

Geography, paradox and environmental ethics

James D. Proctor

Department of Geography, 3611 Ellison Hall, University of California,
Santa Barbara, CA 93106-4060, USA

Abstract: As a diverse and divided discipline, geography embodies tensions central to the paradoxical nature of human dwelling on earth, from which questions of environmental ethics arise. The article reviews major ontological and epistemological tensions within geography – that between nature and culture, and objectivism and subjectivism – emphasizing the ways in which common resolutions to these tensions often represent flawed strategies of avoiding paradox. It then connects these tensions to important philosophical dimensions of environmental ethics. I argue that normative environmental ethics must be built on an adequate sensitivity to the nature/culture tension, and that environmental meta-ethics – specifically, the problem of relativism as applied to environmental discourse – must be similarly informed by the object/subject tension. The most fundamental contribution geography can make, therefore, lies in establishing a philosophical space for environmental ethics that takes paradox seriously and avoids its simplistic resolutions.

One must not think ill of the paradox, for the paradox is the passion of thought,
and the thinker without the paradox is like the lover without passion;
a mediocre fellow (Kierkegaard, 1985: 37).

One is too few, but two are too many (Haraway, 1991: 177).

I Introduction

1 Environmental ethics: enter geography?

In the last several decades a new field of inquiry has emerged in western philosophy, one of potential intellectual interest to geographers. Environmental ethics began with a few influential articles and monographs published in the early 1970s (e.g., Naess, 1973; Routley, 1973; Passmore, 1974; Rolston, 1975), then took off near the turn of the decade with a new journal, *Environmental Ethics*, launched in 1979, and flourished in the 1980s with an array of literature growing at an 'exponential rate' by the latter part of the decade (Katz, 1992: 287).¹ The 1990s saw the formation of a new organization, the International Society for Environmental Ethics (ISEE), whose 35–60 page quarterly newsletter attests to

the sheer bulk and variety of publications, conferences, new journals and online resources in environmental ethics that regularly appear. It also suggests how a field once geographically restricted to North America, Australia and Britain has expanded to many other parts of the world: current ISEE contacts serve the USA and Canada, Australia and New Zealand, western Europe, eastern Europe, Africa, mainland China, and Pakistan and south Asia.²

One can hardly deny that environmental ethics potentially addresses some of the most profound questions that confront late modern societies, whose widespread level of concern over environmental crises spanning local to global proportions is indisputable. Yet the contribution of environmental ethics towards conceiving and implementing meaningful alternative modes of human–environment relations is not altogether clear, in part due to the intellectual complexity of its problematic relative to the conceptual tools it has generally deployed to date. Environmental ethics, which has come into its own by riding the crest of a wave of popular concern over human impacts on the environment, thus finds itself in a very difficult position to pose any conceptually satisfactory way out of this tangled web.

Geographers are demonstrating an increasing interest in environmental ethics (e.g., O’Riordan, 1981; Lewis, 1992; Pepper, 1993; Reed and Slaymaker, 1993; Simmons, 1993; Livingstone, 1995). Indeed, the first volume of the annual serial *Philosophy and Geography* was devoted exclusively to the overlapping terrain of geography and environmental ethics (Light and Smith, 1997b). Yet this literature does not spell out explicitly how geography could contribute to environmental ethics.³ For instance, if ‘context matters’ in environmental ethics, then in what ways would geographical details enrich ethical discussion? Would geography-as-context play an inextricable role in the very formulation of systems of ethics, or only in their situational application?

2 Unsettled identities

One reason it is hard to delineate the contribution of geography to environmental ethics is that the identities of these two fields are so ambiguous. If geography were wholly an analysis of space, then its contribution would be relatively straightforward: just as social justice must make seriously spatial inequities (Smith, 1994), so should environmental ethics consider, for instance, spatial-scale dimensions of human–environment relations. Space does of course matter at some level in environmental ethics. But all geographers know (though some require occasional reminding) that there is more to the discipline of geography than spatial analysis, which necessarily complicates the question of what a geographically informed environmental ethics would look like.

There is another way to approach geography, however. This involves thinking of geography not as a discipline but as reality, as a fundamental condition of human life as (at least at present) earthbound, and thus constituted in relation to the earth. This is the sense of geography Anne Buttimer (1993: 3) invokes when she writes:

For each facet of humanness – rationality or irrationality, faith, emotion, artistic genius, or political prowess – there is a geography. For each geographical interpretation of the earth, there are implicit assumptions about the meaning of humanness ... the common concern is terrestrial dwelling; *humanus* literally means ‘earth dweller’.

This article treats geography both as a discipline and as reality, though I will argue that it is more fundamentally as a systematic reflection on the reality Buttimer invokes, the reality of ourselves as earth dwellers, that geography’s greatest contribution to environmental ethics arises.

The identity of environmental ethics is similarly unsettled, in spite of the apparent convergence of contemporary definitions of the field. According to two recent anthologies, environmental ethics 'is the field of inquiry that addresses the ethical responsibilities of human beings for the natural environment' (Armstrong and Botzler, 1993: xv), concerning itself with 'humanity's relationship to the environment, its understanding of and responsibility to nature, and its obligations to leave some of nature's resources to posterity' (Pojman, 1994: 1–2). That these are introductory definitions should be appreciated; yet definitions provided in more concerted treatments of the subject are also rather general (e.g., P. W. Taylor, 1986: 3; Rolston, 1988: 1).

As Richard Sylvan and David Bennett (1994: 17–18) have recently charged, the environmental ethics literature lacks definitional clarity. This should not come as a surprise. It is hard to define precisely the terrain of ethics or moral philosophy, both since morality itself is so poorly bounded (Feldman, 1978: 1ff.), and since the field of ethics contains a great deal of historical baggage some would argue needs to be jettisoned before any real inquiry into morality and ethics can begin (Bauman, 1994). Then there is little agreement as to whether environmental *ethics per se* is a legitimate field of inquiry, or whether its purview must necessarily include metaphysical and other concerns under the broader rubric of environmental (or eco-) *philosophy* (Fox, 1990: 8). Finally, there exist a number of distinct theoretical movements, such as the oft-cited radical threesome of deep ecology, ecofeminism and social ecology (e.g., Zimmerman, 1993), which cannot be readily fit (at least without drastic simplification) into some common problematic of environmental ethics.

The upshot of this introductory discussion is that it is difficult to establish the potential contribution of geography to environmental ethics more due to the internal ambiguities of these two fields than any lack of substantive overlap. I will argue that this substantive overlap occurs at a rather basic philosophical level, and that attention to this overlap may in fact help clarify the identity of environmental ethics in a manner in which geographers and other scholars may fruitfully contribute.

3 Scope and intent

What follows is not so much a review of environmental ethics as a reframing of its problematic from the point of view of geography. My argument is this: that geography as a diverse and divided discipline, embodies tensions central to the paradoxical nature of human dwelling on earth – the geography of our lives – from which questions of environmental ethics arise. These tensions are both *ontological*, i.e., tensions inherent in this reality, and *epistemological*, i.e., tensions inherent in the ways we construct knowledge about this reality. They map over on to particular tensions within environmental ethics. The most fundamental contribution geography can make, therefore, lies in establishing a philosophical space for environmental ethics that takes paradox seriously and avoids its simplistic resolutions.

I will begin by defining what I mean by paradox, and presenting a simple taxonomy of strategies of overcoming paradox – all of which, I will argue, are flawed in important respects. I then review two major ontological and epistemological tensions within geography – that between nature and culture, and between objectivism and subjectivism – emphasizing the ways in which common resolutions to these tensions often represent flawed strategies of avoiding paradox.

I next connect these ontological and epistemological tensions to major issues underlying the project of environmental ethics as a means of sketching its broad problematic. These issues fall under two main dimensions. *Normative* environmental ethics aims to establish a philosophically robust scheme for caring about nature; the principal tension here involves that between anthropocentric and what I will call physiocentric (literally, nature-centred) ethics. Environmental *meta-ethics* addresses the meaning and justification of ethical arguments; one major meta-ethical tension concerns the problem of relativism, which I express as a tension between universalistic and particularistic schemes of environmental ethics.

The gist of my argument is that normative environmental ethics must be built on an adequate sensitivity to the nature/culture tension, and that environmental meta-ethics – specifically, the problem of relativism – must be similarly informed by the object/subject tension. These tensions within geography thus logically and practically accompany those of environmental ethics; that is why geography matters in a quite fundamental way.

The discussion that follows is necessarily painted with a broad brush; space does not permit excessive embellishment. I am not entirely comfortable with this approach, as it runs headlong against the much more carefully delimited, and hence ‘safe’, writing style that prevails in academic discourse. The reader will, I trust, understand the need for this general treatment, and hence forgive the inevitable lack of nuance.

II Paradox and its resolutions

Paradox is generally defined as an apparent contradiction which is none the less in some ways true. It derives from the Greek *paradoxos*, meaning ‘conflicting with expectation’, which itself is a compound of *para* (beyond) and *doxa* (opinion; from *dokein* [to think]). Paradox often involves a pairing of two ostensibly opposing claims or choices, though threesomes – the mysteries inherent in theologies of the trinitarian Godhead, the complexities inherent in a *ménage à trois* – can serve as paradoxical expressions as well. Philosophical usage dates back at least to the fifth-century BCE philosopher Zeno, a disciple of Parmenides, whose famous paradoxes, such as the Achilles paradox (that a slower runner will never be passed by the faster runner in a race) were designed to prove the soundness of his master’s philosophical teachings.

1 Dualistic and monistic strategies

By its nature, paradox cries out for some form of resolution; I will confine my discussion here to paradox as expressed in two contradictory claims. Two standard – though, I believe, deeply problematic forms of resolution – involve an underlying metaphysical commitment to either *dualism*, the position that there exist two separable, and often incompatible and hierarchically valued, entities, or *monism*, the position that there ultimately exists one entity, that apparently significant differences are illusory. Dualistic and monistic strategies can resolve the tension between paradoxical elements by either *purification*, in which one element is featured at the expense of the other, or *mixing* – typically a weaker strategy – in which both elements are acknowledged though blended. These strategies are graphically represented in Figure 1.

The most common dualistic strategy of resolution is the purificationist approach of *exclusion*: paradox is reconceived as two separate positions, of which one is chosen and

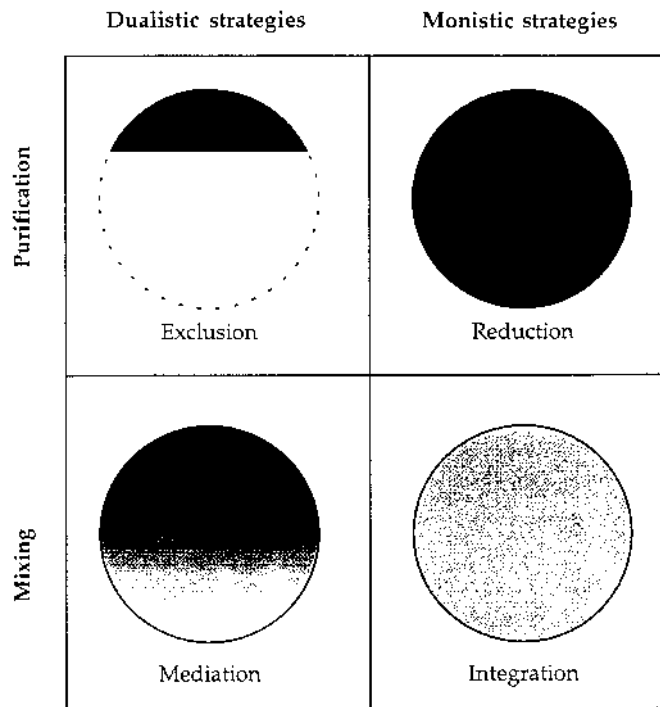


Figure 1 Typology of major dualistic and monistic strategies of resolving paradox as expressed in two opposing claims, here suggested by the colours black and white

the other rejected or otherwise distanced. The reason underlying the choice typically involves an evaluative hierarchy, an ordering of superior and subordinate, in which the superior position stands as the sole representative of truth, rightness and so forth, though in some cases exclusion is predicated merely on the assumed separability of the two positions, and a choice to follow one for reasons other than its inherent superiority. A weaker form of dualism underlies the mixing strategy of *mediation*, in which paradox is again conceived as two opposing positions, though they blend into each other at intermediate points. Mediatory strategies often speak of 'compromise' or 'balance' between two opposing positions (which assumes that such a balance is conceptually and pragmatically possible).

Monistic purification and mixing strategies exist as well. In reduction, one element is explicitly or implicitly subsumed under the other, and hence disappears. Reduction occurs in totalizing statements ('Nature is hostile', 'People are basically all the same') that effectively deny the existence of their alternatives. A less strong monistic strategy is *integration*, in which the opposing elements are fully blended into a unity, thus denying significance difference while preserving certain of both elements.

2 The dialectical alternative?

One could argue that a more elegant scheme of resolving paradox exists than reliance on metaphysical dualism or monism. This scheme is the concept of dialectic, of which

examples of its use abound in philosophy and social theory. Sean Sayers (1985: 15–16), for example, invokes Hegelian-style dialectic (without its idealist trappings) in his realist account of knowledge:

Thought and reality, the subjective and the objective, are not immobile and lifeless – they are opposites which interact and interpenetrate ... knowledge is the process of the transformation of reality into thought. It is the dynamic and dialectical unity of the opposites, the process through which this unity is developed and realized.

Another example is Anthony Giddens' broadly dialectical account of social structure as a 'duality', a process of interaction between structural enabling/constraining forces and individual action (Giddens, 1984: xxi – for his actual use of the term dialectic, see p. 16). Giddens contrasts structure as a duality with the much more common dualism underlying theories that privilege either structuralistic or voluntaristic explanations of human action.

Dialectic is not without its detractors, however, most of whom are unconvinced that it is indeed nondualistic. Bruno Latour (1993: 55), for instance, charges that 'Dialectics feigns to overcome [dualism] by loops and spirals and other complex acrobatic figures. Dialectics literally beats around the bush'. Some commentators have seen dialectic's assumption of binary opposition to be a strongly dualistic feature (Doel, 1992; Bennington, 1993). Though the tendency of dialectics may indeed be towards reification, others understand dialectics in a more metaphorical way, one mindful of the difficulties inherent in constructing literalistic interpretations of paradoxical reality. This is the approach of Gunnar Olsson, for instance, who charges that statements about reality not suffused with dialectical dynamism more faithfully reflect the language in which they are embedded than the reality they intend to describe (Olsson, 1980).

Shed of its oppositional and literalistic baggage, dialectics thus points towards not so much a resolution as an embrace of paradox, which maintains the dynamism and contradiction lost in dualistic or monistic accounts. This approach is built on a metaphysical foundation Donna Haraway (1991: 77) has referred to as *nondualism*, the position of 'One is too few, but two are too many' that rejects dualistic and monistic approaches (Zimmerman, 1994). Viewed in this manner, one neither chooses between opposing elements in an exclusionary sense, nor blends them together in an integrative approach, nor poses some grand literalistic scheme of dynamic opposition in the dialectical sense. Rather one simply acknowledges that, in many cases, reality cannot be adequately expressed in nonparadoxical fashion.

III Paradox and tension in geography

1 Ontology: nature/culture and the physical vs. human geography debate

The diverse objects of study in geography represent an unmatched ontological breadth. No other discipline encompasses geomorphologists and urbanists, climate change and language diffusion, vegetation mapping and mental mapping. As with other fields, geographers have made a sort of uneasy peace among themselves by dividing the discipline according to its different ontological domains. The most basic of these, under which virtually all remaining systematic divisions are organized, is that between physical and human geography, which clearly reflects the prevalent distinction in western societies between nature and culture.

And yet by embracing nature and culture, geography inevitably courts a paradoxical reality. Is, for instance, culture a part of, or apart from, nature? Surely both; but this is self-contradictory. Or: in what ways is nature ontologically (not to mention epistemologically) separable from culture? Is the distinction between them illusory? The three major themes Clarence Glacken employs in his classic inquiry of nature and culture – that of a designed earth, the influence of culture on nature and of nature on culture – represent only in the most general of senses the many ways the relationship between the two has been conceived, and his study is confined solely to European thought prior to the mid-eighteenth century, leaving many later stones, as well as those of other cultures, unturned (Glacken, 1967). There is simply no straightforward and final statement one can make about the relationship between nature and culture – a tension reflected, for example, in literature on the social construction of nature (Olwig, 1984; Bird, 1987; FitzSimmons, 1989; Evernden, 1993; Simmons, 1993; Cronon, 1995; Robertson *et al.*, 1996).

The paradoxical connections of nature and culture inevitably surface in the relationship between human and physical geographers, which has not infrequently been marked by tension. This relationship has played out differently in different departments and in different countries (James, 1972; Hooson, 1977), ranging from a rather volatile alliance between physical and human geographers – and a view of the discipline as a grand ‘go-between’ spanning the physical and human sciences (Livingstone, 1992: 354) – to a complete divorce between the two.

Clearly there are political and institutional explanations for the rift between physical and human geographers (P. J. Taylor, 1986), yet tensions arise as well out of divergent ontological perspectives on the nature/culture issue. One set of contrasting perspectives concerns the inter-relatedness of natural and human processes; here, dualistic and monistic accounts can be detected, with the former held by opponents of physical/human geography integration, and the latter by supporters. A related set of contrasting perspectives concerns more specifically the methodological similarities and differences inherent in gaining knowledge on nature and culture. This discussion revolves around what Roy Bhaskar has elaborated as the question of naturalism, the notion of a relative unity of method between the physical and human sciences (Bhaskar, 1978; 1979). Here, a range of strongly naturalistic to anti-naturalistic positions have been expressed in social theory (Bhaskar, 1993). Ontological commitments play an important role in these differing positions on naturalism as well, with anti-naturalists generally positing, in dualistic fashion, the uniqueness of the social world *vis à vis* the physical world, and emphasizing the necessary differences entailed in studying that social world.

Supporters of greater integration between physical and human geography are a diverse group, ranging from systems-theory practitioners to socialists. Most, however, have been physical geographers. Their position is largely one of monistic integration, stressing the essential interconnectedness of human and physical processes, and the urgency of developing knowledge on these processes (e.g., Marcus, 1979; Richards, 1983; Douglas, 1986; Stoddart, 1987). One example is the position of Andrew Goudie (1986), who has argued that fragmentation runs counter to a longstanding tradition of integration in geography – a tradition that maintains currency given the cross-cutting nature of modern problems confronting geographers. Other supporters of physical/human integration have taken this monistic position in a different, and mildly reductionistic, direction by denying the apparently value-free nature of physical geography (e.g., Bradley, 1983).

Opponents of physical/human integration are less convinced that human and physical processes are inextricably inter-related, at least at the deep level at which scholarly analysis should focus; thus their approach is ultimately dualistic. By selecting one or the other side (typically human geography, as most are human geographers) as their preferred emphasis, however, opponents are not so much denying the validity of its alternative as insisting in their mutual separability; hence their dualistic strategy is none the less one of exclusion. R. J. Johnston, for instance, has argued that human and physical geography consider qualitatively different processes at work on the face of the earth, the former focusing on social dynamics, the latter emphasizing the very different forces governing natural behaviour. It is only the outward forms, Johnston argues, that overlap, not the processes themselves (Johnston, 1983; see also Johnston, 1986; Stoddart, 1987: 330). An anti-naturalist argument against human/physical integration has been offered by Andrew Sayer (1983). Sayer (1983: 51) maintains that social inquiry is qualitatively different from that of physical science, since it must '... not only causally explain actions, it must also interpret and explain their intrinsic meaning'. It is this difference of method which leads him to argue for a clear distinction between human and physical geography; if this distinction is blurred, the risk of physical science methods taking over would be great, and the question of value in human geography would be lost.

With few exceptions, the debate over integration of physical and human geography has in many respects failed to problematize the very categories of nature and culture that lie at its heart, thus unintentionally furthering these reified categories and a number of dualisms and generally exclusionary resolutions associated with them. In this respect, the work of feminists and ecofeminists has a great deal to offer. Their project, in part, is to demonstrate the gendered marking of dualisms such as nature and culture (i.e., to note the links of, and between, nature-as-female and culture-as-male), and to spell out the hierarchical and repressive relation among these entities. The conceptual project of these feminists is broadly similar to that of Derrida-style deconstruction (Bennington, 1993) in that their intent is to replace the assumed relation of opposition with a nonpolarized relation of difference.

An example is Val Plumwood's (1993) account of feminism and nature. Plumwood's objective is to reveal the ways that 'natural' or reified dualisms (i.e., those apparently not of human contrivance) are intimately associated with dominant modes of social relations in western culture. Plumwood argues that the poles of this nature/culture dualism are marked off not so much by separation as what she calls hyperseparation, a qualitative, hierarchical difference that denies meaningful inter-relation.

Implications for geography of the feminist critique of nature/culture dualism have been put most forcefully by Gillian Rose (1993). Nature and culture are conceived by Rose not as two neatly distinguishable categories that readily map on to physical and human geography, but as a dualism resulting from several centuries of disdain of nature and its historical (vs. logical or inevitable) linkages with women, the body and emotion. Rose then focuses on human geography, citing the argument of Margaret FitzSimmons that these historical linkages are reproduced through a series of binary oppositions (FitzSimmons, 1989). For instance, cultural geography is presumed to deal far more with issues of nature than spatial analysis; the two have historically privileged rural and urban peoples, respectively, with little interaction until recently. In place of accepting these dualisms, Rose argues that we must adopt a strategy of oscillation between them, which ultimately works to 'deconstruct the polarities that it oscillates between. The structure of the Same and the Other must be destabilized' (Rose, 1993: 84).

In addition to problematizing these dualistic exclusionary accounts, feminists tackle monistic arguments as well by means of stressing the need to maintain difference. This denial of difference has pervaded many reductionistic positions in geography to date, including the environmental determinist argument that culture is a function of nature, and the more recent social constructivist position that largely subsumes nature under culture. Even the ostensibly more benign integrative monistic approaches are viewed suspiciously by ecofeminists, as they too negate difference. Plumwood's denial of dualism should not thus imply that she is willing to surrender notions of difference and linguistic tools for making distinctions; indeed, she counters the integrative position of deep ecologists and others who argue that nature and culture are some idealized unity, a position she calls the 'indistinguishability account' (Plumwood, 1993: 176).

The question of integrating physical and human geography thus points to the dangers of a dualistic or monistic resolution to the paradoxical relationship of nature and culture. Nature and culture are not one, nor are they quite two. Taking this insight seriously could lead to the revolutionary implication that, at the most fundamental level, there can be no such thing as a purely physical nor human geography. This observation could be countered by citing the practical necessity to cordon off certain manageable chunks of reality for scholarly inquiry – after all, scholars do have their personal limits – as well as the deep historical entrenchment of physical and human subfields. Yet, to the extent that this division of geography has allowed its practitioners safe haven from nature/culture contradictions, it is ultimately damaging. If human dwelling on earth and the earth as the home of humans are fundamental points of departure in geography, then geographers will not be equipped to return to it until they apprehend the nature/culture relation in a nondualistic manner.

2 Epistemology: object/subject and the debate over appropriate knowledges

The epistemological diversity of geography is as wide as will be found in any discipline. This is particularly true with respect to human geography, which exhibits many of the characteristics – ranging from Parsonian and structuralist approaches to hermeneutics and phenomenology – Anthony Giddens notes in the history of sociology and categorizes under the broad headings of objectivism and subjectivism (Giddens, 1984: xx–xxi). *Objectivism* includes epistemologies that consider knowledge to be a more or less authentic reflection of the object under investigation, whereas *subjectivism* includes epistemologies that focus more on the active role of human subjects in constructing knowledge.

Here, too, the geography of reality presents us with a paradox, arising from the fact that learning about this earth as the home of humans and understanding human dwelling on earth always involves the interaction of knowing subject with the object of knowledge. Yet how can knowledge be both objective and subjective at the same time? As with sociology, this paradox is scarcely entertained in geography before being quickly swept away, typically in grand exclusionary (hence dualistic) style, generally under the pretence of objectivism. The historical reason for this preference is simple: the pivotal actor in the tension between objectivist and subjectivist epistemologies in geography in the last half-century has been that constellation of quantitative practices and mores of rigour known as science. David Livingstone has recently sketched some of its major moments (Livingstone, 1992: 304ff); the most famous in geography is the so-called quantitative revolution, built in part on a legendary⁴ conflict between Richard

Hartshorne, who promulgated what is known as the exceptionalist view that geographical reality is inherently complex and unique and as such is not generalizable (Hartshorne, 1939), and Frederick Shaefer, who argued for a more nomothetic approach (i.e., one that aims to develop law-like generalizations) in geography (Shaefer, 1953). Shaefer's posthumous manifesto became a key referent of the architects of the quantitative revolution in geography, though there were many other sources of inspiration as well. The term 'quantitative' is in fact something of a misnomer among its purists, as the revolution more fundamentally represented to them a rejection of the days of exceptionalist youth in geography (e.g., its bent on regional description) as it supposedly matured to a more nomothetic impulse (Bird, 1993: 12). Though the idiographic/nomothetic divide is somewhat different from the subjectivist/objectivist split, the objectivist and nomothetic impulses are similar in that they both seek invariant knowledge, independent either of knowing subjects or local messiness.

The objectivist/subjectivist tensions at the heart of the debate over science in geography have carried into more recent discussions among adherents of various post-positivist epistemologies. One of the major disputes between Marxists and humanists in geography in the 1970s, for instance, concerned to what extent emphasis should be placed on the role of active human subjects in creating their realities, versus the ways these structured realities constrain human subjects (Cloke *et al.*, 1991). More recently, the postmodernist embrace of fractured epistemologies has been challenged by critical realists, who are less than comfortable with its subjectivist leanings (Sayer, 1993).

The relationship between objectivist and subjectivist approaches in geography has been by no means one of tolerance among equals. The quantitative revolution – often portrayed as some evolutionary inevitability – drew upon the great weight of science as it gained a hegemonic role in the academy especially after the second world war, largely echoing a longer cycle of ascendance in industrial society (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1972; P. Smith, 1990; Wilshire, 1990; Sorell, 1991). Epistemological tensions in geography clearly reflect in large part the ways in which knowledge serves as a distinctly partial and power-laden discourse (Foucault, 1980). In the midst of this conflictual discourse, however, are found some warning signs we would well heed. There is, in particular, a common danger in either the objectivist pole that negates the complexities of the knowing subject, or the subjectivist pole that wallows in them. It is the same problem of dualism encountered above. Indeed, Giddens (1984: xx) posited the terms objectivist and subjectivist as a means to argue that both cases affirmed a dualistic subject/object chasm: 'The conceptual divide between subject and social object [in these accounts] yawned as widely as ever'.

This subjectivist/objectivist dualism has been assailed by several movements of the twentieth century. The critical theory of Habermas, for example, was intended in part to define an epistemology of critical science that moved beyond the limitations of purely objectivist 'empirical-analytical' and subjectivist 'historical-hermeneutic' modes of knowledge attainment and use – two modes that map clearly over the epistemological tensions in geography (Gregory, 1994a). Within geography, overcoming this subjectivist/objectivist dualism has been a major preoccupation of critical realism (Sayer, 1991; 1992). Feminist geographers have similarly assailed this dualism as being linked to the nature/culture dualism via gender: 'Knowledge, the social, the theoretical – all these are associated with the masculine and with the cultural and scientific, the work of Man. The bodily, the specific, the private, the relational – these are feminine, and are associated more with the natural, separate from Man' (Rose, 1994: 74). Ultimately, Rose's position is

similar to that of Habermas in that objective and subjective geographies are implicitly related as 'A' and 'not-A': scientific and not-scientific, interpretive and non-interpretive, and thus retain the logically prior dualism that sets both in motion.

Yet, as with the nature/culture paradox above, I am not sure that any one theoretical account – be it critical realism, feminism or other similar attempts – is able to embrace the subject/object paradox in its paradoxical totality.⁵ It is much easier to spell out the real dangers of dualism inherent in exclusionary accounts than to provide a satisfactory replacement. A nondualistic epistemology is probably best expressed as a constellation of epistemologies held loosely together in a state of tension around the subject/object problematic, some delighting in the varied human experience of dwelling on earth, others seeking relatively invariant knowledge on the earth as the home of people, and still others professing to weave both together in some grand resolution. To the extent that these varied approaches commit the sin of hubris in believing theirs to be the one and only mode of knowledge attainment, and to the extent that some are less cognizant of dualism than others, then these vehicles for knowledge will only get their knowledge-seekers so far. But no one vehicle will feel right for everyone, precisely because paradox cannot be resolved with finality. Ideally, the dynamism between these ostensibly conflicting accounts of knowledge will continue to be the source of creative tension in geography that it has been in the last several decades, as evidenced by the insightful publications noted above.

IV Geography and the paradoxical terrain of environmental ethics

1 Exploring linkages across the Great Divide

Before considering how the paradoxes of nature/culture and subject/object map over onto a geographically configured terrain of environmental ethics, some attention must be given to the fact-value distinction, that legacy of positivist science. Ethics lies on the other side of the Great Divide, likely leading many geographers to suspect that anything more than strict empirical work on values crosses the divide and hence commits one of the scientist's gravest sins, or at least moves most geographers into territory for which they are intellectually unprepared and hence hesitant to speak.

Though no one would agree that personal bias and whims should play a major role in the enterprise of knowledge-building, at a more abstract level it is impossible to imagine how any sort of intellectual human practice is not bound up with social values, however implicitly formulated. As David Ley (1994: 171) argues:

[The positivist notion of value-free research] is no longer tenable, less because it is undesirable than because it is unattainable ... the pursuit of value-free science is itself the pursuit of a set of values, the Enlightenment values of rationality and pragmatism, that readily translate into the needs of a rational-bureaucratic society.

The role of values in geography has been discussed for at least the last two decades (Buttimer, 1974). Values have been explicitly included in two loose coalitions of geography: those arguing for the use of more explicitly critical theoretical approaches (Peet and Thrift, 1989), of which William Bunge and David Harvey, respectively, stand as early exemplars (Unwin, 1992: 162–64). Indeed, Derek Gregory (1994b: 10) distinguishes critical geography in terms of its morally self-reflexive character, placing it alongside its counterparts in social theory, 'in a state of common tension by the interrogation of its own normativity'.

The willingness of some geographers to consider, if not embrace, normative issues in their work should not suggest a devaluation of factual knowledge as much as an unwillingness to believe in the Great Divide's distinct and unconnected realms of facts and values – a position these geographers share with pragmatists and critical realists, among others (Rorty, 1982; Bhaskar, 1991: Appendix 1). From the perspective of moral philosophy, this position is generally known as ethical naturalism, 'the view that no sharp demarcation exists between facts about the world and judgments (evaluations) about the world and how humans ought to act in it. Moral evaluations contain facts about natural phenomena' (Angeles, 1992: 201). Most discussions of ethical naturalism proceed from the is–ought dichotomy attributed to David Hume, in which it is impossible to derive a normative statement solely from a descriptive statement; yet this argument not only states (correctly) that one cannot readily proceed from the fact to the value side of the Great Divide but also assumes (problematically) that the Great Divide exists. Most opponents of ethical naturalism cite G. E. Moore's 'naturalistic fallacy', which discounts the possibility of analysing moral statements in terms of their extra-moral basis (Moore, 1903; cf. Williams, 1985: 121ff.; Sayre-McCord, 1988: 2–5). Supporters of ethical naturalism are numerous, however, and range in application from political philosophy (Selznick, 1992: 17ff.) to environmental philosophy (Attfield, 1987: 223ff.). One careful defence is provided by David Brink, who argues for a 'nonreductive' form of ethical naturalism, which 'claims that moral facts and properties are constituted by, and so supervene upon (or vary in a lawlike way with), natural and social scientific facts and properties even if moral terms are not definable by natural terms' (Brink, 1989: 9). I trust most readers will minimally accept a weak ethical naturalism, one which admits that reality claims on nature, nature–society relations and so forth are not entirely meaningless in the context of environmental ethics.

The linkages across this Great Divide I wish to explore involve a differentiation between normative ethics and meta-ethics, a common division of moral philosophy. Normative ethics are devoted to constructing a suitable moral basis to inform human conduct, to answer the question 'What should be done?' Meta-ethics, in distinction, is more an examination of the characteristics of ethical reasoning or systems of ethics than an attempt to construct an ethics *per se*. In important ways, the nature/culture paradox maps over on to a fundamental tension in normative environmental ethics: the tension between human-centred and nonhuman-centred ethical systems. This tension has been perhaps the main point of contention in the last decade in environmental ethics. In contrast, the object/subject paradox maps over on to a fundamental problem in all ethics, one which has however to date been largely passed over in environmental ethics: the problem of relativism. I will discuss these two linkages in turn.

2 Nature/culture and the normative project: physiocentrism and anthropocentrism

At one level, environmental ethics invokes nature and culture in its very definition, as environment is its referent object, and ethics deals with human conduct. In this sense, geographers and other scholars can play an important role in pointing out complexities inherent these two categories, with important moral implications. The work of geographers in chronicling the human transformation of the earth (Simmons, 1989; Goudie, 1990; Turner *et al.*, 1990), for instance, suggests that in many cases what appears to be natural is in fact the result of centuries of direct or indirect human influence, thus obscuring the boundary between natural and human-altered landscapes and calling into

philosophical and practical question the emphasis placed on 'pristine' or 'wild' landscapes (i.e., those untouched by human hands) in certain normative schemes of environmental ethics. In the realm of culture, the work of geographers in tracing causes of environmental degradation (e.g., Blaikie, 1985; Johnston, 1989) supports a stratified social model in which the conduct of certain powerful human individuals and institutions (e.g., political leaders, lending agencies) is in many cases a much more fundamental determinant than the actions of the more numerous and relatively powerless people who happen to be proximately responsible for land transformation. Following these observations, any normative environmental ethic must be built on a differentiated sense of culture and the differential responsibility of various human actors for environmental well-being.

At a more fundamental level, normative theories have been proposed in environmental ethics which themselves invoke nature or culture as a ground for environmentally benign human conduct. These typically proceed from a specific axiology of nature (axiology arises from the Greek *axios*, meaning worth) to derive implications for human conduct affecting nature. Two broad axiological categories include intrinsic value (sometimes called inherent value or worth, though these two terms are also differentially employed to distinguish anthropogenic from autonomous value) and its extrinsic opposite, generally called instrumental value in the environmental ethics literature. An instrumental-value axiology of nature recognizes value in nature relative to humans (who are themselves intrinsically valuable); an intrinsic-value axiology recognizes value in nature in and of itself, i.e., independent of particular human benefits or harms.

Two major classes of normative environmental ethics have been proposed based on this axiological distinction, including anthropocentrism and nonanthropocentric theories. Anthropocentrism grounds human conduct affecting nature in human value, to which nature serves an instrumentally valuable role towards human ends. Anthropocentrism can be subdivided according to the kinds of human ends that are served; thus, for example, Max Oeschlaeger (1991: 286–92) differentiates between resourcism, in which people value nature as a material commodity, and preservationism, in which nature's worth follows from its aesthetic, and ultimately inspirational, value. It can also be divided according to which humans are primarily served; thus Carolyn Merchant (1990) distinguishes between egocentric ethics, which are 'grounded in the self' and exemplified in liberalism and *laissez-faire* capitalism, and homocentric ethics, which are more broadly 'grounded in society' and exemplified in utilitarianism.

There are several important nonanthropocentric theories, all of which primarily ground environmentally significant human conduct in nature (i.e., an intrinsic-value nature axiology). Examples include some forms of animal rights ethics that posit inherent value in certain animals (Regan, 1983), biocentric ethics, which accord intrinsic value to individual organisms (P. W. Taylor, 1986), ecocentric ethics, in which intrinsic value is collectively accorded to ecosystems (Callicott, 1989), and to a certain extent deep ecology, which shares some axiological features of ecocentrism (Fox, 1990). To pull these nonanthropocentric theories together under a positive label, I will refer to them below as varieties of *physiocentrism*,⁶ derived from the Greek *phusis* meaning nature (as in the *physical* world).

Environmental ethics is in many ways derived from two recent observations of western societies, the first involving a material recognition of the growing scale of environmental problems, and the second involving an ideological recognition of the diffuse, embedded status of anthropocentrism and an over-ridingly instrumentalist approach towards

nature. The questions that have concerned environmental ethicists have thus been: is anthropocentrism in some major way responsible for our environmental crisis? Is it thus necessary to move away from anthropocentrism as a basis for environmentally significant human conduct? If so, how would a physiocentric ethical basis be constructed?

This debate over anthropocentrism served as perhaps the major focal point in environmental ethics particularly in the 1980s and early 1990s (Katz, 1989), yet it still persists (Norton, 1995).⁷ The numerous opponents of anthropocentrism (Naess, 1973; Devall and Sessions, 1985; Attfield, 1987; Rolston, 1988; Johnson, 1991) have argued that it inevitably results in a skewed sense of conduct towards nature, one that favours those aspects that benefit people, and is silent (or injurious) to those aspects that do not. Others (e.g., Passmore, 1974; Schrader-Frechette, 1981; Hargrove, 1989; Norton, 1987; 1995), however, are far less certain that nonanthropocentric ethics are necessary, as virtually all environmental damage harms humans as well, and at any rate it is pragmatically difficult if not impossible to imagine western societies moving away from anthropocentrism at any time in the foreseeable future.

There are certain problematic assumptions bound up into this debate; for instance, the notion that all normative ethics must flow from some axiological 'centre' has been criticized by ecofeminists favouring a more relational, less Cartesian approach. Yet given its centrality in the environmental ethics literature (as particularly reflected in the project of many environmental philosophers to construct a suitable physiocentric ethic), as well as the fundamental nature/culture paradox it implicitly invokes, it is worth considering more closely the varieties of resolutions that have been proposed to this debate.

As suggested above, the primary means by which environmental philosophers have resolved the anthropocentrism/physiocentrism debate is by choosing one side or the other in exclusionary, dualistic fashion: either anthropocentrism is seen as fatally flawed, or physiocentrism is seen as unnecessary and impractical. This exclusionary tendency does not square well with the popularly expressed dilemma of 'balancing' social and environmental concerns, which does address at some level the nature/culture paradox at the heart of human dwelling on earth. If environmental ethics does not speak to this paradox as well, its real contribution will be diminished. In this respect, the discussions of environmental philosophers concerning moral pluralism (Stone, 1987; Callicott, 1990; Anderson, 1991; Varner, 1991; Wenz, 1993) point to a real consideration of how the nature/culture paradox may necessitate different though related normative ethical theories in environmental and social ethics. Similarly, the nature/culture paradox is reflected in the efforts of, for instance, Paul Taylor (1986: 256ff.) and Richard Sylvan and David Bennett (1994: 139–42), who attempt with mixed success to delineate the various moral responsibilities people have for natural and cultural entities.

Monistic strategies of resolving the physiocentrism/anthropocentrism debate exist as well. Some have employed the strategy of reduction in arguing that, as all valuation is ultimately human, there cannot be anything such as a nonanthropocentric ethics (Weston, 1985; Grundmann, 1991; Thompson, 1991). A more common and conciliatory integration strategy has been proposed by those on both sides of the physiocentric/anthropocentric divide. For instance, deep ecology is generally understood as positing that there is no real boundary between humans and the nonhuman world, and that in fact humans and nonhuman entities are inextricably interwoven. A result of this monistic ontology is that human concern for the environment is seen to be at once based on human interest and the interests of the nonhuman entity as well; thus, what have been labelled above as intrinsic and instrumental-value axiologies are not distinct. As one

deep ecologist claims: 'There is an identification with all life ... "I am protecting the rain forest" develops to "I am part of the rain forest protecting myself"' (Seed, 1985: 243). From a broadly anthropocentric point of departure and a pragmatist philosophical inclination, other environmental philosophers have argued that the distinction between anthropocentric and physiocentric moral theories is not meaningful, as both can be invoked to defend most of the environmental concerns people have (Norton, 1986; 1991; Weston, 1985; 1992; Parker, 1995).

The problem with these monistic resolutions has been alluded to above: to the extent that they fail to preserve difference and dynamism, they present a simplified view of the nature/culture paradox. It is difficult to grasp, for instance, any meaningful truth in the deep ecological assertion that all environmental injury constitutes human injury, as clearly the reality of uneven development on the face of the earth (N. Smith, 1990) assumes disproportionate social and human-environment impacts at its core. Similarly, the pragmatist assertion that the anthropocentric-physiocentric distinction does not matter in real cases of environmental concern (perhaps most unashamedly expressed by Bryan Norton, 1991) is less convincing in the case of environmental issues that fall out of the terrain of clear or unmixed human benefit – the realm of 'nonresources' (Ehrenfeld, 1976).

In short, the tension between anthropocentric and physiocentric moral theories cannot be usefully resolved by means of these common dualistic and monistic schemes. The ultimate reason why these schemes are unworkable is the same reason why dualistic and monistic resolutions to the physical/human geography debate are unworkable: the problematic of human dwelling on earth entails a paradoxical relationship between nature and culture which must be preserved in our attempts to make sense of it, whether descriptive or moral. As I suggested above with respect to human and physical geography, this dynamic and contradictory relation between nature and culture ultimately suggests that a purely 'environmental' ethics is unworkable, just as environmental philosophers have rightly charged that a purely social ethics has long been unworkable. The solution to this problem is most likely not, however, to scrap environmental ethics but, following a constellation approach, to emphasize a common point of departure and some means of at least occasional communication between environmental and social ethicists. That this full range of moral concerns can follow quite readily from the existent objects of geographical inquiry again points to the potential participation of geographers in this area.

3 Object/subject and the meta-ethical context: universalism and particularism

Whereas the nature/culture paradox maps over to one of the major normative tensions in environmental ethics, the object/subject paradox maps over to one of the most fundamental meta-ethical problems in western thought: the problem of moral relativism (Lukes, 1977; Arrington, 1989; Krausz, 1989b). Unfortunately, this problem has not been given due attention in the environmental ethics literature, in part I believe due to the relative lack of engagement of environmental philosophers with the epistemological object/subject paradox, especially as it applies to multicultural space. The problem, however, is critical: how can anyone go about making moral judgements about environmental protection if the object of concern is understood outside a purely objectivist epistemology? As all schemes of environmental ethics are built at some level on epistemological claims regarding nature, it follows that taking the object/subject paradox

seriously entails consideration of the subject's perspective upon which it is based and to which it is considered binding, as well as the conditions of invariance surrounding the object to which it refers.

Relativism has been defined as the thesis that 'cognitive, moral, or aesthetic claims involving such values as truth, meaningfulness, rightness, reasonableness, appropriateness, aptness, or the like are relative to the context in which they appear' (Krausz, 1989a: 1). Relativism in the philosophically proper sense should be distinguished from the patently self-contradictory form known as radical or extreme relativism, which states that all epistemological, moral and other claims are equally correct, and nihilism (from the Latin *nihil*, meaning nothing), the view that there is no way to distinguish descriptive, moral and other statements in terms of true/false, better/worse, etc.

I would like to express this problem as the tension between universalism and particularism, two terms designed to express the scope of relevance of any moral statement (i.e., the social space defining for whom it is 'true' and binding). A universalist interpretation of a particular moral scheme is that it is binding of all people in all places at all times and situations; a particularist interpretation restricts this scope to a certain extent. On this schema, relativism is a form of particularism in that what is held to be morally correct is limited to a particular cultural or historical context. Its opposite, absolutism, is the universalist extreme: what is morally correct (e.g., that it is not right to take a human life) is held to be true at all times and sociocultural conditions. The universalist/particularist distinction implies that ethics may have a particular social, spatiotemporal/or other scope of applicability. The tension between universalism and particularism has not been ignored by geographers; indeed, David M. Smith (1995: 277–79) argues that it is one of the primary moral issues of geographical significance, and Matthew Gandy (1996: 33–34) criticizes postmodernist celebrations of local environmental knowledges, primary reliance on nature myth and so forth as having rejected a problematic universalism only to replace it with an equally problematic particularism.

The relation between objectivist and subjectivist epistemologies and universalist and particularist tendencies in moral schema is fairly direct. Objectivist epistemologies are understood to be independent of the knowing subject; to the extent that their intent is nomothetic, they thus would tend to support a universalist ethics that negates difference.⁸ Subjectivist epistemologies, which stress the active and potentially differentiated human role in constructing knowledge(s), lead in a much more particularistic direction. Taken to the individualistic extreme, subjectivist epistemologies seem to support an extremely restricted space of applicability for ethical schemes, as expressed for instance in the popular sense as 'I'll do what is right for me'.

One link between the object/subject paradox and actual work by environmental philosophers concerns their discussions regarding whether intrinsic value in nature is of anthropogenic (subjective) or autonomous (objective) origin, and if it is the former, then how it is to be differentiated from anthropocentrism as well as avoid relativistic implications (Rolston, 1988: 115; Callicott, 1989: 133; Fox, 1990: 188ff.). The vast bulk of work in environmental ethics, however, has not yet engaged with the larger implications of this paradox, especially in reference to multiculturalism. Though recent environmental ethics anthologies do include sections of nonwestern thought (e.g., Armstrong and Botzler, 1993: 516ff.; Pojman, 1994: 186ff.), they do not include any serious engagement with the question of relativism. Yet multicultural perspectives on environmental ethics are decidedly different in certain important ways; are they all correct within a certain cultural context?

As one relatively recent example, the well-known environmental philosopher J. Baird Callicott's book *Earth's insights* (1994) is written as a sympathetic survey of forms of environmental ethics expressed by peoples throughout the world. In an introductory section on comparative environmental ethics, Callicott essentially gives away his conclusion even before the core of the book arrives – a position that does not squarely address the question of relativism:

A new scientific paradigm is emerging which will sooner or later replace the waning mechanical worldview and its associated values and technological esprit. The coming twenty-first-century paradigm has many conceptual affinities with preindustrial attitudes toward nature, especially those of the East. Thus, detailed cross-cultural comparison of traditional concepts of the nature of nature, human nature, and the relationship between people and nature with the ideas emerging in ecology and the new physics should be mutually reinforcing... Each of the many worldviews and associated environmental ethics can be a facet of an emerging global environmental consciousness, expressed in the vernacular of a particular and local cultural tradition (Callicott, 1994: 12).

It is particularly important in this regard to note that the vast majority of early writings in environmental ethics arose exclusively in European countries. Ramachandra Guha (1989), for instance, has charged that the strong wilderness and deep ecological leanings of this literature render it totally unsuitable for application to much of the third world, where disastrous and widespread human impacts would result. What does Guha's critique mean for western-based schemes of environmental ethics? Do they only apply in the west? Or perhaps does their parochial nature cast doubt on their applicability even close to their sites of origin?

The above has been a preliminary and exploratory discussion precisely due to the lack of engagement of environmental philosophers with the meta-ethical implications of the object/subject paradox to date. This discussion is not even to the point of recognizable dualistic and monistic resolutions, though traces of extreme universalism are detectable in the silences of this literature, as are traces of particularism in the critiques of, for instance, Guha. Without recognizing the centrality of the universalist/particularist question in environmental ethics, however, it is going to be difficult for (largely European) environmental philosophers to gain the ear of non-Europeans, dispossessed classes of European peoples or simply those who choose to believe in their own homebaked version of environmental ethics. This question has been central to epistemology and meta-ethics in general; it must employ an equivalent level of concern in environmental ethics.

V Conclusion: making good of geography's tense terrain

Geography's potential contribution to environmental ethics builds upon a recent strong showing of support by geographers for work in this area. Many have spoken of the need for geography to include questions of nature and environment, and not merely space, as central to the discipline's theory and practice (Kates, 1987; FitzSimmons, 1989; Buttner, 1993; Driver, 1994; Katz, 1995). Yet how is geography to address the pressing normative concerns that arise in this realm? That geographers are increasingly recognizing their legitimacy is a step in the right direction; thus it is heartening to find the editors of the monumental volume *The earth as transformed by human action* (ET) conclude a recent forum by stating: 'For geographers, for whom the human use of the earth is a central question, it is not too early to use the occasion of this reflection on ET to ask of ourselves and our species: beyond transformation, what ought to be the human use of the earth?' (Turner *et al.*, 1995: 715).

My argument has called into question the Great Divide between facts and values, a legacy of positivist science we would do well to eschew as inaccurate and unhelpful. I have suggested that the fundamental problematic of geography and environmental ethics is similar. I have also suggested that the most fundamental clarification geography can offer in the realm of environmental ethics concerns its ontological and epistemological terrain, and how this terrain leads to particular normative and meta-ethical questions to which environmental ethics could profitably attend.

Yet I believe that geography is uniquely situated to provide this philosophical framework for environmental ethics not from some overarching unity or core to the discipline, but precisely because this unity does not exist. At the creative core of geography and environmental ethics lies paradox; it is, as Kierkegaard observed, the mark of good inquiry that it preserves paradox, rather than smother it under some flattened unity or rend it asunder in some dualistic scheme. A similar conclusion was reached by Anne Buttner (1993: 212–13) in her recent survey of divisions within geography:

Geography as a scholarly discipline can only remain creative and seek integrity when there is ample scope for a playing out of those tensions between integrative and dispersive forces, a dialectic of stability and innovation, of security and adventure ... For once the integrative process reaches fulfillment – either in terms of institutional structures, paradigmatic certainty, or public relevance – then scholarly energies are harnessed toward routine operational tasks. Integration as *fait accompli* ... might be tantamount to the kiss of death for intellectual creativity.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the anonymous *Progress in Human Geography* referees for their assistance, and for the helpful comments of Nicholas Entrikin, Michael McGinnis, Daniel Montello, and members of the Department of Geography at the University of Southern California on earlier drafts of this article. James Birchler provided an invaluable literature research assistance. Work on this article was funded in part by NSF grant SBR-9600985.

Notes

1. Though several bibliographies of environmental ethics are available in published form (deGroh and Valauskas, 1987; Simmons, 1988; Davis, 1989; Katz, 1989; 1992), they are generally dated. An excellent unpublished source is the International Society for Environmental Ethics (ISEE) Master Bibliography, which is constantly updated, and available via the ISEE web page at <http://www.cep.unt.edu/ISEE.html>.

2. The current ISEE contact as of this writing for western Europe is Wouter Achterberg, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Amsterdam, Nieuwe Doelenstraat 15, 1012 CP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Current contacts for North America include Ned Hettinger (HettingerN@CofC.edu), Peter List (listp@cla.orst.edu), Holmes Rolston, III (rolston@lamar.colostate.edu), Jack Weir (j.weir@morehead-st.edu) and Laura Westra (westra@uwindson.ca).

3. The *Philosophy and geography* volume's introduction tends, for instance, to argue by example – i.e., that publications in moral philosophy and environmental ethics show increasing recognition of the value of geography – rather than provide an abstract defence of geography's centrality. The editors do, however, reflect on central geographical themes included in the volume's essays, noting that spatial metaphors such as centres and boundaries are often used to explicate notions of moral community, and that the concept of place offers a grounding for the 'environment' in environmental ethics (Light and Smith, 1997a: 10).

4. I say legendary both because of its notoriety and the fact that it never really involved two living human beings.

5. Though some attempts stand as admirable exemplars, such as Nicholas Entrikin's view of place as best understood from 'points in between' a 'decentred' objectivism and a 'centred' subjectivism (Entrikin, 1991).
6. I am indebted to my colleague and living Greek dictionary, Helen Couclelis, for recommending this term to me.
7. As one prominent environmental philosopher has argued, 'The debate is still alive and well ... Theoretical issues don't go away, they just enlarge' (Holmes Rolston, pers. comm., 4 June 1996).
8. That objectivism need not be nomothetic and thus necessarily universalist is suggested in Anne Buttimer's (1993) metaphor of the world as 'arena of [unconnected] events', represented in certain pragmatist, postmodernist and other movements within geography.

References

- Anderson, J.C.** 1991: Moral planes and intrinsic values. *Environmental Ethics* 13, 49–58.
- Angeles, P.A.** 1992: *The HarperCollins dictionary of philosophy*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Armstrong, S.J. and Botzler, R. G.**, editors, 1993: *Environmental ethics: divergence and convergence*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Arrington, R.L.** 1989: *Rationalism, realism, and relativism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Attfield, R.** 1987: *A theory of value and obligation*. London: Croom Helm.
- Bauman, Z.** 1994: *Postmodern ethics*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Bennington, G.** 1993: Deconstruction. In Outhwaite, W. and Bottomore, T., editors, *The Blackwell dictionary of twentieth-century social thought*, Oxford: Blackwell, 138–40.
- Bhaskar, R.** 1978: On the possibility of social scientific knowledge and the limits of naturalism. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior* 8, 1–28.
- 1979: *The possibility of naturalism*. Hassocks: Harvester Books.
- 1991: *Philosophy and the idea of freedom*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- 1993: Naturalism. In Outhwaite, W. and Bottomore, T., editors, *The Blackwell dictionary of twentieth-century social thought*, Oxford: Blackwell, 412–14.
- Bird, E.A.R.** 1987: The social construction of nature: theoretical approaches to the history of environmental problems. *Environmental Review* 11, 255–64.
- Bird, J.** 1993: *The changing worlds of geography: a guide to concepts and methods*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Blaikie, P.** 1985: *The political economy of soil erosion in developing countries*. London: Longman.
- Bradley, P.** 1983: Underdevelopment and physical geography: bias and relevance. In The London Group of the Union of Socialist Geographers, editors, *Society and nature: socialist perspectives on the relationship between human and physical geography*, London: Union of Socialist Geographers, 32–46.
- Brink, D.O.** 1989: *Moral realism and the foundations of ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Buttimer, A.** 1974: *Values in geography*. Association of American Geographers Resource Paper 24. Washington, DC: Association of American Geographers.
- 1993: *Geography and the human spirit*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Callicott, J.B.** 1989: *In defense of the land ethic: essays in environmental philosophy*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- 1990: The case against moral pluralism. *Environmental Ethics* 12, 99–124.
- 1994: *Earth's insights: a survey of ecological ethics from the Mediterranean Basin to the Australian Outback*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Cloke, P.J., Philo, C. and Sadler, D.** 1991: *Approaching human geography: an introduction to contemporary theoretical debates*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Cronon, W.**, editor, 1995: *Uncommon ground: toward reinventing nature*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Davis, D.E.** 1989: *Ecophilosophy: a field guide to the literature*. San Pedro, CA: R. & E. Miles.
- deGroh, T. and Valauskas, E.** 1987: *Deep ecology and environmental ethics: a selected and annotated bibliography of materials published since 1980*. Council of Planning Libraries Bibliography 185. Chicago, IL: Council of Planning Librarians.
- Devall, B. and Sessions, G.** 1985: *Deep ecology: living as if nature mattered*. Salt Lake City, UT: Gibbs M. Smith.
- Doel, M.A.** 1992: In stalling deconstruction: striking out the postmodern. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 10, 163–79.
- Douglas, I.** 1986: The unity of geography is

- obvious ... *Transactions, Institute of British Geographers* 11, 459–63.
- Driver, F.** 1994: New perspectives on the history and philosophy of geography. *Progress in Human Geography* 18, 92–100.
- Ehrenfeld, D.** 1976: The conservation of non-resources. *American Scientist* 64, 648–56.
- Entrikin, J.N.** 1991: *The betweenness of place: towards a geography of modernity*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Evernden, N.** 1993: *The social creation of nature*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Feldman, F.** 1978: *Introductory ethics*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- FitzSimmons, M.** 1989: The matter of nature. *Antipode* 21, 106–20.
- Foucault, M.** 1980: *Power/knowledge: selected interviews and other writings, 1972–1977*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Fox, W.** 1990: *Toward a transpersonal ecology: developing new foundations for environmentalism*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.
- Gandy, M.** 1996: Crumbling land: the postmodernity debate and the analysis of environmental problems. *Progress in Human Geography* 20, 23–40.
- Giddens, A.** 1984: *The constitution of society: outline of the theory of structuration*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Glacken, C.J.** 1967: *Traces of the Rhodian shore: nature and culture in western thought from ancient times to the end of the eighteenth century*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Goudie, A.** 1986: The integration of human and physical geography. *Transactions, Institute of British Geographers* 11, 454–58.
- 1990: *The human impact on the natural environment*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Gregory, D.** 1994a: Critical theory. In Johnston, R.J., Gregory, D. and Smith, D.M., editors, *The dictionary of human geography*, Oxford: Blackwell, 106–109.
- 1994b: *Geographical imaginations*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Grundmann, R.** 1991: The ecological challenge to Marxism. *New Left Review* 187, 103–19.
- Guha, R.** 1989: Radical American environmentalism and wilderness preservation: a third world critique. *Environmental Ethics* 11, 71–83.
- Haraway, D.** 1991: *Simians, cyborgs, and women: the reinvention of nature*. New York: Routledge.
- Hargrove, E.C.** 1989: *Foundations of environmental ethics*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Hartshorne, R.** 1939: *The nature of geography: a critical survey of current thought in the light of the past*. Lancaster, PA: Association of American Geographers.
- Hooson, D.** 1977: Introduction. In Anuchin, V.A., editor, *Theoretical problems in geography*, Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 3–18.
- Horkheimer, M. and Adorno, T.W.** 1972: *The dialog of enlightenment*. New York: Herder & Herder.
- James, P.E.** 1972: *All possible worlds: a history of geographical ideas*. Indianapolis, IN: Odyssey Press.
- Johnson, L.E.** 1991: *A morally deep world: an essay on moral significance and environmental ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Johnston, R.J.** 1983: Resource analysis, resource management and the integration of physical and human geography. *Progress in Physical Geography* 7, 127–46.
- 1986: Four fixations and quest for unity in geography. *Transactions, Institute of British Geographers* 11, 449–53.
- 1989: *Environmental problems: nature, economy, and state*. London: Belhaven Press.
- Kates, R.W.** 1987: The human environment: the road not taken, the road still beckoning. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 77, 521–32.
- Katz, C.** 1995: Major/minor: theory, nature, and politics. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 85, 164–68.
- Katz, E.** 1989: Environmental ethics: a select annotated bibliography, 1983–1987. *Research in Philosophy and Technology* 9, 251–85.
- 1992: Environmental ethics: a select annotated bibliography II, 1987–1990. *Research in Philosophy and Technology* 12, 287–324.
- Kierkegaard, S.** 1985: *Philosophical fragments*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Krausz, M.** 1989a: Introduction. In Krausz, M., editor, *Relativism*, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1–11.
- editor, 1989b: *Relativism*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Latour, B.** 1993: *We have never been modern*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Lewis, M.W.** 1992: *Green delusions: an environmentalist critique of radical environmentalism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Ley, D.** 1994: Ethics. In Johnston, R.J., Gregory, D. and Smith, D.M., editors, *The dictionary of human geography*, Oxford: Blackwell, 170–72.
- Light, A. and Smith, J.M.** 1997a: Introduction: geography, philosophy, and the environment. In Light, A. and Smith, J.M., editors, *Philosophy and*

- geography. I. *Space, place, and environmental ethics*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1–13.
- editors, 1997b: *Philosophy and geography. I. Space, place, and environmental ethics*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Livingstone, D.N.** 1992: *The geographical tradition: episodes in the history of a contested discipline*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- 1995: The polity of nature: representation, virtue, strategy. *Ecumene* 2, 353–77.
- Lukes, S.** 1977: Relativism: cognitive and moral. In *Essays in social theory*, New York: Columbia University Press, 154–74.
- Marcus, M.G.** 1979: Coming full circle: physical geography in the twentieth century. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 69, 521–32.
- Merchant, C.** 1990: Environmental ethics and political conflict: a view from California. *Environmental Ethics* 12, 45–68.
- Mitchell, B. and Draper, D.** 1982: *Relevance and ethics in geography*. London: Longman.
- Moore, G.E.** 1903: *Principia ethica*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Naess, A.** 1973: The shallow and the deep, long-range ecology movement. *Inquiry* 16, 95–100.
- Norton, B.** 1986: Conservation and preservation: a conceptual rehabilitation. *Environmental Ethics* 8, 195–220.
- 1987: *Why preserve natural variety?* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- 1991: *Toward unity among environmentalists*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- 1995: Why I am not a nonanthropocentrist: Callicott and the failure of monistic inheritism. *Environmental Ethics* 17, 341–58.
- Oeschlaeger, M.** 1991: *The idea of wilderness from prehistory to the age of ecology*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Olsson, G.** 1980: *Birds in egg/eggs in bird*. London: Pion.
- Olwig, K.** 1984: *Nature's ideological landscape: a literary and geographical perspective on its development and preservation on Denmark's Jutland heath*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- O'Riordan, T.** 1981: *Environmentalism*. London: Pion.
- Parker, K.A.** 1995: Pragmatism and environmental thought. In Light, A. and Katz, E., editors, *Environmental pragmatism*, London: Routledge, 21–37.
- Passmore, J.** 1974: *Man's responsibility for nature: ecological problems and western traditions*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Peet, R. and Thrift, N.**, editors, 1989: *New models in geography: the political-economy perspective*. London: Unwin Hyman.
- Pepper, D.** 1993: *Eco-socialism: from deep ecology to social justice*. London: Routledge.
- Plumwood, V.** 1993: *Feminism and the mastery of nature*. London: Routledge.
- Pojman, L.P.**, editor, 1994: *Environmental ethics: readings in theory and application*. Boston, MA: Jones & Bartlett.
- Reed, M.G. and Slaymaker, O.** 1993: Ethics and sustainability: a preliminary perspective. *Environment and Planning A* 25, 723–39.
- Regan, T.** 1983: *The case for animal rights*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Richards, G.** 1983: Dialectics, nature and physical geography. In The London Group of the Union of Socialist Geographers editor, *Society and nature: socialist perspectives on the relationship between human and physical geography*, London: Union of Socialist Geographers, 58–69.
- Robertson, G., Mash, M., Tickner, L., Bird, J., Curtis, B. and Putnam, T.**, editors, 1996: *Future-Natural: nature, science, culture*. London: Routledge.
- Rolston, H.** 1975: Is there an ecological ethics? *Ethics* 85, 93–109.
- 1988: *Environmental ethics: duties to and values in the natural world*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Rorty, R.** 1982: *Consequences of pragmatism (essays: 1972–1980)*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Rose, G.** 1993: *Feminism and geography: the limits of geographical knowledge*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Rose, H.** 1994: *Love, power and knowledge: toward a feminist transformation of the sciences*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Routley, R.** 1973: Is there a need for a new, an environmental, ethic? In *Fifteenth World Congress of Philosophy, Varna, Bulgaria*, Sofia: Publishing House of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 205–10.
- Sayer, A.** 1983: Notes on geography and the relationship between people and nature. In The London Group of the Union of Socialist Geographers, editor, *Society and nature: socialist perspectives on the relationship between human and physical geography*, London: Union of Socialist Geographers, 47–57.
- 1991: Behind the locality debate: deconstructing geography's dualisms. *Environment and Planning A* 23, 283–308.

- 1992: *Method in social science: a realist approach*. London: Hutchinson.
- 1993: Postmodernist thought in geography: a realist view. *Antipode* 25, 320–44.
- Sayers, S.** 1985: *Reality and reason: dialectic and the theory of knowledge*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Sayre-McCord, G.** 1988: Introduction: the many moral realisms. In Sayre-McCord, G., editor, *Essays on moral realism*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1–23.
- Schrader-Frechette, K.** 1981: *Environmental ethics*. Pacific Grove, CA: Boxwood Press.
- Seed, J.** 1985: Anthropocentrism. In Devall, B. and Sessions, G., editors, *Deep ecology: living as if nature mattered*, Salt Lake City, UT: Gibbs M. Smith, 243–46.
- Selznick, P.** 1992: *The moral commonwealth: social theory and the promise of community*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Shaefer, F.K.** 1953: Exceptionalism in geography: a methodological examination. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 43, 226–49.
- Simmons, D.A.** 1988: *Environmental ethics: a selected bibliography for the environmental professional*. Council of Planning Libraries Bibliography 213. Chicago, IL: Council of Planning Librarians.
- Simmons, I.G.** 1989: *Changing the face of the earth: culture, environment, history*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- 1993: *Interpreting nature: cultural constructions of the environment*. London: Routledge.
- Smith, D.M.** 1994: *Geography and social justice*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- 1995: Moral teaching in geography. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 19, 271–83.
- Smith, N.** 1990: *Uneven development: nature, capital, and the production of space*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Smith, P.** 1990: *Killing the spirit: higher education in America*. New York: Viking.
- Sorell, T.** 1991: *Scientism: philosophy and the infatuation with science*. London: Routledge.
- Stoddart, D.R.** 1987: To claim the high ground: geography for the end of the century. *Transactions, Institute of British Geographers* 12, 327–36.
- Stone, C.** 1987: *Earth and other ethics: the case for moral pluralism*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Sylvan, R. and Bennett, D.** 1994: *The greening of ethics: from anthropocentrism to deep-green theory*. Cambridge: White Horse Press.
- Taylor, P.J.** 1986: Locating the question of unity. *Transactions, Institute of British Geographers* 11, 443–48.
- Taylor, P.W.** 1986: *Respect for nature: a theory of environmental ethics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Thompson, J.** 1991: A refutation of environmental ethics. *Environmental Ethics* 12, 147–60.
- Turner, B.L. II, Clark, W.C., Kates, R.W., Richards, J.F., Mathews, J.T. and Meyer, W.B., editors**, 1990: *The earth as transformed by human action: global and regional changes in the biosphere over the past 300 years*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Turner, B.L., Kates, R.W. and Meyer, W.B.** 1995: *The earth as transformed by human action in retrospect*. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 85, 711–15.
- Unwin, T.** 1992: *The place of geography*. New York: Wiley.
- Varner, G.E.** 1991: No holism without pluralism. *Environmental Ethics* 13, 175–79.
- Wenz, P.S.** 1993: Minimal, moderate, and extreme moral pluralism. *Environmental Ethics* 15, 61–74.
- Weston, A.** 1985: Beyond intrinsic value: pragmatism in environmental ethics. *Environmental Ethics* 7, 321–39.
- 1992: *Toward better problems: new perspectives on abortion, animal rights, the environment, and justice*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Williams, B.** 1985: *Ethics and the limits of philosophy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wilshire, B.** 1990: *The moral collapse of the university: professionalism, purity, and alienation*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Zimmerman, M.E., editor**, 1993: *Environmental philosophy: from animal rights to radical ecology*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- 1994: *Contesting earth's future: radical ecology and postmodernity*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.