Feminism and the Mastery of Nature

Val Plumwood

FEMINISM FOR TODAY
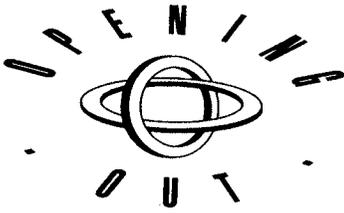
ROUTLEDGE

Feminism and the Mastery of Nature

Feminism and the Mastery of Nature draws on the feminist critique of reason to argue that the master form of rationality of western culture has been systematically unable to acknowledge dependency on nature, the sphere of those it has defined as 'inferior' others. Because its knowledge of the world is sytematically distorted by the elite domination which has shaped it, the master rationality has developed 'blind spots' which may threaten our survival. The future depends increasingly on our ability to create a truly democratic and ecological culture beyond dualism.

The book shows how the feminist critique of dominant forms of rationality can be extended to integrate theories of gender, race and class oppression with that of the domination of nature. Val Plumwood illuminates the relationship between women and nature, and between ecological feminism and other feminist theories. Exploring the contribution feminist theory can make to radical green thought and to the development of a better environmental philosophy, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* challenges much existing work in green theory and environmental philosophy, and engages with the heavily masculine presence which has inhabited many accounts of the area. It will be essential reading for those working in these areas, and for all those seeking to understand the historical, philosophical and cultural roots of the environmental crisis and the culture of denial which blocks response to it.

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OPENING OUT

Feminism for Today
General Editor: Teresa Brennan.

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Contents

Series preface

Feminist theory is the most innovative and truly living theory in today's academies, but the struggle between the living and the dead extends beyond feminism and far beyond institutions. *Opening Out* will apply the living insights of feminist critical theory in current social and political contexts. It will also use feminist theory to analyse the historical and cultural genealogies that shaped those contexts.

While feminist insights on modernity and postmodernity have become increasingly sophisticated, they have also become more distant from the *realpolitik* that made feminism a force in the first instance. This distance is apparent in three growing divisions. One is an evident division between feminist theory and feminist popular culture and politics. Another division is that between feminism and other social movements. Of course this second division is not new, but it has been exacerbated by the issue of whether the theoretical insights of feminism can be used to analyse current conflicts that extend beyond feminism's 'proper' field. In the postmodern theory he has helped build, the white male middle-class universal subject has had to relinquish his right to speak for all. By the same theoretical logic, he has also taken out a philosophical insurance policy against any voice uniting the different movements that oppose him, which means his power persists *de facto,* if not *de jure*. Currently, there are no theoretical means, except for fine sentiments and good will, that enable feminism to ally itself with other social movements that oppose the power networks that sustain the white, masculine universal subject. *Opening Out* aims at finding those means.

Of course, the analysis of the division between feminist and other social movements is a theoretical question in itself. It cannot be considered outside of the process whereby feminist theory and women's studies have become institutionalised, which returns us to the first division, between feminist practice and feminism in the academy. Is it simply the case that as women's studies becomes more institutionalised, feminist scholars are defining their concerns in relation to those of their colleagues in the existing disciplines? This could account both for an

often uncritical adherence to a postmodernism that negates the right to act, if not speak, and to the distance between feminism in the institution and outside it. But if this is the case, not only do the political concerns of feminism have to be reconsidered, but the disciplinary boundaries that restrict political thinking have to be crossed.

Disciplinary specialisation might also be held accountable for a third growing division within feminism, between theoretical skills on the one hand, and literary analysis and socio-economic empirical research on the other. Poststructuralist or postmodern feminism is identified with the theoretical avant-garde, while historical, cultural feminism is associated with the study of how women are culturally represented, or what women are meant to have really done.

Opening Out is based on the belief that such divisions are unhelpful. There is small advantage in uncritical cultural descriptions, or an unreflective politics of experience; without the theoretical tools found in poststructuralist, psychoanalytical and other contemporary critical theories, our social and cultural analyses, and perhaps our political activity, may be severely curtailed. On the other hand, unless these theoretical tools are applied to present conflicts and the histories that shaped them, feminist theory itself may become moribund. Not only that, but the opportunity feminist theories afford for reworking the theories currently available for understanding the world (such as they are) may be bypassed.

None of this means that *Opening Out* will always be easy reading in the first instance; the distance between developed theory and practical feminism is too great for that at present. But it does mean that *Opening Out* is committed to returning theory to present political questions, and this just might make the value of theoretical pursuits for feminism plainer in the long term.

Opening Out will develop feminist theories that bear on the social construction of the body, environmental degradation, ethnocentrism, neocolonialism, and the fall of socialism. *Opening Out* will draw freely on various contemporary critical theories in these analyses, and on social as well as literary material. *Opening Out* will try to cross disciplinary boundaries, and subordinate the institutionalised concerns of particular disciplines to the political concerns of the times.

Teresa Brennan

Acknowledgements

An adequate acknowledgement of debts has to begin with the basic but culturally unacknowledged life-debt to the earth. To this I add gratitude for the stimulation and sustenance my forest home daily provides. Without these things this book would not have been possible.

I am grateful to various friends, neighbours, referees and colleagues for support, enlightenment and stimulation. Alison and Patrick SextonGreen, Simon Kravis and Sean Kenan helped in the book's preparation, lending ears, ideas and houses when necessary. (This was often, as my book production is solar-powered and I live in a wet climate.) I thank Jane Belfrage, Jim Cheney, Simone Fullagar, Jackie French, Jean Grimshaw, Sue Hoffman, Sean Kenan, Brian Martin, Peter Macgregor, Denise Russell, Richard Sylvan, Miriam Solomon, and Karen Warren, who read drafts of parts of the manuscript and made helpful comments. Teresa Brennan was a wonderful and supportive editor; her patient and sympathetic work has saved the reader much frustration and greatly improved the book. I cannot thank her enough.

The participants in the great dialogue of western philosophy, which extends now some two and a half thousand years into the past, have been almost entirely male, white and drawn from the privileged sections of society. That they have not seen this as relevant to their philosophical pursuits indicates how much they have spoken of and for one another, and how incompletely they have, despite their pretensions as philosophers to press the ultimate questions, critically examined themselves and their political relationship to the world about them. In the last twenty years some excitingly different voices have begun to make themselves heard as, for the first time in the history of this tradition, a significant number of women have begun not only to engage with philosophy, but speak from a distinctively feminist standpoint which critically acknowledges women's different positioning. To this newly emerging wing of the 'Invisible College' I give respect and thanks. Their interventions have not only exposed the hidden gender agenda in the philosophical canon, but have brought to the fore new issues and

approaches which place the conceptual fondations of oppression at the very centre of inquiry. This new focus includes the commonalities as well as the specifics of oppression for, as bell hooks has said,

> Feminism, as liberation struggle, must exist apart from and as a part of the larger struggle to eradicate domination in all forms. We must understand that patriarchal domination shares an ideological foundation with racism and other forms of group oppression, that there is no hope that it can be eradicated while these systems remain intact.
>
> (hooks 1989:22)

Introduction

It is usually at the edges where the great tectonic plates of theory meet and shift that we find the most dramatic developments and upheavals. When four tectonic plates of liberation theory—those concerned with the oppressions of gender, race, class and nature—finally come together, the resulting tremors could shake the conceptual structures of oppression to their foundations. Feminism has undergone major conflict, transformation and enrichment as a result of its encounters with other forms of domination and their theories, especially those of race and class. A feminist account of the domination of nature presents an essential but difficult further frontier for feminist theory, all the more testing and controversial because the problematic of nature has been so closely interwoven with that of gender. Because 'nature' has been a very broad and shifting category and has encompassed many different sorts of colonisation, an adequate account of the domination of nature must draw widely on accounts of other forms of oppression, and has an important integrating role.

Ecofeminism has contributed a great deal both to activist struggle and to theorising links between women's oppression and the domination of nature over the last two decades. In some versions it has engaged with all four forms of exploitation encompassed in race, class, gender and nature. At the same time, ecofeminism has been stereotyped in some quarters both as theoretically weak and as doubtfully liberated, and also as exclusively linked to what is often now termed cultural feminism. My objective in this book is to help develop an environmental feminism that can be termed a critical ecological feminism, one which is thoroughly compatible with and can be strongly based in feminist theory.

A better theory can, I believe, greatly increase the critical and analytical force of ecological feminism and make it a far more powerful political tool. It can provide a basis for a connected and co-operative political practice for liberation movements. We need a common, integrated framework for the critique of both human domination and the domination of nature—integrating nature as a fourth category of

analysis into the framework of an extended feminist theory which employs a race, class and gender analysis. I try to show the importance of nature as the missing piece in this framework, and its vital contribution to a more complete understanding of domination and colonisation.

A further major aim of the book is to provide a thorough grounding for a feminist environmental philosophy. The book engages with the heavily masculine presence which has inhabited most accounts of environmental philosophy, including those of many deep ecologists. Their accounts, I show, often retain a dualistic dynamic, although frequently this has appeared in subtle ways and in unlikely guises. I show how a different and improved basis for environmental politics and philosophy might be constructed by taking better account of the ethics and politics of mutuality as developed by a number of feminist thinkers. On this basis, I try to show how the treatment of nature can be thought of in political terms as well as ethical terms. It is here especially that male theorists (for example, Chase 1991) have typically overlooked feminist thought and the contribution the 'third position' of ecofeminist theory can make to a resolution of the problems behind the bitter 'ecopolitics debate' between 'deep ecologists' and 'social ecologists', problems which continue to preoccupy and divide the green movement.

Forms of oppression from both the present and the past have left their traces in western culture as a network of dualisms, and the logical structure of dualism forms a major basis for the connection between forms of oppression. The second chapter of this book begins to develop a new analysis of dualism which explicates the concept carefully in logical terms and shows what can be made good in it. The implications of this analysis are pursued throughout the remaining chapters. The concept of dualism has been crucial to much philosophical and feminist thought, yet is usually only vaguely articulated. My argument examines this concept in a more connected, complete and rigorous way than heretofore, and presses home the political and cultural critique it underpins. I argue that western culture has treated the human/nature relation as a dualism and that this explains many of the problematic features of the west's treatment of nature which underlie the environmental crisis, especially the western construction of human identity as 'outside' nature. A detailed analysis of dualism also shows that its characteristic logical structure of otherness and negation corresponds closely to classical prepositional logic, the leading logical theory of modernity. I argue that classical logic, as the logic of instrumental reason, approximates this structure, and that is a major reason why it has been selected out of alternative theoretical possibilities. Moreover, the logic of dualism yields a common conceptual

framework which structures otherwise different categories of oppression.

In feminist and liberation theory, the misty, forbidding passes of the Mountains of Dualism have swallowed many an unwary traveller in their mazes and chasms. In these mountains, a well-trodden path leads through a steep defile to the Cavern of Reversal, where travellers fall into an upside-down world which strangely resembles the one they seek to escape. Trapped Romantics wander here, lamenting their exile, as do various tribes of Arcadians, Earth Mothers, Noble Savages and Working-Class Heroes whose identities are defined by reversing the valuations of the dominant culture. Postmodernist thinkers have found a way to avoid this cavern, and have erected a sign pointing out the danger, but have not yet discovered another path across the mountains to the promised land of liberatory politics on the other side. Mostly they linger by the Well of Discourse near the cavern, gazing in dismay into the fearful and bottomless Abyss of Relativism beyond it. The path to the promised land of reflective practice passes over the Swamp of Affirmation, which careful and critical travellers, picking their way through, can with some difficulty cross. Intrepid travellers who have found their way across the Swamp of Affirmation into the lands beyond often either fall into the Ocean of Continuity on the one side or stray into the waterless and alien Desert of Difference on the other, there to perish. The pilgrim's path to the promised land leads along a narrow way between these two hazards, and involves heeding both difference and continuity.

Dualism has formed the modern political landscape of the west as much as the ancient one. In this landscape, nature must be seen as a *political* rather than a descriptive category, a sphere formed from the multiple exclusions of the protagonist-superhero of the western psyche, reason, whose adventures and encounters form the stuff of western intellectual history. The concept of reason provides the unifying and defining contrast for the concept of nature, much as the concept of husband does for that of wife, as master for slave. Reason in the western tradition has been constructed as the privileged domain of the master, who has conceived nature as a wife or subordinate other encompassing and representing the sphere of materiality, subsistence and the feminine which the master has split off and constructed as beneath him. The continual and cumulative overcoming of the domain of nature by reason engenders the western concept of progress and development. But as in other patriarchal reproductive contexts, it is the father who takes credit for and possession of this misbegotten child, and who guides its subsequent development in ways which continue to deny and devalue the maternal role.

The account I develop here links environmental philosophy

strongly to the important contemporary critique of reason and of rationalist philosophy, which has emerged especially from feminist and some postmodernist philosophy. Since defenders of the western tradition (and even some nervous old guard critics of it) persistently and vociferously portray criticism of the dominant forms of reason as the rejection of all reason and the embrace of irrationality, it is still necessary to stress that critiquing the dominant forms of reason which embody the master identity and oppose themselves to the sphere of nature does not imply abandoning all forms of reason, science and individuality. Rather, it involves their redefinition or reconstruction in less oppositional and hierarchical ways. To uncover the political identity behind these dominant forms of reason is not to decrease, but rather greatly to increase, the scope and power of political analysis.

Thus it is also exclusion from the master category of reason which in liberation struggles provides and explains the conceptual links between different categories of domination, and links the domination of humans to the domination of nature. The category of nature is a field of multiple exclusion and control, not only of non-humans, but of various groups of humans and aspects of human life which are cast as nature. Thus racism, colonialism and sexism have drawn their conceptual strength from casting sexual, racial and ethnic difference as closer to the animal and the body construed as a sphere of inferiority, as a lesser form of humanity lacking the full measure of rationality or culture. As Vandana Shiva points out (1989, 1991), it is not only women's labour which traditionally gets subsumed 'by definition' into nature, but the labour of colonised non-western, non-white people also. The connections between these forms of domination in the west are thus partly the result of chance and of specific historical evolution, and partly formed from a necessity inherent in the dynamic and logic of domination between self and other, reason and nature.

To be defined as 'nature' in this context is to be defined as passive, as non-agent and non-subject, as the 'environment' or invisible background conditions against which the 'foreground' achievements of reason or culture (provided typically by the white, western, male expert or entrepreneur) take place. It is to be defined as a *terra nullius,* a resource empty of its own purposes or meanings, and hence available to be annexed for the purposes of those supposedly identified with reason or intellect, and to be conceived and moulded in relation to these purposes. It means being seen as part of a sharply separate, even alien lower realm, whose domination is simply 'natural', flowing from nature itself and the nature(s) of things. Such treatment, standard in the west for nature since at least the Enlightenment, has since that time been opposed and officially condemned for humans (while all the while normalised for

marginalised groups such as women and the colonised). Western culture is only just coming to realise that the same construction might also be problematic for non-human nature.

Much feminist theory has detected a masculine presence in the officially gender-neutral concept of reason. In contrast, my account suggests that it is not a masculine identity pure and simple, but the multiple, complex cultural identity of the master formed in the context of class, race species and gender domination, which is at issue. This cultural identity has framed the dominant concepts of western thought, especially those of reason and nature. The recognition of a more complex dominator identity is, I would argue, essential if feminism is not to repeat the mistakes of a reductionist programme such as Marxism, which treats one form of domination as central and aims to reduce all others to subsidiary forms of it which will 'wither away' once the 'fundamental' form is overcome. It is necessary also if we are to give proper emphasis to the role of culture and uncover the deep structures of oppression in culture which help account for the persistence of domination through political and economic change.

The first chapter of this book outlines the relations between feminism and ecological feminism, while the second establishes a basis for my analysis of dualism. I support my account of the role and formation of reason/nature dualism in terms of the master identity by a reexamination of the western rationalist tradition and of the exclusions present in the Platonic account of reason (chapter 3). I argue that many elements of Platonic reason/nature dualism remain unresolved in modern approaches to reason, human identity and death. This analysis of the philosophical past throws into the foreground the many conflicts and tensions in feminist, ecophilosophical and ecofeminist historical accounts of the origins of the domination of nature and of women, especially those which locate the entire problem in the Enlightenment and the rise of atomistic science.

These accounts are commonly supplemented in green thought by an account of mechanism which equates it with atomism. My account presented in chapters 4 and 5 upsets some of this conventional wisdom in green thought on mechanism by focusing on dualism rather than atomism. Breaking the dualism involves both affirming and reconceptualising the underside, nature. Cartesian thought has stripped nature of the intentional and mindlike qualities which make an ethical response to it possible. Once nature is reconceived as capable of agency and intentionality, and human identity is reconceived in less polarised and disembodied ways, the great gulf which Cartesian thought established between the conscious, mindful human sphere and the mindless, clockwork natural one disappears. This approach means that

my account leans less heavily on the saving grace of 'new' science than does the conventional account, and does not rely so much on the rather overworked holistic paradigm, which is of course also enormously problematic as a political framework.

Later sections of the book carry the analysis of reason/nature dualism and its impact on human relations to nature into the further areas of self/other, public/private and reason/emotion dualism (chapter 6). I also show how a dualised conception of self and other, reason and emotion, universal and particular, underlies the instrumental treatment of nature and its exclusion from ethical significance in western (now global) culture, and how a dualist dynamic is often retained in positions such as deep ecology which claim to have escaped it (chapter 7). Overcoming the dualistic dynamic requires recognition of both continuity and difference; this means acknowledging the other as neither alien to and discontinuous from self nor assimilated to or an extension of self. I relate this account to contemporary political theory, with its dominant problematic of selfhood and rationality.

In this period of crisis, time taken for the development of theory seems a luxury indeed. But if we do not understand the development and the defects in the western story of reason and nature, we may remain trapped within it or settle for one of its new versions. The contemporary human and environmental crisis underlines the cultural centrality of the reason/nature story, and the urgency of resolving the western network of dualisms. Much modern environmental wisdom from such thinkers as David Suzuki has as its main theme the message that humans are animals and have the same dependence on a healthy biosphere as other forms of life. On the surface, it is puzzling that an apparent truism should find so much resistance and should need to be stressed so much. But the reason why this message of continuity and dependency is so revolutionary in the context of the modern world is that the dominant strands of western culture have for so long denied it, and have given us a model of human identity as only minimally and accidentally connected to the earth.

For all the formal knowledge of evolutionary biology, this model of disconnection remains deeply and fatally entrenched in modern conceptions of the human and of nature, inscribed in culture as a result of a dynamic which sought to naturalise domination in both human and non-human spheres. We must find ways to rework our concepts and practices of human virtue and identity as they have been conceived, since at least the time of the Greeks, as exclusive of and discontinuous with the devalued orders of the feminine, of subsistence, of materiality and of non-human nature. The master culture must now make its long-overdue homecoming to the earth. This is no longer simply a matter of justice, but now also a matter of survival.

THE VISION OF ECOLOGICAL FEMINISM: PROBLEMS AND QUESTIONS

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

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

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

But as it is often stated the ecofeminist vision, so sane and so attractive, seems to raise many problems and questions. Is ecofeminism giving us a version of the story that the goodness of women will save us?

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

I come from a background in both environmental philosophy and activism, and feminist philosophy and activism, yet my initial reaction to the position asserting such a link, like that of many people, was one of mistrust. It seemed to combine a romantic conception of both women and nature, the idea that women have special powers and capacities of nurturance, empathy and 'closeness to nature', which are unsharable by men and which justify their special treatment, which of course nearly always turns out to be inferior treatment. It seemed to be the antithesis of feminism, giving positive value to the 'barefoot and pregnant' image of women and validating their exclusion from the world of culture and relegation to that of nature, a position which is perhaps best represented in modern times by the masculinist writer D.H.Lawrence. It appeared to provide a green version of the 'good woman' argument of the suffragettes, in which good and moral women, who are nurturant, empathic and life-orientated, confront and reclaim the world from bad men, who are immersed in power, hierarchy and a culture of death. Later reading showed me the diversity of the position and that, while an element of this is present in some accounts, by no means all of them conform to this romantic picture, nor is it a necessary part of a position which takes seriously the idea of a non-accidental connection between the liberation movements.

One essential feature of all ecological feminist positions is that they give positive value to a connection of women with nature which was previously, in the west, given negative cultural value and which was the main ground of women's devaluation and oppression. Ecological feminists are involved in a great cultural revaluation of the status of women, the feminine and the natural, a revaluation which must recognise the way in which their historical connection in western culture has influenced the construction of feminine identity and, as I shall try to show, of both masculine and human identity. Beyond that there is a great deal of diversity; ecological feminists differ on how and even whether women are connected to nature, on whether such connection is in principle sharable by men, on how to treat the exclusion of women from culture, and on how the revaluing of the connection with nature

connects with the revaluing of traditional feminine characteristics generally, to mention a few areas. There is enormous variation in ecological feminist literature on all these areas.[1]

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

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

Simplistic versions of this story attribute these qualities to women directly and universally. But it is only plausible to do this if one practises a denial of the reality of women's lives, and not least a denial of the divisions between women themselves, both within the women's movement and in the wider society. Not all women are empathic, nurturant and co-operative. And while many of these virtues have been real, they have been restricted to a small circle of close others. Women do not necessarily treat other women as sisters or the earth as a mother; women are capable of conflict, of domination and even, in the right circumstances, of violence. Western women may not have been in the forefront of the attack on nature, driving the bulldozers and operating the chainsaws, but many of them have been support troops, or have been participants, often unwitting but still enthusiastic, in a modern consumer culture of which they are the main symbols, and which assaults nature in myriad direct and indirect ways daily. And of course women have also played a major role, largely unacknowledged, in a male-led and male-

dominated environment movement, in resisting and organising against the assault on nature. The invisible, undervalued alternative economy which has for so long framed their identity is less strongly based on disregard for the earth than the masculinecentred official economy of the developed world. As we shall see, the western mapping of a gender hierarchy on to the nature/culture distinction has been a major culprit in the destruction of the biosphere. But if we think that the fact of being female guarantees that we are automatically provided with an ecological consciousness and can do no wrong to nature or to one another, we are going to be badly disappointed.

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

The need to clarify and refine the statement and meaning of this affirmation for the case of ecological feminism is one of the major themes in the next two chapters. An ecological feminist analysis of these problems may help in turn to advance our understanding of some of these questions, which have been difficult and often divisive for feminist theory. Clarification and development of an ecofeminist position in a way that is both strategically useful (for the social movements involved) and theoretically rigorous is one of the central intellectual endeavours of our time. Ecological feminism is essentially a response to a set of key problems thrown up by the two great social currents of the later part of this century—feminism and the environment movement—and addresses a number of shared problems. There is the problem of how to reintegrate nature and culture across the great western division between them and of how to give a positive value to what has been traditionally devalued and excluded as nature

without simply reversing values and rejecting the sphere of culture. There is the problem of how (and whether) to try to reconcile the movements and their associated theoretical critiques (of phallocentrism and anthropocentrism), which have many areas of conflict as well as some common ground. These are central problems for the theories, strategies and alliances of both movements.

GREEN CRITIQUES AND CULTURAL UNIVERSALISM

There is also the need to rid both critiques of the arrogant ethnocentrism which has been such a marked feature of western world-views. Accounts of a generalised 'patriarchy' as the villain behind the ecological crisis implicitly assume that western culture is human culture. But the gendered character of nature/culture dualism, and of the whole web of other dualisms interconnected with it, is not a feature of human thought or culture *per se,* and does not relate the universal man to the universal woman; it is specifically a feature of *western* thought. It is important that a critical ecological feminist analysis recognises this, and some have failed to do so clearly. Women in certain New Guinea cultures, for example, are seen as aligned with the domestic or cultivated sphere, men with the forest and with wild land (McCormack and Strathern 1980). We cannot therefore see the alignment of women to nature as the entire basis and source of women's oppression, as some accounts have done, since women often stand in relatively powerless positions even in cultures which have not made the connection of women to nature or which have a different set of genderised dichotomies. Nevertheless the association of women with nature and men with culture or reason can still be seen as providing much of the basis of the cultural elaboration of women's oppression *in the west,* of the particular form that it takes in the western context, and that is still of considerable explanatory value. Once cultural universalism is rejected, we can draw on these features to explain much that is especially western in our ways of relating to each other and to nature. That is how I have tried to use them here.

The concepts of humanity and nature have been used in a similarly universalised fashion in the critique of anthropocentrism. Critics have rightly complained that the use of the blanket category 'human' obscures highly relevant cultural and other differences between human groups, and differences in responsibility for and benefits from the exploitation of nature (Bookchin 1988; 1989).[2] The Penan who defend the forest at the risk of their lives are not to be held responsible, as 'humans', for its destruction in the way that the agents of westernised development are. A universalised concept of 'humanity' can be used also to deflect political

critique and to obscure the fact that the forces directing the destruction of nature and the wealth produced from it are owned and controlled overwhelmingly by an unaccountable, mainly white, mainly male elite. This criticism applies to those ways of developing the critique which hold that it is simply humanity as a species which is the problem and which use the blanket concept 'human' to cover over vitally important social, political and genderbased analyses of the problem. These problematic formulations of the critique of anthropocentrism tend to assume some sort of underlying species selfishness, perhaps as part of 'human nature', and to focus on a general reduction in human numbers as the solution.

But this approach should not be confused with the critique of the way human identity has been treated in particular influential cultures such as western culture. According to the way of understanding the critique developed here, it is the development in certain cultures, especially and originally western culture, of a particular concept and practice of human identity and relationship to nature which is the problem, not the state of being human as such. The difference might be compared to the difference between ways of understanding patriarchal domination which see males (biology) as the problem, and accounts of the problem in terms of particular understandings and practices of masculine identity in particular social and cultural contexts (gender). There has been much confusion on this point, which has led to charges that critiques which question human domination are 'anti-human', treat being human as a disease; and so on (Bookchin 1988). The critique of human domination must be part of the familiar and healthy practice of self-critical reflection, not an acultural and ahistorical expression of self-hatred and collective human-species guilt.

Similarly, although the critique must involve some recognition of the human species as a whole as more limited in its claims on the earth and in its relation to other species, this does not translate into any simple claim about the need for blanket reductions in human numbers, or into the view that different human groupings have equal responsibility for and benefit equally from the destruction of nature. The human colonisation of the earth is human-centred in the competitive, chauvinistic sense that it benefits certain humans in the short term (although not in evolutionary terms) at the expense of other species. But it is not human-centred in any good sense, since not all humans share in or benefit from this process or from its ideology of rational imperialism. Indeed as in the case of other empires, many humans—including women as well as those identified as less fully human—are the victims of its rational hierarchy, just as many humans are the victims rather than the beneficiaries of the assault on nature.

Thus understood, the critique of human domination is in no way incompatible with older critiques which reject human hierarchy. In fact it complements and makes more complete our understanding of this hierarchy. But just as the exploitation of women cannot be justified by more equal parcelling out of the spoils between males in the way the prefeminist critiques invoking equality and fraternity assumed, so the destruction of nature cannot be justified by a more equal distribution of the results among human groups, as the pre-ecological critiques often suggested. Human domination of nature wears a garment cut from the same cloth as intra-human domination, but one which, like each of the others, has a specific form and shape of its own. Human relations to nature are not only ethical, but also political.

ECOLOGICAL FEMINISM AND GREEN THEORY

What might loosely be called 'green theory' includes several subcritiques and positions whose relationship has recently been the subject of vigorous and often bitter debate, and which have some common ground but apparently a number of major divergences.[3] The debate seems to have revealed that the green movement still lacks a coherent liberatory theory, and raises the question of whether it is and must remain no more than a political alliance of convenience between different interest groups affected differently by the assault on nature.

Yet such a perspective connecting human and non-human forms of domination does seem both possible and essential to do justice to the concerns which the movement has articulated in the last two decades. Key aspects of environmental critiques are centred on the way that control over and exploitation of nature contributes to, or is even more strongly linked to, control over and exploitation of human beings. As numerous studies have shown, high technology agriculture and forestry in the third world which are ecologically insensitive *also* strengthen the control of elites and social inequality, increasing, for example, men's control over the economy at the expense of women, and they do these things not just as a matter of accident. People suffer because the environment is damaged, and also from the process which damages it, because the process has disregard for needs other than those of an elite built into it. We die of the product (the destruction of nature) and also of the process (technological brutality alias technological rationality serving the end of commodification). As the free water we drink from common streams, and the free air we breathe in common, become increasingly unfit to sustain life, the biospheric means for a healthy life will increasingly be privatised and become the privilege of those who can afford to pay for them. The losers will be (and in many places already

are) those, human and non-human, without market power, and environmental issues and issues of justice must increasingly converge.

It seems that unless we are to treat these two sorts of domination as in only temporary and accidental alliance (which would abandon the most important insights of the green movement), an adequate green philosophy will have to cater for *both* sorts of concerns, those concerned with human social systems and those concerned with nature, and give an important place to their connection and accommodation. What is at stake in the internal debate on this issue of political ecology (which has involved social ecology, deep ecology and ecofeminism) is also the question of liberatory coherence and of the relationship between the radical movements and critiques of oppression each of these internal green positions is aligned with. The quest for coherence is not the demand that each form of oppression submerges its hard-won identity in a single, amorphous, oceanic movement. Rather it asks that each form of oppression develop sensitivity to other forms, both at the level of practice and that of theory.[4]

THE FRAMEWORK OF SOCIAL ECOLOGY

Social ecology, which draws on radical tradition for an analysis of ecological problems in terms of human social hierarchy and market society, seems initially to be a promising place to look for a coherent liberatory perspective. But social ecology, as articulated in the recent work of its best-known exponent, Murray Bookchin, tries to resolve the problem of the relationship between these forms of exploitation in the familiar but deeply problematic way of creating a hierarchy of oppressions. Bookchin's work has developed, often in a powerful way, the critique of the role of intra-human hierarchy and centralisation in ecological destruction, and has emphasised the need to maintain a critique of fundamental social structures. But his recent work has been unable and unwilling to accommodate a thoroughgoing critique of human domination of nature or to acknowledge a notion of human difference not linked to hierarchy. Recent (and theoretically superficial) attempts at public reconciliation have not been able to bury the theoretical divergences (Chase 1991). Bookchin's recent work leaves little room for doubt that his theory is for the most part hostile to the new rival critique of anthropocentrisms, and eager to subsume it under some form of human domination. The domination of nature, he assures us, came after the domination of human by human and is entirely secondary to it. Thus he asserts an historical reduction thesis:

> All our notions of dominating nature stem from the very real domination of human by human.... As a historical statement [this]

> declares in no uncertain terms that the domination of human by human *preceded* the notion of dominating nature.
>
> (Bookchin 1989:44)

It is prior in other senses too according to Bookchin. Although his account stresses human liberation, he does not see it as inseparable from the liberation of nature, but rather claims that it is strategically prior to (1989:60–1), and must come *before,* the liberation of nature, which is described as a 'social symptom rather than a social cause' (1989:25). Bookchin can be read as suggesting that we must first create a society in which all forms of human hierarchy are eliminated before we can hope to achieve a truly rational, ecological society (1989:44). Although social ecology stresses its radical political orientation, Bookchin's version of it seems to see politics as confined to intra-human relationships, and his textual practice appears insensitive to the colonising politics of western human/nature relations. Thus in *Remaking Society* Bookchin rarely mentions non-human nature without attaching the word 'mere' to it. (Thus deep ecologists want to 'equate the human with mere animality', to 'dissolve humanity into a mere species within a biospheric democracy' and reduce humanity 'to merely one life form among many' [1989:42].) The more egalitarian approach advocated by some forms of deep ecology is roundly condemned as debasing to humans and involving a denial of their special qualities of rationality.

For Bookchin, the ecological crisis demands the defence of the supremacy of reason and the western tradition against their critics, including recent environmental, feminist and postmodernist critics who have argued that western cultural ideals of reason have defined themselves in opposition to the feminine and to the sphere of nature and subsistence (Midgley 1980; Harding and Hintikka 1983; Lloyd 1985; Fox Keller 1985; Harding 1986). Bookchin's ecological rationalism retains a humanist-enlightenment emphasis on reason as oppositional to spirituality, and maintains the traditional role of reason as the basis of human difference and identity and the chief justification of human superiority over nature. Many ecological critics of anthropocentrism (for example, Dodson Gray [1979:19]) have argued that the dominant tendency in western culture has been to construe difference in terms of hierarchy, and that a less colonising approach to nature does not involve denying human reason or human difference but rather ceasing to treat reason as the basis of superiority and domination. Bookchin, however, presents the denial of human hierarchy over nature as the denial of human distinctness, and the rejection of colonising forms of reason as the rejection of all rationality.

Social ecologists, including Bookchin, are not, I believe, wrong in their conviction that western radical traditions can offer valuable

insights into our ecological plight. But the best radical traditions of the west, at least in their self-critical phases, must surely find problematic the colonising politics of a philosophy which places western culture at the apex of evolution. Bookchin's neo-Hegelian ecological rationalism fails to come to terms with the re-evaluation of any of the complex of western-centred rationalist concepts which inferiorise the sphere of nature and non-western culture—rationality, progress, 'primitivism', development and civilisation. It fails to confront the chief myth of progress and the other ideologies which surround colonialism, namely the confrontation with an inferior past, an inferior non-western other and the associated notion of indigenous cultures as 'backward', earlier stages of our own exemplary civilisation. The retention of an oppositional concept of reason and the continued fear and denial of its exclusions are represented in the constant dark references his work makes to 'atavism' and 'primitivism'.

   Similarly, the concept of salvation in an ecological society where humans represent second nature (defined by Bookchin as 'first nature rendered self-reflexive, a thinking nature that knows itself and can guide its own evolution' [1990:182]) is used to lend support to traditional and hierarchical models of humans as rational 'stewards' managing nature for its own best interests. The concept of humans as 'nature rendered self-conscious' leaves no space for any independence, difference and self-directedness on the part of first nature, making it impossible to represent conflicts of interest between rational 'second nature' and non-rational 'first' nature.[5] Bookchin's version of social ecology, then, focuses on some of the forms of hierarchy within human society, but inherits many problematic aspects of the humanist, Enlightenment, Hegelian and Marxist traditions (Plumwood 1981). It defends assumptions associated with the human colonisation of nature and retains forms of intra-human hierarchy which draw on this. Although social ecology presents itself as offering a way of reconciling the various critiques of domination, Bookchin's version at least falls well short of that objective.[6]

PROBLEMS IN DEEP ECOLOGY

The critique of anthropocentrism or human domination of nature is a new and in my view inestimably important contribution to our understanding of western society, its history, its current problems and its structures of domination. However, as it is currently represented by some of the leading exponents of deep ecology, this critique is hardly less problematic than Bookchin's account of social ecology and is similarly intent on a strategy of subsuming or dismissing other green positions.[7] Leading deep ecologist Warwick Fox makes repeated counter-claims to

'most fundamental' status for his own critique of the domination of nature, arguing that it accounts for forms of human domination also. At the same time (and inconsistently) Fox treats critiques of other forms of domination as irrelevant to environmental concern, claiming, for example, that feminism has nothing to add to the conception of environmental ethics (Fox 1989:14). Hierarchy within human society is declared to be irrelevant to explanations of the destruction of nature.[8]

If social ecology fails to reconcile the critiques because it cannot understand that human relations to non-humans are as political as human relations to other humans, deep ecology as articulated here also suppresses the potential for an adequate *political* understanding of its theme of human/nature domination, although it achieves this suppression of the political by a different route. Thus dominant forms of deep ecology choose for their core concept of analysis the notion of *identification,* understood as an individual psychic act rather than a political practice, yielding a theory which emphasises personal transformation and ignores social structure. The dominant account is both individualist (failing to provide a framework for change which can look beyond the individual) and psychologistic (neglecting factors beyond psychology).

A similarly apolitical understanding is given to its core concept of ecological selfhood; here the account, while drawing extensive connections with various eastern religious positions, seems to go out of its way to ignore the substantial links which could fruitfully be made with feminist accounts of the self and with feminist theory (Warren 1990; Cheney 1987; 1989). The result, as I argue in chapters 6 and 7, is a psychology of *incorporation,* not a psychology of *mutuality.* Fox suggests that selfishness in the form of excessive personal attachment, which he conflates with psychological egoism, is the fundamental cause of 'possessiveness, greed, exploitation, war and ecological destruction' (Fox 1990:262). An analysis which exhorts us to consider nature by transcending the egoism of personal attachment matches in its depth of political insight the sort of social analysis which exhorts us to resolve problems of social inequality through acts of individual unselfishness. Such an analysis also uncritically assumes an account of personal attachment as antithetical to moral life which has increasingly and deservingly come under attack recently, especially from feminists (chapter 7). This form of deep ecology makes a good religious or spiritual garnish for a main political recipe which eschews radical critique and treats green politics in terms of a warmed-over 'green' liberalism. Deep ecology, like social ecology, fails in its current form to present a coherent liberatory perspective (Elkins 1989).[9]

Given these points it seems that both deep ecology and social ecology, as they are currently articulated, are unsuitable for providing the basis

for an adequate green theory. Social ecology stresses environmental problems as social problems, arising from the domination of human by human, but has little sensitivity to the domination of non-human nature, while deep ecology has chosen a theoretical base which allows its connection with various religious and personal change traditions but blocks its connection to the critiques of human oppression. It seems then that an ecologically orientated feminism is the most promising current candidate for providing a theoretical base adequate to encompass and integrate the liberatory concerns of the green movement. The domination of women is of course central to the feminist understanding of domination, but is also a well-theorised model which can illuminate many other kinds of domination, since the oppressed are often both feminised and naturalised. The ecological feminism of writers such as Rosemary Radford Ruether has always stressed the links between the domination of women, of other human groups and of nature.[10] 'An ecological ethic', she writes, 'must always be an ethic of ecojustice that recognises the interconnection of social domination and the domination of nature' (1989:149). Ecological feminism provides an excellent framework for the exploration of such interconnections. I attempt here to provide some of the philosophical basis for such an account.

Chapter 1

Feminism and ecofeminism

> In what does man's pre-eminence over the brute creation consist? The answer
> is as clear as that a half is less than a whole, in Reason. For what purpose
> were the passions implanted? That man by struggling with them might attain
> a degree of knowledge denied to the brutes. Consequently the perfection of
> our nature and capability of happiness must be estimated by the degree of
> reason, virtue and humanity that distinguish the individual and that from the
> exercise of reason, knowledge and virtue naturally flow.
>
> (Mary Wollstonecraft)

That women's inclusion in the sphere of nature has been a major tool
in their oppression emerges clearly from a glance at traditional sources:
'Woman is a violent and uncontrolled animal' (Cato 1989:193); 'A
woman is but an animal and an animal not of the highest order' (Burke
1989:187); 'I cannot conceive of you to be human creatures, but a sort
of species hardly a degree above a monkey' (Swift 1989:191); 'Howe'er
man rules in science and in art/The sphere of women's glories is the
heart' (Moore 1989:166); 'Women represent the interests of the family
and sexual life; the work of civilisation has become more and more
men's business' (Freud 1989:80); 'Women are certainly capable of
learning, but they are not made for the higher forms of science, such as
philosophy and certain types of creative activity; these require a
universal ingredient' (Hegel 1989:62); 'A necessary object, woman,
who is needed to preserve the species or to provide food and drink'
(Aquinas 1989:183). Feminine 'closeness to nature' has hardly been a
compliment.

There are, however, many traps for feminists in extracting
themselves from this problematic. Both rationality and nature have a
confusing array of meanings; in most of these meanings reason
contrasts systematically with nature in one of its many senses. Nature,
as the excluded and devalued contrast of reason, includes the emotions,
the body, the passions, animality, the primitive or uncivilised, the non-
human world, matter, physicality and sense experience, as well as the
sphere of irrationality, of faith and of madness. In other words, nature

includes everything that reason excludes. It is important to note this point because some ecofeminists have endorsed the association between women and nature without critically examining how the association is produced by exclusion. On the other hand, some equality feminists, equally uncritically, have endorsed women's ascent from the sphere of nature into that of culture or reason without remarking the problematic, oppositional nature of a concept of reason defined by such exclusions. In this chapter, I will point to a route of escape from the problematic that the traditional association between women and nature creates for feminists, to a position which neither accepts women's exclusion from reason nor accepts the construction of nature as inferior.[1]

THE WOMAN-NATURE CONNECTION—OUTDATED AND OPPRESSIVE?

The dominant and ancient traditions connecting men with culture and women with nature are also overlain by some more recent and conflicting ones in which unchangeable 'male' essence ('virility') is connected to a nature no longer viewed as reproductive and providing but as 'wild', violent, competitive and sexual (as in the ideas of Victorianism, Darwinism and recent sociobiology), and 'the female' is viewed in contrasting terms as insipid, domestic, asexual and civilising.[2] As Lloyd (1984) has noted too, the attitude to both women and nature resulting from the traditional identification has not always been a simple one. Also, as Merchant (1981) notes, it has not always been purely negative. The connection has sometimes been used to provide a *limited* affirmation of both women and nature, as, for instance, in the romantic tradition (Ruether 1975:193).[3] But both the dominant tradition of men as reason and women as nature, and the more recent conflicting one of men as forceful and wild and women as tamed and domestic, have had the effect of confirming masculine power.

   It is not surprising that many feminists regard with some suspicion the view expressed by a growing number of women who describe themselves as 'ecofeminists': that there may be something to be said *in favour* of women's connectedness with nature. The very idea of a feminine connection with nature seems to many to be regressive and insulting, summoning up images of women as earth mothers, as passive, reproductive animals, contented cows immersed in the body and in the unreflective experiencing of life. It is both tempting and common therefore for feminists to view the traditional connection between women and nature as no more than an instrument of

oppression, a relic of patriarchy which should simply be allowed to wither away now that its roots in an oppressive tradition are exposed (Echols 1989:288).[4]

But there are reasons why this widespread, 'common-sense' approach to the issue is unsatisfactory, why the question of a womannature connection cannot just be set aside, but must remain a central issue for feminism. The connection still constitutes the dynamic behind much of the treatment of both women and nature in contemporary society. As I will show, it is perilous for feminism to ignore the issue because it has an important bearing on the model of humanity into which women will be fitted and within which they will claim equality. And as I argue in this chapter, how it is that women and nature have been thrown into an alliance remains to be analysed. This analysis forms the basis for a critical ecological feminism in which women consciously position themselves *with* nature.

The inferiorisation of human qualities and aspects of life associated with necessity, nature and women—of nature-as-body, of nature-as-passion or emotion, of nature as the pre-symbolic, of nature-as-primitive, of nature-as-animal and of nature as the feminine—continues to operate to the disadvantage of women, nature and the quality of human life. The connection between women and nature and their mutual inferiorisation is by no means a thing of the past, and continues to drive, for example, the denial of women's activity and indeed of the whole sphere of reproduction.[5] One of the most common forms of denial of women and nature is what I will term backgrounding, their treatment as providing the background to a dominant, foreground sphere of recognised achievement or causation. This backgrounding of women and nature is deeply embedded in the rationality of the economic system and in the structures of contemporary society (Ekins 1986; Waring 1988).[6] What is involved in the backgrounding of nature is the denial of dependence on biospheric processes, and a view of humans as apart, outside of nature, which is treated as a limitless provider without needs of its own. Dominant western culture has systematically inferiorised, backgounded and denied dependency on the whole sphere of reproduction and subsistence.[7] This denial of dependency is a major factor in the perpetuation of the non-sustainable modes of using nature which loom as such a threat to the future of western society.

The backgrounding and instrumentalisation of nature and that of women run closely parallel. For women, their backgrounded and instrumental status as nature does not usually need to be explicit, for it structures their major roles in both public and private spheres. Women are systematically backgrounded and instrumentalised as housewives, as nurses and secretaries (Pringle 1988),[8] as colleagues and workmates.

Their labour in traditional roles is also systematically omitted from account in the economic system (Waring 1988) and omitted from consideration when the story of what is important in human history and culture is told. Traditionally, women are 'the environment'—they provide the environment and conditions against which male 'achievement' takes place, but what they do is not itself accounted as achievement (Irigaray 1985a; Le Doeuff 1977). Women are vulnerable to backgrounding even when they step outside their traditional roles, as the history of areas such as DNA research makes plain (Watson 1969), but are most strongly backgrounded in their traditional roles and especially in their roles as mothers.

Diverse strands of feminist theory converge on the invisibility of the mother. The immensely important physical, personal and social skills the mother teaches the child are merely the background to *real* learning, which is defined as part of the male sphere of reason and knowledge (Benjamin 1988; Jaggar 1983:314). The mother herself is background and is defined in relation to her child or its father (Irigaray 1982), just as nature is defined in relation to the human as 'the environment'. And just as human identity in the west is defined in opposition to and through the denial of nature, so the mother's product—paradigmatically the male child—defines his masculine identity in opposition to the mother's being, and especially her nurturance, expelling it from his own makeup and substituting domination and the reduction of others to instrumental status (Chodorow 1979; Irigaray 1982; Kristeva 1987; Brennan 1993). He resists the recognition of dependence, but continues to conceptually order his world in terms of a male (and truly human) sphere of free activity taking place against a female (and natural) background of necessity.

HUMANITY AND EXCLUSION

The view that the connection of women with nature should simply be set aside as a relic of the past assumes that the task for both women and men is now that of becoming simply, unproblematically and fully *human*. But this takes as unproblematic what is not unproblematic, the concept of the human itself, which has in turn been constructed in the framework of exclusion, denial and denigration of the feminine sphere, the natural sphere and the sphere associated with subsistence. The question of what is human is itself now problematised, and one of the areas in which it is most problematic is in the relation of humans to nature, especially to the non-human world.

The framework of assumptions in which the human/nature contrast has been formed in the west is one not only of *feminine* connectedness

with and passivity towards nature, but also and complementarily one of exclusion and domination of the sphere of nature by a white, largely male elite, which I shall call the master model. But the assumptions in the master model are not seen as such, because this model is taken for granted as simply a *human* model, while the feminine is seen as a deviation from it. Hence to simply repudiate the old tradition of feminine connection with nature, and to put nothing in its place, usually amounts to the implicit endorsing of an alternative master model of the human, and of human relations to nature, and to female absorption into this model. It does not yield, as it might seem to do at first, a *gender-neutral* position; unless the question of relation to nature is explicitly put up for consideration and renegotiation, it is already settled—and settled in an unsatisfactory way—by the dominant western model of humanity into which women will be fitted. This is a model of domination and transcendence of nature, in which freedom and virtue are construed in terms of control over, and distance from, the sphere of nature, necessity and the feminine. The critique of the domination of nature developed by environmental thinkers in the last twenty years has shown, I think, that there are excellent reasons to be critical of this model of human/nature relations. Unless there is some critical re-evaluation of this master model in the area of relations to nature, the old female/nature connection will be replaced by the dominant model of human distance from and transcendence and control of nature. Critical examination of the question then has to have an important place on the feminist agenda if this highly problematic model of the human and of human relations to nature is not to triumph by default. If the model of what it is to be human involves the exclusion of the feminine, then only a shallow feminism could rest content with affirming the 'full humanity' of women without challenging this model.

There is another reason then why the issue of nature cannot now be set aside as irrelevant to feminism. As Karen Warren (1987) has observed, many forms of feminism need to put their *own* house in order on this issue.[9] Feminists have rightly insisted that women cannot be handed the main burden of ecological morality, especially in the form of holding the private sphere and the household responsible for the bulk of the needed changes (Ruether 1975:200–1; Instone 1991). The attempt to lodge responsibility mainly with women as household managers and consumers should be rejected because it continues to conceive the household as women's burden, because it misconceives the power of the private household to halt environmental degradation, and because it appeals to women's traditional self-abnegation, asking them to carry the world's ills in recognition of motherly duty. Nevertheless, women cannot base their own freedom on endorsing the continued lowly status of the sphere of nature with which they have been identified and from which they have lately risen. Moves upwards in human

groups are often accompanied by the vociferous insistence that those new recruits to the privileged class are utterly dissociated from the despised group from which they have emerged—hence the phenomenon of lower middle-class respectability, the officer risen from the ranks, and the recently assimilated colonised (Memmi 1965:16). Arguments for women's freedom cannot convincingly be based on a similar putdown of the non-human world.

But much of the traditional argument has been so based. For Mary Wollstonecraft, for example, what is valuable in the human character ideal to which women must aspire and be admitted is defined in *contrast* to the inferior sphere of brute creation. In her argument that women do have the capacity to join men in 'superiority to the brute creation', the inferiority of the natural order is simply taken for granted.[10]

THE MASCULINITY OF THE DOMINANT MODEL

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

1 the critique of masculinity and the valuing of traits traditionally associated with it (Chodorow 1979; Easthope 1986).
2 the critique of rationality. Relevant here is not only the masculine and instrumental character of rationality (Adorno and Horkheimer 1979; Marcuse 1968), but also the overvaluation of reason and its use as a tool for the exclusion and oppression of the contrasting classes of the non-human (since rationality is often taken as the distinguishing mark of the human [Ruether 1975; Midgley 1980; Le Doeuff 1977]), of women (because of its association with maleness [Lloyd 1984]), and, as well, of those inferiorised through class and race (since greater rationality is also taken to distinguish the civilised from the primitive and the higher from the lower classes [Kant 1981:9]). The overvaluation of rationality and its oppositional conception are deeply entrenched in western culture and its intellectual traditions. This overvaluation does not always take the extreme form of some of the classical philosophers (for example, the Platonic view that the unexamined life was worthless), but appears in many more subtle modern forms, such as the limitation of moral consideration to rational moral agents.
3 the critique of the human domination of nature, human chauvinism, speciesism, or anthropocentrism (Naess 1973; Plumwood 1975); of the treatment of nature in purely instrumental terms (Adorno and Horkheimer 1979) and the low valuation placed on it in relation to

the human and cultural spheres. Included in this is a critique of the model of the ideal human character and of human virtue, which points out that the western human ideal is one which maximises difference and distance from the animal, the primitive and the natural; the traits thought distinctively human, and valued as a result, are not only those associated with certain kinds of masculinity but also those unshared with animals (Rodman 1980; Midgley 1980). Usually these are taken to be mental characteristics. An associated move is the identification of the human with the higher, mental capabilities and of the animal or natural with the lower bodily ones, and the identification of the authentic or fully human sphere with the mental sphere. This mental sphere is not associated with maleness as such but rather with the elite masculinism of the masters (male and female) who leave to slaves and women the business of providing for the necessities of life, who regard this sphere of necessity as lower and who conceive virtue in terms of distance from it.

The critiques converge for several reasons. A major one is that the characteristics traditionally associated with dominant masculinism are also those used to define what is distinctively human: for example, rationality (and selected mental characteristics and skills); transcendence and intervention in and domination and control of nature, as opposed to passive immersion in it (consider the characterisation of 'savages' as lower orders of humanity on this account); productive labour, sociability and culture. Some traditional feminist arguments also provide striking examples of this convergence of concepts of the human and the masculine. Thus Mary Wollstonecraft in the *Vindication of the Rights of Women* appeals strongly to the notion of an ungendered human character as an ideal for both sexes ('the first object of laudable ambition is to obtain a character as a human being' [1982:5]), but in her account this human character is implicitly masculine. The human character ideal she espouses diverges sharply from the feminine character ideal, which she rejects, 'despising that weak elegancy of mind, exquisite sensibility, and sweet docility of manners'. Instead she urges that women become 'more masculine and respectable'. The complementary feminine character ideal is rejected—both sexes should participate in a common human character ideal (1982:23) which despite some minor modifications (men are to become more modest and chaste and in that respect to take on feminine characteristics) coincides in its specifications with certain masculine ideals. A single supposedly 'unsexed' character ideal is substituted for the old two-sexed one, where the old feminine ideal was perceived as subsidiary and sexed.

The key concepts of rationality (or mentality) and nature then create crucial links between the human and the masculine, so that to problematise masculinity and rationality is at the same time to problematise the human and, with it, the relation of the human to the contrasted non-human sphere. As we shall see, however, these concepts also form links to other areas of exclusion, for it is not just any kind of masculinity which is usually involved here, but a particular kind which is formed in the context of class and race as well as gender domination (which I have called the master model). The western rationalist ideals of the human embody norms not only of gender exclusion but of race, class and species exclusion. The view that women's humanity is unproblematic mistakenly takes the concept of the human to be unproblematic and fails to observe these biases and exclusions. This connection is then another reason why the issue of the traditional connection of women and nature cannot simply be ignored, why the problems raised must be considered by feminists.

The concept of the human is itself very heavily normative. The notion of being fully or properly human is made to carry enormous positive weight, usually with little examination of the assumptions behind this, or the inferiorisation of the class of non-humans this involves. Thus, for example, behind the view that there is something insulting or degrading about linking women and nature stands an unstated set of assumptions about the inferior status of the non-human world. In modern discourses of liberation, things are deplored or praised in terms of conformity to a concept of 'full humanity'. But the dignity of humanity, like that of masculinity, is maintained by contrast with an excluded inferiorised class.[11]

Once these assumptions are made explicit, the connection between the stance adopted on the issue of the woman/nature connection and the different options for feminism becomes clearer. In terms of this framework the main traditional position—the point of departure for feminism—can be seen as one in which the ideals of human character are not, as they often pretend to be, gender-neutral, but instead converge with those of mastery, while the ideals of womanhood diverge. Thus, as Simone de Beauvoir (1965) has so powerfully stated, the tragedy of being a woman consisted not only in having one's life and choices impoverished and limited, but also in the fact that to be a good woman was to be a second-rate human being. To the extent that these 'neutral' human character ideals were subscribed to and absorbed and the traditional feminine role also accepted, women must forever be forced to see themselves as inferiors and to be so seen. Because women were excluded from the activities and characteristics which were highly valorised and seen as *distinctively human,* they were forced to be satisfied with being mere spectators of what the *distinctively human*

business of life was all about, the real business of the struggle with nature.

Simone de Beauvoir's solution to this tragic dilemma is also stated with great force and clarity—change was to come about by women fitting themselves and being *allowed* to fit themselves into the dominant model of the human, and women were thus to become *fully human*. The model itself—and the model of freedom via the domination of nature it is based on—is never brought into question, and indeed women's eagerness to participate in it confirms and supports the superiority of the model.

THE FEMINISM OF UNCRITICAL EQUALITY

From the perspective of the second wave of feminism, the earlier, first wave form of feminism which made itself felt in the 1960s and 1970s attempted to fit women uncritically into a masculine pattern of life and a masculine model of humanity and culture which was presented as gender-neutral. This first wave position is most closely associated in current terms with liberal feminism, although, as many feminists have pointed out (O'Brien 1981; Young 1985; Benhabib and Cornell 1987; Nicholson 1987; Nye 1988; MacKinnon 1989), the attempt to fit women to a masculine ideal of selfhood goes beyond liberal feminism and is also found in those forms of socialist or humanist-Marxist feminism which are uncritical of the model of the human as a producer or worker. It is also found in some forms of social ecology (Biehl 1991).[12] The second wave thesis requires qualification, I have suggested, since it is the dominator identity of the master rather than a masculine identity as such which has formed the ideals of western culture and humanity as oppositional to nature and necessity. But with appropriate qualifications the basic point still stands. The position rejected as 'masculinising' is one which sees the task for women as one of laying claim to full humanity, in terms of women adapting themselves to the ideals of culture and the corresponding social institutions of the public sphere. The position can be summed up as one which demands participation by women in exclusionary ideals of humanity and culture. The associated activist strategy can be seen as one of uncritical equality, demanding equal admittance for women to a sphere marked out for elite males and to dominant institutions which are themselves viewed critically only to the extent that they exclude women (and elite women especially).

Central to these ideals of humanity to which women must seek admittance on the uncritical equality strategy is the domination of nature. Women, in this strategy, are to join elite men in participation in

areas which especially exhibit human freedom, such as science and technology, from which they have been especially strongly excluded. These areas are strongly marked for elite men because their style heavily involves the highly valorised traits of objectivity, abstractness, rationality and suppression of emotionality; and also because of their function, which exhibits most strongly the virtues of transcendence of, control of and struggle with nature. In the equal admission strategy, women enter science, but science itself and its orientation to the domination of nature (and domination of excluded groups) remain unchanged.

The uncritical equality strategy associated with liberal feminism has been rejected to varying degrees by several recent forms of feminism. It has been widely seen as a very incomplete escape from the more subtle forms of male cultural domination, and as lacking a basis for adequate critique of the masculinity of the dominant western culture. Perhaps the major criticism levelled at it is that it has failed to observe the implicit masculinity of the rational subject of liberal theory and public discourse, as well as the implicit masculinity of the parties in the myth of the founding contract (Jaggar 1983; Harding 1984; Lloyd 1984; Irigaray 1985b; Tapper 1986; Fox Keller 1985; Gilligan 1987; Benhabib 1987; Young 1987; Nye 1988; Pateman 1988; MacKinnon 1989). A critical ecofeminist account can broaden and extend this objection in a number of directions. First, the approach of liberal feminism fails to notice not only the implicit masculinity of the conception of the individual subject in the public sphere (and indeed the subject of post-enlightenment rational discourse generally), but also its other exclusionary biases, and fails to challenge the resulting bias of the dominant model of the *human* and of human culture as oppositional to nature. Thus uncritical equality endorses a model which is doubly phallocentric, for it is implicitly masculine not only in its account of the individual in society, but in its assumption that what constitutes and is valuable in human identity and culture is in opposition to nature. Second, the liberal approach fails to notice that such a rationalist model of the human as exclusive of nature is one which writes in assumptions not only of gender supremacy, but also of class, race and species supremacy.

The implicit masculinity and the other biases of these models also mean that the hope of equality for women within them will be largely illusory, except for a privileged few. The master model of both the human and the individual citizen and of corresponding social institutions has been arrived at by exclusion and devaluation of women, women's life-patterns and feminine characteristics, as well as by exclusion of those others and areas of life which have been construed as nature. Because this model has been defined by *exclusion,* it is loaded against

women in a variety of more and less subtle ways/Most women will not benefit from formal admission to it and will not attain real equality within it. As Genevieve Lloyd notes, 'Women cannot easily be accommodated into a cultural ideal that has defined itself in opposition to the feminine' (1984:104). Absorption into the master model of humanity, culture and social life is not likely to be successful then for most women, who will remain down at the bottom of the social and cultural hierarchy.[13] For women, more than altruism is involved in challenging such models.

But even if the absorption of women into the master model of human culture were to be widely successful, ecological feminists would argue, it would be objectionable, because it amounts to having women join elite men in belonging to a privileged class, in turn defined by excluding the inferior class of the non-human and those counted as less human. That is to say, it is a strategy of making some women equal in a now *wider* dominating class, without questioning the structure of or the necessity for domination. The criticism here is that the conceptual apparatus relating superior to inferior orders remains intact and unquestioned; what is achieved is a broadening of the dominating class, without the basis of domination itself being challenged. And the attempt to simply enlarge the privileged class by extending it to, and including, certain women not only ignores a crucial *moral* dimension of the problem; it ignores the way in which different kinds of domination act as models, support and reinforcement, for one another, and the way in which the same conceptual structure of domination reappears in very different inferiorised groups: as we have seen, it marks women, nature, 'primitive' people, slaves, animals, manual labourers, 'savages', people of colour—all supposedly 'closer to the animals'.

When the problem of the women-nature connection is simply set aside, then, it is implicitly assumed that the solution is for women to fit into a model of human relations to nature which does not require change or challenge. Thus a critical and thoroughgoing contemporary feminism is and must be engaged in a lot more than merely challenging and revising explicit ideals of feminine character and behaviour. It is and must be engaged in revising and challenging as well the ideals of both *masculine* and of *human* character. It must take up the challenge to western culture, issued by the early feminists, to conceive women as being as equally and fully human as men. But it can only do this properly if it problematises the dominant conception of the human, and of human culture, as well as that of the rational individual. The challenge then to dominant conceptions of the human involves but is more than a challenge to male domination. It involves also, as we shall see, the challenge to other forms of domination.

RADICAL FEMINISM AND THE MASCULINITY OF CULTURE

What has been variously called cultural feminism or radical feminism has been a major rival to and critic of the feminism of uncritical equality.[14] If liberal feminism rejects the ideals of feminine character, radical feminism (as well as certain forms of socialist feminism) rejects masculine ideals. This rejection gives rise to several themes in ecological feminism. Ideals thought of as masculine are similarly rejected by some ecofeminists and by some feminist theorists of non-violence (Ruddick 1989; McAllister 1982; Harris and King 1989), who link masculine identity and its character ideal (and biological maleness in the case of Gearhart 1982 and Collard 1988) to aggression against fellow humans, especially women, as well as against nature. They reject the absorption of women into this male mould, which is perceived as yielding a culture not of life but of misogyny and death (Daly 1978:62). The principle behind this critique is important and illuminating, even if it is sometimes presented in an oversimplified form: it is not only women who have been damaged and oppressed by assimilation to the sphere of nature, but also western culture itself which has been deformed by its masculinisation and denial of the sphere associated with women. According to this cultural critique, the dominant forms of western culture have been constructed in part at least through control, exclusion and devaluation of the feminine and hence of the natural. Because western culture has conceived the central features of humanity in terms of the dominator identity of the master, and has empowered qualities and areas of life classed as masculine over those classed as feminine, it has evolved as hierarchical, aggressive and destructive of nature and of life, including human life (Ruether 1975; McAllister 1982; Caldecott and Leland 1983; Miller 1986:88; Eisler 1988). For women, the real task of liberation is not equal participation or absorption in such a male dominant culture, but rather subversion, resistance and replacement.

While such a critique of male-dominant culture is powerful, it can be interpreted in different ways and accordingly gives rise to different forms of ecological feminism and radical feminism. On the basis of assimilation to certain characteristics of radical feminism, ecological feminism is both critiqued and stereotyped. Radical feminist cultural critiques have suffered from various problems: they often assume women's oppression to be the foundational form of oppression from which all others are derived; the denial of the feminine is conceived as the origin point of the distortion of culture. It has been tempting too for some radical feminist opponents of the dominant culture to try to resolve the problem of the inferiorisation of what that culture has denied and subordinated by the reversal strategy: giving a positive value to what was previously despised and excluded—the feminine and the natural. But very different

interpretations of reversal strategies are open to us. One of the major forms of it, the feminism of uncritical reversal, is just as problematic as the feminism of uncritical equality, I shall argue, and perpetuates women's oppression in a new and subtle form. The uncritical reversal position expresses both a strong tendency within, a potential danger for, and a stereotype of ecological feminism. Some critics of ecofeminism do battle with this stereotype rather than with the substantive concerns and the work (which they do not reference) of ecofeminists (Prentice 1988; Echols 1989:288; Biehl 1991). On the other hand, while some ecofeminist writers do fall into this stereotype, and while there is an essentially correct insight in the idea of affirming a difference that has been denied and inferiorised, a great deal depends on how the revaluation is carried out and on what is affirmed, as I argue in subsequent chapters.

The simple reversal model, which affirms women as 'nurturant' and celebrates their life-giving powers in a way which confirms their immersion in nature, conceives the alternatives for remaking culture in terms of rival masculinising and feminising strategies. If the masculinising strategy of feminism rejected the feminine character ideal and affirmed a masculine one for both sexes, such a feminising strategy would reject the masculine character ideal and affirm a rival feminine one for both sexes. Several slogans sum up this feminising strategy: 'The future is female', 'Adam was a rough draft, Eve is a fair copy'. But although this is an obvious way to try to find a basis for an ecological feminist argument, it is not, as I will suggest, either the only way or the best way.

THE FEMINISM OF UNCRITICAL REVERSAL

The concept of dualism is central to an understanding of what is problematic in the attempt to reverse the value both of the feminine and of nature. The dualism of western culture has come under sustained criticism from many directions in contemporary feminist and critical thought, from poststructuralist and postmodernist feminism to ecofeminism. Dualism is the process by which contrasting concepts (for example, masculine and feminine gender identities) are formed by domination and subordination and constructed as oppositional and exclusive. Thus as Alison Jaggar writes:

> Male-dominant culture, as all feminists have observed, defines masculinity and femininity as contrasting forms. In contemporary society, men are defined as active, women as passive; men are intellectual, women are intuitive; men are inexpressive, women

emotional; men are strong, women weak; men are dominant, women submissive, etc.; ad nauseam…. To the extent that women and men conform to gendered definitions of their humanity, they are bound to be alienated from themselves. The concepts of femininity and masculinity force both men and women to overdevelop certain of their capacities at the expense of others. For instance men become excessively competitive and detached from others; women become excessively nurturant and altruistic.

<div style="text-align: right">(Jaggar 1983:316)</div>

Dualism, as a way of construing difference in terms of the logic of hierarchy (Derrida 1981), has been discussed by many feminist and ecological feminist thinkers (Griffin 1978; Jaggar 1983; Plumwood 1986; Warren 1987; King 1989). Only liberal feminism, which accepts the dominant culture, has not had much use for the concept. In dualism, the more highly valued side (males, humans) is construed as alien to and of a different nature or order of being from the 'lower', inferiorised side (women, nature) and each is treated as lacking in qualities which make possible overlap, kinship, or continuity. The nature of each is constructed in polarised ways by the exclusion of qualities shared with the other; the dominant side is taken as primary, the subordinated side is defined in relation to it. Thus woman is constructed as the other, as the exception, the aberration or the subsumed, and man treated as the primary model. The effect of dualism is, in Rosemary Radford Ruether's words, to 'naturalise domination', to make it part of the very natures or identities of both the dominant and subordinated items and thus to appear to be inevitable, 'natural' (Ruether 1975:189).

As I show in chapter 2, dualism is a process in which power forms identity, one which distorts both sides of what it splits apart, the master *and* the slave, the coloniser *and* the colonised, the sadist *and* the masochist, the egoist *and* the self-abnegating altruist, the masculine *and* the feminine, human *and* nature. But if this is so, clearly we cannot resolve the problem by a simple strategy of reversal, affirming the slave's character or culture, for this character as it stands is not an independently constituted nature, but equally represents a distortion. It is a reflection in the dualistic mirror of the master's character and culture. Thus, for example, to the extent that women's 'closeness to nature' is mainly a product of their powerlessness in and exclusion from culture, and from access to technological means of separating from and mastering nature, affirmation of these qualities, which are the products of powerlessness, will not provide a genuine liberatory alternative. Rather, it reactively preserves and maintains the original dualism in the character of what is now affirmed.

In chapter 2 I develop a more thorough theoretical account of dualism and its politics, and show how to affirm the underside of a dualistic contrast (for example, how to affirm nature in contrast to reason) without employing a reversal of values strategy. Here I want to show how the concept of dualism can illuminate the problem of distinguishing acceptable and unacceptable reversal positions, and the clearer formulation of positions in feminism and ecofeminism.

What is at issue here is not the distinctions between women/men, and human/nature, but their dualistic construction. The concept of the human has a masculine bias (among others) because the male/female and human/nature dualisms are closely intertwined, so much so that neither can be fully understood in isolation from the other. The dualistic distortion of culture and the historical inferiority of women and nature in the west have been based, as we have seen, on a network of assumptions involving a range of closely related dualistic contrasts, especially the dualism of reason and nature, or (in a virtually equivalent formulation), of humanity and culture on the one side and nature on the other. It is necessary to set these assumptions out clearly to dispel the fog of charges that essentialism, biologism and reverse sexism are inherent in ecofeminism (Echols 1983; Prentice 1988:9; Biehl 1991), and to chart clearly a path which avoids these pitfalls. Setting these assumptions out more fully makes it clearer what the problematic form of the reversal argument is. There are three parts to each set of assumptions which are important for our discussion:

(A) 1 the identification of the female with the sphere of physicality and nature (women=nature assumption)
   2 the assumed inferiority of the sphere of women and of nature (inferiority of nature assumption)
   3 the conception of both women and nature in terms of a set of dualistic contrasts opposing the sphere of nature to that of reason or the human (dualistic assumption)

(B) 1 the corresponding identification of the male with the sphere of reason, of true humanity and culture (men=reason assumption)
   2 the assumption of the superiority of the sphere of reason, humanity and culture to that of nature (superiority of reason assumption)
   3 the conception of the human or cultural sphere in terms of a set of dualistic assumptions opposing it to nature (dualistic assumption).

The fact that there are three parts to each corresponding set of gender assumptions helps to explain why a thoroughgoing development of feminism leads in the direction of a critical, anti-dualist ecological feminism. For the

feminism of uncritical equality can be seen as rejecting only the first item in these two sets of assumptions, namely (A)1 (the women=nature assumption), but as accepting the further assumptions of each set, (A)2 and (A)3, and (B)1 and (B)2, which inferiorise nature and define it dualistically. Thus liberal feminism rejects the idea of a special feminine (connection to) nature, the traditional feminine model for women, and the exclusion of women from true humanity. Its problem, I have suggested, is that it merely aims to disengage women from the sphere of nature. It does so without questioning either the assumption that the natural sphere itself is inferior, or the dualistic assumptions which yield the masculine model of the human itself, namely (A)2 and (A)3.

The form in which the reversal argument is problematic for radical feminism and ecofeminism is one which does just the opposite of this. The problematic form rejects the premises which assert the traditional inferiority of the feminine and of nature, (A)2 and (B)2. Thus it reverses the low or negative value traditionally assigned to the feminine and to nature, but without disturbing the further assumptions, (A)3 and (B)3, which define this sphere as the contrast term of the masculine model of culture and reason. Here, I shall argue, it is not the assumptions (A)1 and (B)1 which are the problem (although much depends on the form in which these are asserted) so much as the dualistic assumptions (A)3 and (B)3.

PREMISE (A)1: THE IDENTITY OF WOMEN AND NATURE

While an ecological feminist argument cannot be based satisfactorily on accepting premises (A)3 and (B)3, there are a number of different ways ecological feminism can go with respect to premise (A)1, which asserts the identity of women and nature. I want to suggest that (A)1 needs to be refined, and whether or not it is acceptable depends on modifications. Premises (A)1 and (B)1 raise a number of difficult issues, which I shall treat first.

First, we might note that (A)1 and (B)1 yield an important part of the master model of human identity: women's alignment with nature has been matched by the development of an elite masculine identity centring around distance from the feminine, from nature as necessity, from such 'natural' areas in human life as reproduction, and around control, domination and inferiorisation of the natural sphere. Such distance has been obtained by the location of value in the area of human character and culture; this expresses masculine ideals as human ideals, and distinguishes humans from the non-human world. This model then yields the dualistic conception of human identity and culture which a critical ecological feminist position should challenge.

Thus as they stand, these two premises would usually be understood as asserting the identity of women with nature conceived as distinct from and exclusive of culture. Conversely, they assert the identity of men with culture as exclusive of and distinct from nature. (That is, (A)1 would read 'Women are, and men are not, part of nature', and (B)2 would read 'Men are, and women are not, part of culture'.) But once we have begun to question human/nature dualism these assumptions are no longer acceptable. As I argue in chapter 2, human identity has, as part of its dualistic construction, been conceived of in terms which are exclusive of and in opposition to nature. A major point of the critical ecological feminist position I shall develop is to argue that we should reject the master model[15] and conceive human identity in less dualistic and oppositional ways; such a critical ecofeminism would conclude that both women and men are part of both nature and culture. This form of ecological feminism, in reconceiving human identity, is not placing women, or in fact men either, back in undifferentiated nature.[16] For critical ecological feminism, premises (A)1 and (B)1 would be acceptable only in a highly qualified form.

Second, premises (A)1 and (B)1 raise the issue of how women's association with nature reflects women's difference, of whether such a difference exists and how it is based. As we have seen, a common misconception is that the critique of the masculinity of dominant culture requires us to affirm women's difference in the form of a special, biologically based feminine connection to nature, now worn as a badge of pride rather than as one of shame, as in the reversal argument (Prentice 1988:9). But the argument that women have a different relation to nature need not rest on either reversal or 'essentialism', the appeal to a quality of empathy or mysterious power shared by all women and inherent in women's biology.[17] Such differences may instead be seen as due to women's different social and historical position.

Ecological feminists can also be discriminating about the characteristics and aspects of culture they choose to affirm; they need not be confined, as I argue in later chapters, to a choice between Biehl's alternatives of 'demolishing' the complete inheritance of women's past identity or 'enthusiastically embracing it' in its entirety (Biehl 1991:12). To the extent that women's lives have been lived in ways which are less directly oppositional to nature than those of men, and have involved different and less oppositional practices, qualities of care and kinds of selfhood, an ecological feminist position could and should privilege some of the experiences and practices of women over those of men as a source of change without being committed to any form of naturalism.

Ecofeminist critics, as well as some theorists,[18] often write as if ecological feminism is a unitary position. Both critics and sympathisers

need to acknowledge ecological feminism as diverse and as containing, in varying degrees of development, different and sometimes conflicting positions and political commitments. But there is some ground common to all positions which can be called ecological feminist, namely the rejection of (A)2 and (B)2, which state the inferiority of women and nature. The rejection of these assumptions also provides part of the basic common ground between ecological feminism and those other positions in environmental thought which reject the inferiority of nature, although usually without giving attention to its connection with the inferiorising of women.[19] A more complete and critical ecological feminism, I have argued, goes further still, beyond both the feminism of equality and the feminism of reversal to query *both* sets of assumptions, (A)2 and (A)3, and (B)2 and (B)3, and to call the dualistic construction of both gender identity and human identity into question in a thoroughgoing way.

ECOLOGICAL FEMINISM AS AN INTEGRATIVE PROJECT

Women have faced an unacceptable choice within patriarchy with respect to their ancient identity as nature. They either accept it (naturalism) or reject it (and endorse the dominant mastery model). Attention to the dualistic problematic shows a way of resolving this dilemma. Women must be treated as just as fully human and as fully part of human culture as men. But both men and women must challenge the dualised conception of human identity and develop an alternative culture which fully recognises *human* identity as continuous with, not alien from, nature. The dualised conception of nature as inert, passive and mechanistic would also be challenged as part of this development.

   Thus the anti-dualist approach reveals a third way which does not force women into the choice of uncritical participation in a masculinebiased and dualised construction of culture or into accepting an old and oppressive identity as 'earth mothers': outside of culture, opposed to culture, not fully human. In this alternative, women are not seen as purely part of nature any more than men are; both men and women are part of both nature and culture (Warren 1987; Ynestra King 1989).[20] Both men and women can stand with nature (Ynestra King 1989) and work for breaking down the dualistic construction of culture, but in doing so they will come from different historical places and have different things to contribute to this process. Because of their placement in the sphere of nature and exclusion from an oppositional culture, what women have to contribute to this process may be especially significant. Their life-choices and historical positioning often compel a deeper

discomfort with dualistic structures and foster a deeper questioning of a dualised culture.

Writing from a perspective influenced by the Frankfurt school, Patricia Jagentowicz Mills has argued that those ecological feminists who reject the negative value that western culture has attributed to the sphere of nature (which I have argued above is the core assumption of all ecological feminisms) have adopted an 'abstract pro-nature stance'. This is 'theoretically unsound and paves the way for the erosion of women's reproductive freedom' (Mills 1991), by obliging them to oppose abortion rights. Her own proposed solution to the problem would modify the 'abstract pro-nature stance' to take account of the regressive moment of nature, the moment of nature 'red in tooth and claw', which it is essential for women to rise above. A rejection of the negative value traditionally accorded nature, she suggests, would make this impossible.

There are a number of grounds on which to reject Mills's argument. To reject the western construction of nature as an inferior sphere of exclusion is not by any means to adopt an 'abstract pro-nature stance' in the sense of agreeing to abandon oneself to necessity, to accept anything which may happen without resistance, nor to agree to any moral precepts such as 'Nature knows best', whatever they may mean. We do not have to accept a choice between treating 'nature' as our slave or treating it as our master. We do not have to assume that nature is a sphere of harmony and peace, with which we as humans will never be in conflict. A rejection of the western treatment of nature implies a careful, critical and political look at the category of nature. In short, what is involved is not, as assumed in Mills's argument, a simple reversal of the value of nature which embraces the category without further deconstruction.

This approach has major implications for the assignment of women's reproductive activity to the sphere of nature, which has formed much of the traditional basis for their inferiorisation. But this placement of reproduction within a framework of nature/culture dualism is precisely what is now thrown open to question. Much feminist discussion has shown how problematic this dualising framework has been for women (Le Doeuff 1977; McMillan 1982; MacKenzie 1986). A rejection of nature/culture dualism can actually provide a much better framework for thinking about women's reproductive issues than the dualising framework which creates an opposition between the body and free subjectivity.

In terms of the assumptions of nature/culture dualism, women's 'uncontrollable' bodies make them part of the sphere of nature. Such an assumption of women's 'closeness to nature', where nature is taken as the realm of necessity over that of freedom, is of course extremely problematic for feminists. A contemporary example of the attempt to use

the dualistic conception of reproduction to control women is the position (let us call it 'papal ecofeminism') which aims to upgrade traditional women's sphere as nature while denying their freedom to choose, control and structure it, thus denying the basis of their claim as culture. It seeks to imprison women in nature by denying access to available cultural means to mediate nature, and to affirm passivity for women and not for men. In *The Second Sex* Simone de Beauvoir presented a powerful analysis of the effect on women of the conception and treatment of their reproductivity as dualised nature. Because reproduction is construed not as a creative act, indeed not the act of an agent at all, it becomes something which is undergone not undertaken, at worst tortured and passive, at best a field for acceptance and resignation. When women's agency and choice are denied, the female body itself comes to be seen as oppressive, the instrument of an invading nature hostile to human subjecthood and alien to true humanity, a nature which can only be subdued or transcended.[21]

The attempt to view women and reproduction in terms of nature/culture dualism is distorting whichever of the alternatives, nature or culture, is chosen. The construction of reproduction as the field of nature makes it the work of instinct, lacking skill, care and value. It is an unsharable and insupportable 'natural' burden which can be allowed to dominate and distort women's lives and destroy their capacity for choice and participation in a wider sphere of life. But if the escape route is meant to be the entry to culture by the rational mastery of the body as nature, then the results are also problematic. If in the rationalistic paradigm (for example, in Hegel), the male body is made rational by being made the instrument of a rationality which transforms nature, the female body is made part of culture by being subject to the control of others taken to represent rationality: medical and other experts, abortion tribunals and the like. As dualised nature, conceived as inert, passive, non-subjects, women have offered a fertile field for such control and manipulation by a rationality which structures women's experience of reproduction in two Cartesian halves: the suffering body deprived of agency, and the mastering, external rational agent.

But reproduction only becomes intelligible as a *project for women* if it is seen in non-dualistic ways, if the body and agency are not split. If it is seen as pure nature it is not a project for the woman, only a process, although it is a project for others, those who actively 'deliver her'. If it is seen as pure culture, it is a project, but one with the wrong features. In the case of its construal as pure culture, the 'project', conceived in instrumental terms as the production of a child, is perhaps best transferred to a surrogate, whether human or mechanical, and directed in the most efficient way to that end, by scientific personnel. It is only

when women are conceived as free agents and choosers with respect to their bodies and as full agents in their reproductive activity that this split is avoided. It is only in such freedom that women's reproductive life is not distorted.

Accordingly, a critical ecological feminism can reject both the distorted choices generated by nature/culture dualism; it can reject the model of women and women's reproductivity as undifferentiated nature, but it is also critical of the attempt to fit them into a model of oppositional and masculinised culture. The woman-directed movement towards redefining reproduction as powerful, creative and involving skill, care and knowledge with the reproductive woman as subject, should also be understood as the movement to transcending nature/culture dualism. The critical ecological feminism which results from this approach would contain no assumptions which were not acceptable from a feminist standpoint, and would represent a fuller development of feminist thought in taking better account of the category of nature: the key to so much of women's past and present oppression. As a political movement it would represent women's willingness to move to a further stage in their relations with nature, beyond that of powerless inclusion in nature, beyond that of reaction against their old exclusion from culture, and towards an active, deliberate and reflective positioning of themselves *with* nature against a destructive and dualising form of culture.

The programme of a critical ecological feminism orientated to the critique of dualism is a highly integrative one (Plumwood 1986:137; Warren 1987:17; 1990:132), and gives it a claim to be a third wave or stage of feminism moving beyond the conventional divisions in feminist theory. It is not a *tsunami,* a freak tidal wave which has appeared out of nowhere sweeping all before it. Rather, it is prefigured in and builds on work not only in ecofeminism but in radical feminism, cultural feminism and socialist feminism over the last decade and a half. At the same time, this critical ecological feminism conflicts with various other feminisms, by making an account of the connection to nature central in its understanding of feminism (Warren 1990). It rejects especially those aspects or approaches to women's liberation which endorse or fail to challenge the dualistic definition of women and nature and/or the inferior status of nature.

But, as I indicated, critical ecological feminism would also draw strength and integrate key insights from other forms of feminism, and hence have a basis for partial agreement with each. From early and liberal feminism it would take the original impulse to integrate women fully into human culture. Like cultural feminism, it believes this integration is only possible within a culture and concept of the human which is profoundly different from the one we have, one which abandons

the dualisms which have shaped western culture. But it does not see this in terms of a gynocentric model of the human, or a 'women's culture' grown from women's essential nature. From black, anti-colonialist and socialist feminism, I will argue in the next and subsequent chapters, a critical ecofeminism can draw an understanding of many of the processes and structures of power and domination which are embedded in dualisms. Such an anti-dualist ecological feminism must also be understood then as an integrative project with respect to other liberation struggles, for the dualisms which have characterised western culture, and which are linked philosophically to rationalism, also correspond in important ways to its main forms of repression, alienation and domination, as I argue next.

Chapter 2

Dualism: the logic of colonisation

For efficient subordination, what's wanted is that the structure not only not appear to be a cultural artifact kept in place by human decision or custom, but that it appear *natural*—that it appear to be a quite direct consequence of the facts about the beast which are beyond the scope of human manipulation or revision. It must seem natural that individuals of the one category are dominated by individuals of the other and that as groups, the one dominates the other.

(Marilyn Frye)

DUALISM AND DIFFERENCE

As we have seen, both feminist philosophy and ecological feminism have given a key role in their accounts of western philosophy to the concept of dualism, the construction of a devalued and sharply demarcated sphere of otherness (Ruether 1975; Griffin 1978; Dodson Gray 1979; Jay 1981; Jaggar 1983:96; Cixous and Clément 1986:63; Trebilcot 1986; Plumwood 1986; 1988; 1990; 1991; Warren 1987; 1990; King 1981; 1989; 1990; Hartsock 1990). In this chapter I attempt to sharpen up and further explicate this notion. I show in the following chapters that the western model of human/nature relations has the properties of a dualism and requires anti-dualist remedies. A dualism, I have argued, results from a certain kind of denied dependency on a subordinated other. This relationship of denied dependency determines a certain kind of logical structure, in which the denial and the relation of domination/subordination shape the identity of both the relata.

I use examples from a number of forms of oppression, especially gender, race and colonisation, to show what this structure is, and discuss its logical formulation. By means of dualism, the colonised are appropriated, incorporated, into the selfhood and culture of the master, which forms their identity. The dominant conception of the human/ nature relation in the west has features corresponding to this logical

structure. Because of this structure, escape from dualised relationship and dualised identity represents a particularly difficult problem, involving a sort of logical maze. At the end of the chapter I suggest some remedies for overcoming dualised identity, some methods of escaping dualistic traps, and look at some implications for accounts of reason, humanity and nature.

The key exclusions and denials of dependency for dominant conceptions of reason in western culture include not only the feminine and nature, but all those human orders treated as nature and subject to denied dependency. Thus it is the identity of the master (rather than a masculine identity pure and simple) defined by these multiple exclusions which lies at the heart of western culture. This identity is expressed most strongly in the dominant conception of reason, and gives rise to a dualised structure of otherness and negation which I argue corresponds to that of classical prepositional logic. If the prevailing power relations of western culture have determined the selection of logical theories, as they have scientific theories and technologies (Latour and Woolgar 1979; Winner 1986), then to reject this classical structure of reason does not imply the rejection of all attempts to structure or systematise reason, but rather the rejection of those which promote dualistic accounts of otherness.

Dualism can also be seen as an alienated form of differentiation, in which power construes and constructs difference in terms of an inferior and alien realm. In random tyrannies, beings may be selected for oppression in arbitrary and random ways. But in systematised forms of power, power is normally institutionalised and 'naturalised' by latching on to existing forms of difference. Dualisms are not just freefloating systems of ideas; they are closely associated with domination and accumulation, and are their major cultural expressions and justifications. But I do not mean to imply by this that accumulation, the material sphere, is the real motor and the cultural sphere merely its reflection, as assumed in some forms of Marxist theory. The material and the cultural spheres both do the work of domination and may be thought of as mutually selecting one another, just as particular technologies are both selected by certain social and political arrangements and select them, helping to maintain, strengthen and prepare the ground for certain types of social structures.

The set of interrelated and mutually reinforcing dualisms which permeate western culture forms a fault-line which runs through its entire conceptual system. While the human/nature contrast is one of the more recent of these dualisms, like the others, it can be fully understood only as part of the interrelated set. Each of them has crucial connections to other elements, and has a common structure with other

members of the set. They should be seen as forming a system, an interlocking structure.

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

culture	nature
reason	nature
male	female
mind	body (nature)
master	slave
reason	matter (physicality)
rationality	animality (nature)
reason	emotion (nature)
mind, spirit	nature
freedom	necessity (nature)
universal	particular
human	nature (non-human)
civilised	primitive (nature)
production	reproduction (nature)
public	private
subject	object
self	other

I do not claim completeness for this list. Indeed completeness is impossible, since any distinction can in principle be treated as a dualism. But these dualisms are key ones for western thought, and reflect the major forms of oppression in western culture. In particular the dualisms of male/female, mental/manual (mind/body), civilised/primitive, human/ nature correspond directly to and naturalise gender, class, race and nature oppressions respectively, although a number of others are indirectly involved. Their development has been a historical process, following a historical sequence of evolution. Thus dualisms such as reason/nature may be ancient, but others such as human/nature and subject/object are associated especially with modern, post-enlightenment consciousness. But even the ancient forms do not necessarily fade away because their original context has changed; they are often preserved in our conceptual framework as residues, layers of sediment deposited by past oppressions. Culture thus accumulates a store of such conceptual weapons, which can be mined, refined and redeployed for new uses. So old oppressions stored as dualisms facilitate and break the path for new ones.

Since they are formed by power and correspond to stages of accumulation, any account of their development would also be an account of the development of institutionalised power. For prehistory, this would necessarily be speculative. Consider Maria Mies's historical

hypothesis, according to which male hunting bands evolve into protomilitary forces, first living off women's work as agricultural and subsistence labourers, then acquiring slaves from other tribes (Mies 1986:64–5). This process would give rise initially to dualisms such as sacred/profane (where power is religiously sanctioned), male/female and master/slave. Later stages of the accumulation process would see the development of new forms, often produced as nuances, new inflexions of older forms. Thus the period of colonial conquest in the west from the fourteenth century onwards brings to the fore civilised/primitive as a variant of reason/nature and of reason/animal and mind/body, and the rise of science brings to the fore subject/object dualism (Bordo 1987).

   The exclusions of reason are multiple and not reducible to those of gender. Nevertheless gender plays a key role, since gender ideals especially involve ideals of reason (Lloyd 1984), and male ideals which lay claim to universality for men often invoke the elite male identity of the master. Thus to read down the first side of the list of dualisms is to read a list of qualities traditionally appropriated to men and to the human, while the second side presents qualities traditionally excluded from male ideals and associated with women, the sex defined by exclusion, 'made from the dross and refuse of a man' (Morgan 1989:121).

THE KEY ROLE OF REASON/NATURE DUALISM

The line of fracture between reason and nature runs deeply through the key concepts of western culture. In the contrast set, virtually everything on the 'superior' side can be represented as forms of reason, and virtually everything on the underside can be represented as forms of nature. A gendered reason/nature contrast appears as the overarching, most general, basic and connecting form of these dualisms, capable of new nuances and inflections and a great variety of elaboration and development. The structure of reason/nature dualism and its variants is the perspective of power; it represents, as Nancy Hartsock notes, 'a way of looking at the world characteristic of the dominant, white, male Eurocentric ruling class, a way of dividing up the world that puts an omnipotent subject at the centre and constructs marginal Others as sets of negative qualities' (Hartsock 1990:161). This perspective constructs these others by exclusion (or some degree of departure from the norm or centre) as some form of nature in contrast to the subject, the master, who claims for himself both full humanity and reason. The west's understanding of the key concepts through which it deals with the world, its understanding not only of

reason and nature but of their specific dualistic forms, has been formed from such contrasts and exclusions.

Those dualisms (such as particular/universal or public/private) which cannot immediately be seen as variants of a gendered reason/nature contrast can have their derivation from or connection to this basic form revealed by making explicit further implicit assumptions which connect them. These are *linking postulates*. Linking postulates are assumptions normally made or implicit in the cultural background which create equivalences or mapping between the pairs. For example, the postulate that all and only humans possess culture maps the culture/nature pair on to the human/nature pair; the postulate that the sphere of reason is masculine maps the reason/body pair on to the male/female pair; and the assumption that the sphere of the human coincides with that of intellect or mentality maps the mind/body pair on to the human/nature pair, and, via transitivity, the human/nature pair on to the male/female pair. In the case of public/private, the linking postulate connects the sphere of the public with reason via the qualities of freedom, universality and rationality which are supposedly constitutive of masculinity and the public sphere, and connects that of the private with nature via the qualities of dailiness, necessity, particularity and emotionality supposedly exemplified in and constitutive of femininity and the private sphere (Lloyd 1984:74–85). The civilised/primitive contrast maps all the human/animal, mind/body, reason/nature, freedom/ necessity and subject/object contrasts. In the contemporary class hierarchy, the poor are mapped as animal and as children (incapable of deferred gratification), while the working class is mapped as body (Ehrenreich 1989).

The fact that different philosophers and different periods of philosophy have focused on different pairs of these dualisms and have defended different linking postulates has obscured the pervasiveness of dualistic and rationalist influence in philosophy. Thus Hegel and Rousseau emphasise the postulates linking public/private, male/female, universal/particular and reason/nature (Lloyd 1984:58–63 and 80–5). For Plato the emphasis is mainly on reason/body, reason/emotion, universal/particular; for Descartes it is on mind/body (physicality), subject/object, human/nature and human/animal; for Marx it is on freedom/necessity, culture (history)/nature, civilised/primitive, mental/ manual (a variant on mind/body) and production/reproduction. But a philosopher's explicit focus on particular dualisms is often deceptive, for the gendered character of the dualisms may lurk in the background in unexamined and concealed form, as much feminist philosophy exposing phallocentrism has shown.

In practice these dualisms form a web or network. One passes easily over into the other, linked to it by well-travelled pathways of

conventional or philosophical assumption. The concepts of humanity, rationality and masculinity form strongly linked and contiguous parts of this web, a set of closely related concepts which provide for each other models of appropriate relations to their respective dualised contrasts of nature, the physical or material, and the feminine. These concepts and identities are linked by the shared logical structure of dualism inherited from the exclusions of the master identity, as well as by a number of other features.

The connection of the dualisms with the perspective of the master appears plainly in many ancient sources which make clear the role of domination in shaping the relationship between 'superior' and 'inferior' sides in instrumental terms. For example, Aristotle, in a notorious passage in the *Politics* justifying slavery, links together the dualisms arising from human domination of nature, male domination over females, the master's domination over the slave and reason's domination of the body and emotions, and gives his version of each hierarchy's place in a chain of hierarchies.

> It is clear that the rule of the soul over the body, and of the mind and the rational element over the passionate, is natural and expedient; whereas the equality of the two or the rule of the inferior is always hurtful. The same holds good for animals in relation to men; for tame animals have a better nature than wild, and all tame animals are better off when they are ruled by man; for then they are preserved. Again, the male is by nature superior, and the female inferior; and the one rules, and the other is ruled; this principle of necessity extends to all mankind. Where then there is such a difference as that between soul and body, or between men and animals (as is the case of those whose business it is to use their body, and who can do nothing better), the lower sort are by nature slaves, and it is better for them as for all inferiors that they should be under the rule of a master. For he who can be, and therefore is, another's and he who participates in rational principle enough to apprehend, but not to have such a principle, is a slave by nature. Whereas the lower animals cannot even apprehend such a principle; they obey their instincts. And indeed the use made of slaves and of tame animals is not very different; for both with their bodies minister to the needs of life…. It is clear, then, that some men are by nature free and others slaves, and that for these latter slavery is both expedient and right.
>
> (Aristotle, *Politics,* book 1, chaps 4–5)

'The needs of life' to which slaves and other 'body people' minister are of course not the needs of their *own* lives but those of the master, from whose perspective this statement issues. As the passage shows, reason/

nature dualism provides a basis for a series of further overdetermined hierarchies which it confirms and supports. Thus, as in Aristotle's passage, the gulf between the rational and the non-rational, and the inferiority of the latter, can be used to support the supposed inferiority not just of women, but also of slaves, people of other races and cultures ('barbarians') and those who perform manual as opposed to intellectual tasks. All of these can be treated as less rational and as closer to the sphere of nature, and especially as closer to animality. Virtually the whole set of dualisms can be mobilised for this purpose of inferiorising the sphere of nature and those human-beings who may be counted as part of nature, providing a powerful and all-pervasive model of rational meritocracy which is confirmed and mirrored at every turn.

THE LOGICAL STRUCTURE OF DUALISM

There are a number of important characteristics of the relationship between members of contrasting pairs which make it appropriate to call it a dualism rather than just a distinction or a dichotomy. It is not just the fact that there is a dichotomy, that distinctions are made between two kinds of things, which is the key element in establishing a dualistic relation—indeed it is hard to imagine how anyone could get along without making at least some of the distinctions in the list of dualisms; it is rather the way the distinctions have been treated, the further assumptions made about them and the relationship imposed upon the relata which make the relationships in question dualistic ones. Thus by no means every dichotomy results in a dualism.[1]

A dualism is more than a relation of dichotomy, difference, or non-identity, and more than a simple hierarchical relationship. In dualistic construction, as in hierarchy, the qualities (actual or supposed), the culture, the values and the areas of life associated with the dualised other are systematically and pervasively constructed and depicted as inferior. Hierarchies, however, can be seen as open to change, as contingent and shifting. But once the process of domination forms culture and constructs identity, the inferiorised group (unless it can marshall cultural resources for resistance) must internalise this inferiorisation in its identity and collude in this low valuation, honouring the values of the centre, which form the dominant social values. As Albert Memmi puts it, 'colonisation creates the colonised just as it…creates the coloniser' (Memmi 1965:91). A dualism is an intense, established and developed cultural expression of such a hierarchical relationship, constructing central cultural concepts and identities so as to make equality and mutuality literally unthinkable. Dualism is a relation of separation and domination inscribed and naturalised in culture and characterised by

radical exclusion, distancing and opposition between orders constructed as systematically higher and lower, as inferior and superior, as ruler and ruled, which treats the division as part of the natures of beings construed not merely as different but as belonging to radically different orders or kinds, and hence as not open to change. Members of the following family of features are characteristic of dualism.

1 Backgrounding (denial)

Backgrounding is a complex feature which results from the irresoluble conflicts the relationship of domination creates for the master, for he attempts both to make use of the other, organising, relying on and benefiting from the other's services, and to deny the dependency which this creates. Denial can take many forms. Common ways to deny dependency are through making the other inessential, denying the importance of the other's contribution or even his or her reality, and through mechanisms of focus and attention. One way to do this is to insist on a strong hierarchy of activities, so that the denied areas are simply not 'worth' noticing. A related way to solve this problem is through treatir g the other as the background to the master's foreground. Marilyn Frye explains clearly the essential features and tensions of this backgrounding dynamic:[2]

> Women's existence is both absolutely necessary to and irresolubly problematic for the dominant reality and those committed to it, for our existence is *presupposed* by phallocratic reality, but it is not and cannot be *encompassed* by or countenanced by that reality. Women's existence is a background against which phallocratic reality is a foreground.... I imagine phallocratic reality to be the space and figures and motion which constitute the foreground, and the constant repetitive uneventful activities of women to constitute and maintain the background against which this foreground plays. It is essential to the maintenance of the foreground reality that nothing within it refer in any way to anything in the background, and yet it depends absolutely upon the existence of the background.
>
> (Frye 1983:167)

The view of the other as inessential is the master's perspective. The master's view is set up as universal, and it is part of the mechanism of backgrounding that it never occurs to him that there might be other perspectives from which *he* is background. Yet this inessentialness which he believes the slave to have in relation to his own essentialness is an illusion. First, the master more than the slave requires the other in order

to define his boundaries and identity, since these are defined *against* the inferiorised other (see point 4 below); it is the slave who makes the master a master, the colonised who make the coloniser, the periphery which makes the centre. Second, the master also requires the other materially, in order to survive, for the relation of complementation has made the master dependent on the slave for fulfilment of his needs. But this dependency is also hated and feared by the master, for it subtly challenges his dominance, and is denied in a variety of indirect and direct ways, with all the consequences of repression. The real role and contribution of the other is obscured in culture, and the economic relation is denied, mystified, or presented in paternalistic terms (Memmi 1965:21; Waring 1988).

2 Radical exclusion (hyperseparation)

Because the other is to be treated as not merely different but inferior, part of a lower, different order of being, differentiation from it demands not merely distinctness but radical exclusion, not merely separation but hyperseparation. Radical exclusion is a key indicator of dualism.

The relation of radical exclusion has special characteristics. For distinctness, for non-identity or otherness, there need be only a single characteristic which is different, possessed by the one but not the other, in order to guarantee distinctness according to the usual treatment of identity (e.g. in Leibniz's Law). Where items are constructed or construed according to dualistic relationship, however, the master tries to magnify, to emphasise and to maximise the number and importance of differences and to eliminate or treat as inessential shared qualities, and hence to achieve maximum separation. 'I am nothing at all like this inferior other' is the motto associated with radical exclusion. Denial or minimisation of continuity is important in eliminating identification and sympathy between members of the dominating class and the dominated, and in eliminating possible confusion between powerful and powerless. It also helps to establish separate 'natures' which explain and justify widely differing privileges and fates. A major aim of dualistic construction is polarisation, to maximise distance or separation between the dualised spheres and to prevent their being seen as continuous or contiguous. Separation may be established by denying or minimising overlap qualities and activities, and by the erection of rigid barriers to prevent contact.

As Jay (1981) notes, certain ethnologists have seen this radical exclusion relation as important in the distinction between things sacred and things profane in religious thought. They have also noted (although usually not with disapproval) one of its functions: to mark out, protect

and isolate a privileged group. Thus Emile Durkheim writes: 'Sacred things are those which the interdictions *protect and isolate*; profane things those to which these interdictions are applied and which must remain *at a distance* from the first' (Durkheim 1915:40–1; emphasis added). Profane things are thought of as threatening to sacred things, and to the power they represent. Such a dualism of sacred and profane often occurs in the context of a powerful priesthood or religious ruler, or uses religious symbolism to protect the power of one group and intimidate and repress another.

Thus dualistic construal of difference usually treats it as providing not merely a difference of degree within a sphere of overall similarity, but a major difference in kind, even a bifurcation or division in reality between utterly different orders of things. Dualism denies continuity, treating its pairs as comprising 'two worlds between which there is nothing in common', worlds between which there is a 'vacuum' (Durkheim 1915:39). Dualistic distinction aims to maximise the number, scope, or significance of distinguishing characteristics. It does not do this in a random way, but usually by classifying characteristics as belonging exclusively, as far as possible, to one side or the other, thus setting up sets of complementary qualities formed through exclusion and denial of overlap. Thus the master claims for himself reason, contemplation and higher pursuits, and disdains the slave's merely manual occupations, while the slave is forced to exclude from his or her makeup the characteristics of the master, to eschew intellect and become submissive and lacking in initiative. These very qualities then confirm the slave's different nature and fate, for she or he is 'a slave by nature'.

Features such as cleanliness may also reflect such polarising construction; Booker T.Washington in *Up from Slavery* (1967) relates how the exaggerated and genteel cleanliness of the slave-owners' establishments served to mark them off from the 'animal-like' slaves, whose enforced filthiness (they were provided with no means to wash) served the joint function of marking and justifying their condition, and of linking them to animals. Thus the slave's being is part of a lower order in which other linked inferiors also have their being—the slave is body, the slave is animal, the male slave is feminised.

The polarising treatment of gender characteristics in western culture provides a good model of such dualistic construal, and of how common or bridging characteristics are ignored, discouraged, or actually eliminated by such conceptual construction. The division of gender characteristics as rigid complements eliminating overlap, noted by feminists (Jaggar 1983:316), illustrates such polarisation. Thus men are defined as active, intellectual, egoistic, competitive and dominant, while women are defined as possessing the complementary qualities, as passive, intuitive, altruistic, nurturant and submissive. Each has

characteristics which exclude but logically require a corresponding and complementary set in the other. Because of the polarisation and elimination of overlap, dualistic pairs present a false dichotomy, and in a different context it becomes possible to reconceive the items distinguished in less oppositional terms.

Albert Memmi in *The Coloniser and the Colonised* shows how similar distancing is used in colonisation to create the image of separate, discontinuous natures and orders of being. Radical exclusion requires unbridgeable separation, a separation not open to change, in extreme cases rendering conjunction, continuity, or proximity even unimaginable.

> The colonialist stresses those things which keep him separate, rather than emphasising that which might contribute to the foundation of a joint community. In those differences, the colonised is always degraded and the colonialist finds justification for rejecting his subjects. But perhaps the most important thing is that once the behavioural feature, or historical or geographical factor, which characterises the colonialist and contrasts him with the coloniser, has been isolated, this gap must be kept from being filled. The colonialist removes the factor from history, time and therefore possible evolution. What is actually a sociological point comes to be labelled as being biological or, preferably, metaphysical. It is attached to the colonised's basic nature. Immediately the colonial relationship between the colonised and coloniser, founded on the essential outlook of the two protagonists, becomes a definitive category. It is what it is because they are what they are, and neither one nor the other will ever change.
>
> (Memmi 1965:71–2)

Such construction naturalises domination, making it appear to be part of the nature of each and in the nature of things, and yields two hyperseparated orders of being. 'Thus,' concludes Memmi (1965:75), 'due to a double reconstruction of the colonised and himself, he is able both to justify and reassure himself.' So the master defines himself by exclusion, against the other. For the master, formation of identity by this means leads to a need to maintain hierarchies to define identity. There must always be a class below, whose inferiorisation confers selfhood. The more doubtful or insecure the establishment of such an identity is, the more strongly and vociferously the other's inferiority must be stressed. Such an identity requires constant reassurance of superiority and hence constant reassertion of hierarchy. This is a major factor in establishing certain types of masculinity (Connell 1988; Segal 1990:181–9). Thus what is stressed as the defining inferior sphere in white

working-class machismo is usually not only the feminine, but also other lower orders such as people of colour and the unemployed.

3 Incorporation (relational definition)

A further important feature of dualistically construed opposites is that the underside of a dualistically conceived pair is defined in relation to the upperside as a lack, a negativity. Simone de Beauvoir writes that 'humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being…she is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute—she is the Other' (de Beauvoir 1965:8).[3]

Although each is dependent on the other for identity and organisation of material life, this relation is not one of *equal,* or mutual, or equally relational, definition. The master's power is reflected in the fact that his qualities are taken as primary, and as defining social value, while those of the slave are defined or constrained in relation to them, often as negations or lacks of the virtues of the centre (Hartsock 1990:161). As Memmi writes: 'The mechanism of this remoulding of the colonised…consists, in the first place, in a series of negations. The colonised is not this, is not that…. He is never considered in a positive light; or if he is, the quality which is conceded is the result of a psychological or ethical failing' (Memmi 1965:83–4).

The definition of the other in relation to the self as a lack or absence is a special case of incorporation, defining the other only in relation to the self, or the self's needs and desires. Because the other is defined and perceived in relation to the master, he or she is not encountered fully as an independent other, and the qualities attributed or perceived are those which reflect the master's desires, needs and lacks. As Irigaray notes, woman is construed not as occupying a space on her own account, but as enclosing a space for another (1984:3). Similarly the role of the 'noble savage' is to be a foil: he or she is seen as possessing all the good qualities thought to be missing in 'civilisation', when this is regarded negatively, and as lacking all the social virtues, when it is regarded positively. Since qualities or activities which do not fit into the scheme are ignored or denied, an other so perceived cannot provide resistance or boundary for the self. The other is recognised only to the extent that it is assimilated to the self, or incorporated into the self and its systems of desires and needs: only as colonised by the self. The master consciousness cannot tolerate unassimilated otherness.

Radical exclusion and incorporation have two important corollaries, instrumentalism and homogenisation.

4 Instrumentalism (objectification)

Although the relationship is usually (as in Aristotle's case) presented as being in the interests of the dominated as well as the dominator, it is apparent that those on the lower side of the dualisms are obliged to put aside their own interests for those of the master or centre, that they are conceived of as his instruments, a means to his ends. They are made part of a network of purposes which are defined in terms of or harnessed to the master's purposes and needs. The lower side is also objectified, without ends of its own which demand consideration on their own account. Its ends are defined in terms of the master's ends. The dualising master self does not empathically recognise others as moral kin, and does not recognise them as a centre of desires or needs on their own account. Hence on both counts he is free to impose his own ends.

Since the relationship is seen as that of a superior to a separate inferior order, it is also seen as fitting and natural that the lower side serves the upper as a means to his ends. The upperside is an end in itself, but the underside has no such intrinsic value, is not for-itself but merely useful, a resource. The identity of the underside is constructed instrumentally, and the canons of virtue for a good wife, a good colonised, or a good worker are written in terms of usefulness to the centre. In the typical case this involves setting up a moral dualism, where the underside is not part of the sphere to be considered morally, but is either judged by a separate instrumental standard (as in the sexual double standard) or seen as outside morality altogether.

5 Homogenisation or stereotyping

More than polarisation is needed if a relationship is to be an appropriate one for domination. The dominated class must appear suitably homogeneous if it is to be able to conform to and confirm its 'nature'. In homogenisation, differences among the inferiorised group are disregarded (Hartsock 1990:160–1). I well remember homogenisation as an Australian teenager of English-speaking background in the post-war years. It was part of the contempt with which non-English 'foreign' immigrants were treated. Their differences denied, they were all dismissed as 'aliens', 'wogs', or 'reffos' (refugees); the multiplicity and dignity of their cultures and languages ignored, they were seen as 'just jabbering away', much like animals. Why couldn't they speak English, a proper language, like us? And white Australians, like colonists everywhere, continue to ignore the multiplicity and diversity of indigenous culture and social organisation. This disregard for or denial of the diversity of Aboriginal nations inspired the forced congregation of

Aboriginal people from different tribes, which has been a major mechanism of oppression, loss of identity and disruption of Aboriginal culture.

Homogenisation supports both instrumentalism, incorporation (relational definition) and radical exclusion. It produces binarism, a division of the world into two orders. As Hartsock (1990) points out, homogenisation is a feature of the master's perspective. To the master, residing at what he takes to be the centre, differences among those of lesser status at the periphery are of little interest or importance, and might undermine comfortable stereotypes of superiority. To the master, all the rest are just that: 'the rest', the Others, the background to his achievements and the resources for his needs. Diversity and multiplicity which are surplus to his desires need not be acknowledged. The other is not seen as a unique individual bound to the self by specific ties. It is related to as a universal rather than a particular, as a member of a class of interchangeable items which can be used as resources to satisfy the master's needs. Elimination of reliance on any particular individual of the relevant kind also facilitates denial of dependency and backgrounding. Instrumentalisation and commodification normally produce relations of this kind.

Homogenisation in gender stereotyping is well known, involving the appeal to homogeneous and eternal male and female 'natures'. The sage (for example, Lucretius) and the popular maxim both appeal to the 'eternal feminine' and assert that 'women are all alike'. The place of homogenisation in the pattern of domination as a supplement to discontinuity is insightfully discussed by Marilyn Frye; to the extent that the demand for the dualism of just two sharply differentiated sexes is a social creation unsupported by any natural order (since sharp sexual dimorphism does not exist in newborn humans or elsewhere in nature) it requires constant vigilance and regimentation, the coercion of individuals in more or less subtle ways, in order to maintain it. Again, such polarisation functions to naturalise domination:

> To make [domination] seem natural, it will help if it seems to all concerned that members of the two groups are *very* different from each other, and this appearance is enhanced if it can be made to appear that within each group, the members are very like one another. In other words, the appearance of the naturalness of the dominance of men and the subordination of women is supported by anything which supports the appearance that men are very like other men and very unlike women, and that women are very like other women and very unlike men.
>
> (Frye 1983:34)

Homogenisation as a feature of the colonial relationship is remarked

upon by Memmi: the colonised are all alike, and are not considered in personal terms or as individuals. 'The colonised is never characterised in an individual manner; he is entitled only to drown in an anonymous collectivity' (Memmi 1965:25). Homogenisation supports both instrumentalisation and radical exclusion of the colonised. The colonised is reduced to a function, and the relationship of domination destroys the ability to perceive or appreciate characteristics of the other over and above those which serve this function.

Dualism then imposes a conceptual framework which polarises and splits apart into two orders of being what can be conceptualised and treated in more integrated and unified ways. But dualism should not be seen as *creating* difference where none exists. Rather it tends to capitalise on existing patterns of difference, rendering these in ways which ground hierarchy. The point is important for several later conclusions. The features of dualism also provide bases for various kinds of centredness, the rendering of the world in terms of the views and interests of the upperside, the centre (Hartsock 1990). It provides the cultural grounding for class-centred hegemony as discussed by Gramsci and others,[4] for male-centredness, Eurocentredness and ethnocentredness, and for human-centredness.

THE LOGIC OF DUALISM

This way of being constructed as other, which is shared by a number of marginalised groups, clearly has a logical pattern and corresponds to certain representations of otherness in logical theory. I shall argue that it corresponds closely to features of classical logic, but not to the principles of logic *per se*.[5] Clarifying the logic of dualism helps to clarify too why a dualism is not the same as a dichotomy, and why we do not have to, and should not, abandon either dichotomy or difference in order to avoid dualism.

Logic has had a worse reputation than most other disciplines among feminists; it is seen as a sphere of unlimited abstraction and contest for mastery of the other (Walkerdine 1988:199). But such indiscriminate condemnations, as in the case of science, discount the diversity of practices and theories. They also hide rather than expose the politics of reason by obscuring the extent to which the selection of particular practices and types of theories has operated to support hierarchical and phallocentric world-views. Logic appears as a monolith not only in feminist but also in popular thought; there is just one Logic, one way to order the world, and that one is classical logic, now inculcated early in terms of Venn diagrams and set theory. Since this suits the prevailing power relations (in logic, as well as in the world generally), this view is

rarely corrected. But, as in other areas of knowledge, there are competing and contested accounts of reason, and correspondingly of logical systems. Selection from among them is made in accordance with the principles of theory selection used in other areas, and is influenced by the same sort of social relations.

Choices for the most part reflect the perspectives of those at the centre, and theories which sit comfortably with this perspective are more likely to be successful than those which do not. Despite its notorious problems as an account of reasoning practice (irrelevance and the paradoxes of implication), classical logic is firmly entrenched as 'the Logic' and still manages to get away with representing as 'deviant' more implicationally adequate rivals such as relevant logic.[6] Thus Quine and others have vigorously defended classical logic as the logic of 'our ordinary' negation. There is, in Quine's view, no alternative to it, for any alternative would, in his revealing phrase, 'change the subject' (Quine 1970:81). One reason for this logic's entrenched character, I shall argue, may be that 'the subject' is the master. At the level of prepositional logic, classical logic is the closest approximation to the dualistic structure I have outlined.[7] The 'naturalness' of classical logic is the 'naturalness' of domination, of concepts of otherness framed in terms of the perspective of the master.

As work in relevant and paraconsistent logic has shown (Routley *et al.* 1983), negation is the key axis of comparison among implicational systems. If negation is interpreted as otherness,[8] then the way that negation is treated provides, together with other features, an account of how otherness is conceived in a given system. Classical logic supplies an account of otherness which has key features of dualistic otherness. The negation of classical logic is a specific concept of negation which forces us to consider otherness in terms of a single universe consisting of everything. In classical logic, negation ($\sim$p). is interpreted as the universe without p, everything in the universe other than what p covers, as represented in the usual Venn diagram representing p as a figure surrounded by a square which represents the universe, with $\sim$p as the remainder (Figure 1). Such an account leads directly to the relevance paradoxes. But what is important for the issue we are considering here is that $\sim$p *can then not be independently or positively identified, but is entirely dependent on p for its specification.* Not-p has no independent role, but is introduced as merely alien to the primary notion p (Plumwood and Routley 1985:217).

This corresponds to the relational definition feature of dualism, to a logic of presence and absence in which the other is specified as the absence of the condition specified by p, rather than as an independent other. Such an account of $\sim$p specifies $\sim$p in relation to p conceived as the controlling centre, and so is p-centred. The very features of simplicity which have helped to select classical logic over its rivals are implicated
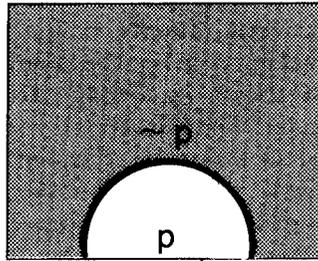
Figure 1

here. In the phallic drama of this p-centred account, there is really only one actor, p, and ~p is merely its receptacle. In the representation of the Venn diagram, p penetrates a passive, undifferentiated, universal other which is specified as a lack, which offers no resistance, and whose behaviour it controls completely. There is no room here for the complexities of the dance of interaction between the one and an independent other. These features also lead to the homogenisation of the other, since the other of p, as receptacle, is indistinguishable from the rest of the universe (Plumwood and Routley 1985). Homogenisation involves binarism, interpreting the other as 'the rest'. These homogenising properties of classical negation are associated with the failure of classical logic to make any finer discriminations in prepositional identity than truth-functionality. These are precisely the features which help to make classical logic problematic as a theory of reasoning practice.

The negation of classical logic (which is responsible for its paradoxical character) has features of radical exclusion of the alien other which lies behind distancing and discontinuity, as well as other features which are characteristic of dualism. The radical exclusion aspects of classical otherness are evident in the classical treatment of contradictions as implying everything, for the effect of p & ~p ? q is to keep p and its other or negation at a maximum distance, so that they can never be brought together (even in thought), on pain of the maximum penalty a logical system can provide, system collapse. It is the penalty of merger, of the loss of all boundaries, which threatens when p and its receptacle, ~p, come together in the forbidden encounter of contradiction. Semantically, p and ~p are treated classically as maximally distant in situational space. The extreme penalty classical logic provides for conjoining p and its other not-p, establishes a maximally strong relation of exclusion between p and this other, in comparison to other logical systems which define much weaker exclusion relationships.

A further feature of classical logic which corresponds to the logic of

dualism is its role as a truth-suppression implication, which permits the suppression of true premises. (Simply, in the Aristotelian notion of suppression, a suppressed premise is an assumption used in arriving at the conclusion but not shown as among the premises.)[9] The suppression of premises on condition of their truth gives formal expression to the dualistic condition of *backgrounding,* in which the contribution of the other to the outcome is relied upon but denied or ignored.[10] If the major task of logic is about showing (showing everything that has been relied on), a logic allowing truth-suppression is about hiding. Truthsuppression is closely related to another feature of classical logic, truthinterchangeability, in which any truth can be substituted for any other truth while preserving implicational properties. It is also closely related to the feature that material equivalence as a criterion of prepositional identity yields just one true and one false proposition. This interchangeability of truths can be alternatively viewed as indicating that material implication expresses instrumental or means-ends reasoning, in which conditions as means are interchangeable provided they equally produce equivalent effects or ends. The logic of dualism thus connects with the logic of instrumental reason, which is also expressive of the master identity, and is the dominant logic of the market and the public sphere.

None of these features of dualistic otherness or classical negation is an inevitable feature of logic, negation, otherness, or reasoning. Fully worked-out logical systems which do not have these features are available and in use, and these can point in directions which might be promising for alternative conceptions of otherness and rationality. For example, some of the resulting systems, those of relevant logic, can also claim to be a more adequate expression of actual reasoning practice than classical logic (Routley *et al.* 1983). At the same time, the negation of relevant logic, relevant negation, can be interpreted as expressing a notion of otherness as *non-hierarchical difference.* The resulting concept of relevant otherness avoids radical exclusion, for the conjunction of A and ~A does not induce system collapse, and ~A is not homogenised. Relevant negation considers exclusion not with respect to the universe, but with respect to a much more restricted state, so that the negation of A is not just to be specified in relation to A. The resulting concept of otherness can be modelled by a number of natural widely used otherness relations, such as 'the other side', which have no hierarchical features (Plumwood and Routley 1985:216–20). It is neither a cancellation of nor a lack or absence of a specified condition, but another and further condition—a *difference*—yielding the concept of an other which is not just specified negatively but is independently characterised and with an independent role on its own behalf.

If we mean by 'dichotomy' what is commonly meant, simply making

a division or drawing a distinction, it is essential to distinguish between dualism and dichotomy. Equating them would either cripple all thought (if we were forced to abandon dichotomy along with dualism) or collapse the concept of dualism (if we were forced to retain dualism along with dichotomy). In either case escape from dualism becomes impossible. Both in terms of predicate logic and in terms of propositional logic, a dualism must be seen as a quite particular kind of distinction or dichotomy, one involving the features I have discussed which result from domination. As we have seen, in terms of predicate logic dualism and radical exclusion involve a maximisation of non-shared characteristics, whereas to establish ordinary difference or non-identity we require only that a single characteristic be different. In terms of prepositional logic dualism is associated with a quite particular concept of negation or otherness, and the way to escape dualism is to replace it with a non-hierarchical concept of difference. The transition, however, is not straightforward, and residues of dualism are often remarkably persistent.

ROUTES OF ESCAPING DUALISM

There is a strong temptation, once the role of dualism in creating exaggerated separation is perceived, to conclude that the resolution of a dualism requires merger, the elimination of the problematic boundary between the one and the other, the coloniser and the colonised. Thus the colonised may adhere to the culture of the coloniser (Freire 1972:22), lacking the confidence to affirm a distinct identity. Similarly, the feminism of uncritical equality sees the answer to hyperseparation as the fitting of women to a masculine model. As Paulo Freire writes of the oppressed at this stage: 'Their ideal is to be men; but for them, to be a man is to be an oppressor. This is their model of humanity…at this level, one pole aspires not to liberation, but to identification with its opposite pole' (1972:22). The master also denies difference, but, as we shall see in the Conclusion, for more proprietorial reasons. The denial of difference leads theory to the attempted elimination of the distinction between mind and body (via reductive physicalism, for example), between masculine and feminine (via androgyny), between sex and gender,[11] between human and nature, and between self and other (nature), and similarly for other pairs in the list of dualisms. But in general such a merger strategy is neither necessary nor desirable, because while dualism makes difference the vehicle for hierarchy, it usually does so by distorting difference. The attempt to eliminate distinction along with dualism is misconceived on both political and philosophical counts.

But this discussion of the structural features of dualism, expressed especially in classical otherness, clarifies some of the steps which need to be taken in overcoming dualised identity. Dismantling a dualism based on difference requires the reconstruction of relationship and identity in terms of a non-hierarchical concept of difference. An appropriate relationship of non-hierarchical difference will have the following specific features:

1 *Backgrounding* (denial): a non-hierarchical concept of difference requires a move to systems of thought, accounting, perception, decision-making, which recognise the contribution of what has been backgrounded, and which acknowledge dependency.
2 *Radical exclusion:* a non-hierarchical concept of difference will affirm continuity, reconceive relata in more integrated ways, and break the false choice hyperseparation presents in reclaiming the denied area of overlap.
3 *Incorporation (relational definition):* a non-hierarchical concept of difference must review the identities of both underside and upperside. It can aim to rediscover a language and story for the underside, reclaim positive independent sources of identity and affirm resistance.
4 *Instrumentalism:* a non-hierarchical concept of difference implies recognising the other as a centre of needs, value and striving on its own account, a being whose ends and needs are independent of the self and to be respected.
5 *Homogenisation:* a non-hierarchical concept of difference involves recognising the complexity and diversity of the 'other nations' which have been homogenised and marginalised in their constitution as excluded other, as 'the rest'.

These remedies correspond to the central conceptual and cultural concerns of various liberation movements. Thus to set out clearly what is involved in dualism is to have seen the signposts which point the ways towards escaping it. But the escape routes are mazes containing mirrors, sidetracks, looped trails and knots. Some of these we have already met in chapter 1 in the feminism of uncritical equality and the feminism of reversal, but there are other traps to turn aside the unwary pilgrim. These feminisms reflect two common problems in the formation of post-colonised identity, the denial of difference and the reversal syndrome. As we shall see later, the same sorts of trap exist for those attempting to escape other dualisms and for human/nature dualism. A closer examination of these traps, and the ways out of them in the case of gender dualism, will provide both a test and an explanation of some aspects of the theory of dualism I have outlined.

TRAPS FOR POST-COLONISED IDENTITY

The logic of colonisation creates complementary and, in advanced cases, complicit subordinated identities in and through colonisation. The reclamation and affirmation of subordinated identity is one of the key problems for the colonised, especially in race, class and ethnic colonisation. The affirmation of women and of the feminine falls within this problematic. A common postmodernist objection (deriving from Derrida) suggests that affirmation involves reversal and must remain within the problematic of binary opposition. Dualism has often been treated as an inevitable part of the human condition, especially within the existentialist tradition (Heidegger 1977; de Beauvoir 1965), which presents its structures as a cursed but inescapable part of subjecthood. One source of the illusion of inevitability is the failure to distinguish the dichotomising from the dualising subject. Hence existentialism has not been concerned with routes around the problematic colonised identity; its subject sits beside the path, cast in bronze like Rodin's *Thinker, a* warning to travellers of the perils of philosophy and excessive consciousness.

I shall contest the claim of inevitability, both in its existentialist form and the postmodernist form which denies the possibility of positive identity. For the colonised who would establish a positive post-colonised identity, there are ways forward, but they require care as well as daring. But first, we must untie the knots created by the logic of colonisation. The Cavern of Reversal, the Desert of Difference and the Swamp of Affirmation must still be negotiated.

THE CAVERN OF REVERSAL

We have seen that reversal results from the attempt to treat dualism as a simple hierarchy, and to reverse value without attending to the identity-forming functions of colonisation.[12] Because the new identity is specified in reaction to the coloniser and still in relation to him, and has accepted wholly or partly the dualistic construction of identity, the idea that the colonised has broken free of dualised identity is an illusion. The colonised is not free to proceed independently, but affirms uncritically whatever the coloniser has made of him or her, or embraces whatever the coloniser despised and excluded. Similarly, the 'worker' who accepts but revalues the identity assigned in the master's terms of production has made only an incomplete escape, and remains tied to the master's productivist framework. These forms of affirmation ignore the way in which the colonised's characteristics are not determined independently but are defined in relation to the master. Reversal reproduces the

problem in a new form, an inadequate or incomplete movement beyond dualistic conception.

In the case of gender colonisation,[13] we have already met the uncritical reversal syndrome in chapter 1, in the problem of affirming an identity for women as part of nature without reconceiving its dualistic construction. In gender reversal, a new feminine identity comes to be specified *in reaction to* the old. In the most extreme and conservative case this strategy accepts the old identity and reverses its value, excluding from the new 'authentic feminine' qualities such as rationality, thus conceding the male claim to these qualities, and covertly affirming the qualities of subordination. The form of revaluation typical of the feminism of uncritical reversal saw the solution to women's oppression as a matter of rediscovering women's essence[14] (Alcoff 1988:410), treating gender difference not as constructed within a power relation but as a given, and as problematic only to the extent that it is inferiorised, not adequately recognised, or not authentic.[15] The cultural feminist solution to devaluation is the provision of 'a healthy environment for the female principle' (Alcoff 1988:408), the fostering of a woman's culture based on female experience.[16] This still falls within the dualistic problematic in being too limiting and uncritical of polarisation and exclusion, in accepting homogenisation through the failure to envisage women's identities as plural, and through serving to obscure major differences in women's situation and politics (Spelman 1988; hooks 1989; Jaggar 1991).[17]

DISSOLVING VERSUS RECLAIMING IDENTITY

If a simple affirmation faces difficulties, the attempt to bypass affirmation via dissolution and repudiation of gender identity is also problematic. The choice between simple revaluation and evasion corresponds to the familiar feminist options of cultural feminism and poststructuralism. As Alcoff notes, the poststructuralist strategy of discarding the identity 'woman', or treating it as no more than a permanent site and possibility of disrupted and contested meanings, offers as an alternative a political struggle and a 'feminist practice [which] can only be negative' (Alcoff 1988:418). To the extent that it evades or rejects all identities, it is unable to provide a basis for validating some forms of women's identity over others. Hence it cannot provide a basis for a politics based on feminist identities, or even for the claim that women are oppressed (Alcoff 1988:420). The ensuing renunciation of political identity corresponds to the dilemma of the Coloniser Who Refuses (Memmi 1965; Hartsock 1990); he rejects the original identity as coloniser but can establish no positive identity which

can serve as a basis for political action in solidarity with others and for effective resistance. The ex-coloniser lingers by the Abyss of Relativism, unable to proceed further.

Yet in our own time, the identity or 'difference' of woman this strategy would dismantle has presented one of the most important critical vantage points on western systems of domination and one of the most powerful sources of alternative vision and cultural challenge. Can we really afford to lose it?

The attractions of dissolution of identity are said to include 'proliferating gender configurations, destabilising substantive identity, and depriving the naturalising narratives of compulsory heterosexuality of their central protagonists: "man" and "woman"' (Butler 1990:146). But the problem of dualism, as I have argued, is not binarism, the number two, or the setting of limits to the self by the boundary of otherness. The fracturing of binarism (Butler 1990) is not sufficient for escaping the deep structures of colonisation. The dissolution of gender identity through destabilisation and the definitive act of parody recommended by poststructuralists (Butler 1990:142) amounts to the formation of anti-identities which become further identities. But these identities are not independent. They are still defined essentially in relation to the objects of parody which originate in the problematic of colonisation. Such an approach not only continues to tie the subject to the master, but still has to face the problem of allowing for a multiplicity of responses to traditional gender identity. The parodic strategy can hardly be universally prescribed as the only possible stance feminists might adopt towards the gender ideals of woman.[18]

Nor can the social identity of woman be seen, any more than social life generally, as merely a source of restriction and limitation, calling forth only disruption, parody and destabilisation as appropriate responses (Grimshaw 1986:141). Social identities are also sources of empowerment and connection, of stability and continuity, which make it possible to draw on and contribute to wide social sources of meaning and practice. They are, to be sure, never unproblematic given the power relations which shape social identities generally and traditional gender identities in particular. But they are capable of liberatory or subversive reconstruction without total demolition and abandonment. Despite the difficulties of the type of affirmation involved in reversal, there is ultimately no viable alternative to a creative and affirmative reconstruction of post-colonised identity. Affirmation is essential to counter the logic of the master subject, who inferiorises women both individually and culturally, backgrounds and devalues their works, and defines them as peripheries to the master's centre. There must be some sort of compensating recognition to correct this devaluation, but it must be a critical and qualified one. The structure of colonised identity has

been a prison; it requires extensive and ongoing renovation before yielding a comfortable structure for free habitation.

BEYOND COLONISED IDENTITY: CRITICAL AFFIRMATION

The current wave of diffidence about endorsing the identity 'woman', or any feminine-associated characteristics and gender ideals, is in part a reaction against the cultural feminist proclivity towards a too sweeping affirmation of the feminine, and its focus on affirming a singular 'authentic' woman identity as a basis for political action. But these alternatives represent a false choice: abandonment of the identity woman is not the only alternative to uncritical reversal. A better route to subversion than that of poststructuralism would treat woman's identity as an important if problematic tradition which requires critical reconstruction, a potential source of strength as well as a problem, and a ground of both continuity and difference with traditional ideals. Such a critical reconstruction can correct the distortions of western culture through the affirmation and empowerment of the areas of culture and life associated with the feminine and with nature, and hence continue the concerns of earlier feminism and ecological feminism in a modified form.

According to Alice Echols, 'the question of whether feminism entails the transcendence of gender or the affirmation of femaleness has become the new feminist fault-line' (Echols 1989:287). This dichotomy, like the alternatives of demolishing the prison versus inhabiting it as it is, of repudiating versus revaluing feminine identity, represents a false choice: an adequate reworking of gender identity must involve both elements of transcendence and elements of affirmation. A healthy feminist identity, like a healthy personal identity, needs to maintain a good balance between self-criticism and self-affirmation. In the same way, critical reconstruction requires the balancing of conflicting imperatives towards redefinition and revaluing. Critical reconstruction must take account of the way gender identity is imbued with power, and must confront the feminist version of the paradox of power—if feminine character and feminine values are shaped in subordination, how can they become in turn socially valued or socially dominant and still retain their character? These kinds of problem are often taken to rule out *any* kind of affirmation of the feminine for feminists. Catharine MacKinnon states an objection designed to show that in affirming the feminine we can only be affirming women's powerlessness:

> When difference means dominance as it does with gender, for women to affirm differences is to affirm the qualities and characteristics of powerlessness. Women may have an approach to moral reasoning, but

it is an approach made both of what is and what is not allowed to be. To the extent materialism means anything at all, it means that what women have been and thought is what they have been permitted to be and think. Whatever this is, it is not women's, possessive.

(MacKinnon 1989:51)

The argument would rule out any affirmation of female-associated qualities and areas of culture. But there are several problems in the argument. We can agree that feminine identity, like colonised identity, is not an independent nature only accidentally and inessentially subordinated,[19] but has been shaped in and through colonisation (Memmi 1965; Freire 1972; hooks 1989). Nevertheless, powerlessness does not exhaust its content, and therefore difference does not coincide with dominance. As feminists women are not passive recipients of the identity woman, but are actively engaged in shaping it and in positioning themselves critically in relation to its traditional meanings, often without total abandonment (Alcoff 1988).[20] MacKinnon's account leaves out the *content* of gender, those actual characteristics, activities and life-areas which have been devalued and assigned to the background along with the women they have been taken to characterise, and the value they might have in another context. Traditional femininity was devalued and backgrounded but was also the expression of a range of tasks, values and interests, concerns, areas of life and social orientations of real value and importance; they cannot just be dismissed, because of this denial, as powerlessness. We can reject women's powerlessness without also rejecting the entire *content* of women's lives and roles and the areas of culture which have been assigned low status. The argument trades on failing to distinguish between the content and value feminists might now assign to those activities and life-concerns which are allocated to women and the low status or powerlessness which the master culture has assigned to them (usually by treating them as 'nature' rather than as 'culture'). The failure to make such a distinction perpetuates rather than escapes the master perspective by denying the life-concerns, values and knowledges traditionally associated with women and other subordinated groups. Thus it creates the illusion that empowering the feminine must involve a contradiction.

The concern about powerlessness nevertheless has a point. Although it is wrong to see *all* difference and all qualities characteristic of women as inseparably imbued with powerlessness, powerlessness *is* inherent in some kinds of femininity and is not detachable from *some* characteristics. It is important to distinguish those cases where powerlessness is necessary to, presupposed by, or inherent in, some quality or area allocated to the feminine, from those cases where it is not. Some apparently innocent characteristics conceal crucial

ambiguities of power; for example, 'nurturance' and 'empathy', qualities affirmed by some ecofeminists (Love and Shanklin 1984; Gearhart 1982). These can mean supporting others, being receptive to their needs and being concerned for and skilful in promoting their growth and welfare; or they can mean making powerful others feel good, bolstering masculinity and ego-massaging, the sensitivity of the slave to the needs and moods of the master.[21] 'Nurturance' in the first sense is not necessarily a product of powerlessness, whereas in the second it is. The first sort of nurturance could be empowered in a society of equality, whereas the second could not, and calling for its empowerment is indeed self-refuting. In the second type of case, correcting inferiorisation cannot take the form of upward revaluation, for the sorts of reasons MacKinnon's analysis indicates.

A feminist affirmation and reappropriation of the feminine must be actively critical and reconstructive for another reason too; the dualist dynamic does more than writing subordination into the definition of the underside; it also creates via radical exclusion polarised understandings of identity based on subordination/domination. Correcting this requires a movement beyond the old, polarised understandings, redefining the ground and renegotiating hyperseparated identity. What will now be valued positively will not be the original, polarised characteristics, but liberatory analogues obtained by transcending the false choices created by the polarised understandings of dualism. Thus a feminist perspective might affirm relational selfhood as the overcoming of the traditional false choices of egoism and self-abnegation (Miller 1986:47; Gilligan 1987). To the extent that gender dualism is interwoven with a systematic network of related dualisms, the false choices obtained through radical exclusion (such as reason/emotion, passive/active, public/private) run through the entire network. Resolution of gender dualism must correspondingly be interwoven with resolution of other dualisms. This is another reason why women cannot be liberated in isolation and why linking feminism to other forms of oppression has a powerful subversive potential.

CONTINUITY AND DIFFERENCE

As a structure of self and other, features 1–5 fall into two groups. Features 1 and 2 deny dependency, continuity and relationship of self to other, while features 3, 4 and 5 deny the other's independence of self. Escaping the logic of colonisation thus requires a dialectical movement to recognise both the relationship and continuity denied by backgrounding and radical exclusion, and also to affirm the difference and independence of the other denied by incorporation and the

definition of the other in relation to the self as lack and as instrument. The resolution of dualism requires, not just recognition of difference, but recognition of a complex, interacting pattern of both continuity *and* difference. Although forms of feminism stressing similarity to men and forms stressing difference are often seen as incompatible, the analysis of dualism suggests that recognition of continuity and recognition of difference are both needed, and are appropriate responses to different parts of the overall problem of escaping dualised gender identity. Thus to the extent that hyperseparation of male and female nature has occurred, and gender dualism has created exaggeratedly different male and female orders of being which conceive the natures and destinies of men and women as utterly different, as worlds apart, feminism would need to emphasise common political rights, stress common humanity and break down the barriers of exclusion which have confined women to a special inferiorised sphere. This is the stage or moment of 'desegregation', which has indeed been the major task of early feminism and of the first wave of the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s. On the other hand, to the extent that gender dualism has defined the feminine in relation to the central identity of the master as a lack, that is, in terms of classical otherness, women have needed to stress positive, independent conceptions and sources of feminine identity, and therefore to creatively reinterpret and affirm women's difference. However, critical reconstruction involves much more than the affirmation of women's difference. In the web of oppression, the combined identity in which colonised and coloniser identities are interwoven is the normal case. To the extent that women are not only the colonised in relation to gender, but are also themselves the colonisers (for example, in relation to other races and cultures, classes and species), critical reconstruction of identity normally involves not only affirming and rebuilding subordinated identities, but also reconstructing master identities. Thus western women must also learn to throw off the master identity embedded in the western construction of the human.

Thus this analysis points to the need to replace the concept of phallo(go)centrism as the basis of the affirmation of difference by the more complex concept of the master identity. Much of the stress on affirming women's difference has resulted from an effort to problematise the character of a culture whose central protagonist, the apparently neutral rational subject, is defined in opposition not only to women but to many other oppressed groups and even to nature itself. But focusing exclusively on women's difference as the basis of opposition tries to make women the symbolic and political bearers of the entire domain of exclusion of western culture (Bacchi 1990:250). Thus a conception of women's difference has been employed to articulate in a novel way a

very powerful social critique and alternative vision, but the attempt to present the alternative entirely in terms of gender in the fashion of much radical feminism (Miller 1986:88; Chodorow 1979) places on this critique a load which has been too heavy for it to bear alone. The contraction by this feminist critique of the identity of the master to an identity which is simply male tends to obscure the real political issues and the real measures which are needed to bring about change (hooks 1989:20). To shake the conceptual foundations of these systems of domination we must unmask more fully the identity of the master hidden behind the neutral guise of the human and of the ideals of rationality.

Chapter 3

Plato and the philosophy of death

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

(Plato)

While a Christian is honestly serving God, he is a stranger even in his own state. We have been enjoined as strangers and sojourners to sojourn here but not to dwell here.

(St Cyprian of Antioch)

THE WESTERN HUMAN/NATURE RELATIONSHIP AS A DUALISM

The denials of dualism have defined the meaning of the human/nature relationship in the western tradition. As many writers on environmental ethics have noted, nature in the west is *instrumentalised* as a mere means to human ends via the application of a moral dualism that treats humans as the only proper objects of moral consideration and defines 'the rest' as part of the sphere of expediency. The natural world and the biosphere have been treated as a dump, as forming the unconsidered, instrumentalised and unimportant *background* to 'civilised' human life; they are merely the setting or stage on which what is really important, the drama of human life and culture, is played out. In the dominant view, the biosphere forms the taken-for-granted material substratum of human existence, always present, always functioning, always forgiving; its needs do not have to be considered, just as the needs of other species generally do not have to be considered, except as they occasionally impinge upon or threaten the satisfaction of our own. Systematic devaluation and denial are perceptually ingrained in backgrounding, involving systematic not noticing, not seeing. The way in which we background nature is

evident in our treatment of it in a range of areas; for example, it is backgrounded in standard treatments of human history. It is also backgrounded in standard economics where, notoriously, no value is given to anything natural or to resources as they stand before they acquire use-value or before human labour is applied, where no account is taken of natural limits and ecological factors are treated as 'externalities'.[1]

The natural world is *homogenised* and *defined negatively and in relation* to humans as 'the environment'. 'If you've seen one redwood you've seen 'em all' expresses a common kind of insensitivity to the incredible diversity and richness of nature, treating beings in nature as all alike in their defectiveness, their *lack* of human qualities. 'The scrub' is an Australian expression expressing a degree of homogenising contempt (sometimes affectionate contempt) for uselessness, and is applied especially to rainforest, the most diverse ecosystem on earth. The term 'nature' itself partakes of all these problems, homogenising in the sweep of 'the rest' things as diverse as seals, waves and rocks, oysters and clouds, forests, viruses and eagles.

Nature in most of its senses and contrasts is subject to *radical exclusion,* and is conceptually constituted by it, as well as by the other features of dualism. As I show below, accounts of the mind/ body and reason/ nature relation associated with the Platonic, Aristotelian, Christian rationalist and Cartesian rationalist traditions exhibit radical exclusion as well as other dualistic features. Thus the body and the passions belong in Plato's account to a sharply distinct lower realm, homogenised and defined by exclusion, to be dominated and controlled by superior reason, and to be used in its service. In Descartes' account the gulf between mind and body becomes even greater as bridging characteristics involving both body and mind, such as sensation and perception, are allocated to one or the other side as part of a polarisation process. In dualistic construals of the mind/body division, mind and body are assumed to belong to quite different orders, being seen as so different as to give rise to the classic problem of how they can interact. The sphere of mind, of rationality and intellect, is similarly assumed to be quite different from the sphere of physicality. Thus it is widely assumed to be the possession of mental attributes which makes humans completely different from other animals.

The polarising effect of radical exclusion facilitates the conclusion that there are two quite different sorts of substances or orders of being in the world; for example, mind and body, humans and nature. There is a total break or discontinuity between humans and nature, such that humans are completely different from everything else in nature. Radical exclusion in the human/nature case takes various forms. A

major difference in kind is assumed to exist between humans and nature, and in a situation of both similarities and dissimilarities or discontinuities between humans and non-humans, it is discontinuity which is characteristically stressed in western thought. The characterisation of the genuinely, properly, characteristically, or authentically human, or of human virtue, in polarised terms that exclude 'the natural' is what John Rodman has called 'the Differential Imperative' (Rodman 1980; Gouldner 1965:122). Here what is virtuous in the human is taken to be what maximises human differentia, and hence what minimises links to nature and the animal. The ideals which are held up as truly worthy of a human life exclude those aspects associated with the body, sexuality, reproduction, affectivity, emotionality, the senses and dependence on the natural world, for these are shared with the natural and animal; instead they stress reason, which is thought to separate humans from the sphere of nature. Discontinuity is obtained via an account of human identity and virtue which eliminates overlap with the 'animal within', or polarises this as not truly part of the self or as belonging to a lower, baser 'animal' part of self. The human species is thus defined out of nature, and nature is conceived as so alien to humans that they can 'establish no moral communion' with it (James 1896:43).

This leads to an alienated account of human identity in which humans are essentially apart from or 'outside of nature, having no true home in it or allegiance to it. They stand apart from it as masters or external controllers of nature. Attempts to frame an alternative to this alienated identity tend to speak vaguely of humans as 'part of nature', but rarely clarify what is involved and often seem to be just reminding us of the platitude that our fate as humans is interconnected with that of the biosphere, that we are subject to natural laws. But human/nature dualism is the reason why we have to be reminded of this apparently obvious truth. The key to existential homelessness and to our denial of our dependence on nature is the dualistic treatment of the human/ nature relationship, the view of the essentially or authentically human part of the self, and in that sense the human realm proper, as at best accidentally connected to nature, and at worst in opposition to it. In modern times, the denial of dependence only occasionally takes the form of denying that humans are essentially embodied or have links to (have evolved from) nature. But the failure to conceive ourselves as essentially or positively in nature leads easily into a failure to commit ourselves to the care of the planet and to encourage sustainable social institutions and values which can acknowledge deeply and fully our dependence on and ties to the earth. Modern world-views continue to treat links to nature as either negative or inessential constituents of the human.

What is involved also in the rationalist account of human virtue is the rejection of those parts of the human character identified as feminine and with the lower order of subsistence. This model identifies these areas also as less than fully human, and stresses ideals such as rationality, freedom and transcendence of nature which mark the situation of an elite masculine identity. This hyperseparated conception of the human expresses the master perspective, and his desire to exclude women, slaves and animals and keep his distance from them. It is his cultural identity which links these spheres by exclusion.

THE DEEP ROOTS OF HUMAN/NATURE DUALISM

How does the deep structure of human/nature dualism arise historically? I shall argue that the denial, exclusion and devaluation of nature can be traced far back into the intellectual traditions of the west, at least into the beginnings of rationalism in Greek culture. The society of classical Greece is often viewed benignly, by both liberal and environmental writers, as the cradle of western civilisation, and the philosophy of Plato is especially revered as the source of its proud intellectual, artistic and civic traditions (Adam 1911:3; Buchanan 1948:1).[2] Recently a few dissenting voices have been raised, especially from feminists, suggesting that we might also seek there for the origins of the fatal flaw, the marriage of reason and domination, the source point of much that is deeply problematic in the contemporary condition. Just as feminists have discerned in the rational subject of liberal theory a concealed masculine identity, so some have seen in the Platonic account of reason a masculine identity which has profoundly influenced its character (Hartsock 1985; Irigaray 1985a; Lloyd 1984).

In this chapter I argue that it is not only a masculine identity as such which underlies the Platonic conception of reason and of the life of reason, but a master identity defined in terms of multiple exclusions, and in terms of domination not only of the feminine but also of the slave (which usually combines race, class and gender oppression), of the animal, and of the natural. I also extend the critical feminist perspectives previously applied to the Platonic treatment of women and of reason to illuminate Plato's environmental philosophy, arguing that we find in the Platonic world-view an important source of reason/nature dualism and that Plato's treatment of nature has important parallels to his treatment of women. My own reading of Plato, along with that of a number of other feminist philosophers (for example, Irigaray 1985a; Hartsock 1985; Ruether 1975; Spelman 1988), has thus suggested a very different picture of Plato and his rationalist successors, deeply implicating Platonic rationalism at least, if not Greek culture as a whole, in the

development of reason/nature dualism and in a process of elevating an abstract and oppositionally defined reason at the expense of devaluing and denying its dualised contrasts.

Several contemporary environmental historians have recently revisited classical Greece in search of gems of environmental wisdom to bring back to our troubled century. They have found in the environmental philosophy of the Greeks a potential model and corrective for that of our own society and times (Nash 1990; Hughes 1982; Sale 1985). They have, with some exceptions (Passmore 1974; Hargrove 1989), portrayed Greek society as environmentally friendly, as valuing the small-scale, as seeing human life as properly subject to control and limits, and as emphasising the adverse consequences of human arrogance or hubris (Tanner 1992). The Greeks are presented as respecting and celebrating the earth through the worship of Gaia, the ancient earth goddess. Historian J.Donald Hughes, who treats the Greek tradition in these respects as basically unitary (1982:6), extends to Plato this favourable assessment of Greek attitudes towards nature. He notes Plato's discussion of the deforestation of Attica (1982:7), and presents Plato's references to Gaia and to the world-soul in the *Timaeus* as indicative of an 'organic' world-view of the sort we are said to stand in need of, a world-view not very different from that found in the modern Gaia hypothesis which sees the world as a living organism (1982:7).

I shall argue that this portrait of Plato as an environmentalist is misleading. For example, Plato's discussion in *The Republic* of the story of the earth as mother (Lee 1987:181), on which this favourable portrait is partly based, makes it clear that he considers the story to be false but places it in the category of useful lies (or 'magnificent myths') which the ruling guardians can propagate if they serve the social ends which the guardians deem worthy. Plato's discussion of the Mother Earth myth immediately precedes his discussion of the myth of the bronze, gold and silver classes, a story which he suggests is useful in encouraging acceptance of social stratification. Similarly, the Gaia story is presented as false but as useful because it will encourage citizens to fight for the state, in the guise of their land. In short, what the myth is designed to promote is not environmentalism but militarism. Plato is as implausible a candidate for environmental canonisation as he is for feminist canonisation.

PLATO AND THE CARTESIAN 'BIRTH' OF ALIENATED IDENTITY

The view of Greek philosophy and especially of Plato's philosophy as 'organic' seems to be inspired not only by the familiar liberal adulation of classical Greece but by an analysis which sees the entire problem of

western hyperseparation from nature as beginning with the onset of Enlightenment mechanism and the rise of science, focusing especially on Descartes (Bordo 1987; Capra 1983; Sheldrake 1988). This analysis treats mechanism as supplanting a basically unitary tradition of an organic cosmos, seen as a sacred and living female. Descartes is held to be responsible especially for the murder of the cosmic mother, the female world-soul. Susan Bordo has provided an interesting and insightful analysis of Cartesian philosophy in terms of the anxiety and reaction formation attendant on this separation of the human self from the cosmic mother. For Bordo, mechanism must be understood as a flight from a female cosmos, a flight in which 'the soul which Descartes drained from the world was a female soul…for Plato most explicitly, the world has a soul—a female soul—which permeates the corporeal body of the universe' (Bordo 1987:101–2).

But although the Greek term for soul, *psyche,* is grammatically female and is occasionally and misleadingly translated by female pronouns,[3] Plato nowhere treats the soul of the world as female or ascribes feminine characteristics to it. He refers in the *Timaeus* to the entire living being of the ensouled world as a 'blessed god', not a goddess. Such a treatment of the world-soul as female would be badly out of step with Plato's consistently stressed view of the female type and elements of soul as inferior to the male (Spelman 1988:29–31), and with the rest of Plato's views on the female and the feminine. It would be in conflict also with the leading metaphor of Plato's cosmology in the *Timaeus,* that of rational male form *(cosmos)* ruling irrational female matter *(chaos).*

Moreover there are other good reasons to see a 'flight from the feminine' as taking place much earlier than the Enlightenment and as more thoroughly embedded in the western philosophical tradition (Lloyd 1984).[4] The account of the Cartesian birth of human/nature alienation, striking though it is, depends for its analogy of psychical 'birth' of the separate human self on placing the whole development of an alienated identity in the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment period, and hence on a unitary conception of pre-Cartesian views of nature as 'organic'. Such an account lets off dominant earlier traditions, especially those of earlier rationalism and of Christianity, much too lightly.[5] It fails to recognise how deeply rooted in the western tradition is the oppositional account of reason and the associated master account of human identity and denigration of nature. One does not have to see philosophy as 'consistently and obsessively devoted to the exclusion and transcendence of the feminine' (the phrase in which Bordo [1987:9] dismisses the work of those such as Lloyd who locate masculinisation in the rationalist tradition generally and in thinkers both before and after Descartes) in order to observe that many of the essential elements of an alienated human identity and of the

masculinisation of thought are present, often as major themes, in much earlier philosophy and in early Christianity.

While Bordo's thesis of the birth of a separate human identity with the Enlightenment need not be entirely abandoned, it requires, I shall argue, major modification. The Enlightenment period does involve a major intensification of the domination of nature, just as our own period involves a major intensification of the instrumentalisation of biological life, but the essential ingredients of alienated identity are already present in a major way and as major themes in pre-Enlightenment thought. We can better account for the development of a dualised human identity in terms of a colonisation process taking place over a much longer period than the Enlightenment, and involving, as does colonisation itself, distinct stages and sites. As I will argue in chapter 6, the formation of an alienated and hyperseparated human identity which takes shape in the Enlightenment involves a different set of sites for separation and the denial of dependency, and corresponds to a later phase in the process of separation, rather than to the entire process. This later phase corresponds to the relocation of radical exclusion between humans and nature, previously situated in human identity and human virtue, to the new site of mind or consciousness, leading to mechanism.

Reconciling these problems and tensions in the historical accounts suggests that we modify the thesis of a dominant, unitary pre-Enlightenment tradition of respect for an 'organic' female nature assumed in the work of Bordo and others. An adequate historical treatment would recognise multiple and conflicting tendencies and traditions with respect to nature in the period prior to the rise of mechanism, distinguish minor and dominant traditions, and make appropriate connections to social structures of domination, of which the domination of women is one but not the only one. There is more at stake in this debate than historical accuracy, since recognition of problems in the culture of the past is closely bound up with recognition of aspects of culture as problematic in the present. An interrogation of past philosophy from a perspective which recognised multiple and interlocking oppressions, including feminism, classism and naturism, would yield a different historical account from one which acknowledged only a single form of oppression to which all others are subsidiary.

PLATO'S FEMINISM

What is at issue, specifically, in the account of Greek society as environmentally benign is the possibility not only of a coherent and critical feminist perspective on western culture and the question of the relationship of philosophy to social structures, but also of connection

between contemporary forms of oppression. However, an examination of Plato's feminism is illuminating here, because Plato's environmental philosophy presents us with a major set of problems and conflicts which are very like those which appear in his treatment of women. In the case of Plato's treatment of women just as in the case of nature there are those who champion Plato's ideas as enlightened. In both cases we are faced with conflicting evidence. In both cases, I shall propose a parallel resolution of the conflicts.

Plato's treatment of women and the private sphere in the *Republic* has been a major subject of controversy since well before feminist philosophers undertook the critique of western philosophy. Some of this controversy receives an illuminating review in a recent book by Natalie Harris Bluestone, *Women and the Ideal Society* (1987), which shows how male commentators of the past dealt with Plato's proposals for the equality of women guardians in the *Republic* with distaste or incredulity. Bluestone herself champions Plato as a feminist, and much of her book is taken up with defending him against some of his feminist critics.[6] One major problem for feminist critics lies in reconciling the proposals of the *Republic* for equality among male and female guardians with the constant derogatory references to women scattered through the dialogues, which routinely belittle and exclude women and depict female nature as fallen. It also lies in reconciling the proposals for the equality of women guardians with Plato's social theory, which sanctions and presupposes slavery and other forms of social hierarchy.

Bluestone gives priority in this conflict to the proposals of the *Republic,* treating Plato's disparagement of women as merely 'the casual misogyny of the Athenian male', a fault of his place and time but not one integral to his philosophical thought. 'Plato', she writes, 'did not like women but he favoured their emancipation' (1987:88). Bluestone fails to take seriously Plato's devaluation of women and of the feminine as a major element of his philosophical system, just as the blatantly sexist classical scholars she criticises failed to take seriously Plato's proposal for women as guardians. This approach fails to take account of the connection many feminists have stressed between Plato's inferiorisation of women (and other oppressed groups) and his overall philosophical and social vision.

Plato's debasement of women runs much deeper than mere personal distaste for women as a sex. The theme of 'sending away the women' appears consistently in the dialogues: Socrates on his death-bed not only sends away his wife and other female relatives who give way to undisciplined grief and fail to appreciate his reasoned approach to death; he also remonstrates with one of his male disciples who shows a similar 'feminine' lack of control, comparing him to the women (*Phaedo* 277).[7] It is not women themselves as a sex, then, who are the problem so much as the feminine: the behaviour, characteristics and areas of life associated

with women. Such behaviour is equally or even more problematic when indulged in by men. The feminine is explicitly and repeatedly associated in Plato with the lower order of nature as opposed to reason, associated with formless, undisciplined matter or primeval chaos (*Timaeus* 50): with disorder and ungoverned emotion (*Republic* 605 D-E), with idle gossip and opinion *(doxa)* (*Republic* 304 C, 111, 395), with moral evil *(Timaeus* 91), incompetence (*Republic* 455D), animal nature and distance from *logos* (*Timaeus* 76), with lower, slavelike nature unsuited to the public sphere (*Republic* 455D), and with the baser self and bodily appetite (*Timaeus* 70). As feminist commentators have noted, denial of the whole sphere of the feminine is implicit in the analogy of the Cave (Irigaray 1985a; Flax 1983).

Such a denial of the feminine also emerges from Plato's treatment of art and the emotions in the theory of the divided self in the *Republic,* which is explicit in treating the extirpation of 'feminine' softness and lack of control as a major aim of a properly militarised education.[8] These remarks are applied to women quite generally, and characterise the supposed qualities of women negatively as a series of lacks, as the opposite of *logos* and of what souls should strive for. Such consistent denial and derogation is no mere 'casual misogyny'. It is a major and extremely influential aspect of Plato's philosophical framework, involving the persistent association of women and their lives with the lower order of being, and the treatment of reason and of philosophy as the life of reason as oppositional to and exclusive of this lower order.

How then can we explain the much-discussed doctrines of the *Republic* advocating the guardianship of women? As Julia Annas has argued, the doctrines of the *Republic* concerning the equality of women of merit as guardians do not really run counter to these overall tendencies to the devaluation of women. Rather, they demonstrate Plato's commitment to the primacy of the state and to the mobilisation of all available human capacity in its service (Annas 1976). Plato makes it plain that he is not assuming that women as a class possess the same ability as men as a class. As a class women are naturally inferior to men, but by totally excluding women a certain amount of potential talent may be lost to the state, *especially in its capacity to wage war*. It is especially here in the area of war that we must seek an explanation of Plato's state 'feminism', for Plato is an exception both in his time and in philosophical history in that he does not see courageous women as excluded from the capacity to wage war and hence from the requirements of citizenship. Plato is said to have been especially impressed with the example of the Spartan women riding to war, and he refers in the *Critias* to the women of Athens who did so in the past (Bluestone 1987:125; *Critias* 135).

Plato's 'feminism' is then consequent on and entirely secondary to his

rational meritocracy. He wants a certain type of woman in the guardian class not through considerations of justice, but as a means to the ends of the state.[9] It is meant to achieve a maximal rational ordering of the state, especially in war, and in the disorderly reproductive arrangements of the private sphere, which can now be partially (at least for the guardians) brought into the empire of colonising reason and made to serve the rational ends of the state.

This account of Plato's 'feminism' makes it straightforward to reconcile the *Republic's* advocacy of women's inclusion in the guardian class with his debasement of women and the feminine elsewhere in his work (and indeed elsewhere in the *Republic*). Plato's claim to feminism is that he does not see women's lives and characters as entirely determined by their anatomy. Plato admits people with female bodies to the extent that they conform to 'a male model of excellence' (Thornton 1986:97); to the extent that they have female bodies but 'manly souls' (Spelman 1988:33). As Spelman argues, the term 'woman' is ambiguous: the kind of womanhood Plato values and means to reward with membership of the guardian class is 'what could become of a female person if she has a certain [manly] nature and is trained in the way of the philosophers' (Spelman 1988:34). But this sort of 'feminism' is entirely consistent with the strong devaluation of most women and their lives. It is not the mass of women, who appear in Plato's own society and household as highly circumscribed domestic workers, whose lives will change or who will deserve respect as rulers. Only elite women who have been successfully colonised by reason will be among the guardians of the *kallipolis*. As Irigaray notes, women will participate on the basis of their sameness to men and not their difference (1985a:157).

My reading is easily reconciled with Plato's generalised contempt for women and with his hierarchical social theory. Plato has no intention of liberating women in general or other dominated groups, and most women are still classed with slaves, children and 'other animals', as distant from the *logos*. Thus, as Bluestone concedes (1987:185), both sexes of guardians will leave to lower grades of women the tasks of infant socialisation and early childhood education which are so characteristically women's area of responsibility. The guardians, men and women, will take over the child's education at the point where he or she is deemed to have been born as a cultural being, to have entered the domain of reason, culture and masculine control, which is taken to constitute real 'education'. The new 'androgyny' of the guardians will not be based on some integration of male and female characteristics and areas of responsibility; it is women guardians who will change to take on male characteristics and to fit into a male model, rather than both men and women changing, and non-elite women who will continue to perform the despised female tasks.[10] Plato's proposal for women

guardians is based then on the all-too-familiar route of elite women being rewarded for taking on the characteristics of the master, defined by exclusion of the mass of women and of other oppressed groups.

Plato's proposal for women guardians does nothing to change the definition of reason and of the good life as the province of elite males, opposed to the lower order of nature and the feminine; it does not make Platonic cultural values or reason itself gender-neutral or androgynous. Platonic feminism is, at best, the feminism of uncritical equality, and this appears also to be the form of feminism endorsed by Bluestone herself. Bluestone is wholly uncritical of Plato's politics and of the construction of reason in these oppositional ways. Without argument Bluestone asserts the gender-neutrality of Platonic norms (1987:ix, 10, 126). The only form of feminism which Bluestone discusses is one which involves 'identical treatment' between (some unspecified group of) men and women; Bluestone writes as if more than a decade's intensive critical discussion of the problems in this model had never occurred, ignoring major recent studies concerned with Plato and the masculinity of reason. These arguments turn on the question of difference, and Bluestone's discussion persistently misinterprets these as arguments for a return to women's traditional roles. Bluestone overlooks the alternative that such arguments are arguments for social change and for the development of more integrated, less dualistic forms of culture and of reason in which women will be able to participate fairly and fully.

Thus Bluestone systematically mistreats feminist arguments involving the critique of male-dominant culture, just as she systematically generalises Plato's concern for elite women to women in general. Despite her numerous accusations that feminist writers are deficient in classical scholarship, Bluestone's own account often seems out of touch with contemporary feminist scholarship and concerns. She contends, for example, that contemporary college-age women are held up by an 'excessive emphasis' on their bodies; it would be beneficial for such women to escape this 'obsession' with their bodies and learn a lesson from Platonic indifference to the body (1987:151). But this is to misrepresent both the problem for contemporary women and Plato's account, which is not 'indifferent' or neutral regarding the body, or aimed merely at correcting an 'excessive emphasis' on it, but is mostly negative and contemptuous. Indeed the preoccupation with the weight and appearance of the female body which Bluestone takes to be 'excessive emphasis on or adulation of' the body, 'obsession with the body', is not the expression of an overly affirmative view of the body, but rather conceives the female body in terms of a series of lacks. As many feminists have argued, this stems not from adulation but from a created insecurity and anxiety about falling short of absurd and disempowering ideals of 'beauty' (Lakoff and Scherr 1984; Lawrence

1987; Wolf 1991). It is certainly important for women to escape such an identity, but Platonic influences seem to be part of the problem rather than part of the solution. The non-benign influence of the Platonic model in the contemporary context can be seen in the approach to female beauty as conformity to a remote form or Ideal (or rather the six or seven Ideals licensed for this fashion season) rather than in the celebration of the diversity of actual bodies. It can also be seen in the thoroughly Platonic identification of the body and its appetites as alien and inferior and the object of obsessive attempts at control by a real self identified with a disciplining, mastering *logos* (Bordo 1988; 1990).

THE ORDER OF REASON AND THE ORDER OF NATURE

Much the same set of conflicts and problems as in the case of the feminine appears in Plato's treatment of nature. Plato strongly devalues nature in virtually all its forms, but, as I noted, some commentators have detected a major conflicting trend in the glorification of the universe or cosmic nature in the *Timaeus*. The favourable assessment Plato's environmental philosophy has received depends on the failure to take account of the complexity of the concept of nature and its many contrasting roles. These roles emerge in a number of areas: in Plato's account of the relation of soul or reason to the body; in his account of human character and identity as belonging to the divine sphere; in his later theory of the relation of soul (the authentic and enduring aspect of self) to the other lower aspects of the self (nature within); and in his cosmological account of the significance of the sensible world of nature. The following are some relevant contrast senses of 'nature':

nature as
1 body
2 passion, emotion
3 the visible world (senses)
4 animal
5 wild, non-human landscape and beings
6 slave, barbarian
7 feminine (primal matrix), reproductive nature
8 realm of changes, of becoming, biological life
9 matter as excluded from cosmos, as chaos
10 cosmos, universal order (Nature).

Only in the last sense, where Nature as the rational order of the universe contrasts with primitive chaos, is nature treated as the 'positive' or

upperside of its contrast. This exception does little to improve the attractiveness of Plato's environmental philosophy, since admiration for universal Nature excludes nothing environmentalists might be concerned about. Universal Nature, considered as the workings of rational scientific principles, plainly includes the bulldozer as well as the rainforest, in addition to the process by which the one destroys the other. In all the other senses, nature is the inferiorised and dualised contrast to the realm of reason, which is also the realm of goodness and the source of value.

Platonic philosophy is organised around the hierarchical dualism of the sphere of reason over the sphere of nature, creating a fault-line which runs through virtually every topic discussed: love, beauty, knowledge, art, education, ontology. There are two sorts of being, two sorts of love, two sorts of equality, two sorts of knowledge, two sorts of causation, two sorts of art and even two sorts of music. In each of these cases the lower side is that associated with nature, the body, and the realm of becoming, as well as of the feminine, and the higher with the realm of reason. The timeless, abstract realm of the Forms is separate and maximally distanced from the inferior 'world of changes', of coming into being and passing away, and its representatives are everywhere treated as the superiors and masters of the representatives of the lower order. Thus Vlastos writes:

> Everywhere Plato gives the Form pre-eminence. In epistemology it is the object of knowledge; sensible particulars can only be objects of that low-grade cognitive achievement, opinion. In cosmology only the Forms represent completely lucid order: physical individuals, enmeshed in brute necessity, are only quasi-orderly, as they are only quasi-intelligible. In ontology there are grades of reality and only Forms have the highest grade. So too in the theory of love the respective roles of Form and individual are sustained; the individual cannot be as lovable as the Idea; the Idea, and it alone, is to be loved for its own sake; the individual only so far as in him and by him ideal perfection is fugitively copied in the flux.
>
> (Vlastos 1973:34)

Thus the higher sort of love (identified as taking place between males) is that which uses bodily beauty as a means to reach the higher sphere of the forms. It approaches the supremely beautiful, the Form of the Good, through contemplation of its resemblance. As Vlastos notes (1973:34), the higher form of love is essentially the love of the Idea in people, rather than a love of those people themselves. The lower form of love is associated with the pursuit of women and the engendering of children in the same way as animals; it pursues these objects for their own sake, not

as a means to reach the higher sphere. Similarly, the higher form of music consists of the contemplation of the abstract relationships of mathematical harmonics, and has nothing to do with the material realm and 'torturing instruments', that is the production of actual sounds (Plato, 1948: *Republic,* chap. 26, vii, 530–1).

Of the two sorts of equality, Plato tells us, one treats pleasures and candidates for office as if they were all equal, failing to discriminate against those lacking in *logos,* while the other discriminates between higher and lower in terms of a hierarchy based on reason over nature, and has no taint of democracy, giving equal consideration only to those of equal merit (Vlastos 1973:194). The two sorts of causation comprise a higher form, which pertains to rational principle or Form, and which is the true form of causation, described as 'intelligent', 'divine' and 'productive of all that is fair and good' (Vlastos 1973:154). Contrasting with this is a lower or secondary form pertaining to the material realm which Plato describes as 'completely incapable of reason or intelligence', and as irrational, fortuitous and disorderly. This lower type of cause belongs, unlike the first, to the sphere of necessity, and is mistakenly perceived by most people to be the true variety (*Timaeus* 46–7; Vlastos, 1973:154). Nature itself is divided correspondingly into higher rational 'cosmos' and lower material 'chaos'.

GLORIFYING NATURE: COSMOS OR CHAOS?

In this context, what account can be given of the claims made on Plato's behalf for a vision of unity between humans and nature, a vision which *glorifies* nature? Such claims, relying especially on the doctrines of the *Timaeus,* have been made not only by recent environmental writers anxious to find a respectable foundation for environmentalism in the wisdom of the west, but also by Cambridge Platonists keen to reconcile Platonism, Romanticism and Christianity (Adam 1911). Must we recognise in the world-soul of the *Timaeus,* as Lovejoy has suggested (Lovejoy 1936:46), a reversal of the themes of rejection and denial of nature which inform the rest of Plato's philosophy, a 'return journey' from the journey out of the Cave, one in which nature comes to be seen as necessary to the higher world? Such an interpretation would make Plato's 'glorification' of universal nature an anomaly (as indeed the 'return journey' phraseology concedes), out of step with the rest of his system. But as in the case of Plato's feminism, there is room for a more consistent interpretation. There is, I shall argue, a reading of these doctrines of the world-soul which brings them much more closely into alignment with the rest of Plato's doctrines on nature, but under such a reading they offer little comfort to those who would like to see in Plato a source of environmental and feminist wisdom or a model for Gaian planetary consciousness.

The problem turns on two points: first, what should we count as 'nature', and second, how does Plato conceive the relationship between rational cosmos (the 'blessed god' of the *Timaeus*) and chaos, the irrational sphere of necessity, 'the indeterminate, the inconstant, the anomalous, that which can neither be understood nor predicted'? In reconciling these apparent inconsistencies, much turns on what is identified as nature, and nature in what sense. The claim that the term 'nature' is ambiguous is an understatement. But for Adam, who defends an account of Plato as glorifying Nature, the term is straightforward: 'I ask you to believe that this World-Soul or WorldReason is in reality Plato's conception of Nature' (Adam 1911:11). Nature with a capital N perhaps, but as we have seen, there are many other, rather more common senses of the term in which Plato denigrates and excludes nature. These, I suggest, are the sorts of senses of 'nature' which are relevant to the environmentalist, nature as the non-human world, as the animal world, the area of continuity and overlap with it within the human self, as the earth itself, the world of biological life, and the visible and sensory world around us. In abstract cosmos what Plato glorifies, I shall suggest, is again *logos,* which, as rational principle and universal law, persuades, orders and subjugates material necessity (chaos). But this sense of Nature, akin to the sense in which nature is used in 'laws of nature', is not only quite distinct from the others but requires no one's defence or solidarity, certainly not that of the environmentalist. Its glorification, as we will see, is in fact a glorification of the conquest of nature in its more relevant environmental senses.

Interpretations of the *Timaeus* as environmentally benign rely upon treating Plato's account of cosmos as meaning that *logos* and divinity are immanent in the world of nature, rather than transcendent.[11] There is a small amount of textual support for the immanence interpretation, and a large amount against it. One problem of the doctrine of the *Timaeus* is that although the visible and intelligible realms are always and everywhere else kept clearly separated, indeed hyperseparated, Plato seems at times to recognise in the *Timaeus* as godlike and as part of the realm of *logos* a material entity, in fact the universe itself. If this interpretation is correct, the doctrines of the *Timaeus* would effect a great reconciliation between the orders, through the creation of the world by God (representing *logos*) as a single living being endowed with soul and intelligence, 'containing within itself all living beings of the same natural order' (*Timaeus* 30–1). In this act of creation God (who is given a major role here expressly to achieve this result) 'put soul in the centre and diffused it through the whole and enclosed the body in it…His creation was a blessed god' (*Timaeus* 34). But the essence of Plato's theory of Ideas and of Platonic dualism is the radical separation of the higher order of *logos* from the lower order. There is a considerable

consistency problem then in interpreting the world-soul as immanent in nature, as Adam does in his attempt to reconcile Plato with Wordsworth and with Romantic nature mysticism. The problem is compounded by the fact that Plato still insists on the separation of higher and lower forms of causation (rational and material necessity) discussed in the *Timaeus*, which parallel the relation of cosmos to chaos (*Timaeus* 46), and pictures the higher form as dominating the lower.

There is then a good deal to suggest that the relation between cosmos and chaos is the same kind of relation between the higher and lower orders that we have noted elsewhere. The point of the cosmology of the *Timaeus* is to justify the primacy of reason and counter the material philosophy of Democritus and others by showing how the rational sphere controls and regulates the lower order of nature represented as material necessity, producing arrangements which are for the best. Reason does this by imposing order and uniformity (judged to be 'incalculably superior to its opposite'). Thus God 'finding the visible universe in a state not of rest but of inharmonious and disorderly motion, resolved to reduce it to order from disorder, as he judged that order was in every way better' (*Timaeus* 30). God as maker and fabricator of the universe imposes on the natural disorder of nature (chaos) a properly regular, rational and perfect shape, motion and form (that of the circle and the globe) creating 'a smooth and unbroken surface, equidistant in every direction from the centre' (*Timaeus* 34). Primal nature (chaos) is conceived as initially fallen and disordered; *logos* undertakes to do for this disorderly other that he finds in nature the same task that he undertakes for slaves, free-living animals, female forces and other 'disorderly' elements; *logos* orders and rules the world of nature, conceived as chaotic and disorderly, in a relation of domination conceived as the imposition of a rational order. Plato explains the relation of cosmos to chaos and of rational to material cause through a set of domination metaphors framed in terms of the multiple exclusions: master to slave (Vlastos 1973), male to female, soul to body.[12] Thus Plato separates world-body and world-soul and insists on the world-soul's priority: 'God created the soul before the body [of the world] and gave it precedence both in time and value, and made it the dominating and controlling partner' (*Timaeus* 34).

The *Timaeus* explains the principle and process involved in the imposition of form on indeterminate and formless matter as the imposition of rational order *(logos)* on the female 'receptacle'. This process of turning chaos to cosmos is in turn given a reproductive modelling in terms of male/female domination as the father's *(logos)* imposition of form on the mother's matter (chaos), described as 'neutral plastic material' (*Timaeus* 50), without definite character of its own,

'upon which differing impressions are stamped' by reason. Feminine matter is conceived as a *lack* of qualities, for proper receptivity to paternal impression demands that it be 'devoid of all the characters which it is to receive' (*Timaeus* 50). It is explicitly pictured as a passive female; according to Plato in the *Timaeus* (50, 18): 'we may indeed use the metaphor of birth and compare the receptacle to the mother, the model to the father, and what they produce between them to their offspring'.[13] This account foreshadows Aristotle's later account of human reproduction in terms of male form and female matter.

These passages are not admiring, Gaia-guided references to female creativity, as implied in Hughes's discussion, but rather its denial. Hence if the rational cause is the father *(logos)* and the material cause is female or nurse (matter), the term 'nurse' indicates the inferior and backgrounded role of the female and of matter as not the real (rational) cause of things, but a mere keeper of the male product. This fits well the account of superior and inferior causes and of creativity in the *Symposium* (Hartsock 1985) and elsewhere. This dualistic account denies to the female lower order of the body and passions a genuine creative role in either generative or cultural production, reducing it to 'fertility', a mere nurse function, and reserving real creativity for the male. This is hardly a 'return journey' towards adequate recognition of dependency on the material sphere, since the latter still has a devalued, minimised and backgrounded role. If Plato's universe is a marriage of reason and matter, it is a marriage in which reason clearly has the upper hand over an inferiorised and backgrounded partner—a patriarchal marriage.

What is divine in this marriage, then, is the husband/master cosmos, and his primordial underside (described somewhat prejudicially as chaos) comes to share in her partner's goodness to the extent that she is properly subsumed by cosmos and registers the completeness of his conquest. The ascription of disorder to chaos expresses the perspective of the master. The Master Craftsman finds in his basic material of raw, unmodified nature elements which have, like the slave, properties which lie outside and beyond his intention, elements irrelevant to his purpose and unpredictable in terms of that purpose (Lee 1971:11). These are the qualities described as 'the indeterminate, the inconstant, the anomalous, that which can neither be understood nor predicted' (i.e. disorder, externality). In short, the master finds independent others not moulded to his needs, others which follow out their own designs which he is unable to or does not care to recognise. Their otherness he interprets as disorder, which must be cancelled and rendered adjunct through 'persuasion' or compulsion, the slavish unfreedom (necessity) of these others contrasting with his own freedom of purpose (*Timaeus* 50).

Considered as an environmental model, the Platonic vision of the world-soul yields not a spiritualisation of nature but rather a colonisation model which points not to leaving things be in nature but to imposing human 'rational' design on them. Plato celebrates not nature but the structuring of the world to the needs and intentions of mastering *logos*, the eradication or rationalisation of superfluous qualities, kinds, tribes, which are seen from the perspective of the master as disorderly, unnecessary, useless, out(side) of control. Its modern equivalent is development, which, like the colonisation Plato describes in terms of the creation of the perfectly uniform and smooth geometrical figure of the globe, is the project of reforming the world to the master's rational design, creating uniformity and regular pattern,[14] especially the straight line, which as the shortest distance between two points, admirably expresses the instrumentalisation of nature. Nature so apprehended is not an independent other with which to come to terms but a subordinate which has to be ordered to will, a 'product' fabricated by *logos*, an instrument. It is such a colonised nature, emptied of independent life, which is glorified by Plato as exemplifying rational order, as universal Nature, as 'the fairest of all things'.

MODELS FOR THE REASON/NATURE RELATION

Platonic thought systematically denigrates nature in the same way that it systematically denigrates women, and the inferiorisation of nature in all these senses is strongly linked to the inferiorisation of women, slaves and animals, as well as to the aspects of life, culture and self associated with women; that is, the feminine. The identification of the contrasting orders of reason and nature as gendered (the superior side being male) is not advanced as an explicit general thesis in Plato's work (although it is by his successors; for example, Philo) but the identification of the underside of the Platonic dualisms as feminine emerges clearly enough in metaphor as well as in particular cases of the contrasts of reason, and also through the constitution of the *polis* in opposition to forces construed as female and as natural.

Environmental critics of Plato such as Hargrove have located idealist epistemology and ontology as the main source for the anti-ecological tendencies in Platonic thought. I suggest that it is principally in Platonic *politics* that we should seek for the basis of these tendencies, although the separation is artificial in that all areas of Platonic thought—metaphysics, epistemology, psychology and ontology—are saturated with politics, especially the politics of rational hierarchy implicit in the higher and lower orders of being. This emerges through the political analogies and models Plato uses constantly, which most academic commentators have somehow contrived not to notice. Platonic thought

draws fully on the available range of social relations of subjugation to model the relation of lower to higher ontological orders.

The relation between the orders of reason and nature is constantly depicted as one of control and mastery. The body in particular and the lower passions (representing nature within) are to be controlled by 'commands', 'threats' (*Timaeus* 70), coercion and violent discipline.[15] The body and its associates, the senses, are treated in *Phaedo* as alien to the true self and in entirely negative terms as a 'prison' or 'trap' for the soul. As 'subject and servant' they obey the rule of the soul.[16] Similarly, nature, as Vlastos argues, is conceived in the *Timaeus* as partaking of necessity, as well as of chance and disorder. Disorder is a puzzling concept best explained by a contrast with the order and purpose of *logos,* and as analogous to the concept of compulsion, especially compulsion as the torture to which 'disorderly' slaves were subjected.[17] Thus the political metaphors which guide the conception of the relation between higher and lower orders of being include especially the relation of master to slave: the function of soul is said to be that of a master 'taking charge and exercising control' and of ruler to 'subjects and servants'. But these political metaphors also include something unremarked by commentators: the mastery and control of animals, and the domination and control of women. Thus in the *Timaeus* the tripartite theory of the soul identifies women with the lowest, or appetitive, section located in the trunk of the body, nearest the earth and maximally distanced from the highest, immortal element located in the head.

> The mortal element they secured in the breast and trunk (as we call it); and since it has a better and a worse part, they divided the hollow of the trunk by inserting the midriff as a partition, rather as a house is divided into men's and women's quarters.
>
> (*Timaeus* 69–70)

In this household analogy, the male section of the self-household (variously described as courage, spirit and indignation or righteous anger, which is active especially in warfare and killing) is portrayed as always combining with the ruler (reason) in the suppression of the female section, identified with the lower part of the body or carnal appetite. Appetite or desire, the lowest section of the soul, is clearly and constantly identified with wild animals and with 'children and women and slaves' (*Republic* 431C). The famous analogy of the charioteer in the *Phaedrus,* in which spirit (the white horse) again combines with reason (the charioteer) against desire, draws on the coercion, torture and breaking of domestic animals, in the form of the ugly, recalcitrant black horse, again representing carnal appetite, to frame its image of the right relation of reason to the lower orders of the self.

> The driver…falls back like a racing charioteer at the barrier, and with a still more violent backward pull jerks the bit from between the teeth of the lustful horse, drenches his abusive tongue and jaws with blood, and forcing his legs and haunches against the ground reduces him to torment. Finally, after several repetitions of this treatment, the wicked horse abandons his lustful ways; meekly now he executes the wishes of his driver, and when he catches sight of the loved one is ready to die of fear.
>
> (*Phaedrus* 63)

Thus slavery (which mingles class, race and gender oppression[18]), male/female oppression in the household, the relation of ruler to lower classes in the state, and the subjugation of nature and of animals are all used in mutually reinforcing ways to model the relation of reason to body and nature and the lower aspects of self. Platonic *logos,* just as much as the rational subjecthood of Enlightenment thought expresses the perspective of the master, whose shadowy identity takes shape as the upperside of all these metaphors and of these multiple related exclusions. The disorder upon which *logos* imposes order is the disorder the master perceives in marginalised or oppressed others. As Alvin Gouldner argues, the behaviour of the slave (and the female and the colonised) is seen as disorderly, out of control and unpredictable from the point of view of the master, because the slave is perceived instrumentally, as a living tool. To the extent that the slave's own ends are not recognised and cannot form a basis for explaining her behaviour, and to the extent that she resists organisation in accordance with the master's ends, she will appear irrational and disorderly, since no ends other than the master's are recognised (Gouldner 1965:352–3). The deficiency of all these others is expressed in terms of distance from *logos,* ordering reason. The relationship of subjugation the master sees as good for both sides, since the lower lacks and *needs* order or *logos,* which the master can supply to the ultimate benefit of all (a perspective Aristotle makes explicit). It is the identity and viewpoint of the master, framed in the context of class, race, gender and species domination, which is presupposed in the Platonic conception of reason and which has framed the central concepts in terms of which the west approaches the world.

PLATONIC DUALISM AND HUMAN IDENTITY: RADICAL EXCLUSION

It is difficult to overestimate the enduring influence of Plato's thought, and especially of the *Timaeus*. The *Timaeus* is the main text in which Plato deals explicitly with nature. It not only anticipates major aspects of

Christianity, but was doubtless a major influence in forming it. This text was continuously available and was studied in Latin translation throughout western history. Elaborations of Platonic thought in the work of Aristotle, Plotinus, Augustine, Aquinas and others formed the intellectual foundations of Christian doctrine, and of the dominant western intellectual and philosophical traditions of rationalism until the Enlightenment. The early church fathers—Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Origen—all speak of Greek philosophy and especially of Plato as a preparation for Christianity. Clement claims that Plato wrote by the inspiration of God (Adam 1911:3).

Plato presents the first developed and enduring statement in western history of the otherworldly principles which have dominated so much of the history of western thought (Collingwood 1945:59). He provides an immensely influential account of human identity, the significance of death and the relation of soul to body. I shall now concentrate on this aspect of Plato's thought which makes it truly, as Nietzsche says, and as Plato himself has Socrates assert in the *Phaedo,* a philosophy of death. It is this account which later rationalists, including Christian rationalists, build on, together with Plato's earlier form of reason/nature dualism. It reaches its fullest development and distinctively modern form in the thought of Descartes and his successors.

Plato's views on the nature of the human self and of human identity and virtue illustrate many of the features of dualism set out in chapter 2, especially radical exclusion or hyperseparation between the real self and the body, the senses and emotions, and the animal passions and appetites, all of which pertain to the realm of appearance. The soul is aligned with the immaterial and divine order and the body with the inferior material order of nature:

> the soul is in the very likeness of the divine, and immortal, and intellectual, and uniform, and indissoluble, and unchangeable; and the body is in the very likeness of the human, and mortal, and unintellectual, and multiform, and dissoluble, and changeable.
>
> (Plato 1948: *Phaedo* 225)

In Plato's psychology the complexity and diversity of the human personality are marshalled into alignment with these two sharply contrasting, mutually exclusive and opposing orders. These discontinuous contrasted orders correspond on the one hand to the world of the Forms or of Reality, which is changeless, immaterial, incorruptible, a world of timeless abstract ideas, and on the other to the 'world of changes', of becoming, which Plato identifies as the world of Appearance. The world of Appearance is the world we can see, touch, hear and smell, the world of 'coming into being and passing away', the world of biological life. In a major sense of the term 'nature', it is the

world of nature. The term 'reality' indicates the explanatory, epistemological, political and ontological priority of the higher sphere of the Forms (Ideas) or reason over the lower sphere of biological life, of nature.

The way in which the self is aligned with these contrasting orders undergoes important changes from the time of Plato's earlier theory to the theory developed in his later work, but in each case the result is to split the basis of self-conception and the sources of human action into opposing orders of dominating reason and inferior nature. In the early theory of the self which appears especially in the *Phaedo,* the contrast is between the true self, which is of course reason, and the forces of the body, of animality, emotionality and nature, which are treated as located *outside* the soul. For Plato the body is clearly part of the 'region of the changeable'—the realm of nature—and in the earlier theory of the *Phaedo* is treated as excluded from and in opposition to the genuine self, the soul, which is persistent and eternal like the realm of Forms. In this dialogue, as we have seen, the body is treated in highly negative terms—the body is a hindrance and a distraction, an alien and essentially evil other which is as externally and accidentally related to the true self as a coat; it is in fact 'a coat of flesh', in the term which many later thinkers were to use. The philosopher, who represents Plato's ideal of human life, desires death over life because death enables escape from the body and its entrapment (Plato 1948: *Phaedo* 235). The body is described in the Pythagorean image as the *prison* or 'tomb' for the soul (the true self) which is fastened to it, and conceived as the source of endless trouble by reason of its requirements and liability to change and disease (ibid.: 200).

In Plato's later work, the self is portrayed in terms of warring tendencies or elements, higher and lower, which are present, and in struggle, within the self or soul. Plato's treatment of the issue in terms of the more sophisticated theory of the divided self in the *Republic* and the *Phaedrus* continues the dualistic theme, but now as a dualism of reason and nature lying *within* the self. Non-rational qualities previously treated as alien to the self are now treated as properly parts of the self, which is the site of political struggles and conflict between distinct and opposing elements to an even greater extent than is the state itself. A more complex account now shows how bodily beauty and sexuality can be used to lead the soul towards the higher realm of the Forms. But the base elements (represented in the story of the charioteer in the *Phaedrus* as the 'bestial' black horse, and in the *Timaeus* as the section of the body between the midriff and the navel) continue to be those linked to bodily appetite and to animality, and their inferiority is conceived, like that of the subjugated political orders, in terms of distance from ruling *logos* (Plato 1948: *Phaedo* 203).

The theory of the divided self gives us, it is true, an account of

greater dynamism, complexity and richness, which can now take account of conflict and struggle within the self, and which lays the basis for the treatment of many later thinkers such as Freud (Lloyd 1984:19). But it is also one which itself *creates* such conflict, placing the human self in inevitable and fundamentally irresoluble conflict with the basic conditions of its physical existence on this earth, with the nature of this self as a sexually reproducing, animal being. It produces conflict between the self and those desires or needs (the 'appetites' in Plato's term) which serve to maintain the body and to maintain the self's relations of affectional and material dependency on others and on the earth.

Plato's account structures this self dynamically not only in terms which create inevitable conflict, but as a hierarchy of reason over nature, and one which reproduces in the interior sphere of the self the relations of hierarchy and domination which his theory presupposes and supports in the exterior political sphere. A harmony within the self is the Platonic objective for the just and ethical life, but because of the necessarily irresoluble character of the conflict as a denied relationship of dependency, it is one which can only ever be achieved temporarily and only then through the internal analogues of conquest and colonisation, namely repression and denial. The right relation between the elements, or health, is defined in terms of colonisation, control and subordination of this element—nature within—by reason and its allies within the self (*Republic* 444D). In the same way, the right order in the universe is the colonisation of the world of material nature by *logos,* as represented in the 'world-soul'.

In the early dialogues dependency on the body is flatly denied; the body is said to be 'of no help in the attainment of wisdom', and we are said to 'make the nearest approach to knowledge when we have "the least possible intercourse with or communion with the body"' (Plato 1948: *Phaedo* 204). Plato thus foreshadows Descartes' later denial of dependency on the senses and his treatment of the senses as sources of error, as well as other elements of Descartes' later development of human/nature dualism in terms of mind/body dualism. In the theory of the divided self in the later dialogues, radical exclusion and hyperseparation between the real self and 'nature within' is expressed as a normative principle: the best life is defined in terms of maximal distancing between the higher and lower elements. Plato articulates here a key western tradition of human virtue in relation to nature. Thus the right relation between body and reason is not only one of rigid control and discipline, but of maximum distance compatible with this, as pictured in the 'divided household' analogy from the *Timaeus* cited in the last chapter. Similarly, in the *Timaeus,* appetite, the lowest form of the self, is said to be located in the area between the midriff and the

navel because this is the position which is 'as far as possible from the seat of deliberation' (*Timaeus* 71).

These features of reason/body dualism reappear in the central Platonic contrast between, on the one hand, the animal and earthly elements and, on the other, the divine elements in the human makeup. They appear also in the Platonic account of human identity and the significance of human life. In the *Timaeus* the normative account of the divided self of the later dialogues, and the Platonic conflict between higher and lower orders, is transferred to the human and mapped as a conflict between higher and lower elements in human identity. The truly or properly human element, the 'most authoritative' part of the soul, is of course *logos,* identified with the divine and persistent aspect of the human. This gives rise to an 'ape/angel' dualism in which human continuity with the animal and earthly order is denied, and 'the lower appetites which clog and thwart the soul are no part of man at all' (Adam 1911:19–20).

The environmental implications of the doctrine of 'man as a celestial and not a terrestrial plant' are profound. The doctrine provides in explicit and highly theorised form an account of the meaning and real location of human life as beyond the earth. Here is the definitive account of the otherworldly identity, basis of the millennial 'existential homelessness' in which the earth is not a home to be cherished but a trial, a place of temporary passage and little significance compared with the world beyond.

This account of human nature as not of the earth also defines a human task, the accomplishment of which delineates, if not the human in the descriptive sense, at least the human in the normative sense, the fully and properly human. The task is to rise above and distance from both nature within and nature without while here on earth. As I have stressed, for Plato the greatest distance possible is the best, and that distance is finally attained only with death. But it can be approximated by the philosophic life of contemplation of the divine Forms, and by an appropriate disregard or disdain for earthly things. For a later age which has lost the faith in the other world, the 'distanced' identity remains, but is mainly expressed in the instrumentalisation of the world and an attitude to the sphere of animality and nature without and within which is one of control and domination. Plato's human/ nature dualism has crucial significance for his account of death, which is probably the single most influential feature of his philosophy. Death is the goal of the philosopher because it is the final and most complete attainment of these goals of separation and denial of dependency. It is the ultimate in attainment of distance from the body and the ultimate separation from the entire lower order of nature as the 'world of changes'. It brings at last

reconciliation with the eternal divine order to which humans really belong.

DENYING THE EARTH: IMPLICATIONS OF PLATONIC DUALISM

The dualistic construction of the two orders, especially the discontinuity, split, or break between two different realms of reality, is represented in the metaphor of the Cave in the *Republic*. The darkness and illusions of the Cave (representing the world of Appearance) are contrasted with the blinding light of Reason, with the sublime, eternal and incorruptible world of the Forms contemplated by the philosopher—the world of Reality. The journey out of the Cave (which as Plato describes it, remarkably resembles the uterus or matrix) is the 'great task' of separation, the oedipal journey of the establishment of masculinity; it is the journey to the vision of *logos,* to true selfhood leaving behind 'nature within', and to the attainment of human cultural identity defined by rejection and separation from the lower order, which includes the mother, primal matter, the earth, and all that is conceived as belonging to it. What is to be reached, the sphere of the eternal, unchanging forms, 'assures freedom from the cave, the womb, the unending cycle of birth and death, the realm of necessity and of women (mothers)' (Flax 1983). What is to be left behind in the journey up from and out of the Cave is both the feminine and those aspects of nature associated with it—materiality, the body, the senses, 'primitive' stages of human and individual existence. The image of escape from the Cave unifies in a single brilliant metaphor these multiple exclusions, the transcendence (in the sense both of inferiorisation and of denial of dependency) of all these aspects of nature as the primal matrix of being, of the woman and the mother, of the body and the senses, of the whole lower order of physicality and changeability, and finally of the earth itself.

Plato rejoices as he walks out of the cave of flesh into the light and leaves behind the prison, the tomb of the body, free to become fully a philosopher at last. St Jerome, his hair matted, his body filthy and diseased from neglect, crows with delight as he waves goodbye to the contemptible order here below, his soul bound for higher things. The spaceship *Republic 2* blasts off for the distant higher realms of the stars, leaving behind a stripped and ruined earth where once was a green and lovely planet, abundant with life and all that life needed.

What strikes us from a contemporary perspective as so fantastic about these images, which represent literal ways of living out the more extreme forms of the Platonic doctrines of denial (the last of which some of Plato's heirs are now, it seems, setting themselves to realise) is that they

represent what we now in some sense recognise as an absurd and impossible denial of dependency on the 'lower' order of materiality. We recognise that the relationship *is* at the most basic level one of dependency; Plato and St Jerome need the body to philosophise, we need the earth to live and for much more, and the sooner we begin to treat it as a beloved and irreplaceable home the better. *Logos* has had to come to terms with its dependency on the denied order of nature, but its admission remains a partial and unwilling one. Western consciousness retains the elements of identity 'outside' nature, and thus it largely continues to treat the connection, the dependency in terms of denial, in as minimal and grudging a fashion as possible, and often with a strong element of vengeance.

The rationalist-instrumentalist doctrine that reason is the supreme good, and that the rest of the universe is to be used in its service, appears clearly in the Platonic theory, especially in relation to the body, and is made explicit also by Plato's rationalist successors.[19] In the *Timaeus* instrumentalism regarding nature is explicit. The necessary type of cause is to be used for the sake of the divine type (*Timaeus* 69): God's gift of sight is not to be valued because it enables us to see and understand the greatness of the universe of nature and life, but rather because from it we have derived mathematics and philosophy, 'the greatest gift the gods have ever given or will give to mortals' (*Timaeus* 47). A number of Platonic passages attest to a view of nature as unimportant;[20] when nature does acquire importance it is in virtue of the fact that in trying to comprehend it we are led to develop and serve reason. Reason cannot in the last analysis completely dispense with the slave order of material existence, but those who see themselves as its representatives can practise a less heroic form of denial, and try to make nature conceptually inessential, to bring all significance, value and meaning back to the master realm of reason.

PLATO AND NON-HUMAN NATURE

The terrestrial order, including both non-human nature, the human body and matter itself, is conceived, especially in the *Timaeus,* as fundamentally disorderly or morally wanting, and is redeemed only to the extent that rational order transforms its wanton and mindless chaos. These aspects of Plato's thought lay the foundations for the lifedenying tradition of contempt for the earth and for 'worldly' affairs which were to flourish so well later in Christianity. It anticipates fundamental aspects of the Christian doctrine, embraced in an even more exaggerated form in the Gnostic tradition, of nature as fallen, to be redeemed first by *logos* as God, later by science as god (Ruether

1975). It results in an opposition of 'good' colonised nature to 'bad' uncolonised nature.

In this spirit Plato makes no bones about the inferiority of animals—wild animals especially. The ideal country—for example, Attica as described in the encomium to the Athenians of the past favoured by the gods—contains no wild animals, animals which are useful just to themselves, only the tame or domesticated kind which are useful to man.[21] Animals, like women, are created after and as adjuncts to men, and are at the bottom of the hierarchy and farthest from divinity in the theory of transmigration of souls. Animals, especially wild animals, are constantly used as metaphors for the morally doubtful sides of the human self, such as irrational appetite, and for distance from *logos* (*Republic* 439B; *Timaeus* 71). Natural difference in animals, as in other parts of the lower order of being, is to be understood in terms of a hierarchy laid out in accordance with distance from *logos* and corresponding closeness to earth (a view Aristotle expressed more often and developed more fully). Thus, according to the account of the *Timaeus*:

> Land animals came from men who had no use for philosophy and never considered the nature of the heavens because they had ceased to use the circles in their heads [reason] and followed the leadership of the parts of the soul in the breast [spirit]. Because of these practices their forelimbs and heads were drawn by natural affinity to the earth, and their forelimbs supported on it, while their skulls were elongated into various shapes as a result of the crushing of their circles through lack of use. And the reason why some have four feet and others many was that the stupider they were the more supports god gave them, to tie them more closely to the earth. And the stupidest of the land animals, whose whole bodies lay stretched upon the earth, the god turned into reptiles, giving them no feet, for they had no further need of them. But the most unintelligent and ignorant of all turned into the fourth kind of creature that lives in water…they live in the depths as a punishment for the depths of their stupidity. These are the principles on which living creatures change and have always changed into each other, the transformation depending on the loss or gain of understanding or folly.
>
> (*Timaeus* 92)

Plato is hardly kinder in his treatment of the ordinary visible landscape of nature apparent to the senses, the world of hills, stones, trees and plants. In a beautifully written passage in the *Phaedo,* which prefigures and is no doubt a model for many later passages on the delights of heaven in comparison with the dolours of the earth, Plato gives his views

on the inferior and corrupt state of the world of nature that we know and see around us. Just as the pure and incorruptible Forms lie beyond the inferior objects which participate in them, so above the world we know there is another one far, far better, much purer and fairer:

> and, if the nature of man could sustain the sight, he would acknowledge that this other world was the place of the true heaven and the true light and the true earth. For our earth, and the stones, and the entire region which surrounds us, are spoilt and corroded, as in the sea all things are corroded by the brine, neither is there any perfect or noble growth, but caverns only, and sand, and an endless slough of mud; and even the shore is not to be compared to the fairer sights of this [other] world. And still less is this our world to be compared to the other.
>
> (*Phaedo* 267–9)

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

> decked with various colours, of which the colours used by painters on earth are in a manner samples. But there the whole earth is made up of them, and they are brighter far and clearer than ours; there is a purple of wonderful lustre, also the radiance of gold, and the white which is in the earth is whiter than any chalk or snow. Of these and other colours the earth is made up, and they are more in number and fairer than the eye of man has ever seen…and in this fair region everything that grows—trees, and flowers, and fruits—are in a like degree fairer than any here; and there are hills, having stones in them in a like degree smoother, and more transparent, and fairer in colour than our highly valued emeralds and sardonyxes and jaspers, and other gems, which are but minute fragments of them: for there all the stones are like our precious stones, and fairer still. The reason is that they are pure, and not, like our precious stones, infected or corroded by the corrupt briny elements which coagulate among us, and breed foulness and disease both in earth and stones, as well as in animals and plants.

According to Socrates in the *Phaedo*, the visible world of nature in which we live is, quite literally, a hole, its condition and status linked to that of the feminine via the metaphor of the Cave, their mutual association with the body, and numerous other features. Like the body and the Cave, it is an 'earthly prison' (Plato 1948: *Phaedo* 273). It is also a dump, a place where refuse and sediment from the higher world above accumulate. Change itself, the very basis of life, is proof of inferiority, and only the changeless immaterial Forms can avoid contamination by it. Biological

change, the decay of organisms and their change into other organisms, is viewed with disgust as disease and foulness. Platonic philosophy as revealed here not only devalues nature, it is profoundly anti-ecological and anti-life.

GREEK SOCIETY AND DEATH

Where does the remarkable set of values enshrined in the Platonic system of thought come from? Why is reason developed in oppositional ways as hostile to nature? The attractions of choosing the shadowy, abstract world of the Forms over the living world of experience are not immediately obvious. As Luce Irigaray puts it, 'what could induce anyone to choose as the more visible, the more true, and ultimately the more valuable something that is merely named and that is intended to replace something else that has charmed your whole life?' (Irigaray 1985a:271). The Platonic theory appears to represent an extraordinary inversion of intuitive thinking: the lifeless world of the Forms gives eternal life, the living world of nature is called a tomb.

In the *Phaedo* Plato characterises philosophy as the study of death, an indication of the centrality of death to his philosophy (Plato 1948: *Phaedo* 226). There are important and obvious ways in which Plato is hostile to life: in the establishment of an otherworldly identity beyond the earth which is the real source of meaning and in the corresponding treatment of the individual's life on earth as a prison; in the conception of the biological world of change and decay as inferior and corrupt; in the conception of the female giving of life as debased; and in the imposition of lifeless, abstract 'rational' patterns (such as the spherical geometrical patterns of the *Timaeus*) on the supposedly 'disorderly' world of life. These values represent in a fairly straightforward way the value perspective of the master, who identifies with the eternal order of mind, culture, learning and freedom—represented by the eternal Forms—and despises and radically separates from the bodily and manual sphere of compulsion, representing the slave, the woman and the animal. But there are further important and less often noticed respects in which Plato's philosophy is a philosophy of death, both in the sense that death plays a central role in that philosophy and that his is a philosophy framed in opposition to life, one denying the value of life. Some of these stem from the key role of war, militarism and the values of militarism for Plato's thought and their strong connection with both reason and the master society of the Greek *polis*.

As Alvin Gouldner shows, the society of the *polis*, as a slave society, depended crucially on war, not just for self-defence but for continuation of the means of production, or at least the slave part of it (Gouldner

1965:145). The life of the master, his ability to lead a life above slavish necessity, depended on war. It is no coincidence that war is a central organising principle in Plato's thought, and is closely associated with reason. The City of Reason is structured so as to maximise not one but two variables, which might normally be seen as incompatible, but which for Plato are perfectly harmonious, indeed inseparable. These are the maximisation of reason and the maximisation of the ability to wage war.

War is mentioned as a major function of the *polis* very frequently in the opening pages of the *Timaeus* and almost as frequently in the *Republic*. It is mentioned at least as many times as reason, and in a way which indicates that it is not undesirable. In the *Republic* Plato imagines an ideal society; to most of us that would be a society without war. But for Plato war is still seen as essential. The educational and other arrangements in the *Republic* (including the female guardians) are designed to facilitate war and the development of the warrior, as well as to serve intellectual goals. To this end the *Republic* advocates praising death and forbidding any representation of it as a tragedy or depictions of people mourning or bemoaning their fate. The deletion of such material from the poets (especially Homer, who has many such passages) is one of Plato's main motives for advocating a ferocious form of censorship. Plato zealously follows this principle himself in the *Phaedo* and elsewhere, not only in the form of eulogising death but in the form of devaluing life. The Platonic system involves the systematic valorisation of death over life.

The great accomplishment of Plato and the key to the enormous influence his system exerted was the creation of an intellectual framework for an otherworldly identity which claimed to cancel death. This accomplishment answered to the demands of a number of cultural forces and social groups in Plato's period and in later periods, most obviously those of the warrior (and in transmuted form, those of the slave). It also reflected a more diffuse dissatisfaction in Hellenic culture with the existing account of death (Gouldner 1965:362). It is a response to the Hellenic perception of death as a tragic shadow hanging over and poisoning life.

As Nancy Hartsock has argued (1985), many of the features of Plato's treatment of the lower order of nature can be seen to flow from the choices of the warrior-hero in a system which confers honour and status in terms of preparedness to risk life in combat.[22] The choice of the warrior-hero is the choice of spirit, honour and reputation over life, of culture over nature. In the win-lose game of the warrior-hero (Hartsock 1985:177) those who survive defeat lose both freedom and honour (Plato says of the man who survives defeat 'of him we shall speak no more'). Such men now deserve their fate as part of the lower order of nature (necessity) as slaves. The warrior in risking death demonstrates

his control over and disregard for the body and the emotions, and scorn for mere self-preservation and life.[23]

As Hartsock points out (1985:196), the warrior-hero experiences nature in the form of death as a hostile force severing continuity, and he experiences culture and 'reputation' as a positive force which provides a form of continuity. The situation of the warrior-hero leads to a demand for a system of thought which provides a way to cancel death and provide continuity, but which does so in a way which is consonant with the rest of the political context of the warrior-hero's life. The Platonic otherworldly identity is a solution to this problem. It provides a strong form of continuity and a locus of meaning in a way which is consistent with the need to promote death over life, to promote control by an elite identified with *logos* and devaluation of the lower social orders as lacking *logos,* and to model the whole in terms of the social relations of the master to inferior orders. Hence the otherworldly identity is not only the choice which comforts the slave (as Nietzsche assumed) but also the choice of the master, the outcome of the system of domination which sustains both identities. This structures the broad outlines of the Platonic system of the primacy of *logos,* as the value system not only of the warrior-hero but of what the successful warrior is in interludes of peace, the master of slaves and women, the citizen who relegates to others the work of necessity, but who is able to participate in the 'free' government of the *polis* and to develop his intellectual skills as weapons in friendly contests of reason with fellow masters and citizens.

The Homeric account was not, unlike Plato's, death-accepting. In the Homeric account life itself is neither devalued nor denied. Honour and the underworld provide a shadowy consolation for death rather than a replacement for life. The devaluation of life and the primacy of the abstract ideas and the sphere of reason, in the Platonic sense of the controlling and disciplining element, the imposer of order, is the new and immensely powerful Platonic twist on this older Homeric story of the warrior and the victory of honour over death. Reason (the virtue of the *polis* and the citizen as well as the warrior) replaces and subsumes honour and reputation (Homeric clan virtues) as the new focus for this otherworldly story. In the new story, it is reason rather than honour which now overcomes death in the form of nature and nature in the form of death, reason which has supremacy over the world of biological flux and decay, the 'world of changes', and reason which conquers the fear of death through rational argument.

Last but not least, the otherworldly identity, based on the primacy of reason Plato created, answered to the needs of a new class of intellectuals controlling written records, and to Plato's own requirements as an intellectual. For reason now proclaims its own supremacy, and that of philosophy, and its superiority to all other modes

of life and forms of power, on the basis of its ability to overcome, through the written word and its techniques of abstraction and universalisation (Havelock 1963), the fear of death and the various forms of disorder and decay represented by nature. Reason, and the life of reason and intellect, now has primacy over its war-ally spirit or courage (indignation), as the intellectual guardians have primacy over the second caste of military guardians. For Plato is not only himself of the class of the warriors and masters; he is also a professional intellectual and scholar, perhaps the first to give an account of human experience in terms of a fully abstract theory (Havelock 1963:302, 305). He both lives off these new intellectual skills representing the triumph of the abstract and promotes their privilege on all levels as the organising principles for society. *Logos* is the abstract representative of rational meritocracy, Plato's ideal successor to the unreliably rational aristocracy with which his political life brought him so strongly into conflict. In the opening passages of the *Republic* Plato demonstrates in dialogue/combat with the clumsy, inexperienced and overconfident Thrasymachus the superiority of reason to mere strength. Reason is the new weapon in the new context of combat, the new basis of power, but its elevation is still based on the oppositions of the master and the warrior, on the domination of nature in all its forms (except for universal Nature, which is an extension and reflection of reason itself), and on the otherworldly alliance with death in opposition to life.

DISCONTINUITY, DEATH AND EARTHIAN IDENTITY

For both Platonic and Christian systems, the meaning of death is that the meaning of human life is elsewhere, not to be found in the earth or in human life as part of nature, but in a separate realm accessible only to humans (and only to certain chosen of these), the world of the Forms and the world of heaven. The salvation awaiting them beyond and above the world of nature, a fate marked out for humans alone, confirms their difference and separation from the world of nature, and their destiny as one apart from that of other species. The real self is the soul, and continuity for the self is provided by its continuation in the world of the Forms; in fact if the real self is discontinuous from nature continuity can only be provided by the soul's persistence in a spiritual realm also discontinuous from nature, which furnishes the significance and locus of continuity in human life. This formation of identity ensures that it is not merely discontinuous from and outside nature, but is oppositional to it, and is in conflict with the basic conditions and fact of its physical existence.

   In otherworldly identity, death confirms and necessitates human

continuity in terms of persistence of the human essence in a larger order beyond the world of changeable things. Its meaning is that the decay of the body is of no significance (a theme given added emphasis in the Christian doctrine of the resurrection), for the human essence is not tied to the body or to the world of changes, but is embedded in a transcendent spiritual order which persists. Death so understood expresses continuity with this spiritual order, but it also expresses the opposition of the human essence to the contrasting order of nature. It teaches us that as natural beings we die, and that only as rational, cultural beings in opposition to nature (and hence to the basic conditions of our lives) do we live.

This account of death is of course no longer plausible for modernity: the other world beyond the earth has vanished as the source of significance and continuity for human life. For the post-Nietzschian subject, the afterlife stands revealed as a human reflection and invention; there is no significance outside 'man himself. But the modern escape from this otherworldly identity remains incomplete in a number of ways. Modernity has dispensed with the other world, disconnected from and opposed to nature, as the basis for human identity, but this disconnection, this opposition, *itself* now becomes the basis of human identity. The original location of human identity in the sphere of the immutable, divine order has been lost, but it has not been relocated in or reconciled with Plato's opposing, excluded order of living things and of the earth, 'with all its numberless changes and transmutations'.

No single position on human significance has appeared to replace that of otherworldly religion; rather there are a number of sons contending for the mantle of the Father, the power to confer meaning and identity. The sites of contest include science, progress, technological conquest, the economy. These offer different solutions to the problem of identity and continuity, but they are usually ones as hostile to the natural world as the old identity based in denial of human connection to nature. The religion of progress expresses and confirms the same identity in an endless and escalating process of conquest of those conditions and beings cast as natural. Where it is based in the conception of human identity as 'economic man' whose main identifying feature is the drive to the satisfaction of wants, identity is confirmed and expressed in a process of endless and escalating consumption of commodities. These modern foundations for identity are still based in the master's discontinuity from and opposition to nature. They fail to recognise any larger order persisting over time of which humans are a part.

Contemporary western identity has rejected the otherworldly significance and basis for continuity, but has given it no other definitive meaning, provided no other satisfactory context of continuity or embeddedness for human life. Modernity, despite its

pride in throwing off the illusions of the past, has not provided an earthian identity which gives a life-affirming account of death, or comes to terms with death as part of the human condition and with the denials and exclusions inherited from the otherworldly tradition. It does not give death the significance of unity with and embeddedness in nature, for the human essence is still conceptualised as discontinuous from nature; or to the extent that death can express a unity with nature, it is a unity with an order of nature conceived as dualised other, as itself stripped of significance, as mere matter. Death in the modern western context thus has the overall meaning of alienation, of separation of the individual from any larger order of significance. Death is a nothing, a void, a terrifying and sinister terminus, whose only meaning is that there is no meaning. The meaninglessness of death in modern western culture has much to do with the meaninglessness of life.

Any adequate attempt to rework the western tradition's account of human identity and its relations to nature must confront the anti-life themes implicit in its major traditions of death. A major philosophical challenge is to reconceive and reinterpret both death and the significance of human life in ways which are both life- and nature-affirming and death-accepting. A Platonic solution may provide continuity and consolation for death, but does so by treating life as of no value; it demands a terrible and distorting price for its comfort. An account which provides for continuity entirely in terms of the persistence of the real self beyond the world of nature must interpret that real self as outside of nature.[24] An account which treats death as severance from meaning and continuity also deprives life of much of its meaning and continuity.

To abandon continuity is largely to abandon the search for a framework of significance for human life, for embedding the individual life within a larger persisting order. Continuity need not be identified with an otherworldly continuity, just as reason need not be identified with the Platonic construction of reason. An ecological identity which aims to resolve the legacy of alienation from the earth must seek a ground of continuity not in *separation* from nature but in *connection* with it. This is the philosophical achievement, attained with great beauty and elegance, of certain tribal traditions, such as those of Australian Aboriginal people, which interpret death as a return to the land. For the Gagadju people, death is treated as a means of realising human continuity with the earth, and identity is based on the links between the community, the land and ancestral beings (Neidjie 1986; 1989). The foundation of this unity is the particularity of tribal land, which contains both the remains of past generations of kin and the other living beings it fosters and will foster. The particularity of these ties to land yields a

framework for human identity which underlies responsibility for and connection to both the land and the generations of the past and the future.

A culture such as that of the west in which dualism has such deep roots and which has lost such links to particular land areas as defining both communal and individual identity, clearly cannot simply borrow such traditions. Yet perhaps through them it can come to see some fuller and better possibilities for reworking its own world-view and traditions.

Chapter 4

Descartes and the dream of power

There exist no occult forces in stones or plants. There are no amazing or marvellous sympathies or antipathies, in fact there exists nothing in the whole of nature which cannot be explained in terms of purely corporeal causes totally devoid of mind and thought.

(Descartes)

THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN/NATURE DUALISM

Dualism has not only shaped our conception of human identity and the conception of the relations between humans and nature, but has also shaped the western mechanistic conception of nature. If early rationalism construes the genuine human self, in polarised and oppositional terms, as without the qualities of the animal and natural spheres, later mechanism construes nature as bereft of qualities appropriated to the human. The development of human/nature dualism thus destroys bridging characteristics from both ends, as it were, and writes out continuity. The human/nature contrast appears as the contrast of 'consciousness versus clockwork' (Kenny 1973:113).

The rationalist tradition is of course not the only tradition in western philosophical thought. But it is the key tradition both in terms of the framing of central concepts, and as the central focus in relation to which other traditions position and define themselves. An understanding of the rationalist account of nature and human identity is important for any attempt to forge an alternative. In the rationalist tradition, just as the central feature of human identity comes to be seen as reason (and reason itself construed oppositionally to nature and to other human features) the central feature of nature comes to be seen as its lack. This full-blown human/nature dualism develops historically, in a series of steps in the development of rationalist thought. The central project of this chapter is to trace the Cartesian contribution to this development, but I will begin further back with Aristotle.

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

Nevertheless in Aristotelian thought the human sphere was characterised by rationality, and there was a corresponding rational order in nature. Aristotle saw nature as a fusion of matter and form, and the form component—the rational principles which were discernible in and shaped matter—was mindlike. Thus the rationality of principles in nature paralleled the rationality which was treated as the central feature of the mind. The Aristotelian position left more room for continuity than is typically left in the rationalist tradition. But it was a continuity organised around hierarchy. And Aristotle, despite a much more organically orientated philosophy, ultimately endorsed in the *Eudemian Ethics* an intellectualist model of human identity in which all other human functions exist in an instrumental support relation to reason, which is treated as the supreme good for man, the final aim and true pursuit of the best human life.[1]

Neither Aristotle nor Plato has a conception of humans as a unified group sharing a common human nature in contrast to non-human nature; slaves, for example, are little different from animals. Aristotle, like Plato, sees human nature in terms of a number of kinds, each naturally fitted to a certain kind of life: not all humans are separated from nature and identified with the life of reason, only the highest and best. A generalised human/nature dualism as such is therefore not found in these authors. It appears only with the development of humanism, and the idea that all humanity possesses a common nature or potential, approximating to or identified with the Platonic conception of the best.

But as I have indicated, early rationalist and Christian thought lays the foundation for the later development of the human/nature dualism. Gnostics of the second century held that humanity's true or higher nature was not of the sensible world, but of the spiritual one. It originated in heaven, and the sensible realm of the body and nature where humans must live, as in a prison, was a creation of the devil.

Origen held that the first and original creation was not material at all, and that material creation appeared only after the fall (Ruether 1974:153; Jonas 1958).

Later neo-Platonic thinkers of the medieval period such as St Augustine identified the world of nature and of the body as lower, a perishable inferior realm, to be treated as an instrument to gain salvation in the immutable and spotless world of heaven, identified with the Ideas. Christianity has, as Ruether (1975:190) points out, encompassed two conflicting positions concerning the alienated character of creation, the Hebraic and the Greek, which is itself differentiated. But for most of the history of Christianity the tendency to view the material world as alienated, as evil, or as having at best meaning and significance as an instrument to a separate higher spiritual realm, has triumphed. These views of nature are the precursor to later mechanistic views, in which the redemption of nature is attained through science, while emphasis on the domination of nature without replaces or supplements Christian and Platonic emphasis on the domination of nature within.

In terms of human nature dualism, this means the boundaries become starkly polarised, appearing as divisions between the whole human and whole mental (cultural) sphere on the one side, and the whole sphere of nature and the body as machine on the other. In the Cartesian and later humanist revolution, the boundaries are redrawn in both the human and the mental area so as to eliminate or submerge the earlier complicating divisions within the category of humans and the category of the soul, to give unified human/nature and mind/body dualisms. (As we will see, mechanism is one outcome of this redrawing of the map.)

In humanism, the categories of the human and those of the mind are simplified and taken as synonymous, and a common human nature is discovered. But the older, conflicting alignment of supposedly inferior humans with the order of nature also persists, especially in colonialism, giving rise to a variety of conflicts within the master consciousness (for example, about the legitimacy of slavery). However, with the movement of production out of the household, upper-class women are no longer simply aligned with wild nature. Instead their identity is defined in terms of 'the household of the emotions', the remaining reproductive and supportive functions of the home (Heller 1976:184). This womanly area of household and child care is still defined as the sphere of instinct and necessity in contrast to the freedom of the sphere of culture and public life, but now appears as controlled, civilised, or domesticated nature and instinct (Kant 1981:26), in contrast also to the 'savage' nature of colonised women and the 'abandoned' nature of lower-class women

(Mies 1986). New inflexions and nuances of the concepts of reason and nature evolve to enable the structure of reason/nature dualism to cope with new kinds and sites of domination and annexation. Nature becomes a sphere of multiple, layered and sometimes conflicting exclusions, a concept of extraordinary complexity which Raymond Williams described as the most complex term in the English language (Williams 1976). As the common thread running through a number of these dualisms, nature is in various guises the shared contrast term to the master (males of the ruling class, race and species, who define the ideals of masculinity as dominance), the male itself, the human, the mental and cultural spheres, and the sphere of reason. With the rise of colonial conquest and expansion and the ideology of progress as technological conquest, nature as the primitive and as the past from which certain 'advanced' human cultures have supposedly risen is also represented as the dualised underside of the concept of civilisation, in the contrast of civilisation (reason) versus primitivism (barbarism or savagery), and in the ideology of racism as the contrast of higher, civilised races to lower, backward races. Maria Mies writes: 'The colonies were no longer seen as part of the economy or society, they were lying outside "civilised society". In the same measure as European conquerors and invaders "penetrated" those "virgin lands", these lands and their inhabitants were "naturalised", declared as wild, savage nature waiting to be exploited and tamed by the male civilisers' (Mies 1986:75).

The first step in the evolution of human/nature dualism, is the construction of the normative (the best or ideal) human identity as mind or reason, excluding or inferiorising the whole rich range of other human and non-human characteristics or construing them as inessential. The construction of mind or reason in terms exclusive of and oppositional to nature is the second step. The construction of nature itself as mindless is the third step, one which both reinforces the opposition and constructs nature as ineluctably alien, disposing of an important area of continuity and overlap between humans and animals and non-human nature. This last step, which is the one Descartes makes explicit, is frequently focused upon as the problematic element introduced by the Enlightenment. This is not entirely wrong: there is a major intensification of human/nature dualism at this time. The first two steps are clear in Plato, and the third is implicit in his treatment of original matter as chaos, the mindless material or primitive form of the world on which rational order must be imposed. The Cartesian contribution builds on and presupposes the earlier steps, and together they construct the great gulf between the human and the natural which has become characteristic of the western tradition.

Although animals had always in the dominant tradition been denied

access to reason, intellectual nature and the Christian soul, they were seen, by Aristotle, for example, as sharing other features such as sensation and emotion. Even plants share to a minor degree in aspects of the psyche on Aristotle's account (*De Anima* 413 a-b). The construction of animal and human nature along mechanistic lines extends and intensifies earlier rationalist tendencies to construe the human/nature contrast in terms of radical exclusion. The central feature of the new mechanistic account is that it takes neither nature nor animals to exhibit *any* features of mind.

This construction of nature and animals as mindless mechanism complements the earlier construction of the essential human qualities as precisely centred on the qualities of mind denied to nature. It yields a completely polarised account of the role of mind in the human/nature relationship. And animals present a particularly difficult challenge to such a view. Descartes denies animals the status of mindful, sociocultural beings through identifying them with the body and mapping the human/animal dualism on to his newly reformulated mind/body dualism (a mapping which remains influential). Thus he writes: 'On thus coming to know how different the animals are from us, we comprehend so much better the reasons which prove the soul to be of a nature entirely independent of the body' (Descartes 1952:149 [*Discourse,* part V]).

For the earlier rationalist tradition the responsibility for upholding human hyperseparation lay with the account of the genuine human self as rational, excluding or dominating those 'baser', feminine-associated characteristics shared with nature. Through the differential imperative particularly, rationalism provided a virtue-based account of the nature of humans and of the kind of lives they should strive for, of what was to be valued in human society and individual life in terms of the ideals of reason. While this account involved the radical exclusion of nature, with Enlightenment rationalism the emphasis shifts away from the virtue-based account, in terms of the Differential Imperative, to a theory of consciousness as the focus of the self. Responsibility for maintaining human hyperseparation correspondingly shifts from an account of human virtue to an account of nature and the body as pure mechanism, devoid of any elements of mind, which is now identified with consciousness. In the contemporary outlook, where the reasonbased account of human virtue remains a still influential older layer or trace (McIntyre 1982), the mechanistic world-view plays the crucial role in sustaining human/nature dualism, although it is often supplemented by new exclusionary accounts of human identity (for example, in terms of language use). It is in Descartes' philosophy particularly that the further refinements which widen and deepen the

chasm between what identifies humanity and what defines the world of nature and the senses are elaborated.

DESCARTES AND THE DREAM OF POWER

One major change between the work of Plato and that of Descartes concerns power, as well as the object of power. Although Plato views true human identity as outside nature, and although the *Timaeus* outlines a cosmology of rational order controlling nature, Plato does not view the task of humans themselves as the control of external nature. As we have seen, he is mainly concerned with the primacy of reason over *internal* nature, with dominating and disciplining the body, the emotions and the senses. The prime human task, the route to the higher type of life, is to move *beyond* nature, to rise above ties to the lower realm and to ascend to the heights of reason and contemplation of the Form of the Good. Plato does not seem to think of the natural world itself, external nature, as a field for control, something humans have power over or have to struggle with. He regards it rather as an inferior sphere of little interest.[2] The *Republic,* although containing all sorts of prescriptions for ordering the social and cultural life of the guardians so as to achieve the end of the best state, down to details of what sorts of music are permissible, says nothing about ordering external nature, and very little about production or the lower classes.

What has especially changed for the intellectual in the intervening centuries with the rise of technology (especially weapons technology) since the twelfth century (Passmore 1974:17) is not so much the separateness and inferior moral status of nature, but the confidence in controlling it. This shift in perceived human power in relation to nature is implicit in Descartes' images. Where Plato depicts internal nature as a prison and as a recalcitrant animal—both images of struggle—for Descartes the guiding images of external nature are those of the wax—passive and easily moulded—and the machine. The machine image confirms the new confidence in control as well as the narrow and instrumental view of nature associated with a technological outlook. The machine's properties are contrived for its maker's benefit, and its canons of virtue reflect its users' interests. If well made, it contains few surprises and superfluities: it does not outrun us, and we can hope to attain a complete knowledge of it. A machine is made to be controlled, and knowledge of its operation is the means to power over it. Through knowledge of the machine of the body, even death itself might be controlled:

> We could be freed from innumerable maladies, both of body and of mind, and even perhaps from the infirmities of age, if we had

sufficient knowledge of their causes and of the remedies provided by nature.

(Descartes 1952:152)

A new role is envisaged for reason, the role of exercising power over the natural world rather than escaping from it or rising above it through death or right living, the role of becoming the 'masters and possessors of nature' (Descartes 1952:151). To the alienated human identity of earlier rationalist dualism, in which what is distinctively and virtuously human is above nature, is added the fantasy of complete mastery.

In the paradigm of scientific mechanism, nature is nullified and defined as lack. It is seen as non-agentic, as passive, non-creative and inert, with action being imposed from without by an external force. It is non-mindful, being mere stuff, mere matter, devoid of any characteristics of mind or thought. It lacks all goals and purposes of its own (is non-teleological and non-conative). Any goals or direction present are imposed from *outside* by human consciousness. The human realm is one of freedom, whereas the realm of nature is fixed and deterministic, with no capacity for choice. Nature is neutral, indifferent and meaningless, with no interests or significance of its own, a mere endless hurrying of particles; any significance or value it might have for humans is an arbitrary product of human consciousness. In accordance with dualistic construction, most of the characteristics attributed here to nature are defined in relation to the primary term, the human, as absences or inabilities. They combine to build a picture of the sphere of nature not as a sphere of independent others whose difference and power must be respected, or at least acknowledged (even if negatively), but as a homogeneous nullity, merely wanting in comparison with the superiority of human consciousness, human rationality, human creativity and freedom.

There is a close connection between giving such an account of nature as empty and viewing it in instrumentalist terms as available without constraint for annexation and normalisation to fit human needs, as a mere thing for human use. For if something is conceived in these mechanistic terms, as lacking any of the qualities of autonomy and agency which are required for us to be able to accord respect to it as its own thing, it can be seen as merely our thing. If it lacks its own goals and direction, it can impose no constraints on our treatment of it; it can be seen as something utterly neutral on which humans can and even must impose their own goals, purposes and significance. It represents a teleological vacuum, into which human ends must enter. Thus a mechanistically conceived nature lies open to, indeed *invites* the imposition of human purposes and

treatment as an instrument for the achievement of human satisfactions.

It is no coincidence that this view of nature took hold most strongly with the rise of capitalism, which needed to turn nature into a market commodity and resource without significant moral or social constraint on availability. The mechanical philosopher Robert Boyle notes that 'the veneration with which 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 only looked upon [control], as an impossible thing to compass, but as an impious thing to attempt' (Boyle 1744:363). As Boyle indicates, power over nature, considered as a powerful other, was often previously seen as neither desirable nor possible.[3]

The view of nature as *terra nullius* available for annexation, as empty, passive and without a value or direction of its own, often underlies and is implicit in early liberal arguments for the legitimacy of private property. For example, Locke's famous argument in the second treatise justifying private property in terms of the 'mixing' of one's own labour with natural resources in the state of nature, provides just such a licence for annexation (Locke 1960:329). The argument assumes not only that the natural world is 'unowned' (unless so mixed with labour) by other humans, but also that it does not 'own' itself. It assumes that nature is a nullity, without value or direction on its own account, and that these things are added in by human labour. Without such a nullity assumption, the 'mixing' analogy is not at all convincing and does not show that nature is simply available to the mixer. For why should the addition of labour make it possible to simply annexe the natural world, without constraints other than those arising from the needs of other humans? If nature has creativity, value and significance on its own account, the result of 'mixing' would be more like the mixing of one person's labour with another's or with what another person owns. There would be thus no case for simple appropriation, for claiming the 'mixed' human labour to be dominant in giving property rights and overriding the claim of the item to be 'its own thing', with its own agency, significance and value. As Vandana Shiva points out, Locke's argument provides for those elite groups whose work counts as real 'labour' a similar licence for annexation by defining as 'nature' the work of marginalised groups, especially women and the colonised.[4]

DESCARTES AND MIND/NATURE DUALISM

A licence for the annexation of nature is provided by Cartesian mind/ nature dualism, the close associate of Cartesian mind/body dualism. As

Margaret Dauler Wilson (1978:199.) notes, many philosophical commentators on Descartes show some confusion about the exact content of Cartesian dualism. Cottingham, for example, seems to think that it lies simply in the fact that Descartes draws a distinction between mind and body (1986:119). I shall argue that the dualism of Descartes does not lie in this distinction itself but in the way it is treated in terms of hierarchical realms. For both mind/nature and closely related mind/body distinctions, dualism emerges in Descartes' thought through radical exclusion, through relational definition (defining nature as lack), and through instrumentalisation and homogenisation, as well as through other features of dualism. For the mind/body distinction, dualism emerges especially in the radical exclusion of mind and body and the elimination of mind/body overlap and continuity. This is done through the creation of the polarised conceptions of disembodied mind and mindless body which Gilbert Ryle happily described in the phrase 'the ghost in the machine'.[5]

Descartes is plainly the heir of the Platonic and rationalist flight from and devaluation of the body, nature and the feminine. Like these earlier rationalists he defines the real self as alien to the body and nature, and treats the body in the fashion of a devalued and denied dependency. But these objectives of human/nature dualism are now achieved by a different route, in terms of mind and consciousness, rather than in terms of the earlier conception of human virtue. Descartes' account dispenses with the subtleties of the divided self, of the higher and lower parts of the soul as elaborated by medieval philosophers, and the division between the rational and irrational parts of the soul becomes (as in early Platonic thought) a division between mind and body. The Aristotelian conception of soul was much wider than that of mind, rationality or thought, the special faculty which dealt with truth. For Descartes, non-rational areas which cannot be reduced to thought are no longer part of the soul but instead pertain to the body (Lloyd 1984:45).

Descartes shifts the basis of mind from rationality to consciousness. But it is a very special account of consciousness which continues to make reason its *de facto* linchpin. The shift to consciousness contributes to deepening the human/nature dualism in a number of ways. Rationality can be present in the world in different ways and degrees; for example, as rational principles in nature, as in the Aristotelian form/matter distinction. The boundary of rationality in this form does not necessarily coincide with the human, and for Aristotle the boundary of soul is much wider than the human. Descartes is anxious to reject this Aristotelian account and to dispense with any explanation which requires mind or teleology outside the human sphere. Animals are 'animal-machines' devoid of thought, the body is 'pure extension', formed 'without being

composed of any other matter' and 'without putting into it at the beginning any rational soul' (Rodis-Lewis 1978:156). The soul does not inform the body as its principle nor could it have emerged from it, but requires a separate and express act of creation by God, who then inserts it into the body in the case of humans, but omits it in the case of animal-machines (Descartes 1952:149).

The account of mind in terms of consciousness allows for no Aristotelian fusion and for no continuity. On Descartes' account, mind, the inner mechanism which explains the operations of the mechanically conceived human body, also divides humans utterly from the rest of nature, from which mind is totally absent. The mind, and its major feature consciousness, becomes an on/off concept—it is either fully present or it is not present at all. There is no room for distinctions of kind or for differences of degree. Either something 'has a mind' or it does not, and having a mind requires consciousness or 'thought'.

Cartesian consciousness or thought is a confused amalgam of different psychological concepts—pondering, calculating, willing, perception and heeding concepts, such as attention and roticing, are all run together. This amalgamation is important in Descartes' construction of dualism. The word 'thought', writes Descartes, covers 'all the operations of the soul' (1973:II, 36). 'Willing, understanding, imagining and feeling are simply different ways of thinking, which all belong to the soul.'[6] Thought includes not only 'meditations and acts of the will, but even the functions of sight and hearing, and the resolving on one movement rather than another' (1973:II, 36). But since some of these features (e.g. calculative functions, pondering) were taken to be peculiarly human, this amalgamation facilitated the conclusion that the whole set of operations which could be called thinking was similarly confined to the human. Certainly the term 'thought' or consciousness *could* be redefined to include in a democratic fashion the whole gamut of broadly psychological activity—imagination, sensation, emotion, as well as intellectual functions. But this is not what Descartes actually does, for the intellectual functions and reason retain in a *de facto* fashion their privileged place in the definition of selfhood *(sum res cogitans)* and in the account of mind, and are now deployed to deprive the non-human sphere of any claim to any of the other aspects of mind. Thus Descartes does not argue that animals have sensation, and therefore must think, but instead that they cannot think (reason), and therefore must lack true sensation.

The theme of the need for hyperseparation between human nature and animal nature (and nature more generally) is one Descartes sees as of supreme importance. He writes:

For next to the error of those who deny God, an error which I have,

> I think, already sufficiently refuted, none is more effectual in diverting weak minds from the straight path of virtue than that of imagining the soul of the brutes to be of the same nature as ours.
>
> (Descartes 1952:149)

But at first glance it would seem that a theory of mind as consciousness must provide some basis for a recognition of human continuity with other sentient beings. So one problem for Descartes, given his identification of mind with consciousness, is what to do about human characteristics such as perception, experiential characteristics, sensation and emotionality which appear crucially to involve the body, and also to be shared with animals. Descartes solves this problem for the Differential Imperative by a distinction very similar to that Plato makes between understanding music as the rational theory of intervals (mathematical harmonics) and music as 'tormenting instruments', between true knowledge of music as given by reason as opposed to the inferior or illusory understanding of music associated with the body, the playing of instruments and the sense of hearing.

Descartes obtains radical exclusion between mind and body through an account of perception which distinguishes between sensations construed as modes of thought, and sensations construed as modes of matter or body. Sensation is said to consist of two parts, the impression made by an external object on the organ of sense, and the mind's awareness or contemplation of this impression. Only the second is given the status of sensation proper, sensation as part of the self, of the 'I', for 'certainly I seem to see, to hear, to feel heat. This cannot be false; this is strictly what in me is called sensing; but this is strictly speaking nothing else but to think.'[7] Thus it is sensation construed as a type of consciousness or thought which gives knowledge and pertains to the subject 'I', and not sensation as a bodily phenomenon. Descartes writes: 'For I now know that, properly speaking, bodies are cognised not by the senses or by the imagination, but by the understanding alone. They are not thus cognised because seen and touched, but only insofar as they are apprehended understandingly' (Meditation 11: Descartes 1952:211). This not only frees thinking, and the experience of sensation, from any commitment to the body, and makes possible the dualistic polarisation between thinking mind and mechanical body. It also means that animal sensation can be construed along completely mechanistic lines as purely bodily on the (somewhat question-begging) grounds that animals lack the capacity for thought. The latter thesis, as we have seen, results from running together, into the notion of 'thought', the different notions of awareness, noticing, consciousness, judgement, pondering, practical and formal reasoning. This makes it possible to move from the claim that animals lack the capacity for reasoning (itself construed narrowly as

calculation) to the claim that they lack consciousness or awareness. This last claim of course is clearly false if we understand awareness or consciousness in the more normal sense, as including sensation and sense perception itself.

Descartes' main strategy for achieving hyperseparation and eliminating human/animal and mind/body continuity was then to reinterpret the notion of 'thinking' in such a way that those mental activities which involve the body, such as sense perception, and which appear to bridge the mind/body and human/animal division, become instead, via their reinterpretation in terms of 'consciousness', purely mental operations, 'modes of thinking' (Descartes 1973:VII, 81). Sensations proper now fall under the heading of 'thinking', and are quite distinct from any bodily operations of sight, hearing, smell, which humans might share with animals. Animals themselves have only the lower or bodily grade of sensation and 'lead their lives merely by physical movements', those 'movements of their fear, hope, joy, that they can have without any thought' (Descartes quoted in Rodis-Lewis 1978:168–9).

The effect is to enforce a strict and total division not only between mental and bodily activity, but between mind and nature and between human and animal. As mind becomes pure thought—pure *res cogitans* or thinking substance, mental, incorporeal, without location, bodiless—body as its dualised other becomes pure matter, pure *res extensa,* materiality as lack. As mind and nature become substances utterly different in kind and mutually exclusive, the dualist division of realms is accomplished and the possibility of continuity is destroyed from both ends. The intentional, psychological level of description is thus stripped from the body and strictly isolated in a separate mechanism of the mind. The body, deprived of such a level of description and hence of any capacity for agency, becomes an empty mechanism which has no agency or intentionality within itself, but is driven from outside by the mind. The body and nature become the dualised other of the mind.

Mechanism then involves a stripping process, the stripping out especially of mindlike qualities such as agency and goal-directedness. The same stripping process is applied in the case of the natural world to yield the account of nature as machine. Nature is taken to have no originative power within itself, and to be devoid of teleology, to be 'plastic'. Cosmos and organism emerge as a meaningless assemblage of parts because their organising principles are lost in the destruction of intentional description, and its isolation in the separate organ of mind. Because agency is stripped from a mechanistically conceived nature, it has to be reinserted into the picture from outside, either by godlike humans or by God himself, who drives nature as a separate Unmoved

Mover, just as the mind drives and controls the actions of the body. The position of the exterior mover *vis-à-vis* nature corresponds to the mind's position *vis-à-vis* the body. There is an intimate linkage between the dualism of mind and nature and the dualism of mind and body.

All these features of Cartesianism make for a great and unbridgeable division between the sphere of nature and the sphere of the mental, identified on the general level with the human and on the individual level with the self. *Consciousness* now divides the universe completely in a total cleavage between the thinking being and mindless nature, and between the thinking substance and 'its' body, which becomes the division between consciousness and clockwork. Gone is the teleological and organic in biological explanation. Mind is defining of and confined to human knowers, and nature is merely alien.

Several feminist philosophers, especially Susan Bordo, have argued that many of the features of Cartesian epistemology which lead to this loss of continuity result from an account of self which is implicitly masculine. Cartesianism retains and expands in the epistemological sphere the earlier rationalist denials of dependency on the body. The Cartesian knower as 'thinking substance' is without body, unlocated, his knowledge not limited by a bodily perspective; the body is backgrounded and denied in the Cartesian account of achievement and identity. As with the early Plato, identity is divorced from the body, interpreted, as in the *Phaedo,* as a hindrance to knowledge. As Bordo shows, the ideal of knowledge as freedom from doubt and as objectivity is also interpreted as freedom from the body and its deceptions, weaknesses and hindrances, its personal and emotional ties (Bordo 1987:89; Flax 1985:27). But these features do not establish a masculine identity for the Cartesian knower so much as the identity of the master. The body is 'feminine-associated', but it is even more clearly associated with other oppressed groups, such as 'primitives', animals, slaves and those who labour with their bodies.

In Cartesianism, as in earlier rationalism, the excluded and inferiorised contrast of 'pure' thought includes much more than the feminine. Its contrasts now include not only animality and the body itself, but also material reality, practical activity, change, the emotions, sympathy and subjectivity. These features are drawn together in the new concept of objectivity: interpreted oppositionally as pure thought, objectivity involves setting aside 'all distractions and passions which obscure thinking' (Bordo 1987:27). For Evelyn Fox Keller, the insistence on an impartiality which rules out any blurring of boundaries between subject and object, and the relationship of sympathy and continuity with what is known, is the feature which most clearly marks out such an epistemology of objectivity as masculine. I would argue that we need to modify this thesis in two major ways: first, it is not only the feminine

that is excluded, and second, overcoming Cartesian separation does not require the loss of boundaries or of separate identity between knower and known, because the Cartesian knowledge relationship is the epistemological correlate of dualism. It involves not just separation but hyperseparation, construing sharing and connection as a hindrance to knowledge, the object known as alien to the knower, and the knowledge relation as power (Fox Keller 1985).

A hyperseparated account of self also emerges in Cartesian solipsism, an extreme denial of dependency which doubts the other's mindful existence and treats the other as alien to the self, excluding the possibility of mutual recognition or exchange (Flax 1985:28–9). For Benjamin, such a hyperdifferentiation of self and other is associated with the inability to grasp the aliveness of the other; it reflects the dualisation of the self/other boundary and its construal as a relationship of opposition and power (Benjamin 1988:193). In the Cartesian dream of power, the subject is set over against the object it knows, in a relation of alleged neutrality in practice modelled as power and control. We are yet to awaken from this dream, which has formed modern conceptions of scientific knowledge and rationality, human as well as non-human identities.

LOCKE AND THE EMPIRICIST CONTRIBUTION TO MECHANISM

The 'empiricist' response of Locke and his successors to the Cartesian problematic attempted a very limited rehabilitation of some of the excluded area in an affirmation of some forms of knowledge obtained from experience, but does not challenge the Cartesian hyperseparation of reason and experience, or the impoverished account of the material sphere Cartesian dualism provides. Lockean empiricism also makes its own important contribution to the development of modern mechanism by amplifying the Cartesian view that sensory qualities are not really 'in' objects, and through its reduction of relations and other 'soft' qualities to a privileged group of 'hard', 'scientific' qualities. These features emerge, for example, in Locke's treatment of the distinction between primary and secondary qualities, and help in giving the empiricist tradition the reductionist and positivistic flavour it has never lost.

Locke's account of primary and secondary qualities involves much more than a distinction: it involves a reduction, for he does not merely mark a difference (in the fashion of Aristotle) between qualities which involve a relation to an observer and those which do not, but insists that one area only is real, the other epistemologically reducible and inferior: 'the particular bulk, number, figure and motion of the parts of fire or

snow are really in them,—whether anyone's senses perceive them or no: and therefore they may be called *real* qualities.... But light, heat, whiteness, or coldness, are no more really in them than sickness or pain is in manna' (Locke 1961:58). All Locke is entitled to claim about secondary qualities on the basis of his arguments is that they are relational, and his denial of reality to them both establishes a paradigm in which relations and dispositions are treated as suspect, as somehow 'not real', and privileges an extraordinarily impoverished 'hard', 'scientific' discourse in which only the attributes of 'solidity, extension, figure and mobility' are countenanced. The reductive corpuscularism (derived from Boyle) which informs Locke's account of the material individual is extended to the political individual: for Locke's political particles, like his material ones, relationship is suspect, the encounter with the other an accidental collision, a mere coincidence of self-interest. The accidental, external relation the other bears to such a self-particle is expressed in the view of society as founded through acts of political contract. Political particles extend themselves into the world not by forming relationships but by annexation, the incorporation of the other into self as 'property', obtained through the mixing of labour as self-substance.

The Lockean division between the 'hard', rational sphere of scientific corpuscularism and the 'soft' sphere of relationship, feeling and dependency now replaces the older Platonic division between the shining realm of eternal forms and the corrupt 'realm of changes' as the site of philosophical privilege. Gender ideals are now defined in relation to this social and intellectual division of 'hard' and 'soft' spheres. In the 'primary' public masculinist world of corpuscular contract, of hardnosed reason, hard science, hard politics and hard currency, instrumental efficiency reigns and particles must fend for themselves to survive hard evolutionary and social competition. The contrasting 'soft' exclusions include ethics (flabby sentimentality), beauty and meaningfulness (speculation), as well as the ideals of the private sphere, the home and the feminine, of altruism, values, emotionality, relationship and care. The private sphere receives legitimacy to the extent that it can be contained and instrumentalised, made to serve the primary 'public' and rational order. As secondary to the primary sphere of rational order, the domain of the private and the feminine has no political status in its own right, but can be thought only by being reduced, subsumed under the headship of the primary particle.

As Locke's mentor Boyle noted approvingly, the mechanistic project in which empiricism is complicit through its reduction of the world to 'solidity, extension, figure and mobility' removes the basis for an ethical response to that world. The mechanistic stance expressed in the treatment of nature as lifeless, homogeneous and passive and in the

negation of nature as agent, is highly invasive of the human sphere. The metaphor of the machine has deeply penetrated our own conceptions of ourselves and our society. The framework of reductive mechanism permits the emotional distance which enables power and control, killing and warfare, to seem acceptable, just as it did in the case of the animals Descartes' followers used for experimentation. The language of 'collateral damage', of 'body counts' and 'surgical strikes' is the language of reductive mechanism. It is the language too of the machine economy which increasingly dominates public life, in which 'gross domestic product' replaces 'good' or 'happiness' and people appear as market resources. In such a framework, the modern subject loses a sense of itself not only as an organic but as a social being, as an agent in and chooser of political, economic and technological frameworks. It comes to see itself and others as components of relentless machinery rather than as active participants in a political community. Retrieving a sense of other beings in nature as diverse, richly relational individuals and as originative, intentional agents is also part of retrieving such a conception for ourselves in our social systems.

Chapter 5

Mechanism and mind/nature dualism

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

BEYOND CARTESIANISM: MECHANISM AND THE MATERIALIST PROJECT

Modern philosophy has tended to consider Cartesian mind/body dualism, as it has considered so much else, as an intellectual puzzle, in isolation from its political and social context. But understanding Cartesian mind/body dualism requires an understanding of its intimate connection to human hyperseparation and to the dualisms of human/nature, male/female and subject/object, as well as its political origins in the wider network of reason/nature dualisms. Nevertheless in much contemporary and modern philosophy Cartesian mind/body dualism has been under attack. But the criticism of Cartesianism in modern philosophy has tended to leave the closely associated forms of mind/nature and human/nature dualism untouched, or even enhanced. The dominant post-Cartesian trends have retained both mechanism and the hyperseparated account of human identity, and the old dualisms often persist in more subtle forms.

Reason/nature dualism still casts its shadow across the projects of modernity. The greatest of its philosophical and scientific projects has been materialist reductionism, especially in the form of the discrediting of the mental and intentional, and the affirmation, in its place, of the concept of the material sphere as delivered by dualism. This project does not involve resolving these dualisms, but rather involves disguising them through a form of *truncated reversal*. Rationalism is rejected in favour of

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materialism, physicalism, or their counterpart in logic, extensionalism, and in favour of other reductionist positions which resolve the dilemma presented by human/nature dualism through conceiving not only nature and animals but also the human itself in the mechanistic and reductionistic terms inspired by Cartesianism. Empiricism, usually presented as the answer to rationalism, has also become part of this thrust. Its main import has not been to reinstate the senses and the body, much maligned by rationalism, as sources of knowledge and identity, but to validate a 'scientific', stripped-down, impoverished and subordinated conception of the object of knowledge through observational restrictions on what can count as a knowledge claim and the policing of a strict 'hard'-'soft' subject-object boundary.

Materialist positions, which have become popular and self-consciously modern positions, attempt to reduce the mental side of the dualism to the bodily, as in physicalism which reduces mind to brain (in mind/brain identity theory), to bodily behaviour (in various forms of behaviourism and stimulus-response theory), or to complex organisational machine states (functionalism). But the original dualism remains in the wings in such a conception to the extent that an impoverished and polarised conception of the material or bodily sphere deriving from the original dualism is affirmed as the ground of reduction. What is granted reverse value status as the ground of reduction is a conception of body or of the physical sphere stripped of psychological and mindlike attributes, considered to be part of the sphere of the 'non-scientific'. All talk of teleology, of agency, of goals, of striving, of choice and freedom is exorcised here.

For these reduction positions, the dilemma of the ghost in the machine is to be resolved by evicting the ghost and embracing its exoskeleton, the empty but serviceable mechanism of the world which is left. The mind/nature and mind/body dualisms are apparently resolved through this reduction, but at the price of a total, and not merely *partial*, mechanistic conception of the world. Modern mechanism views humans too as machines; perhaps not as clocks, but as, for example, 'survival machines—robot vehicles blindly programmed to preserve the selfish molecules known as genes' (Dawkins 1978:x). Sociobiologist Edward O.Wilson describes part of the mechanist project as applied to the human:

The transition from purely phenomenological to fundamental theory in sociology must await a full, neuronal explanation of the human brain. Only when the machinery can be torn down on paper at the level of the cell and put together again will the properties of emotion and ethical judgement become clear. Simulations can then be employed to estimate the full range of behavioural responses

and the precision of their homeostatic controls. Stress will be evaluated in terms of the neurophysiological perturbations and their relaxation times. Cognition will be translated into circuitry. Learning and creativeness will be defined as the alteration of specific portions of the cognitive machinery regulated by input from the emotive centres.

<div align="right">(Edward Wilson 1976:575)</div>

Such a resolution may provide a basis for human/nature continuity, but an unsatisfactory one which leaves nature as a sphere voided of meaning, a mere endless movement of matter, and which reconceives humans in similar terms. If these positions remove the basis for the total division between the human and non-human, they do so in a way which removes the basis for respect and moral consideration *both* for the human and for the non-human sphere. Such positions extend the instrumentalisation accorded a meaningless, passive and manipulable nature to the human, rather than resolving the dualism by extending the respect due to self-directed beings to the non-human. It is no coincidence that they also often endorse explicitly, for the human sphere, instrumental and 'human-engineering' approaches (Skinner 1972).

Both Skinnerian behaviourism and sociobiology (which appears in many ways as its successor) exhibit this devotion to an engineering approach. Sociobiologists do not usually (contrary to what the term 'sociobiology' might have led one to expect) challenge the reductionist treatment of animals which is deeply entrenched in the scientific industry (Noske 1989). Rather they tend to treat both humans and animals in non-agentic terms as the passively determined vehicles of larger forces, evolutionary or environmental, and the resulting explanatory framework disguises or denies the political character and significance of human actions such as rape.[1] The recognition of evolutionary and adaptive continuity between humans and animals by sociobiology is welcome. But to the extent that sociobiology adapts and extends to humans themselves a largely reductionist treatment derived from the mechanistic conception of animals, a treatment which fails to recognise animals adequately either as sociocultural beings, as agents in their own lives, or as others whose being outruns our knowledge, it is not a programme for enriching our understanding of the human or the animal. This reductionist stance complements its adoption of a framework of explanation which Donna Haraway has called 'the genetic marketplace' (1991:59).

Animals are an obvious and major source of human/nature continuity, presenting a complex play of both similarity and difference. This pattern is particularly difficult for a dualistic approach to treat. The philosophical treatment of non-human animals is thus particularly

revealing of the presence of dualistic assumptions, tending to swing between the poles of Same and Different. Under the sign of the Same or Self, animals are assimilated to the human or seen as reduced or impoverished versions of humans; under the sign of the Different or Other, animals are treated after the fashion of Descartes, in ways involving radical exclusion, and constructed as alien. In both treatments they emerge as inferiorised, because dualism cannot allow a non-hierarchical or unassimilated concept of otherness. We will see this pattern repeated in a number of other areas.

A deeper resolution of mind/body and associated mind/nature dualisms involves finding a *non-reductionist* basis for recognising continuity and reclaiming the ground of overlap between nature, the body and the human. Breaking down the dualism must involve remaking the relationship so as to remove the features of denied dependency. It means re-examining the lower value accorded the underside, the body, the senses, emotion, the imagination, the animal, the feminine and nature. Is the contrast treated as absolute and rigid or as allowing flexibility and overlap? Is 'nature within', those characteristics of humans such as sexuality and emotionality that are shared with non-humans, and which bridge mind/body dualism, to be sharply separated, feared, denied, denigrated, kept under lock and key by reason and never fully admitted to the status of the human (seen perhaps as 'mechanism', 'instinct', or 'id')? Is the sphere of 'nature within' still instrumentalised in the service of the goals of ego or reason (Mathews 1990:34)? Or is it integrated, honoured and accepted, treated as a vital and creative part of human life and culture? Are concepts of body, reason, imagination and emotion, matter and mind, human and animal, retained in their dualised and hyperseparated forms, even where the traditional devaluation of the contrasts of reason is abandoned?

Subject/object dualism is another legacy of the Cartesian denial of mindlike features to the world which underlies western scientific accounts of objectivity. Subject/object dualism, as a mode of attention to the world which denies dependency and kinship between observer and observed, has been discussed insightfully by Evelyn Fox Keller (1985). In subject/object dualism, radical exclusion can appear in the denial of commonality and empathy noted above, and the treatment of observation as itself a form of domination of an alien other. Fox Keller contrasts it with 'dynamic objectivity', a form of observation premised on continuity, which 'aims at a form of knowledge which grants to the world around us its independent integrity but does so in a way which remains cognisant of, indeed relies on, our connectivity with that world' (1985:117). Radical exclusion can appear also in the refusal to consider the object of observation as another subject, or potential subject, or as a sociocultural being possessing mindlike

qualities. This is routine in the treatment of animals in science, but also extends to the observation of humans, especially those of non-western cultures. The object side of subject/object dualism is instrumentalised and defined in relation to the subject and his goals: 'the scientist, in these cases…does not encounter the object as such, in its own fullness'; he aims to fit the object to some system or hypothesis, and ignores or denies features which offer resistance to these goals (Fox Keller 1985:120).

A deeper resolution of these dualisms would involve extending concepts of autonomy, agency and creativity to those who have been denied them under the Cartesian division of the world, thus extending the challenge to dualism to include subject/object dualism. Undoing the mind/body and mind/nature dualisms also involves problematising the rigidity of the boundaries, and especially polarised conceptions of identity obtained through exclusion. Postmodern philosophy is beginning to discover the body in the mind, the mind in the animal, the body as the site of cultural inscription, nature as creative other. We need not and should not follow reductionist positions in denying difference, in denying that the psychological or intentional is an irreducible mode or level of discourse different from the physical. But we can conceive mind as more bodily and body as more mindlike, and we can also conceive their relationship in friendlier and more co-operative terms. For subject/object, mind/nature and human/nature dualism, a non-reductive resolution requires both that we reconceive ourselves as more animal and embodied, more 'natural', and that we reconceive nature as more mindlike than in the Cartesian conception. This is a condition for remaking our relations with nature, and beings in nature, on the basis of recognising them not as things but as creative, self-directed, originative others. I shall explore what this might mean in more detail in the following sections.

HOLISTIC ALTERNATIVES TO MECHANISM

Anti-mechanist insights have been articulated recently in terms of various proposals for an alternative paradigm. According to many green writers critical of mechanism, we need to reconceive the world in one (sometimes all) of several new ways; first, as goddess or immanent divinity present in nature as a whole, making it 'alive' and lifting it out of the sphere of pure materiality; second, according to the concepts of various 'new' areas of science, for example, systems theory, quantum theory, or geometrodynamics (Capra 1977; 1983; Berman 1981; Fox 1990; Mathews 1990). These are said to be holistic rather than

atomistic, and thus to allow for more continuity between the human and the natural than conventional scientific concepts. The third proposal is for reconceiving the world in terms of process, an experiential reformulation that at the submicroscopic level allows us to see nature in terms of 'occasions of experience', and hence as mindlike.

The analysis of the logic of dualism presented in chapter 2 leads to the conclusion that an adequate resolution of dualism requires recognition of both continuity and difference. I shall argue that most of these proposed alternatives to mechanism have severe problems in balancing the recognition of continuity with the recognition of difference, always a testing balance to be sure, but an essential one. Some positions so stress continuity and kinship that difference disappears entirely, and is brought back, if at all, through a series of special stratagems assimilating it to self. Others, as we shall see, fail to achieve a non-reductive and non-hierarchical concept of difference between species or between experiencers, or an appropriate balance between whole and part, general and particular, self and other.

Many of these suggested alternatives, especially those associated with deep ecology, stress a paradigm of psychological 'identification' and extreme holism which treats continuity in terms of a 'participating consciousness' realising oneness with the universe, 'the mode of consciousness in which the individual feels connected to the cosmos as a whole' (Capra 1983:411–12; Mathews 1990:147–63). I deal with the problems in this type of position in more detail in chapter 7. For the time being I want to note how such a position privileging wholes over parts and sameness over difference, relies on telescoping atomism and dualism.

Mechanism, I have argued, involves the stripping out of teleology, agency and intentionality from the body and nature together with their relocation in a hyperseparated exterior mechanism (in the case of mind/ body dualism), or their complete repudiation (in the case of reductionistic materialism). Part of the way in which this stripping out of agency is achieved by Descartes and later mechanists, at the level of matter, is through a particular atomistic account of causation which later became enshrined in Newtonian physics. In accord with the radical exclusion features of dualism, this atomism treats ultimate individuals (particles) as hyperseparated, their relations to other individuals inessential at best. They are also non-agentic. They have no originative power or capacity for movement within themselves, but are set in motion only by the action of an external force. Freya Mathews notes: 'The only force allowed within the mechanistic framework is that of kinetic energy—the energy of motion by contact—all other purported forces, including action at a distance, being regarded as occult' (1990:17).

EXTREME OR REDUCTIVE HOLISM

The chain of reasoning which underlies the emphasis on holism identifies mechanism as a form of atomism, and then identifies holism as the cure for atomism, hence as the cure for mechanism.[2] This reasoning is problematic at several points. First, as Freya Mathews notes (1990:17), atomism itself, as the explanation reducing larger wholes to separate irreducible particles, is not sufficient for mind/ nature dualism, nor does atomism necessarily take an anti-teleological form. Dualism (together with other assumptions) implies the hyperseparated account of individuals given by atomism, but atomism does not imply dualism, since ultimate particles may still be treated as having mindlike properties. Cartesian and Newtonian atomism is the handmaiden of mechanism, but is not identical with it, and it is a fallacy to assume that negating atomism is negating mechanism. We need to learn to think of the world in non-atomistic ways, but this is only one part of the problem, and not any cure for atomism will do.

Second, the assumption of a simple dichotomy between atomism and holism represents a false choice, for there are different kinds and degrees of both atomism and holism (Plumwood 1980). Extreme holism should in fact be seen as a form of *reversal,* in which hyperseparation is replaced by its polar opposite, indistinguishability. We must acknowledge the significance of the ecocosm and of other wholes; there is much wisdom in the view that we are contextual and relational beings, formed by and in exchange with the other, 'the one living the other's death, and dying the other's life', in Heraclitus' words. But this does not imply the extreme of methodological or physical holism. A better alternative to Cartesian and Newtonian atomism may involve giving a richer account of individuals in nature as both agentic and essentially relational, as well as acknowledging the irreducibility of wholes. Although the rejection of mechanism clearly points to the need for a richer account of matter and of individuals, it does not force us towards an oceanic account of individual or of human identity, achieved through oneness with the cosmic whole, or any other set of privileged or reductionistic totalities. We must acknowledge continuity and cease to view the other as alien, but this does not involve the dissolution of distinction or privileging community over difference. Nor does it force us towards pantheism, a view of nature as enspirited through the presence of an immanent deity (of either sex).

GODDESS PANTHEISM

We have noticed how the Cartesian strategy involved stripping mindlike and originative capacities from the body of the world and concentrating

them in a separate exterior mechanism of mind which drives the body from without. This results in two mechanisms, the ghostly, separate rational or spiritual 'driver', and the machine, the body of the world, emptied of its mindlike attributes and meaning. The choice between these mechanisms, ghost and machine, corresponds to the conventional choice between religion (with its external god or conscious maker designing and driving the world) and reductionist science, embracing a mechanistic world of things emptied of design, purpose and meaning. It corresponds also to a choice between a fully human type of conscious purpose (as in the Argument from Design) and mechanism as the absence of any inherent purpose. It thus fails to recognise the diversity and multiplicity of teleological forms in the world, and marshalls these into two starkly contrasting orders. This is plainly a dualistic and human- (or humanoid-) centred strategy. Pantheism is sometimes posed as an alternative to this dualism, as an attempt to reintegrate in the body of the world what this dualism has split apart, sometimes through the notion of God as immanence, of indwelling, pervasive spirit. Recently pantheism has been seen as female, both in terms of the gender of the enspiriting power, and as a suitably female form of religious life (Starhawk 1982; 1988). But there are problems and dangers in pantheism as an alternative, and doubts about how far it escapes the dualisms it sets out to avoid.

Pantheist positions are often unsatisfactory for a variety of reasons. In many forms of pantheism, Nature is treated as fully sentient and as having, through its possession of spirit, human qualities. In this case there is no recognition of difference. Nature is anthropomorphised in fact or fancy, and the human is taken as the basic model. Such a position does not succeed in genuinely escaping a dualistic and humancentred model. Pantheist positions have also to face the objection that if spirit is really distributed through all things, the function of a deity is unclear and appears to lack point. But frequently such a decentralised distribution of spirit fails, and spirit continues to be conceived in separate and centralist ways. Thus beings in nature may still be conceived as really non-agents in themselves, and agency and teleology conceived as drawn from a centralised source, from a god, goddess, or spirit which acts as a secret ingredient, a hidden presence throughout the whole, inhabiting the shell and animating it. An immanent divinity conceived as the ecocosmic Whole or One may be treated as a sort of centralising spiritual bureau. It then behaves as a central agency dispensing parcels of spiritual life and virtue to devalued, dependent and dispossessed particulars:

Hers is the thunder, the lightning, the glory,
She is the morning,

She is the evening,
She is the star.
She wears the gown of mystery.
Heaven is hers!
Earth is hers!
Who can argue?

<div align="right">(Canan 1989:11)</div>

I would argue that the location of all virtue in a centralised source is a problem. In such a framework, beings do not escape thinghood and move to the status of beings in their own right. They do so only through participation in the centre. There are too many chiefs and not enough Indians in this picture, and the One as Star is both One too many and not enough; *all* may wear the gown of mystery. A form of pantheism which recognises neither difference nor diversity, and in which each particular is respected only for its sameness or goddess component, remains within a hierarchical and dualistic framework. There may be something to be said from an ecological viewpoint in favour of a symbolism of nature or the earth as benevolent mother or matrix of being, although the issue is a complex one and a variety of models are needed (Plumwood 1991c). But this does not justify retaining centralising and reductionist conceptions of nature which reduce all creativity to that of the centre, whether conceived as female or male. The Whole as it is sometimes conceived by alternative environmental philosophers (Mathews 1990; Fox 1990) also seems to fill such a godlike position at the centre, providing the meaning and significance which have been drained from the world by mechanism and which were previously supplied by God. But the importance of such a centre seems still to be obtained by robbing particular things of their own measure of significance or agency, again concentrating the source of value at the centre. Such a deity is theft. A view of the whole as spiritually or ecologically significant is in no way a substitute for a recognition of the great plurality of particular beings in nature as capable of their *own* autonomy, agency and ecological or spiritual meaning. For this, only a richer account of individuals themselves, as well as recognition of their intricate interconnectedness, will do. But if we have such an account, why should we need a deity?

PROBLEMS IN PROCESS

A contemporary position which aims to replace the mechanistic model and to break down mind/nature dualism articulates an alternative in terms of process philosophy, a position associated especially with the

name of Alfred North Whitehead, and more recently with the work of Birch and McDaniel as well as some deep ecologists (Cobb and Griffin 1976; Birch and Cobb 1983; Fox 1984; McDaniel 1983; Birch 1990). According to this view, the ultimate constituents of the universe and everything in it are events or processes which are continually unfolding or perishing: there is no great gulf between the human mind and nature. For Cobb and Griffin 'Process philosophy sees human experience as a high level exemplification of reality in general' (Cobb and Griffin 1976:13). Process philosophy argues that scientific understandings of submicroscopic matter show that mind and nature are of the same stuff or substance, and that mind is matterlike and matter mindlike.

In an interesting and widely read article McDaniel (1983) attempted to synthesise a Whiteheadian perspective with both an ecological approach and recent work in quantum mechanics. He argued that submicroscopic matter should be understood as partly lifelike and as creative and sentient, free and capable of decision in the sense that it is able to actualise some possibilities rather than others and sentient in the sense that it is able to 'take other things into account', to 'feel' the presence of external determinants and thereby be influenced by them (McDaniel 1983:300). Thus according to McDaniel submicroscopic matter is partially lifelike and is like the human mind: 'To speak of the mind as a series of actual occasions or energy events is to say that mind is made of the same "stuff" as matter' (1983:305).

McDaniel goes on to argue that matter is mindlike on five grounds of alleged similarity between human consciousness or experience and matter. Mind and matter have in common characteristics of freedom and choice, subjectivity (i.e. 'taking into account' although not necessarily in a conscious way), decision and creativity ('I create my own response to the data affecting me' in subjective experience) (1983:307), emotion and retrospection (memory), and the immediacy or continual perishing of subjective experience. McDaniel concludes: '"Matter" and "mind" are simple names for different types of actual occasions of experience' (1983:309).

We are not told exactly where these differences lie, nor is the argument from identity in process here unproblematic. The fact that both mind and matter can be interpreted as events or processes does not show that they are not events of radically different kinds, any more than the fact that both matter and mind could be described as 'things' would show that they were both the same kind of things. And the key argument that particles have freedom and make choices and decisions turns on the indeterminacy of submicroscopic behaviour, and on the actualising of some outcomes rather than others.[3] But this is a doubtful and extremely stretched sense of 'choice' and 'freedom', which for the human and animal case require an actual ability to *select* or determine an

alternative, not merely the presence of the *random* or undetermined element in causation demonstrated by quantum theory.[4]

According to biologist Charles Birch, another process theorist, all entities are full subjects, and we should think of 'atoms and other entities as occasions of experience themselves. To be actual is to be an occasion of experience' (Birch 1990:76). Although we cannot say outright that stones have feelings, 'they are agglomerations of natural entities that themselves have feelings' (Birch 1990:77). Experience is widespread, indeed apparently universal, but only on the condition that we reformulate our ordinary talk about objects in terms of the magic formula of process theory which admits us, like other spells, to a fairytale world where everything is conscious and shoes and string can feel. This formula is convoluted, so much so that we are urged to keep it for special occasions when we might need a world-view, and not to worry about it in everyday contexts (Birch 1990:77).

It is quite unclear what kind of ethical relations could emerge with respect to the homunculi which inhabit 'occasions of experience', or how this esoteric reformulation is supposed to make a difference to our everyday behaviour. But the real trouble in this account is its assimilation to a human-centred view. The account does not so much seek to affirm a basis for continuity as to erase difference, especially difference between experiencers and non-experiencers. Birch, who likewise appeals to the paradigm of 'undivided wholeness' (1990:82), asserts: 'The ecological model of the universe and its entities shows the fundamental similarity of all individual entities from protons to people' (1990:83).

The erasure of difference carried out under the sign of the Same non-coincidentally brings humans out on top, yielding a hierarchy of nature based on richness of experience or orders of consciousness in which the natural world is conceived as inferior to the human mind. The world has mindlike properties, but only to a very minor degree. (Thus McDaniel asserts 'the degree of freedom of an atomic event is practically negligible compared to advanced organisms' [McDaniel 1983:312].) The criterion of experience builds in an anthropocentric hierarchy, since it conceives the world of nature as similar to but of lesser degree than the human mind, rather than as simply different. Such a position seems to offer little prospect of a real challenge to the thesis that the natural world is inferior to the human sphere, depending as it does on the extension in a weakened form of properties which are exemplified most fully by the human mind.[5] This is not to say that process thinking in a form less totalising and less devoted to the erasure of difference has nothing to offer in the search for an alternative to mechanism.

INTENTIONAL CRITERIA OF THE MENTAL

The process account discussed above tries to extend to all matter the Cartesian account of mind in terms of consciousness or experience (subjectivity). It assumes that in order for matter to be mindlike it must have properties which resemble those of consciousness. But there is not just *one* criterion of the mind, but rather a whole cluster—consciousness, intentionality, experience/sentience, imagination, reason, goal-directedness—to name some. These concepts suggest different places and ways to renegotiate mind/nature dualism and each gives different results in terms of its application to the non-human world. One reason for the Cartesian emphasis on consciousness as the mark of the mental is that it is a concept perhaps most strongly represented in the human sphere. For the same reason it is the worst one to pick in trying to break down mind/nature dualism. I want to focus here on a different mark of the mental, intentionality, as part of an alternative basis for a non-reductive account of continuity between mind and nature. It is a basis, I shall argue, which allows both for continuity and for a complex pattern of difference. My appeal will be not to the success but to the *failure* of a scientific programme designed to establish a conclusive difference between the human-psychological and the non-human, physical realms.

Since the work of Franz Brentano in the last century, intentionality has been widely seen by phenomenologists as the most important mark of the mental. The criterion of intentionality does not identify the central characteristic of the mental in terms of a special activity of mind, consciousness, which supposedly accompanies all and only mental activity and so divides up the world, but instead identifies intentional or psychological discourse as falling into a certain special logical category, that of direction to or relation to a content.[6] The concept was introduced by Brentano initially to refer to the way in which psychological concepts especially 'point' or are directed beyond themselves to something which might be, but also might not be, found in the actual world. On the oldest accounts, the intentional involves direction, going beyond what is given. It can be true that someone is looking for a unicorn, for example, without its being true that unicorns actually exist. The intentional is a subclass of intensional discourse, which is contrasted with truth-functional or extensional discourse. Intensional discourse contains a great deal that is psychological, as well as teleological: talk about aims, goals, functions, directions, and a good deal more such as causation and natural law (depending on analysis). Mindlike properties are found in both the category of the intensional and the category of the intentional.[7]

The great project of modern logical analysis has paralleled and extended that of materialism and dualism elsewhere in philosophy in

seeking to subjugate through a gradual programme of reductive analysis the intensional area of discourse associated with the psychological and teleological. Extensionalism in logic, the dominant doctrine associated especially with positivism and the work of logicians such as Quine and Davidson, is the logical correlate of reductive materialism and dualism. The key to mechanism is the restriction of analysis to extensional forms of discourse which dispel the mindlike. Conversely, characterising an item as another being, in terms such as autonomy and agenthood, requires the recognition and restoration of intensional description.

Like materialism, extensionalism has treated all unreduced talk even of necessity and possibility, let alone of understanding, imagination, emotion, perception, teleology and agency, as suspect and unscientific. But it is now being recognised that the extensionalist programme to contain the problem area of mindlike properties has been a failure, not only because the reductive analyses of the intensional have sacrificed so much, but because neither the intensional nor the intentional logical categories holding these mindlike properties can be prevented from spilling over beyond the human sphere into the vast reaches of nature itself. The dam wall that has hitherto held back this flood of mindlike properties (and which was built to maintain the Differential Imperative, the insistence on the hyperseparation of human and nature), has begun to show some very large cracks.

It is now clear that the intentional level of description is not confined to the mental, or to the description of human activity. It appears elsewhere in nature, and is necessary to the understanding not only of mind and the human sphere but of nature and science. What is more, no clear boundary can be drawn between the intentional and the intensional, so the latter can accordingly be viewed as yielding mindlike properties. The failure of the century-long attempt to conclusively mark off mind from nature via internal logical features of intentionality is recognised in the literature. For example, a paper by C.B.Martin and Karl Pfeifer shows that a number of the marks of intentionality, including forms of *directedness,* are intrinsic to causal dispositions and are to be found throughout all of nature, including systems of dispositional states capable of complex, directed, regulative adjustments and control. As the authors note, such systems are to be found in non-psychological, non-mental things and even in inorganic nature (Martin and Pfeifer 1986:531–56).

The irony is that the concept of intentionality is perceived as a failure by logicians like Martin and Pfeifer, *precisely because* it does not conclusively mark off the category of mind from nature. Martin and Pfeifer treat the failure to contain intentionality at the level of the human mind as potential panpsychism, and thus treat it as a reason for

abandoning intentionality as the criterion of mind (1986:553).[8] But the spread of intentionality beyond the conventional human concept of mind does not imply panpsychism in the strong sense of process theory, in which all entities are fully mindful experiential subjects. Although the failure of discontinuity is usually presented as implying strong panpsychism (the thesis that consciousness is fully present everywhere and present especially in nature), this would only follow if we make the on-off assumption about mind associated with human hyperseparation: mind is either totally present in a human or humanoid form or completely absent. Once mindfulness is conceived in more diverse, continuous and graduated ways, the failure of discontinuity leads only to the much more plausible thesis of weak panpsychism, the view that *mindlike* qualities are to be found in nature, that there is no basis for an absolute break or an unbridgeable gulf marking humans as mindhavers off from the rest of the universe.

Both the discontinuity or hyperseparation model and the on-off assumption have had unquestioned status as desiderata in accounts of mind, such that their absence is taken to provide a *reductio ad absurdum* of alternative accounts. An alternative conclusion is that intentionality itself provides a basis for the recognition of continuity between mind and nature, and thus also between the human and natural spheres. The need to maintain mind/nature and human/nature dualisms is not only used at the theoretical level as a *criterion* of what can count as a mark of mind, but has shaped the entire programme of research into the area. The programme started by Brentano, and carried on by Chisholm and others, depends on finding a feature which sharply distinguishes the supposedly human 'psychological' sphere from the natural sphere. But it has proved extremely difficult to find a logical criterion of intentionality which will pick out all and only 'mental' operations and which does not collapse the notion back into the wider notion of the intensional, thus destroying discontinuity. Successive proposals by logicians have failed. Thus Chisholm in a series of papers (1952; 1955; 1962; 1963; 1967) attempted to make good the Brentano criterion of intentionality, initially characterised as intentional inexistence, as the mark of the psychological. Chisholm moved through a series of ever more tortuous modifications of the original criterion of intentional inexistence, relying on increasingly *ad hoc* and less significant logical distinguishing features. All of these ultimately fail and involve him in a major translation and reanalysis programme of the kind only too familiar from extensionalism and reductive materialism.

The rock on which even the more sophisticated later criteria based on scope and quantification constantly perish is that of separating the intentional off from the intensional, distinguishing mental and psychological functors from causal dispositional, modal, deontic, alethic

and teleological functors, to name a few. Although the search for a logical criterion which separates these has not been successful, that does not of course show that there is not such a logical characteristic. What does seem clear, however, is that the increasingly minor logical differences appealed to cannot correspond to any really significant philosophical division, certainly not as cosmic a division as that alleged to hold between mind and nature. So even if a logical feature separating psychological functors from other intentional ones can be found, it does not support the view that there is a major difference in kind between the sphere of the psychological, and the sphere of the non-psychological but intensional.

CONTINUITY AND DIFFERENCE

Intentionality provides a ground of continuity between mind and nature, but also a basis for recognising the heterogeneity of nature since it makes possible a rich set of distinctions among mindlike properties. It does this to a much greater degree than the Cartesian on/off concept of mind, and the simple spectrum concept emphasised by process theory, which establishes a hierarchy in terms of 'richness of experience' or sentience.

   On the intentionality criterion, mindlike qualities are spread throughout nature, and are necessary to its understanding, but there is a high level of differentiation between different sorts of mindlike qualities, and between different sorts of beings which have them. Intentionality is an umbrella under which shelter more specific criteria of mind such as sentience, choice, consciousness and goal-directedness (teleology). Thus intentionality provides a way to realise continuity without assimilation, to represent the staggering and exuberant complexity and heterogeneity of nature. It provides a complex of distinctions, a web of difference against an overall ground of continuity, and a way to reject any absolute, cosmic division or break between the human and natural spheres based on the possession of mind. Nor does it retain a break which is relocated elsewhere, as in the case of the absolute divorce between animate and inanimate nature, or sentience and the rest, characteristic, for example, of utilitarianism and many animal liberation views. Because intentional systems are differentiated in terms of kind rather than of degree of variation along the same axis, it is possible to conceive much of the field in terms of a non-hierarchical concept of difference, rather than of an experiential meritocracy with humans at the top. We do not have to decree, for example, along with Dennett, that plants are 'degenerate, uninteresting and negligible Intentional systems' (Dennett 1976:180). To a more sensitive and less human-centred view, the plant world includes

fully intentional others whose strivings, interactions and differences in life strategy are intricate, amazing and mysterious.

Thus we can distinguish, without ordering as a hierarchy, items within a complex differentiated field in which mind is expressed in a family of related intentional concepts. This is applicable at varying levels and in varying ways to the natural world generally, as well as to humans. In this field we might see (but with a high degree of caution against the arrogance of presuming to totally encompass the other) some complex, highly intensional psychological activities, such as second order desires (for example, desiring to be a different kind of person), as *perhaps* confined to certain humans.[9] To certain kinds of animals including humans we can clearly ascribe awareness, choice, decision, emotion, imagination and consciousness—for example, missing a companion, learning a new technique, choosing the wrong way, or noticing the gate; and perhaps to a wider class again sentience, emotion, volition and sensation, feeling pain and pleasure, as well as certain sensory and intentional capacities humans do not possess. To all living creatures we may clearly ascribe a teleology or overall life-goal, for the sake of which its parts are organised, as well as many other teleological concepts. The unfolding, development and directedness inherent in natural processes also involve a kind of teleology and intentionality, and this redescription in the intensional terms of process constitutes part of the appeal of process theory.[10] Intentionality is common to all these things, and does not mark off the human, the mental, or even the animate.

An important part of obtaining alternatives to a mechanistic paradigm and of breaking down mind/nature dualism is the reinstatement of teleology as important and irreducible. But neither an anthropocentric Aristotelian teleology nor an anthropomorphic animistic one is needed here. There is an extended family of teleological concepts, and while some of these may require meta-levels of consciousness and may apply only to so-called higher animals, others can be applied without any anthropomorphism to non-conscious beings. Notions of growth, of flourishing, for example, are implicitly teleological and do not presuppose consciousness; some, concepts such as function, directionality and goal-directedness of a self-maintaining kind, are applicable to natural systems and processes generally. Mountains, for example, present themselves as the products of a lengthy unfolding natural process, having a certain sort of history and direction as part of this process, and with a certain kind of potential for change. Trees appear as self-directing beings with an overall 'good' or interest and a capacity for individual choice in response to their conditions of life. Forest ecosystems can be seen as wholes whose interrelationship of parts can only be understood in terms of stabilising and organising principles, which must again be understood teleologically. Even the

machine itself is not as 'dead' as the mechanistic world-view has led us to believe, and can outrun extensional description. We should not aim to replace the dualism of reason and nature by a new dualism of the organic/ mechanical, in which moral and value status is achieved against an excluded and alien class in the form of the inorganic and mechanical world (Haraway 1991:127).

MECHANISM AND THE INTENTIONAL STANCE

We saw how the Cartesian strategy created the mechanical body deprived of autonomy and agency by concentrating intentionality in a hyperseparated organ of mind. The roots of mechanism in each dualism, mind/nature and mind/body, are the same. The deadness or lifelessness of mechanistically conceived nature, like the deadness of the body, appears in the stripping off of both intentional and intensional characteristics, and confinement to the 'neutral' extensional ones which make nature a dull and meaningless affair. The readmission of intentional description reintroduces agency and closes the gap Descartes opened. Thus an alternative to mechanism does not need an anthropomorphic 'respiritualisation' of nature, as most advocates and critics of anti-mechanist views have assumed. An alternative to mechanism should certainly try to avoid centralising and dualising forms of 'respiritualisation', whether cast as male or female. We should aim to find cultural ways to recognise and celebrate the play of intentionality and agency in the world (and for regaining sensitivity to the particularity and agency of place especially), but preferably ways which do not show disrespect for the otherness of nature by inscribing that agency with the cast of the conscious human mind.

There are many ways to readmit intentionality and to reconceive nature without dualism, and some forms of animism are ways of stressing continuity. But dualising forms of animism can result from acceptance of the dualising of nature and spirit, and the addition of spirit as an extra ingredient needed to make nature spiritual or subjective. The need for an extra, hidden, anthropomorphically conceived spirit to bring the dead machine of nature to life is like the need for an extra hidden mechanism to direct the mechanically conceived body and make it come alive. We do not need an extra spiritual force or an esoteric vocabulary if we conceive of nature in the reunified organic and intentional terms of directedness and growth, and of teleological concepts generally. We already have much of the vocabulary of natural agency: 'That stone doesn't want to come', says the mason of one that is indeed a being thoroughly embedded in the context and mysterious history of its place, and which anyway says 'no' to our endeavours with its weight. 'We must

consider the needs of oceanic processes in our use of the river's flow', says the Environmental Impact Statement. The life and continuity we try to bring back to nature with the hidden ingredient of spirit are already there if we resist the 'scientific' attempt to remove, reduce and replace these deeply embedded ways of thinking and speaking about and with nature. The difference between those who have found in nature a sustaining companion, and those who see in it a dead machine or a slave, is that the first group see and are part of a nature intensely alive with beings engaged in various kinds of mindful, purposive, directional activity; this is not a world populated by human subjects and the left-overs, but a world where humans can encounter nature as non-alien other.

Human/nature dualism has distorted our view of both human similarity to and human difference from the sphere of nature, and the use of criteria which are supposed to distinguish the human and the mental sphere. When this framework of discontinuity is discarded, we can see that the major marks of the mental and of what is supposedly distinctive of the human, do not support a picture in which nature is alien but rather one in which nature can be recognised as akin to the human; human difference, like that of other species, appears against an overall background of kinship, forming a web of continuity and difference. We need to understand and affirm both otherness and our community in the earth. Mechanistic views of nature represent the kind of hyperseparation from the other in which the other is treated as alien, a non-self whose kinship is denied and which can only be made non-alien by being brought to reflect the self's own image. We can as humans indeed recognise ourselves in nature, and not only as we do when it has been colonised, commodified and domesticated, made into a mirror which reflects back only our own species' images and our own needs. We can instead recognise in the myriad forms of nature other beings—earth others—whose needs, goals and purposes must, like our own, be acknowledged and respected.

The adoption of the intentional stance towards earth others opens all sorts of doors which the mechanist stance, the stance of the other as alien object or thing, has closed. In the intentional stance we open ourselves to possibilities and exchanges which are not just of our own devising. We can encounter the earth other as a potential intentional subject, as one who can alter us as well as we it, and thus can begin to conceive a potential for a mutual and sustaining interchange with nature. Earth others can be seen not as objects for manipulation but as 'other nations' of roots or wings or legs, nations we must meet on their own terms as well as ours. These terms must negate the arrogance of the assumption that earth others are exhausted by our knowledge and our needs, and recognise in their limitless heterogeneity beings who always

outrun what we may know and want. Thus the intentional stance makes possible the conception of our relationships to earth others in ethical and in political terms, where ethics is defined as the domain of response to the other's needs, ends, directions, or meaning.

The ability to apply ethical concepts (for example, respect) to earth others is largely a matter of concept formation and of individuating them in appropriate ways, in terms of discerning others as autonomous intentional systems, rather than in terms of an instrumental and mechanistic system of individuation in which they are conceived only as fulfilling certain predetermined human ends. In a respect framework then, we would tend to frame concepts of, and individuate the world in terms of, the intentional stance towards the other. The Coca Cola bottle when individuated as part of a human instrumental context is not (or not without a further context) framed intentionally, and we can neither hinder nor assist its journey. Unless it is individuated as an artefact, that is, subsumed within a context of human agency and intentionality (in which case it is subject to the considerations of intrahuman ethics), there is no obvious intentional context to place it in. Unless we can find one, it has no direction of travel, and all outcomes with respect to it are indifferent. But the glaciated valley can easily be conceived as such an intentional system, if considered as part of a directional, developmental process of the earth, and we might both hinder its journey and stop it telling its story by damming it, for example. If the object of respect then, is the other, appropriately individuated, there is no need to draw a boundary concerning those who qualify for respect.[11] In such a respect framework, nature is individuated in terms of intentional others, to which we can open ourselves with wonder and gratitude.

The intentional stance thus opens up between human self and earth others many of the joys, challenges and perplexities of the interplay and exchange between human self and human other which the mechanistic erasure of agency in nature had foreclosed. The intentional stance towards the earth other makes it possible to regain the dramas of interaction with nature which reductive science has stolen from us, and to be receptive to the stories of other beings and places in the world. These stories can be heard as part of a great dialogue with earth others which people in other times, places and cultures have heard clearly enough and participated in. Bill Neidjie of the Gagadju people writes of the dialogue he hears and experiences with his body:

> That tree now, feeling...
> e blow...
> sit quiet, you speaking...

that tree now e speak…
that wind e blow…
e can listen.

We think.
Story we think about, yes.
Tree…yes.
That story e listen.
Story, you'n'me same.
Grass im listen.
You'n'me same…anykind.
Bird e listen…anykind, eagle.
E sit down. E want to speak eagle eh?
Im listen. You listen…eagle.
Listen carefully, careful
and this spirit e come in your feeling
and you will feel it…anyone that.
I feel it…my body same as you.
I telling you this because the land for us
never change round, never change.
Places for us, earth for us,
star, moon, tree, animal,
no matter what sort of animal, bird or snake…
all that animal same like us. Our friend that.
This story e coming through your body
e go right down foot and head, fingernail and blood…
through the heart.

(Neidjie 1989:18–19)

Life in active dialogue with earth others is exhilarating and manydimensional. Many of the issues and difficulties of relationship and interplay which are familiar from the ethics and the politics of the personal appear here also. We must interact, but how far am I entitled to assert myself against or impose myself on the other? We must adapt to one another, but is one party always to be the one who adapts and the other to be adapted to? How much must we leave for the other? How much can we expect to share? Here there is not just *one* play of exchange between self and other, but multiple and contextual ones. We cannot, any more than in the human case, stereotype the relationship as one of love and harmony, excluding all disharmony and conflict. Although we may aim for a relationship of mutual enrichment, cooperation and friendship, we may often have to settle for that of respectful but wondering strangers (not necessarily second best). The earth other is a being whose company may be fearful or enticing, fruitful or bitter,

intimate or indifferent, but whose presence is always more than the nullity and closure of the world presented by mechanism.

Chapter 6

Ethics and the instrumentalising self

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

(Ursula Le Guin)

REASON AND INSTRUMENTALISM

We have seen how the exclusions of reason are multiple and how the meanings and boundaries of the concept of nature shift to encompass changing social circumstances and opportunities for colonisation and mastery. It is not only the concept of nature which has this flexibility, but also that of reason. With the rise of science reason takes on the Cartesian sense of objectivity (disengagement from internal sources of error in nature as the body, the senses and emotions) and strips the natural world of ends and of the intentional elements which make an ethical response to it possible. With the rise of capitalism, the variations on the reason/nature story which develop in tandem with the emerging systems of individual appropriation and distribution turn on a concept of the individual, and of individual rationality, which denies both human social others and earth others in its concept of the rational egoist subject of social and economic life. The new conception of reason expressed in economic and in liberal theory continues to deny and background those areas previously excluded as nature—the non-human, the reproductive and bodily sphere, the labour of those colonised as nature—treating these now in the form of invisible inputs to the rational economy. It adds to this an intensified instrumentalism as the economic subject comes increasingly to the fore, and the new form of mastery comes to define rationality as egoism, and sociality as an instrumental association driven by self-interest. Accordingly self/ other dualism becomes the key to these concepts of selfhood and rationality.

In this chapter I shall problematise the treatment of nature as an instrument or no more than a means to human ends, the kind of selfhood which corresponds to this, and the political process of which both are a part. Instrumentalism is a way of relating to the world which corresponds to a certain model of selfhood, the selfhood conceived as that of the individual who stands apart from an alien other and denies his own relationship to and dependency on this other. I explore further the cluster of connections between instrumentalism and self/other dualism.

Recent feminist accounts of the structures involved in sexual domination can contribute to an understanding of structures of human identity involved in domination of nature. Feminist accounts of the formation of self through relationship and difference have, I argue, much to contribute to an understanding of the ecological self. I consider the mutual self as providing an alternative account of relations to nature which both breaks down self/other dualism and provides a model for relations of care, friendship and respect for nature, and hence for the ecological self.

I shall characterise instrumentalism with respect to nature here, as elsewhere (Plumwood and Routley 1979; Plumwood 1980; 1991b) as the kind of use of an earth other which treats it as entirely a means to another's ends, as one whose being creates no limits on use and which can be entirely shaped to ends not its own. We must distinguish instrumentalism in this strong sense from the sort of use of the other which does not reduce that other to an instrument for use. In this second case, even where the other's agency is overridden by the user's own in the process of bringing it into use, it is acknowledged as more than a means to these ends, as an independent centre of striving which places limits on the self and on the kinds of use which may be made of it. Instrumentalism is a mode of use which does not respect the other's independence or fullness of being, or acknowledge their agency. Its aim is to subsume the other maximally within the sphere of the user's own agency. It recognises no residue or autonomy in the instrumentalised other, and strives to deny or negate that other as a limit on the self and as a centre of resistance. In these terms it is easy to see the role the Cartesian 'death of nature' has played in encouraging the pervasive instrumentalism regarding nature which characterises modernity.

EGOISM AND SELF/OTHER DUALISM

The structures of self involved in human domination and colonisation are reflected, repeated and confirmed in the reduction of non-human nature to an instrument. The domination of nature and the domination

of human groups are linked not only by the logical structure of dualism and by the exclusions of rationalism, but by the dynamics of self-other relationship which flows from these. The same basic structures of self which appear in the treatment of nature as lifeless instrument also underlie the rational egoism and instrumentalism of the market, the treatment of those supposedly less possessed of reason as inferior, and as instruments for their more civilised western neighbours (as in slavery, colonialism and racism), and the treatment of women as inferior others whose norms of virtue embody a thinly disguised instrumentalism. The deep structures of mastery are lodged now especially in self/other dualism, which weaves a tangled web of exclusions and incorporations between self and other that I shall now attempt to disentangle.

The understanding of egoism, which is usually portrayed as a politically innocent moral failing of certain sorts of natures, is to be found in this problematic of the formation of self through the processes of self/other dualism. Liberal thought presents egoism as an unfortunate fact of human nature, and egoism and self-denying altruism are presented as an exhaustive set of alternatives. Where possible, egoism is to be overcome by universal reason, representing society, or by altruism, interpreted as the pursuit of the interests of others and the setting of one's own interests aside in favour of theirs. However, egoism is taken to be the dominant rational mode and altruism a subsidiary one, a praiseworthy but irrational exception. But assumptions about the egoism of 'human nature' conceal an implicitly male as well as a class model, for while self-denying altruism is viewed as supererogation for men, whose identity is formed via the public sphere where rational egoism prevails, such altruism is traditionally enjoined for women, whose identity is formed via the private.

The ideal of a life based on self-sacrifice creates severe problems of a logical as well as personal kind, for the supposition of universal altruism, that everyone behaves so as to ignore their own interests and serve the interests of others, leads to an infinite regress, the same absurd result as the supposition that all values can be instrumental (Blum *et al.* 1976).[1] Just as a slave requires a master, just as instrumental value requires a non-instrumental goal, an end in itself, so self-sacrifice requires a set of primary, non-altruistic interests to sacrifice itself for. The concepts of egoism and altruism therefore build in inequality and asymmetry. As is typical with dualistic concepts, each is conceptually shaped to and presupposes its complement: thus masculine achievement in the public sphere denies but presupposes the backgrounded female support system of the private sphere. As is also typical of concepts formed in terms of radical exclusion, their polarised division of the world creates a false dichotomy.[2] These traditional conceptions of self and other and of egoism and altruism are then each related as dualistic pairs.

The dualistic self which complements the instrumental treatment of the other exhibits radical exclusion. As feminist theorists have shown in their accounts of the formation of the masculine self through differentiation from the mother and the feminine, such a self stresses sharply defined ego boundaries, and emphasises its distinctness, autonomy and separation from others (Chodorow 1979; 1985; Benjamin 1985). The masculine, hyperseparated self of feminist object relations theory is a self which has not merely separated from but distanced itself maximally and reactively by repudiation of the feminine and the mother. Because it is hyperseparated from the other, which it does not encounter as akin, it lacks essential (as opposed to accidental) relations to others, and its ends have no non-eliminable reference to or overlap with the welfare or desires of others. In a tally of the desires and ends of the rational egoist self, others can figure only as means to its own self-contained ends, since it does not recognise or include among its own ends the ends of others, or recognise their relationship. The ends of others appear, where they do, only accidentally or contingently and as a means to its own ends, as in enlightened or rational self-interest.[3]

The rational egoistic mode may be conceived of as one where the self is treated as an end in itself, of primary or intrinsic value, and the mode of altruism in the sense of self-abnegation as one where the self is treated as instrumental to the interests of others who are conceived as ends in themselves. If we divide a person's goals into primary, non-interchangeable ones pursued for their own sake, and secondary ones pursued as contingent and intersubstitutable means to the primary ones, then the thesis of philosophical egoism is that even in the case of enlightened self-interest the welfare of others can figure only in the secondary set, never the first, primary set of ends. The resulting agents are conceived as hyperseparated and self-contained because no internal relations of interest or desire bind people to one another, and primary goal sets are exclusive, without overlap. The primary interest set of such a rational agent is assumed to concern only himself. The welfare of others may be considered, but only in ways which treat it as secondary to primary goals.

Such a self is also separated from others as a centre of striving and needs; it treats the other as alien and is thus not constrained empathically or morally by the other's needs. Hence it is not only free to conceive others without constraint as instruments, but has no motivation to do anything else. As Mary Midgley notes: 'The point is not just that, since they are wicked, they are unlikely to consider others, but that, since they are separate, they can have no reason to do so' (Midgley 1981:142). The central problem for a society of individuals conceived in this way is

ethics, which will appear to lack foundation, and its dominant ethical mood will be ethical nihilism (Poole 1991).

EGOISM AND INSTRUMENTALISM

In the egoist-instrumentalist model (the master model of self), the self erases the other as part of the ethical domain. The other appears only as a hindrance to or as a resource for the self's own needs, and is defined entirely in relation to its ends. Thus such a self does not recognise the other as another self, a distinct centre of agency and resistance, whose needs, goals and intrinsic value place ethical limits on the self and must be considered and respected. It 'experiences the other solely in terms of its own needs for gratification and its own desires', in Nancy Chodorow's words. The reduction of the world to the status of instrument is, as Marilyn Frye has written, the work of the eye which sees 'everything that is as a resource for man's exploitation. With this world-view, men see with arrogant eyes which organise everything seen with reference to themselves and their own interests' (Frye 1983:67).

For the rational egoist, others as means or as 'resources' are defined in relation to the self and its ends and are interchangeable if they produce equivalent satisfactions—anything which conduces to that end is as valuable, other things being equal, as anything else which equally conduces to that end. The interchangeability of others as means enables denial of dependence on any particular other, so that others are encountered as homogenised, as members of an already instrumentalised class or category. The transactions of the dualised self with the world are attempts to use others in order to get satisfaction for predetermined private interests. Such a self 'continues to move in the realm of subject and object, untransformed by the other. The self says, "You cannot affect or negate my identity, you can only be the object of my assertion"' (Benjamin 1988:195). In instrumental relations to the other, the self takes no risks but is not open to real interaction with the other, because the independence of its desires makes the dualised individual a closed system. The definition of the other entirely in relation to the self's needs means that it is encountered only as incorporated by the self.

Instrumentalism involves hyperseparation of the kingdom of means and the kingdom of ends, and means/ends dualism. When means and ends are seen as of radically different kinds, as non-continuous and non-contiguous, there are no threatening ambiguities or confusions about which item belongs where, no risk for the master consciousness of finding itself on the wrong side of the boundary, as the eaten instead of

the eater, the used instead of the user. A sharp boundary instils the necessary confidence about who is the other, and who is the master for whose wants and needs the universe is conveniently available. It erases too the possibility of identification or sympathy, as was so clear in the case of Descartes and his followers. Thus instrumentalism can also be thought of as a form of *moral dualism* between means and ends. It expresses the master perspective, the perspective of power.

The domain of ethics is the domain of those who have not been instrumentalised, whose needs and agency must be considered. The problem for rational egoism is to keep the prevailing ethical nihilism and instrumentalism which accompany the predominantly egoist liberal account of the self within the boundary of nature as representing the kingdom of means, and to prevent their infecting the more sensitive parts of the human sphere. This is supposedly accomplished for Kant by the use of reason to effect the division between the sphere of means and that of ends:

> Beings whose existence depends not on our will but on nature have, nevertheless, if they are not rational beings, only a relative value as means and are therefore called things. On the other hand, rational beings are called persons, inasmuch as their nature already marks them out as ends in themselves i.e. as something which is not to be used merely as means and hence there is imposed a limit on all arbitrary use of such beings, which are thus objects of respect.
>
> (Kant 1981:35–6)

I will discuss some of the problems of the Kantian use of reason to demarcate the boundary of ethics in chapter 7. The point I want to make here is that the lines between the human user and the non-human used are not in practice so sharply drawn as this passage and the official liberal story suggest, and the instrumental treatment of the other is relentlessly invasive of the human sphere. In modern life, for example, instrumentalisation remains part of the ideals not only of nature but of womanhood, as well as those of other subordinated groups, which are often inscribed in that particular calling or kind of identity. Although the mother does not relate to the child as instrumental product, instrumentalism appears in traditional motherhood and the traditional female role through non-reciprocal altruism, and the mother's finding of meaning and significance in and through service to others who are justified as ends in terms of their wider social participation. Egoism and associated qualities such as assertiveness and competitiveness have been part of the qualities traditionally deemed proper for maleness and are assumed by the institutions of the public sphere. In contrast women in the traditional family are supposed to exhibit feminine qualities of

altruism in the sense of self-abnegation, non-development or abandonment of their own projects, and putting others first. Many other traditionally feminine characteristics such as the proscription of confidence and self-assertion for women flow from this instrumental mode of existence, in which the instrumentalised are negated as centres of resistance and recognition of achievement, and self-expression must be obtained through the achievements of others counted as ends in themselves.

The official liberal humanist version of the modern reason/nature story holds that instrumentalism is confined within the non-human sphere. But in practice instrumentalism affects to some degree all of those on the lower rungs of the rational meritocracy: those diverging from the master account of reason. In practice we humans who are not among the masters find here, as elsewhere, that it is not so easy to separate our fate from that of non-human nature. But although the instrumental model is officially recognised as objectionable in the case of relations to other humans, where it must take disguised and subtle forms, in the case of nature it is the accepted and explicit western model: it is presented as normal and inevitable.

EGOISM AND HUMAN EGOISM

This instrumental model of the human-nature relationship is so deeply entrenched in the western outlook that even many conservationists work unquestioningly within it, and challenges to it often succeed only in slightly extending the master class. The treatment of nature as no more than a resource for human ends, and as having its significance and value conferred by or through human interests, presents the class of humans as the master.

The master model of egoism and instrumentalism, in which the systems of class, gender and colonial oppression have a heavy and connected investment, has been immensely influential in shaping the way the human relation to nature has been conceived in the west. The dominant traditions of western culture have viewed relationship to plants, rivers, animals, places and ecosystems as entirely instrumental, and defined human relations to others in nature in the same terms as the egoist defines his relation to others—humans stand apart from a nature conceived only as a means to satisfy essentially self-contained human interests. In this model, nature is seen as only *accidentally* related to human identity, and hence as something which can only be used as a means to the self-contained ends of human beings. Pieces of land are real estate, readily interchangeable as equivalent means to the end of human satisfaction; a place is no more than 'a stage along life's way, a launching

pad for higher flights and wider orbits than your own' (Berman 1982:327). But like the individual egoist model, this model does not always fit human behaviour, although instances of contrary behaviour would no doubt be more common if their possibility were not denied and distorted by both theoretical and social construction. Many non-western cultures have recognised that their identity as humans is essentially connected to land, and many indigenous voices from the past and present speak of respect for the land,[4] and of the grief and pain in loss of their land, a grief as intense as for any human other. When Aboriginal people, for example, speak of the land as part of them, 'like brother and mother' (Neidjie *et al* 1985:51; Neidjie 1989:4, 46), this is I think one of their meanings.

The human egoist model pictures the primary goals of humans, as a group, as including the interest only of other humans, which are therefore self-contained with respect to nature in just the way that the primary goals of the personal egoist are self-contained, making no reference to those of others. So entrenched is the model of human egoism that cases which do not easily fit the model are cut and trimmed until they do, just as in the case of philosophical egoism. The philosophical egoist holds that any action is really motivated by self-interest, even an apparently altruistic one, and can always find an egoistic motive which is the real cause of any action, even if it has to be specified in trivial ways. The person who sacrifices life for another is really concerned about reputation, and therefore really acts selfishly, and so on. In the same way, relationships to nature are cast relentlessly into a human egoist mould. Where there is no obvious payoff one must be found, and nature is represented as an experiential resource, an aesthetic resource, and even a spiritual resource.

To shore up this human egoist model, a number of arguments are commonly employed to show that earth others can have value only instrumentally, as a means to human ends. Any alternative conception, any notion that they might have value as ends in themselves, that we might have regard for them on their own account or concern for them for their own sake, is held to be incoherent, involving a view of nature as having a value which is inherent or objective, which is located in earth others themselves with no reference to human interest (Passmore 1974; Mannison 1980; McCloskey 1983:59; Thompson 1983; 1990).[5] Most of these arguments purporting to show the inevitability of human chauvinism are designed to demonstrate that human ends are or must be self-contained, and therefore parallel exactly the arguments for egoism. Many of the same structures and arguments are common to human/nature dualism and self/other dualism, which I discuss in detail in the next chapter.

ARGUMENTS FOR THE NECESSITY OF HUMAN EGOISM

One very resilient argument which is supposed to demonstrate that values are, and must inevitably be, determined through the interests of humans or persons as instrumental to their interests goes as follows:

A values are determined through the preferences of valuers;
B valuers' preferences are determined through valuers' interests;
C valuers are humans [persons];
D therefore, values are determined through human interests.

Hence, it is sometimes concluded, not only is it perfectly acceptable to reduce matters of value and morality concerning nature to human interest, but there is no rational or possible alternative to doing so (Passmore 1974:187). When this initially persuasive argument is set out clearly it can be seen to rest on fallacious assumptions and to be a variant of the argument for philosophical egoism. Although the argument above is formally valid, given only some conventional assumptions such as that the relation of determination is transitive, not all the premises should be accepted. The plausibility of the premises rests on crucial ambiguities and slides in much the same way as the argument for egoism.

   The argument for philosophical egoism runs along the following parallel lines:

AE actions are determined through the preferences of agents (in freely chosen cases);
BE agents' preferences are always determined through self-interest;
CE agents are individuals;

and therefore:

DE individuals' actions are determined by self-interest.

The argument for human egoism can be treated as the major representative of a family of similar arguments, and my criticisms here will transfer to the variations.[6] The key premise in the human egoism argument is premise B, and in the philosophical egoism argument it is premise BE. Suspicion of premise B may be aroused by noticing that it plays an exactly parallel role in the human egoist argument to that played in the familiar arguments for philosophical egoism by the similarly crucial premise BE. The first, human selfishness argument, like its egoist counterpart, depends critically on an ambiguity or slide on 'interest' effected by premise B. There is a weak, indeed trivial sense of 'interest' where interest is used as an internal accusative, and whatever

valuers value is said to be 'in their interest', merely on the grounds that they do value it, that it reflects their preferences. In this weak sense of 'interest' it means much the same as the term 'preference' employed in premise A. In this weak sense of 'interest' premise B is trivially true, but the conclusion D must be weakened accordingly, and does not support any conclusions about human selfishness in any strong or damaging sense. There is another, stronger sense of 'interest' in which 'in their interest' has something more like the meaning of 'in their own selfish interest', 'to their own advantage', and would license a stronger conclusion about selfishness (or human selfishness). But in this sense premise B, that preference rankings reflect the valuer's *selfish* interest, is false (or can alternatively be seen as begging the question). Both the human egoist argument and the philosophical egoist argument employ the slide from 'in their own interest' to 'to their own advantage' or 'for their own uses or purposes'. The final conclusion of human egoism, again parallel to the case for egoism, is not only that the egoistic and instrumentalist position is thoroughly rational but that there is no alternative, no other possible analysis of any action.

What I have said above is more or less what is usually said about the argument from philosophical egoism (Nowell-Smith 1956). But it is worth looking in more detail at why these two senses of 'interest' are different and what their conflation is designed to achieve. The weak sense of 'interest', as we have seen, can include cases where your interests include those of other people; that is to say, relational interests. Thus it does not follow from the assumption that because people make choices according to their own preferences (which amounts to little more than the claim that their choices are their own choices and not someone else's), these preferences do not take into account the interests or preferences of other people; that they are, in this sense, 'selfish interests'. Similarly in the human case, it does not follow that because humans arrive at some set of values and choose according to it, these choices only reflect the interests of humans, and cannot involve essential relation to the interests of some other species. Just as BE is refuted by examples of non-self-interested behaviour, so B is refuted by examples of behaviour which does not just reflect the interest of humankind. The real ambiguity then is between relational and self-contained interests, and their conflation is designed to convince us that interests must be self-contained, in the individual case making ineliminable reference only to that individual's well-being, and in the human case only to the well-being of other humans. The weak sense of 'interest' then is inclusive, and allows for relational cases, while the strong sense implies self-containment, and does not.

But there is no more reason to accept an account of interests as self-contained or as self-centred or species-centred in the human species case

than in the individual human case. Just as relatedness of interest breaks this false dichotomy in the individual case, so it does in the case of human egoism. The actions and desires of the human species and its members can reflect not only their own interest (egoism), or the interest of other species (altruism), but a relationship between their own interest and that of another, and a relationship of a non-contingent kind. And such relationships can hold between humans, both individually and in social groups, and nature, in whole or in part. My welfare or satisfaction may be essentially connected to the thriving of a particular set of ecosystems, to the welfare of particular animals or plants (and ultimately if more distantly to the thriving of global nature), just as much as to the thriving of human kin.

Just as in the individual case, such examples are contested by the advocate of egoism, who insists that the endangered species, like the drowning man, is saved through desire for fame or to assuage guilt or for some other self-centred reason. But such an analysis of examples is not compulsory, and is often very strained. The egoist analysis of examples trades heavily on the egoism/altruism false dichotomy and the supposed sharpness of the boundary between them. The Kantian framework requiring totally disinterested action is often brought into play here to show the correctness of a general egoistic analysis, and gave Kant himself reason to despair that 'some secret impulse of self-love, merely appearing as the idea of duty, was not the actual determining cause of the will. We like to flatter ourselves with the false claim to a more noble motive; but in fact we can never, even by the strictest examination, completely plumb the depths of the secret incentives of our actions' (1981:19). But in fact the requirement that we be sure that *no* motives of a self-interested kind are present is far too strong, and sets up a false choice between egoism and pure otherinterestedness. What is required is that one be concerned with others for their own sake and that one's ends make ineliminable reference to the ends of others, not that they be somehow totally free of self.[7] And this is just as possible to achieve in the case of non-human others as it is in the case of human others.

LIBERALISM AND THE DENIAL OF THE OTHER

In the structures of individuality constructed through the market and the public sphere 'individuals conceive of themselves as the self-contained centre of their needs and desires, and others exist as the means through which these needs and desires may be satisfied' (Poole 1991:88). Here the self-interested individual employs a conception of reason as the use of both other humans and the world generally as a means to their satisfaction, which is assumed to be the satisfaction of interests in which

others play no essential role. In the projects of such a market individual, there is no non-eliminable reference to the welfare or projects of others. The projects of others appear only to the extent that they are useful to serve the self's predetermined ends, and the desires of others are satisfied, if they are satisfied at all, entirely accidentally, in ways that are contingently and externally related to the self's own aims. This is the model of social beneficence presented by the Hidden Hand (Poole 1991:6).

The denial of dependency on the social other presupposed in the market conception of rationality is present in the original liberal account of the individual and of society and the state. In the founding fiction of the contract, society is treated as an instrumental association driven by self-interest, whose purpose is each individual's security and the co-ordinating and making available of the infrastructure for the market, conceived as the means to the satisfaction of the myriad individual desires. The individual's 'contract' with these others testifies to their externality to his needs, to their mere usefulness, their inessentialness. For such a lone, self-sufficient wanderer in the woods, he who encounters the other only accidentally and occasionally, the well-being of others is merely a contingent, mutual arrangement of convenience, not an essential part of his well-being.

The influential but impoverishing master fiction of the self as a self-contained rational maximiser denies the social and connected nature of the self, which could function in the way the fiction implies for only very limited areas of life. The instrumental, disembedded account of the relation of self to others and associated accounts of the individual as atomistic and abstract has been very extensively criticised in the area of political theory from a variety of quarters—feminist theory, in the critique of liberalism, and environmental philosophy (Miller 1986; Benhabib 1987; Benhabib and Cornell 1987; Benjamin 1985; 1988; Cheney 1987; Chodorow 1985; Gilligan 1982; 1987; Grimshaw 1986; Jaggar 1983; Hartsock 1985:44–5; Plumwood 1980; Poole 1985; 1990; 1991; Sandel 1982; Warren 1990). Just as the structure of dualism provides a link between the hierarchies of gender, class, race and species, so the master ideals of the hyperseparated, disembedded self are those not just of gender but of class, race and species colonisation, so that the web of hierarchies is integrated at the level of the liberal self as well as at other levels.

In the critique of this account of individuality, several theories converge. This convergence is not accidental, but reflects the denials and exclusions of the master as the representative of reason in the public sphere of liberal capitalism. The dualised self which treats the other as an instrument, the rational, self-contained maximiser of interests of liberal and market theory, also invokes the hyperseparated masculine self defined against the feminine in the construction of male gender identity

in the public sphere. The rational master self constructed in the market and the public sphere is formed in ways which deny dependency on the other, whose necessity, contributions and labour are backgrounded (that is, presupposed but denied), belittled and unrecognised. Thus the hyperseparated self of the master consciousness typically backgrounds the contributions to his life of women and subordinates them in appropriating achievement as his own. The public sphere presupposes but backgrounds the private (Poole 1991). The entrepreneurial self denies social dependency and backgrounds the social in the appropriation as private goods of what has acquired value only through the unacknowledged social contributions of others. The model of the individual who 'makes good' without others is a model which integrates class, gender and nature denials. Biospheric nature is backgrounded in its treatment in the market, as in western culture more generally, as the taken-for-granted backdrop to market activities, as absorber of wastes and provider of limitless resources, noticed only when it threatens to fail to perform as required.

As I noted earlier, critics of both capitalism and phallocentrism have pointed to an alternative paradigm of selfhood which recognises the denied dependencies and relationships of the master self, treating the self's desires as capable of overlapping with and as essentially related to the desires, projects and flourishing of others. A relational account of the self points the way towards breaking the false dichotomy of egoism and self-denying altruism, for only on the assumption of hyperseparation of selves and their interests would it be necessary to *abandon* or displace your own desires or interests in order for it to be possible to desire the welfare of the other and to include their welfare goals among your own. But, as a number of philosophers have remarked (Blum 1980; Plumwood 1980; Naess 1988b:22, 23; Poole 1991:54; Grimshaw 1986:172), where interests are essentially connected and you desire someone else's flourishing for their sake, what is involved is not abandoning your own interest, because in pursuing the other's interest you also pursue, *non-accidentally,* your own.

A relational account of the self accordingly promises a better account of the social and a common basis for dialogue and recognition between corresponding oppositional critiques, including, as we have seen, those which resist the destruction of nature. As Benjamin (1988) shows, we must understand the self as *essentially* related and interdependent, and the development of self as taking place through involvement and interaction with the other. The view of the self as a closed system only accidentally involved in relationships with others and of the ultimate desires of the individual as self-contained gives a misleading picture of the world which omits or impoverishes the most significant dimension of social experience. We can give a much better account of social life by

treating individuals as having interdependent interests and needs which make *essential* and not merely accidental or contingent reference to those of others. As Jean Grimshaw writes:

> The human self is 'embedded' in a network of relationships with others, both at very immediate and intimate and at wider levels. Human needs and interests arise in a context of relationships with other people, and human needs *for* relationships with other people cannot be understood as merely instrumental to isolable individual ends. For all these reasons, it is right to reject an 'individualistic' account of the human self, if by that is meant that the doctrines of abstract individualism or psychological egoism, or the notion that the 'interests' of each human being are sharply separable from those of other people, are untenable.
>
> (Grimshaw 1986:175)

When the mother wishes for the child's recovery, the child's flourishing is internal to her desires, not merely an external, interchangeable means to some other end, such as her own happiness. She wants health and happiness *for* the child for its sake, as Well as for her own. Such intrinsic or essential relationships are not confined to the private sphere, and the sense of loss and despair brought about in most of us by the future prospect of a devastated natural and social environment cannot be explained in terms of isolable individual interests.

BEYOND RELATIONALITY: MUTUALITY AND THE ECOLOGICAL SELF

Recognising relationality of concerns and ends is clearly a necessary condition for a more adequate, less dualistic account of self and of its embedment in both social and ecological communities, as well as for the explication of non-instrumental alternatives and of such key concepts as friendship, acting in solidarity with, caring for others for their own sake, and recognising the other's intrinsic value. The relational account has a clear application in the case of the self's relationship to nature, where such dependency and relatedness have been most strongly denied in the instrumental model.

A view of self as self-in-relationship can not only explain how instrumentalism can be avoided but also provide an appropriate foundation for an account of the ecological self, the self in non-instrumental relationship to nature (Naess 1988b:24; Mathews 1990; Plumwood 1980; 1986; 1991a; Warren 1990). The ecological self can be viewed as a type of relational self, one which includes the goal of the flourishing of earth others and the earth

community among its own primary ends, and hence respects or cares for these others for their own sake. Concepts of care, solidarity and friendship present alternatives to the instrumental mode within existing liberal societies. There are various different non-instrumental relationships possible here, as well as degrees of intensity. In some cases, relationships of care for particular places and earth others form part of one's identity, and these relationships will then be treated as the ground of action and choice, rather than treating these others as interchangeable commodities which can be chosen or abandoned at will.

The relational self gives an account of the non-instrumental mode, which includes respect, benevolence, care, friendship and solidarity, where we not only do not place the other among our secondary or instrumental goals but treat at least the general goals of the other's well-being, ends or *telos* as among our own primary ends. As a movement beyond self/other dualism, the relational self concept also implies some breakdown of means/ends dualism, seeing means as constraining ends and vice versa, and resisting analysis in terms of a sharp division of the kingdom of ends and that of means so characteristic of domination and instrumentalism. The relational self delineates the general structure of a relationship of respect, friendship, or care for the other as a variant on Aristotle's account of friendship: wishing for the other's good for their own sake. Such a non-instrumental conception of relationship to the other, although not yet a full account of ecological selfhood, is an important ingredient in such an account.

However, acknowledging embedment on its own provides an incomplete resolution of self/other dualism, and leaves us still beside the Ocean of Continuity. There are different ways to proceed from there and to develop the account of the relational self, some of which threaten to plunge us into the problems of merger, and the denial of difference. In terms of the account of dualism I have presented, recognising relationality, embedment and continuity overcomes hyperseparation of selves, but does nothing to counter incorporation, the definition of the other in terms of the self's realm of agency. The difference between radical exclusion and incorporation corresponds to two distinct elements in denying the other: radical exclusion corresponds to the conception of self as self-contained and of other as alien which denies relationship and continuity, while incorporation corresponds to the totalising denial which denies the other by denying difference, treating the other as a form of the same or self. As we have noticed, two movements are therefore required to overcome dualistic constructions of self/other—recognising kinship and recognising difference. The second movement is essential to capture the mutual features of the social, the interaction between individuals who are recognised as distinct centres of striving and resistance, and as others who can transform and be mutually

transformed by the other. As I have stressed, the recognition of difference is especially critical in mutual relationships with earth others.

Drawing on elements of object-relations theory and of Hegel's narrative of interacting subjectivities in the master/slave dialectic, Jessica Benjamin in *The Bonds of Love* presents an illuminating account of the development of the mutual self through intersubjective interaction, and the distortion of this process involved in domination and instrumentalism. The experience of resistance the real world offers to the self is obtained through the encounter with someone else's needs and reality, creating an interactive process in which each transforms and limits the other. For Benjamin, the process of mutual transformation or recognition, the 'dance of interaction', is the basis of the formation of self through mutuality, a process in which an external other sets a boundary or limit to the self and its desires. This formation involves the recognition of the other as alike (non-alien) but as different, as other.

As in the account of the relational self, the individual conceived in terms of mutuality is formed by, bound to and in interaction with others through a rich set of relationships which are essential to and not incidental to his or her projects. Nevertheless he or she can and must remain a distinct individual, separated but not hyperseparated. He or she is not simply at the mercy of these relationships, dissolved, passive and defined by others (as some holistic claims about relational selves suggest), but is an active participant in them and determinant of them. The reciprocity and mutuality which form such a self are not only compatible with but actually *require* the existence of others who are distinct and not merged, making possible the 'combination of resonance and difference' (Benjamin 1988:26) on which the interplay of self and other is based. As Benjamin puts it: 'The recognition a child seeks is something the mother is able to give only by virtue of her independent identity' (Benjamin 1988:24). The feeling of union and contact occurs in active exchange with an other who contributes enough difference to create a boundary to the self:

> Experiences of 'being with' are predicated on a continually evolving awareness of difference, on a sense of intimacy felt as occurring between 'the *two* of us'. The fact that self and other are not merged is precisely what makes experiences of merging have such high emotional impact.
>
> (Benjamin 1988:47)

The strength of this awareness of difference and the resulting tension between like and unlike can make experiences of contact with others in nature particularly powerful ones. We can relate to earth others as conceived in the intentional stance in terms of mutual exchange and transformation and 'the dance of interaction'. I see the snake by the pool

about the same time as it sees me. We are both watching the frogs, but with different aims. There are not nearly so many froglets as yesterday, and I wonder if the snake managed to eat them all or whether they just dispersed overnight. There are so many mysteries here. We are used to one another, and have a shared basis of understanding and expectation, but one which does not entirely exclude the unexpected. The snake does not retreat; neither do I; but we are aware of one another as significant others. Our interaction involves shared expectations (and hence recognition of the other as alike in being a centre of needs and striving), but also recognition of difference: recognition of the other as a limit on the self and as an independent centre of resistance and opacity. Recognition of earth others does not necessarily require this kind of intersubjectivity—the conscious sharing and recognition of states of mind—but does require such a dialectical movement to recognise both kinship and difference; that is, mutuality.[8]

However, for Benjamin, when only one of the kinship and difference pair is recognised, the tension between separateness and dependency which is central to the formation of self is lost or distorted. What results is the dialectic of control.

> If I completely control the other, then the other ceases to exist, and if the other completely controls me then I cease to exist. A condition of our own independent existence is recognising the other. True independence means sustaining the essential tension of these contradictory impulses; that is, both asserting the self and recognising the other. Domination is the consequence of refusing this condition.
> (Benjamin 1988:53)

The loss of the tension between different and alike in what Benjamin calls 'mental omnipotence' signals 'a breakdown of differentiation in which self is assimilated to other or other is assimilated to self and in which internalisation replaces interaction or exchange with the outside (1988:73). This leads to domination and instrumentalisation, the erasure of the other as an external limit on self and its reappearance as a projection of self. The dualised self which can only view nature instrumentally cannot recognise in nature another who is both different from self and non-alien, and misses the essential 'tension of recognising the outside other as both different *and* alike' (Benjamin 1988:195). It is caught in a dilemma, being unable to experience alikeness and continuity, or else unable to experience sameness without obliterating difference (Benjamin 1988:48).

The other side of the self-contained master identity then is the incorporating, totalising, or colonising self, which recognises the other only as part of the empire of the same, as colonised or as assimilated to

self. Such a self cannot recognise unassimilated otherness; it presses everywhere against the boundaries of the other, having no recognition of its own limits or of the other as a source of resistance, and is driven by an expansionary and aggrandising dynamic. Hence it is also a maximising self, not satisfied with enough, orientated to maximise at the expense of the other. Such a self is insensitive to the other; it has no awareness of the limits of its own desires and passions, and cannot see itself through the eyes of another (Benhabib 1987:84). The colonising self does not interact with or encounter the other as independent other, but only in the image of its own desires or needs, which it imposes upon them. An example of this process is Columbus' imposition of names on the land he first sights, names which rarely record any of its features or any real encounter with it, but merely register its conquest, its incorporation into the empire of same (Turner 1986:131).[9]

The structure of dualism then creates a dilemma of hyperseparation versus incorporation, which especially affects the area of difference and of recognition of the other as non-alien but different. The dilemma or oscillation between these two forms of distortion of difference, corresponding to that of the self-contained and that of the incorporating self, runs through many dominant theories and frameworks. Both of these distortions of difference involve the denial of the other. In the case of social theory these twin distortions represent the choice between totalising forms of society, which deny the other through the failure to recognise diversity, versus liberal-capitalist forms, which deny the other through the failure to recognise dependency and relationship.

As Iris Young (1990) points out, many communitarian theorists have stressed community to the exclusion of recognising difference. Again, the distinction between separation and hyperseparation developed in chapter 2 has a useful role to play here. If, as I have argued, what is often referred to as 'individualism' is the result not of separation but of hyperseparation, of dualistic definition by exclusion of the other, overcoming it does not require the dissolution of difference and separation in a concept of fusion, social unity, or transparency, as often assumed. Young has argued that a communitarian ideal seeking the merger of individuals through a fused intersubjectivity, which makes subjects transparent to one another and aims at complete mutual understanding through face-to-face relations, is essentially an ideal of assimilating otherness. Young writes: 'The same difference that makes sharing between us possible also makes misunderstanding, rejection, withdrawal and conflict always possible conditions of social being' (Young 1990:310). However, Young's argument does not discriminate between the rejection of liberal individualism and the acceptance of such ideals of fusion. Fusion is not presupposed in the concept of mutuality I

have outlined, which through the distinction between separation and hyperseparation can negotiate the path between the Desert of Difference and the Ocean of Continuity, rejecting both merged ideals and the individualist-egoist accounts of self characteristic of liberalism. The distinction between separation and hyperseparation allows for a concept of community which negotiates a balance between difference and community, where this is conceived as something more than the rules for the congress of egoists. It allows for social but non-fused selves; it does not aspire to oppressive unity or to the elimination of otherness in the form of conflict or of cultural difference, or attempt to absorb or reduce individuals into social wholes.

Any adequate account of social community and of ecological community must avoid these distortions of difference. As an ecological concept mutuality resists both analysis in terms of an ontology of holistic reduction and analysis in terms of its converse, atomism (Plumwood 1980; Warren and Cheney 1991). The truly social self is the mutual self; the social self salutes the social other as another *self,* a centre of subjectivity like mine but a different one, one which imposes limits on mine, and incorporates this salutation into the concept of the 'I' (Benhabib 1987:94). Similarly, the ecological self recognises the earth other as a centre of agency or intentionality having its origin and place like mine in the community of the earth, but as a different centre of agency, which limits mine.

Conventional ethical and social theory exhibits these distortions of difference, which are transferred to environmental ethics. As we have seen, the dualised, hyperseparated self can have no basis or reason to empathise with the other or to consider the other as more than the instrument of its independently defined needs, but remains isolated in the Desert of Difference. Reasons for considering the other morally will have to consist of ways of presenting or disguising the other as really the self in some extended guise. That is, they will have to amount to techniques for somehow cancelling difference, for getting the rational egoist self to transfer its self-regard to the other. Others will be recognised ethically just to the extent that they are marked as self; those not so marked will be returned to the heap of the instrumental, the merely useful. As we will see in chapter 7, this is just what modern universalist moral theory attempts with techniques such as the Rawlsian blindfold (Benhabib 1987:88). Ethical approaches which rely on cancelling difference are especially problematic for nature, whose inclusion in such human-based accounts invariably emerges as secondary or doubtful.

A parallel approach in environmental ethics which remains within this problematic is what Karen Warren has called 'moral extensionism'. This aims to extend moral consideration to earth others on the basis of and in

proportion to their similarities to humans, their capacity for 'higher mental states', their abilities to be right-holders, and so on. The moral extensionist approach does not begin with a respect for difference and aims to erase it by more or less subtle means. As Warren argues, we need a concept of moral community 'which acknowledges and respects difference, whatever "sameness" also exists' (Warren 1990:141).[10] I have suggested that recognition of and respect for the intrinsic value of the other is an essential adjunct to an ethic of care and respect for difference, and is presupposed in the Aristotelian concept of care and friendship as care for the other for the other's own sake. To the extent that respect is directed to the other for its own sake, it will not be respect just for those aspects of the other in which it resembles us, and hence will entail respect for difference.[11]

Those forms of deep ecology which analyse the problem as one of separation and difference (for which the cure is taken to be merger or holism), rather than as one of dualism and hyperseparation, tend to interpret relational selfhood (where it is admitted) in ways which stress connection and merger and deny difference (either of selves or of interests). As I have argued, an adequate account of the ecological self must be able to recognise both the otherness of nature and its continuity with the human self. In ecological selfhood the thriving of nature and of earth others is treated as not instrumentally but essentially related to our own thriving. We include the flourishing of earth others *as others* among our own primary or intrinsic ends and desires. But this project does not require any sort of identity, merger, or loss of boundaries between self and other, as some ways of treating the concept of ecological selfhood imply. We do not, for example, have to take our interests to be identical with those of the other, as some deep ecologists suggest, nor to 'assume the interests of the other' (Mathews 1988:351; Naess 1990:187).[12] In care, love, friendship and community, we include among our essential interests and desires some of the *general* goals of the other's good or flourishing, but this does not imply assuming all or even any of their specific interests or goals, either in addition to or instead of our own (Grimshaw 1986:176). The mother does not have to give herself over to the oral pleasures of the child. We can be delighted that our local bandicoot colony is thriving without ourselves acquiring a taste for beetles. In care, love, friendship and, especially, respect, it is crucially important to maintain both empathy and the sense of the difference of our needs and desires from those of the other. I examine deep ecology's account of the ecological self in more detail in chapter 7, and argue that some forms of deep ecology fail to adequately acknowledge difference and continue to conceive nature and the ecological self in ways which reflect dualism and, in some cases, colonisation.

WOMEN AND WILDERNESS

> Where I live as a woman is to some men a wilderness. But to me it is home.
> (Le Guin 1989:46)

An important test of the adequacy of an account of the ecological self and of the recognition of kinship and difference is the concept of wilderness. For accounts caught in the dualist dilemma between treating the self as hyperseparated from an alien other or as unable to recognise unassimilated otherness, the great reservoir of otherness represented by wilderness is full of hazards. Accounts which base their analysis entirely on affirming human continuity with nature cannot recognise what seems to be the major distinguishing and value-making characteristic of wilderness, its independence of the human. On the other hand, accounts which stress only the independence of wilderness have foregone any basis for countering the western construction of nature as alien, or for providing a foundation for ethical relations to it.

   This dilemma appears in other contexts of colonisation. In the case of women one horn of the dualist dilemma appears in the traditional construction of women as utterly different by nature and as part of a separate, lower, or exceptional sphere (Freud's 'dark continent'), thus denying continuity and the common claims of humanity. The other horn recognises and values women only on male terms—as assimilated to masculinity in fact or fantasy, placed as 'one of the guys', as 'honorary males', or as incorporated into structures based on rejecting or excluding the feminine (Plato's philosopher queens). Unassimilated female otherness, in the form of the assertion of a difference which challenges and exposes the phallocentricity of the 'norm', is intolerably subversive. For Aboriginal and other colonised peoples, the dilemma of difference in racist society appears in the choice between the alien and the assimilated. The coloniser can recognise the other only as a form of self, valuing only those aspects of the colonised which reflect the master model. The coloniser erases unassimilated difference as *terra nullius,* creating alternatives of treating the unassimilated other as alien or subhuman versus incorporating the other via difference-denying assimilation.[13] Incorporation in the empire promises 'human' treatment on condition of abandonment of any political assertion of cultural difference. In both cases the other is valued only in terms of its conformity to the master norm, in terms of sameness.

   For deep ecologists who view the route to ecological selfhood in terms of the concept of self-realisation advanced by Arne Naess, in which the self is identified with as much of the world as possible, wilderness must be seen as part of the self. There certainly seems to be something problematic and even paradoxical in the notion of relating to

uncolonised areas via their incorporation into or assimilation to self, as these analyses would suggest. The failure of the main varieties of deep ecology to recognise and value nature's *otherness* and independence as exemplified in wilderness is criticised by existentialist philosopher Peter Reed. He emphasises, against Naess's assimilating account in terms of self-realisation, the concept of 'nature as a stranger', and bases respect on its total otherness, on complete human *separateness* from nature (Reed 1989).[14] But this approach too is distorting unless it can also address the historically constructed identity western culture has created for the human as outside an alien and hostile nature. This horn of the dilemma of otherness then leads into another form of the problem of alienation, for the nature so conceived may be valued highly, but in ways which make it as devoid of meaning and affinity for humans as the universe of the humanist scientist, while humans remain existentially homeless.

These dilemmas surrounding the concept of wilderness arise in part from the dualistic choice between on the one hand an excessive emphasis on continuity and community with nature denying the possibility of difference between the non-human and the human (incorporation), and on the other hand retaining the gulf between the human and the natural, thus denying the possibility of continuity and community on the other (alienation). To escape the dilemma, we must be able to recognise and value both continuity and difference with the other. It is inevitable, given a situation where there is a network of continuity and difference, that different individuals and groups will choose to emphasise one aspect over the other. But stereotyping wilderness in either of these ways, as Same or as Stranger, indicates the dilemmas of difference symptomatic of unresolved dualism.

Further problems are created by hyperseparated understandings of the concept of wilderness which demand apartness of nature to the point of insisting that there can be no human influence at all on the *genuinely* natural.[15] Just as culture must exclude all taint of nature, nature must not be permitted to mingle with culture, an approach which parallels the demand common in racist society for complete cultural purity and isolation before cultural difference can be recognised. Non-pristine nature may be seen as spoilt, inferior and unworthy of defence. Such hyperseparated understandings of the concept of nature exclude the ground of interaction, since any interaction is held to re-create nature as a human artefact, and hence not as other. In the extreme case, making the ground of interaction invisible results in 'genuine' nature (wilderness, which is valued highly here precisely because it exemplifies the demand that difference exhibit complete independence of the human) disappearing entirely or remaining for ever elusive and alien, on the other side of a definitional wall, so that all that humankind can really

interact with is some reflection of itself (McKibben 1990). This approach relies on defining the autonomy of the other as hyperseparation, apartness from any human influence. We should respect the autonomy of earth others, and mourn the impending loss or reduction of their resistance, but we do not have to construe nature in hyperseparated terms as alien in order to do so.

The use of hyperseparated concepts of human and nature which rule out the ground of interaction and demand that true nature exclude all human influence makes the concept of wilderness extremely problematic in relation to indigenous peoples who both sustain and are sustained by their land and its ecosystems. The forest gardens and tended landscapes which are home for such peoples come to be viewed by the master consciousness as pure nature, in which humans, if they have a place at all, wander and live 'as the beasts of the forest'. In a double colonisation, both those earth others conceived as Nature and those humans cast as natural are defined through exclusion of culture (identified with 'civilisation' by the master culture), as having just those features this exclusion dictates. They are noble if civilisation is corrupt, and low savages if civilisation is conceived as the site of value. 'Wilderness', traditionally the territory excluded as the underside of the contrasts of reason and civilisation, is also traditionally a wasteland empty of culture and inviting colonisation. It is named as *terra nullius,* the alien, fearful and disordered domain of animals, women, savages and the underside of the human psyche. In the Romantic reversal it becomes the cathedral of spiritual uplift, the salvation of the world, once it is cleared of the indigenous inhabitants who might disrupt its unspoilt ecosystems or mar the 'wilderness experience' for the western adventure tourist.[16] The master culture arrogantly speaks of 'discovering' and 'exploring' areas which other species and other human cultures have occupied over immense time periods, and appropriates as 'nature' germplasm which embodies the labour of generations of indigenous agriculturalists (Shiva 1992). What is wilderness in the terms of the master identity is to these others a home.

This is not to deny either that there are ecosystems (for example, Antarctica) where human influence has been very slight and where it would be beneficial for human and non-human alike if it should continue to be so. Nor is it to deny to earth others agency or the need for their own domain. A theory of mutuality which acknowledges both continuity and difference provides an alternative way to view wilderness, recognising it as the domain of the uncolonised other. In this framework, 'wilderness' does not designate an excluded place defined negatively, apart from self, alien and separate. Nor is wilderness assimilated to self. It is a domain where earth others are autonomous or *sovereign,* free to work things out according to self-determined patterns, which may be

those of sameness or difference. Autonomy should, as feminists have pointed out, be distinguished from hyperseparation (Miller 1986:95). 'Wilderness' is not a place where there is no interaction between self and other, but one where self does not impose itself. It is a place to be visited on its own terms and not on ours (Rolston 1983:182). Here it is the visitor who is the taught and not the teacher, the transformed and not the transformer, visitors who must see themselves through the other's eyes, must bend themselves, as is appropriate for visitors, to the other's ways.

This points towards an important feature of alternatives which aim to break away from the colonisation approach which treats the earth as a human empire. A mutual and co-operative relationship with other earth nations will seek a balance of transformation with them, whereas a relation of domination will treat earth others as always the object of assertion, the ones to be transformed. In a mutual and reciprocal relationship with nature, there may be areas of land and life where *humans* are sovereign, as far as they may be without denying dependency, and there may also be a whole fruitful domain where they may undertake together with earth others 'the dance of interaction', being both transforming and transformed, sustaining and sustained. But a respectful and mutual relationship must also leave a space for the other. This is something which is not to be done just in special, non-human places, but through many areas of contact with earth others. In the areas of nature called wilderness especially, those from the master culture must recognise that it is their turn to be acted upon, that they are in the domain of others who are, in the words of Henry Beston, 'not brethren…not underlings; they are *other nations,* caught with ourselves in the net of life and time, fellow prisoners of the splendour and travail of the earth' (1928:20).

Chapter 7

Deep ecology and the denial of difference

> Meanwhile, man, precisely as the one so threatened, exalts himself to the posture of lord of the earth. In this way the illusion comes to prevail that everything man encounters exists only insofar as it is his construct. This illusion gives rise in turn to one final delusion: it seems as though man everywhere and always encounters only himself.
>
> (Martin Heidegger)

Feminist work on ethics has done much to draw attention to the complexity of moral experience, as well as to male bias in theoretical accounts of what that experience is. Both of these elements have important contributions to make to environmental ethics and philosophy. Because we do and must relate to nature in a multiplicity of ways, environmental ethics requires an understanding of the many dimensions of moral experience, and of the advantages and limitations of different ethical approaches. Accounts of male bias are important not only because an adequate environmental philosophy should aim to respect the moral experience of women as much as that of men (Jaggar 1991:95; Warren 1990:139) but because phallocentrism and the exclusion of women's experience is a very good indicator of similar exclusions of other related subordinated groups, the undersides of the western web of dualisms. Feminism has especially criticised the rationalist tradition on this account.

I argue in this chapter that feminist critiques of the rationalist tradition in ethics are particularly relevant to environmental ethics, and that the dominant trends in environmental philosophy have failed to engage properly with this tradition. Thus, they continue to employ damaging assumptions from this tradition in attempting to formulate a new environmental philosophy, and often make use of or embed themselves within rationalist philosophical frameworks which are not only biased from a gender perspective, but which have been inimical to nature as well.

I will also show that current mainstream brands of environmental philosophy, both those based in extending universalising ethics and rights to non-humans and those based in deep ecology, suffer from one or other form of the distortions of difference, which, as we saw in the last chapter, are associated with unresolved self/other dualism. Neither has an adequate historical analysis, and both continue to rely implicitly upon rationalist-inspired accounts of the self which have been a large part of the problem. In the last section I look at an alternative, virtuebased way to conceive the ecological self and ecological sensibility as a partial basis for grounding in identity an environmental ethic of care.

RATIONALISM AND THE ETHICAL APPROACH

The ethical approach of mainstream environmental philosophy hopes to centre a new approach to nature in some extension of the standard ethical approaches of Kantian ethics, in contractarian ethics, or in rights. This has been criticised from a feminist perspective by a number of recent authors (especially Cheney 1987; 1989). I want to agree in part with and disagree in part with these criticisms; I think that the emphasis on conventional ethics as the central part (or even the whole) of the problem is misplaced, and that although ethics (and especially the ethics of virtue and of non-instrumental value) has a role, the particular ethical approaches which have been adopted by mainstream environmental philosophy are problematic and unsuitable. I shall illustrate this claim by brief discussion of two recent books: Paul Taylor's *Respect for Nature* (1986) and Tom Regan's *The Case for Animal Rights* (1986). Both have been significant, and indeed impressive, contributions to their areas.

Paul Taylor's book aims to provide a detailed working-out of an ethical position which rejects the standard and widespread western treatment of nature as instrumental to human interests and instead takes living things, as teleological centres of life, to be worthy of respect in their own right. The book aims to defend a biocentric (lifecentred) ethical theory in which a person's true human self includes his or her biological nature (1986:44). But it attempts to embed this within a Kantian ethical framework which makes strong use of the reason/emotion dichotomy. Thus we are assured (1986:41) that the attitude of respect is a moral one because it is universalising and disinterested, 'that is, each moral agent who sincerely has the attitude advocates its universal adoption by all other agents, regardless of whether they are so inclined and regardless of their fondness or lack of fondness for particular individuals'.

The essential features of morality having been established as distance from emotion and 'particular fondness', morality is then seen as the

domain of reason, and its touchstone belief. Having carefully distinguished the 'valuational, conative, practical and affective dimensions of the attitude of respect', Taylor goes on to pick out the essentially cognitive 'valuational' aspect as central and basic to all the others—'it is *because* moral agents look at animals and plants in this way that they are disposed to pursue the aforementioned ends and purposes' (1986:82), and similarly to have the relevant emotions and affective attitudes. The latter must be held at an appropriate distance, and not allowed to get the upper hand at any point. Taylor claims that actions do not express moral respect unless they are done as a matter of moral principle conceived as ethically obligatory, pursued disinterestedly, and not through inclination, solely or even primarily. According to Taylor, 'If one seeks that end solely or primarily from inclination, the attitude being expressed is not moral respect but personal affection or love' (1986:85–6). Taylor writes:

> It is not that respect for nature *precludes* feelings of care and concern for living things. One may, as a matter of simple kindness, not want to harm them. But the fact that one is so motivated does not itself indicate the presence of a moral attitude of respect. Having the desire to preserve or protect the good of wild animals and plants for their sake is neither contrary to, nor evidence of, respect for nature. It is only if the person who has the desire understands that the actions fulfilling it are ethically obligatory, and that they would be obligatory even in the absence of the desire, that the person has genuine respect for nature.
>
> (Paul Taylor 1986:85–6)

There is certainly good reason to reject as self-indulgent the 'kindness' approach which reduces respect and morality in the protection of animals to the satisfaction of the carer's own feelings. Respect for others involves treating them as worthy of consideration for their own sake, and not just as an instrument to the carer's satisfaction. Taylor would be on firm ground in claiming that such self-orientated 'kindness' is not genuine care or respect for the other. But Taylor is doing much more than this—he is treating care, viewed as 'inclination' or 'desire', as irrelevant to morality. Respect for nature on this account becomes an essentially *cognitive* matter (that of a person believing something to have 'inherent worth' and then acting from an understanding of ethical principles as universal).

The account draws on the familiar view of reason and emotion as sharply separated and opposed, and of 'desire', caring and love as merely 'personal' and 'particular' as opposed to the universality and impartiality of understanding, of 'feminine' emotions as essentially

unreliable, untrustworthy and morally irrelevant, an inferior domain to be dominated by a superior, disinterested (and of course masculine) reason. This sort of rationalist account of the place of emotions has come in for a great deal of well-deserved criticism recently, both for its implicit gender bias and its philosophical inadequacy, especially its construal of public reason as sharply differentiated from and controlling private emotion (Blum 1980; Gilligan 1982; 1987; Benhabib 1987; Lloyd 1983a and 1983b). Reason and emotion so understood form a dualism, part of the interwoven set which protects and strengthens human/nature dualism. Thus reason and emotion are construed in terms of radical exclusion as sharply polarised and oppositional (Blum 1980). The Kantian account of ethical universalisation as derived from reason alone disguises and denies the dependency of ethical judgement on empathic elements (Green 1993).[1]

A further major problem in the uncritical use of reason/emotion dualism in this context is the inconsistency of employing, in the service of constructing an allegedly biocentric ethical theory, a framework which has played such a major role in creating a dualistic account of the genuine human self as essentially rational, and sharply discontinuous from the merely emotional, the merely bodily and the merely animal elements. For the emotions, and the private sphere with which they are associated, have been treated as sharply differentiated and inferior, as part of a pattern in which they are seen as linked to the sphere of nature in contrast to reason (McMillan 1982:7). The basis of this link in rationalism was precisely that the emotions involve qualities or express needs of the kind shared with animals, and are therefore both inferior and not truly human (Arendt 1974:24). In other words, the inferiorisation and hyperseparation of emotion in rationalism is based on the Differential Imperative.

Given the bias implicit in concepts of rationality, the Kantian choice of rationality as the basis for ethical life creates a framework of rational meritocracy which remains problematic not only for women but also for nature and other subordinated groups. Although such a use of reason masquerades as universal, in practice it hides a bias, for it depends on choosing 'those properties as essentially and universally human which the philosophers themselves have earlier and explicitly identified as male properties, or which were associated with roles and functions in which males predominated' (Gould 1983:429). For Kant, the abilities which are taken to be necessary for morality and the 'dignity of humanity' are identified as characteristics found to only a minor degree in women and even in the bulk of lower-class male humanity, to a very low degree in blacks and not at all in non-humans. The result, as in the case of Aristotle and Plato, is a rational hierarchy ordered with elite males at the

top, which leads also to a corresponding hierarchy of instrumental ordering with non-humans at the bottom (Dodson Gray 1979).

Thus for Kant, the capacity to employ rational will to the end of 'universal legislation' is the basis on which man is an end in himself, and on which the dignity of humanity is based (1981:36). For Kant, as for Aristotle, Plato and Aquinas, the rational nature exists as an end in itself. But the capacity for disinterested universalisation, the real mark of humanity, is one in which women, for example, are seen as deficient. Woman's possession of the traits of sensibility, taste and 'beautiful understanding' (Kant 1981:78) hardly compensates for her poor grasp of these truly human capacities, but they do fit her admirably for her instrumental role as wife, housekeeper and mother. As women are deficient in the exercise of this 'human' capacity, so are 'the more common run of men who are closer to the guidance of mere natural instinct and who do not allow their reason much influence on their conduct' (Kant 1981:9). Kant's racist account of African people and people of colour denied to them even this measure of reason, attributing to them an inferiority in reason 'as great in regard to mental capacities as in colour' (Kant 1981:111). For Kant, non-humans are entirely excluded from the exercise of reason and are correspondingly entirely excluded from the kingdom of ends. 'Animals are not self-conscious and are there merely as a means to an end. That end is man. We can ask "Why do animals exist?". But to ask "Why does man exist?" is a meaningless question' (Kant 1963:239). Although not everyone who uses Kantian ethics makes these assumptions about the distribution of reason, the construction of reason as oppositional to nature and its human and non-human representatives which is built into the framework is the key to the anthropocentrism of the western tradition. The Kantian-rationalist framework is hardly the area in which to search for a foundation for a biocentric ethic, and its use for this purpose, in a way which accepts the supremacy of reason and its opposition to contrast areas, is a matter for astonishment.

Kantian universalisation demands that the dutiful individual apply his maxim impartially to all others in like situations. Taylor argues for an 'equal consideration' condition between persons which would give equal weight to all interests, thus forcing the moral subject to stand outside of his or her own situation. But this way to oblige the egoistically conceived self to consider others is problematic. First, the structure of rational meritocracy acts as a counterweight to the injunction to the moral subject to consider others differently placed. Under these background assumptions, as feminists have cogently argued, the ideal of impartial moral reason must erase the other both in the sense of the differentiated and differently placed moral subject and in the sense of particularity, 'the sensuous, desiring and emotional experience that ties me to the

concreteness of things' (Young 1987:62). Such a universalisation is a technique for cancelling difference, for including the other in the moral sphere by treating it as another master, as the egoistic self in an extended guise. As Seyla Benhabib puts it, 'moral impartiality is learning to recognise the claims of the other who is just like oneself (1987:85). This is particularly clear in the case of Rawls's extended contractarianism, where the 'veil of ignorance' condition, which is supposed to create moral reciprocity, actually makes invisible the other as different from the self (Benhabib 1987:89). Those (such as non-humans) who cannot easily be so assimilated into the empire of self are simply excluded from morality thus conceived. Ethical universalisation and abstraction are both closely associated with accounts of the self in terms of rational egoism. Universalisation is explicitly seen in both the Kantian and the Rawlsian framework as necessary to hold in check natural self-interest as well as what is excluded from reason: desire and emotionality. It is the moral complement to the account of the self as hyperdifferentiated, 'disembodied and disembedded' (Benhabib 1987), as the autonomous self of liberal theory and the rational egoist of market theory. In such a framework moral principles must take the form of prohibition.

In the same vein, the broadening of the scope of moral concern and the according of rights to the natural world have been seen by influential environmental philosophers (Leopold 1949:201–2; Nash 1990; Fox 1989a:12) as the final step in a process of increasing moral abstraction and generalisation, part of the move away from the merely particular, *my* self, *my* family; *my* tribe, the discarding of the merely personal and, by implication, the merely selfish. It is viewed as moral progress, increasingly civilised in its increasing distance from primitive selfishness. Nature is the last area to be included in this march away from the unbridled natural egoism of the particular and its close ally, the emotional. Moral progress is marked by increasing adherence to abstract moral rules and a movement away from the supposedly natural (in human nature). The completion of its empire is, paradoxically, the extension of its domain of adherence to abstract moral rules to nature itself.

On such a view, the particular, the affective and the bodily are viewed as the enemy of the rational, being seen as corrupting, capricious and self-interested. And if the 'moral emotions' are set aside as irrelevant or suspect, as merely subjective or personal, we can base morality only on the rules of abstract reason, on the justice and rights of the impersonal public sphere. This view of morality as based on a concept of reason as oppositional to the personal, the particular and the emotional has been assumed in the framework of much recent environmental ethics. But the impartiality condition of equal consideration has been widely questioned even by conventional moral philosophers, who view it as clashing with

the obligations of special relationships (Friedman 1991).[2] And as a number of feminist critics of the masculine model of moral life and of moral abstraction have pointed out (Nicholson 1983; Blum 1980) this increasing abstraction is not necessarily an improvement. The opposition between care and concern for particular others and generalised moral concern is associated with the opposition between public (masculine) and private (feminine) realms. Thus it is part of the set of dualistic contrasts in which the problem of the western treatment of nature is rooted.

In short, the treatment of moral concern for nature as the completion of a process of (masculine) universalisation, moral abstraction, detachment and disconnection, involving the discarding of the self, emotions and special ties (all of course associated with the private sphere and femininity) is highly problematic. This account of respect for nature in terms of 'moral progress' is also remarkable for its ethnocentrism, since it treats as a feature of 'human progress' what is in fact a change in the outlook of western liberalism, many other cultures having held such views from time immemorial. Environmental ethics has for the most part placed itself uncritically in such a universalising framework, although it is one which is extended with particular difficulty to the natural world. The universalisation framework fails to capture the most important elements of respect, which are not reducible to or based on duty any more than the most important elements of friendship are, but which, as we have seen, are rather an expression of a certain kind of selfhood and a certain kind of non-instrumentalising relation between self and other.

RATIONALISM, RIGHTS AND MORAL EXTENSIONISM

An extension to nature of the standard concepts of morality is also the aim of another recent major book in the area, Tom Regan's *The Case for Animal Rights* (1986), an impressive, thorough and solidly argued book with excellent chapters on areas such as animal intentionality. But the key concept upon which this account of moral concern for animals is based is that of rights, which requires strong individual separation of right-holders and is set in a framework of human community and legality. Its extension to the natural world raises a host of problems (Midgley 1983:61–4). Even in the case of individual higher animals, for which Regan uses it, it is problematic. Regan employs a concept of rights based on Mill's concept, where if a being has a right to something not only should he or she (or it) have that thing but others are obliged to intervene to secure it. The application of this concept of rights to individual wild living animals appears to give humans almost limitless

obligations to intervene massively in all sorts of far-reaching and conflicting ways in natural cycles to secure the rights of a bewildering variety of beings. In the case of the wolf and the sheep, an example discussed by Regan, it is unclear whether humans should intervene to protect the sheep's rights or whether in so intervening they violate the wolf's right to its natural food.

Regan attempts to meet this objection by claiming that since the wolf is not itself a moral agent (although it is a moral patient) it cannot violate the sheep's rights not to suffer a painful and violent death (1986:285). But the defence is unconvincing, because even if we concede that the wolf is not a moral agent, it still does not follow that on a rights view we are not obliged to intervene. From the fact that the wolf is not a moral agent it only follows that it is not *responsible* for violating the sheep's rights, not that they are not violated or that others do not have an obligation (on the rights view) to intervene. If the wolf were attacking a human baby, it would hardly do as a defence in that case to claim that one did not have a duty to intervene because the wolf was not a moral agent. But on Regan's view the baby and the sheep do have something like the same rights. So we do have a duty it seems (on the rights view) to intervene to protect the sheep—leaving us where with the wolf?

Assimilation is even more problematic in the non-human than in the human sphere. Thus the concept of right-holding is impossible to apply in the context of predators in a natural ecosystem, where it obliges us to police nature. It may have application, however, where non-humans are part of a particular human social context; or where there are claimants who are part of a reciprocal social community, and where conflict cases are either few, or can be settled according to some agreed principles. All this seems to tell against the concept of rights as a good one even for the general task of dealing with earth others in the natural environment (as opposed of course to domestic animals in a basically humanised environment).[3] For wider aspects of nature it is even more difficult to apply and to ground. These difficulties are a symptom of the subtle form of erasure of otherness involved in the rights picture, that of *moral extensionism;* non-humans are included just to the extent that they resemble humans (Rodman 1978), just as women are allowed for in the institutional structure of the public sphere just to the extent that they can be seen as possessing masculine characteristics or analogues of them. Such positions remain subtly human-centred and male-centred, respectively.

Rights seem to have acquired an exaggerated importance in ethics as part of the prestige of the public sphere and the masculine, and the emphasis on separation and autonomy, on reason and abstraction. A more promising approach for an ethic of nature, and also one much

more in line with the current directions in feminism, would be to remove rights from the centre of the moral stage and pay more attention to some other less universalistic moral concepts such as respect, sympathy, care, concern, compassion, gratitude, friendship and responsibility (Cook 1977:118–19). These more local moral concepts, because of their dualistic construal as feminine, and their consignment to the private sphere as subjective and emotional, have been treated as peripheral and given far less importance than they deserve. But a virtue-based ethics— for example, an ethic of friendship, care and responsibility, articulated in terms of these concepts—seems to extend much less problematically to the non-human world than the impersonal concepts which are currently seen as central, and seems capable of providing a better basis than universalising concepts for the account of the ecological self, and the non-instrumental treatment of earth others many environmental philosophers have now called for. I shall examine this alternative in the last section of this chapter.

DIFFERENCE AND DEEP ECOLOGY

Mainstream environmental philosophy is problematic not just because of restriction *in* ethics but also because of restriction *to* ethics. Most mainstream philosophers continue to view environmental philosophy as primarily concerned with an extension of existing ethical frameworks. For example, instrumentalism is viewed as a problem in ethics, and its solution seen as setting up a theory of intrinsic value. But this neglects the key further aspects we have been examining, of dualism and the account of the self and of human identity as hyperseparated from nature, the connection between this and the instrumental view of nature, as well as the broader historical and political aspects of the critique of dualism and instrumentalism. As an alternative to this impoverished conception, deep ecology has had some success in broadening the conception of the problem to include issues concerning the human self and questions of human identity and discontinuity from nature. Feminist theory has revealed many of the buried links between conceptions of ethics and conceptions of selfhood, and thus has a very useful contribution to make to the discussion of both these approaches.

   In many crucial respects deep ecology does not present a very thoroughgoing alternative to extensions of mainstream ethics. In its dominant forms deep ecology continues to suffer from problems associated with unresolved human/nature dualism and other dualisms. If mainstream environmental ethics suffers from the kind of distortions of difference which attend the problematic of individualism and rational egoism, deep ecology tends to suffer from the obverse kind of distortion

of difference associated with incorporation. As we saw in the last chapter, major forms of deep ecology fail to acknowledge difference and continue to conceive nature in ways which reflect dualism and, in some cases, male domination (Cheney 1987; 1989; Kheel 1990; Plumwood 1991a).

Although deep ecology contrasts with the mainstream in emphasising connections with the self and the continuity between humans and nature, there remain severe tensions between some forms of deep ecology and feminist perspectives. These forms have not satisfactorily identified the key elements in the traditional framework, or noted their connections with rationalism and the master identity. As a result they fail to reject adequately rationalist assumptions, and indeed often provide their own versions of rationalist accounts of self, universalisation and the discarding of particular connections.

The analysis of human/nature and other dualisms I have presented here has stressed the importance of affirming both difference and continuity, and of maintaining the balance between them. Respect for others involves acknowledging their distinctness and difference, and not trying to reduce or assimilate them to the human sphere. We need to acknowledge difference as well as continuity to overcome dualism and to establish non-instrumentalising relationships with nature, where both connection and otherness are the basis of interaction. The failure to affirm difference is characteristic of the colonising self which denies the other through the attempt to incorporate it into the empire of the self, and which is unable to experience sameness without erasing difference.

Major forms of deep ecology have tended to focus exclusively on identification, interconnectedness, sameness and the overcoming of separation, treating nature as a dimension of self, for example, in the concept of self-realisation and in the extension of ego psychology to nature. Foundational deep ecologist Arne Naess, whose concept of self-realisation, as I will argue later, also has elements of the relational self, urges a way of thinking and feeling which 'corresponds to that of the enlightened, or yogi, who sees "the same"'; Naess quotes the *Bhagavadgita*:

> He whose self is harmonised by yoga seeth the Self abiding in all beings and all beings in Self; everywhere he sees the same.
>
> (Naess 1985:260)

Since ethics is normally viewed as concerned with the relation of self to other, Naess's substitution of the 'maxim of "self-realisation"' for an account of ethical relations to nature is a symptom of the death of the other in the theoretical framework of deep ecology.[4] Even though 'the self' in such an account is not to be interpreted as the 'egoic or

biographical self' or 'the personal ego', such a framework must lose the possibility of providing a dynamic or interactive account, which requires diversified elements. The loss by the account of the 'essential tension between self and other' appears in the fact that the theory does not see itself as concerned with relations between diverse interacting elements, self and other, humans and nature, but basically only with one element, the self. In terms of a role in the theory, nature as other is erased, and in Warwick Fox's account seems to disappear entirely as a focus of concern:

> the appropriate framework of discourse for describing and presenting deep ecology is not one that is fundamentally to do with the value of the non-human world…but rather one that is fundamentally to do with the nature and possibilities of the Self, or, we might say, the question of who we are, can become, and *should* become in the larger scheme of things.
>
> (Fox 1986:85)

The proper study of the deep ecologist, it seems, is 'autology', and the other is of concern for what it reflects back about the self; the other is made an 'instrument of self-definition' (Kheel 1990:136). The proper comparison for such an account of the liberation of nature is not with a theory of opposition to sexism that is *also* concerned with the behaviour and interests of men, as Fox claims in response to criticism of this self-preoccupation (Fox 1990:242), but with one that sees it as 'fundamentally' concerned *only* with the behaviour and interests of men. It is ironic that a position claiming to be anti-anthropocentric should thus aim to reduce questions of the care and significance of nature to questions of the realisation of the human self (or Self).

The denial of difference is also reflected in the use by some deep ecologists of a 'transpersonal' version of ego psychology, in which the self as isolated subject incorporates or internalises outside objects in nature, assimilating them to self (or Self). Hidden at the foot of the tree of transpersonal psychology lie the liberal-individualist roots of humanistic psychology.[5] As Fox explains, transpersonal psychology arose from humanistic ego psychology through Sutich's conviction that the personal ego was too small, was 'no longer comprehensive enough' (Fox 1990:293). The 'big "Self"' was the answer. But on an interactive account, the loss of the essential tension between different and alike is characteristic of domination and instrumentalisation, which involves the erasure of the other as an external limit and its reappearance as a projection of self (Benjamin 1988:53, 73). In the domination framework, the entire dynamic of interaction takes place within the self, rather than between the self and the external other. The framework on which deep

ecology draws here represents such a psychology of incorporation, in which 'our sense of self can expand to include aspects of both the mind and the world that we usually regard as "other"' (Fox 1990:299). Even if the direction of travel is reversed so as to absorb self in world rather than world in self, the result is still not a framework which allows for the tension of sameness and difference or for the other to play an active role in the creation of self in discovery and interaction with the world; rather it is one that, like ego psychology itself, conceives the self as a closed system. As Benjamin says of ego psychology:

> Within this closed system, the ego invests objects with his desire and takes in these objects to further his autonomy from them. This conception of the individual cannot explain the confrontation with an independent other as a real condition of development and change. It does not comprehend the simultaneous process of transforming and being transformed by the other.
>
> (Benjamin 1988:49)

These problems over difference emerge especially in deep ecological accounts of separation, the self and the chameleon term 'identification'. Deep ecology locates the key problem area in human-nature relations in the separation of humans and nature, and it provides a solution for this in terms of the 'identification' of self with nature. 'Identification' is usually left deliberately vague, and corresponding accounts of identification and of self are various and shifting, and not always compatible.[6] There seem to be at least three different accounts of self involved—indistinguishability, expansion of self, and transcendence of self—and practitioners appear to feel free to move among them. Much of the appeal of deep ecology rests on the failure to distinguish between them. As I shall show, all are unsatisfactory, both from a feminist perspective and from that of obtaining a satisfactory environmental philosophy.

THE INDISTINGUISHABILITY ACCOUNT

The indistinguishability account rejects boundaries between self and nature. The universe is said to be a seamless whole, and according to Fox (1984:7), the central intuition of deep ecology is that 'We can make no firm ontological divide in the field of existence…there is no bifurcation in reality between the human and non-human realms…to the extent that we perceive boundaries, we fall short of deep ecological consciousness'.

This seems like a firm rejection of human/nature dualism and hyperseparation, but much more is involved here than the rejection of radical exclusion between humans and nature. Leading deep ecologists

go on to deny separation entirely, and to replace the human-in-environment image by a holistic or *Gestalt* view which 'dissolves not only the human-in-environment concept, but every compact-thing-in-milieu concept'—except when they are talking at a superficial level of communication (Fox 1984:1). These deep ecologists insist on a cosmology of 'unbroken wholeness which denies the classical idea of the analysability of the world into separately and independently existing parts' (Naess 1973:96). They are strongly attracted to a variety of mystical traditions and to the Perennial Philosophy, where the self is merged with the other—'the other is none other than yourself. As John Seed puts it: 'I am protecting the rainforest' develops into 'I am part of the rainforest protecting myself. I am that part of the rainforest recently emerged into thinking' (Seed *et al.* 1988:36). According to Joanna Macy: 'In the web of relationships…there are no clear lines demarcating a separate, continuous self (Macy 1989:205). Macy thinks that 'the notion of an abiding individual self…is the foundational delusion of human life' (1989:207). There is 'no separate experiencer, no permanent self (1989:207).

There are many problems here. It is not merely that the dissolution of boundaries of which deep ecologists speak stands in need of much more clarification; it is also that it does the wrong thing. The real basis of hyperseparation lies in the concept of an authentic human being, and in what is taken to be valuable in human character, society and culture, as exclusive of what is taken to be natural. Instead of healing this dualism, deep ecology proposes a 'unifying process', a metaphysics which insists that everything is really part of, indistinguishable from, everything else. This is not only to employ overly powerful tools, but ones that do the wrong job, for the origins of the particular opposition involved in human/nature dualism remain unaddressed and unanalysed. This overreaction results from the confusion of separation and hyperseparation, radical exclusion and non-identity. The confusion is clear in Fox, who proceeds from the ambiguous claim that there is no 'bifurcation in reality between the human and non-human realms' (which could be taken as a rejection of human discontinuity from nature) immediately to the conclusion that what is needed is that we embrace an indistinguishability metaphysics of unbroken wholeness in the whole of reality. But the problem must be addressed in terms of this specific dualism and its connections. Instead this form of deep ecology proposes the obliteration of distinction.

It is unclear how such a solution to removing human/nature dualism, by obliterating any human/nature distinction and dissolving self boundaries, is supposed to provide the basis for an environmental ethic. The analysis of humans as metaphysically unified with the cosmic whole will be equally true whatever relation humans stand in with nature—the

situation of exploitation of nature exemplifies such metaphysical unity equally as well as a conserver situation, and the human self is just as indistinguishable from the bulldozer and Coca Cola bottle as the rocks or the rainforest. What John Seed seems to have in mind here is that once one has realised that one is indistinguishable from the rainforest, its needs will become one's own. But there is nothing to guarantee this—one could equally well take one's own needs for its. And some pronouncements indicate clearly that this is what happens. Thus John Seed's 'I remain in awe of the perennial power of humans joining together in worship of our Earth and the way that the Earth always responds. Of course She hears! For She? It? (words fail), is us' (Seed 1991:2). The question of just whose response counts for both of us has important political implications.

The problem points towards a general set of boundary problems encountered by forms of deep ecology which dissolve or expand the self in this way. There is an arrogance in failing to respect boundaries and to acknowledge difference which can amount to an imposition of self. Deep ecologists see themselves as 'empowered to act on behalf of other beings' by claims of merging (Macy 1989:210). One may in certain situations claim without arrogance to act in solidarity with or on behalf of another through one's own (always imperfect) understanding of that other's situation, but one may not without arrogance assume that one is that other or knows that situation as does the other, that the other is transparent and encompassable by self without residue. Acknowledging the other's boundary and opacity of being is part of respect for the other. It is the master consciousness which presumes to violate boundaries and claims to subsume, penetrate and exhaust the other, and such treatment is a standard part of subordination; for example, of women, servants, the colonised, animals.

Similarly, respecting the needs of the other involves acknowledging the difference as well as the connection between our needs. We need to recognise not only our human continuity with the natural world but also its distinctness and independence from us and the distinctness of the needs of things in nature from ours. As Jean Grimshaw writes of a related feminist account implying the indistinctness of persons (the acceptance of the loss of self boundaries as a feminine ideal):[7]

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

needed in order not to see the other as a projection of self, or self as a continuation of the other.

(Grimshaw 1986:182)

These points seem to me to apply as much to caring for other species and for the natural world as they do to caring for our own species. But just as hyperseparation is confused with separation, so self/other merger is taken to be the only alternative to egoistic accounts of the self as without essential connection to others or to nature. Fortunately, this is a false choice; it is neither helpful nor necessary to opt for merger to realise an account of the ecological self as connected to nature in non-instrumental ways.

THE EXPANDED SELF

In fairness to deep ecology, it should be noted that it often tends to vacillate between mystical indistinguishability and the other accounts of self, especially between the merged self and the expanded Self. Vacillation occurs often by way of slipperiness as to the meaning of the identification of self with other, a key notion in deep ecology. This slipperiness reflects the confusion previously noted between separation and hyperseparation, but also seems to reflect a desire to retain the mystical appeal of indistinguishability while avoiding its many difficulties. Where 'identification' is used equivocally to mean *both* 'identity' and something like 'sympathy' or 'empathy', identification with other beings leads to an expanded self which encompasses all those we empathise with. According to Arne Naess, 'The self is as comprehensive as the totality of our identifications.... Our Self is that with which we identify' (Naess 1985:261). This larger self (or Self to Deep Ecologists) is something for which we should strive 'insofar as it is in our power to do so' (Fox 1986:13–19). And according to Fox we should strive to make it as large as possible.

But this expanded Self is not the result of a critique of egoism; rather, it is an enlargement and an extension of egoism (Cheney 1989). It does not question the structures of possessive egoism and self-interest; rather, it tries to allow for a wider set of interests by an expansion of self. The motivation for the expansion of self is to allow for a wider set of concerns while continuing to allow the self to operate on the fuel of self-interest (or Self-interest). This is apparent from the claim that 'in this light…ecological resistance is simply another name for self defence' (Fox 1986:60). Fox quotes with approval John Livingstone's statement, reminiscent of knightly vows: 'When I say that the fate of the sea turtle or the tiger or the gibbon is mine, I mean it. All that is in my universe is not merely mine; it is *me*. And I shall defend myself. I shall defend myself

not only against overt aggression but also against gratuitous insult' (Fox 1986:60). Joanna Macy also invokes the Self-interest model in an expanded form, calling on us to be 'a little more enlightened about what our self-interest is' (1989:210), while Arne Naess says: 'The requisite care flows naturally if the self is widened and deepened so that protection of free nature is felt and conceived of as protection of our very selves' (Seed *et al.* 1988:29).

The expanded Self version of deep ecology misconceives identification (Blum 1980:75) and arises from failure to question fully the problematic of rational egoism. It continues to subscribe to two of the main tenets of the egoist framework—that human nature is egoistic and that the alternative to egoism is self-sacrifice.[8] The concept of Self-realisation also inherits the Nietzschean framework of egoist assumptions inscribed into humanistic psychology and the human potentials movement (Grimshaw 1986:146–53). Given these assumptions about egoism, the obvious way to obtain some sort of human interest in defending nature is both through the expanded Self operating in the interests of nature, and along the familiar lines of self-interest.[9] Once the assumptions of rational egoism are questioned it is unnecessary to expand the Self in order to extend consideration to the other. The expanded Self strategy might initially seem to be just a dramatic but harmless way of saying that humans empathise with nature. But the strategy of transferring the structures of egoism is both unnecessary and highly problematic, for (as noted in Cheney 1989), the widening of interest is obtained at the expense of failing to recognise unambiguously the difference and independence of the other. Others are recognised morally only to the extent that they are incorporated into the self, and their difference denied. And the failure to critique rationalism, dualism and the structures of egoism means a failure to draw connections with other contemporary critiques. One of the effects of the shift in focus towards the critique of dualism and rationalism is to make the connections of the environmental critique with other critiques, especially feminism, central rather than peripheral or accidental as they tend to be seen by deep ecologists.

There are places, especially in Arne Naess's more recent work, where the assumptions of egoism *are* called clearly into question and appeal is made to what appears to be a version of the relational account of self (Naess 1988; 1990). If 'identification' is interpreted to mean simply 'empathy' or the assuming of the other's interests as one's own, as Naess suggests in his response to Reed (Naess 1990:187), then the self which identifies with the other will be a version of the relational self, albeit a version which is interpreted in an unnecessarily holistic way as interest-identity, the assumption by the self of all the interests of the other. But the problem for deep ecologists in treating the relational self as a further, fallback interpretation of the Self is that it makes the whole problematic

and cumbersome account of ecological selfhood as self-expansion and Self-realisation entirely unnecessary, along with the claim that the Self is the totality of its identifications. And it is also inconsistent with these frameworks, for the relational self framework must readmit the other, which the self-realisation strategy of deep ecology, especially with respect to the dissolution of ethics, depended upon absorbing into Self.

THE TRANSCENDED OR TRANSPERSONAL SELF

To the extent that the expanded Self requires that we detach from the particular concerns of the 'narrow, biographic self (a relinquishment which despite its natural difficulty we should, according to Fox, struggle to attain), expansion of self to Self also tends to lead into the third position, and to become the transcendence or overcoming of self, the conquest of 'the personal ego'. Thus Fox urges us to strive for *impartial* identification with *all* particulars, the cosmos, discarding our identifications with our own particular concerns, personal emotions and attachments (Fox 1989:12; 1990). Fox presents here the deep ecology version of universalisation, with the familiar emphasis on the personal and the particular as corrupting and self-interested ('the cause of possessiveness, war and ecological destruction' [1989:12]), and of particulars as inferior to the larger whole.

This treatment of particularity, the devaluation of personal relationships and of an identity tied to particular parts of the natural world as opposed to an abstractly conceived whole, the cosmos, inherits the rationalistic preoccupation with the universal and its account of ethical life as oppositional to the particular. Fox (1989:12) reiterates (as if it were unproblematic) the view of particular attachments as ethically suspect and opposed to genuine, impartial 'identification', which necessarily falls short with all particulars. The framework of detachment, impartiality and impersonality which this form of deep ecology takes over so uncritically from rationalist ethics and from some eastern thought, has been seen by many feminists as deeply problematic since, as Gilligan puts it, 'it breeds moral blindness or indifference—a failure to discern or respond to need' (1987:24). The analogy in human terms of impersonal love of the cosmos is the view of morality as based on universal principles, or the impersonal and abstract 'love of man' detached from any particular caring relationships. As Marti Kheel writes: 'This preference for identification with the larger "whole" may reflect the familiar masculine urge to transcend the concrete world of particularity in preference for something more enduring and abstract' (1990:136). Because it carries this extra freight of devaluation of the area of particularity which has been associated with women,

'transpersonal ecology' represents a significant increase in theoretical masculinisation over and above the earlier forms of deep ecology.[10]

Because this 'transpersonal' identification is so indiscriminate and denying of particular meanings, it cannot allow either for the deep and highly particularistic attachment to place which has motivated both the passion of many modern conservationists and the love of many indigenous peoples for their land[11] (which much deep ecology inconsistently tries to treat as exemplifying its modal). In addition to the love of the land as kin, noted earlier, particularistic care emerges clearly in the statements of many indigenous peoples; for example, in the moving words of Cecilia Blacktooth explaining why her people would not surrender their land:

> You ask us to think what place we like next best to this place where we always lived. You see the graveyard there? There are our fathers and our grandfathers. You see that Eagle-nest mountain and that Rabbit-hole mountain? When God made them, He gave us this place. We have always been here. We do not care for any other place…. We have always lived here. We would rather die here. Our fathers did. We cannot leave them. Our children were born here—how can we go away? If you give us the best place in the world, it is not so good as this…. This is our home…. We cannot live anywhere else. We were born here and our fathers are buried here…. We want this place and no other.
>
> (McLuhan 1973:28)

These are very specific and local responsibilities of care. In inferiorising such particular, emotional and kinship-based attachments, deep ecology gives us another variant on the superiority of reason and the inferiority of its contrasts, failing to grasp yet again the role of reason and incompletely critiquing its influence. To obtain a more adequate account than that offered by mainstream ethics and deep ecology it seems that we must move towards the sort of ethics much feminist theory has suggested, which can allow for both continuity and difference, and for ties to nature which are expressive of a rich variety of relationships of care, kinship and friendship, rather than towards increasing abstraction and detachment from relationship.

THE ECOLOGICAL SELF AND THE VIRTUE OF ETHICS

A major motivation for the self-realisation account of deep ecology is that it supposedly makes it possible to dispense with appeals to ethics and morality in ecological matters and to replace them with Self-interest, from which care flows naturally. On this deep ecology account, ethics

and morality are equated with duty, sermonising and self-sacrifice, in effect Kantian ethics, which operates as a prohibition on desire (Naess 1988b; Macy 1989:210). But this form of ethics is only one variety of ethical account of relationship to nature, and there are other types of ethical experience and theory which do not take such a prohibitory form. Virtue accounts, for example, are based on a set of commitments inherent in a particular type of identity, and from them care does 'flow naturally', that is, it expresses what that individual *wants* to do, as that particular sort of individual, rather than what he or she is constrained to do through duty (Poole 1991:55; McIntyre 1982). Deep ecology often operates with a covert version of a virtue-based account of the ecological self; thus Naess writes: 'We need not say that today man's relation to the non-human world is *immoral*. It is enough to say that it lacks generosity, fortitude, and love' (Naess 1980:323). Were the use of such a virtue-based account to be explicitly admitted by deep ecology, it would be unnecessary to incur the many problems of Self-interest, especially the denial of difference, in order to find a basis for consideration of others in nature which flows from the self and is not based on prohibition.

There are many good reasons to avoid building an account of ecological morality on ethics in its usual rationalist conception, and to move in the direction of an ethics of virtue.[12] Rationalist-inspired ethical concepts are highly ethnocentric and cannot account adequately for the views of many indigenous peoples. The attempted application of these rationalist concepts to their moral life tends to lead to the view that they lack a real ethical framework (Plumwood 1990). Alternative virtue-based concepts such as care, respect, gratitude, sensitivity, reverence and friendship seem more applicable.[13]

Such concepts are more resistant to analysis along the lines of reason/emotion dualism, and their construal along these lines has involved confusion and distortion (Blum 1980). They are moral 'feelings' but they involve both cognitive elements, ethical elements and emotion in ways that do not seem separable. These are more local concepts, which allow for particularity and do not require either assimilation or, mostly, reciprocity. They are also concepts many feminist philosophers have argued should have a more significant place at the expense of abstract concepts of mainstream western ethics such as rights and justice (Gilligan 1982; 1987; Benhabib 1987). The feminist suspicion is that no abstract morality can be well founded that is not grounded in sound particularistic relations to others in personal life, the area which brings together in concrete form the intellectual with the emotional, the sensuous and the bodily.

Such an approach treats ethical relations as an expression of identity; for example, maternal care as an expression of self-in-relationship (Gilligan 1987:24) rather than as the discarding, containment, or

generalisation of a self viewed as self-interested and non-relational, as in the conventional ethics of prohibition or universalisation. From this perspective, rationalist ethics provides an account suited to governing the relations of egoist stranger to egoist stranger (Benhabib 1987; Poole 1991:61), rather than one suited to a richer and more particular form of relationship. If the grounding of virtue in the commitments of identity can provide the *terra firma* of valuation which floundering ethical theories have long sought, it also provides its own problems. Identities themselves must be subject to ethical assessment, and may be morally problematic (Poole 1991:61); alongside the identity and virtue of the mother must be placed that of the soldier. Indeed many moral issues are simply displaced on to issues of the morality of being that kind of person, having that identity. But the argument I have developed in this book has shown that these issues of human identity and relationship to nature *are* among the key issues which need to be addressed in any new approach to nature.

It is not, then, that we need to abandon ethical aspects of environmental philosophy, or opt for an entirely contextual ethics.[14] Rather environmental ethics needs a different and richer understanding of ethics, one which gives an important place to the issues surrounding human identity, allows for ethical concepts owning to emotionality and particularity, and abandons the exclusive focus on the universal and the abstract associated with egoism, and the dualistic and oppositional accounts of the reason/emotion and universal/particular contrasts given in rationalist accounts of ethics.

Deep ecology has some excuse for the identification of ethics with those rationalist forms of it based on the concept of moral rules restraining the rational ego. For this has been the conception corresponding to dominant forms of modern market rationality and social life. Rationalism, the prestige of reason and the kind of egoist and instrumental identity demanded by the public sphere have influenced not only the concept of what morality is and of what is *central* to it, but also what count as moral concepts. Virtue-based concepts such as friendship, love, respect, care, concern, gratitude, community and compassion are in conflict with the rational instrumentalism of the public sphere, in which they have no place. As the main ethical concepts of society, they correspond to a different conception of (social) moral life which is now, as McIntyre argues, a residue. Excluded from the public, these concepts appear today mainly in the practices and relationships of the private sphere, and of women especially as the representatives of that sphere (Gilligan 1987: Poole 1991:59). Motherhood and friendship represent perhaps the clearest examples of relational selfhood, and an identity expressed in caring practices which treat the other non-instrumentally.

As we saw in chapter 6, the ecological self can be interpreted as a

form of mutual selfhood in which the self makes essential connection to earth others, and hence as a product of a certain sort of relational identity. In expressing that identity, the individual fulfils his or her own ends as well as those of the other (one meaning of 'self-realisation'). He or she stands in particular relations, which may be those of care, custodianship, friendship, or various diverse virtue concepts, to that other, who is treated as deserving of concern for its own sake, and hence as intrinsically worthy or valuable. The relational self and intrinsic value are, therefore, essential theoretical complements of a virtue account of ecological selfhood. I have tried to show how they can be accounted for in ways that enable them to apply to the natural world without problematic assumptions about difference or egoism. On their own, however, they do not delineate the precise content of that relationship, except as one of essential and non-instrumental concern, one of regard for beings for their own sake.

Since virtue accounts are based on a set of commitments inherent in a particular type of identity (McIntyre 1982; Poole 1991), an essential further ingredient in putting flesh on the bones of an alternative conception of care for nature is that of human identity. I have stressed the origins and defects of the traditional western account which defined human virtue in terms of the radical exclusion of the contrast class of nature, and which, as we have seen, treats the human relation to it as one of domination and instrumentalism. Any new conception of human identity would need to make allowance for the variety of human commitments to and human caring relations for the limitless variety of beings in nature, as well as providing for alternative visions and ethical frameworks which may be highly regionalised and particularised. It is unlikely that any single conception would cover a ground of such diversity. However, if care and friendship are seen as generic or determinable concepts, there is a range of determinate relationships and caring virtues on which such a practice of human virtue in relation to nature might draw.

Many of the more specific virtues which might be drawn upon for a new human identity in relation to nature have already emerged from the debate. Some of them are the general virtues of friendship, such as openness to the other (Macy 1989:211), generosity (Naess 1980), leaving space for the other, the ability to put oneself in the place of the other and to respond to the other's needs. With nature, as with the human sphere, the capacity to care, to experience sympathy, understanding and sensitivity to the situation and fate of particular others is an index of our moral being. Other virtues would express recognition of specific relations of dependency, responsibility, continuity and interconnection, as well as those of difference (including human difference) and of respect for the independence and

boundlessness of the other. An important ground of certain caring relations would be a locally particularised identity involving commitment to a particular place and its non-human as well as its human inhabitants. This is advocated by bioregionalism. But any attempt to rekindle such an alternative conception of human identity must confront the loss in modern urban life of much of the basis of that identity, and the loss of the particular practices of care through which commitment to particular places is expressed and fostered. For most people in industrial society such virtues are, tragically, indeed a residue. This is not just a feature of modernity; it is a feature of the mobility and instrumentalism of market society.

Although a virtue ethics is usually now exemplified in relations in the private sphere, a private construction of ecological selfhood (for example, as personal 'care' or as the Self) does not go far enough. Rather such an ethical commitment should be thought of as a form of resistance to dominant instrumental constructions of public and social life. Any attempt to work towards a different conception of the human self and to construe its relations to nature along these lines as non-instrumental will have to confront the problem of the dominance of instrumental relationships in the public sphere. Although ecological selfhood has private aspects, it cannot satisfactorily be construed as a purely private practice, like personal friendship or motherhood, which does not impinge on the public sphere, or challenge its dominant instrumentalism. Hence ecological selfhood cannot be conceived in terms of the thunderclap of personal conversion to an after-hours religion of earth worship, tacked on to a basically market-orientated conception of social and economic life. Nor, as Poole argues against McIntyre, should it be tied to the attempt to resurrect past social forms. It must be seen rather as an attempt to obtain a new human and a new social identity in relation to nature which challenges this dominant instrumental conception, and its associated social relations. Hence it is a practice of opposition which parallels that of the attempt to retain and expand other non-instrumental forms of social and economic life in the face of relentless instrumentalising pressure.

Part of overcoming the influence of dualism in ethics is the dissolution of the false opposition rationalist ethics assumes between particularistic relations of concern and more general moral concern. There *can* be opposition between particularity and generality of concern, as when concern for particular kin is accompanied by *exclusion* of others from care or chauvinistic attitudes towards them (Blum 1980:79, 80). But this does not happen automatically. Emphasis on oppositional cases obscures the frequent and important instances in which care for particular others is essential to a more generalised morality. Special relationships, which are treated by universalising

positions as at best morally irrelevant, and at worst a positive hindrance to the moral life, are thus mistreated. For as Blum stresses (1980:78–83), special relationships inevitably must form the basis for much of our moral life and concern. Special relationships with, care for or empathy with particular aspects of nature as experienced, rather than with nature as abstraction, are essential to provide a depth of concern. Under appropriate conditions, experience of and care and responsibility for particular animals, trees, rivers, places and ecosystems which are known well, are loved and are appropriately connected to the self, enhance rather than hinder a wider, more generalised concern for the global environment.

This helps to explain why global moral concern should not be and does not have to be abandoned in such a framework. Certainly, we cannot treat the entire universe as if it were our nearest and dearest, although saints sometimes try, and certainly, moral concern cannot exclude strangers and distant others. Moral concern cannot just be particularistic, but at the same time it cannot be based satisfactorily on a universalism which denies and devalues particularised moral commitments and the relevance of personal experience. Nor can they just be tacked on, as some accounts suggest (the 'adding women's experience' solution). For we have to address not only the omission of the voice of love and care but also the opposition between the universalising voice and the caring voice, as well as the latter's subordination. And this in turn is part, not just of ethics, but of re-evaluating and realigning the relations of the public and private sphere on which these different voices have been based.

Still, there is scope here for a different account of universalisation which is not based on devaluation of the personal and particular. It would make wider concern a question not of transcending or detaching the self from particular, personal moral commitments, but in part at least of understanding or coming to see the relationship between these particular commitments and local situations and those of distant others. You can come to understand the relationship between your own loss and that of others, the degradation of your own local ecosystem and that of the global ecosystem, the impoverishment of social and natural life-forms and that of your own life and the lives of those you know. Such wider forms of care can be expressed in political consciousness and social action with as much force and validity as in personal relationships.

The implication of this form of empathic generalisation, in contrast to Kantian universalisation, is that the *more* strongly you feel about your own commitments and attachments the more basis you should have for expanding concern to others. This is not to assume that everyone makes such connections, but rather to shift the moral focus from supposed

oppositional relations, between particular and general concern, to the conditions of social and political life which produce such opposition and which hinder such empathic generalisation. These conditions will often be those which construct the other as alien, and include especially the web of dualism and hierarchy.

However, an ethic of care speaks not in one voice but in a number of different political voices, both particularised ones of concern for family and immediate others, and more general forms voicing concern for nature and wider social groups. These voices will not necessarily be in harmony. To expect that they would be so would be to mistake what such voices have to offer us. The voices of care are non-instrumentalising voices, but they can carry widely different political messages. There cannot be a single answer to the question of whether the ethics of care is socially progressive or socially regressive—it is a determinable whose determinates can be either. The care which women provide in the context of the family in market society typically has an incompleteness and an ambiguity, the more so to the extent that it is controlled and structured by its larger context. Often the ethics of care is contained and adapted to a supportive role, that of supplying the care and the human values omitted from the public sphere and so making life tolerable or possible, or that of providing the co-operatively socialised individuals on which the public sphere relies but which it could not itself provide. Thus familial care can support a conservative value system resisting extension of care to non-familial or 'undeserving' others or working to disadvantage women by denying them equal participation in the public arena (Bacchi 1990:244–5); the mother working in the munitions factory can give care for 'the boys' as the justification for work supporting militarism (Ruddick 1989:87). Or, in the ecological case, a woman can give care for a husband's or son's welfare and employment as the reason why she thinks a logging practice, which will destroy an endangered species, should continue.

But despite these ambiguities, the care model has a major contribution to make to understanding alternatives to the dominant instrumental models. The association of the virtues of personal care with women is historical and contingent rather than essential.[15] It does not reflect women's unique or innate suitability for their practice so much as the exclusion of these non-instrumentalising virtues and practices from the public sphere. It is in these wider contexts especially that the practices and virtues of care, long contained in the private sphere, realise their subversive and oppositional potential. Women indeed have something highly valuable to offer in these non-instrumentalising voices, as 'custodians of a story about human attachment and interdependence' (Gilligan 1987:32), a story

increasingly driven from the world at large, both as human care and in the form of care for the earth.

RECONSTRUCTING REASON

The resolution of human/nature dualism is closely linked with the resolution of other closely associated reason/nature dualisms, such as the reason/emotion dualism. We have seen how reason/emotion dualism fits the model of denied dependency, especially in the rationalist conception of the ethical. We have noticed how emotion is constructed as the opponent and dualised underside of reason, so that it is identified as an unreliable, unreflective, irrational and sometimes uncontrollable force reason must dominate. We should certainly challenge the narrowing and dominating role of reason. But what is contra-indicated by the analysis of reason/emotion dualism is the replacement of the affirmation of reason by the affirmation of the dualised conception of emotion (as in parts of the Romantic and current New Age traditions). Emotion, like other areas reason has excluded, can be treated affirmatively, as a crucial and creative element, but in doing this we affirm neither the irrational nor the anti-rational.

Since overcoming dualism does not imply dissolving difference, there may still be a point in recognising a distinction between reason and emotion. But the distinction should not be treated in terms of radical exclusion: emotions need not be treated as so unreasonable, nor reason as so divorced from emotion, as they are in dualistic construction; nor need they be construed as necessarily oppositional, but as capable of a creative integration and interaction (Blum 1980). The anti-dualist programme implies a politics which can create a different, non-hierarchical and integrative role for rationality in developing and articulating perceptions, feelings and values (Midgley 1981:3), in grounding and establishing a basis for human existence on the earth which is not based on illusions of the master. In a properly grounded human life, reason could act as the facilitator for the faculties, rather than the dictator, and play this role both in its relation to other elements in individual life and in the many social forms and institutions in which the hierarchical construction of reason is still embedded. An honoured, rather than a denigrated, place could be given to engaged forms of reason which acknowledge and are faithful to their value commitments, and to a conception of social and public life governed by the values of care for and commitment to the other which have been stripped from it and confined to the private. The expulsion of the master identity from the western construction of reason requires not the abandonment of reason itself, but an effort to instal another, less hierarchical, more democratic and plural identity in its place.

Conclusion
Changing the master story

> Let us love the land of Here Below: it is real—it offers resistance to love.
> (Simone Weil)

The account I have given replaces phallocentrism as the chief concept of cultural analysis by the identity—at once more specific and more universal—of the master subject who has held and shaped most of the high ground of western culture, especially that delineated as the territory of reason. It is not material conditions—nature as stingy mother—which have kept us everywhere in chains, as Marxist fundamentalism would have us believe, but our own cultural bondage to the logic of the master. Since culture was shaped around the written word in Plato's time, the ruling elites (whose identities are condensed in the master subject) which stand at the apex of various forms of domination have been able through their command of social resources to exercise control over culture disproportionate to their numbers. They have made much of it as their instrument and in their image. Their hegemony has created deep structures in culture which ensure the continuation and expansion of oppression through many political changes. Mainly by means of the deep structures of dualism, even the challenges to the ruling elites have been appropriated by the master forms of consciousness or remade in their terms. Although the superrich increasingly own both the world and the word, the master identity is more than a conspiracy: it is a legacy, a form of culture, a form of rationality, a framework for selfhood and relationship which, through this appropriation of culture, has come to shape us all.

As we have seen, the deep structures of mastery are buried in the foundations of western intellectual frameworks and conceptual history. There is scarcely a subject or a topic which is not entwined in the knots of dualism these conceptual structures have created. The master's logic of colonisation is the dominant logic of our time. The explanation of what is happening to the earth and its complement of

life is also to be found in this problematic, in the logic of mastery, now being seared into the biosphere of an entire scarred and wounded planet as well as across its sociosphere. We have traced some of the progress of this cultural subject through the landscape of western intellectual history. He has explained, justified and naturalised his actions in colonising otherness in terms of a story about reason and nature which is written large on western culture and which increasingly guides human impacts on the earth and prevents a sustainable, mutual relationship with the planet. The master's colonisation denies the other he calls nature in two main ways, both by denying self's dependency on and relationship to it, and by denying and cancelling its independence of self.

We have seen how the meanings of reason and nature are multiple and have shifted, but how the strategies of mastery are still played out between the mastering one and dualised other. Variations in the concepts of nature and reason have enabled the long-running story of reason and nature to remain relevant, to guide changes in technological development and to provide a reliable conceptual response to widely varying circumstances and opportunities. The flexibility of these concepts has enabled the strategies of mastery to be transferred across sites of oppression as mastering reason invades and colonises those others counted as nature. In the range of plots which emanate from the master, from the perspective of power, nature is that other which is excluded from the sphere of ends. It is the name for all those whose own ends are denied and have disappeared, those seen as imposing no limits on the rational self. The master strategies of nullification apply to all of these. In our own time many of these meanings cluster especially around the concept of economic development.

We can understand the development of this story about reason and nature as a story whose stages correspond to the historical stages in the process of colonisation of otherness. With some room for variations, these progressive stages of the colonisation process can be represented (with somewhat arbitrary divisions) as justification and preparation, invasion and annexation, appropriation (instrumentalism) and incorporation (assimilation). In the first stage, the story is set up and the leading characters of mastering reason and the lower separate sphere of nature are established. This is the work of Plato and the early rationalists; in their time the invasion of otherness in non-human nature has not yet begun in earnest, but the master identity has established itself firmly in control of the lower orders of otherness classed as nature, as the master of animals, slaves, 'barbarians' and women, and has begun its colonisation of the human self and of culture. Plato also gives a lead to what is to come for non-human nature in his conception of 'original' matter as a chaotic and formless void empty of ends, uninhabited by

qualities, on which mastering reason stamps itself as form, as the passive receptacle in which reason's own ends and intelligence are implanted in a process which carries no element of mutuality.

This Platonic lead is followed in the second stage, that of invasion and annexation by later rationalists; as the invasion gets truly under way, Cartesian thought declares non-human nature *terra nullius*, uninhabited by mind, totally available for annexation, a sphere easily moulded to the ends of a reason conceived as without limits. After annexation, Locke shows how reason, in its next persona as self-contained individual egoism or instrumental rationality, can profitably appropriate the whole sphere of 'nature' as its own individual property by dispossessing and making invisible previous inhabitants and their prior rights, whose agency is excluded by Eurocentric concepts of productive labour. The third stage, appropriation, reconceives rationality as egoism and nature in instrumental terms as a resource for the master. As we have seen, instrumentalism is not only a form of transformation of the other. It is one which gives the other's ends no weight, treats it as a mere tool or means for ends that are not its own. This is the stage of the systematic searching out and exploitation of 'use' in nature, in which the rational ego is conceived as standing apart from the alien other, as the self-contained user of the item for consumption or resource for knowledge it now becomes. The other is reinvested with agency and purpose only through being brought captive as means within the master's sphere of ends, through assimilation to the sphere of self via use, in commodification or consumption.

THE FINAL STAGE: DEVOURING THE OTHER

The three stages of justification and preparation, invasion and annexation, instrumentalisation and appropriation can be seen as parts of the overall dualising process in which reason progressively divides, devalues and denies the colonised other which is nature. But there is often a fourth stage to the colonisation process, which we can see clearly in such contemporary sites of struggle as East Timor. This is the stage of devouring the other.[1] In this stage there is a more intense and totalising form of instrumentalisation; the colonised are offered the alternatives of elimination or incorporation. Only those who can be incorporated into the empire of self, who offer no resistance, are permitted to exist.

If we allow the fourth stage to come about, the trajectory I have plotted extends into a fearful future. In the fourth stage, reason systematically devours the other of nature. The instrumentalisation of nature takes a totalising form: all planetary life is brought within the

sphere of agency of the master (Self). Devouring is the project of the totalising self which denies the other's difference (Brennan 1994), the colonising self which presents to all unassimilated otherness the alternatives of elimination or incorporation. Otherness is destroyed by both alternatives, both in use (in commodification) and in non-use, as whatever cannot be made use of, commodified, represented in the market, whatever still dares to assert difference, is destroyed. Devouring is a process in which what can be incorporated into the empire of self is permitted to exist in assimilated form and what is not of use is eliminated. It seeks to create a slave-world, a 'terra-formed' landscape which offers no resistance, which does not answer back because it no longer has a voice and language of its own.

In the fourth stage reason is increasingly constructed in the sphere of the global economy. Devouring is the process characteristic of the latest expression of the master identity as the hidden subject of the global 'Rational Economy' and of the forms of rationality grounded in the rational egoism of global 'enterprise culture'. As the form of rationality represented in the Rational Economy appropriates all the remaining space on the earth, living things, beings who move to their own rhythms, who follow the urgency of their own messages rather than those of the Rational Economy, are denied space and place. The Rational Economy will pay for and allocate space (increasingly privatised as a scarce resource) only to what it can use or what participates in it. Increasingly it withdraws access to resources from unassimilated others, those who cannot be used or incorporated into Self (as commodities or in some other appropriated form which destroys otherness). In the fourth stage, the world is not only conceived instrumentally, but completely instrumentalised. The objective is the implementation of the Cartesian dream of complete control over the other of nature and the final destruction of all resistance that the earth as other has to offer, as biotechnology and other mastering technologies repopulate the world with assimilated, artefacted life and the master science strives to harness all global energy-flows to the Rational Economy.

As in the original Platonic version, reason, as expressed in the Rational Economy, disdains the world, which it reckons as less perfect than itself, but now undertakes the post-Platonic project of remaking the 'chaos' of the biosphere and also the sociosphere in the image of its own abstract perfection. In the fourth stage, the earth itself, formed by the Rational Economy as rational cosmos, becomes smoothly surfaced, ground down, intersected by straight lines, and hostile to living things. Like Plato's world-god, the form of reason expressed in the Rational Economy acknowledges no other on which it is dependent or which is outside itself. The Rational Economy increasingly reveals reason in its full Platonic stature as inviolable economic law and as ultimate social

end, subsuming earlier goals such as the nation-state and the social goals provided by it. Moving beyond any semblance of its earlier conception in classical liberalism as the mere servant of individuals and their ends, the Rational Economy increasingly presents itself both as the supreme end and as final arbiter of other ends.

In the fourth stage, the operations of the Rational Economy become as destructive of the sociosphere as they are of the biosphere, as the Rational Economy, which has thrown off any democratic or social control, penetrates to the heart of social life itself and devours the social. As it grows in power it increasingly subsumes older models of political community as social negotiation yielding constraints imposed on economic policy and economic maximisation. Those humans who remain unassimilated, outside participation in the Rational Economy, are offered the same choice of incorporation or elimination; those not useful to the Rational Economy are discarded, deprived of access to the means of life—now almost totally within the control of its rational meritocracy. In this context, the fate of the poor is naturalised as they are distanced from the form of reason constructed in the Rational Economy; they are constructed as improvident, incapable (like children and animals) of deferred gratification, and insufficiently (self-) developed (Ehrenreich 1989).

The logic of domination and the deep structures of dualism create 'blind spots' in the dominant culture's understanding of its relationship to the biosphere, understandings which deny dependency and community to an even greater degree than in the case of human society. The distorted perceptions and mechanisms of denial which arise from the master rationality are an important reason why the dominant culture which embodies this identity in relation to nature cannot respond adequately to the crisis of the biosphere and the growing degradation of the earth's natural systems. The coloniser perspective is blind to the intricate pattern and workings of nature, seeing only a disorderly other in need of the imposition of rational order via development. The mechanistic world-view means that the master rationality is unable to see in biospheric nature another centre of striving and needs for earth resources, or to see that these needs must limit and bound its own demands. Through instrumentalism and incorporation the dominant culture comes to frame its conceptual approach to this sustaining other entirely in terms of its own needs, treating it as an infinitely manipulable and inexhaustible resource. Instrumentalisation and homogenisation, with their assumptions of intersubstitutability, prevent the master rationality from recognising in biospheric nature a unique, non-tradeable, irreplaceable other on which all life on the planet depends. Because it has not fully come to terms with earthian existence, but clings to illusions of identity outside nature, the master rationality is unable to grasp its peril.

In different frameworks from that of the master, frameworks which recognise dependency on the earth as sustaining other as the central fact of human life, it is clear that a rational culture oriented to survival would develop forms of rationality which encouraged mutually sustaining relationships between humans and the earth. In the sphere of human society, the best examples of such mutually sustaining relationships are found in care, friendship and love. In terms of these frameworks, the aggressive colonising and instrumentalising logic of the master rationality and the maximising logic of the Rational Economy emerge as profoundly unintelligent, even irrational, as ecological and survival strategies. In the colonising strategy of the master, only what is marked as Self is permitted to survive. But to know that there are those who have such power over the earth, and whose strategy is that of mastery, is also to know what the ending of such a story must be. After much destruction, mastery will fail, because the master denies dependency on the sustaining other; he misunderstands the conditions of his own existence and lacks sensitivity to limits and to the ultimate points of earthian resistance. The master's denial of dependency and his self-deception with respect to the conditions of his own life carry grave dangers, which include, of course, self-destruction. Since he is set on a course of devouring the other who sustains him, the story must end either with the death of the other on whom he relies, and therefore with his own death, or with the abandonment of mastery, his failure and transformation.

REMAKING THE STORY

The strands interwoven by this master story of colonisation form a mesh so strong, so finely knit and familiar it could almost pass for our own bodies, but it is an imprisoning web which encloses us. We are not yet artefacted life, tailored totally as resources to the master's ends. We do have still some power to reject the master's definition of us as passive bodies to be subsumed by his agency, mutilated, imprinted and conditioned. We remain active and intentional subjects, and we can still effect change, on ourselves and on the course of the social world. We can learn to recognise and eject the master identity in culture, in ourselves, and in political and economic structures. Increasingly the project of expelling the master from human culture and the project of recognising and changing the colonising politics of western relations to other earth nations converge, and increasingly too both these projects converge with the project of survival.

A central part of both projects is that of remaking reason in a different mould from the master mould. If rationality is to have any

function for long-term survival, it must, as ecologists have been telling us, find a form which encourages sensitivity to the conditions under which we exist on the earth, one which recognises and accommodates the denied relationships of dependency and enables us to acknowledge our debt to the sustaining others of the earth. This implies creating a democratic culture beyond dualism, ending colonising relationships and finding a mutual, ethical basis for enriching coexistence with earth others. We can realign reason not with the master formations of elite control and the rational egoism which fails to acknowledge the other as a limiting principle, but with social formations built on radical democracy, co-operation and mutuality. We can explore the rationality of the mutual self, the self which can take joy in the flourishing of others, which can acknowledge kinship but also feast on the other's resistance and grow strong on their difference. Such a rationality could begin to treasure the incomparable riches of diversity in the world's cultural and biological life, and to participate with earth others in the great dialogues of the community of life.

The reason/nature story has been the master story of western culture. It is a story which has spoken mainly of conquest and control, of capture and use, of destruction and incorporation. This story is now a disabling story. Unless we can change it, some of those now young may know what it is to live amid the ruins of a civilisation on a ruined planet. The power to direct, cast and script this ruling drama has been in the hands of only a tiny minority of the human race and of human cultures. Much inspiration for new, less destructive guiding stories can be drawn from sources other than the master, from subordinated and ignored parts of western culture, such as women's stories of care. Those of us from the master culture who lack imagination can gain new ideas from a study, undertaken in humility and sympathy, of the sustaining stories of the cultures we have cast as outside reason. If we are to survive into a liveable future, we must take into our own hands the power to create, restore and explore different stories, with new main characters, better plots, and at least the possibility of some happy endings.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1 To consider just one area of diversity: those versions of ecological feminism (mostly characteristic of the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s) close to cultural feminism often take women's oppression to be the key form of oppression which explains all others. For these positions, as Charlene Spretnak writes, 'identifying the dynamics—largely fear and resentment—behind the dominance of male over female is the key to comprehending every expression of patriarchal culture with its hierarchical, militaristic, mechanistic, industrialist forms' (Spretnak 1990). Social ecological feminists join black feminists in seeing women's oppression as one among a number of forms of oppression (hooks 1981; 1984; 1989; Combahee 1978). Social ecological feminism draws especially on black and anti-colonial feminism and socialist feminism (Ruether 1975; Haraway 1989; 1991; Hartsock 1985; Mies 1986; Warren 1987; 1990; King 1989; 1990; Shiva 1989; 1992; Spelman 1988). But unlike those forms which are concerned exclusively with race, class and gender (Wajcman 1991; Walby 1992), it integrates a concern with nature into its investigation of multiple grounds of exploitation and shows how all these types of exploitation mutually determine and support one another. Karen Warren writes that such a feminism 'would build on these insights [of socialist and black feminism] to develop a more expansive and complete feminism, one which ties the liberation of women to the liberation of all systems of oppression' (1987:133). Such a feminism can aim to use understandings and insights from feminist thought to enrich understandings of the destruction of nature, without attempting to reduce one to the other. This form of ecological feminism is not committed to the thesis that women's struggle is identical with the struggle for nature, or that fixing one problem would automatically fix the other, which is a causal fallacy for most linked phenomena. See Plumwood (1991a).

2 Murray Bookchin writes of deep ecology: '"Humanity" surfaces in a vague and unearthly form to embrace everyone in a realm of universal guilt... we...lose sight of the social and of the differences that fragment "Humanity" into a host of human beings—men, women, ethnic groups, oppressors and oppressed' (1988:6A).

3 On the ecopolitics debate between social ecology, ecofeminism and deep ecology see especially Biehl (1987; 1988; 1991); Bookchin (1988; 1989; 1991); Bradford (1989); Chase (1991); Cheney (1987); Eckersley (1989); Fox (1989); Plumwood (1991a). A useful contribution is Tokar (1989).

4 Many postmodernist writers on the topic of movement connection object strenuously to absorption or 'totalisation', but are unable to envisage interaction in any more positive terms than mutual disruption, disintegration, or destabilisation (Quinby 1990). This is indeed 'a philosophical insurance policy' (Brennan 1991b) against effective opposition to the master.

5 For a deep ecology critique of Bookchin's position see Eckersley (1989).

6 Biehl (1988:5–7), another social ecologist, retains Bookchin's heavy emphasis on the defence of an oppositional conception of rationality and on Enlightenment humanism. She endorses Bookchin's thesis of the secondary character of the domination of nature and is dismissive of its critique (Biehl 1991). Some other social ecologists adopt less extreme positions. Thus both Tokar and Bradford, although heavily critical of present forms of deep ecology and its political orientation, go some way towards endorsing the generic critique of human-centredness (Tokar 1989; Bradford 1989).

7 Deep ecology has a high profile in some parts of the environment movement and is often identified with the critique of anthropocentrism, but this is a major error, not only in terms of conceptual alternatives but also historically. But it is one which deep ecologists (with the exception of Naess who allows for a plurality of positions [1988]) do not usually hasten to correct. In fact the critique of anthropocentrism has been developed in a number of different ways by various different schools of environmental philosophy, and deep ecology is only one of these ways, not necessarily the most satisfactory. This is a key point, because many critics do not distinguish criticism of the *kind of* position deep ecology represents, the critique of anthropocentrism, from the specific details of this criticism which are peculiar to the deep ecology form of development of that critique. This has an important bearing on how the alternatives are seen and on the question of whether the type of enterprise deep ecology represents is reconstructible in different terms or whether it has to be entirely abandoned as some critics have claimed. The terminology 'light' to 'dark' or 'deep' green theory is widely used in this context, but there has been contention over the issue of whether the difference can be represented as a spectrum or not. I use it here not to reinforce the idea of a spectrum, but mainly to allow terminologically for the idea that the critique of anthropocentrism or 'deep green theory' is much wider and more diverse than the particular development given it by Naess, Sessions, Devall, Fox and others who call themselves 'Deep Ecologists' and includes such deep ecology as a proper subset. This issue has been a potent source of confusion and conservativism.

Another way to make this point, which I shall not adopt here, is to capitalise the particular development of the position as 'Deep Ecology' and refer to the generic position challenging anthropocentrism as 'deep ecology'. See Steve Chase (1991). For the term 'Deep Ecology' see Arne Naess (1973 and 1988a). Bill Devall and George Sessions (1985); Warwick Fox (1990). For development of deep green theory which is not deep ecology see Plumwood (1975) and Plumwood and Routley (1979).

8 Warwick Fox (1989:5–25); on the irrelevance of feminism see ibid. (14, n. 22). See also Eckersley (1989:101). For a discussion of this point see Karen Warren (1990:144–5) and Plumwood (1991a).

9 This treatment emerged in the remarks of Jonathon Porritt in 'Green Politics', an address to Ecopolitics V Conference, University of New South

Wales, April 1991, available on ABC Radio tapes. See also Jonathon Porritt (1984). Deep ecologists have praised the work of Fritjof Capra as presenting the best development of their political thought (see, for example, Fox 1990:53). In contrast Stephan Elkins (1989) argues powerfully that Capra's social and political theory is 'an eclectic potpourri lacking internal coherence' (ibid.: 59) and lacking any perspective for emancipatory social change.

10 See also Ruether (1975); Griscom (1981); Ynestra King (1981).

CHAPTER 1

1 There is now an extensive literature on the contrast between the masculine rational sphere of public life, production, social and cultural life and rational justice and the feminine sphere of the private, domestic and reproductive life, the latter representing necessity, immersion in life, the natural and the individual, the former the social and cultural, the area where human freedom and control are exercised over affairs and over nature, especially via science and in active struggle against nature and over circumstances (de Beauvoir 1965; Lloyd 1984; McMillan 1982).

2 As Lynne Segal notes (1987:7). This modern overlay is also displayed in the work of such writers as D.H.Lawrence, Norman Mailer and Henry Miller. Some of the features which may have contributed to this reversal of the older identification of women with the body and as insatiably sexual are the Victorian bourgeois idealisation and splitting of female nature and the way in which sexuality is increasingly perceived as an arena for control and domination. As a powerful sexuality has come in modern times to have higher status and to be perceived as an attribute of strength instead of weakness as in the past, men have claimed that too for themselves.

3 As Rosemary Radford Ruether (1975) points out, the romantic tradition should be seen as mainly a counter-tradition, if an inadequate one.

4 Janet Biehl also sees the supposedly patriarchal origin of the woman-nature connection as a reason for its abandonment (Biehl 1991:13). Biehl ignores not only the variety of possible responses to the connection but the way they correspond to feminist positions on humanity and equality.

5 I use 'reproduction' here, following Carolyn Merchant, to include the reproduction of nature, as well as human and social reproduction. As Merchant (1989) argues, if 'reproduction' provides the conditions for 'production' to take place, then it must be thought of as including not only the reproduction of the labour force and of society, but also the conditions of the natural world which make life, society and production possible.

6 The extent of backgrounding emerges in treatments of the 'unofficial' economy such as Ekins (1986).

7 As Nancy Hartsock notes: 'The most important life activities have consistently been held by the powers that be to be unworthy of those who are fully human, most centrally because of their close relationship with necessity and life: motherwork, housework, and until the rise of capitalism in the west, any work necessary to subsistence' (Hartsock 1985:244).

8 As Rosemary Pringle remarks: 'The secretary's role is to transcribe what others say, not to speak herself ' (1988:29).

9 See Karen Warren's 1987 discussion of the inadequacies of standard forms of feminism from an ecological feminist perspective.

10 For a discussion of the complexities of Wollstonecraft's views on reason/see Jean Grimshaw (1990) and Karen Green (1993). Wollstonecraft places great stress on the absence of reason in the natural world and in animals and their consequent inferiority. However, she replaces patriarchal cruelty or indifference by a beneficent matriarchalism in which 'kindness' demonstrates human superiority. Thus she writes: The children eagerly enquired in what manner they were to behave to prove that they were superior to animals? The answer was short—be tender-hearted; and let your superior endowments ward off the evils which they cannot foresee. It is only to animals that children can do good; men are their superiors' (Wollstonecraft 1993:372–3).

11 For examples see Thomas (1983:41 ff.).

12 For an example from social ecology see Janet Biehl, who appeals to supposedly gender-neutral concepts of reason and humanity (especially 1991:8–27).

13 Vandana Shiva (1989: ch. 5); Catharine MacKinnon (1989) reveals what phallocentric models do to women's equality.

14 I adopt the terminology 'radical feminism' in the sense of Jaggar (1983) rather than the conflicting characterisation employed in Echols (1989). I find Echols's characterisation (1989:6–7) of 'radical feminism' confusing. It is not clear how 'radical feminism' in her sense differs from forms of either liberal or socialist feminism. It supposedly focuses on women's sameness with men rather than their difference from men, and makes common cause with socialism but operates mainly at the level of personal politics. Since the 'cultural feminism' which is contrasted with it is specified in ways which identify it with biologism and essentialism, the result is a misinterpretation of accounts of women's difference and a false choice, as well as a bypassing of the main body of feminist theoretical work (cultural and otherwise) over the last fifteen years.

15 The concept of the master subject is introduced in Haraway (1991:192) and Hartsock (1990).

16 This provides part of an answer to Mills (1991), who claims that ecofeminists do not consider the question of a 'regressive reconciliation with nature' as discussed by the Frankfurt school. There are many traps to be avoided in giving a positive value to nature and many forms a reconciliation might take, as I have tried to show below. The most obvious is the one that I have discussed in this chapter, of women accepting their traditional construction as nature and also accepting the false choice between nature and culture. In this case ecofeminists such as Plumwood (1988) and Ynestra King (1989) have already made it clear how what they are advocating differs from such a position. Janet Biehl (1991) also accuses ecofeminists without distinction of 'reinforcing gender stereotypes' (ibid.: 25) and of 'freezing women as social and nurturing beings' (ibid.: 15). Biehl's discussion ignores all the distinctions made above, and overlooks the fact that such ideals of nurturance are proposed by virtually all feminists who embrace them as new ideals for *both* sexes, and that whatever else they may do, they cannot be seen as simply reinforcing old gender stereotypes.

17 As Brennan (1989) remarks, the problem of essentialism has become a 'sclerosis' in feminist thought. It is an obstacle to conceptual progress and a fail-safe objection to almost any theory with any content. With respect to biological determinism, there are at least three possible approaches feminists can adopt on women's closeness to nature and the role of the body.

First, women's association with nature can, as Karen Warren points out

(1987), be accepted as a historical and descriptive connection only, with no basis in women's biology other than convention. 'Closeness to nature', if it were now to be accounted a virtue rather than, as traditionally, a vice, would be just as accessible to men as to women. This conventionalist position, viewing the body as neutral and the real self as ungendered, and the body as only conventionally connected to gendered qualities, is typical of liberal feminism, which does not view the connection with nature as having anything of real value to offer.

   Second, the connection might be considered a non-conventional one to the extent that women's historical treatment as aligned with nature has been associated with a different set of social abilities and based on a different position of power and role in society. This has shaped the characteristics of women's difference, but women's role in reproduction has not been irrelevant to it. Differences between men's and women's concerns and kinds of selfhood (identity) are real, and although not necessarily inherent in biology are not just conventional either. Even if they have arisen from the difference in the experiences, concerns and areas of life each sex has been taken as responsible for (from the kinds of lives they have tended to lead as Jean Grimshaw argues [1986:254]), they may still not be just arbitrarily connected to differences in male and female bodies, but result from the social meanings inscribed on or interwoven with bodies (see Irigaray's concept of the morphology of the body [Irigaray 1977:64; Grosz 1989:111]). In Gilligan's account, although women may be regarded as having a special and valuable role as 'custodians' of a different culture arising from these different experiences, practices and values (Gilligan 1987:32), this is not in principle inaccessible to men. Nor is participation in rival masculine practices and concepts of culture in principle inaccessible to women.

   Third, the connection can be affirmed in a stronger way as determined by women's biology and women's essential nature. Such a closeness to nature would not be accessible, except in some doubtful and derived way, to men. Some—a minority I believe, among radical feminists and ecofeminists—adopt such a biologically determinist position in a more or less explicit form, usually in tandem with a reversal argument (Daly 1979; Collard 1988; Gearhart 1982; Metzger 1989). On the other hand many radical feminists and ecological feminists have clearly disclaimed biological determinism. The unsupported assertion that underneath they are all still somehow committed to it (Echols 1989; Biehl 1991:27) amounts to misrepresentation.

   Conventionalist accounts, as in the first approach, and biological accounts, as in the third, are commonly presented as the choices concerning difference, in the guise of a choice between nature and nurture. As a number of critics have pointed out, the choice itself, as well as both these options, reflects mind/body dualism (Jaggar 1983:106), the ungendered account in assuming the body to be neutral and passive and the relationship between bodies and social practices conventional, the biological account in entirely leaving out social factors and factors of consciousness. The first option leads to the view of the individual as 'disembedded and disembodied' (Benhabib 1987:162) whereas the third is open to even more serious and well-known objections (Jaggar 1983:106–13; Haraway 1990).

18 Ecofeminist editors and commentators have often acknowledged diversity but declined to give an account of it and to distinguish systematic positions within ecofeminism (Diamond and Orenstein 1990; Spretnak 1990; Plant

1989). This encourages the sort of criticism Janet Biehl advances which accuses ecofeminism indiscriminately of biologism and reversal, irrationalism and incoherence. The failure to make such distinctions is one of the main problems in Biehl's 1991 critique, which could more fairly and usefully have been targeted against particular forms of ecofeminism (where appropriate forms do in fact exist). Biehl's procedure of lumping obviously diverse forms together and then claiming inconsistency is one which would enable any political position which exhibits any diversity to be similarly accused of inconsistency and incoherence.

19 Karen Warren (1990:133) suggests that the basic common ground of ecological feminism is the rejection of the whole logic of domination. But this seems to me too strong a requirement and to mark out only one kind of environmental ecofeminism, since not all forms of feminism or even of ecological feminism reject dualism and the logic of domination in its entirety.

20 For a discussion of nature/culture opposition and a refutation of Janet Biehl's claim that ecofeminists locate women where they were in the past, outside culture (1991:17, 27), see Ynestra King (1989 and 1990) and Warren (1987:15).

21 It is important to note that there is no necessary conflict in the abortion case between the view that living beings should be respected and the admission of women's right to choose abortion. The real issue is not whether the foetus is conceived as a living other to be respected, but whether the woman will continue to be conceived in instrumental terms; that is, conceived as one for whom no choice is necessary, as one who provides without cease; whose own needs, if they exist at all, always come second; whose value is determined by the child she produces; whose work is both expected, devalued and invisible, its real skill, importance and difficulty disappeared and defined into nature.

CHAPTER 2

1 The pathbreaking discussion of Jay (1981) makes the very important connection between otherness and logical treatments of negation for the first time, but neither in this discussion nor that of Hartsock (1990) is there a clear separation of dualism and dichotomy or an appreciation of the multiplicity of logical accounts of negation or of the multiple possibilities they provide for representing relations of otherness. The failure here and elsewhere to draw the distinction between dualism and dichotomy has the disastrous result that any attempt to draw distinctions or to use negation comes under suspicion.

2 On the comparable mechanism of denial of dependency on the part of the coloniser see Memmi (1965:54–5, 66–7). On psychological mechanisms of denial see Brennan (1989; 1993).

3 De Beauvoir goes on to add that such a treatment of otherness is inevitable since 'the category of the *Other* is as primordial as consciousness itself'.

4 Radical exclusion and other dualistic features appear in many aspects of relations between economic classes. Hyperseparation appears especially in the division of labour in production, which is often framed in terms of a rigid mind/body dualism in which mind people control body people. For example, many tasks of decision-making and various other intellectual tasks which can beneficially be amalgamated with the practical or manual aspect

of work are reserved for managers, with the purpose of setting them apart as a distanced and controlling elite. Radical exclusion appears in the division between high and low culture, as well as in cultural concepts and practices such as 'quality' and conspicuous consumption which are designed to mark out higher classes by exclusion. Denials of dependency appear in many areas, especially in the foregrounding of the managerial or entrepreneurial contribution to the task and appropriation of the product, and in private property relations in the backgrounding of the social infrastructure and other social contributions which go to make private profit and property possible.

The extreme dualistic form of class division is seen in the master/slave relationship, which resembles the other cases where the dualism is based on distorting an existing difference of race or gender in the rigidity of its boundaries and polarisations. Although the relationship between the proletarian and capitalist classes has much of the dualistic structure, a feature of modern class relations is that these boundaries are a good deal more permeable than in the master/slave case, since it is possible for selected individuals to move across the boundary. However, as G.A.Cohen points out, this possibility of escape is available to only a few (since necessarily numbers able to join the class owning the means of production are limited), and it is available on precisely the condition that the remaining members of the class do not succeed in realising the same possibility (Cohen 1979:23).

Gender boundaries, once similarly rigid, are now becoming permeable, in the same sort of way as perhaps in some places are those of race. As the case of class has demonstrated, such 'upward mobility' for a few can have considerable political advantages in disguising inequality. For a discussion of some of the contemporary distancing and marking phenomena of class see Ehrenreich (1989: especially 135–43). There has been important discussion recently of the problems of characterising class (Walby 1992).

5 The discussion in Hartsock (1990:162–3) seems to carry the implication that a dualistic account of otherness is a feature of logic.

6 See especially Routley *et al.* (1983).

7 My argument in this paragraph draws especially on Plumwood and Routley 1985. There are a number of different ways in which a formalisation of the structural features of dualism I have outlined might go. A more finegrained formulation might take account of geometrical features, for example.

8 Nancy Jay (1981:39–56) pioneers this interpretation of negation in her discussion of dichotomy. However, Jay's discussion is problematic not only because of the failure to distinguish between dualism and dichotomy, but because of the attempt to theorise the area in terms of Aristotelian logic which is a highly insensitive tool for dealing with both negation and identity, the two central concepts for giving an account of dualism, difference and otherness. Once dualism is distinguished from dichotomy, the laws of Non-Contradiction and of Excluded Middle, which represent the dichotomising rather than the dualising functions of negation, do not have to be rejected.

9 For an account of suppression in terms of prepositional logic, see Routley *et al.* (1983:139–52).

10 Backgrounding as truth suppression is expressed classically in the principle of Exportation, and by p & ((p & q) ? r) ? q?r, which accordingly might be called Exploitation.

11 For a critique of the treatment of gender in the dualistic terms found in 'sexrole stereotyping' see Gatens (1983); for a further critique of its treatment as indistinguishable from sex see Plumwood (1989); see also Jaggar (1984). Gender has often been understood as pure culture, as if the body were irrelevant. But the alternative is not to treat it as indistinguishable from either nature (sex) or culture. The distinction may still be useful and viable if treated in non-dualistic ways, and can be used to provide some sensitivity to social and cultural context.

12 Lynne Segal (1990:168–81) insightfully discusses the role of such reversal in forming white images of black men and women. Albert Memmi shows how the dynamic of reversal of values appears for the colonised in his or her attempt at escape. The colonised now affirms his or her own culture's qualities as indiscriminately as the coloniser has despised them.

> Suddenly, exactly to the reverse of the colonialist accusation, the colonised, his culture, his country, everything that belongs to him, everything he represents, become perfectly positive elements.
>   We shall ultimately find ourselves before a countermythology. The negative myth thrust on him by the coloniser is succeeded by a positive myth about himself suggested by the colonised, just as there would seem to be a positive myth of the proletarian opposed to a negative one. To hear the colonised and often his friends, everything is good, everything must be retained among his customs and traditions, his actions and plans; even the anachronous or disorderly, the immoral or mistaken…. The colonised's self-assertion, born out of a protest, continues to define itself in relation to it. In the midst of revolt, the colonised continues to think, feel and live against, and therefore *in relation to,* the coloniser and colonisation.
>
> (Memmi 1965:139; emphasis added)

13 The problem of affirming a subordinated identity has a straightforward solution involving simple positive revaluation only in the case where the identity of the subordinated group has not been constructed in and through subordination but remains more or less intact and independent. But such cases, although they can occur in colonised identity, usually indicate an early stage in which the identity of the colonised is not yet affected. Theorists of colonisation have pointed to the complicity and adherence of the colonised at advanced stages of colonisation (Memmi 1965; Freire 1972; hooks 1989). The case of gender identity clearly does not fit the model of independent ethnic identity. The type of colonisation model which treats women's identity on analogy with the ethnic model could be misleading at this point as a model for gender to the extent that it suggests a conception of women's difference as an independently constituted (or once independently constituted) feminine nature, force, or culture, temporarily suppressed or overwhelmed, rather than as constructed in a power relation.

14 An essence which is usually taken to be more comprehensive than that given by patriarchy, but which nevertheless involves a 'homogeneous, unproblematised, and ahistorical conception of woman' (Alcoff 1988:413). As Jaggar (1991:88) points out, we need to distinguish the empirical, normative and symbolic associations of the terms 'masculine' and 'feminine', as well as making the usual distinction between women and the feminine.

15 Thus Charlene Spretnak urges the cultivation of 'the authentic female mind' as the salvation of both the earth and western culture (Spretnak 1989:132).

16 Some versions of ecofeminism aim to replace the old, masculinised account of human identity with a gynocentric account using woman's identity as the basis for a new human identity in which 'female experience determines culture' (Collard 1988:11). Most ecofeminists have seen some kind of affirmation of the feminine as essential. Those who have most stressed it include Collard (1988) and Gearhart (1982).

17 The attempt to locate a 'pure', singular women's identity in the case where there are no other forms of oppression operating and women are oppressed purely 'as women' writes into that identity class, race and other forms of supremacy (Spelman 1988).

18 In treating that identity not as fixed but as negotiable and transformable, women acknowledge its contingency and their own position as active subjects. But to the extent that it is an ethical identity assuming commitments to others (for example, children) and responsibility for their needs, it cannot involve the high degree of choice, contingency, arbitrariness and instability which seems characteristic of a performative identity (Butler 1990:139).

19 This is very much how those cultural feminists who approach the problem of women's identity through the revival of an historically based women's culture have seen it. Riane Eisler (1988) infers the existence of an original, independent pre-subordination 'female culture' in which women have characteristics such as peacefulness similar to those of current gender ideals, even though there is good reason to view these current ideals as the product of subordination.

20 Linda Alcoff's work (1988) discusses the problems in this choice and also how to bypass this choice through a concept of the identity 'woman' as constructed historically but as open to individual and political negotiation.

21 How far are the qualities which have arisen from women's association with nature ones that this analysis suggests a feminist perspective might affirm? That is, how far are they qualities which presuppose a social context of subordination? Some of the qualities which have been taken to link women to nature do seem to presuppose such a context. To the extent that women have had a 'softer' stance with respect to nature which reflects their exclusion from culture, and from access to science and technology which provide the means to dominate nature, affirming such a softer stance would amount to affirming the qualities of subordination. But the alternative to a human identity alienated from nature is not one of such 'feminine', passive powerlessness or immersion in nature. Rather it is the affirmation of an identity which is both truly human and cultural but which recognises human continuity with, mutuality with and dependence on nature.

CHAPTER 3

1 On the backgrounding of the 'unofficial economy' (the sphere of reproduction) see Ekins (1986) and Waring (1988). Even conservative treatments are beginning to realise the unwisdom of treating nature as background to the economic system: see, for example, Pearce *et al.* (1989).

2 For example, editor Scott Buchanan writes in his introduction (Plato 1948:

1): 'In the year 1948 the reading of Plato's dialogues by a large number of people could make the difference between a century of folly and a century of wisdom for the world'.

3 But such a feminine translation of *psyche,* which is only grammatically feminine, is misleading, because it disguises the fact that Plato treats souls as gendered both male and female. See Elizabeth Spelman (1988:30–3). Recent translators seem to have dropped the habit, which, in terms of practice with other cases of Greek gender, was anomalous.

4 Bordo dismisses the location of alienation in the Greek period, asserting: 'We cannot connect Plato's emphasis on the transcendence of the body to distinctively male processes of individuation from the mother. We simply do not know enough about the nurturing practices with respect to boys and girls in the Athens of 500 BC' (Bordo 1987:7). There are, I think, several responses to this: first, that a good deal of relevant information is available on the general structure of nurturing practices and other structures of male dominance in classical Greece; second, that the argument that links concepts of reason and humanity to a masculinised and dualised identity does not depend exclusively on appealing to 'processes of individuation from the mother', or on placing the entire weight of the argument on resulting subject/object dualism. Thus the work of feminist philosophers such as Lloyd and Hartsock has shown directly how masculine experience and identity are universalised via exclusion of the feminine in classical concepts of reason and in the structure of the 'agonal society' of classical Greece.

5 This is undoubtedly one of the reasons for the popularity of the Enlightenment analysis. Rupert Sheldrake, for example, is able on this basis to claim that Aristotelian-influenced, scholastic Christianity involved an 'animistic' philosophy in which 'nature was alive and all the many kinds of beings had souls' (Sheldrake 1988:22). But both the Platonic and the Aristotelian conceptions of 'soul' distinguished between kinds of soul and the possession of the lower kind implied, in the case of animals, for example, little more than a capacity for movement or life and no inclusion in the kingdom of ends (see Plato 1973: *Phaedrus* 49). Both Augustine and Aquinas, as well as other Aristotelian-influenced church fathers, are explicit that animals lack the crucial ingredient of reason and, having no commonality with humans, are not subject to moral law or to salvation (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles,* 'On killing living things' question 64, article 1).

6 On the case for viewing Plato as a feminist see also Martha C.Nussbaum (1986).

7 Elizabeth Spelman, in her excellent discussion of this issue, conjectures that Plato sees the real problem with physical love between men as lying in men acting like women (Spelman 1988:29).

8 Plato 1941: *Republic* 75, 84.

9 Thus Julia Annas (1976:183) is right, I believe, to claim that Plato is not a feminist on the grounds that he aims at the emancipation of some women only and then not as an end but as a means, and hence not out of concern for injustice. Bluestone discounts this argument on the grounds that 'feminism' could be defined to include those who desire the emancipation of some women as a means to some other social end. But the distinction between instrumental and non-instrumental forms of feminism is an important one which such a definition would obliterate. Bluestone rejects

Annas's view on the grounds that such an account of feminism as requiring non-instrumental concern with the oppression of women (and other groups) would have the consequence that Plato's theory could not be concerned with individual justice or fairness. But it is a common objection to Plato's social theory that it does treat people as instruments to the good in just this way (Vlastos 1973), and that its instrumentalism consequently precludes a real concern with justice. Bluestone fails to notice moreover that her own definition of 'feminism' (which calls for concern about present and past oppression and commitment to complete gender equality [1987:87]) would clearly exclude Plato on precisely the sort of grounds that Annas gives, that he is not genuinely concerned with the oppression of women.

10 It is true, as Bluestone notes (1987:125), that Plato argues for gentleness as a desirable quality in the guardians, but there is nothing to suggest that he views gentleness (as opposed to cowardice and lack of self-control) as a female-associated quality. Rather elsewhere he associates it with refinement, self-discipline and the treatment refined male lovers owe to each other. He associates its lack with a slavelike or brutal nature.

11 Collingwood (1945) argues for a modification in some later dialogues of the Platonic shift of emphasis towards the transcendent conception of Form and the organisation of matter, which he also identifies as Plato's great historical contribution. Collingwood attempts to resolve the immanence/transcendence debate with respect to Plato via an argument which obliterates the distinction between immanence and transcendence interpretations (1945:59–63). But the argument that transcendence implies immanence and vice versa works only if 'immanence' is understood in a very weak sense, as a particular's sharing the attribute of the Form, and we ignore Plato's persistent inferiorisation of the qualities of the particular in relation to the Form.

12 As Vlastos argues for the modelling of the higher and lower forms of causation in terms of a master/slave model. See 'Slavery in Plato's thought' (Vlastos 1973).

13 *Timaeus* 50, 18. If we take God as the supreme Form, this passage on plasticity is strikingly reminiscent of the account of the role of Mary in the conception of God's offspring, Jesus. Pliant, submissive, she declares herself plastic material: 'Be it done unto me according to thy will.'

14 *Timaeus* 70; Plato 1948: *Phaedo* 225.

15 Plato 1948: *Phaedo* 245. The apparent exception to this is the recommendation of training and care for the body in the *Republic* (444D), but, significantly, such care is instrumental to realising the life of reason and warfare.

16 Plato 1948: *Phaedo* 203, 229.

17 Vlastos (1973:155–6). Hence the 'torture' metaphor used by Descartes and Bacon to picture the relation of knowledge to nature is already present in Plato.

18 On this point, and especially the complexities of the concepts of race and slavery in the Greek context, see the discussion in Spelman (1988:198).

19 For St Thomas Aquinas 'The intellectual nature alone is requisite for its own sake in the universe, and all others for its sake' (quoted in Regan and Singer 1976:57).

20 Hargrove (1989:27) argues that the inferiorisation of empirical knowledge leads to the downgrading of nature, but it is hard to say what is prior here.

21 Plato *(Menexenus* 239A), quoted in Vlastos (1973:192).
22 That the Platonic account of death is specifically designed to increase the preparedness to risk life appears in Plato's discussion in *The Republic* of the reasons for censorship.
23 The need for rigid control and discipline of the inclinations and of the body during combat is conducive to their treatment as alien objects external to the true self which must be mastered. The achievement of such control in a very strong form is a major aim of Platonic self-discipline and is explained throughout the dialogues in terms of examples of indifference in the face of death.
24 There is an important distinction to be made here between accounts in which the afterworld supplements the world of life and accounts in which it is construed in oppositional terms as replacing and devaluing it. Some Native American traditions, for example, seem to have viewed the world beyond in ways which did not detract from the world of nature and life.

CHAPTER 4

1 Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics,* book X, chaps 7 and 8; for a useful discussion see Nagel 1972.
2 Thus in the *Phaedrus* (227a–30c), Socrates announces that there is nothing to be learnt from 'trees and open country'.
3 For a discussion of Boyle see Carolyn Merchant (1989).
4 Vandana Shiva, address to Freedom from Hunger Conference, Sydney, October 1991. On the concept of *terra nullius,* the rubric under which Australia and some parts of Africa were declared 'vacant' and annexed as colonies, see Plumwood 1992.
5 Ryle (1955:78). Ryle pays a lot of attention to the ghost but very little to the machine, an approach which might be compared to trying to understand the concept of husband without that of wife. Thus in a brief and superficial discussion, Ryle simply dismisses the problem of mechanism as a bogey, a baseless fear, on the grounds that there are other kinds and levels of explanation (in this case for human behaviour) than those in terms of the laws of mechanics.
6 Quoted in Kenny (1973:115). Kenny has a useful discussion of Descartes' account of thinking. See also Meditation VI.
7 Quoted in Dauler Wilson (1978:75). See also Descartes' discussion of imagination at the beginning of Meditation VI, and his response to Burman (1952:249).

CHAPTER 5

1 See critiques of sociobiology in Sunday and Tobach 1985.
2 The assumption that the problem is atomism and the cure holism underlies the basic argument of Capra (1983 and 1977).
3 See also Birch (1990:28).
4 This point is argued in Sylvan (1991:11).
5 However, such a hierarchy does not inevitably emerge from the experiential account of mind, but only if further assumptions assigning value in

proportion to degrees of consciousness or experience are made, as in Birch, who whendetermining an item's value employs a 'richness of experience' criterion which is highly favourable to humans (Birch and Cobb 1983:153).

6 This criterion was originally stated by Brentano, although a similar distinction is much older. See, for example, selections from Brentano in Chisholm (1960). Intentionality can be given a simple and very close semantical definition in terms of invoking another world or situation (Routley 1979). Chisholm's original modern restatement of Brentano's criterion was: 'A simple categorical statement is intentional if it uses a substantive expression without implying that there is or isn't anything to which the expression truly applies' (Chisholm 1952:425).

7 Intensional statements are often psychological. Unlike their contrast class (the extensional), their truth cannot be settled just by looking at the truth of their components. For example, if we compare statement (A), 'Maria is wondering whether unicorns and centaurs really exist', with statement (B), 'It is true that unicorns and centaurs exist', we can see that the first, psychological statement about Maria, (A), can be true regardless of whether its component 'unicorns really exist' is true or not, but that the truth of the second, (B), requires the truth of both its components. We would say that 'Maria is wondering' is intensional but that 'It is true that' is extensional.

8 Martin and Pfeifer propose a new criterion of intentionality in terms of experiential throughput (1986:553). This is so different from the historical concept of intentionality that it should be seen as a new criterion of mind, rather than an attempt to save, refine and explicate the original concept of intentionality. As a criterion of the psychological, it seems to relocate the problem in a new place, that of characterising in precise terms the experiential, rather than providing a resolution. Apart from these problems, the proposal for relocating the central features of mind in experience has some attractions. This proposal provides a good basis for human continuity with certain animals, but not with nature more generally, and is only forced on us by the spread of intentionality to nature if the need for human hyperseparation is unquestioned and no distinctions are made between kinds of panpsychism. The search for a ground of continuity (weak panpsychism) is not the same as a search for a universal shared mind in all things (strong panpsychism), because the latter does not recognise the complex web or family of criteria of mind and their resulting differences of spread and graduated nature.

9 Dennett (1976). But Dennett's claim that such higher order desires mark the boundary of *personhood*, considered as the fundamental moral category, is one an adequate environmental philosophy should reject.

10 Similarly the real basis for human/nature continuity in the Whiteheadean picture, to the extent that it does not just depend upon metaphor, seems to be the redescription of both human and natural phenomena in terms of suitably corresponding analogues which operate at different levels of intentionality, one being a more 'conscious' or 'subjective' description of the same general intensional kind as the other.

11 We can avoid the attempt to impose a limit on respect or other ethical concepts to certain kinds of beings, as retaining much of the original exclusionary problematic which sought to enlarge the kingdom of ends but which always retained a contrasting excluded order of means. There may be, however, some restrictions on the application of ethical concepts such

as respect implicit in these concepts themselves. It seems that there needs to be something that can be turned aside or frustrated by our actions, so that the concept of respect or consideration can get a foothold, as it were. If we consider something like a Coca Cola bottle, for example, it is not clear how it could be individuated so that respect is applicable to it, or what could possibly make a difference with respect to it (as opposed to us). But the criterion of the making of difference does not pick out the conscious (Thompson 1990:155)—unless we confuse making a difference with respect to something with making a conscious difference to it—or the self-repairing, autopoeitic, or self-valuing (Fox 1990). There will be such a making of difference wherever there is an intentional system, whether it is self-valuing or not, the most obvious case being that of teleology or directionality. Wherever we can discern an autonomous intentional system or teleology the concepts of respect and moral consideration have a potential for application. In the case of artefacted life and in some other cases, the other may be individuated as a mixed form in which its agency is subsumed within the sphere of human agency as an instrument (as Aristotle notes).

The criterion of *autopoeisis* has been suggested recently as marking the boundary of moral consideration. This has a long pedigree, looking very like a reductive, systems theoretic version of Aristotle's account of the soul (in its broadest sense) as the agency (originative power) of a body organised around self-maintenance (self-nutrition) *(De Anima,* book 2, chap. 1, 413ab). But there are a number of problems with the *autopoeisis* criterion, which especially as stated originally in Maturana (Maturana and Varela 1980) in terms of systems theory, is still very mechanistic and reductionist, assuming that *autopoeisis* so specified can eliminate or reduce goal-directedness, and actually defining living systems as autopoeitic machines. But the possibility of a self-repairing machine actually seems to be a problem for the definition, to the extent that it is offered as an explication either of life or of the boundary of moral consideration. And being self-repairing is not the same as being self-valuing, since a self-repairing machine is not necessarily self-valuing. More importantly, the criterion might give us a reason to value those things it marks out, but it does not give us a reason to *stop* valuing things at just this point; that is, not to value anything else. Can't we value a person who is not self-valuing; for example, a potential suicide?

The criterion of *autopoeisis,* as proposed by deep ecologists, seems to be inconsistent with the deep ecology injunction to maximise identifications, since there is a wider class of excluded beings; for example, beings with an agency, *telos,* or direction of their own not necessarily orientated to self-maintenance, which we might also come to relate to non-instrumentally. These can be distinguished from machinery by the fact that the *telos* or agency they possess is their own, and not that of some other being, that is, external to them, as in the case of a machine or artefact (Aristotle, *De Anima* 412b). This suggests the need to extend moral consideration to at least the wider class of beings with a *telos* of their own. Drawing the moral boundary at living things has the problematic consequence that the wild river, the forbidding mountain and the venerable glaciated landscape on which the story of the earth's history and power is inscribed, have value only for and in virtue of the living things they contain or entertain.

CHAPTER 6

1 It has long been recognised—for example, by Aristotle and Kant—that the idea of a purely instrumental theory of value is incoherent. (See Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics:* chap. 1, section 1; *Metaphysics* 994b 9–16; Kant 1981:36.) Problems for pure instrumentalism arise when questions are asked about the status of the ultimate goal itself, as Aristotle noticed. To sum up, the dilemma for the pure instrumentalist comes about in the following way. At some point in an instrumental theory there must be a final goal by reference to which the instrumental value accorded other items is justified. But if we ask whether this final goal is also instrumentally valuable or not, both possible answers refute the pure instrumental position. If the answer is yes and the goal is taken to be only desirable as a means to a further goal, then a regress is initiated and the same issue arises with respect to a new goal. But if the answer is no, that it is not only instrumentally valuable, then the instrumental theory is again refuted because intrinsic values have been admitted. But from the point of view of the philosophical status of intrinsic values and their alleged incoherence, there is no difference between admitting only one thing (for example, human life) to be intrinsically valuable, and admitting a number of things (including nature) to be intrinsically valuable (Plumwood 1975).

2 If we redefine other-orientatedness or altruism not as self-abnegation but as relationality of interests and desires, then a false choice is no longer created, but to avoid confusion it is important to note the ambiguity in the notion of altruism. In this case the account no longer requires a division between primary self-oriented motives and secondary other-oriented ones, and corresponding classes of people or things. Another casualty of such a redefinition is the neat, sharp division presupposed between the kingdom of ends and the kingdom of means, and the assumption that means are only contingently related to ends. If ends constrain means (and vice versa), and in specific cases are internally related to them, there is no general interchangeability between means which produce a given end, and no sharp division between the two spheres. Such a division is characteristic of instrumentalism, and also reflects the dualistic division of the sphere of self (ends) and that of the other (means).

3 The same distinction can be made in terms of the interests of others being internally versus externally related to the interests or concerns of self. Internal/external can be taken literally here as scope indicators—the internal goal is internal to the psychological functor and included in its scope, the external goal external to its scope and hence referentially transparent, i.e. subject to contingent identity substitution principles.

4 One way of elaborating philosophically such an alternative model of instrumentalism is in terms of the notions of respect for nature and in terms of nature's having intrinsic value or worth. Intrinsic value is only one of a number of non-instrumental concepts which are needed to counter the prevailing instrumentalism. Instrumentalism implies that there are no constraints imposed by the *telos* of the instrumentalised class, which is subject to 'arbitrary use', that in moral decision-making, the good, welfare, or *telos* of those outside the respect boundary does not have to be considered except as it contributes to that of those inside it. To respect nature then means at a minimum that it does not count for nothing in the deliberations of ethical, social and political life, and that actions concerning it are not seen

as unconstrained except by human interest and human goals. Respect puts the respected item's good or *telos* on the moral agenda; it requires moral consideration. A stronger concept of respect would require that it not only be considered but be considered as significant, and a stronger one still that it be considered as somehow an equal. In practical terms, respect requires careful or respectful use, where there is use, and sometimes no use (Plumwood and Routley 1980).

The associated concept of intrinsic value has been far more controversial. Much of the controversy is due, as I have argued (Plumwood 1991b), to divergent uses of the terminology, particularly as between an objective sense of 'intrinsic' and one in which it has its classical meaning of 'for its own sake', i.e. as not instrumental. Thus to say that something is intrinsically interesting, intrinsically beneficial, intrinsically valuable is just to say that it is interesting, beneficial, or valuable for its own sake or on its own account and not as a means to something else. It is, I think, curious that such a strong controversy should have arisen about the use of the notion of a value, interest, etc., being intrinsic at precisely the point where it was used to question human instrumentalism, since the same concept has long been in quite normal and widespread use without anyone raising any of these concerns. The assignment of intrinsic value to nature changes the class of beings assumed to be intrinsically valuable, but it does not have to introduce a somehow new and different account of value.

5 The reason why intrinsic value does not imply detached value can also be explained in terms of a formal semantical argument; for example, that presented in Routley and Plumwood (1983) and in Plumwood (1991b). A very similar account has been given by Elliot (1989; 1985). This semantics explains how taking something to have intrinsic value involves the valuer's preferring situations/worlds in which the item valued exists or flourishes to ones where it does not. Where this evaluation occurs across the whole range of worlds, it will include ones where the valuer does not exist, as well as ones where his or her interests are in conflict with or are not furthered by the item's existence. In this case the item is not valued as instrumental to the valuer's interest, but the account does not make value independent of the valuer's perspective. This paper also provides a relational account of value, that is, of value as dialogue rather than monologue.

6 Variations are discussed in detail in Plumwood and Routley (1979). In the original form the argument should be rejected anyway, since some valuers may not be human and certainly not all humans are valuers. However, premise C is not the main difficulty; even if it is stated in analytical form (as, for example, valuers are valuers or valuing creatures), there remain problems in the argument. On the problem of arriving at a morally relevant, non-circular and defensible criterion which marks out exactly the class of humans, see Plumwood and Routley (1979). On the questionbegging character of most proposed criteria see Elizabeth Dodson Gray (1979: chap. 2).

7 The argument for human egoism has a very popular parallel form in which the conclusion is that anthropocentrism is inevitable, because values must reflect a human outlook and human interests, and so be 'human values', and therefore must be 'anthropocentric'. But the concept of anthropocentrism is similarly and correspondingly ambiguous. In the weakest sense, or lowest grade, of anthropocentrism, 'human values' are human, or reflect human interest, in the same trivial sense as in the weak grade of egoism, that is, that

they represent human valuations, a human outlook, or human valuational perspectives on the world. But this form of 'anthropocentrism' is not a great cause of concern, and does not license any damaging conclusions about human selfishness, for the same reasons as we have just noticed. It cannot be assumed that because valuations represent 'human valuational perspectives' they cannot take account of the interests or wellbeing of other species for their own sake; that is, that these 'valuational perspectives' cannot be relational. If this is assumed, then we have not the weak but the strong sense of 'anthropocentrism' in which interests are taken to be self-contained. This does yield a damaging conclusion about human selfishness or species-centredness. But in this strong sense of 'anthropocentrism' the key premise B taking valuers' preferences to be determined by their interests is open to challenge, as ignoring the possibility of relational interests, and similar counter-examples to those above can be brought against it. See Plumwood (1991b; 1980; 1975); and Plumwood and Routley (1979; 1980).

   The point that we do not need to be utterly selfless to refute claims of egoism has an important bearing on the argument for the inevitability of anthropocentrism: that we need to make use of nature, and need to appeal to human-orientated reasons for conserving nature, and hence must adopt an instrumental perspective. But the rejection of the treatment of nature as instrument does not rule out appeal to these human reasons, for the same reason as the rejection of the treatment of humans as nothing more than means does not rule out the possibility that they are also sometimes means. As Kant's own principles make clear, treating something as an end requires that it not be treated *merely* as a means, not that it is not made use of at all. Instrumental trouble sets in when there is reduction to means, the treatment of others as no more than means. Respect, therefore, does not preclude but rather *constrains* use. The need to make use of the natural world to survive does not provide a reason for the inevitability of anthropocentrism.

8 Full intersubjectivity, requiring the mutual recognition of sameness and difference in dynamic interplay and the sharing of similar conscious states, may only be possible between humans and humans for some states and between humans and animals for others. However, other sorts of mutual interaction remain important in human relations to earth others. Here it is important to note that the 'dance of interaction' as described by Benjamin in the case of mother and child requires no linguistic skills. This sort of subjective interaction can also be experienced in play with a young animal, for example, as a sharing of agency and consciousness. Other kinds of intentional interaction occur without subjectivity in ecosystems; for example, in the growth of plants in ways that respond to the presence of other plants in forest ecosystems.

9 Turner (1986:131) illustrates this closure with respect to the land splendidly in a passage on Columbus naming the New World: To each bit of land he saw he brought the mental map of Europe with which he had sailed. Anciently…place names arose like rocks or trees out of the contours and colors of the lands themselves…as a group took up residence in an area, that area would be dotted with names commemorating events that took place in it…where one tribal group supplanted another, it too would respond to the land, its shapes, moods, and to tribal experiences had there. Now came these newest arrivals, but the first names by which they designated the islands were in no way appropriate to the islands themselves. Instead, the Admiral scattered the nomenclature of Christianity over these lands, firing his

familiar names like cannonballs against the unresisting New World.... One group was called Los Santos because the Christ-bearer sailed past them on All Saints' Day.... An armoured Adam in this naked garden, he established dominion by naming.'

10 Warren suggests that another problem in the moral extensionism approach is that it concentrates exclusively on the nature and qualifications of the parties to the moral consideration relationship, as if this relationship could be reduced to a question of 'the values of the moral beings' in those relationships, and thereby fails to give 'recognition of the relationships themselves as a locus of value' (Warren 1990:135), especially relationships of love and care. These relationships may be of value in themselves, but it is also important not to practise a different kind of erasure of the other by substituting recognition of the value of these relationships for respect for the other and recognition of their value, reducing questions of moral consideration for earth others to questions of the experiences, virtues and attitudes of carers. From this perspective, an account in terms of relational selfhood requires supplementation by an account of intrinsic value, the relational self being the kind of self which can acknowledge the other in such non-instrumental ways.

An adequate environmental ethic must position itself clearly outside the instrumental mode, and acknowledge earth others as beings *deserving* of such care, concern and consideration *for their own sake,* and not only for their instrumental value in giving us the opportunity to be in relationships of certain kinds with them which are more rewarding for us. An account of value in terms of the virtue of care and the value of caring relationships presupposes rather than replaces a non-instrumental account. The inclination to instrumentalise or enslave others, for example, may indicate a character defect, a certain 'lack of excellence', but it would be hard to view the matter as stopping there. It is a character defect at least in part *because* it involves a certain sort of injustice or failure towards these others, treating them as less than they are; that is, as means rather than as ends. If the other not cared for had no deserts to be an end, we would have no basis for taking the failure to care as a failing. This is also the problem which afflicts Kant's account of what is wrong with cruelty to animals (Kant 1963:239–41).

11 Adopting a non-instrumental stance to the other is not the same as entering into a relationship of care or friendship and we must distinguish different possible cases here. There is the case where we do not instrumentalise the other but are indifferent to the other's flourishing, and the case where we might prefer the other not to flourish but where nevertheless we see ourselves as obliged to respect the other and their ends and as not entitled to impose our own (as one respects a dangerous adversary, for example).

12 Deep ecological interpretations of the 'relational self tend to stress connectedness at the expense of difference and assume that what is required is identity or merger of interests, thus transferring erasure of otherness to interests. Naess (1990:187) says identification is a process in which 'the supposed interests of another being are spontaneously reacted to *as our own interests',* while Mathews (1988:351) speaks of 'identifying with' as 'essentially a matter of...assuming the interests of the other'. Naess's formulation glosses over our different placement with respect to these interests, that we wish here for the satisfaction of interests recognised as those of another. And not only do we not normally assume the entire interest

set of the other, but the interests we assume may not be among the interest set of the other at all as the other perceives them, and what we assume may be our conception of the other's good, not theirs. Thus in the case of a suicidal person, for example, we may wish for that person's good in the form of continued life, even knowing that he or she does not.

13 This dilemma as it has been posed for Tasmanian Aboriginal people resulted in their facing treatment as subhuman or severe discrimination on the alien horn of the dilemma, and now confronting white reluctance to recognise their difference on the assimilating horn. That is, difference is either unrecognised or used against them.

14 For a critique of Reed see Naess (1990).

15 Human/nature dualism generates several sets of false choices turning around sameness and difference. The flip-side of the concept of culture apart from nature is that of nature apart from culture. Thus humans who are conceived as not part of the realm of culture (for example, indigenous peoples) come to be seen as pure nature, and authentic nature is conceived as totally apart from the human. 'Wilderness' or 'nature proper' is an area completely apart. Humans must be seen either as indistinguishable from nature and totally immersed in it, or as completely separate from and opposed to it. The oscillation between these choices takes the form of a dilemma which appears in two commonly encountered arguments. These collapse the human/nature distinction, as it were, from different directions, one leading to the conclusion that *everything's* really natural, the other to the conclusion that *nothing* is. H.J.McCloskey advances both arguments: 'If man is deemed to be an insider, part of Nature, nothing he can do could be unwise, irrational, wrong, contrary to Nature.' According to the second argument: 'Wilderness proper would seem to be that which is completely untouched and unaffected by man. So defined, there probably is little, if any wilderness left' (McCloskey 1983). The first argument, that everything's really natural, would work only if humans were not only 'part' of nature but were an indistinguishable part of it. The second argument that nothing's really natural, demands hyperseparation; it emphasises the apartness of nature to the point of insisting that there can be no human influence at all on the *genuinely* natural. This second, apartness position is also implicit in McKibben's argument that the real tragedy of greenhouse is a philosophical one, that it makes such a total separation impossible, and therefore creates 'the end of nature' (McKibben 1990).

16 Hecht and Cockburn (1990:33) observe that this pattern was first set by John Muir's Yosemite 'which inaugurated its career with the expulsion of the Miwok Indians who had previously made their homes there'.

CHAPTER 7

1 This is revealed, as Karen Green (1993) has argued, by a consideration of the example of Hare's fanatic, who puts adherence to ideological principles before considerations of suffering. The fanatic can universalise, but is incapable of the empathic leap which enables sympathy with the victims of his doctrines. The fanatic thus arrives through universalisation at such ethical conclusions as 'If I were a woman [a black], I too would wish to be kept under'. The failure of this process of universalisation to bring out adequate moral principles in the case of a person who is insensitive to the sufferings of others shows that universalisation

alone will not suffice, but that the plausibility of Kantian ethics depends on a suppressed reliance on such empathic processes as sympathy and putting oneself in the other's place. On the denial of the dependency of reason on imagination, see Johnson (1987).

2 But as Friedman's discussion suggests, the model of care for one's own proposed in much mainstream ethics seems to take the form of concern for just those intimate others who are assimilated to or subsumed in the male 'household head' in classical liberal theory.

3 Regan, of course, as part of the animal rights movement, is mainly concerned not with wild animals but with domestic animals as they appear in the context of and support of human society and culture, although he does not indicate any qualification in moral treatment. Nevertheless, there may be an important moral boundary here, for natural ecosystems cannot be organised along the lines of justice, fairness and rights, and it would be absurd to try to impose such a social order upon them via intervention in these systems. This does not mean of course that humans can do anything in such a situation, just that certain kinds of intervention are not in order. But these kinds of intervention may be in order in the case of human social systems, and in the case of animals which have already, through human intervention, been brought into these social systems, and the concept of rights and of social responsibility may have far more application here. This would mean that the domestic/wild distinction would demarcate an important moral boundary in terms of duties of intervention.

4 The expulsion of the ethical, an aspect of Naess's theory which has been ardently embraced by some disciples (Macy 1989), is the result of several factors; the simplistic identification of ethics with prohibitory Kantian ethics, and the influence of Nietzsche and liberal egoism on the human potentials movement and the account of 'self-realisation', are two. The reduction of the ethical to an aspect of 'self-realisation' and the treatment of the maxim of self-realisation as *substituting for* and obviating an ethical account of care and respect for nature, are justified in Naess by appeal to good positivist principles of simplification (Naess 1988a:20, 86). The abandonment of ethics and its reduction to psychology is also part of the positivist programme. But deep ecology's approach to ethics is, like much else, doubtfully consistent, variable and shifting. In more recent work the emphasis seems to have quietly shifted back again to a broad and vague ethical format which places the centre once again in ethics and the injunction to form a maximally expanded Self.

5 For an excellent critique of humanistic psychology and especially the work of Abraham Maslow on which transpersonal psychology draws heavily see Jean Grimshaw (1986:146–53).

6 Grimshaw (1986:182). See the excellent discussion in Warren (1990:136–8) of the importance of recognition and respect for the other's difference; see also Blum (1980:75) and Benhabib (1987:166).

7 Other critics of deep ecology, such as Sylvan (1985) and Cheney (1987), have suggested too that it shifts between different and incompatible versions. Ecofeminist critics of deep ecology have included Salleh (1984), Kheel (1985), Biehl (1987) and Warren (1990).

8 Thus John Seed says: 'Naess wrote that when most people think about conservation, they think about sacrifice. This is a treacherous basis for conservation, because most people aren't capable of working for anything except their own self-interest…. Naess argued that we need to find ways to extend our identity into nature. Once that happens, being out in front of bulldozers or whatever becomes no more of a sacrifice than moving your

foot if you notice that someone's just about to strike it with an axe' (Seed 1989). Although in other contexts Naess does recognise the difference between self-sacrifice and the other-orientated actions of self-in-relationship (Blum 1980:76; Naess 1988b:23), he does not notice that this makes the entire strategy of expanding the self unnecessary.

 9 This retention of the egoist problematic and denial of difference is also the route taken by J.Baird Callicott (1985:275) who indeed asserts that The principle of axiological complementarity posits an essential unity between self and world and establishes the problematic intrinsic value of nature in relation to the axiologically privileged value of self'.

10 Fox, in claiming gender-neutrality for cosmologically based identification and treating issues of gender as irrelevant to the issue of ecological selfhood (1989:12), ignores the historical scholarship linking conceptions of gender and conceptions of morality, via the division between public and private spheres; for example, Lloyd (1984) and Nicholson (1983). To the extent that that thesis is not an essentialist one linking *sex* to emotionality and particularity or to nature, but one linking social and historical conceptions of *gender* to conceptions of morality and rationality, it is not refuted by examples of women who buy a universalising view or who drive bulldozers.

11 This traditional model of land relationship is closely linked to that of bioregionalism, whose strategy is to engage people in greater knowledge and care for the local areas which have meaning for them and where they can most easily evolve a caring and responsible life-style. The feat of 'impartial identification with all particulars' is, beyond the seeking of individual enlightenment, strategically empty. Because it cares 'impartially' for everything it can, in practice, care for nothing.

12 Although virtue ethics are Aristotelian and Aristotle is usually counted as a rationalist, this is one of a number of areas in which his work is not typical of rationalist thought.

13 For example, Bill Neidjie's words 'This ground and this earth/like brother and mother' (Neidjie 1985:46) may be interpreted as an affirmation of such kinship or continuity. See also ibid.: 53, 61, 62, 77, 81, 82, 88.

14 Contra Cheney (1987), who appears to advocate the abandonment of all general ethical concepts and the adoption of a 'contextual' ethics based in pure particularity and emotionality. We do need both to reintegrate the personal and particular and re-evaluate more positively its role, but overcoming moral dualism will not simply amount to an affirmation of the personal in the moral sphere or of a ruleless ethics. Rules, as Grimshaw (1986:209) points out, are not incompatible with recognition of special relationships and responsibility to particular others. The problem is not rules themselves, but rules which demand the discarding of the personal, the emotional and the particular, or which aim at self-containment.

15 The voices of the ethics of care are not unproblematically those of women, not only for these reasons but also because they generate many conflicts for women's lives. The traditional voice which locates women as carers for close others still speaks to and through women with a force and power most women cannot ignore, but women cannot now safely allow themselves to be defined by this voice (Grimshaw 1986:215 ff.).

CONCLUSION

1 For a philosophical account of devouring, see Brennan (1991a; 1993).

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