Australian coral-islands of recent origin)."[159] One recent critic, for instance, criticizes nature development projects in Netherlands advanced by ecologists subscribing to an essentialist view of nature: "The ideal behind the large-scale production of new nature is *old* nature. Everything revolves around the original, unspoilt nature, around 'primeval nature' in which there is no place

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[156] See, for instance, Richard H. Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens and the Origins of Environmentalism, 1600-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

[157] "Sierra Leader refines goals, environmental justice a priority," *The Commercial Appeal*, October 11, 2001.

[158] See, for instance, Patrick Novotny, *Where We Live, Work and Play: The Environmental Justice Movement and the Struggle for a New Environmentalism* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2000).

[159] See *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: Norton, 1978), 171.

for man or his technological artefacts."[160] According to the constructivist view, knowledge claims of ecologists made in favor of protecting/restoring species and places have to be evaluated according to their social consequences. One should look at who wins and who loses from such projects. The same critic continues to unmask the disguised ("ideological") effects of such projects: "nature development can be seen and described as an (implicit) form of cultural politics which manages to engage certain social groups while at the same time threatening to sideline other groups to the point where their interests and needs can no longer be voiced in politics."[161]

6.2.1 Environmentalism in Crisis?

The misgivings about American environmentalism is not restricted to a few renegade environmentalists whose writings have sparked the most recent episode which I shall discuss shortly. Similar observations that there is a disconnect between environmentalists and ordinary people have been made for more than a decade. Already in 1992, it was observed that "environmentalist groups with broad social programs" fail "to capitalize on the growing public concern about the environment and thereby to set their programs permanently in motion."[162] The authors further stress that this is not only a problem for mainstream but also for radical environmentalists:

> What is true for the government-sponsored social engineers that grew up in the conservation movement at the beginning of this century is . . . true also for newer groups like the deep ecologists, wilderness preservationists, eco-anarchists, and green politicians: They have been unable to create strong communicative

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[160] Jozef Keulartz, *Struggle for Nature: A Critique of Radical Ecology*, trans. Rob Kuitenbrouwer (London: Routledge, [1995] 1998), 158, italics original.

[161] Ibid.

[162] Jimmie Killingsworth and Jacqueline S. Palmer, *Ecospeak: Rhetoric and Environmental Politics in America* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992), 7.

> links with the mass public, links that would support a strong power base for reformative actions.[163]

It is ironic that this failure of communication exists despite the fact that environmental awareness in the US and many other advanced industrialized countries has been consistently on the rise since the 1970s.[164] Not that environmentalists are not ordinary people, but they are commonly perceived either as privileged "managers" or spoiled "rebels" without a cause:

> Thirty years after Earth Day, the common image of the environmental movement is that of large, national, and highly political organizations focused on the transgressions of corporations and the shortcomings of federal agencies and dedicated to preserving the intent and integrity of existing environmental law. A more extreme image is tree huggers—or even tree dwellers—engaged in acts of civil disobedience against timber companies and developers.[165]

The New York Times columnist and author Thomas Friedman confirms this image problem when he portrays with humor what he takes to be the mainstream America's image of environmentalists as "liberal, tree-hugging, sissy, girlyman, unpatriotic, [and] vaguely French."[166] The same image appears in a recent popular book on conservative environmentalism. Its author, Rod Dreher, a conservative intellectual, remembers of his childhood years in rural Louisiana and how his father and hunter friends held a low opinion of environmentalists: "Those men—my father and his friends—considered themselves *conservationists*; as far as they were concerned, 'environmentalists' were citified liberal pantywaists, uppity sentimentalists who didn't

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[163] Ibid.

[164] See Deborah L. Guber, *The Grassroots of a Green Revolution: Polling America on the Environment* (MIT Press, 2003).

[165] See Debra S. Knopman, Megan M. Susman, and Marc K. Landy, "Civic Environmentalism: Tackling Tough Land-Use Problems with Innovative Governance," *Environment* 41.10 (1999): 24-32.

[166] Brian Braiker, "Not Your Parents' Energy Crisis," *Newsweek*, June 9, 2006, http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/13231593. See also Thomas L. Friedman, "The New Red, White and Blue," *The New York Times*, January 6, 2006.

understand a thing about the woods and the creatures who lived there." [167] He also confesses that he shared their opinion until very recently: "Every time I heard the word "environmentalist," I'd think of the sanctimonious cultural elitists who seemed to have such worshipful regard for trees and owls, but so little concern for people."[168] Dreher's book *Crunchy Cons* is an expression of a new growing group of conservative leaning educated Americans who have sympathies with some of the concerns of the American environmental movement. I have more to say on this topic in the next chapter.

This stereotypical impression of environmentalism among the public is far from peculiar to the conservative opponents of environmentalism however. One of the earliest critique of the environmental movement was delivered by the German Marxian essayist Hans Magnus Enzensberger affiliated with the German Frankfurt School. In his essay, Enzensberger stresses the "class character" of environmentalists as "middle class" and "new petty bourgeoisie," and the radicals are "eco-freaks" hostile to civilization.[169] The academic secular left holds similar views which zero in on the charge of anti-humanism and misanthropism:

> During its first one hundred years, the environmental movement has been concerned, almost exclusively, with preserving pristine places. This narrow, class- and race-based perspective of what counts as nature leads the environmental movement to neglect people and the places they inhabit, thus isolating the movement from labor and civil rights concerns and rendering it vulnerable to charges of elitism and misanthropism.[170]

A number of national or international controversies over (endangered) species such as whales and owls have certainly contributed to this impression. Reckless statements made

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[167] Rod Dreher, *Crunchy Cons* (New York: Crown Forum, 2006), 153, italics original.

[168] Ibid.

[169] Hans M. Enzensberger, "A Critique of Political Ecology," in *Critical Essays* (New York: Continuum, 1982), 186-223. This essay was originally published in *New Left Review* I/84 (March-April 1974).

[170] DeLuca and Demo, 542.

about humanity in general or Hispanic immigrants by radical environmentalists in the United States must have also contributed to it.[171]

There is also another dimension to this image problem. The language used by environmentalists is predominantly scientific with only scattered references to values such as "responsibility."[172] Scholars who study environmental discourse have noted that environmental organizations "have always sought to demonstrate a scientific basis for their perspective."[173] Mark Sagoff believes that using a purely scientific rhetoric is not a wise choice:

> those who wish to protect the natural environment rarely offer ethical or spiritual reasons for the policies they favor. Instead they say we are running out of resources or causing the collapse of ecosystems on which we depend. Predictions of resource scarcity appear objective and scientific, whereas pronouncements that nature is sacred or that greed is bad appear judgmental or even embarrassing

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[171] These accusations against Earth First! organization or Deep Ecology in particular and ecocentrism in general are not only made by left-wing or populist opponents of environmentalism but also left-leaning ecologists such as Murray Bookchin. We should also note that ammunition for this type of critique is not lacking in Europe. The co-founder of German Greens, Rudolf Bahro, who left the party later, is remembered to have called scandalously for a "Green Adolf" to save mankind from self-destruction. His utterance however was not motivated by any kind of racism. It was made probably due to his disillusionment with the democratic system in the spirit of late Heidegger's messianic pronouncement in 1966 *Der Spiegel* interview entitled "Only a God Can Save Us."

[172] Environmentalists' adoption of the word "responsibility" owes much to Hans Jonas' *The Imperative of Responsibility: In Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age*, trans. Hans Jonas with David Herr (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, [1979] 1984). But Leo Strauss aptly notes that "responsibility" in its contemporary sense is a "neologism." In its authentic sense, it simply signifies the precondition of morality—the presupposition of choice as a universal human capacity—but is commonly used today as a "fashionable substitute" for such words as "duty" and "virtue." See Leo Strauss, "Liberal Education and Responsibility," in *Liberalism: Ancient and Modern* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [1968] 1995), 10.

[173] Killingsworth and Palmer, 51. See also Stephen Bocking, *Nature's Experts: Science, Politics and the Environment* (Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004). Bocking opens his book with the following observation: "Environmental matters are widely seen as matters of science . . . . Environmentalists, although sometimes ambivalent about the effects of science and technology, in practice draw heavily on scientific expertise: national environmental organizations recruit professional scientific talent, while community groups solicit volunteer scientists from the local university" (p. 3). This of course does not mean that national or international environmental policy decisions are based purely on the criterion of scientific truth. It has been often argued that political decisions in certain international environmental negotiations were made in the absence of reliable scientific evidence. Hence, the determining influence on such decisions was partially non-scientific. See, among others, Karen T. Litfin, *Ozone Discourses: Science and Politics in Global Environmental Cooperation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); and Sheila Jasanoff, *Designs on Nature: Science and Democracy in Europe and the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

> in a secular society. Prudential and economic arguments, moreover, have succeeded better than moral or spiritual ones in swaying public policy. These prudential and economic arguments are not likely to succeed much longer.[174]

Sagoff's skepticism of environmentalists' public strategy is shared by others as well. One scholar observes that "after several decades of environmental campaigning, the long-desired ecological U-turn has still not been achieved and does not seem to be imminent either."[175] John Barry, whom I cited earlier, acknowledges this situation and hopes that civic environmentalism or environmental citizenship can be a remedy:

> Since the provision of knowledge and information about the ecological crisis has failed to encourage sufficient numbers of individuals to become environmental (never mind sustainable) citizens and alter their behavior accordingly, a republican view would be that what is needed is the creation or cultivation of such citizenly virtues and behavioral changes.[176]

Over the last decade, several other environmental journalists have drawn attention to the same disorientation and unpreparedness for what is to come. Dianne Dumanoski observes that "despite growing recognition of . . . environmental crisis over the past three decades, a profound confusion persists about the ultimate stakes."[177] Another prominent environmental journalist and author, Philip Shabecoff, noted as well that "the environmental movement, despite its great achievements, had not yet adequately prepared itself to meet the current and coming challenges, to transform a

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[174] Mark Sagoff, "Can Technology Make the World Safe for Development? The Environment in the Age of Information," in *Global Sustainable Development in the Twenty-first Century*, eds. Keekok Lee, Alan Holland, and Desmond McNeill (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 116-7.

[175] Ingolfur Blühdorn, *Post-Ecologist Politics: Social Theory and the Abdication of the Ecologist Paradigm* (London: Routledge, 2000), xi.

[176] John Barry, "Resistance is Fertile: From Environmental to Sustainability Citizenship," *Environmental Citizenship*, eds. Andrew Dobson and Derek Bell, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 28. See also Kyle S. Van Houtan, "Conservation as Virtue: a Scientific and Social Process for Conservation Ethics," *Conservation Biology* 20.5 (2006): 1367-72.

[177] Dianne Dumanoski, "Rethinking Environmentalism," Fall 1998, http://www.clf.org/general/index.asp?id=470.

future that now seems filled with danger."[178] Bill McKibben likewise indicated more recently that contemporary environmentalism has failed "when it came time to deal with global warming."[179] All three authors see the remedy in broadening the social vision of contemporary environmentalism to relate it to all spheres of social life and this is what the civic approach promises to accomplish according to its advocates.

The feeling of disarray among environmentalists suggests that the innovative concept of "sustainability" must have lost its initial appeal as an animating vision. The sustainability discourse might still be one of the rhetorical weapons in the environmental arsenal but, as the environmental scholar Dale Jamieson recognizes, "we need a discourse that permits deeper discussion of aesthetic, spiritual, religious, cultural, political, and moral values." Without using the notion of "environmental citizenship," Jamieson draws our attention to the need to develop "a richer set of positive visions regarding the proper human relationship to nature":

> These visions must go beyond the bloodless futures of scientific forecasters, the technological futures of cornucopians, and the single focus futures of those who are interested only in rainforests, women, or American family incomes. What is needed are simple and compelling stories that show us how to practically participate in creating the future in our daily lives, and how to engage in ongoing dialogue with others about how our everyday actions help to produce global realities. Articulating these visions is not the job of academics alone, but also requires the efforts of writers, artists, and people from all walks of life.[180]

Three points in this quote need to be noticed. First, the new environmental discourse must be inspiring and accessible by people who do not spend much time in

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[178] Philip Shabecoff, *Earth Rising: American Environmentalism in the 21st Century* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2000), xii.

[179] Bill McKibben, "A Deeper Shade of Green," *National Geographic*, August 2006. See also Daniel Somers Smith, "Place-Based Environmentalism and Global Warming: Conceptual Contradictions of American Environmentalism," *Ethics & International Affairs*, Volume 15.2 (2001).

[180] See Dale Jamieson, "Sustainability and Beyond," *Ecological Economics* 24 (1998): 191. See also Ingolfur Blühdorn and Ian Welsh, "Eco-politics Beyond the Paradigm of Sustainability: A Conceptual Framework and Research Agenda," *Environmental Politics* 16.7 (2007): 185-205.

reading about the intricacies of environmental problems. To do so, the audience and constituency of environmentalism must be broadened by connecting with other concerns of ordinary people which are not strictly "environmental." Third, this new discourse must make use of the connection between the micro level individual behavior and the macro level environmental outcomes. In response to the recent debate over the "death" of environmentalism, the environmental author Bill McKibben arrives at a similar conclusion. He draws attention to the need to add a rhetorical appeal to environmentalism so that it can resonate with public more effectively:

> Environmentalism isn't dying. In fact, the need for it has never been greater. But it has to transform itself into something so different that the old name really won't apply. It has to be about a new kind of culture, not a new kind of filter; it has to pay as much attention to preachers and sociologists as it does to scientists; it has to care as much about the carrot in the farmers market as it does about the caribou on the Arctic tundra.[181]

The need for raising environmental awareness and participation is most evident in the case of global warming, which now looms large as the most comprehensive environmental challenge that we have faced in our evolutionary history. Global warming touches the very logic of modernity which continues to drive most nations in the world today: securing and/or maximizing happiness and freedom on a mass level through growing material prosperity. As Blühdorn provocatively observes, economic growth is so central to the legitimation of late modern societies that, structurally speaking, they are not only incapable but also reluctant to turn sustainable.[182] Still, environmentalists reject this sort of fatalism and want to do their best to transition to a more sustainable ways of living. The willing participation of large segments of public is central to the success of

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[181] McKibben, "A Deeper Shade of Green."

[182] Ingolfur Blühdorn, "Unsustainability as a Frame of Mind-and How We Disguise It," *Trumpeter* 18.1 (2002), http://trumpeter.athabascau.ca/content/v18.1/bluhdorn.pdf, 2; see also Ingolfur Blühdorn's *Post-Ecologist Politics: Social Theory and the Abdication of the Ecologist Paradigm* (London: Routledge, 2000).

their attempts in a democratic age however. As Dale Jamieson points out, the active cooperation of people outside the politically active cadre of activists, scientists, and policy-makers is essential to tackle this particular problem at its source, that is, the US—the heartland of global warming at least for the next few decades:

> What's obvious is that you don't really get energy taxes without people having some value change. Part of why . . . we are not going to get significant reductions in the use of oil in the United States is that, in order to do that, you have to have predictable, steady increases in price . . . . But the only way you get that is when we as a society say that what we want to do is to become less reliant on fossil fuels. Because once we have those values, then, we will not punish politicians who put in place a new set of incentives.[183]

The kind of environmental value changes—"people having some value change" as Jamieson puts it in the above quote—however, cannot be manufactured, as it were, from a single control room, especially when in a democratic system there are numerous groups biding their time to get at the helm to give the ship a direction they think is right. Liberal democracy—the political paradigm of our age—allows for the peaceful turnover of power or fair participation in representative political institutions but it does not guarantee the substantive changes that environmentalism aims at nor can it guarantee the effective adoption of environmental "values" on a mass level. The best it can do is to allow for environmental groups to compete for a slice of public's attention. In this endeavor, the civic approach can play a key role in the coming decades but whether it can stem the overall environmental degradation no one can tell in advance.

As I have said earlier, the civic approach must be interpreted in the light of the recent debates over the future direction of environmentalism. Environmental scholars on both sides of the Atlantic have almost simultaneously begun to talk about the "death" or "end" of environmentalism. Whether there was mutual influence between these two

[183] Carnegie Council, "Can Cultural Values Save the Environment?," 13 September 2006, http://www.cceia.org/resources/transcripts/5393.html.

debates is not clear.[184] The debate in Europe is over the "end" (in both senses as "goal" and "final point") of environmentalism.[185] What has prompted it is ironically the relative receptiveness of European societies to environmental concerns and issues. The editors of a recent book on this subject cautiously point out the question that this state of affairs poses for environmental scholars: is there any "reason why environmentalism as an independent school of thought should continue to exist" or do "environmentalist still have a *reason* to be environmentalists." They explain that this is a question for political theory: "whether environmental political *theory*'s ideas are (still) valid." [186] The individual responses to these questions compiled in this book vary but the common tone is that to avoid irrelevance environmentalism has to reinvent itself. One particular blind spot of environmentalism that many contributors to the volume point out is the naïve supposition that "the facts speak for themselves, and the Greens are there merely to point to facts."[187] Another contributor ties the lack of change to this misconception:

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[184] There is certainly much interaction between American and European environmental scholars but these two debates might not be related for three reasons. First, the debate in Europe has involved academics while the American debate first began among the environmental NGO community. Second, the warning for the "death of environmentalism" in the American debate was instigated by the perception of the failure of environmentalists in influencing national policies in the US, whereas the "end of environmentalism" debate in Europe hints at the possible co-optation of environmental agenda by liberalism, abolishing the need for the existence of environmentalism as a separate political ideology. Third, the book which contains the European debate was published as the proceedings of a conference which was actually held two years before the start of the American debate in 2004.

[185] The debate in Europe is presented in Marcel Wissenburg and Yoram Levy, eds., *Liberal Democracy and Environmentalism: The End of Environmentalism?* (New York: Routledge, 2004). See also Ingolfur Blühdorn, "Green Futures? A Future for the Greens?" in *The Culture of German Environmentalism: Anxieties, Visions, and Realities*, ed. Axel Goodbody (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002).

[186] Yoram Levy and Wissenburg, "Introduction," in *Liberal Democracy and Environmentalism: The End of Environmentalism?*, eds., Marcel Wissenburg and Yoram Levy (New York: Routledge, 2004), 3, italics original.

[187] Gayal Talshir, "The Role of Environmentalism," in *Liberal Democracy and Environmentalism: The End of Environmentalism?*, eds., Marcel Wissenburg and Yoram Levy (New York: Routledge, 2004), 10. See also James G. Cantrill, "Perceiving Environmental Discourse: The Cognitive Playground," in *The Symbolic Earth: Discourse and Our Creation of the Environment*, eds. James G. Cantrill and Christine L. Oravec (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 76-94.

"environmental policy research has shown clearly that the mere provision of information will never be sufficient to bring about decisive change."[188] Based on these reassessments, most authors point toward the importance of finding fresh ways of engaging ordinary people. More attention to citizenship and culture is recommended by most authors.[189] The following moderate conclusion can be taken as representative of the rest of the collection:

> The old type of environmentalism which used to be directed at goal-setting, technical planning and general policy design will be replaced by a new form which will have to balance ecological considerations against arguments in favour of freedom of action, individual desire for pleasure and craving for luxury.[190]

Martha C. Nussbaum has noted the convergence among Aristotle, environmentalism, and conservatism in the "radical environmental and anticonsumption thought" of recent times. She warns, however, against the possible authoritarian implications of this strand of thought, which, according to her, is inclined to see "the role of the state in curbing a wasteful lifestyle." Instead, she prefers to adopt Aristotle for her liberal project of enhancing the capabilities of individuals as citizens.[191]

In America, the most recent episode of the debate was sparked by an essay co-authored by Michael Shellenberger and Ted Nordhaus—environmental strategists and

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[188] Marius de Geus, "The Environment Versus Individual Freedom and Convenience," in *Liberal Democracy and Environmentalism: The End of Environmentalism?*, eds., Marcel Wissenburg and Yoram Levy (New York: Routledge, 2004), 87-99, 96. See also Marius de Geus, *The End of Over-consumption: Towards a Lifestyle of Moderation and Self-restraint* (Utrecht: International Books, 2003).

[189] See the contributions by Graham Smith, Marius de Geus, and John Barry.

[190] Ibid., 99. De Geus directs his attention in this article to the problem of consumption in advanced industrialized societies and finds Aristotle's conception of ethics of particular importance (pp. 97-8).

[191] See "The Good as Discipline, the Good as Freedom," in David A. Crocker and Toby Linden, eds., *Ethics of Consumption: The Good Life, Justice, and Global Stewardship* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 313, 324-32.

organizers who are well informed about the world of environmental NGOs.[192] As they chose the meeting of the Environmental Grantmakers Association as a venue for their paper, they were able to get much publicity for their opinion. Their papers have been widely circulated and received much response since then.[193] A similar view was defended shortly after the November 2004 election by another environmental insider Adam Werbach who was president of the Sierra Club between 1996-98.[194] Both papers show clear signs of frustration with business as usual within the environmental movement.[195] Their common complaint is that there is lack of comprehensive and inspiring political vision, too much preoccupation with technical fixes, and much denial about the deteriorating state of affairs among leading environmental groups in the US. This poverty of vision makes it difficult to overcome the public image of environmentalists as merely another special-interest group. Shellenberger and Nordhaus attributes the failure to the conventional wisdom among environmentalists that technical fixes are adequate.

I do not necessarily agree with the critics' attempt to recharge environmentalism with progressive zeal but much of their diagnosis echoes the points made by the civic approach proponents that I have discussed earlier. I want to point out these commonalities and suggest that their diagnosis warrants taking a harder look at the tenets

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[192] Michael Shellenberger and Ted Nordhaus, "The Death of Environmentalism: Global Warming Politics in a Post-Environmental World," September 2004, http://www.thebreakthrough.org/images/Death_of_Environmentalism.pdf.

[193] For reactions, see *The Grist Magazine* website, http://www.grist.org/news/maindish/2005/01/13/doe-intro/, the Spring 2005 issue of *Social Policy*, and the March 2006 issue of *Organization & Environment*.

[194] Adam Werbach, "Is Environmentalism Dead?" Speech presented to the Commonwealth Club of California, San Francisco, 2004, http://www.3nov.com/images/awerbach_ied_final.pdf.

[195] The common theme of "death" is not a coincidence as all three authors are well acquainted with one another. The spirit that both papers are written in is reminiscent of Howard Dean's bold critique of John Kerry in the Democratic Party primaries for the 2004 election. The leading Democratic Party nominee John Kerry was trying to look "tough" by defending his support for Iraq War given the Republicans' advantage in national security issues. Dean's strategy was against the conventional wisdom of the Democratic Party leadership which was to try to match the Republicans in national security credentials.

of liberalism and the modern project of progress. Since both papers has much in common, I will refer to both papers interchangeably. The problem of environmentalism is situated within the broader liberal culture:

> The failure is not unique to environmentalism. Our death is a symptom of the exhaustion of the liberal project. Having achieved its goals of basic economic rights, liberalism and its special interests now fail to speak to the modern need for fulfillment of the American people.[196]

This statement suggests that the "fulfillment of the American people" goes beyond securing the "basic economic rights." This point is important because, as we shall see, the critics fail to say anything that actually goes beyond them but remains within the progressive liberal framework. Still, their honest critique is important. At the center of this critique is what we have seen above that environmentalism does not reach the ordinary people. This stands in stark contrast to the grip of political right on people. Hence, environmentalism has to invent a new competing vision to become politically effective: "Environmentalism is dead in no small part because it could never match the right's power to narrate a compelling vision of America's future." To do so, environmentalists must "step outside the confines of the environmental discourse to articulate a more expansive, more inclusive and more compelling vision for the future . . . [to become] American progressives."[197]

This sounds good but what could that vision contain as new other than the existing stock liberal issues such as gender, labor, race, and the environment. It seems that the authors complain of the lack of a single narrative that can relate all to one another. They suggest that it is the balkanization of liberal issues that sap their synergistic power:

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[196] Werbach, 4.

[197] Ibid., 5.

> For 30 years American liberals have defined themselves according to a set of problem categories that divide us, whether they be racial, gender, economic or environmental. We have spent far less time defining ourselves according to the values that unite us, such as shared prosperity, progress, interdependence, fairness, ecological restoration and equality. We can no longer afford the laundry list of "-isms" to define and divide our world and ourselves.[198]

The critics further underline the need to pool together the seemingly different issues under a unifying framework without losing their "web of connections."[199] I am not going to dwell on the vacuous term "value" in the above statement here which I have discussed at length in the previous chapter. It is important to note however that the adoption of "values" discourse cannot resolve the nihilism of contemporary times. The conservatives who apply the term "values" almost promiscuously should not be imitated.[200]

Putting aside this critique for a moment, how is a unifying vision possible to create around values which we know vary from one subject to another, or one period to another, or one culture to another? The values of black culture, for instance, are different from the values of Hispanic culture in the United States and both from the white culture. One might say that, the critics are speaking of moral values rather than cultural values. My first response to this objection would be that these two sets of values cannot be held apart in reality. Cultural values are not about the fact that whether one listens to Rap music, Britney, or Tango but the commonly shared meaning and practices derived from them. An example of a cultural value is whether "personal expression" or "deference to authority" is encouraged in a group setting. It is well known, for instance, that the

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[198] Ibid., 6.

[199] Ibid., 8.

[200] For a critique of contemporary "values" discourse, see Peter C. Emberley, "Values and Technology: George Grant and Our Present Possibilities," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 21.3 (1988): 465-94.

Hispanics predominantly value the latter. They also put family rather than the individual first. Much has also been written on the fact that values of "freedom" and "equality" do conflict given certain interpretations of each. Freedom to own the fruits of one's own labor conflicts with the policies aiming at national or international economic equality. If it is true that values are irreducible, then conflict among these values has to be perpetually disguised for the sake of a unifying vision. But this is exactly what Marxists and Marxism-inspired intellectuals denounce as "ideology," that is, masking and artificially repressing competing interests.

But the analysis of our critics is still helpful to confirm the contradictions of environmentalism as this diagnosis will make it easier to acknowledge the complicated nature of the question concerning the environment. For the question has not easy or self-evident answer. To continue, the critics confirm what I have suggested above that these debates are connected to the meaning of the basic categories such as the "environment" or "nature." They speculate that "this lack of vision for the American people was connected to conservation's darkest side: its misanthropic nostalgia for a 'natural' past that didn't include human beings." [201]

> Within environmentalists and environmentalism reside both a love for and a hatred of humanity. Because misanthropy at a political level is suicidal, it merits remaining private. But over the years, ordinary Americans have sensed it, the media has magnified it, and during the springtime of the environmental movement, the keenest conservatives saw an opportunity to exploit it.[202]

The critics conclude that "environmentalism" as an independent category is obsolete. One of them even boldly announces that "I am done calling myself an

[201] Ibid., 7.

[202] Ibid., 8.

environmentalist."[203] Both papers repeat the points made in earlier debates such as the technological fascination of environmentalists and the need to a more heterogeneous conception of the "environment" and "environmentalism."[204] The same ambiguity is true for the more exotic terms "green" or "ecological" since these ultimately rest on the notion of the environment and nature. What these terms signify in meaning is clearly not something straightforward. Despite the fact that the terms "environment" and "environmentalism" draw attention to the "real," "urgent," "practical," or "material" problems that exist in the world apart from us, environmental problems and issues can be imagined only through preexisting, more familiar concepts such as "citizenship" as opposed to "sustainability." A greater part of the legitimacy that the question of the "environment" enjoys actually derives from the fact that it touches these long-standing conceptual issues and the empirical-practical phenomena they are intended to conceptualize. "Conservatism, properly understood, is the perspective most congenial to an acceptance of the complexity of our political inheritance."[205]

The civic environmental approach is of increasing interest to scholars, journalists, policy-makers, and non-governmental groups in the environmental field.[206] An environmental research center at a prestigious American university, for instance, has been giving out for the last few years annual "global environmental citizen awards" to

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[203] Ibid., 4.

[204] Ibid. In a follow-up postscript to their original article, Michael Shellenberger and Ted Nordhaus continue to put emphasis on overcoming the prevailing narrow conception of the "environment" excluding human health and urban concerns. See Michael Shellenberger and Ted Nordhaus, "Death Warmed Over," http://www.thebreakthrough.org/images/Nordhaus-Shellenberger.pdf.

[205] Lawrence E. Cahoone, *Civil Society: The Conservative Meaning of Liberal Politics* (Blackwell, 2002), 205; Bert van den Brink, *The Tragedy of Liberalism: An Alternative Defense of a Political Tradition* (SUNY Press, 2000).

[206] The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Conservation Union (IUCN) both promote "global environmental citizenship."

public figures who have contributed to environmental protection efforts at the global level.[207] Although the award itself is of symbolic significance and its scope is global, it is telling that the term "citizen" is used in the title. For the term "citizen" and its cognate "citizenship" are pregnant with normative import and rich in rhetorical resonance. Both draw upon the tradition of citizenship, evoking a sense of moral duty that competes with individuals' withdrawal to private lives.

The civic approach to the environment is far from being a panacea for all sorts of environmental ills which are simply too diverse and multifaceted to admit a one-size-fits-all approach. Although civic initiatives may not replace the niches of governmental, legislative, judicial, technological, scientific, and market approaches, the reverse is also true. These technical methods cannot succeed in the absence of voluntary public support. Nor can these instruments ensure against the possibility of policy reversals by future governments with different agendas in liberal democratic societies. Hence, we should be willing to welcome the strengths and advantages of the civic approach without necessarily closing our eyes to its possible inadequacies under specific circumstances or with respect to certain environmental issues. It is true that the civic environmental approach might fall short with respect to environmental problems on a large scale transcending national borders such as global warming but they are neither totally irrelevant nor a lot worse than its technical cousin. The civic approach can be valuable in forming political alliances, motivating the active core of environmental activism, and broadening the larger support base of environmentalism. I have more to say on this point in the next chapter.

[207] The most recent recipient of this award—bestowed by "The Center for Health and the Global Environment" at Harvard Medical School—has been Prince Charles. Past recipients include other well-known figures such as Al Gore, Bill Moyers, Jane Goodall, Harrison Ford, and Edward O. Wilson.

In thinking through the question concerning the environment, we should expect that the theoretical debates in environmentalism over its future cannot move forward without recognizing the connections between environmental theory and the history of political and moral thought. The extent to which the Aristotelian element is incorporated into these discourses certainly varies. Since these discourses are put forth by individual scholars, we should naturally expect differences in the way they are framed and presented. Despite their differences, the common emphasis on "citizenship" and "civic" duties betray the critique of the classical liberal conception of citizenship. As is well known, the classical liberal conception of citizenship in Hobbes prioritizes security or survival and that of Locke emphasizes private ownership of property. Both conceptions are individualist due to their similar explanation of society as an outcome of voluntary (or "artificial" as Hobbes puts it) process that not only took place in the mythical past but is ever renewed in the present. The "civic" emphasis in these environmental discourses are specifically aimed at countering this conception of politics. Civic environmental scholars need to posit a goal different from those of security/survival and wealth for this task. Strangely, however, the civic environmental literature is seriously inadequate in this regard. Still, the civic approach as well as environmental virtue ethics are as close as we can get to Aristotelian viewpoint within contemporary environmental theory literature.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The previous chapters have argued that Aristotle's integral thinking on praxis, nature, and art is critical to make sense of the contemporary question concerning the environment. My presupposition all along has been that what we mean by the "environment" when we regularly invoke it in everyday or academic discourse within a normative framework is not self-evident. Upon deeper reflection, it can be seen that it signifies much more than its immediately visible aspects. Basically, the question in its non-material dimension touches the perennial philosophical and religious debates about the good life. Hence, Aristotle's relevance to contemporary thinking on the environment can be best seen in the context of the contrast between the premodern and the modern understanding of the human condition. Much of the normative analysis of environmental scholars sides with the premodern view of things. This premodern influence is at times explicit and at times is less obvious.

In Chapter 2, I emphasized two of these. One is that Aristotle offers us an integral picture of reality from which human *being* is not alienated. Human beings are distinct among species by virtue of their superior intellectual capabilities but this potential superiority does not translate into active superiority "without virtue." For without it, "he is the most unholy and the most savage [of the animals], and the worst with regard to sex and food" (*Pol.* 1253a35-38). I have noted that this integral vision is quite compatible with the recurring environmental longing for wholeness or integrity by which not only the physical reality of human dependence on nature but also our spiritual connection to something greater is meant. Such unifying vision may sound unscientific or impossible to hard-headed positivists given the advancement of scientific understanding of reality in our age but these two reasons do not change the fact that this sentiment is a fundamental aspect of the human way of

living, which shows itself in active yearning for happiness and completion. I will have more to say on this point later on. Second, Aristotle's account of politics does not sever its link to ethics the way modern political science does in pursuit of deterministic causality (or more humbly "correlation") in human affairs. This would be a crucial mistake in Aristotle's view because it distorts the "truth" pertaining human condition which is changeable in one sense but invariable in another. What does not change is the psychological constitution of human reality—the need for friendship for well-being for instance. My subsequent remarks will speak to this particular example.

I have noted before that there have been scholars who have studied Aristotle in this connection. The political theorist Mulford Q. Sibley, for instance, argued more than thirty years ago (in an article now almost forgotten) for the relevance of classical political philosophy to contemporary environmental concerns.[1] Sibley's article discussed the issues of economy, technology, and ecology by contrasting classical political tradition (by which he not only meant Plato and Aristotle but also later figures such as More and Aquinas who followed either Plato or Aristotle) and "modernity" that is founded on the rejection of the classical tradition both in natural and political philosophy. This dissertation has followed Sibley's lead but I have expanded on his article by taking into account more recent scholarship on this topic.

In recent scholarship, Aristotle's relevance has been discussed in three different environmental fields—environmental ethics/philosophy, environmental political theory, and environmental economics. Environmental philosophers have shown interest in Aristotle primarily in relation to the theme of "virtue" and, to a lesser degree, his biology as well as his

[1] Mulford Q. Sibley, "The Relevance of Classical Political Theory for Economy, Technology, and Ecology," *Alternatives: Perspectives on Society and Environment* 2.2 (1973): 14-35; see also Mulford Q. Sibley, "Utopian Thought and Technology," *American Journal of Political Science* 17.2 (1973): 255-81.

account of the relationship between nature (*phusis*) and art (*techne*). Among environmental political theorists, Aristotle's political naturalism (or the relationship between *phusis* and *praxis*) and attention to civic virtue was of primary interest. In environmental economics, Aristotle's distinction between *chrematistike* (business expertise) and *oikonomia* (household management) received much attention. So there is growing interest in Aristotle-environment connection so much so that Aristotle is now considered by some as one of the fifty key thinkers on the environment.[2] The contribution of my dissertation to this literature was to pull together these disparate strands and respond to the skeptical environmental scholars who have either explicitly criticized and dismissed Aristotle or neglected his potential contribution.

Max Oelschlaeger noted, for instance, about a decade ago that "environmental philosophy is dominated by largely negative appraisals that view Greek thinking more as an obstacle to overcome than a source for constructive thinking" and acknowledged that he himself previously "dismissed the relevance of Greek philosophy to these times."[3] Aristotle's relevance to the issue of the environment has not been obvious to environmental scholars such as Oelschlaeger for two main reasons. First, the category of the environment, as I have discussed in the last section of the previous chapter, is too narrow to represent a variety of themes that have family resemblance to one another, say, community gardening, renewable energy, and asthma. The second reason for missing the Aristotelian connection is the fact that environmentalism has been predominantly interpreted as a self-contained ideology. The ideological approach tends to narrow down the scope of environmental thinking and creates

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[2] See David E. Cooper, "Aristotle," in *Fifty Key Thinkers on the Environment*, ed. Joy A. Palmer (London: Routledge, 2001), 12-6.

[3] Max Oelschlaeger, foreword to *The Greeks and the Environment*, eds. Laura Westra and Thomas M. Robinson (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997), ix.

unnecessary holier-than-thou types of exchanges among environmental scholars. Similar self-righteous views are also expressed toward non-environmental scholarship. This dissertation has been a call to be wary of this narrow ideological framework. I shall return to this topic after a brief overview of previous chapters.

I began with a survey of the existing scholarly literature on Aristotle's relevance and significance to contemporary environmental thought. I have found this literature to be unfairly critical of Aristotle for his established place in the anthropocentric tradition of Western civilization. Then, I offered my own account of how best to relate Aristotle to current environmental discussions combining the insights of aforementioned fields of study. I suggested that seeking external limits to consumption or growth is a normative ideal that can be derived from an Aristotelian understanding of ethics conceived in relation to human ends. I also argued that the way Aristotle conceives ethics and politics as inter-related domains of praxis is hospitable to environmental political objectives in the public sphere opposing the prevalence of instrumental rationality embodied in the policies of technological prometheanism and economic growth. I specifically argued that Aristotle's teleological understanding of (human) nature and praxis, and the way he relates nature and praxis to productive arts is of considerable significance to contemporary environmental thought. "Virtue is something more precise and better than any art, just as nature is" (*NE* 1106b13-4). This Aristotelian viewpoint—foregrounding nature and praxis—captures the "conservative" spirit of contemporary concern over the environment as I shall discuss shortly.

I delved into the question of *techne* and nature in Chapters 2 through 4 in more detail and compared Aristotle's view of the relationship between *techne* and *phusis* with the modern era. In Chapters 5 and 6 I critiqued some of the academic works in the fields of "environmental virtue ethics" and "environmental citizenship." My major criticism of works

in these research fields has been that scholarship in environmental virtue ethics, for the most part, has not paid sufficient attention to the "political" aspect of Aristotle's philosophy and that of environmental citizenship has failed to incorporate the "ethical" dimension of Aristotle's thought adequately. In Chapter 6 I examined two inter-related areas of the current environmental literature—civic environmentalism and environmental citizenship—to argue that these visions support and in turn are supported by an Aristotelian understanding of praxis which puts virtue, justice, and community before individual autonomy or freedom. In the rest of this chapter, I will briefly discuss why "conservation" and "conservatism" share more than an etymological connection in light of the preceding remarks.

7.1 Reconciling Conservative and Environmental Sensibilities

A practical implication of bringing Aristotle into dialogue with contemporary environmental thought is the recovery and accentuation of the conservative spirit of environmentalism. The extent and feasibility of this reconciliation must be explored in future research but a few brief remarks are in order. I shall shortly elucidate what I mean by "conservative" and how it is derived from a study of Aristotle but before this let me say a few words on why it is important to seek a common ground between conservatism and environmentalism and why there is skepticism about this enterprise. Getting in touch with the conservative spirit of conservation is important for environmentalism to grow out of its current crisis. As my discussion in previous chapter shows, there is widespread misunderstanding of the significance of the question of the environment both within and without the contemporary environmental movement. Although I have only mentioned the cases in the US and Western Europe, I can tentatively claim that there is a similar situation in every modernizing country such as Turkey where I am from. The most common perception

in the developing countries among the political and educated groups is that environmental concern is a luxury. The most urgent task of politics and economics is to feed people and provide for their security. The means to do this to invest in developmental projects such as transportation, energy, and mining, especially by attracting foreign capital.

The low opinion of the issue-area of the environment is also common among political and academic intelligentsia who subscribe to the vision of realism. For them environmental politics is either a non-issue or an issue of "low politics."[4] This judgment results from lack of deep reflection on the set of normative questions entangled with the environment. What is at stake in the question concerning the environment, as I have argued hitherto, is the vision of the good life and the interpretation of modernity in contemporary societies in an increasingly globalized world. The theoretical framework of the question of the environment goes well beyond the practical problem of finding technological solutions and even engaging in courthouse or legislature battles against anti-environmental interests. What we need first and foremost is a philosophical understanding that the relationship between human species and non-human nature is bound with the way human beings and societies conceive and build the conditions of happiness and excellence, namely, the good life. Environmentalists cannot succeed in their attempts to unravel the logic of unsustainability unless they tackle the broader framework of which the environmental question is a part. The conservative critique of modernity based on individual autonomy and material progress can be helpful to see this big picture.

[4] The contrast between low and high politics is often made in IR literature in the context of the larger debate between realism and idealism. Security issues are often regarded as the archetypal form of politics by realists whereas the issues of environment and development are considered as secondary or derivate. For a discussion of low and high politics in IR literature, see Robert O. Keohane & Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Power and Interdependence* (Boston: Little & Brown, 1977).

The conservative dimension of environmentalism can be instrumental to see through the ideological thicket of modernity. We can better appreciate the nuances of the world of praxis if we go beyond the dichotomous thinking imposed by the conventional left/right or liberal/conservative dualities. The ideological labels which are arisen in the Western world in the post-1789 era is increasingly becoming obsolete in our globalizing era. The binary logic of left and right or the more nuanced gallery of ideologies such as liberalism, socialism, conservatism, and fascism (which are again ordered along the continuum of "left" to "right") are proving inadequate to understand the varied intellectual and political positions that havee been in the making in the last few decades. The rise of new social movements such as feminism and environmentalism since the early 1970s have challenged ideological categories interpreted solely in terms of political and economic interests. The new ideologies are interpreted as cross-cutting the private and public spheres and dealing with non-economic issues such as identity and culture. However, there is a fake sense of radicalism accompanying the ideologues of these new social movements. They often forget or ignore that their radical edge over old ideologies of material interests (and this is true only for liberalism and socialism rather than conservatism and fascism) is owing to the inadequacies of modern philosophy and natural science. This is particularly true for environmental intellectuals who oppose the logic of modernity to quantify the lifeworld. The expansionist, quantifying, calculating forces of technology, science, corporations, developers, engineers, and economists are opposed by practitioners and intellectuals of environmentalism in the name of "values" that cannot be quantified or measured. It is this very sentiment deep at the heart of every environmentalist, whether they articulate it or not, that make it possible to accentuate its conservative streak.

Environmentalism is often regarded as a democratic, liberal, or progressive cause because the environmental institutions have been staffed by people with liberal or progressive opinions and habits. The progressive image of the issue of environment also prevails because environmentalists try to change conventional practices, laws, and institutions contributing to environmental problems. Among their targets is the free operation of the economic actors. The conservatives who put their faith in capitalism often attack or dismiss environmentalists by charging them of having ulterior motives of establishing collectivism. Environmentalists are often likened to a watermelon—green on the outside, red on the inside.[5] But if we turn to the substantive goals then we can notice the overlap with traditional conservatism.

The literature that explores their relationship and suggesting that a reconciliation is both possible and desirable is growing. Some of these authors come from conservatives and some others from environmentalists. If "consistently applied," according to the environmental author David Orr, conservation and conservatism become "natural allies."[6] Similarly, according to the conservative scholar Roger Scruton, "conservatism and environmentalism are natural bedfellows" but he laments that "so few environmentalists seem to see this."[7] The reason for this oversight seems to be the misunderstanding of conservatism both by environmentalists and self-identified conservatives alike.

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[5] See George Will, "Environmentalism as a Cover for Collectivism," December 15, 2005, http://realclearpolitics.com/Commentary/com-12_15_05_GW_pf.html.

[6] David W. Orr, "Conservation and Conservatism," *Conservation Biology* 9.2 (1995): 242. See also C. A. Bowers, *Mindful Conservatism: Rethinking the Ideological and Educational Basis of an Ecologically Sustainable Future* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).

[7] Roger Scruton, "Conservatism," in *Political Theory and the Ecological Challenge*, eds. Andrew Dobson and Robyn Eckersley (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 8, 9. See also John A. Gray, "An Agenda for Green Conservatism," in *Beyond the New Right: Markets, Government and the Common Environment* (London: Routledge, 1993), 124-177; Gordon K. Durnil, *The Making of a Conservative Environmentalist* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995); John R. E Bliese, *The Greening of Conservative America* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001); and Rod Dreher, *Crunchy Cons* (New York: Crown Forum, 2006).

Environmentalists often consider "conservatism as the ideology of free enterprise, and free enterprise as an assault on the earth's resources, with no motive beyond the short-term gains that animate the market." But conservatives too are partially responsible for their image: "For they have tended to see modern politics in terms of a simple dichotomy between individual freedom on the one hand, and state control on the other."[8]

To explore the common ground between environmentalism and conservatism, it is important to distinguish different strands of conservatism. In a recent article written on this subject by Nadivah Greenberg, five strands of American conservatism are identified: *Classical, Theological, Free-market, National Security,* and *Sierra Club Republican.*[9] Apart from the last one, the first four strands are prevalent among the conservatives. Greenberg examines the prominent ideas and intellectual figures in each strand and locates small pockets of pro-environmental conservatives in all five strands. Although they hold pro-environmental positions for different reasons, Greenberg suggests that there is a window of opportunity for "the possibility of an emerging, authentic environmental conservative compatibility."[10] In practical politics too, there are developments to this effect.[11] The collaboration of the Republican Party senator John McCain with the formerly Democratic Party senator Joe Lieberman to curb global warming is a well known example.[12] More recently, Mark Sanford,

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[8] Ibid., 7.

[9] Nadivah Greenberg, "Shop Right: American Conservatisms, Consumption, and the Environment," *Global Environmental Politics* 6.2 (2006): 85-111.

[10] Ibid., 89.

[11] A small organization called "Republicans for Environmental Protection" or "Green Elephants" was established in 1995. They "appreciate the common roots of 'conservatism' and 'conservation.' " See http://www.repamerica.org/.

[12] The Lieberman-McCain bill "Climate Stewardship Act" was first introduced in the Congress in 2003, voted in the same year but failed by a vote of 43 to 55 in the Senate. In January 2007, a new version of the bill was reintroduced with bi-partisan support. The new bill, which is pending, gained support from the National Wildlife Federation, Environmental Defense, and the Pew Center on Global Climate Change.

the Republican governor of South Carolina, urged his fellow conservatives in a Washington Post article to embrace the cause of conservation.[13]

My understanding of "conservative" point of view is neither restricted to the Anglo-Saxon countries nor the modern era. I also have in mind the rest of Western countries as well as non-Western countries. Most contemporary critics of modern times as well as premodern intellectuals would count as conservative. In this sense, Gandhi, for instance, is a conservative. For the Anglo-Saxon context, I am referring to the strand associated with the British statesman and philosopher Edmund Burke (who ironically was a Whig rather than a Tory), and which had to be labeled "traditional(ist)" in the post-World War II era to distinguish it from its other variants which defend strong national security, free market/trade, and individual liberty above all.[14] Among its contemporary representatives are Russell Kirk and Michael Oakeshott. This strand is also named as "cultural"[15] or "philosophical."[16] Kraynak notes that "cultural conservatives . . . question the basic assumption of historical progress" and believe that "modernity does not constitute unmixed 'progress' over the past because the advances in freedom, material prosperity, and technology that we presently enjoy are offset by a decline in the highest aspirations of the

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[13] Mark Sanford, "A Conservative Conservationist? Why the Right Needs to Get Invested in the Search for Climate Change Solutions," *The Washington Post*, February 23, 2007, A19. See also other public voices from the conservative intellectuals: Fred C. Ikle, "Growth Without End, Amen?" *National Review*, 7 March 1994; Jeremy Beer, "A Greener Shade of Right: Who says Conservatives Can't Be Conservationists?" *re:generation quarterly*, March / April 2003, http://www.utne.com/issues/2003_116/promo/10361-1.html; and Steven F. Hayward, "Is 'Conservative Environmentalist' an Oxymoron? How to End Environmental Policy Gridlock," August 2, 2005, AEI, http://www.aei.org/publications/filter.all,pubID.22934/pub_detail.asp.

[14] The two other main variants in the US are known as neo-conservatism and libertarianism. See Peter Berkowitz, *Varieties of Conservatism in America* (Hoover Institution Press, 2004). In Europe, the latter is known as neo-liberalism or simply as liberalism.

[15] Robert P. Kraynak, "Conservative Critics of Modernity: Can They Turn Back the Clock," *The Intercollegiate Review* 37.1 (2001): 31-9.

[16] See C. A. Bowers, *Mindful Conservatism*, 12-4. Bowers advocates an ecologically informed conservative approach which he calls "mindful conservatism"—a revised version of philosophical conservatism represented by philosophical figures such as Edmund Burke and Michael Oakeshott.

human soul—in the aspirations for heroic virtue, spiritual perfection, philosophical truth, and artistic beauty."[17] In the sense that Kraynak defines it, cultural conservatism is not in the monopoly of the Western intellectual tradition but non-Western societies too have traditionalist conservatives as well. Kraynak's list of cultural conservatives includes intellectual figures such as Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Henry Adams, Leo Strauss, Richard Weaver, and Southern Agrarians, and groups such as traditional Catholics, Eastern Orthodox believers, and Orthodox Jews.[18] We can also add to this list American literary figures such as Irving Babbitt and T. S. Eliot.

Under this strand falls also the Catholic intellectual tradition derived from Thomas Aquinas with its stress on community, justice, and subsidiarity. Among them are contemporary intellectuals who are directly engaged with environmental issues as well as others whose ideas are reconcilable with them.[19] Pope John Paul II's writings on the environment are well known.[20] We can also include among cultural conservatives certain communitarian critics of contemporary liberalism such as Robert Nisbet. Radical critics of technology such as Ivan Illich and George P. Grant too by virtue of their premodern visions must count as "cultural conservative."[21] A crucial chain in the link between conservatism and environmentalism is the American farmer and author Wendell Berry whose writings are appreciated both by environmentalists and conservatives. Another important figure is E.F.

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[17] Kraynak, 31, 32.

[18] Ibid., 32.

[19] Alasdair MacIntyre's attention to intelligent animals such as dolphins to accentuate the animality of human beings in his recent work *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues* (Chicago, IL: Open Court, 1999) is an example of the latter group of catholic intellectuals.

[20] See *Ecology and Faith: The Writings of Pope John Paul II*, ed. Ancilla Dent (Arthur James, 1997).

[21] See George P. Grant, *Technology and Empire: Perspectives on North America* (Toronto: House of Anansi, 1969); and *Technology and Justice* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986).

Schumacher—the author of *The Small is Beautiful* (1973)—who explicitly draws on Aristotle's emphasis on limits.[22]

Why would the political goals of environmentalism be of conservative character? To answer this question, we need to understand the nature of traditional conservatism and its opposite stance progressivism in the light of the project of modernity: the improvement of the lot of humankind through increasing control of nature. To this is later added the improvement of society by social engineering. The following distinction regarding the question of technology is illuminating for the difference I want to emphasize:

> Those who hold that the biggest obstacles to human happiness are material, arising from scarcity and the stinginess and violence of nature, from the indifference of the powers that be, or (within) from disease and death, look to the arts. On this view, the inventors and bringers of the arts are the true benefactors of mankind, and are revered like the gods. The supreme example is Prometheus . . . bringer of fire, with its warming and transforming power, and, through fire, all the other arts. In contrast, those who hold that the biggest obstacles to human happiness are psychic and spiritual, arising from the turbulence of the human soul itself, look instead to law (or to piety or its equivalent) to tame and moderate the unruly and self-destroying passions of human beings. On this view, the lawgiver, statesmen, and prophets are the true benefactors of mankind—not Prometheus but Lycurgus, not builders of Babel but Moses.[23]

Using an ideal-typical taxonomy, we may safely characterize the former camp as progressive and the latter as conservative. The substantive ethos of environmentalism is more justifiable from a traditional conservative rather than a progressive viewpoint. Environmental figures such as E. F. Schumacher, Ivan Illich, David Orr, and Wendell Berry who openly raise the question of virtue and the good life and locate them in the non-material dimension of human life beyond the spheres of productive and consumptive activities are

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[22] See, for instance, the recent defense of Schumacher's vision by a British conservative author: Joseph Pearce, *Small is Still Beautiful* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2006).

[23] Leon Kass, "Introduction: The Problem of Technology," in *Technology in the Western Political Tradition*, eds. Arthur Melzer, Jerry Weinberger, and Richard Zinman (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 10-1.

conservatives according to the above distinction.[24] By emphasizing the role of human psyche in ecological crisis, Vaclav Havel represents the common ground between conservative and environmental sensibilities:

> It is my deep conviction that the only option is for something to change in the sphere of the spirit, in the sphere of human conscience, in the actual attitude of man towards the world and his understanding of himself and his place in the overall order of existence. It cannot suffice to invent new machines, new regulations, new institutions. It is necessary to understand differently and more perfectly the true purpose of our existence on this earth, and of our deeds. Only such a new understanding will allow the development of new models of behaviour, new scales of values and objectives in life, and through these means finally bind a new spirit and new meaning also to the specific regulations, treaties and institutions. [25]

The compatibility between conservative and environmental sensibilities can be made from a number of angles three of which I shall discuss here briefly.[26] The first is the adoption of a precautionary stance toward technological innovation and human interventions in the natural world. The Aristotelian virtue of prudence is resuscitated.[27] David Harvey, for instance, notes that:

> In some of the ecological literature the principle of prudence and respect for tradition plays a leading role. Human adaptations to and of natural environments have been arrived at over centuries and should not be unnecessarily disturbed. Conservation and preservation of existing landscapes and usages, sometimes argued

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[24] Certainly not all environmentalists qualify as conservative in this ethical/moral sense. Some strands of environmentalism regard environmental problems as stemming from structural factors outside the individual human choice such as over-population, socio-economic institutions, policies, religions, or ideologies. There is a partial truth to this view but the oversight that these ultimately depend on agency lead one eventually to gridlock. Given these external factors, they reach conclusions which downplay the role of individual human choice or ethics in the creation and resolution of environmental problems. Without going into the merits of framing the environmental discourse this way, I will only make the observation that this type of analysis circumvents the question of individual character or ethics that has been central to a venerable type of philosophical conservatism observed in many cultures in history.

[25] Vaclav Havel, "A Statement Delivered at Forum 2000," September 4, 1997, http://www.cts.cuni.cz/conf98/vhavel.htm#111

[26] For more points of contact, Bruce Pilbeam, "Natural Allies? Mapping the Relationship Between Conservatism and Environmentalism," *Political Studies* 51 (2003): 490-508

[27] See Bliese, 64-6; Pilbeam, 493-94; and "Arne Naess: Green Conservatism," in *The Green Reader: Essays Toward a Sustainable Society*, ed. Andrew Dobson (San Francisco: Mercury House, 1991), 253-54.

> for by explicit appeal to esthetic judgments, give such a framework a conservative ring.[28]

The following remarks of a conservation biologist, made in reference to a species endangered because of urban sprawl, illustrate the conservative environmental stance in this respect: "Those of us in favor of their preservation are often motivated by a deeply conservative feeling of distrust of irreversible change and by a socially atypical attitude of respect for the components and the structure of the natural world."[29]

A second common point of interest is the desire for vibrant, organic, and self-sufficient communities. Both environmentalists and conservatives value intergenerational continuity and the integrity of socio-physical environment out of reverence for community and continuity.[30] This is the real meaning of tradition which, as C.A. Bowers notes, is unfairly denigrated in the contemporary world especially among progressive liberals.[31] The environmental historian Clarence J. Glacken observed long ago the underlying psychological dynamics of the interdependence between conserving cultural and natural heritage: "The same belief that is the basis of the traditional Chinese family system is also the philosophical basis of much of the literature on the wise use of the natural environment. It is this belief in historical continuity and the values it enshrines that also inspires movements for the preservation of man's creations like the Parthenon and natural phenomena like the redwoods. Few want and few could tolerate a disembodied present."[32] More recently, a China scholar confirms this observation by emphasizing the desirability of looking at the

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[28] David Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1996), 178-79.

[29] David W. Ehrenfeld, *The Arrogance of Humanism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 178-79.

[30] See Bliese, 63-4; and Pilbeam, 498-99.

[31] C.A. Bowers, *Educating for Eco-Justice and Community* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2001).

[32] Clarence J. Glacken, "Man's Place in Nature in Recent Western Thought," in *This Little Planet*, ed. Michael Hamilton (New York: Scribners, 1970), 165.

environment from a broader perspective: "The embeddedness of environmental values suggests that the promotion of a certain set of environmental values has to entail a whole set of other values. For example, to promote environmental protection also entails the promotion of protection of communities, lifestyles, and traditions."[33]

A third area of convergence between conservatism and environmentalism is the critique of materialism and the common emphasis on the moderation of consumerist appetites. The teaching of modern view has encouraged the pursuit of happiness through individual autonomy secured by mobility and freedom from constraints. The most common strategy in this pursuit has been to accumulate status symbols (i.e., success or career) and experience of pleasure (fun). It is this pursuit that is commonly called "consumerism" or "consumption culture." If increasing environmental dilemmas are seen as by-products of the modern era by virtue of inducing growth in population, technology, and consumption, we can see more clearly the reasons for the convergence and compatibility between conservative and environmental sensibilities. Following Russell Kirk's conception of conservatism, we should perhaps consider "environmentalism" in terms of having and spreading environmental sensibility as opposed to subscribing to a coherent ideology.[34] Discerning conservatives such as Russell Kirk was well aware of this aspect of ideological thinking which prompted him to define conservatism as an anti-ideology: "conservatism is the negation of ideology: it is a state of mind, a type of character, a way of looking at the civil

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[33] Carnegie Council, "Can Cultural Values Save the Environment?," September 13, 2006, http://www.cceia.org/resources/transcripts/5393.html.

[34] This is not to denigrate "environmentalism" but to point out that no alleged "ideology," be it socialism, liberalism, or feminism, can ever be a coherent one. There cannot be a single coherent body of principles (i.e., doctrine) as such opinions and actions most of the time emerge from the collective (not necessarily collaborative) efforts of several figures across time and geography (e.g., Marx and Lenin). Even when the doctrine is believed to be issued from a single source, during the course of its spread to different individuals and groups across time and space, the doctrine is often subjected to modification. The traces of this inescapable revisionism and alteration can be seen virtually in all ideologies and religions in the world.

social order."[35] By "sensibility," I mean awareness of and responsiveness toward environmental problems. Environmental sensibilities can be coupled with other sensibilities, one of which is concerned with conserving cultural heritage.

It has been suggested that ideologies are truncated descendants of modern political philosophy and their prevalence in the late modern era is characteristic of the intellectual malaise of our times: "As regards modern political philosophy, it has been replaced by ideology: what originally was a political philosophy has turned into an ideology. This fact may be said to form the core of the contemporary crisis of the West."[36] We may also see it, to borrow Nietzsche's metaphor, as an illness just as pregnancy is an illness. According to another account, the meaning of the word *ideology* is analogous to that of the Greek word *doxa* (opinion).[37] If this comparison is reasonable, then the Aristotelian method of dialectic to refine *doxa* must be open to us.

Andrew Dobson, a major exponent of ecologism as a distinct ideology, shows awareness of the danger of ideological simplicity. In response to the criticism that his work is guilty of this simplistic approach, Dobson concedes in a later edition of his work on green ideology that "the demands of ideology and the demands of theory are . . . different." He believes that "ideologies are useful" by virtue of their "enlisting the big theme rather than the theoretical detail."[38] Another environmental scholar confirms Dobson's view of ideology but reaches a different conclusion: "Political ideologies that guide approaches to addressing environmental problems tend to oversimplify reality . . . . This oversimplification has the benefit of assisting the process of recruiting and maintaining adherents to a cause through

[35] Russell Kirk, *The Politics of Prudence* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 1993), 16.

[36] Leo Strauss, *The City and Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [1964] 1976), 2.

[37] Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), 30.

[38] Andrew Dobson, *Green Political Thought: An Introduction*, 4th ed. (London: Routledge, [1990] 2007), 22.

easily interpretable messages, but it imposes a high cost in terms of diminished effectiveness of environmental campaigns."[39] Our understanding of the question of the environment is assisted by a philosophical as opposed to an ideological discourse which tends to erase certain significant differences and exaggerate some others.[40] One must rather examine the opinions of individual authors or actors on their own merits as opposed to fitting them in rigid, pre-existing categories. The ideological mindset often induces false agreement or disagreement of positions within and among schools of environmental thought.[41]

The flaws of ideological mentality can be seen in the fact that the conservative environmental scholar William Ophuls has often been misunderstood and misrepresented by environmental scholars whose political sympathies lie with liberalism, socialism, or progressivism. His first work published in 1977 was revised fifteen years later in 1992.[42] In the earlier version, Ophuls relied on the neo-Malthusian "Limits to Growth" argument as well as Garret Hardin's "The Tragedy of the Commons" (1968) article to make his case for restraint. This can be either voluntarily imposed or outsourced to a Hobbesian government. The latter could effectively supply the needed political coercion to enforce compliance with environmental limitations. Most environmental scholars have immediately seized on his

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[39] William D. Sunderlin, *Ideology, Social Theory, and the Environment* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 209.

[40] The claim of irreducible differences among different strands of environmentalism has been questioned by theorists of environmental pragmatism such as Bryan G. Norton, *Toward Unity Among Environmentalists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[41] For a critical contrast of ideological and theoretical accounts of green politics, see John Barry, *Rethinking Green Politics: Nature, Virtue and Progress* (London: Sage, 1999), 3-6.

[42] William Ophuls, *Ecology and the Politics of Scarcity: Prologue to a Political Theory of the Steady State* (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman and Co., 1977); and William Ophuls and A. Stephen Boyan, Jr., *Ecology and the Politics of Scarcity Revisited: The Unraveling of the American Dream* (New York: W.H. Freeman and Co., 1992).

draconian tone and declared him as one of the terrible trio of eco-authoritarianism.[43] In the revised version, Ophuls protested the misinterpretation of his argument he laid out in the 1977 edition: "the overall spirit of the work is . . . far from Hobbesian."[44] Despite this bold denial, it is clear that Ophuls in the first edition was overly sympathetic with Hobbes's Leviathan. But we can note the following in his favor. Authoritarianism is not peculiar to Hobbes if by this word we understand the threat of the legitimate use of force in case of noncompliance with laws. Moreover, the authoritarian framework of Hobbes's social contract is ambivalent as it presupposes individual consent even though it is premised on fear. This is a far cry from Aristotle's authoritarian argument that the relationship between ruler and ruled is a natural one.

Still, based on his revised work and his latest work, Ophuls appears to have clarified his ideas and thereby changed his mind on Hobbes and has come to reject him as a model. This realization is most evident in his latest work but not absent from the 1992 revision since, in an afterword, he states that "far from being the solution, Hobbes is rather the essence of the problem."[45] "Hobbes's fundamental error," according to Ophuls, was to believe that "politics could ever be separated from virtue."[46] "The current environmental problematique is a direct outgrowth of the system of individualistic and economic politics that evolved out of the social contract theory elaborated in *Leviathan*."[47] His new model is now the *Social Contract* of Rousseau which, some may argue, is not a long distance from

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[43] The other two are Garret Hardin and the left-leaning economist Robert Heilbroner (due to his 1974 book *An Inquiry into the Human Prospect*) both of whom emphasized the issue of ecological scarcity rather than more left-wing solution of distribution.

[44] Ophuls and Boyan, 312.

[45] Ibid., 312.

[46] Ibid., 313.

[47] Ibid., 312.

Hobbes.[48] This is noted actually even by Ophuls himself: "Rousseau's answer . . . is not much different from Hobbes's: Man must be "forced to be free"—that is, protected from the consequences of his own selfishness and shortsightedness by being made obedient to the common good or 'general will,' which represents his real self-interest."[49] Yet, Ophuls dissociated himself from Hobbes over time either because of the negative criticism he had received or because he had realized that Hobbes was part of the problem of modernity rather than its dissolution.[50]

Ophuls is better understood as an environmental conservative or conservative environmentalist as he, like Havel, prioritizes moral rejuvenation rather than political struggle or institutional reconstruction: "the most critical need is for a change of heart, or 'metanoia,' ["fundamental transformation of world view"] because until we have embraced ecological ethos, we cannot possibly have a genuinely ecological politics."[51] By "metanoia" and "ethos," Ophuls means "temperance and virtue needed for the ecological survival of a steady-state society."[52] In this, Ophuls gestures at a Burkean type of conservatism as well as classical political philosophy:

> the questions raised throughout this book are scarcely new but in fact are modern variations on ancient themes . . . the values of a steady-state society would have to resemble pre-modern values in many important respects, but steady-state values bear a particularly uncanny resemblance to the ideas of the British conservative thinker Edmund Burke, the last great spokesman for the pre-modern point of view.[53]

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[48] William Ophuls, "The Rousseauean Moment," *The Good Society* 11.3 (2002): 91-4.

[49] Ophuls and Boyan, 199.

[50] See William Ophuls, *Requiem for Modern Politics: The Tragedy of the Enlightenment and the Challenge of the New Millennium* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1996).

[51] Ophuls and Boyan, 314.

[52] Ibid., 287.

[53] Ibid., 294.

Ophuls appears at times muddleheaded though. Even though he acknowledges Burke as an influence, he also appeals to anarchism. First he states: "Ecology broadly defined is thus a fundamentally conservative orientation to the world . . . . Burke will surely have much to teach us."[54] Immediately after this, he claims that "modern anarchist tradition may also contain valuable lessons" for the environmental movement as "to the extent that the environmental movement shares a common political ideology, it is predominantly anarchist."[55] I am not aware of any anarchist tradition which would count Burke or Hobbes as an influence. So what does Ophuls want to mean? One reason for this panoply of names and ideologies is the eclectic nature of Ophuls's exposition. Another possible reason for this apparent contradiction is that Ophuls actually appreciates the "decentralization, local autonomy, modesty, community" in the anarchist tradition. These are surely compatible with conservative sensibilities.[56] But this compatibility is conceivable vis-à-vis the centralized nation-state framework coupled with rampant free market individualism which offends both anarchists and traditional conservatives. Despite Ophuls's occasional lapses, his work is conservative in spirit when he says, for instance, that "not all values are equal and that virtue matters" against "the modern liberal-democratic orthodoxy." The latter "holds that people have an inalienable right to create their own values." Ophuls is acutely aware of the liberal (and we can add the confused conservatives who are actually the cousins of liberals) resistance to any appeal to "common interest" other than "the clash of personal and factional interest . . . devoted almost exclusively to the utilitarian satisfaction of desire or

[54] Ibid., 295.

[55] Ibid., 296.

[56] We should also note that another area of compatibility is that anarchists can also be authoritarian in practice regardless of what they say in principle.

appetite."[57] Nonetheless, Ophuls sees "the crisis of ecological scarcity . . . fundamentally [as] a moral and spiritual crisis."[58]

Two implications of this rapprochement between conservatism and environmentalism should be emphasized. One is the recognition that religion must be seen as an ally of environmentalists. The other is that happiness must be sought in intangibles. The first is visible in the increasing spread of environmental sensibility among religious groups both in the US as well as in other countries.[59] I have noted above that the Catholic Church has long taken a pro-environment position (except perhaps its stance on birth control). In the US, a splinter group of Evangelicals came out recently in support of stricter climate change policies by calling on the Bush administration to do more on carbon dioxide emissions.[60] There is much to be gained from cross-fertilization of conservative and environmental sensibilities but the standing distrust has to be overcome through mutual communication and collaboration. Gary Gardner at the Worldwatch Institute point out the need to overcome this mutual distrust:

> The effort to build a sustainable world could advance dramatically if religious people and institutions, on one hand, and environmentalists and advocates of sustainable development, on the other, were to embrace each other's central concerns. But to do

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[57] Ibid., 298.

[58] Ibid., 299.

[59] See, for instance, Martin Palmer and Victoria Finlay, *Faith in Conservation: New Approaches to Religions and the Environment* (World Bank Publications, 2003); and Gary Gardner, *Inspiring Progress: Religions' Contributions to Sustainable Development* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 2006). See also the Alliance of Religions and Conservation, http://www.arcworld.org/.

[60] See Blaine Harden, "The Greening of Evangelicals Christian Right Turns, Sometimes Warily, to Environmentalism," *The Washington Post*, February 6, 2005, A01; Evangelical Climate Initiative, "Climate Change: An Evangelical Call to Action," January 2006, http://www.christiansandclimate.org/pub/statement-booklet.pdf; and J. Matthew Sleeth, *Serve God, Save the Planet: A Christian Call to Action* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007). See also the Grist Magazine series on "God & the Environment," http://www.grist.org/news/maindish/2006/10/05/gate/.

> so, the longstanding distrust between the two communities would need to be overcome.[61]

One area where the marriage of religion and the environment can make an impact, according to Gardner, is the issue of consumption. Due to their predominantly secular outlook, environmentalists are not able to influence ordinary people:

> Consumption is the one issue on the sustainability agenda where we seem to be making very little progress. Yet it's an issue that religion has a long history of experience with, in terms of warning people of the dangers of excessive attachment to the corporeal world. When an environmentalist talks about consumption, he or she could make a strong case for the impact of our consumption habits on the natural world. A religious person could make the same case, but could take it further and say that consumption is bad for us as human beings, for the human spirit and for community—that excessive consumption can be a corrosive influence in our lives.[62]

What Gardner points out here is the perennial teaching of almost all pre-modern religious and philosophical traditions in the world. Only modern philosophy evades it. The question of "excessive" consumption is basically one of psychological dissatisfaction and is immediately related to that of happiness. The most accessible ways of dealing with the experience of what is known in Buddhism as "dukkha" (suffering or "that which is difficult to bear") is to seek "wealth, goods, power, reputation, and all such things . . . to excess without limit" (*Pol.* 1323a36-38). It has been the foremost role of religion and myth to act as a palliative against the fact of human suffering. "How are we to be consoled for the misery of living?" is the religious question that runs through all times and cultures.[63] Marx's characterization of religion as "the opium of the people" is sensible as far as the reality of

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[61] Gary Gardner, *Invoking the Spirit: Religion and Spirituality in the Quest for a Sustainable World* (Worldwatch Institute, 2002).

[62] "A chat with Worldwatch's Gary Gardner on faith and environmentalism," October 11, 2006, *Grist Magazine*, http://www.grist.org/news/maindish/2006/10/11/gardner/.

[63] Philip Rieff, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic: Uses of Faith After Freud* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, [1966] 2006), 23.

suffering goes but his suggestion for "the abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of men" and "demand for their real happiness" is questionable.[64]

Now, as the religious interpretation of reality has lost significant ground to science in the industrialized and industrializing nations, its place is being filled by a series of addictive consumptive activities with a serious social, psychological, and ecological toll. Some psychological analysts locate the roots of "addiction" (including but not restricted to drug use) in psychosocial "dislocation" mass-produced by the free market economy. The mobile and competitive lifestyle of free markets dissolve the "traditional family, community, and religious ties" which integrate individuals into their societies psychosocially. The free-floating individuals of modern mass society are then compelled to develop substitute lifestyles in which they seek comfort. These non-conventional forms of addiction and lifestyles can be as diverse as internet use, casual sex, compulsive shopping, binge eating, and gang membership.[65] Civic-minded environmentalists are increasingly concerned about the ecological and social impact of consumption in the industrialized countries and its spread to developing nations. Seeing the interdependence of ecological well-being and civic well-being, they advocate normative constraints on the consumption of natural resources and energy.[66] But how this can be done without compromising the most cherished fruit of modernity, namely, individual freedom, is a question that future research might look for an answer. The evocation of virtuous behavior to limit consumption and production voluntarily for the sake

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[64] Karl Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), 54.

[65] See Bruce K. Alexander, "The Roots of Addiction in Free Market Society," April 2001, http://www.policyalternatives.ca/documents/BC_Office_Pubs/roots_addiction.pdf.

[66] See, for instance, David A. Crocker and Toby Linden, *Ethics of Consumption: The Good Life, Justice, and Global Stewardship* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998); Thomas Princen, Michael F. Maniates, and Ken Conca, *Confronting Consumption* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002); and Thomas Princen, *The Logic of Sufficiency* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005).

of the good life is something shared by traditional conservatives. Traditional (or cultural) conservatism, observes Russell Kirk, rejects "the reduction of human striving to material production and consumption"[67] or the idea that "the ends of existence are production and consumption merely."[68]

In addition to the scientific neo-Malthusian take on the discourse of "limits," we may then identify a culturally conservative environmental *ethos* which can be characterized as a modern-day revival of concern for the spiritual corruption or distraction of the human soul by pleasure, money, and power.[69] The well-known environmentalist principle of the "three R's" (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle)—a fourth "R" such as Repair, Restore, or Recover is occasionally added to this list—is the most succinct expression of the venerable environmental principles of moderation, frugality, sufficiency, and voluntary simplicity to live aright. David Orr, for instance, observes that achieving sustainability requires the virtue of moderation and limiting consumption:

> [S]ustainability will require a reduction in consumption in wealthy societies and changes in the kinds of things consumed toward products that are durable, recyclable, useful, efficient, and sufficient . . . . If we are not to turn the earth into a toxic dump or bankrupt ourselves by expensively undoing what should not have been done in the first place, moderation must eventually replace self-indulgence.[70]

This conservative ethos in Orr's critique of consumption also underlines much of environmental literature on technology and economics—E.F. Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful*,

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[67] Russell Kirk, *The Conservative Mind* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing Inc., [1953], 1985), xv. See also Christopher Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991), 528-32; and Christopher Lasch, "The Age of Limits," in *History and the Idea of Progress*, eds. Arthur M. Melzer, Jerry Weinberger, and M. Richard Zinman (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 227-40.

[68] Kirk, *The Politics of Prudence*, 203.

[69] See Bob Pepperman Taylor, *Our Limits Transgressed: Environmental Political Thought in America* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1992); and David W. Orr, "The Limits of Nature and the Educational Nature of Limits," *Conservation Biology* 9.2 (1998): 746-48.

[70] David W. Orr, *Earth in Mind: On Education, Environment and the Human Prospect* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 1994), 62.

Ivan Illich's "convivial life," and Herman Daly's "economics for the common good" all of which privilege "quality" over "quantity" in the pursuit of the good life and happiness. Theirs is at the same time a harsh critique of modern science and culture in which "quantity has become quality."[71] The same debilitating effect of industrial civilization on the loss of freedom was observed by the economist Ralph Borsodi. We are transformed "from a self-helpful individual into a self-helpless individual . . . . They consume what others have produced, and are dependent for existence and happiness upon things about the making of which they know nothing."[72]

Today, it is no longer possible to speak of "quality" and be taken seriously by natural and social scientists who are in constant search of more precise measurements. As a result, "the answer to all questions for 'what for?' is 'more.' "[73] The disappearance of "quality" as a scientific category is the single most important feature of "modernity." The widespread talk about "quality" time, education, or health-care that we hear today is nostalgic of a forgotten wisdom but nonsensical to the modern scientific view of reality. Parallel to the abandonment of "quality" is the confusion surrounding the goal of "happiness." For Aristotle, one sort of quality (*poiotēs*) was the active condition (*hexis*) and disposition (*diathesis*) (*Cat.* VIII). As I have noted in Chapter 4, our words for these are values and attitudes. The displaced vocabulary of virtues and vices are enduring hexis-type qualities. Without careful attention to these qualities, happiness will not only be elusive but misunderstood as well.

As I have argued in Chapter 4, Aristotle defines the ultimate goal of human endeavors as "being-at-work [*energeia*] of the soul in accordance with virtue" (*NE* 1098a17-

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[71] Rieff, 54.

[72] Ralph Borsodi, *This Ugly Civilization* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1929).

[73] Rieff, 54.

18). In *Politics* I.9 concerning the role of economy and material goods in human life, for example, Aristotle takes issue with a prevalent view of his time that sees owning and getting wealth as an end in itself to be pursued *ad infinitum*. He criticizes this view for failing to discern the proper means-end relationships of human life. Those who overvalue wealth acquisition and see its increase as the primary goal in life are either intent on "living," according to Aristotle, hence unaware of "living well" as an end, or seek the latter in the wrong place, in the pleasure they get in and through material possessions. In either case, ordering one's life around riches, reputation, power, or pleasure leads to insatiability: "Since that desire of theirs is without limit, they also desire what is productive of unlimited things" (*Pol.* 1258a1-2). Every thing or activity conducive to living or gratification is pursued as an end, which Aristotle considers as going against nature (*kata phusin*). What was true in Aristotle's time is also true for today. There is a growing body of research suggesting that after a certain threshold material affluence does not contribute to a subjective sense of well-being.[74] We see a return to Aristotelian thinking at the margins of academic scholarship on technology, economics, urban planning, and education.[75] These are promising signs that Aristotle's insights may be revived in the future.

This study has aimed at expanding the intellectual horizon of contemporary environmental politics. An encounter with Aristotle is important today not only because it can illuminate our response to a crucial contemporary social issue but also because it can help us to situate contemporary environmental thought in the tradition of Western political philosophy—a vital project that has been vastly neglected in environmental scholarship until

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[74] Robert H. Lane, *The Loss of Happiness in Market Economies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

[75] See, among others, Nel Noddings, *Happiness and Education* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Albert Borgmann, *Real American Ethics: Taking Responsibility for Our Country* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2006); and Luigino Bruni and Pier Luigi Porta, eds., *Economics and Happiness: Framing the Analysis* (Oxford University Press, 2007).

recently. Although environmental concerns are unique to the late modern era, the underlying socio-political causes of environmental problems, as commonly acknowledged, cannot be restricted to the late modern era. By bringing up the classical perspective of Aristotle's political philosophy, my intention is not, as Stanley Rosen put it in another context, "a return to the wisdom of ancients," but "the transmission of ancient wisdom into the contemporary terrain."[76]

[76] Stanley Rosen, *Metaphysics in Ordinary Language* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 233.

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