PERSPECTIVES

International Postgraduate Journal of Philosophy
Vol. 4 **Spring 2012**

Special Issue
Philosophy and Nature

UCD School of Philosophy

PERSPECTIVES

International Postgraduate Journal of Philosophy

Volume 4
Spring 2012

SPECIAL ISSUE:
Nature and Philosophy

EDITORS:
Tim Burns, Fergal McHugh,
Bart Zantvoort (UCD)

UCD School of Philosophy

PERSPECTIVES

International Postgraduate Journal of Philosophy

Acknowledgements

The Editors gratefully acknowledge the support of University College Dublin, School of Philosophy and UCD Philosophy Society.

Funding

UCD School of Philosophy

Design and Layout

Patrick McKay, Advantage Point Promotions

Thanks to

Maria Baghramian
Helen Kenny
Board of Reviewers
UCD School of Philosophy
UCD College of Human Sciences

Contents

SPECIAL ISSUE

Nature and Philosophy

EDITORIAL

ARTICLES

BOOK REVIEWS

EDITORIAL

It is our pleasure to welcome you to the fourth volume of *Perspectives: International Postgraduate Journal of Philosophy*. This journal is an annual, peer reviewed, postgraduate publication that features articles and book reviews from the analytic and continental traditions in philosophy. It is our goal to offer a platform for all students of philosophy who are in the early stages of their career, be they master's students, doctoral students or recent graduates, to publish their work, and gain experience with the peer-reviewing and editing process that is part of publishing in a serious academic journal.

Academic publishing can be a long, frustrating process; one that aspiring philosophers may feel is imposed on them for reasons alien to philosophical interest. Yet publication is essential to surviving and thriving in academic philosophy. Through being open to submissions from all areas of philosophy, and especially seeking out themes that are of interest to both continental and analytic styles, we hope to open up a space where discussions across boundaries can take place. At the same time, by holding submissions to the highest academic standards, the editors hope to promote careful thought, engaging writing, and ongoing philosophical dialogue.

Due to the financial crisis, local recession, and resulting budget cuts in education, last year's issue of *Perspectives* was not available in a printed version, published only online. This year, thanks to a new collaboration with the UCD Philosophy Society, we have been able to return to providing both an online and a printed version.

The theme of this year's journal is philosophy and nature. 'Nature' has been prominent in the news of late. In the last five years alone wildfires have destroyed millions of acres of forest in the western United States alone. In 2004 and again in 2011, tsunamis wreaked havoc in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. In 2010, Pakistan was deluged by monsoons and nearly one fifth of its land mass was flooded. In 2011, Australia was hit by a series of floods, and at one point, three quarters of the state of Queensland was under water. A scientific consensus has emerged that climate change is a reality; the climate is getting warmer and human actions are at least to some extent responsible for this. The tsunami in Japan and the resulting nuclear disaster in Fukushima is a powerful example of the occasionally disastrous interaction between nature and technology. Governments have tried to respond to these challenges, and some unprecedented and sometimes controversial measures have been taken, such as carbon emission trading, government targets for reducing emissions, and the drive for renewable energy sources. However, on the whole the political response to global

warming seems dominated by misinformation, scandals, squabbling, economic fear and disagreements about the distribution of responsibility and financial burdens. The challenges involved in furnishing an appropriate response are directly connected to the ways in which climate change (and environmental concerns more broadly), pose enormous questions for our relation to technology, knowledge, social justice, and political institutions. The editors of *Perspectives* can think of no better time to devote an issue to the problems engaging humanity in its relationship to nature.

When issuing the call for papers, we did not want to single out any particular area of this relationship. The philosophical examination of humanity's relationship with nature asks numerous questions beyond the scope of our culpability for extreme weather and global climate shifts. We invited articles addressing any number of issues in this relationship. We invited those who submitted papers to address issues like: What is nature? How do we know nature? What is the relationship between humanity and nature? Have science and the enlightenment gone too far in their disenchantment of nature? We also invited submissions from the fields of Deep Ecology, Environmental Ethics, Feminism and the Environment, Social Ecology, and Wilderness Research. We could not have been more pleased with the response we received.

In this volume Richmond Eustis takes up the implications of guided trips into the wilderness in his article "Buying the Wilderness Experience: the Commodification of the Sublime." He inquires whether or not it is possible for the consumer, on a purchased wilderness holiday, to have a genuine experience of the Kantian sublime. His analysis reveals the precarious role of the guide as one whose job it is to walk the fine line between providing a disingenuous, engineered experience and one that plays too closely with the very real dangers of the wilderness. In her article "Whether Earthquakes are Lovable: Knowing Nature in the Wake of Disaster", Molly Sturdevant challenges an overly optimistic reading of Spinoza in environmental philosophy. This view uses Spinoza's ethics to give a holistic account of our place in nature, but leaves out the implications of Spinoza's determinism, according to which nature is wholly indifferent to human values and suffering. She goes on to indicate the possibility of a Spinozistic environmental ethics which does justice to the relation between humans and nature which is both one of dependency and of mutual violence. In 'Climate Change and the Ethics of Individual Emissions: A Response to Sinnott-Armstrong' Ben Almassi seeks to counter Sinnot-Armstrong's claim individuals are not responsible for the emissions they produce. On Almassi's account Sinnot-Armstrong rejects the assignment of moral

responsibility to individuals on the basis that no defensible moral principle is available to ground this assignment. Almassi develops an account of the 'threshold-contribution principle' which he argues can both withstand Sinnot-Armstrong's objections and demonstrate how emissions are the individuals moral responsibility.

Finally, *Perspectives* is a work of collaboration between postgraduate editors, authors, and those who have been kind enough to anonymously peer review our articles. This is a voluntary gift and a labor of love. We would like to thank our contributors, our reviewers, and our publisher. We would also like to thank the UCD Philosophy Society and the UCD School of Philosophy for their support. We are proud to present to you the fourth edition of *Perspectives*.

The Editors,
Tim Burns
Fergal McHugh
Bart Zantvoort

Climate Change and the Ethics of Individual Emissions: A Response to Sinnott-Armstrong

Ben Almassi

University of Washington, USA

Abstract

Walter Sinnott-Armstrong argues, on the relationship between individual emissions and climate change, that "we cannot claim to know that it is morally wrong to drive a gas guzzler just for fun" or engage in other inessential emissions-producing individual activities. His concern is not uncertainty about the phenomenon of climate change, nor about human contribution to it. Rather, on Sinnott-Armstrong's analysis the claim of individual moral responsibility for emissions must be grounded in a defensible moral principle, yet no principle withstands scrutiny. I argue that the moral significance of individual emissions is obscured by this critique. I offer a moral principle, the *threshold-contribution principle*, capable of withstanding Sinnott-Armstrong's criticisms while also plausibly explaining what's wrong with gas-guzzling joyrides and other gratuitous emissions-producing individual acts.

Keywords: climate change; practical ethics; emissions; moral thresholds; probability

1. Introduction

Walter Sinnott-Armstrong has recently argued that, when it comes to the relationship between climate change and individual emissions, "we cannot claim to know that it is morally wrong to drive a gas guzzler just for fun" (2010, p. 343). The problem as he identifies it is not uncertainty over the phenomenon of global warming, nor over the fact of human contribution to warming, nor over the climate changes precipitated by warming. Neither is his conclusion unique to wasteful driving, which he picks as just one

illustrating example of inessential yet enjoyable emissions-producing activities. The problem on Sinnott-Armstrong's analysis is that such claims on the ethics of individual emissions must be grounded in a defensible moral principle, yet no such principle withstands critical scrutiny. Thus our moral attention should be directed not to individual emissions but governmental policy: "It is better to enjoy your Sunday driving while working to change the law so as to make it illegal for you to enjoy your Sunday driving" (Sinnott-Armstrong, 2010, p. 344).

On the need for better governmental policies and the value of individual participation in collective activism toward policy changes, I fully agree. Yet I think the moral significance of individual emissions- producing actions has been obscured by Sinnott-Armstrong's analysis. In this paper I articulate a moral principle concerning individual contributions to moral thresholds, a principle which I believe can survive Sinnott-Armstrong's criticisms while explaining what's wrong with gas-guzzling joyrides and other such gratuitous activities. This *threshold-contribution principle* should be appealing especially but not exclusively to those sympathetic to act consequentialist moral theories. I suggest characterizing the issue of human contribution to climate change as a *threshold problem*, or more precisely, a set of interrelated threshold problems. In this, the climate change problem Sinnott-Armstrong identifies shares structural similarities with other moral issues, such as those surrounding conventional animal agriculture and global trade. So understood, we may see how the threshold-contribution principle gives moral guidance for individual emissions-producing acts, and further, how it avoids the criticisms Sinnott-Armstrong levels against other principled attempts to identify moral responsibility for emissions and climate change.

2. Global Warming and Wasteful Driving

The present debate is not about the manufactured controversy over scientific disagreement over the phenomenon of global climate change, nor about collective human causal and moral responsibility for it.[1] Sinnott-Armstrong is happy to grant these points, along with the recognitions that climate change will disproportionately harm the poorest globally and that major governments (especially the United States) have special moral responsibility to work toward serious mitigation and adaptation (2010, pp. 332-333). Under dispute here is specifically what these grave contemporary and future realities mean for individual moral obligations. One might

have thought the answer was rather simple. Each of us is responsible for our individually produced emissions, which contribute to the collective phenomenon of human caused climate change. Thus each of us is morally obligated to reduce our individually produced emissions: perhaps entirely, perhaps as much as we reasonably can, perhaps to some equitable and sustainable level.

But, as Sinnott-Armstrong contends, this analysis is too simple. It's not at all clear that my individual actions that produce emissions should be understood as even partially causally and morally responsible for global climate change. To focus his discussion, Sinnott-Armstrong invites us to consider the example of *wasteful driving*: not relatively essential trips to work or the store but simply afternoon pleasure drives, "where nothing so important is gained…All that is gained is pleasure" (2010, p. 333). Focusing further, he says, let's specifically consider pleasure drives in gas-guzzling sport utility vehicles –not because other cars are unavailable but simply for the attendant feelings of power and excitement. Now SUV joyrides produce emissions and emissions cause global warming, yet we cannot conclude from this that an individual instance of SUV joyriding contributes causally to global warming and climate change, Sinnott-Armstrong argues. Far from it:

The point is not that harms do not occur from global warming. I have already admitted that they do. The point is also not that my exhaust is overkill, like poisoning someone who is already dying from poison…And the point is not that the harm I cause is imperceptible…Instead, the point is simply that *my individual joy ride does not cause global warming*, climate change, or any of their resulting harms, at least directly. [Sinnott-Armstrong 2010, p. 336, emphasis added]

To be clear, in the imagined case Walter's SUV is not emission-free nor burning some special fuel. It emits the same gases other cars do. While they are not the only sources of emissions (we cannot forget airplanes, power-plants, other industry, etc.[2]) automobile emissions taken collectively are an undeniably significant causal contributor to global warming. Sinnott-Armstrong does not deny this; indeed, he cites governmental restrictions on auto emissions as an example of worthwhile policy change. His claim is that this individual joyride has no causal role in climate change: not just a very small role, not just a role that's very hard to perceive, but no causal role at all.

For this claim he offers two interrelated arguments. The first argument is that an individual joyride is neither necessary nor sufficient for global warming. After all, he notes, "global warming will still occur even if I do

not drive just for fun. Moreover, even if I do drive a gas guzzler just for fun for a long time, global warming will not occur unless lots of other people also expel greenhouse gases" (2010, p. 334). Generally speaking, he says, an act which is neither necessary nor sufficient for production of some harm is not properly identified as a cause of that harm. Sinnott-Armstrong recognizes exceptions to this general rule, however: that is, cases in which an act is properly understood as a cause of harm, though it is neither necessary nor sufficient for that harm. As one such case, we are invited to imagine a macabre scenario in which he (Walter) joins five people pushing a car off a cliff with someone locked inside, where by hypothesis this only requires three people pushing.

Notice that the car-pushing scenario is structurally similar to a hypothetical scenario offered by Derek Parfit in his analysis of "mistakes in moral mathematics" in *Reasons and Persons*. Parfit imagines joining three other people in a rescue of 100 trapped miners: by hypothesis four people are needed to lift the miners to safety, and also by hypothesis, a fifth person is waiting to join the rescue effort if he (Derek) were to go elsewhere. In this case, Parfit argues, his "share of the total" would not be 20 lives saved, but rather nothing, since the four other rescuers would have succeeded without him. "When some group together harm or benefit other people, this group is the *smallest* group of whom it is true that, if they had all acted differently, the other people would not have been harmed, or benefited." (1984, p.71). Likewise the smallest relevant group in Sinnott-Armstrong's car-pushing scenario is four people. Walter's pushing is neither necessary nor sufficient to harm the passenger - yet Sinnott-Armstrong allows that his pushing is still part of the cause of the harm. Why? He explains that despite the lack of necessity of sufficiency, Walter's act had a causal role because i) he *intended* to cause the harm and ii) the act was *unusual* (2010, p. 335). But neither of these conditions is met by the joyrider, he says, who intends no harm and whose SUV-bound gas-guzzling afternoon jaunt is "not unusual." So the joyride is not a cause of global warming, Sinnott-Armstrong concludes, because it fails to meet the necessity or sufficiency conditions or his proposed criteria for exceptional cases.

I will turn to Sinnott-Armstrong's second argument against wasteful driving causing global warming presently, but let's stay with this argument a bit longer. Intentionality and unusualness are offered as two conditions for proper attribution of causal responsibility in the absence of necessity and sufficiency. "When I intend a harm to occur," Sinnott-Armstrong explains, "my intention provides a reason to pick my act out of all the other background circumstances and identify it as a cause" (2010, p. 335).

To illustrate his point, consider a variation on the car-pushing scenario. Imagine that Walter joins five people pushing the car, but does so without realizing quite what's happening; perhaps he fails to see the passenger inside, is deep in conversation with another pusher, and so starts pushing in an absent-minded, distracted way. We may say he intends to push but does not intend to harm the passenger. In that case, as I understand the proposed analysis, Walter would not be part of the cause of the harm to the passenger.

Perhaps, however, the unusualness condition is intended to cover cases like this variation on the car-pushing scenario. The condition of unusual action seems rather peculiar: why does being *usual* undermine being causally responsible? Sinnott-Armstrong clarifies that by "unusual" action he means that most people would not act that way. In circumstances where one's act is neither necessary nor sufficient for a particular harm, the fact that most people would perform that act undermines causal responsibility in at least two ways. First, we are invited to consider the analogous case of matches. According to Sinnott-Armstrong we do not ascribe causal responsibility for a match lighting to the oxygen, but to friction, since the oxygen is *usually present*. (While he does not use this language, one might describe the friction as the proximate cause and the presence of oxygen as a remote cause of the match lighting.) Second, he argues, in moral cases we have a special efficacy-based reason not to ascribe causation to usual acts. Here I quote the argument at length:

Labeling an act a cause of harm and, on this basis, holding its agent responsible for that harm by blaming the agent or condemning his act is normally counterproductive when that agent is acting no worse than most other people. If people who are doing no worse than average are condemned, then people who are doing much worse than average will suspect that they will still be subject to condemnation even if they start doing better and even if they improve enough to bring themselves up to the average. We should distribute blame (and praise) so as to give incentives for the worst offenders to get better. The most efficient and effective way of doing this is to reserve our condemnation for those who are well below average. This means that we should not hold people responsible for harms by calling their acts causes of harms when their acts are not at all unusual, assuming that they did not intend the harm. [2010, 335]

I must admit I find this line of reasoning rather problematic. For one thing, it elides any distinction to be made between holding someone causally responsible, holding the person morally responsible, blaming him or her, and public condemnation. It is clear that Sinnott-Armstrong

regards the identification of an act as a cause of harm as the *basis* on which the agent will be held responsible, and that the *way* he or she will be held responsible is by blaming him or her or condemning the act. Note that as stated, the causal label, the holding responsible, the blaming and condemning are collectively characterized as counterproductive. Yet there are useful distinctions to be made between these steps that have not been addressed here.

Further, this argument assumes without citation a fairly complicated social-psychology of agent response to the collective distribution of praise and blame. Moral condemnation may come in varying strength, so that the prospect of *significantly reduced* condemnation may in fact motivate worst offenders to improve their behavior. Further still, the argument assumes that our guiding priority for distributing moral blame and attributing causal responsibility should be to encourage worst offenders to improve their behavior. This goal certainly may be among our moral priorities, but should we take it to be the central or most important one? It seems me that much will depend here on particular features varying across cases. In some cases, harm may be reduced more significantly by improving behavior on behalf of "the average" and attempting to instigate the "worst offenders" may be wasted effort.

One thing I find worrisome about the unusualness argument is its single-minded priority of incentives for those most contributing to harm and neglect of those most experiencing that harm. I take this to be especially salient to the issue of anthropogenic global climate change. As Sinnott-Armstrong recognizes (2010, p. 332), the global distribution of harms and benefits of emissions is enormously imbalanced.[3] It seems perverse to deny present and future victims of climate change even a basic acknowledgement of partial causal responsibility by those who enjoy individual emissions-producing activities like joyriding, on the grounds that this acknowledgement will fail to incentivize better behavior by the most privileged.

Finally, by what measure are gas-guzzling SUV joyrides properly characterized as "not unusual"? Certainly in the early twenty-first century there are places where SUV ownership is fairly common and places where it is quite rare; certainly there are places where SUV joyriding is rather frequent and places where it's incredibly atypical. Gas-guzzling SUV joyrides are "not unusual" only assuming a very narrow reference class limited to the global rich. One might argue that many SUV joyriders do not *see* their actions as unusual compared to local folks, folks like them; yet the atmospheric effects of our emissions are not limited to those nearby but decidedly global, and globally such rides are uncommon indeed.

Let us now turn to the second argument on individual responsibility, individual emissions, and climate change:

[T]he harms of global warming result from the massive quantities of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Greenhouse gases (such as carbon dioxide and water vapor) are perfectly fine in small quantities. They help plants grow. The problem emerges only when there is too much of them. But my joy ride by itself does not cause the massive quantities that are harmful. [2010, p. 335]

Here Sinnott-Armstrong offers the contrasting case of cyanide poured into a river then drunk by someone downstream who subsequently becomes ill and ides. In the causal chain of global warming, "no particular molecules from my car cause global warming in the direct way that particular molecules of the poison do cause the drinker's death" (2010, p. 335). An SUV joyride is not like pouring cyanide upstream in a river, he suggests, but more like pouring a quart of water upstream in a river already flooding.

It is true that emissions are not inherently harmful and true that one joyride in a really inefficient SUV does not emit a quantity of gases that would be harmful *on its own*. Indeed, we can recognize that in some contexts the emissions of a particular Sunday afternoon drive *could* have positive environmental effects; in such contexts it would be wrong to identify that drive as (even partially) causally responsible for harm. Does this show that similar drives in our *actual* context (even partially) cause no harm? I am skeptical: a variation on Sinnott-Armstrong's cyanide story may illustrate why. Just as greenhouse gases can be fine and even environmentally beneficial in sufficiently small amounts, the same is true of cyanide. After all, it is naturally occurring and safe *in sufficiently small quantities*. A single molecule does not cause the drinker's death *on its own*. The contrast between emissions and cyanide is a difference of degree, then, not a difference in kind.

Further response to this second argument may be drawn from Parfit's discussion of mistakes in moral mathematics. Even in cases where a single act by itself does not cause a harm, Parfit argues, "this act may be wrong because it is one of a set of acts that together harm other people" (1984, p.70). Now, automotive greenhouse gas emissions in our contemporary context fit the description of a "set of acts" that together harm other people. So on a Parfitian analysis, one joyride may be a part of just such a set of collectively harmful acts.

I return to Sinnott-Armstrong's analogy of the quart of water poured into an already flooding river in Section 4. But at this point let us recall the larger point of Sinnott-Armstrong's arguments on individual responsibility

for climate change. Direct causal responsibility may not be necessary for moral obligation, but it is a plausible basis for a moral principle, which Sinnott-Armstrong identifies as the *harm principle*: "We have a moral obligation not to perform an act that causes harm to others" (2010, p. 334). The two arguments rehearsed and criticized above are intended to block application of this principle to wasteful driving by denying causal attribution of harm. Here I think Sinnott-Armstrong is right to address the harm principle in detail, as it is both intuitively plausible and likely underlies many environmentalists' moral opposition to emissions-producing activities like SUV joyrides. Yet there are alternatives to this principle as articulated, only some of which Sinnott-Armstrong has argued against. In the next section I offer *the threshold-contribution principle* as a plausible principle not entirely equivalent to those principles which Sinnott-Armstrong considers and rejects.

3. A Probabilistic Account of Threshold Issues

I think it is fruitful to recognize the discussion of wasteful driving and climate change rehearsed here is structurally similar to *individual causal impotence* objections frequently raised against consequentialist arguments for ethical vegetarianism or consumer ethics. Having identified some particular agricultural or labor practice as morally better than others, many of us take ourselves to have a moral obligation to support the better practice. Now "support" can be understood in many ways, but a common interpretation is that for some good practice X, *supporting X* means *contributing to bringing about X*. Moral commitments to vegetarianism, fair trade, and other practices are often grounded this way: specifically in a moral evaluation of an individual act as right to the extent that it aids in undermining worse practices and supporting better ones, and wrong to the extent that it supports worse and undermines better ones.

Attempts to justify individual dietary and consumer acts in this way have met with criticism similar to Sinnott-Armstrong's analysis of individual emissions and climate change: namely, the fact that individual purchases rarely if ever really seem to yield positive (or negative) effects on the good (or bad) agricultural or labor practices we seek to change. This problem is raised by Regan (1980) and others against Singer's (1980) utilitarian defense of ethical vegetarianism.[4] Such critics argue that while utilitarians may oppose and condemn contemporary animal uses, their theoretical basis doesn't warrant *individual* changes. This problem is not unique to

vegetarianism but extends to anywhere a lag exists between individual actions taken and effects actually registered.

For his part, Singer responds to the charge of causal impotence against utilitarian vegetarianism by appeal to the notion of *thresholds*. With the poultry industry as his example, Singer offers this argument:

[B]ut there must be some point at which the number of vegetarians makes a difference to the size of the poultry industry. There must be a series of thresholds, hidden by the market system of distribution, which determine how many factory farms will be in existence. In this case one more person becoming a vegetarian will make no difference at all, unless that individual, added to the others who are already vegetarians, reduces demand below the threshold level at which a new factory farm would have started… [1980, p. 335]

Singer thus concludes, "[a]s long as I have no idea whether or not my own decision to go vegetarian is the decision that takes the demand for chickens below the threshold the strength of this reason for being a vegetarian is unaffected" (1980, p. 336).

In the spirit of Singer's insight, I want to articulate here a distinctly *probabilistic* approach to the threshold issue applicable to Sinnott-Armstrong's challenge on emissions and global climate change. To this end, let us consider an individual consumer act (*i*) that may or may not reach some relevant threshold (*t*) that effects some concrete morally positive change in production and thereby promotes the good in a tangible way. The basic idea, then, is that the individual act in question should be performed just in case, and all other things being equal,

$p(t|i) > p(t)$

[positive threshold]

that is, when the probability the threshold is reached is increased given the performance of the act. The operative conception of probability here is *rational subjective probability*, such that p(t|i) is a measure of how likely we should reasonably expect it to be, given all the evidence available to us, that the threshold will be reached given that the act is performed. Along these lines, p(t) expresses how likely we reasonably should expect it be that the threshold will be reached otherwise.

The threshold-contribution principle applied just as straightforwardly for morally negative thresholds, that is, a level *t* at which some moral harm is brought about. In this case an individual action *i* should be performed just in case, and all other things being equal,

$p(t|i) < p(t)$

[negative threshold]

We can also apply a variation on the threshold-contribution principle to comparative moral evaluation of the different potential actions. So in choosing between the performance of two individual acts, *i1* and *i2*, concerning some morally positive threshold *t,* then all other things being equal and given the evidence available to us, we should perform whichever action makes reaching the positive threshold more probable than would the other. So, for example, we should perform *i1* over *i2* just in case $p(t|i1) > p(t|i2)$. Likewise, concerning some morally negative threshold *t*, we should perform *i1* over *i2* just in case $p(t|i1) < p(t|i2)$.

Now one might have thought an individual act should be performed if doing so *will* reach the desired threshold, or if one should *reasonably expect* (given the evidence) that doing so will reach the threshold. While they might be sufficient conditions for action, however, as necessary conditions they fail to account for a wide range of cases. Consider, for example, many everyday prudential actions in automotive care: changing brake pads, tires, windshield wipers, and so on. We do these things not because each automotive safety precaution will avoid an accident or even because we reasonably expect each precaution will do so. Rather, precautions should be taken because they increase the rational subjective probability of avoiding accidents. Turning from prudential to moral reasoning, we may consider reckless and negligent actions of all sorts. It's no moral defense of merrily tossing televisions off a high hotel balcony into an atrium below to insist after the fact that no one was hurt; what makes such actions morally wrong is that they increase the rational subjective probability of such injury or damage. Or consider dining out, ordering a vegetarian option on the basis of one's concern for animal welfare under conventional contemporary agriculture. On the threshold-contribution principle I should choose a vegetarian option not because I know this meal will cause the restaurant to buy less meat from the wholesaler, improving particular animals' welfare (I will rarely if ever actually know *that*) but because the evidence available to me suggests that ordering this way *improves the odds* of that positive outcome. The basic idea of the threshold-contribution principle, then, is that an act is right (all other things being equal and given the evidence available to the actor) because it makes reaching the desired threshold more likely. As long as $p(t|i) > p(t)$, we have moral reason in favor of performing the individual action, or analogously for negative thresholds, moral reason in favor of refraining from performing the individual action, all other things being equal.

To be clear, the threshold-contribution principle is offered as one principle to be weighed with others: the *ceteris paribus* clause of the

principle allows that given countervailing moral considerations, all other things sometimes may not be equal. Furthermore, the principle is built to accommodate uncertain cases, in which we have evidence of varying strength about how individual actions contribute to collective effects, though we may not know for sure. I take it that many real-world moral problems are like this. By contrast, in both Sinnott-Armstrong's car-pushing scenario and Parfit's miner-rescue scenario, the actor knows just what will happen if he joins in and what will happen if he refrains. So the threshold-contribution principle will be neutral toward Derek assisting with the rescue, since by hypothesis the probability of the morally positive threshold (one hundred lives saved) being reached in this case is 1, regardless of Derek's action, as a fifth rescuer would join instead. Likewise, the principle would not identify Walter joining in pushing the car as wrong because as the case is constructed the probability of the morally negative threshold (the passenger's fate) being reached is already 1. In a more epistemically realistic version of the car-pushing scenario, however, the principle would give a different answer. Perhaps Walter has pretty good evidence that the four men pushing the car are all fully prepared to push it off the cliff: still, he cannot discount the possibility that one or more of them *may* change his mind, or the possibility that Walter joining the effort may bolster each man's confidence to continue their cruel act, or the possibility that Walter could by other means persuade or force them to stop. Given the evidence available to Walter in real-world scenarios, the probability of the terrible cliff-threshold being reached without his assistance is something short of 1, and that probability should be expected to increase were he to help push. As such, the threshold-contribution principle would clearly identify Walter's pushing as morally wrong.

4. Climate Change Thresholds

Climate scientists widely agree that human activities have had a "discernable" (Oreskes & Conway 2010, p. 205) influence on global climate; given the protracted nature of the phenomenon, this effect will be registered by future generations even if we ceased emissions from this day forward (Gardiner 2011, pp. 32-35). In a real sense, then, climate change is happening and will happen regardless of whether Walter takes his gas-guzzling joyride. Yet it would be profoundly misleading to describe human contribution to climate change as an all-or-nothing affair. When I characterize global climate change as a threshold issue, I do not mean to

suggest that it is a single threshold ("human influence on climate change, or none") that our individual emissions contribute to crossing. It would be more fruitful, rather, to envision a series of interrelated thresholds, like several rungs on a climatological ladder. Understood this way, we may better appreciate the bounded yet nonzero potential threshold effects of our individual emissions-producing activities.

One single emissions-producing act such as an afternoon drive may not produce enough emissions to cross a climatologically negative threshold *entirely on its own*; likewise refraining from one such act and doing something else may not reduce emissions enough to achieve a climatologically positive threshold entirely on its own.[5] Even if we consider collectively all emissions-producing actions that individuals can perform or refrain from performing within existing global, national, and local institutional structures, the climatologically negative and especially the climatologically positive thresholds we could cross together would be limited.[6] Yet with these restrictions in mind, we might appreciate the potential of individual actions to *contribute* to crossing morally and climatologically significant thresholds.

When Walter contemplates going for a gas-guzzling joyride, what does he know? By hypothesis he knows this drive is not *important*: it is "not necessary to cure depression or calm aggressive impulses," (Sinnott-Armstrong 2010, p. 333), but just one source of pleasure among many. The emissions produced during this drive are a clear case of *luxury emissions,* to use Henry Shue's language (1993). Walter also knows that, taken together, automotive emissions significantly causally contribute to climate change. He knows that while one drive on its own may not cross any climatologically negative or positive threshold, still there is some quantity of total automotive emissions produced or withheld from being produced that would cross some negative and positive thresholds, respectively. Finally, and crucially, he knows that in contemplating this gas-guzzling joyride he is not the only person with the freedom to decide whether or not to perform an emissions-producing action. Things would be different if everybody else's actions were predetermined and known to Walter and if he had perfect understanding of climate change: then he would know exactly which climatologically significant threshold would be crossed or not, regardless of his own individual action. But in reality, the best he can do is to predict others' actions based on the evidence available to him with a healthy appreciation for the fallibility of these predictions.

Given all of this, what moral guidance does Walter receive from the threshold-contribution principle articulated in the previous section? Recall

that on this principle, all other things being equal, Walter's act is morally right just in case it makes it more likely (given the evidence available to him) that a positive threshold will be crossed and/or less likely that that a negative threshold will be crossed; his act is morally wrong just in case it makes it more likely that a negative threshold will be crossed and/or less likely that a positive threshold will be crossed. (What matters here is not that *Walter* crosses these thresholds, but that they *are* crossed.) To put the point in rational subjective probabilistic terms, as long as $p(t|i) > p(t)$, for individual action (or inaction) i and positive threshold t, there is a moral reason in favor of that action or inaction. In case of the contemplated joyride, I would argue that the threshold-contribution principle recommends against this and similar such inessential individual emissions-producing actions. By taking a gas-guzzling Sunday drive, Walter will be increasing the rational subjective probability that one or more climatologically negative threshold(s) will be crossed.

What makes individual, gratuitous emissions-producing acts morally wrong is not limited to the direct effects of those actions but also includes their indirect effects. Specifically, our actions can be *contagious*: by performing one gratuitous emissions-producing action, I may thereby make other emissions-producing actions more likely than they would otherwise have been. My indirect effects may include role-modeling effects on others' behavior (both constructive role-modeling of good acts and destructive role-modeling of bad ones), but also cascading effects on my own future behavior too. The fact that I treat myself to an inessential SUV joyride *this* Sunday may make it harder to resist taking similar joyrides *next* Sunday, and so on. In this way an individual act may increase the probability of an established pattern of behavior that further increases the probability of one or more climatologically negative thresholds being reached.

Recall Sinnott-Armstrong's image of individual emissions as a quart of water poured into an already flooding river. To the extent that this metaphor invites the reaction that the quart makes no difference since the flood will happen anyway, it's thereby misleading in the sense discussed above of global climate change as an all-or-nothing, single-threshold affair. A little reflection, however, reminds us that a flooding river isn't always a single threshold disaster either. Even as the initial threshold of overrunning its banks is quite significant, the further issue of *just how much* (how high and far) the river floods the surrounding area is significant too. Another quart of water won't affect the crossing of the already-met initial threshold (overrunning the riverbank), yet still its small contribution makes more likely the crossing of *additional* thresholds (overcoming the first row

of sandbags, or damaging the basements of buildings even further from the river, and so on). In this way the analogy with individual emissions works, though perhaps not as Sinnott-Armstrong intends. While the fact of anthropogenic global climate change in the coming decades is clear, the *extent* of this contribution and its effects still can be affected for better or worse; our further individual emissions-producing activities increase the likelihood of crossing these additional thresholds of climate change.

At this point it is natural to consider whether Sinnott-Armstrong's criticisms of other moral principles that recommend against wasteful driving properly extend to the threshold-contribution principle as well. On my assessment, those candidates closest to the threshold-contribution principle among those Sinnott-Armstrong entertains the *risk principle* and the *contribution principle*, respectively defined as follows:

The risk principle: We have a moral obligation not to increase the risk of harms to other people.

The contribution principle: We have a moral obligation not to make problems worse. (2010, p. 337)

According to Sinnott-Armstrong, neither of these principles actually yields the desired result for climate change and individual moral responsibility for emissions. The main problem with the first, he argues, is that an individual instance of wasteful driving *doesn't* make the problem of climate change worse: "there is no individual person or animal who will be worse off if I drive than if I do not drive my gas-guzzler just for fun" (2010, p. 337). Likewise, the risk principle holds in *some* cases–Sinnott-Armstrong grants that drunk driving is morally wrong "because it risks harm to others, even if the drunk driver gets home safely without hurting anyone" (2010, p. 337)–but wasteful driving is not one of them. The difference, he argues, is that the victims of particular drunk drivers are easily identifiable while any such victims of my wasteful driving are not. Furthermore, he says, if the risk principle were true it would be too strong, "unbelievably restrictive" (2010, p. 337). *Anything* we do that emits even tiny amounts of greenhouse gases (like exercising or boiling water) would seem to increase the risk of harm to other people and thus violate the principle. This absurdity, he concludes, gives us further reason to reject the risk principle.

Initially these criticisms of the contribution and risk principles may seem to extend successfully to my threshold-contribution principle, but I think we should resist that assumption. Recall that the threshold-contribution principle asks us to refrain not only from actions that actually, concretely end up making a problem worse, but actions that increase the rational subjective probability of making a problem worse. *Even if* Sinnott-

Armstrong is right that Walter's joyride ends up making no individual creature worse off (though how this can be known and asserted certainly is far from clear), nevertheless given the evidence available to him as he contemplates his action, taking the joyride and producing its attendant emissions *increases the chances* that some such harmful outcome comes to pass.

Does the alleged disanalogy between wasteful and drunk driving hold for the threshold-contribution principle as Sinnott-Armstrong suggests for the risk principle? It is true that individual actions increasing the rational subjective probability of climatologically negative thresholds crossed often fail to have *easily identifiable* victims. But consider the example of drunk driving again. While victims of drunk driving are fairly easily identifiable *when it causes harm* (e.g., when there is actually an accident), Sinnott-Armstrong agrees that drunk driving is not morally wrong *only* when it causes harm. This means that drunk driving is wrong *even when* it has no easily identifiable victim: it seems *ad hoc* to insist that drunk driving is *always* wrong because it *sometimes* has an easily identifiable victim which makes it importantly disanalogous to wasteful driving. These considerations, I suggest, should make us doubt the weight of moral disanalogy drawn between drunk and wasteful driving on the moral relevance of easily identifiable victims.

Finally, would application of the threshold-contribution principle to individual emissions be overly restrictive, as Sinnott-Armstrong contends for the risk principle? As I see it, the threshold-contribution principle allows a workable distinction between exercising and boiling water for cooking or purification on the one hand and gas-guzzling joyrides and other inessential individual emissions-producing activities on the other. The relevant distinction here is not between significant and insignificant risks or increases in risk,[7] but between important and unimportant activities. The *ceteris paribus* clause of the principle allows for distinctions of this sort: we are not morally obliged to refrain from boiling water – for purification, to cook, not just to idly watch the bubbles roll – because then all others things are not equal. Now the distinction between important and unimportant activities is not always clear to be sure, and I will not pretend to offer a general analysis of the distinction here. But recall that Sinnott-Armstrong's project proceeds from the assumption of this very distinction; he attends to wasteful driving specifically because he takes it to be paradigmatic of emissions-producing acts in which nothing important is gained. The drive has no purpose but pleasure, and pleasure can be had in other ways. To the extent that Sinnott-Armstrong's project presumes a

workable distinction between important and unimportant activities, then, using the threshold-contribution principle to identify what makes *just such* emissions-producing activities morally wrong should be able to draw upon that workable distinction too.

5. Conclusions

I think we have good reason to be skeptical toward Sinnott-Armstrong's denial of individual moral obligation to reduce emissions.[8] Specifically, I have questioned the basis of his unusualness condition for proper attribution of causal responsibility, as well as its alleged inapplicability to gas-guzzling Sunday afternoon joyrides and other individual inessential emissions-producing activities of the global rich. I also have challenged the intended contrast between greenhouse gases and cyanide and the comparison of our individual emissions with a quart of water added to an already flooded river. Furthermore, through my threshold-contribution principle I have offered an explanation of what makes wasteful driving and other inessential emitting activities in the face of global climate change morally wrong – attributions of direct causal responsibility notwithstanding. We have a moral obligation not to take the gas-guzzling joyrides Sinnott-Armstrong describes, because (all other things being equal, given the evidence available to us) doing so makes crossing climatologically negative thresholds more likely and crossing climatologically positive thresholds less likely.

When it comes to moral evaluation and response to global climate change, some may argue that we should attend to institutional structural change rather than worrying about individual emission-producing acts. This is surely the implication of Sinnott-Armstrong's closing remark that "It is better to enjoy your Sunday driving while working to change the law so as to make it illegal for you to enjoy your Sunday driving" (2010, 344). The idea is that SUV joy-riding Walter should join others working for social change where lasting progress can be made. Along similar lines, others may urge that multinational corporations and powerful governments should be properly identified as the agents morally responsible for working to adapt and mitigate global climate change, not individual joy-riders. Both arguments contain key insights. Moral responsibility for global warming and accompanying climate change should be shouldered not by individual people alone but powerful governmental and industrial bodies too; further, we shouldn't retreat to our individual actions as moral substitute for assisting in collective action for systematic change. Yet both arguments also invite false dilemmas. Individual action is no substitute for social activism toward

better structures; neither does the need for activism make our individual emissions morally irrelevant.

References

Almassi, B. 2011. The consequences of individual consumption: A defense of threshold arguments for vegetarianism and consumer ethics. *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 28(4): 396-411.

Aufrecht, M. 2012. Climate change and structural emissions: Moral obligations at the individual level. Forthcoming in the *International Journal of Applied Philosophy*.

Chartier, G. 2006. On the threshold argument against consumer meat purchases. *Journal of Social Philosophy* 37(2): 233-249.

Gardiner, S. 2011. *The perfect moral storm*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Garrett, J. 2007. Utilitarianism, vegetarianism, and human health: A response to the causal impotence objection. *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 24(3): 223-237.

Hartzell, L. 2011. Responsibility for emissions. *Ethics, Policy, and Environment* 14(1): 15-17.

Hiller, A. 2011. Morally significant effects of ordinary individual actions. *Ethics, Policy, and Environment* 14(1): 19-21.

Matheny, G. 2002. Expected utility, contributory causation, and vegetarianism. *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 19(3): 293-297.

Nolt, J. 2011. How harmful are the average American's greenhouse gases? *Ethics, Policy, and Environment* 14(1): 3-10.

Nolt, J. 2012. Greenhouse gas emission and the domination of posterity. In *The ethics of global climate change,* ed. D. Arnold (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011): 60-76.

Oreskes, N. 2005. The scientific consensus in climate change. *Science* 306.

Oreskes, N. & E.M. Conway. 2010. *Merchants of doubt*. New York: Bloomsbury Press.

Parfit, D. 1984. *Reasons and persons.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Regan, T. 1980. Utilitarianism, vegetarianism, and animal rights. *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 9(4): 305-324.

Schinkel, A. 2011. Causal and moral responsibility for (the harmful consequences of) climate change. *Ethics, Policy, and Environment* 14(1): 35-37.

Shue, H. 1993. Subsistence emissions and luxury emissions. *Law and*

Policy 15(1): 39-60.

Shue, H. 1999/2010. Global environment and international inequality. Originally in *International Affairs* 75(3): 531-545. Reprinted in *Climate ethics*, eds. S. Gardiner, S. Caney, D. Jamieson, & H. Shue (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

Singer, P. 1980. Utilitarianism and vegetarianism. *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 9(4): 325-337.

Sinnott-Armstrong, W. 2005/2010. It's not *my* fault: Global warming and individual moral obligations. In *Perspectives on climate change,* eds. W. Sinnott-Armstrong & R. Howarth (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2005): 221-253. Reprinted in *Climate ethics*, eds. S. Gardiner, S. Caney, D. Jamieson, & H. Shue (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010): 332-346.

(Endnotes)

1 For further discussion of these issues, see Oreskes 2005, Oreskes & Conway 2010, and Gardiner 2011.

2 Hartzell 2011 emphasizes that corporations and states, not just individuals separately or collectively, should be recognized as bearing responsibility for emissions as well.

3 See also Shue 1993, Shue 2010, and Gardiner 2011 on the unequal distribution of harms and benefits of emissions as a global justice issue.

4 For various versions of the individual causal impotence objection, see Regan 1980, Chariter 2006, and Garrett 2007. For various responses to the objection, see Singer 1980, Matheny 2002, and Almassi 2011.

5 See, however, Hiller 2011 for a careful critical discussion of the effects of ordinary individual actions.

6 See Aufrecht 2011 for an adept analysis of emissions and climate change as a structural problem.

7 See Parfit 1984, pp.74-75, for its adept discussion of the irrationality of dismissing "tiny" chances.

8 For further critical engagement with Sinnott-Armstrong on individual responsibility for climate change, see Nolt 2011, Nolt 2012, and Schinkel 2011.

Buying the Wilderness Experience: The Commodification of The Sublime

Richmond m. Eustis jr.

Nicholls State University

Abstract

This study examines some of the implications of guided wilderness trips against the theoretical framework of the sublime as Kant sets out in the Critique of Judgment. In particular, it focuses on the role of professional guides as providers of distancing protection from wild and dangerous nature—at the same time as they attempt to facilitate a possible awe-inspiring encounter with nature in its wild otherness. This exercise of power by capital makes the guide an odd locus of power dynamics—at once the site of complicity and resistance. Guides help generate revenue for industry, but they also may use their position to critique industry's fable of human domination over nature.

Keywords: Kant, Critique of Judgment, wilderness, sublime, outdoor industry

The concept of wilderness drags with it a bundle of sometimes contradictory connotations. It is at once a realm of chaos and danger, a blank slate ripe for development, a proving ground, a purifying realm. It is the place of the vision quest, the place the locals warn outsiders away from, the place surveyors scrutinize for development. In Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, it is the place where we might encounter intuitions that delight us with their beauty or stun us with their sublimity. Much of Kant's third critique examines the subject's encounter with nature. Especially in his discussion of the sublime, Kant explores themes with important implications for the way in which many people experience the outdoors today. What once was an individual or communal experience increasingly is commodified as a service.

BUYING THE WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE: THE COMMODIFICATION OF THE SUBLIME

As cities sprawl and undeveloped land dwindles, the demand for access to remaining rugged territory has increased.[1] Much of the demand comes from those who have not developed sufficient outdoor skill to attempt backcountry ventures wisely on their own, so they require trained guides. The companies that provide these guides can find the trade lucrative. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, outfitters and guide companies in the United States generate $289 billion annually in sales and services.[2] The OIA's study comprised a few practices some consider extreme—such as whitewater kayaking, mountain biking and telemark skiing—but also included bird watching, RV camping and fishing as part of the revenue pool. Of that total, outdoor services (guiding, entertainment, instruction and food, among other services) generated $243 billion. With the increased demand for these kinds of activities, the market for guiding companies has grown as well, and the number of self-guided trips into the backcountry has become a smaller percentage of the total number of people venturing into the woods, up the mountains, or on to the ocean. More people are experiencing nature through the prism of a carefully planned trip, with a full market apparatus of training, salaries, and especially insurance backing the venture.

This study examines some of the implications of the guided wilderness trip against the theoretical framework of the sublime as Kant sets out in his *Critique of Judgment*. In particular, it focuses on the role of paid professional guides as providers of distancing protection from wild and dangerous nature—at the same time as they attempt to facilitate a possible awe-inspiring encounter with nature in its wild otherness. To determine whether an experience of the sublime in a Kantian sense even is possible on such a venture, this analysis moves through a few stages. First, there is a brief discussion of Kant's aesthetic system, with an extended discussion of the aspects of the sublime as they bear on the modern wilderness experience—a disinterested encounter with, in Paul Crowther's definition, "a set of items which, through the possession or suggestion of perceptually, imaginatively or emotionally overwhelming properties, succeeds in rendering the scope of some human capacity vivid to the senses" (Crowther, 162). Then it takes up the issue of the guide as mediator of one's encounter with the wild. That is, as the guide manages encounters with nature, there is the possibility of the sublime experience, but only insofar as the guide walks a fine line between an obviously engineered experience and one subject to the very real dangers and discomforts of the wilderness.

The Sublime, Natural and Unnatural

Kant's definition of the sublime is complicated: "The sublime can be described thus: it is an object (of nature) the *presentation of which determines the mind to think of nature's inability to attain to a presentation of ideas*" (Kant, 268).[3] So, in order to have the sublime at all, there must be a manifold perceivable in some way. Then there must be an effort to present the intuited manifold and then a failure on the part of the imagination. Then there must be a realization that while the subject can present an idea through reason nature cannot.

> True sublimity must be sought only in the mind of the judging person, not in the natural object the judging of which prompts this mental attunement. Indeed, who would want to call sublime such things as shapeless mountain masses piled on one another in wild disarray, with their pyramids of ice, or the gloomy raging sea? But the mind feels elevated in its own judgment of itself when it contemplates these without concern for their form and abandons itself to the imagination and to a reason that has come to be connected with it—though quite without a determinate purpose, and merely expanding it—and finds all the might of the imagination still inadequate to reason's ideas. (Kant, 256)

Although from time to time Kant refers to objects as sublime, he is using a sort of shorthand for a point he hammers more than once: in the experience of the sublime, what is truly sublime is the operation of the mind, not the manifold the subject intuits. As he defines it in terms of the mathematical sublime: "It is a magnitude that is equal only to itself. It follows that the sublime must not be sought in things of nature, but must be sought solely in our ideas" (Kant, 250). The mountain is not sublime. That which the mountain enables our mind to do is sublime. Or, as Lee Rozelle explains: "The post-Kantian sublime no longer resides on Mount Blanc itself, but rather somewhere between the craggy, snow-capped peak and the mind of the observer" (Rozelle, 4).

Kant sets out two varieties of the sublime: the mathematical and the dynamical. The mathematical sublime is referred to the faculty of cognition (theoretical reason), while the dynamical sublime is referred to the faculty of desire (practical reason). The former is an absolutely massive challenge to the cognitive powers, where the latter is an inconceivably powerful check on our freedom. Essential to the dynamical sublime is the concept

of fear. For a manifold to qualify as provoking the sublime, it must be fearful, but it must not provoke fear. As with the beautiful, the sublime must remain disinterested. To provoke fear in the onlooker is to provoke an interest—specifically the interest of getting away and never again being in such a situation. To be truly sublime, there must be fearfulness without fear. But without the ability to provoke fear in the onlooker, the sublime cannot occur. "We can, however, consider an object *fearful* without being afraid *of* it," Kant writes, "namely, if we judge it in such a way that we merely *think* of the case where we might possibly want to put up resistance against it, and that any resistance would in that case be utterly futile" (Kant, 260). That is, there must be fear, and it must be viewed from a place of safety. Doing so, Kant contends, allows the mind to come to a realization of its own sublime power. We find "a superiority over nature;" that is: "an ability to resist which is quite of a different kind, and which gives us the courage [to believe] that we could be a match for nature's seeming omnipotence" (Kant, 261). In the dynamical sublime, the subject learns that nature cannot subdue the mind. The subject can imagine situations in which the mind can resist the power of nature.

However, the simple presence of a manifold causing fear is not enough in itself to provoke an experience of the sublime. The fear must be of a specific kind. It must, in short, be purposeless and without interest. It must also provoke an awareness of a will not only counter to that of the subject, but utterly alien to it and incommensurate with it. In order for a perception of the sublime to be pure, it must consist in fearfulness without fear. If the fear is manifest, then the sublime is not possible. To contemplate and reflect upon the unmatched power of the avalanche is all but impossible when one is trying to escape being buried by it. (However, a true sublime experience may result from contemplation of the avalanche field once one is in a safe place.) A subject faced with a real threat—not safe from it—does not have the receptive mind necessary to appreciate the sublime. He become like Kant and Saussure's Savoyard peasant who "did not hesitate to call anyone a fool who fancies glaciered mountains" (Kant, 265). That is, though a subject may have a mind that in the proper surroundings might appreciate the sublime, the presence of real threats and perceptions of immediate danger may render that subject's mind temporarily unreceptive. Faced with real danger, "[i]n all the evidence of nature's destructive force [*Gewalt*], and in the large scale of its might, in contrast to which his own is nonexistent, [the subject] will see only the hardship, danger and misery that would confront anyone forced to live in such a place" (Kant, 265).

Perception in this case is essential. In a strict Kantian sense, the actual existence of the fearful manifold has no bearing on its sublimity. However, I think we must add, as some theorists do, a caveat here. That is, the actual existence of the fearful manifold has no bearing on the manifold's suitability as a stimulus of the sublime *provided that the subject perceives the object as fearful*. For example, a sailor on the open ocean perceives what seems to be a mighty storm cell a safe distance away off his bow. Though the sailor does not know it, he has misread the clouds and his instruments. Though he might perceive the cell as a powerful tempest, it's really just indicative of an hour or two of mild showers. As long as the sailor perceives the cell as fearful, the sublime is possible. However, if he checks his instruments again and learns that what he thought was a tempest is really a band of light showers, the possibility of the sublime is negated. Crowther sets out an analogous hypothetical for the mathematical sublime. "Suppose we take pleasure in the sturdiness of an oak tree, only to find that it is rotten to the core. Would not the discovery of this fact about the 'real existence' of the tree totally spoil our pleasure?" (Crowther, 143).

The answer to this is subtler than yes or no; it is a conditional yes or no. If we are taking an interested pleasure in the tree—as a possible new wood floor or a good place to climb—then discovering its rotten core ruins our pleasure, which is founded on taste. In the Kantian sublime the subject is to be satisfied by the form of the tree alone—not by its use for any particular purpose. However, on attaining the knowledge that the tree is rotten, surely one's aesthetic appreciation of its form as massive and sturdy is tainted? Much the same proposition holds for the perception of danger. In the case of a sailor confronting a storm at sea, if the interested sailor (one not at a safe distance from the cell) learns that the tempest is really just a light shower, he is relieved. If the disinterested sailor learns that the mammoth storm is really nothing much, surely the sublime is not possible. The fearfulness of the manifold has been lost. As Crowther suggests: "If the danger is only imaginary, then perhaps we are at best playful and at worst insincere, in our appreciation of the soul's sublimity" (Crowther, 113).

Though the sublime is not necessarily exclusive to the natural world, generally that is where the most provocative manifolds are to be found. It is important to note that Kant does not set up a pure binary opposition of the sublime/not-sublime. There is a continuum, as the power of the sublime increases or decreases according to an array of internal and external factors.

> [C]onsider bold, overhanging, and, as it were, threatening rocks, thunderclouds piling up in the sky and moving about accompanied by lightning and thunderclaps, volcanoes with all their destructive power, hurricanes with all the devastation they leave behind, and the boundless ocean heaved up, the high waterfall of a mighty river, and so on. Compared to the might of any of these, our ability to resist becomes an insignificant trifle. *Yet the sight of them becomes all the more attractive the more fearful it is*, provided we are in a safe place. (Kant, 261)(emphasis mine)

As Kant notes, the sublime increases in intensity the more fearful the object of contemplation is. The more intense the encounter with the colossal or stupefyingly powerful alien will is, the more sublime the reaction of the subject's mind will be. This is not to say that something is not either sublime or not—there is no such thing in Kant's system as a manifold that is "kind of sublime." However, once a manifold provokes the feeling of the sublime in a subject, that sense of sublimity can be intensified or softened, depending on the fearfulness or intensity of the manifold the subject contemplates. That is, once a subject has become aware of the sublime, some stimuli provoke a more powerful reaction than others. Even to qualify as sublime, a manifold must be purposeless. "We must not take for our examples such beautiful or sublime objects of nature as presuppose the concept of a purpose. For then the purposiveness would be either teleological, and hence not aesthetic, or else be based on mere sensations or an object (gratification or pain) and hence not merely formal" (Kant, 270). In a strict interpretation, that would seem to mean roadless terrain, with little sign that humanity has put it to use. The more the manifold shows itself pliable to the human will, presumably, the less use that manifold is for provoking the sublime. This leads to a difficulty in establishing what Kant means by "nature" in reference to the sublime. He is not speaking of gardens, crop fields, parks or orchards, certainly. As Edward Casey suggests, "A pleasant and healthy landscape lacks intensity; it lulls us into the pleasure of the beautiful. Only where landscape is sublime does tension arise…between an imagination not able to comprehend the complexity of the scene and a reason that claims to go far beyond it" (Casey, 199). Before we can establish the guide as mediator between nature and subject, it's necessary to explore where man-manipulated nature ends, and "crude nature" or wilderness begins.

The Problem of Wilderness

Attempting a definition of the term "nature" highlights the difficulty of arriving at a consensus definition of the term "wilderness." Roderick Nash indicates: "Depending on the context, for instance, 'nature' might be synonymous with wilderness, or it could refer to a city park" (Nash, 6). The city park, as we have seen, is unsuitable for an apprehension of the sublime. Rather, the sublime stems from an encounter with what Kant calls "crude nature." While not synonymous, the expression indicates that Kant has wilderness in mind for his site of encounters that provoke the sublime. One may imagine crude nature in a non-wilderness setting, but conceiving of a wilderness without crude nature is impossible. So if we are to determine this site of the sublime, we must attempt to establish what constitutes a wilderness. Nash writes that ecologist Aldo Leopold defined wilderness as a tract of land that could absorb a two-week backpacking trip. Nash is less demanding in terms of the magnitude of the area. "In theory," he writes, "if a person does not see, hear or smell civilization, he is in wilderness. But most people want the additional knowledge that a soft-drink dispenser is not quietly humming around the trail's next bend. Some want it to be miles away" (Nash, 4). With this definition Nash links the concept of wilderness with perception and knowledge. It must look like wilderness, but it must also include knowledge that civilization is not 30 feet away. Wilderness, or the perception of it, depends on the perceiving mind's ability to order a complicated manifold. As one subject may perceive fearfulness where another may not, so one may perceive wilderness where another may not.

Nash traces the etymology of the term "wilderness" to the Old English "wild-deor-ness": "the place of wild beasts" (Nash, 2). In literature, at least since the Classical period, the concept of wilderness has stood opposed not only to the concept of civilization, but also to the notion of the garden—nature tamed and bent to the will of humans. In one traditional concept, wilderness is inhospitable, alien, a condition to struggle against, and a place where men go mad—like Roland and Lancelot. Scripture—especially the story of Eden and Man's ejection from it, "embedded into Western thought the idea that wilderness and paradise were both physical and spiritual opposites" (Nash, 15). That is, wilderness stood opposed to paradise, envisioned as an all-nurturing garden. However, wilderness also acquired meaning as a testing ground for the virtuous. It was where the Israelites wandered to be purged, purified, to make them worthy of the promised land. As Nash notes, wilderness was "the environment of evil and hardship *where spiritual catharsis occurred*. Jesus emerged from the wilderness prepared to speak for God" (Nash, 17).[4] Encompassing these

definitions is sometimes self-contradictory. "On the one hand, wilderness is inhospitable, alien, mysterious, and threatening; on the other, beautiful, friendly, and capable of elevating and delighting the beholder. Involved, too, in this second conception is the value of wild country as a sanctuary in which those in need of consolation can find respite from the pressures of civilization" (Nash, 4).[5] Here, Nash touches on the reasons one might choose to seek out the wilderness: in one sense a respite, in another a realm capable of elevating the beholder, enabling him to experience the sublime.

However, finding wilderness pure enough to meet the standard of "crude nature" might be difficult if one adopts a strict definition of purposelessness. Does a blazed trail demolish the possibility of the sublime? What if on the trail into a deep gorge, one finds a PowerBar wrapper? "To insist on absolute purity could conceivably result in wilderness being only that land which the foot of man has never trod" Nash writes (Nash, 4). For purposes of legislation, the U.S. Government relies on the Wilderness Preservation Act of 1964: "A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." Even this definition is a problem for our purposes, if only because of the question of how "untrammeled" such land must be. Nash proposes a useful and elegant solution: wilderness is defined along a range, "from the purely wild on the one end to the purely civilized on the other—from the primeval to the paved" (Nash, 6). In the realm of the purely civilized, nature is the outpost—the stuff of city parks and street landscaping. Wilderness, on the other hand, is "Predominantly the environment of the non-human, the place of wild beasts… Vast, largely unmodified regions would be very close to absolute wilderness: the North American continent prior to settlement serves as an example" (Nash, 7). A single footprint on a trodden but unimproved trail several miles from a road would not disqualify the area for wilderness—even if the subject spots a footprint or two more in the dirt on the way.

Why Enter the Wilderness?

If it is so that, for centuries, humanity has been doing its best to throw back the borders of the wilderness in favor of expanding civilization, why is it that after having achieved such spectacular success in the last half-century or so, the desire to seek out (and to fight to preserve!) rugged spaces for their own sake has appeared? It is, of course, impossible to trace the beginning of what we call the outdoor industry. Accounts of explorers braving the

wilderness are as old as the oldest stories. The difference is in the intent of these explorations—the purposes for which they were undertaken. In this sense, the interest of the explorer is caught up in the notion of the sublime. Earlier explorers sought the wilds at least in part to demark and explore the limits of what they knew as civilization. Later, there was the urge to expand that civilization (usually on behalf of its markets). Still later—in the United States of the 19th Century for example—much exploration was undertaken in pursuit of a sort of physical census of the nation. Lewis and Clark are perhaps the most famous. John Wesley Powell, whom this study addresses later, is another explorer who put his abilities and affinities to work for an expanding United States. His descriptions of the territory "beyond the 100th meridian" included suggestions for wise development of the Rocky Mountains and Grand Canyon region (though his suggestions were honored mostly by being ignored). Only relatively recently has emerged the desire to venture into the wild not for financial gain nor for the purpose of extending one's civilization, but simply for the purpose of encounter with the wild. What once was primarily a supremely interested endeavor, in the Kantian sense, has in some cases slowly transformed into a more disinterested one. However, in other cases, the interest simply has turned to a new object.

A glance at two prominent guiding and wilderness instruction programs' catalogs gives a sense of what appeals to their clients. For example, the National Outdoor Leadership School, based in Lander, Wyoming, makes a convincing case for the wilderness trip on its website:

> We define wilderness as a place where nature is dominant and situations and their consequences are real. Living in these conditions, away from the distractions of modern civilization, fosters self-reliance, judgment, respect, and a sense of responsibility for our actions. It can also be a profoundly moving experience that leads to inspiration, joy and commitment to an environmental ethic.

The text begins with a description of what the school—perhaps the most prominent outdoor training school and guide company in the world—considers the wilderness. Key in the description are the "dominance" of nature and the reality of the dangers one might confront in the wild. This echoes the awe faced with the power and fearfulness of nature in the Kantian sublime. It is the foundation for the sublime experience. The description then sets out a series of purposes for which one might enter the wilderness: to foster self-reliance, judgment, and so on. One who undertakes an outdoor trip for these purposes is seeking something

other than a sublime experience. However, it may be that such judgment, respect and self-reliance is forged in confrontation with the immeasurably great force of nature as apprehended in the dynamical sublime. Last, the writer notes that such a trip "can also be a profoundly moving experience that leads to inspiration, joy and commitment to an environmental ethic." Leaving aside the reference to an environmental ethic, which Kant does not address directly, the first parts of the NOLS statement reflects much of Kant's assessment of what happens to the properly prepared human mind in the wild: "Thus, any spectator who beholds massive mountains climbing skyward, deep gorges with raging streams in them… is indeed seized by amazement bordering on terror, by horror and a sacred thrill" (Kant, 269). One can enter the wilderness for a chance at the sublime—a chance to experience the inspiration, the joy, the sacred thrill such an encounter might provoke. But not everyone could do such a thing alone. A wilderness excursion without the proper skills would be incapable of achieving the Kantian sublime, as it would tend to plunge the suspect into a dangerous—hence profoundly interested—scenario. Hence, the necessity for guides, and through guides, for the outdoor industry.

The Safety Machine

Taking to the wilderness with a guide makes sense for several reasons. First, it's worthwhile to go with someone who knows the region, can indicate and discuss the local plants, wildlife and geology, and can minimize the risk of getting injured or lost. The guide has knowledge and skills valuable in the wild that, presumably, the guide's clients lack. These might include orienteering, backcountry camping technique, the ability to identify safe food and water, wilderness medicine, even specialized skills like high-angle rescue. Second: the guides are not the only advantage one secures when hiring them. Rather, the client taps into the power of an entire structure of capital that makes the guide possible—the entire outdoor industry. There is, then, an enormous guarantee of one's security when embarking on a wilderness excursion with a hired professional guide. The guide becomes the personified representative of the industry itself, backed by access to gear and knowledge his clients lack.

The question of safety is an enormous one for the industry—a selling point, and a necessary concern for the client seeking an experience in the wilderness. The wilderness trip is to be a safe encounter with a nature wilder and more powerful than a guide's clients encounter every day. The wilderness is an essential element, but so is the ability to experience it

safely—as indicated by the marketing material for Wilderness Ventures, a guiding company in Jackson Hole, Wyoming:

> We have continually set the standards in this field for conducting safe and successful programming and we are proud that our safety record is unmatched. After thirty-three years, with over fourteen thousand [clients], we have never experienced a serious injury requiring extended hospitalization. This record is the result of our strict staff selection process…our highly detailed procedures for conducting safe activities… which exceeds that of all other outdoor adventure travel programs and outdoor leadership schools… (WV Catalog, 5-6)[6]

While the heavy modifiers in the phrase "a *serious* injury *requiring extended* hospitalization" might raise an eyebrow, it's clear this company seeks to assure clients form the outset that when they take a Wilderness Ventures trip, they are safe—as safe as they can be in the wilderness. In a sense, the text very cleverly lays groundwork for the experience of the sublime. It establishes that trips into the wilderness are, by their nature, dangerous—otherwise, why address the issue of safety at all? However, at the same time that it acknowledges implicitly that such trips are dangerous, it also reassures the reader that safety is of paramount importance. Not only is the company a safe one—it is safer than any other a prospective client might choose. NOLS, too, "accept[s] risk as an integral part…of the environments through which we travel… We believe successful risk management stems from good judgment based on experience, training and knowledge." That experience, training and knowledge comes in handy for the client in the woods, but it's also absolutely essential for the wilderness outfitter if it is to survive. Because of the risky activities participants undertake on wilderness trip, because of all the things that can go wrong, the probability of a crippling lawsuit is high. To mitigate extremely high insurance costs, a wilderness company must to convince its insurers that its guides are trained in keeping with industry standards and practices. Wilderness Ventures's catalog provides a description of that training:

> In addition to their many other qualifications, all of our staff members are fully trained in first aid and emergency procedures. Most of our staff have over 120 hours of wilderness first aid training and many are emergency medical technicians. While extensive formal first aid

> training is helpful, it can never take the place of highly experienced and trained leaders who make appropriate and safe decisions. Our carefully selected staff members and high standards are responsible for our enviable safety record…(WV Catalog, 11-12)

The emphasis here is on training, supplemented by judgment, but buttressed by certifications—warrants from industry-recognized organizations that a particular individual is able to perform particular skills. The case WV makes to prospective clients is much the same one it makes to the market, in the form of insurance companies. Thus when the client enters the backcountry with a hired guide, he or she knows that there is an entire market structure constraining the company—if it is a good one—not to make decisions that will unduly risk the health of the client. The knowledge of minimized risk, however, should not be enough to minimize the client's encounter with nature, if the guides do their job. Rather, it should enable the client's experience of the sublime.

Orchestrating the Sublime

The wilderness trip relies on the proposition that the sublime as provoked by crude nature is available as experience to all people whose minds are properly receptive. It is a part of Kant's common sense—a structure of mind shared by all. The sublime, Kant contends, "has its foundations in human nature: in something that, along with common sense, we may require and demand of everyone, namely the predisposition to the feeling for (practical) ideas, i.e., to moral feeling" (Kant, 125). As a person who is unable to perceive beauty lacks taste, so someone unable to perceive the sublime lacks feeling, in Kant's estimation. In *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, Gilles Deleuze makes Kant's suggestion explicit: "We assume that our pleasure (in the sublime) is by rights communicable to or valid for everyone; we assume that everyone must experience this" (Deleuze, 48). This communicability of the sublime is essential to the notion of wilderness outfitting. If such communicability were not possible, the trips could not develop as they have. They would become a purely interested pursuit—a means of losing weight or learning to read a map or to cook outside. They would not produce the kind of awe and joy the sublime engenders and that these companies claim to be able to provoke.

After all, the company and the guide together hope to orchestrate a sense of the sublime in their clients. In order to be successful, the guide must tread a very fine line between the perception of safety and danger. Too much danger, and the sublime is impossible, as the client spends too much

time uncomfortable or terrified, unable to reflect on the sublime the scene might have provoked in other circumstances. These clients, Paul Crowther notes, experience joy in relief, not in the sublime: "While the cessation of actual fear gives rise to a state of joy, it also has two negative consequences: (i) we resolve never to put ourselves in such a dangerous situation again and (ii) we find it distressing even to recall the event" (Crowther, 109). Too much safety, however, and the trip becomes nothing more than a glorified, slightly less comfortable, slightly less crowded theme park visit. The guide constructs an illusory sense of danger, with a real, perceptible apparatus of safety providing the clients with a psychic space from which to contemplate it.

The question of perception is important, because it is the perception of fearsomeness or awesome size or formlessness that makes possible the sublime. Crowther writes that "[t]he scope of rational cognition can be realized just as much by the *appearance* of vastness and power, as it can by the vastness and power of a real object" (Crowther, 149). The guide, then, must maintain the perception or appearance of balance between danger and safety. The actuality of either pole is unimportant to anyone but the guide as long as the guide's illusion holds. That is, as long as the client can perceive the manifold sparking the sublime, and perceive it from a position of equally perceived safety, the actual presence of either danger or safety is unimportant to the client's ability to have an experience of the sublime provoked by the present manifold. For example: it may be that the clients are perfectly safe from the lightning storm among a stand of trees, but if the clients do not perceive that safety, the perceptual basis for apprehending the sublime does not take hold. Or the guide may know that crossing a fast river at a given spot is truly dangerous—the most dangerous portion of the trip—but as long as the clients believe they are safe, the sublime is possible. In the course of such a journey, guides become like Kant and Saussure's Savoyard—profoundly interested in the perception of the manifold the group encounters. The guides are at work, and this interferes with the pure experience of the sublime on their part in most cases. An excerpt from John Wesley Powell's account of his exploration of the Grand Canyon is illustrative. Though he perceives the astounding beauty and magnificence of the scene around him, "somehow I think of the nine days rations and the bad river and the lesson of the rocks and the glory of the scene are but half conceived" (Powell, 263). Because the guides are always weighing risks, considering logistics and worrying about the health and abilities of their clients, the experience of the sublime for them comes in a different form—not from careful manipulation, but from actual

unpredictable moments going "off the script."

However, it's important to remember that wilderness guides are not manipulating wilderness. They are manipulating people—how minds encounter the otherness that is the backcountry. A walk through a gorge might be the easier and more sensible walk, for example, but a difficult hike up the ridge leads one to an astonishing view of crashing waterfalls and rugged country spread for miles. Opting for the latter trip enables the guide to direct the gaze of the client to the manifold that might spark the sublime in those with the capacity to perceive it. (There will always be one or two who would rather complain about sore legs.) And in this manipulation of minds, the guide is in a remarkable position to influence the way in which the clients perceive the wild manifold about them. Most guides, for example, have at least rudimentary training in ecology—and almost all of them have undergone extensive training in zero-impact expeditions—what some refer to as "Leave No Trace" or "zero impact" outdoor ethics and techniques. As the Wilderness Ventures materials claim: "While we are privileged to visit these national treasures, our travels through them instill in us a responsibility for their future survival. On our expeditions, you will learn not only the finest methods of zero-impact camping, but also gain a love for these places…" (Catalog, 17). That is, instead of teaching clients how to dominate the wilderness, the guide demonstrates how to co-exist with it comfortably without damaging it. Here is an interesting twist—industry not only advocating wilderness preservation, but attempting to instill it as an ethic in its customers. In this sense respect and awe faced with the wilderness becomes an imperative for the market—a means of preserving a revenue-generating resource for later continued exploitation. That is, the careful orchestration of the sublime operates to generate revenue, but it also demands that the commercial interest work to protect those places that enable such orchestration. Without the possible encounter with Kant's "raw nature," it becomes much more different to package the sublime. In this sense the guide continues to function as the company's representative: helping to preserve the resources that make to outfitter's existence possible. But guides have other possible functions, owing to their privileged space as mediator between industry, wilderness and client's mind. Those possible functions include teaching clients to wrest these encounters from commercial control, enabling them to encounter the wilderness on their own, without a guide or a commercial apparatus to mediate them.

Toward a Sublime of Coexistence

The sublime as Kant describes it culminates in a moment of sublime pride—in the resurgent human mind, and the mind's recognition of its own unfathomable size and indomitable power—its freedom. It is an opportunity to experience the immeasurable power of the surging mind, "a might that allows us to assert our independence of nature" (Kant, 269). As Christopher Hitt describes it, "[T]he discourse of the sublime has operated to confirm the authority and autonomy of a subject over and against a threatening other" (Hitt, 603). The subject of course is the human mind, and nature or wilderness the threatening other. Though backcountry outfitters promote a wilderness ethic that respects the wilderness, it does not do so only as a recognition of the awe and fearfulness the presence of the other provokes. The wilderness ethic as practiced by these companies also is a means of preserving its access to revenue. The wilderness is exploited in a gentler manner, but exploited nonetheless. In the dynamic of the outdoor industry, the company does not exist to foster awe in the face of the wilderness. Rather, that awe of confronting wild nature becomes a means of securing the preservation of the resources that allow the company to make money. There is a dual loyalty here. To make money, the company must preserve wild areas. The sublime in this sense is provoked or orchestrated by humans, and harnessed for a purpose. This is not the man-made sublime of which Crowther writes, one which might encompass the Hoover Dam or the atomic bomb's mushroom cloud, which focuses on "the products and epiphenomena bound up with technological innovation in the capitalist and state capitalist systems" (Crowther, 165). Rather than presenting a man-made manifold to the perception of the subject, the company though its representative guides controls the way in which its clients perceive manifolds not made by humans. The key to capital's operation in this case is to make preservation a value for an exploitation of the wild that does not mar it.

This exercise of power by capital makes the guide an odd locus of power dynamics—at once the site of complicity and resistance. Guides are representatives of an industry who nevertheless are in a position to subvert the industry's dynamic of humanity dominating nature, bending it towards an end that is not nature's own. The guide is in the position of fostering a sublime that stops at respect and awe in the face of the wilderness, rather than proceeding, as Kant does, to superiority. Such an ecological sublime, Christopher Hitt suggests, would reinforce "a sense of the inexorable otherness of nature." (Hitt, 612) "by restoring the wonder, the inaccessibility of wild nature. In an age of exploitation, commodification

and domination we need awe, envelopment and transcendence. We need, at least occasionally, to be confronted with the wild otherness of nature and to be astonished, enchanted, humbled by it" (Hitt, 619). In this sense, such an ecological sublime would recognize the necessity of the "wild manifold" and the receptivity of the perceiving mind. Though they are representatives of an industry that exploits nature in its own gentle way, guides are in the position to remind their clients that it is not nature being manipulated in this case, but people, and the way they perceive the wild. This gentler exploitation manipulates the mind, rather than attempting to alter the manifold. According to Nick Van Noy, an ecological sublime would show that humans "are not masters of the landscape" (Van Noy, 87). This "decentered" sublime, as Van Noy describes it, would rest "not on the transcendence of human reason but through the 'otherness' of the other—based on the self's relationship to what was beyond and outside it" (Van Noy, 163).

This possibility, perhaps, indicates a way to grapple with Hitt's dilemma: how to preserve Nature's otherness in the sublime, without reifying it. The guide, as conduit between industry, wilderness and human mind, is in a position to attempt just such a piece of perceptual gymnastics. This would be a sublime that recognizes the necessity of awe and respect for certain experiences of nature as a condition for apprehending the power and freedom of the human mind. The pleasure a mind takes in this sublime might stem from recognition that one lives in a world of real manifolds that seem to have wills alien to our own. It might stem from the realization not that the human mind is part of nature, but that the otherness of nature is an analogue for ourselves—and evidence, perhaps, that insomuch as we are like such crude nature we exist as more than ghosts in the machine. If the guide does the job properly, the client may learn to respect wilderness, and to navigate it on her own.

References:

Casey, Edward S. (2003). Taking a Glance at the Environment: Preliminary Thoughts on a Promising Topic. In Charles S. Brown and Ted Toadvine (Eds.) Eco-Phenomenology: Back to the Earth Itself. Albany: SUNY Press (pp. 187-210).

Cassirer, Ernst (1981). Kant's Life and Thought. London: Yale University Press.

Crowther, Paul (1989). The Kantian Sublime. Oxford: Clarendon.

Deleuze, Gilles (1984). Kant's Critical Philosophy. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Harvey, Mark (1999). The National Outdoor Leadership School's Wilderness Guide. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Hitt, Christopher (1999). "Toward an Ecological Sublime." New Literary History, 30.3, 603-623.

Kant, Immanuel (1981). Critique of Judgment. Trans. Werner Pluhar. Indianapolis: Hackett.

Kemal, Selim (1992). Kant's Aesthetic Theory. New York: St. Martin's.

Lyotard, Jean-Francois (1987). Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime. Stanford: Stanford UP.

Nash, Roderick Frazier (2001). Wilderness and the American Mind. New Haven: Yale UP.

Gookin, John, ed. (2006). National Outdoor Leadership School Wilderness Educator Notebook, 10th edition. Lander, Wy: NOLS Press.

Outdoor Industry Association Report (2006). The Active Outdoor Recreation Economy 2006. Boulder, Co.: Outdoor Industry Foundation.

Powell, John Wesley (1987). The Exploration of the Colorado River and its Canyons. Washington D.C.: Penguin.

Rozelle, Lee (2006). Ecosublime: Environmental Awe and Terror from New World to Oddworld. Tuscaloosa: U Alabama P, 2006.

Van Noy, Rick (2003). Surveying the Interior: Literary Cartographers and the Sense of Place. Reno: U Nevada P.

Wilderness Ventures Catalog, Summer 2010. Jackson, Wyoming.

(Endnotes)

1 See p108-109 of The NOLS Wilderness Guide (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999), for illustrative, if dated, trend figures.

2 The OIC claims that outdoor products and services contribute $730 billion to the U.S. economy. This includes the impact of 60 million cyclists, 66 million wildlife tourists, 33 million fishers, and 13 million hunters, among others. The $730 billion figure includes a $379 billion ripple effect due to the action of "suppliers, intermediaries, and employees" who "circulate money through the economy"

3 I follow Werner Pluhar's pagination, based on the Akademie text of 1793.

4 Emphasis mine.

5 In this incarnation, such wilderness would be accessible only through acts of literature.

6 It should, perhaps, be noted that Wilderness Ventures experienced its first fatality in summer 2011. Doubtless the language in its catalog will change.

Whether Earthquakes are Lovable: Knowing Nature in the Wake of Disaster

Molly Sturdevant

Saint Xavier University, Chicago IL, USA

Abstract

This essay examines the question of whether and how philosophical thinking is equipped to countenance in a meaningful way what for Spinoza is nature's brutally manifest indifference to whether one likes it or not. Nature's indifference to human pleasure, as well as its uniquely unsettling challenge for conceptualization, must be investigated if nature is to be a meaningful category for environmental ethics. In search of a way to conceptualize nature as it is, I take up an explication of key passages from Spinoza's *Ethics*, and thereby maintain that earthquakes *are* "lovable." I hold this position to be true for two reasons. In brief, earthquakes are ontologically contiguous with the same power and force whereby all entities are maintained; secondly, love, understood intellectually and through a Spinozistic lens, is that modality of relating which understands power primordially and is able to act ethically without belaboring judgments of pleasure or pain, or even holding nature at a distance in order to revere it as something to save.

Keywords: Spinoza; *the Ethics, Deus sive Natura*; environmental ethics; critical theory; climate change; (critiques of) deep ecology

"[…]why are there so many imperfections in Nature? why are things corrupt to the point where they stink? So ugly that they produce nausea?[…]"
(Spinoza, *Ethics*, Appendix to Part I)

I. Introduction

Recent scholarship has questioned whether moralizing nature or in various ways characterizing it with transcendent qualities, is suited for the demands of theorizing difference, social justice, and political economies.[1] The inadequacy of such theories is perceived to lie in the ways in which they, albeit in vastly diverse ways, tend to grant nature a kind of *otherness*. In doing so, they often assume that nature is something we must try not to

touch, or that it must be preserved, that it must be saved, that it is something towards which we must in some sense return, or with which we must reunite. In a word, transcendent thinking about nature hinges on asserting that it is some "thing" distinct from the "unnatural."[2] In its prime, deep ecology became an example of the kind of thinking that pursued a theory of immanence in order to resolve these dualistic ontologies.[3] While this turn towards immanence did provide an important resistance to forms of domination that famously rendered nature a machine for man to manipulate, or set it on a pedestal as a virgin to be either adored or plundered,[4] this version of a theory of immanence still retains, to my mind, vestiges of emotive, soteriological motivations that avoid the true consequences of immanent logic.

The question that emerges today is whether either appeal can be meaningful as nature reveals itself on an increasingly unpleasant scale.[5] Ethical dispositions based in asserting nature's alterity, such as reverence, preservation, care, or friendship have informed many attempts to create discourse about sustainability,[6] but these concepts seem blighted under the glare of the increase in meteorological extremes and natural disaster. They seem blighted because, while a general definition of, say, friendship might include: *two or more beings bearing a mutual comportment of care for one another*, it is not evident that nature's erosion, flooding, or drought cares about the humans who experience these things. On the other hand, if we forego appealing to the virtues extolled by understanding nature as in some sense transcendent, that is, in a relationship with us as an *other*, we find that even the apparent alternative of immanence—loosely defined as: *nature understood to be a nexus within which humans are intimately bound and interdependent*—risks waiting for a positive feedback-loop from a sense of oneness, when opposite sorts of manifestations abound. Examples of these negative manifestations could be any number of diseases that move through species, such as those that begin in animals' food sources, and move through to the human consumers of these animals. Oneness is a viable way of describing this connectivity, but in a case of disease outbreak, the experience of the connection to the disease-carriers alone offends what uncritical appeals to immanence seek when they assert a feeling of oneness with nature.

What follows is only a brief exploration of this rather large question. I want to explore whether and how philosophical thinking is equipped to countenance in a meaningful way nature's brutally manifest indifference to whether one likes it or not. This requires attention to a second issue: nature itself as both an ontological and epistemological category seems

impossible. It is, like Blanchot's disaster that cannot and yet must be written, or Anselm's concept that proves its divinity by shattering our finite conceptual capacity, impossible to *grasp* (Blanchot, 1986; Saint Anselm, 1078).[7] These two features, namely, its indifference to human pleasure and its uniquely unsettling inability to be conceptualized, must be investigated if nature is to be a meaningful category for environmental ethics. My argument does not intend to be strictly a "climate-change" argument. By this I mean that the claims do not hinge on an agreement or longer discussion about what exactly climate-change means or how it is caused. My interpretation of passages from Spinoza's *Ethics,* I hope to show, stands on its own regardless of that discussion. And yet, I do suggest that it is precisely its most unpleasant activity that has increasingly become what we talk about when we talk about nature.

To support these contentions, I begin by shoring up the complexities involved in attempting to define "nature," showing its particularly difficult place in philosophical method. I then attempt to read portions of the *Ethics* so as to maintain that Spinoza allows us to conceptualize the essence of nature without recoiling from its omnipresent indistinction. I then explore that very concept of nature, in order to demonstrate that earthquakes, as examples of the unpleasant face of nature, *are* "lovable," a term to be radically revisited if it is to be useful for ethical theorizing. As modes of natural action, earthquakes are ontologically contiguous with the same power and force whereby all entities receive their being and are maintained in it, and love, understood intellectually and through a Spinozistic lens, is that modality of relating which understands power primordially and is able to act ethically without belaboring judgments of pleasure or pain, or even holding nature at a distance in order to revere it as something to save.

II. Defining Nature

"But, Socrates, I do not know how to say what I mean. For whatever statement we advance, somehow or other it moves about and won't stay where we put it."

(Plato, *Euthyphro*, 11b)

A primary difficulty in any philosophizing about nature, but especially in the search for a sustainable environmental ethics, is always how to describe and delimit the being, or nature, of this particular being: *Nature*. In fact, the formulation of the task already announces a kind of hermeneutical dilemma: we are seeking the nature of nature. Something about this particular object

of study strikes us as unlike all others. Neither is the uncanny resemblance the object bears to the criteria of the investigation relieved by substituting "essence" in place of "nature." In search of this essence of nature, one would simply be compelled to list the kinds of things they see when they look at "it," saying, "it is the collection of exemplars of what is natural, namely, those birch trees over there, and squirrels and wind and the grass and such," but this list of examples must end at some point. It must end, we assume, because in order for a definition to be possible, the object being defined must exclude what is different from it, so that it might stand in relief, able to be seen and identified. If this effort is to continue, the next step would be to ask, what then is *un*-natural? Buildings? Neon signs? Or *whom*? Humans? It would be strange to say that nature is everything *but* humans and what humans produce. Strange, for we are animated, i.e., we are (to controversial and varying degrees) "animal." Stranger still, our bodies are in large part comprised of natural elements; we are mostly water, we use and exchange air; further still, we are "dirt," or at least, our physical body is capable of decomposing altogether. Not only that, but perhaps the birch tree I am now seeing was selected, bought, transported, and landscaped all by human design and labor. It has much in common, on this view, to the building next to it.

It is well-known that when Socrates demands the "essential aspect"[8] or "form"[9] of the object which Euthyphro is under pressure to define, Euthyphro is at least able to dialogically discover what this aspect is *not*. He can (assisted by Socrates) identify what will *not* function as the "model"[10] they could use to recognize the finite exemplars of piety. But even the epistemological achievement of identifying the non-essence of piety, however minimal, is unattainable for the one seeking the "model" of what is natural. It is occluded by the omnipresence of *nature* as it saturates the processes, be they social, aesthetic or productive, through which even trees can be brought into being or through which they can be conceived and experienced. The well-known Heraclitian observation from fragment 39-b123 that nature "likes to hide"[11] succinctly expresses one face of this problem. The true difficulty, however, seems not to be nature's evasive retreats, but rather, that nature refuses to hide when we try to show that something exists which is *not* it. One might attempt to solve the problem by creating a litany of ever-more unnatural things such as the neon signs mentioned above. One might insist that her phone and her computer are *very* unnatural, thus allowing the natural, and thereby nature, to stand out. And yet, even the components of these cold, processed objects are reducible to various elements of metals, chemical bonds, conduits of

electricity, paints, dyes, minerals such as copper or lead, and other things that underwent a long process of manufacturing, refining and design, but did not appear on this earth *ex nihilo*. We (natural beings) developed them from what already existed (naturally). The problem remains. Nature now seems more *overwhelming* than hard-to-find. It is everywhere; indeed, it abhors a vacuum. Nothing is empty. Nothing is *not* nature.

In *Against Nature: The Concept of Nature in Critical Theory* (1996), Steven Vogel has expressed this totalizing reach of the category of the "natural" in another context, showing the way in which nature presents a difficulty for the concept of reification in dialectical materialism. In his critical analysis of Lukács' attempt to hold a distinction between the natural and the social in the context of a critique of immediacy, Vogel has very clearly laid bare the general argument for nature being but a social construct, and thus nothing ontologically distinct in itself.

> The objects 'naturally' surrounding us have social roles and meanings, they are literally 'social constructs,' built by human labor; the 'natural environment' is never encountered independently of its social context; and the 'nature' revealed by natural science cannot be separated from the socially organized practices through which such a science operates- these are, then, the [...] senses in which 'nature is a social category.' These [...] senses can be seen as stages in an argument in which the desire for nature as an ultimate immediacy on which our practices are founded is shown to be systematically frustrated. The conclusion is a hard one to accept. Mediations, we believe, must come to an end somewhere, and 'nature' is the name we give to that somewhere (Vogel, 1996; p. 38).

While we will not approach the reasons for his critical interpretation of these themes in Lukácsian theory, two insights that are relevant to the present concern about defining nature are apparent. One, Vogel's problematization of the object-status for nature further illuminates the difficulty laid out above. This is apparent in Vogel's observation that there is no "end" or "limit" to our linkage from one object to another; there is no end that could mark the other side beyond the boundary between the natural and the unnatural. Secondly, the assertion that the argument's conclusion is "hard to accept" is of no small consequence. It is hard to accept because if nature is something meaningful for us as humans, it has been due to our desire to establish it as a *that-without-which*, a foundation, a limit, or an origin. We have

attempted—as Euthyphro must, though fated to fail—to establish "nature itself' as that model without which we would not recognize exemplars of the natural. Such exemplars may grant meaning to questions of human life and action, but they are dissolved in human action and production, insofar as they erase every distinction between what nature is and what it is not.

From these perspectives, nature is not just everywhere refusing to be defined, but it is never done doing so. Nature resists definition, and thereby resists being grasped by philosophical method insofar as this method relies on concepts under which it might subsume the thingly quality of the object under scrutiny. As an alternative, one might relinquish the commitment to conceiving the thing, and attend rather to the way in which a natural entity, even the purchased and landscaped birch tree, contains within itself its own principle of acting, i.e., of generation and flourishing. When one conceptualizes the tree through this quasi-Aristotelian lens, one cannot help but observe its origin and end in relation to the seed, the flourishing, the decomposition, and the rich relation to seed again. Thus the essence of nature may be better conceived through this active context, that is, through thinking it as an event, as suggested perhaps by Aristotle's *ta physica: "*moving" or "changing" things, beings that manifest, and retreat again.[12] But even if it can, even if bearing witness to nature's character as event falls within the realm of the possible, the question of its efficacy in developing an ethics remains. If I admit the unique being of the tree as distinctly different from that of the computer, then I might potentially have an understanding of this individuated nature, i.e., this tree, but I have no means by which I might know how to relate to it. I only know that it has its principle of growth within itself. Such criteria for being "natural," if considered too simply, would also exclude other likely candidates for being "natural," such as stone, soil, or water. I may have knowledge of things that grow and reproduce, but not necessarily of nature, and not at all of my *environment*. This is because a knowledge of trees is not the same as a knowledge of what surrounds me, especially if my surroundings are comprised more of inert material than things that grow. Hence, even this more active, less thingly understanding of nature falls short of being a satisfactory definition.

In a nuanced and sustained evaluation of the possibility of being ecological *without* a robust or transcendent notion of nature or environment, Timothy Morton has observed a similar difficulty. Without wanting to risk a reduction of his far-reaching analysis of environmental aesthetics, we may observe that our presently thwarted attempt to define nature is illuminated as such by Morton's insight in *Ecology Without Nature;*

Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics (2007). In this text, Morton suggests that the very assertion of nature as other, as thing, or as different, enables an important (and presumably unethical) distance *from* it.

> The environment was born at exactly the moment when it became a problem. The word *environment* still haunts us, because in a society that took care of its surroundings in a more comprehensive sense, our idea of environment would have withered away. The very word *environmentalism* is evidence of wishful thinking. Society would be so involved in taking care of 'it' that it would no longer be a case of some 'thing' that surrounds us, that environs us and differs from us. Humans may yet return the idea of the 'thing' to its older sense of *meeting place.* In a society that fully acknowledged that we were always already involved in our world, there would be no need to point it out (Morton, 2007; p. 141).

That we are "already always involved" in nature—in the environment—announces the difficulty in defining what nature is, but more importantly, there is a danger that the use of the term indicates in itself the problem of distance. The distance created by the very act of identifying what surrounds us as our "environs" and which thereby can be pointed out as other, might raise the question of the extent to which even well-intended environmental policy has been overly "othered," and even soteriological in its attempt to save, mourn, or redeem something radically unlike itself. For several reasons, it has become clear that the task of knowing, i.e., of conceptualizing and defining nature *qua* nature, is an exceedingly complex one. Nature takes no singular shape; it has no easily-apprehended quality, nor does it have any opposite such that it could be called into relief and therefore known. It exists in no place, while it simultaneously saturates the whole.

III. Being Present to Indifference: Spinoza's Dislocation of Deus sive Natura

No degree of philosophical complexity will grant us a pass on having to know what nature is, or at least having to renew and redesign our discourse about our intensifying *environs*. If nature is to be an object of discourse at all, our advances thus far suggest that its essence may have to be understood through capacity, movement or action, rather than whatness.

The understanding that defines accordingly will need to be already involved in its concept; it will also be an event and will remain moving, immanent to what it understands. With this possibility in view, let us begin again, this time with a rather simple etymological perspective. We can read in the Latin term for "nature" a particular kind of action that holds more promise than the evasive thingliness of an object. The Latin noun we seek is *natura*.[13] The infinitive verb form extends the reach of natura; *naturare* says "to birth" but not quite to give birth. Rather, birthing is happening. One is not pushing out one other, once and for all; no giving is connoted, such as that in *donare*, "to give; to donate." There is no transference of being from one to the other, in one moment. Spinoza saw that Cartesian metaphysics knew the difference between these two forms of causation, calling attention on one hand to things from which the cause can be taken away while the effect will still endure.[14] As an example of this mode of causation, consider that a foal can and probably will outlive the mare. But, Descartes observed (though he restricted his observation), there is on the other hand a kind of causation that is quite different. Finite beings, he argued, cannot account for the entirety of their kind existing in time according to any one of their own kind. The existence of all the effects taken together requires some cause greater in power than any one of themselves taken individually. This mode of causation reflects what is said in the infinitive verb, *naturare,* to birth. This mode of causation is birthing all the time, such that effects are always being effected.

Natura, as "birthing," is also properly understood as a translation into Latin of what for the Greeks was preeminently expressed as *physis*. Physis says, "that which makes itself manifest naturally" or more simply, the verb form *phuo* says "to grow."[15] Nature as *physis,* is always on the go and never the same. As such, its essence may be conceptualized without relying on a limit to its entity. Spinoza's efforts to lay bare the implications of single substance monism under the aspect of immanence also demonstrate this possibility for conceptualization. In the first part of the *Ethics,* "Of God," the grounding of the project begins with defining not only being, but also by expressing the way in which definition reflects rules for conceptualization and perception. "By cause of itself," begins Definition 1; [16] this is the first alternative we are offered for the promised object of explication, namely God (EId1). A second follows immediately: "*or* that whose nature cannot be conceived except as existing" (EId1). Here, we are shown a limit, via the phrase "cannot be conceived," to what we are able to think about this being. In Definitions 2, 3 and 4, we find similar juxtapositions of what is being thought with the nature and possibilities of thinking itself. An

example in Definition 3 reads: "By substance I understand what is in itself and is conceived through itself, that is, that whose concept does not require the concept of another thing from which it must be formed" (EId3). Now, God, cause-of-itself, *or* substance, refuses to take the place of the "end" of a linkage of objects who share a causal story in time, nor is it the boundary we may have hoped to reach which would have made nature's essence known by virtue of its not being something else. It (God, or substance), requires no other concept in order for us to grasp what it is, or better, what it *does*. This God is "a being absolutely infinite" (EId6), but its limitlessness (a direct rendering of the term "infinite") does not indicate that it is nothing, or somehow imperceivable. It is a substance (EId6); unlike all other entities which come under our conceptualization, this one, this infinite substance, "involves no negation" (EId6). There is no sense in which we must say what it is not, or make it an other, in order to hold it in view for our understanding.

Grasping this being, is for Spinoza a task of the first order. That this be accomplished first signifies its primacy epistemologically and ontologically. It does so not only because Spinoza maintains that "the order and connection of things is the same as the order and connection of ideas" (EIIp7), but also for the same reason why this conceptualization of an active totality indicates that the text of the *Ethics* does *not* attempt to derive an ought from an is.[17] Being and knowing simply are identified; one cannot conclude from her concept that she ought to act this or that way, but that she *is* this or that way. For Spinoza, ethics are not an act of habituating the free will (indeed he denies such a will),[18] but they are a matter of empowering the intellect to attend to the necessary connections in which the thinking individual finds herself. With this end in view, the text of the *Ethics* opens not with an arbitrary, disputational, or aesthetic choice, but upon the unity of thinking and being, during the exposition of the absolute substance from which everything else takes its being and through which everything else can be known.

This primary grasp of God, cause-of-itself, or substance, thus unfolds toward an understanding of the consequences of immanence, or, omnipresence. It is not until EIp5 that we encounter the term "Nature," however, and the implications of the relationship of this term to God are not immediately obvious. The careful progression indicates that nature is no mere addition to a list of equally apt names for a single concept. Reflecting a consistency with the consequences of the definition of substance, Proposition 5 simply claims, "In Nature there cannot be two or more substances of the same nature or attribute" (EIp5). In Proposition

6, a second and third appearance are observed: "In Nature there cannot be two substances of the same attribute [...] which have something in common with each other. [...] For in Nature there is nothing except substances and their affections[.]" (EIp6). In this moment, the text resists an uncritical or unqualified identification of God with the natural world that has attracted much ecological thought. The resistance can be found in the sense that here, "Nature" is deployed in a propaedeutic service. The reader of this passage must conceptualize not only nature, but the necessary ways in which what follows logically from these claims about nature cannot be otherwise. If only substance (what is independent or self-caused) and what is dependent on that substance, exist, then we must ask what follows from this order of dependence. The question of nature then, in its first appearance in the *Ethics,* assists conceptualization by preparing it to grasp both finite (dependent) beings—what might be considered individual natural entities—and the only subsisting actual being through which these finite natural beings have their being and through which they must be conceived. In short, nature appears on the scene as another way to say the being of God, but moreover, it serves to transport our thinking towards the ways in which we must conceive the effects of this being. This is confirmed in the Appendix, where Spinoza writes that, "For if God had decreed, concerning Nature and its order, something other than what he did decree, that is, had willed and conceived something else concerning Nature, he would necessarily have had an intellect other than he now has, and a will other than he now has" (EIa).

Immanence is thus not a simple oneness or sense of connection, but a kind of loss. In accepting the logical consequence of independence and limitlessness as the essence of substance, and of there being only one substance, one concedes that this substance is nowhere to be pointed out as if it were not somewhere else. To say it another way, in its being immanent, nature is not "located" anywhere. It has no whereabouts; there is nothing to see, but there is everything to think. In this sense, nature serves as that surrounding which, as Morton's text suggested, does not need to be pointed out. Spinoza makes the point in Proposition 29 and its scholium as follows:

> [...] So all things have been determined from the necessity of the divine nature, not only to exist, but to exist in a certain way, and to produce effects in a certain way. There is nothing contingent, q.e.d.
> Ip29 Schol:
> Before I proceed further, I wish to explain here-or rather to

> advise [the reader] - what we must understand by *Natura naturans* and *Natura naturata.* For from the preceding I think it is already established that by *Natura naturans* we must understand what is in itself and is conceived through itself, *or* such attributes of substance as express an eternal and infinite essence, that is (by P14C1 and P17C2), God insofar as he is considered a free cause. But by *Natura naturata* I understand whatever follows from the necessity of God's nature, *or* from any of God's attributes, that is, all the modes of God's attributes insofar as they are considered as things which are in God, and can neither be nor be conceived without God.

The whole of nature includes everything, and in a sense, there is yet only one thing. The exclusionary problem that stifles Euthyphro, namely, the problem of identifying what is *not* natural such that what is can be known, retreats under the alternative of embracing an omnipresent active power rather than searching for a singular thing. Under the addition of the present participle, *-ans,* we understand *Natura* as something clearly causing, moving, birthing, and being independent. Its acting is prior, but not in time. It is not one of the effects, but it is always presently causing, and thus immanent to its effects. Spinoza collapses that causal power which must exist in order for anything else to exist into its effects. This reveals the proper understanding of what is meant by the "whole." It is no mere kinship or story of origin but a dynamic relation that denies singularity. Nor is it even a collected totality of related beings. Spinoza affirms that "No definition involves or expresses any certain number of individuals[.]" (EIp8s2). Nature is a relation of power that is not ended in terms of finite causation.

Natur*ing* is also able to be understood as "God," for Spinoza famously (though infrequently, and not until Part IV of the *Ethics*) adds to his invocation of *Natura* the phrase, "that is, God."[19] He writes, "For we have shown in the Appendix of Part I, that Nature does nothing on account of an end. That eternal and infinite being we call God, *or* Nature, acts from the same necessity of nature from which he exists. [...] As he exists for the sake of no end, he also acts for the sake of no end" (EIVpref). But it is important to keep in mind, as I suggested above, that this is not Spinoza's primary objective, nor is this phrase, God *or* Nature, a *simple* identity which gives us an arbitrary option for approaching the exact same object of thought. Nature is invoked as an order, as a demand to conceive of the way in which

nature's actions relate, subsist and operate. This is apparent in noting that "Nature" is often accompanied by the phrase "the order of" or "the whole of" in the text. For example, "[...] the order of the whole of Nature," is repeatedly invoked in, and is the subject of the scholium to EIIp7. Nature is that lawful universe through which we may think the beings we encounter in it. It is also God and conceived through God, insofar as it is the whole expression of God's active power as the necessarily existing infinite causal power. But these joined terms, God *or* Nature, are not merely a friendly unity or experienced connection or relationship; they are two ways of conceptualizing ways of existing. One subsists by the necessity of its own power, the other by depending on it.

What has been established thus far claims that in the text of the *Ethics,* the quest to acquire knowledge through definition is shaken loose from the requirement that a thing, boundary, difference, *or* a simple sameness, be pointed to. Rather than search in time for this "other" or thing, conceptualization must always be occurring. This juncture of being and knowing is the only "place" in which nature might be said to be thinkable. In his recent and penetrating critique of deep ecology's appropriation of Spinoza's metaphysics, Eccy de Jonge has expressed a similar contention. "First, the true definition of a substance neither involves nor expresses anything *beyond* the nature of the thing defined; […] And yet, Spinoza argues, substance is not only a concept but the only 'real being', for a real being is one whose essence does not depend on anything else for its existence (EIp7pf)" (de Jonge, 2004; p. 64). In this possibility for conceptualization, there is no invisible, transcendent or benevolent entity beyond what is conceived; there is only *nature naturing*, or if we push our translation of nature as "birth," we might say "birth, birthing."

As implied in the early definitions and propositions laid out above, this causing power can also be thought of through conceiving its effects. Spinoza fleshes out this latter aspect of the disseminating effects of nature's incessant birthing in his description of *Natura naturata*, by using the past participle to indicate that nature has "natured." He writes, "But by *Natura naturata* I understand whatever follows from the necessity of God's nature, or from any of God's attributes, that is, all the modes of God's attributes insofar as they are considered as things which are in God, and can neither be nor be conceived without God" (EIp29s). *Naturata* indicates whatever exists, in so far as it is an effect of God *or* Nature's causal power. The extent of this commitment to a dynamic, (not merely numerical) totality is reinforced where Spinoza denies distinctions even between human thinking and what might be considered natural *physically*. As evident in the following

excerpt from one of Spinoza's most studied letters, the identification denies faculty-specific capacities which had—up to Spinoza's work—remained territorialized in mental or bodily regions. He writes to Henry Oldenburg:

> You see therefore, how and why I think that the human body is a part of Nature. But as far as the human mind is concerned, I think it is a part of Nature too. For I maintain that there is also in Nature an infinite power of thinking, which, insofar as it is infinite, contains in itself objectively the whole of Nature, and whose thoughts proceed in the same way as Nature itself, its object, does.[20]

The human body is included in nature, and, nature *thinks*, though it is not thereby already *concerned*. The understanding "proceeds in the same way" as the activities of what it understands. Humans' immersion and involvement in nature is radicalized in this instance. Thinking about nature will be no separate or distinct activity from *nature's naturing.* Admittedly, here we are only touching upon a critical and nuanced area of Spinoza's *Ethics.* But what we have established by looking at the passage above suffices to offer support to the contention that immanence is not just a closeness, but a commitment to a kind of determinism that does not free an ethical agent to care for or save something unlike herself.

Another passage from Spinoza which expresses the consequences of this determinism, is also one that many theoretical attempts at an immanent environmental ethics have shied away from. He writes, "[...] all things are in God and so depend on him that without him they can neither be nor be conceived; and finally, [that] all things have been predetermined by God, not from freedom of the will or absolute good pleasure, but from God's absolute nature, or infinite power" (EIa). Taking this "not" in the strongest sense, we see the indifference that I earlier characterized as "brutal." Brute, as in factually so. Not from any will, not from any good pleasure, does God *or* Nature birth. Attempting to grasp nature's being through wondering about its "ends," or the goals or reasons why it does what is does, such as free will or pleasure, tempts the ecologically minded. But as Spinoza points out in the Appendix to Part I of the *Ethics*, this is the very prejudice he hopes to correct. "All the prejudices I here undertake to expose depend on this one: that men commonly suppose that all natural things act, as men do, on account of an end; indeed they maintain as certain that God himself directs all things to some certain end, for they say that God has made all things for man, and man that he might worship God" (EIa). Here, as in elsewhere, Spinoza denies that God *or* Nature acts according to ends. It

does not respond to the placation of creatures, and the course of nature's naturing cannot be changed by human desire.

Nature in this sense, Spinoza teaches, has no intention or goal. Immanent, primary, and omnipotent (but unlike the Cartesian God, *not* omnibenevolent), nature natures with power only. Recognizing this determined omnipotence liberates our understanding of nature from having to ask whether and what purpose it may have had for its actions. Illustrating the consequences for those who fail to attend to this determinism, Spinoza writes:

> But while they sought to show that Nature does nothing in vain (i.e., nothing not of use to men), they seem to have shown only that Nature and the gods are as mad as men. See, I ask you, how the matter has turned out! Among so many conveniences in Nature they had to find many inconveniences: storms, earthquakes, diseases, and the like. These, they maintain, happen because the gods [NS: (whom they judge to be of the same nature as themselves)] are angry on account of wrongs done to them by men, or on account of sins committed in their worship (EIa).

Here, Spinoza exposes the error resulting from the attempt to subsume the destructive aspect of non-human being under human modes of conception. If our epistemological paradigm includes that there is a divine reason for an earthquake or a disease, we fall to the suspicion of punishment, become stifled by the passive affect of hope,[21] or entertain the dilemma of trying to reconcile omnipotence with the notion of free will, i.e., we wonder why god didn't choose to act less destructively. Spinoza anticipates the concerns thusly: "For many are accustomed to arguing in this way: if all things have followed from the necessity of God's most perfect nature, why are there so many imperfections in Nature? why are things corrupt to the point where they stink? so ugly that they produce nausea? why is there confusion, evil, and sin?"(EIa). Spinoza answers as follows: "[...]For the perfection of things is to be judged solely from their nature and power; things are not more or less perfect because they please or offend men's senses, or because they are of use to, or are incompatible with human nature" (EIa). To offer an example of how Spinoza's answer might play out, consider one's reaction to a very strong earthquake; one would estimate the strength of it in such a way that confirms it is very *perfect*. It is not good, just very *complete*. It is not evil, just very *thorough*, if we assume (as Spinoza does) the literal sense of the Latin roots for the word "perfect." *Per* adds a thoroughness

to *facere:* "to do," or, "to make." This, according to Spinoza, is the proper poise when faced with the indifference of nature's power. This attitude does not go "deep," as the ecological thinker might, but rather it stays its ground in the acceptance of the difference between the power of the human and that of the natural event.

This notion of perfection as a measure of power brings us closer toward understanding the ways in which a Spinozistic ethics does not require categories of supposed kinship, concern, or friendship with "nature" as if it were either other than us, or somehow connected to us in a way that would yield a positive experience of that connection. A relevant example of these things *not* being the case for Spinoza can be found in his perspective on animal life, a perspective that no deep ecologist was willing to adopt.[22]

> [...] it is clear that the law against killing animals is based more on empty superstition and unmanly compassion than sound reason. The rational principle of seeking our own advantage teaches us to establish a bond with men, but not with the lower animals, or with things whose nature is different from human nature. We have the same right against them that they have against us. Indeed, because the right of each one is defined by his virtue, or power, men have a far greater right against the lower animals than they have against men (EIVp37s1).

In this passage, ecological ears recoil from the resistance to "unmanly compassion" and the notion that we should "seek our own advantage." The phrases fall far afield from the interconnected and reverential or affectionate attitudes often assumed by a weak understanding of immanence. On a closer look, however, this same passage provides a way to begin thinking towards something more effectively ecological. First, consider that unity is accounted for in terms of this right, or *ius*, a justification of action that every being, by virtue simply of its being a share in God *or* Nature, has.[23] This right is not given; it is not an act in the sense of *donare,* or an endowment which adds being to a being. Rather, it is already immanent in all of the effects of nature's naturing. In so far as the cause has power, the effects mirror their cause in also having a degree of power, that is, a right to act. All beings have the *ius*, or "justification" to act. This is not something we have to claim. It is simply another face of saying what things are. Animals have a *ius* according to the kind of beings that they are. Indeed it will belong to the inclination of some animals to act to destroy others, and possibly to destroy humans; "[W]e have the same right against them as they have against us."

Each being is properly understood through its degrees of power according to its essence, not its goodness, its being "evil," or even in a difference in sentience. Spinoza illuminates this understanding in the preface to Part IV.

> So insofar as we refer all individuals in Nature to this genus, compare them to one another, and find that some have more being, or reality, than others, we say that some are more perfect than others. And insofar as we attribute something to them which involves negation, like a limit, an end, lack of power, and so on, we call them imperfect, because they do not affect our mind as much as those we call perfect, *and not because something is lacking in them which is theirs, or because Nature has sinned*. And whatever follows from the necessity of nature of the efficient cause happens necessarily (EIVpref, emphasis mine).

Neither blessings nor curses obtain in the natural world. There are only varying degrees of power, constantly affecting the fabric of the nexus in which we find ourselves and thus manifesting entities and events which affect us in varying ways.

This specific way in which Spinoza claims that we have varying degrees of power holds a key for the possibility of an environmental ethics. In so far as my power, (taking myself as an example as a being that can have *some* degree of power *in se*, in itself) comes from myself and strives to act as nothing other than what preserves the kind of thing that I am, it is indeed empowering as power, and as it evolves, it becomes for Spinoza what he describes as "intellectual love" and is inextricably linked to the notion of "joy." While this leap warrants and has elicited a critically important body of study, it will suffice for the purposes of the present argument to consider why this sort of love plays an important role for being ethical. First, Spinoza recognizes the disorienting effects of feeling as if one is constantly being affected by events outside of one's own control. "From what has been said it is clear that we are driven about in many ways by external causes, and that, like waves on the sea, driven by contrary winds, we toss about, not knowing our outcome and fate" (EIIIp59). The remedy is not in hoping or conspiring with a divinity that has a will to assist, but rather in understanding that in which one's true power consists. "When the mind considers itself and its power of acting, it rejoices, and does so the more, the more distinctly it imagines itself and its power of acting" (EIIIp58). This power of acting increases joy. "Joy is an affect by which the

body's power of acting is increased or aided. Sadness, on the other hand, is an affect by which the body's power of acting is diminished or restrained" (EIVp41). Joy entails an increase in the body's power, but there is a risk involved the more joy is tied to something external to our body. "Love is a joy accompanied by the idea of an external cause" (EIII, D6). When love is a joy accompanied by an external cause, it can be a good, though it can become excessive and deploy the imagination, a mode of knowing suspect to certain pitfalls if unaided by the intellect. When it is good, it is because it provides "a satisfaction in the lover on account of the presence of the thing loved, by which the lover's joy is strengthened or at least encouraged" (EIII, D6). Ideally, we are present to that which we love, rather than distant from it. Even better, when love can evolve toward something that requires *no* image of external causes of my joy, it evolves to intellectual love. In Part V of the *Ethics* Spinoza writes, "And then [knowledge] begets a love toward a thing immutable and eternal which we really fully possess, and which therefore cannot be tainted by any of the vices which are in ordinary love, but can always be greater and greater[.]"(EVp20dem).

Everything brought forth, natured or birthed, *en-joys* (internalizes joy) the necessity of being itself and being active. Further evidence abounds as Spinoza asserts that the act of knowing and the act of existing concurrently experience adequacy, and thereby increase the power of the one thinking adequately. "When the mind conceives itself and its power of acting, it rejoices, (by p53). But the mind necessarily considers itself when it conceives a true, or adequate, idea (by IIP43). But the mind conceives some adequate ideas (by IIP40S2). Therefore it also rejoices insofar as it conceives adequate ideas, that is (by P1), insofar as it acts" (EIIIp59). To cause or act, is to know and to preserve one's own essence. I suggest that this means that a strong reading of immanence, which allows us to accept the logical consequences of God *or* Nature's determined necessity, does not allow us to be resigned to a false perception of what is entailed by "necessity." Such a false or weak critique of determinism might worry that if everything follows from God's necessity, the ethical agent has no power over the course of events. But being present to nature's necessity and indifference correctly is precisely what frees the agent for loving what does exist and what does matter, namely, the power of self-preservation. And because no self is an independent, separate individual, love of self is always also love of my ability to understand what empowers or diminishes my being. What is empowering, is loving, that is, being present to the effects of nature's naturing as indifferent manifestations of diverse degrees of causal power, rather than appealing to transcendent or dualistic thoughts,

such as, reverence, ends, reasons, suspicions, or fears.

Another consequence of the logic of immanence becomes apparent when one takes seriously that immanence is not a kind of ethical injunction or suggestion, but a fact about what exists. In Part V, Spinoza asserts this limit, claiming that "No one can hate God" (EVp18). In his demonstration, he argues, "The idea of God which is in us is adequate and perfect (by IIp46, p47). So insofar as we consider God, we act (by IIIp3). Consequently (by IIIp59), there can be no sadness accompanied by the idea of God[.]" (EVp18dem). Consider "or Nature" in place of God in this passage. Insofar we consider, or attempt to conceptualize the order of god's effects at all, we are already acting, or existing. Being and knowing coincide, and mutually reinforce one another. The scholium to the same Proposition offers poignant instruction in relation to this point: "But, it can be objected, while we understand God to be the cause of all things, we thereby consider God to be the cause of sadness. To this I reply that insofar as we understand the causes of sadness, it ceases to be sadness. And so, insofar as we understand God to be the cause of sadness, we *rejoice*"(EVp18s, my emphasis). Here again we see that understanding the true causes of what affects us is related to joy, and that joy and love thereby respect the difference in degrees of causal power that comprise the diverse expressions of *natura naturans*.

At the end of Part IV, Spinoza asserts that "[...] we are a part of the whole of Nature, whose order we follow. If we understand this clearly and distinctly, [...] the better part of us, will be entirely satisfied with this, and will strive to persevere in that satisfaction. For insofar as we understand, we can want nothing except what is necessary [...] Hence, insofar as we understand these things rightly, the better parts of us agrees with the order of the whole of Nature" (EIV, D32). Clearly, immanence does entail that we are a part of the whole order of Nature, and are dependent on it. However, this passage also supports the contention that the complexity in the phrase God *or* Nature, it is not a simple identification which would afford us the ability to say "I am God," or "that tree is God." In a sense, this is not entirely incorrect, but it too easily dismisses the function of the term Nature, which is to indicate that we must approach God's effects differently than we do when contemplating God's essence itself. Nature can indeed be known and conceived, both in its sheer power of causing, *and* in the effects of its power. We can continue to see how attention to this aspect of the "Nature" component in God *or* Nature, is relevant to our development of a Spinozistic environmental ethics. Immanence grants us an "agreeable" (capitalizing on Spinoza's use of "agree" above) disposition towards thinking of our place in the *order* of nature, that is, thinking of ourselves

as without any special place, promise, or role over or beyond other natural beings. The key is to adequately conceive of this belonging without being tempted to stretch it into an assumption of friendship or kinship with these other natural beings. While it is right to say that Spinoza denies humans any special dominance over such things as animals or plants, consider his assertion that "Apart from men we know no singular thing in Nature whose mind we can enjoy, and which we can join to ourselves in friendship, or some kind of association" (EIVa). This means that "I," (the one seeking to be ethical) am not nature's friend. It means natural entities and events can destroy me. When I must assert that I love nature, I understand our sameness as dependent beings, all having *ius* or the impetus to act, and all having a difference in degrees of power. My ethical stance then opens up without setting nature at a distance such that I must save it, worship it, socially construct or perform it. I am ethical when I cease to think that caring for other kinds of beings requires me to give up my essence and take on theirs.[24]

IV. Conclusion

As exemplars of the destructive force of nature, earthquakes are lovable—according to our reading of select passages from the *Ethics*—because they are ontologically contiguous with the same power and force whereby all entities receive their being and through which all beings are understood, and secondly, love, understood through a Spinozistic lens, is that disposition of relating which understands power primordially, and is thus able to be ethical without belaboring judgments of pleasure or pain, or even holding nature at a distance in order to revere it as something to save. This does not mean that a natural disaster is not an object properly responded to with the emotions that make up the being of being human. But it ought not become something inconceivably beyond my paradigms as an ethicist or naturalist. It ought to be part of the total-field image of every ecological philosopher, as an empowering meditation on *how* nature is, rather than what it is.

Another effect of my reading, though it is one I have explored only in passing, is a brief exposure of ways in which the general reading of Spinoza by some environmental philosophy, including deep ecology, seems to me to be weak in that it tends to stop at the notion of immanence and assume that this deterministic sense of monism is a good in itself, or, these theories over-estimate the positivity perceived in the affects of joy and love, rather than attend to their embodied manifestation of increases or decreases of power. My position on these points however, is inconsequential to the

larger issue in this paper and I do not afford room for a proper analysis of these particular readings.[25] I simply propose that there is a better sense in which Spinozism might give us a way to be environmentally ethical. That sense, I have hoped to show, is in his consistency with the logic of immanence, as it attends to the reality that nature neither befriends us, nor really notices us at all.

While "Spinozism" certainly merits a more broad investigation than just an examination of the *Ethics,* it has also been suggested that precisely this text is able to respond to the complex difficulty in simply knowing what nature is. As long as philosophy has been happening, it has tried to say the essence of nature, to understand the human's relationship to it, and to raise the question of how we might behave in it. Part I of the *Ethics* contribute to this effort to know what nature is, but this knowing is also for Spinoza always an act of existing. Such an understanding of nature mobilizes ethical feeling insofar as we cannot expect to be done with our answer to the question of what nature is and move on. As soon as we think it, we are relating to it, we are increasing it (via the self-empowering effect of adequate reasoning), and we are aware of our dependence on it. If we leave our concept of nature alone, cease to think it and walk away, then nature is redefined and plundered by inadequately thinking beings. Climate change, regardless of whether it is an effect of such plundering, is underway, and it undermines any notions that imagine nature to be a kind of friend. In ways suggested above, such thinking falls short of being able to countenance nature's propensity for disaster. If we reduce our response to these changes in nature to modes of waiting, hoping, repenting, or choosing to be blissfully ignorant, then we violate our own essence as beings that both *are nature, and are dependent on it*. Within the text of Spinoza's *Ethics,* we have begun to see how notions of power and of love give us a way to maintain ourselves in our essence as such, and thus avoid dualistic and transcendent pathologies.

References

Berry, Thomas (1987). The Viable Human. *Revision*, *9*, (2).

Blanchot, Maurice (1986). *The Writing of the Disaster.* Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.

Daston, Lorraine, and Vidal, Fernando, (Eds.). (1994). *The Moral Authority of Nature.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

De Jonge, Eccy (2004). *Spinoza and Deep Ecology: Challenging Traditional Approaches to Environmentalism*. Hants, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Drengson, Alan, and Deval, Bil, (Eds.), (2008). *The Ecology of Wisdom: Writings by Arne Naess*. Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint Press.

Fraenkel, Carlos (2006). Maimonides' God and Spinoza's Deus sive Natura. *Journal of the History of Philosophy, 44,* (2).

Glazebrook, Trish (2000). From physis to techne: Heidegger on Aristotle, Galileo and Newton. *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, *38*.

Kohák, Erazim (1984). *The Embers and the Stars: A philosophical inquiry into the moral sense of nature.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

McKibben, Bill (2010). Eaarth: Making Life on a Tough New Planet. New York, NY: Henry Holt & Co..

Merchant, Carolyn (1980). *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution.* New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers.

Morton, Timothy (2010). *The Ecological Thought*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Naess, Arne (1986). The Deep Ecological Movement: Some Philosophical Aspects. In Zimmerman, Michael, (Ed.). *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Pfeiffer, Dale Allen (2006). Eating Fossil Fuels: Oil, Food and the Coming Crisis in Agriculture. Canada: New Society Publishers.

Sharp, Hasana (2011). *Spinoza and the Politics of Renaturalization*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Shiva, Vandana (1997). *Biopiracy.* Boston MA: South End Press.

Spinoza, Baruch (1677), *Ethics.* In Curley, Edwin, (Trans., Ed.), (1994). *A Spinoza Reader: The Ethics and Other Works*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

_____(1660). *Principles of Cartesian Philosophy*. In Shirley, Samuel, (Trns.), (1996). Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company.

_____(1670). *Theological Political Treatise*. In Shirley, Samuel, (Trns.), (1991). Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company.

Vogel, Stephen (1996). *Against Nature: The Concept of Nature in Critical*

Theory. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

White, Jr., Lynn (1967). The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis. *Science*, *155,* (3767). Reprinted in: Gruen, Lori, and Jamison, Dale, (Eds.). (1994), *Reflecting on Nature: Readings in Environmental Philosophy.* Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

(Endnotes)

1 A rather long list could be generated here. In a penetrating and thorough work that is particularly relevant to the present topic, Hasana Sharp has written that, "Although both the radical enlightenment traditions and deep ecology take inspiration from Spinozism and often deviate from the letter of Spinoza's text, it is important to guard against moralizing nature as a kind of authoritative design to which we ought to conform. Spinoza's naturalism forecloses appeals to either a spiritual of a natural order separate from the connection and order of finite things as they are" (Sharp, 2011; p. 4). Another compelling example of such critical inquiries into normalizing appeals to nature which informs much of my own thought here is: Daston, Lorraine & Vidal, Fernando, (1994); pp. 7-15. Another excellent example, and one to which I refer in the body of the essay is: Vogel, Stephen, (1996). Against Nature: The Concept of Nature in Critical Theory. Albany, New York: SUNY Press.

2 Several examples abound. One that stands out might be Lynn White Jr.'s essay "The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis," in which he proposes that "Possibly we should ponder the greatest radical in Christian history since Christ: Saint Francis of Assisi. […] His view of nature and of man rested on a unique sort of panpsychism of all things animate and inanimate, designed for the glorification of their transcendent Creator[.]" (White Jr., Lynn, 1967, p. 23). Although White himself is critical of some forms of transcendence, his view of nature as an entity through which a god might be glorified typifies the sorts of virtues often extolled by transcendent ethics.

3 Eccy de Jonge has described the complicated identity of this movement succinctly: "Since many philosophers who define themselves as sympathetic to deep ecology hold opposing views as to what it is, and yet still use the term 'deep ecology', we shall use 'deep ecology' to refer to a philosophy of ecology which is deeper than environmental ethics or normative approaches to environmentalism. […] [Arne] Naess argued that shallow ecology focused on 'the health and affluence of people in the developed world', in contrast to deep ecology which viewed humanity as inseparable from nature, maintaining a non-anthropocentric bias. It was the non-anthropocentricity of deep ecology that, Naess argued, distinguished it from shallow (or reform) ecology." (De Jonge, 2004; p.1).

4 The metaphors allude to such early modern texts as those critically exposed by Merchant, (1980). She cites several writings in which Nature takes on a

sexualized and oppressed female identity, such as in Francis Bacon's De Dignitate et Augmentis Scientiarum (1623). Her citation of Bacon reads: "For you have but to follow and as it were hound nature in her wanderings […]. Neither ought a man to make scruple of entering and penetrating into [nature's] holes and corners, when the inquisition of truth is his whole object[.]" (Merchant, 1980; p. 168). Thomas Berry, (1987), reflects deep-ecological awareness of the contemporary remnants of such logic. He claims that "[…] A deep cultural pathology has developed in Western society and has now spread throughout the planet. A savage plundering of the entire earth is taking place through industrial exploitation."

5 To view well-conceived and recent expositions of the data confirming that such a change is at hand, see: Pfeiffer, Dale Allen, (2006). See also, McKibben, Bill (2010). In this essay, I am not invested in arguing whether such a change is real, new, caused, or anything else. I am simply asserting that nature is increasingly unpleasant, and that it is changing. Nor am I the first scholar to question what this experience means for philosophizing about nature. Timothy Morton has intimated that; "Nature as such appears when we lose it, and it's known as a loss. Along with the disorientation of the modern world goes an ineffable sadness. […] Ecological disaster is a warlike experience- the Pentagon is concerned about the political consequences of climate disruption. The total destruction of nuclear war is upon is, in an ultra-slow-motion version. We look around and see what we are losing as a 'thing' that is disappearing from our grasp and out from under it our feet" (Morton, 2010; p. 133).

6 In particular relevance to the present essay, consider as an example Arne Naess' suggestion that "Conservation strategies are more eagerly implemented by people who love what they are conserving, and who are convinced that what they love is intrinsically valuable. Such lovers will not want to hide these attitudes and values, rather they will increasingly give voice to them in public" (Naess, 2001; p. 188).

7 Although it would be neither adequate nor entirely wrong to say that the disaster about which Blanchot muses could be imagined to be a natural one, this beautifully complicated text attends in an intriguing way to the difficulty in thinking what is both an origin and an end. He writes, "To think the disaster (if this possible, and it is not possible inasmuch as we suspect that the disaster is thought) is to no longer have any future in which to think it. […] The disaster is not our affair and has no regard for us; it is the heedless unlimited; it cannot be measured in terms of failure or as pure and simple loss." (Blanchot, 1986; p. 1-2). The text to which I allude regarding Saint Anselm, is his early instantiation of the ontological argument for god's existence in the second and third chapters of the Proslogium. Retreived from http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/anselm-proslogium.asp#CHAPTER%20II.

8 "Essential aspect" translates τό είδος, (6e), in: Fowler, Harold North, (Trns.). (1914, 2006). Plato, Volume I., Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

9 "Form" translates τό είδος, (6e), in: Hamilton, Edith, and Cairns, Huntington, (Trns.). (1961, 1989). Plato: The Collected Dialogues, Bollingen Series. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

10 "Model" translates παραδείγματι (6e), in: Fowler, Harold North, (Trns.). (1914, 2006). Plato, Volume I., Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

11 Heraclitus, Fragment 123, (McKay, Dave, Trns.). "φγσις δε καθ Ήράκλειτον κργπτεσθαι φιλέ." Retrieved from http://www.davemckay.co.uk/philosophy/heraclitus/heraclitus.fragments.php.

12 Aristotle. Physica I.2, 184b 25, 185a 1 – 19, and I.7., 190a-191a. In McKeon, Richard, (Ed.), and Hardie, R.P., and Gaye, R. K., (Trns.), (1941). New York, NY: Random House, and Oxford, England: Oxford University Press. Here I seek only a brief reflection on a well-known and rich discussion of the essence of nature with special attention to Aristotle's foundational deployment of "motion" and "change" as descriptors of natural entities. In the passages to which I refer in Book I of the Physics, physis and genesis are at work in understanding both Being and beings, which resonates with the effort to grasp the nature of both nature itself and natural things in dynamic terms.

13 Several sources have contributed to scholarship in this area. I am precisely interested in exploiting the connotations of "birth" as indicated in the etymological explication in the following Oxford English Dictionary entry: "nature, n., Etymology: Anglo-Norman and Old French, Middle French, French nature active force that establishes and maintains the order of the universe, group of properties or characteristics that define objects (early 12th cent.), sort, species, race (early 12th cent.), attributes, innate disposition of a person (late 12th cent.), constitution, principle of life that animates and sustains the human body (early 13th cent.), genitals (early 13th cent.; also in Anglo-Norman in spec. senses 'menstrual discharge', 'semen'), and their etymon classical Latin nātūra birth, constitution, character, the genitals, the creative power governing the world, the physical world, the natural course of things, naturalness in art, in post-classical Latin also the divine and human nature of Christ (6th cent.), the need to defecate and urinate (1300 in a British source) < nāt-, past participial stem of nāscī to be born (see nascent adj.) + -ūra-ure suffix1. Compare Spanish natura (1207), Italian natura (a1250), Portuguese natura (13th cent.)."OED Online (2011). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, retrieved from http://www.oed.com/viewdictionaryentry/Entry/125353.

14 A key and relevant passage can be found in: Spinoza, Baruch, (1660). Principles of Cartesian Philosophy. In Shirley, Samuel, (Trns.), (1996). Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company. Spinoza claims, "Motion, having only God for its cause (Prop.12 Part 2), never has of itself any force to exist (Ax. 10 Part I), but at every moment continues, as it were, to be created by God (by what is demonstrated in connection with the Axiom just cited). Therefore, although we attend only to the nature of the motion, we can never attribute to it, as pertaining to its nature, a duration that can be conceived as greater than another duration."

(Spinoza, 1660, Shirley, 1996; p. 65). Another relevant passage reads: "So far we have been dealing with the nature of essence of extension. The fact that it exists such as we conceive it, created by God, we have proved in the last Proposition of Part I, and from Prop. 12 Part I, it follows that it is now preserved by the same power by which it was created." (Spinoza, 1660, Shirley, 1996; p. 55).

15 This semantic and etymological connection has not been bridged here for the first time. The fruits of several studies in this regard have tended towards phenomenological support for grasping nature as an acting being, and even a as a region 'held open' between what Heidegger argues are essential tensions between 'world' and 'earth. I have more fully explicated this allusion to Heidegger's aesthetics in: Sturdevant, Molly (2000). Holding Open: An Explication of Heidegger's Aesthetics. In Current Studies in Phenomenology and Hermeneutics,1. archived on-line only: http://karljaspers.org/csph/2000/molly.htm. Scholarship on this point has been prolific. Especially influential to my work are the following: Glazebrook, Trish, (2000), and, Kohák, Erazim, (1984).

16 Spinoza, Baruch. Ethics (1677). In: A Spinoza Reader: The Ethics and Other Works. Curley, Edwin,(Trns.), (1994). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Hereafter references to passages from the Ethics will be made within the body of the essay only, according the standard abbreviations for Spinoza's Ethics; E will designate the Ethics, the Part will be noted by roman numerals, e.g., "II," followed by the number of the Proposition in arabic numerals, e.g., "p27." The formal Definitions of Part IV will be noted by a capital "D," and scholia and corollaries will be noted in abbreviated form.

17 Hasana Sharp has raised the issue as well, noting that "Contemporary political theory is overwhelmingly concerned with questions of justice and legitimation rather than with ontological accounts of what kinds of beings we are. Normative political theory, for good reasons, is also wary of deriving political principles from nature or metaphysics. Contemporary debates occur largely within the categories of normative political and moral thought, which pertain to conventional human practices and the criteria for just procedures within institutions that engender and regulate what Hegel calls 'ethical life.' As a result of this powerful philosophical tradition, we lack a sophisticated political language to address either our own naturalness or our relationship to nonhuman nature." (Sharp, 2011; p. 10).

18 Spinoza claims that "The will and the intellect are one and the same" (EIIp49 cor.) "[...] men are deceived in that they think themselves free, [...] an opinion which consists only in this, that they are conscious of their actions and ignorant of the causes by which they are determined. This, then, is their idea of freedom-that they do not know any cause of their actions" (EIIp35 schol.).

19 For an indispensible study of the notion of Deus sive Natura which critically analyzes the "sive" and takes the theological history of the concept as a priority over the concern with Natura, see: Fraenkel, Carlos, (2006); pp. 169-215.

20 Spinoza, Baruch. Ethics (1677). In: A Spinoza Reader: The Ethics and Other Works. Curley, Edwin,(Trns.), (1994). Letter 32; IV/170, p. 82.

21 This is itself a complex notion in Spinoza and one which cannot be thoroughly unpacked here. In brief, Spinoza defines hope in EIII D12 as: "Hope is an inconstant joy, born of the idea of a future or past thing whose outcome we in some sense doubt." It is compelling to think that hope, on this reading, is not the force of optimism that it is often taken to be and one which tempts the environmental philosopher. However, in being inconstant and plagued with doubt, the affect of hope diminishes one's power rather than increases it. "An affect which is called a passion is a confused idea[.]" Entertaining passive affects means that one's "power of acting, or force of existing, is […] diminished." (EIII General Definitions).

22 Arne Naess attempted an apologetic interpretation of this same passage in: Drengson, Alan, and Deval, Bill, (Eds.), (2008). The Ecology of Wisdom: Writings by Arne Naess. Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint Press.

23 Spinoza himself considers ius in several places, namely in the Theological-Political Treatise where ius is a law or statute that is ordained by humans for themselves, in contrast to the "absolute sense" of a law, in which the ius follows from the "very necessity of the thing." See: Spinoza, Baruch, (1670), Theological Political Treatise. In, Shirley, Samuel, (Trns.), (1991). Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., Chapter IV, p. 49. The Latin Text for the passage I cite in the essay, which includes ius as the translation of the "right" humans have over animals and vice versa, is as follows: "Atque haec illa sunt, quae in schol. prop. 18. huius partis demonstrare promisi, ex quibus apparet legem illam de non mactandis brutis magis vana superstitione et muliebri misericordia, quam sana ratione fundatam esse. Docet quidem ratio nostrum utile quaerendi necessitudinem cum hominibus iungere; sed non cum brutis aut rebus, quarum natura a natura humana est diversa, sed idem ius, quod illa in nos habent, nos in ea habere. Imo quia uniuscuiusque ius virtute seu potentia uniuscuiusque definitur, longe maius homines in bruta, quam haec in homines ius habent." (4P37s1, emphasis mine). The Latin is reproduced from the following on-line text: http://users.telenet.be/rwmeijer/spinoza/ethpars4.htm.

24 Similar currents have been articulated from the perspective of the biological sciences. With a provocative similarity to the language of Spinoza's Ethics, biologist Vandana Shiva (1997), has asserted that: "Self-healing and repair is another characteristic of living systems that derives from complexity and self-organization. The freedom for diverse species and ecosystems to self-organize is the basis of ecology. Ecological stability derives from the ability of species and ecosystems to adapt, evolve, and respond. In fact, the more degrees of freedom available to a system, the more a system can express its self-organization. External control reduces the degrees of freedom a system has, thereby reducing capacity to organize and renew itself." (Shiva, 1997; p. 31).

25 Examples of the sorts of interpretations I have in mind include those in Drengson and Deval (2008); pp. 230-251.

BOOK REVIEWS

Starting with Locke
By Greg Forster
Continuum International Publishing Group, 31 March 2011. xi + 159. ISBN 978-1-84706-583-4. Paperback.
$19.95

Greg Forster's *Starting with Locke* (Continuum, 2011) argues that Locke's theology, views of religious toleration, political and epistemological thought all had something in common. They were answers to how a society torn apart by religious differences could become more peaceable. Religious fragmentation caused by the Reformation, what Forster terms "the earthquake," (4) brought on social conflicts, violence, wars, and divisions along the proliferating lines of religious differentiation and identification. These divisions and conflicts were motivated by the underlying assumption that peaceable societies could only be secured if members had shared religious worldviews and commitments, but "after the Reformation, the assumption of a shared faith was removed" (122). "The earthquake" was then "the catastrophic breakdown of social consensus about the intersection of religion, morality, and politics" (2). Locke, affected by these developments, strove to reconcile politics and religion and to find new grounds of political membership. Those new grounds were, to use Rawls's phrase, related to the idea that "comprehensive conceptions of the good" were not legitimate bases of political or civil coercion or dispute (yet, to be sure, Forster does not make any connections between Rawls and Locke). New criteria of political membership could then be argued for, where agreements and disagreements were limited to civic matters and where religion was privatised so that mutual agreement could occur even in the face of deeper, metaphysical disagreements. Forster argues, then, that the motivational underpinning to Locke's thought was to help "people of mutually hostile religious beliefs build a common citizenship" (2) or again, to develop "some account of how to build moral consensus in the absence of religious consensus" (146). Contemporary societies, Forster notes, are still grappling with reaching consensus among disagreements and with the issue of how metaphysically far political disputes should go, so the problems that Locke chose to tackle are akin to our own and this is one reason why Locke is still relevant.

Another central issue for Locke, argues Forster, was the appropriate limits of political power, which, since Henry VIII, appeared, by virtue

of Locke's Whig politics, to be increasingly abused by English kings. In reaction to this awareness and to the felt possibility of religious persecution under a new variety of power-hungry Catholic monarchs, Locke maintained that power was not the basis of political authority and rather that its business was to secure justice, or natural law. And by putting forward a non divine right theory of political authority and by developing a view of political legitimacy that starkly opposed tyranny, this enabled Locke to develop a "revolutionary politics" that justified overthrowing predatory despots.

As one might surmise from the above, Forster is concerned with "reconstructing the real Locke," the "real, historical Locke," who has been for two centuries "reduced to a dry peddler of airy abstractions" (x). However, the publisher Continuum sets the overarching aim of the book in place. The book is part a philosophical series that "offers clear, concise and accessible introductions to key thinkers in philosophy… [and these series are] ideal for first-year students starting out in philosophy" (ii). As this is the promised purpose of the book, I will review how adequately it meets this purpose.

Before going there, I should note that Forster is chiefly concerned with summarising Locke's thought within the particular historical context of Locke's times. By Locke's times, Forster means the English Civil War in response to the Reformation, Locke's stay at Christ Church, Oxford, Locke's friendship with Anthony Ashley Cooper, Ashley's participation in the Cabal Ministry, Charles II and the Exclusion Bill, Locke's and Ashley's time in the Netherlands, the Glorious Revolution, and Parliament's officiating the Bill of Rights. I note this because Forster does not aim at demonstrating connections between Locke and liberal theory and societies. Nor could Forster fall into a group that C.B. Macpherson pointed out in his introduction to the *Second Treatise of Government*—where Locke provided an "acceptable theoretical fall-back for publicists who accept the modern liberal state and society uncritically."(Hackett Publishing Company, 1980, vii). While Forster does not fall into such a grouping, he is also not critical of Locke. To the contrary, he regularly paints him as a down-to-earth innovator.

In terms of Locke's biography, Forster capably describes Locke's transformation from having Anglican theological and political persuasions (that is, at the time) in his early days at Oxford to becoming a constitutional monarchist with a "revolutionary politics" in his later days, as much influenced by his friendship with Lord Ashley and his experiences in the Netherlands. Being that Forster's Locke is concerned with finding moral consensus amid religious divisions, Forster's reconstructing of "the real

Locke" involves illustrating how Locke's corpus sought to create a model of moral consensus amid religious hostilities. It is for this reason that a good part of the book covers the intersection between Locke's theological and political thought (Chapter 3, 63-86). Here, Forster writes on Locke's views of religious toleration and its basic limit, Locke's dismissive views on tradition as properly grounding religious belief, a discussion on why Locke thought faith and reason to be compatible, and the proper division between religion and the state. This chapter could be used for newcomers to the seminary or for a philosophy of religion class where the focus was on social matters.

While I think Forster successfully offers a "clear, concise, and accessible introduction" to the historical Locke, I am, in the end, less convinced that the book is *ideal* for the first-year philosophy student. For example, let me take Forster's discussion of Locke's epistemology. Forster writes that Locke "provides a detailed account (which we need not review here) on the various different types of ideas in each of these categories, and of how simpler ideas combine to form more complex mental structures. Locke's emphasis on the central importance of ideas in epistemology was unprecedented" (52). The latter could be an interesting claim were Forster to discuss Locke's philosophical understanding of ideas, but this is dismissed by Forster for its irrelevancy. Forster has a chapter devoted to Locke's epistemology, but his discussion of ideas goes no further than saying that ideas are "anything the mind is directly aware of thinking about" (52). This move impairs the reader's ability to comprehend the *philosophical* meaning of Forster's *further* discussions on Locke's epistemology. As a matter of mere accounting, there is no discussion of (the passivity of) simple ideas, ideas versus qualities, and hence, no discussion of primarily/secondary qualities or the corpuscularian hypothesis/epistemological atomism. Nor is there mention of the origin, retaining, comparing, abstracting, compounding, or discerning of ideas as what the human mind does in its reasoning and understanding. No matter how one might go about discussing Locke's understanding of ideas, the reader will not know what Locke means by them by the end of the book.

Perhaps more interestingly, Forster's discussion on Locke's epistemology does not contain the word "empiricism" or the phrase "Classical British Empiricism." Of course, one could discuss the idea of empiricism without using the word, but Locke's empiricism, one way or the other, is not represented. Aside from Forster's discussion on Locke's view on miracles, which he writes can be described as an "evidence-based approach to faith," (79) I am doubtful that a first-year philosophy student

with little background, after reading this book, could distinguish between rationalism and empiricism—or know that Locke was an empiricist. This raises another point. Forster, in more than one place, describes Locke's focus on ideas to be unprecedented. To memorize this without an argument may do a disservice to the beginner interested in Locke's thought (who after all need not be a student). For Locke is placed in the 'Way of Ideas' tradition (i.e., we are only immediately aware of ideas), whose popular minister was Descartes, and Locke certainly makes use of Descartes' notion of clear and distinct ideas in the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Speaking of Descartes, Forster's only formal discussion on the man portrays him as a rather absurd fellow doubting his existence, nightgown attired—so much then for arousing curiosity in the beginner's mind in he who is often identified as the first modern philosopher. The reader *will* know that Locke and Descartes are not philosophical comrades. The basic reason for this, Forster tells us, is that Descartes was too engaged with those 'airy abstractions'— so one will not know their philosophical breaking points.

Forster's states that Locke's attack against innate ideas (where the target in this case is Descartes) is a "subtle argument" (50) and the rest of the discussion is subtle. For example, consider the passage,

> Instead, Locke is simply arguing that beliefs undergo a process of discovery and formation. The doctrine of "innate principles" implies that some beliefs transcend such processes. Locke wants to establish that all beliefs are subject to some sort of constructive process within the mind, by which the mind figures out what it believes (51).

Locke wants to establish a foundational epistemology upon which any science could be based (yet Forster states that the primary reason for Locke's epistemological project was to discover the differences between opinion and knowledge, which Locke is concerned with, but not first and foremost—and one may say so because Locke tells us what his aims are in Book I, Chapter I, of the *Essay*). This being Locke's main aim, his attack against innate ideas is not a matter of subtlety—it is essential and decisive for Locke in order to go further in the *Essay*. I am unclear as to why one needs to say to beginners in philosophy that Locke's arguments against innate ideas are somewhat understated. To the contrary, Locke offers a slew of arguments in the *modus tollens* format against innate ideas, which makes those arguments at least structurally straightforward. Most importantly, the upshot of Locke's attack against innate ideas is not represented— that the human mind is a *tabula rasa* and that experience and observation source all

the operations of reasoning and are the bases of all knowledge. Rather, the upshot of Forster's discussion on innate ideas is that we nevertheless "have innate powers of reasoning and perception" (which sounds Kantian, and, in Locke's language, one might instead say 'innate capacities of reflection and sensation') and that "we're not born [already believing in something] – we have to go through a process of realization" (51). Whatever the reader might take that to mean, this nevertheless eschews the important philosophical point—Locke's empiricism.

Finally, while Forster has several sections discussing Locke's understanding of the degrees/limits of knowledge (although he doesn't explain, as Locke does in Book 4, Chapter 2 of the *Essay* that those degrees fall into the clusters of intuitive, demonstrative, and sensitive) the neophyte will not know what I would regard, if I may say so, to be two fundamental points about Locke's view on the limits of knowledge. First, the *definition* of knowledge as being a matter of indubitableness and is no more than the *perception* of the agreeability or repugnancy between *ideas*. Second, that, for Locke, natural philosophy cannot be made into a natural science because we can no have no *clear and distinct idea* of the genuine, and not merely qualitative, quintessence of substances. Rather, the conclusion of Forster's discussion on Locke's view of substances is that "we should not reify these concepts [of essences] into rigid categories, because we lack the power to directly perceive these essences" (57) and that "The real workings of the physical universe are much too mysterious, in Locke's view, for anyone [to decipher anything about]" (58). Had Forster said that Locke holds that humans *only* have immediate cognitive access to ideas, this important point could have been clearer, as this could have helped to explain *why* Locke maintained "we can never mentally connect to the world" (53), which Forster just asserts. In that case, the reader would have known that a central part of Locke's worldview (the chapter on Locke's epistemology is called "Locke's Worldview") is that there are ideas and everything else in the world, where the latter is an idea's causal basis and its representation. In sum, Locke's epistemology is unavoidably based on a doctrine of ideas, and as this is not addressed, the clarity of Forster's discussions on Locke's epistemology is diluted.

I have two major misgivings with Forster's presentment of Locke's political views. First, Forster states several times over that "the whole justification for creating government in the first place…is because [people are] bias[ed] in their own favor" (127) and this without addition. The careful first-year student in philosophy, I think, will find this claim a bit weak without stating what this bias involves. Locke clearly states in Chapter 9

of the *Second Treatise* (section 124, 125 and 126) that people in the state of nature face three main "inconveniencies," related to bias, which civil society corrects. The beginner will not know what these inconveniencies are.

Second, Forster writes, "seeking God's will is the main business of human life" (77) and this without much addition. Locke is clear in Chapter 2 of the *Second Treatise* that the 'main business of human life' involves discerning and working towards one's own private 'mission' that God has sent him or her into the world to do, and so, no one should unjustifiably infringe upon that private mission. As the 'main business of human life' is to discern and work towards one's 'God-given mission,' this is why the purpose of government is to preserve one's property, life, health, and liberty—as Locke understands those to be necessary conditions in order to live out one's individual life plan. The intimacy between Locke's understanding of the human good and the proper role of government—which, as Locke writes over and over again, is to secure private property—is not made (the latter point, independently, is not made).

Some fundamental oversights, I think, are made in this book and I have highlighted some of them. However, this should not discourage. The book offers a bright, accessible, and concise biography of Locke; connections between Locke's times and thought are crisply made. The last chapter effectively presents Locke's "revolutionary politics," its influence on the Declaration of Independence how this was seminal in inaugurating the 'era of revolutions.' This implies that the book could be used in introductory humanities or history classes. Forster skilfully and interestingly presents the connections between history and the history of ideas, and perhaps is best at giving one a sense of *the spirit of the times*. However, the book is less successful in meeting its intended purpose— an ideal philosophical introduction to a philosopher's thought. My corrective, for what it's worth, is conservative. An introductory philosophical text, which, arguably, has become less popular, should be methodological and carefully explain principal philosophical premises and arguments based on, I think, key segments of a philosopher's text, largely done within a philosophical context. Although, no doubt, blending depth with information for beginners is no easy task.

Eric Comerford *Michigan State University*

HAVING THE WORLD IN VIEW: ESSAYS ON KANT, HEGEL, AND SELLARS

Having the World in View: Essays on Kant, Hegel, and Sellars
By John Henry McDowell
Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2009. Pp. xi + 285. ISBN 978-0-674-03165-4. Hbk
Hbk £30.95 ($41.50)

In his recent collection of essays titled *Having the World in View: Essays on Kant, Hegel, and Sellars* (*HWV*), John McDowell draws on the work of Kant, Hegel, and Sellars in an attempt to clarify, *inter alia*, the cooperation between our abilities to make up our minds and to experience the sensible world of which we are a part. (Unless otherwise noted, all references here in are to *HWV*.)

As Kant, Hegel, and Sellars all recognize, clarifying the relationship between our mutually dependent capacities for rational judgment and for sensory intuition is integral to understanding not simply how our categorial thought is rationally constrained, but also how we think determinately at all (p. 37). Specifically, a satisfactory account of the relationship between our perceptual and judgmental capacities would enable us to make sense of intentionality for rational subjects, i.e., the way our empirical intuitions open us up to things we can think about. In this way intentionality explains thought's answerability to the world; it is what enables thinking that aims at empirical judgment to be correct or incorrect. And unless such thinking can at some point be correct or incorrect, it is not thinking but meaningless babbling – or an 'inner' analogue thereof. So if we can make sense of intentionality, then we can lay skeptical worries to rest; we can see how 'thought and the world must be understood together' (p. 143). This in brief is McDowell's semantical route to realism, or rather his route to 'an idealism that does not diverge from common-sense realism' (p. 143).

McDowell recognizes that it takes certain constraints – like the laws of logic and empirical facts – to be freed from the immeasurably greater constraint of mindlessness. For a detailed discussion of enabling constraints, see Essay 5. In Essay 9 McDowell makes this point with respect to objective ethical norms. McDowell thus opposes Pippin's constructivist interpretation of Hegel, which ultimately struggles to make sense of changes in ethical beliefs as genuine improvements.

With respect to perceptual beliefs, experience must allow the world to stand in judgment over our attempts to make up our minds. Accordingly, McDowell agrees with Sellars that empirical descriptions of sensory consciousness fail to capture the normative role that sensory consciousness must play for empirical judgments to be thoughts at all (p. 5). When I

believe that there is a book in front of me because I see a book in front of me, this 'because' indicates a rational relation to what I should think rather than a causal relation to what I do think (p. 127, cf. *Mind and World*, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1996, p. 68). For experience to justify rather than merely cause belief, for it to function normatively like this, it must, on the one hand, be receptive so that it *opens* us up to the world; and it must, on the other hand, be categorically formed, i.e., formed in a manner that opens *us* as rational beings up to the world. The former dimension of experience relates to the 'downward dependence' of conceptual capacities on sensory intuitions, contra unconstrained conherentism. The latter dimension relates to the 'upward dependence' of sensory consciousness on conceptual capacities, contra traditional (naïve) empiricism.

Although *HWV* is a collection of essays that each can stand alone, McDowell's affirmation of Kant's insight into intentionality ties most of these essays together. While it is not Kant but Hegel whose outlook McDowell ultimately endorses, one of the keys to McDowell's purportedly Hegelian view is nevertheless an adequate grasp of the co-extensiveness of the understanding and sensibility, especially the categorial form of intuitions.

McDowell maintains that if experiences reveal the way things are, then those experiences entitle us to beliefs about those things in an indefeasible, non-inferential way (p. 131). This contention is intuitively plausible. However, it is hardly uncontroversial given that veridical experiences can in principle be indistinguishable from non-veridical counterfeits like hallucinations. We cannot determine *a priori* which experiences are veridical. And dreaming, to take one example of a counterfeit, precludes the possibility of carrying out genuinely empirical procedures to determine whether one is dreaming. On McDowell's line, nevertheless, the important question is how something like intuitions can figure into our thinking in a non-mysterious way. For the answer, McDowell follows Hegel and Sellars in picking up on the relationship Kant identifies between our sensory capacities and our judgmental capacities.

In a key passage from the so-called 'metaphysical deduction' in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (trans. P. Guyer and A. Wood, Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1998, 79/B 104) Kant propounds the idea that passively elicited sensory representations or intuitings of particular objects (for self-conscious beings such as ourselves) owe their unified form to our conceptual capacities, which derive from our 'spontaneous' capacities for reasoning. Intuitions differ from judgments, not so much

in their logical structure, but in their passivity. As perceptual experiences are involuntary actualizations of *conceptual* capacities, McDowell agrees with Sellars that they should be modeled on linguistic performances in which claims are literally made. Hence Sellars's contention that perceptual experiences 'contain' claims in a way. The content of sensory intuitions of particular objects may thus be expressed with singular demonstrative phrases like 'that cube'. Against the Myth of the Given, McDowell additionally affirms Hegel's and Sellars's understanding of the holistic nature of conceptual capacities: we must have many concepts to have any. (Kant also confirms this fact but does not explore it to the extent that Hegel or Sellars does.) An intimately related point, which is crucial for McDowell's project, is that conceptual capacities are essentially rational. As sensory intuitions have conceptual structure, we find the holism and the rationality of conceptual capacities in the mere intuition of a red round object – veridical or not. Such an experience requires being capable of exercising an active spontaneity of understanding by judging, e.g., that it is not green and that the lighting conditions are not unusual. Not just any parroting will due. This latter judgment about the lighting conditions rests in turn on a grasp of the distinction between 'is' and 'looks', which essentially involves a notion of 'truth'. With respect to the former judgment, taking something to be 'red' implies taking it to be 'colored'. And having a grip on 'color' requires having a grip on many different colors. On McDowell's idealism, there is arguably no difference between the conceptual order and the real order here. They are two sides of 'the one and the many' coin. Disappointingly, however, McDowell fails (at least in this collection) to relate the holistic implications of his conceptualism to Kant's case for the 'objectively validity' of reason's ideal of systematicity.

Notwithstanding the large extent that Hegel, Sellars, and McDowell embrace Kant's account of intentionality, they all reject it as ultimately subjectivist. But they do so not because concepts are imposed on the contents of our impressions, for there are no raw impressions of things without categorial unity; impressions are themselves passively elicited actualizations of conceptual capacities. By McDowell's lights, in the B Deduction Kant successfully addresses an objection that the pure concepts of the understanding are so imposed on intuitions (Essay 4). Rather, Hegel, Sellars, and McDowell reject Kant's account because our concepts apply only to spatial and/or temporal objects. This would be fine except Kant claims that spatio-temporality characterizes not things themselves but only our forms of representation. In other words, the genuine objectivity of our empirical judgments is restricted in Kant's account by the ideality of space

and time.

From here though, McDowell follows Hegel in a way that seems to distance him (McDowell) from Sellars. Whereas Hegel, according to McDowell, reconceived the receptivity of sensibility as 'a "moment" in the free self-determination of reason' (p. 87), Sellars holds that the assimilation of sensations to thoughts – i.e., the failure to preserve a sense in which receptivity is 'sheer receptivity' (non-conceptual) – has either unconstrained idealism (in the pejorative sense of the term) or reductive empiricist phenomenalsim as its consequence. Accordingly, Sellars thinks Kant should have understood sensory intuitions in two strictly distinct ways: as non-conceptual representations and conceptual representations of the same physical object. For those who are wary of idealism, a label that Hegel himself only uses infrequently to characterize his view, McDowell may seem to put undue emphasis on the upward dependence of intuitions on conceptual capacities. While McDowell tempers his conceptualism in the final essay, 'Avoiding the Myth of the Given', he continues to disagree with Sellars that sensory intuitions should be understood as both conceptual and non-conceptual. Sellars has various reasons for maintaining his double-aspected view of sensory intuitions – such as, (1) experience is richer than our conceptual repertoire can be and (2) the groundlessness of a non-veridical, hallucinatory episode (it's disconnectedness from reality) is not an instance of misunderstanding or misconception. However, McDowell has persuasive conceptualist responses or at least supplies the resources for such responses. On (1) for example, insofar as we can discursively isolate contents of experience, those contents must already be presented with a discoverable identity. This implies that they must be presented in a unified, categorial form, a form that mere sensation cannot provide independently of conceptual capacities on which the productive imagination draws (p. 264, cf. *Mind and World*, p. 57).

With respect to McDowell's divergence from Kant in favor of Hegel, I have some critical notes. McDowell must inevitably neglect important issues, for only so much can be said in a single volume, let alone in self-standing essays that have been collected for a volume. But I believe there are some crucial issues that McDowell should not have passed over without comment.

One such issue is Kant's conceptions of space and time. Kant's view may be counterintuitive; it may contravene 'common sense realism'. But since McDowell fails to explain why we should believe that space and time are not merely our forms of representation, McDowell has done nothing more than merely assert that Kant's project ultimately fails. Besides, Kant

thought his view accommodates what we might now call 'common sense realism'. Take this statement by McDowell, for example: 'Kant's Deduction would have worked if Kant had not attributed brute-fact externality to the spatial and temporal form of our sensibility' (p. 85). It would have worked to do what? Confirm the view we've assumed to be true? We can criticize Kant for false advertising, as he takes himself to have averted the threat of subjective idealism. We can criticize Kant for a careless use of terms like 'objective' when he discusses the 'objective validity' of the categories only within the context of our forms of intuition. But this will give us no reason to believe that the conditions of the possibility of knowledge of things tell us about the conditions of the possibility of things themselves.

McDowell may be correct that 'in [Kant's] picture it remains a sort of brute fact about us . . . that the pure intuitions that reflect the forms of our sensibility are intuitions of space and time' (p. 76). From this McDowell may be correct to conclude that '[t]ranscendental idealism, which is just this insistence that the apparent spatiality and temporality of our world derive from the way our sensibility is formed, stands revealed as subjective idealism' (ibid.). But this merely describes Kant's critical philosophy negatively. No rejection of Kant's transcendental idealism should neglect to mention, as McDowell does, that Kant has a thesis that effectively presents us with a false dilemma: 'we can know *a priori* of things [e.g., that they are spatial and/or temporal] only what we ourselves have put into them' (*Critique of Pure Reason*, B xxii note).

Something else goes missing in McDowell's treatment of Kant. Whereas Kant addresses the question of 'whether' we know, McDowell finds this unnecessary because this question is supposedly motivated by non-compulsory skeptical worries. Instead, McDowell seems to hold that skeptical worries will prove unwarranted once we get clear about 'how' we know. But if non-veridical experiences share with veridical experiences the quality of being categorially formed – i.e., the quality that purportedly explains 'how' – then answering 'how' cannot suffice for much against skepticism if McDowell wants to maintain that non-inferential perceptual beliefs can have an indefeasible base.

One of McDowell's few shortcomings is his tendency to paint the philosophical picture in broad brush strokes. In addition to his cursory criticism of Kant's idealism, his endorsement of Hegel's understanding of the relationship between thought and being is vague. For instance, McDowell does not misrepresent Hegel's view when he says that Hegel sees the receptivity of sensibility as 'a "moment" in the free self-determination of reason'. But without more precision readers are unlikely

to understand how radically Hegel's view diverges from a 'common sense' view. 'Passivity' should not be a term that leaps to mind when considering Hegel's understanding of sense experience. Hegel concludes that sensations alone do not open us up to independent unified objects. Instead, *in an act of thought*, albeit a non-deliberate act, the self differentiates sensed contents from itself and *posits* those contents over against itself (*Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*. *Being Part Three of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (1830), trans. W. Wallace and A. V. Miller. Oxford, United Kingdom: Clarendon Press, 1971, §413 and Addition, p. 153). Contra McDowell (p. 73), Hegel agrees with Kant that much of the action happens beneath the surface of everyday awareness.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned shortcomings, McDowell's *HWV* is richly insightful into how we can be realists on various fronts. Although I would not recommend this book to students coming to Kant, Hegel, or Sellars for the first time, the fresh and incisive interpretations McDowell offers in this collection will undoubtedly prove helpful and challenging to scholars interested in any of these philosophers or in the problems on which McDowell brings these seminal figures into dialogue.

Christopher Murphy *University College Dublin*

The Remains of Being
by Santiago Zabala
Columbia University Press, 2009. xvii + 178 pp.
ISBN 978-0-231-14830-6. Hbk $45.00 (£ 31.00).

In *What is Philosophy?* [Rowman and Littlefield, 1956], Heidegger writes that we find the answer to this question "not through historical assertions about the definitions of philosophy but through conversing with that which has been handed down to us as the being of Being." This handing down is what constitutes the philosophical tradition, which according to Heidegger has been dominated since Plato by the metaphysics of presence. Being has only been thought in terms of beings; the ontological difference has been forgotten. Yet, we are now – a "now" which was inaugurated by Nietzsche's insight into the hollowness of the traditional thought of Being – at the end of this metaphysics. The task that Heidegger sets as the central one for philosophy in the post-metaphysical age is to think through, or to think *from within*, this end. Such is the task that Santiago Zabala takes up in *The Remains of Being.*

In this short but rich book, Zabala addresses what he takes to be the philosophical question *par excellence* – "How is it going with Being?" as Heidegger puts it in his *Introduction to Metaphysics* [Yale University Press, 2000] – by way of what he calls an "ontology of remnants." This is first and foremost a hermeneutical approach, which proceeds by way of considering the way in which both Heidegger and some of the most influential post-Heideggerian thinkers contend with the question of the meaning of Being. Zabala's position is that such considerations will point the way forward to new possibilities for understanding Being precisely by keeping dialogue with philosophical pasts alive. Hermeneutics, he argues, is just as generative or productive as it is merely exegetical; in fact, it is uniquely suited to our contemporary philosophical situation precisely because of its ability to bring the past and future together. Zabala certainly makes a persuasive argument that the hermeneutic ontology he advocates is highly capable of addressing Being "after metaphysics" (though it is less certain whether this method is unique in its capability).

Zabala begins by framing his topic in terms provided by Heidegger. Throughout the book, the themes of thinking Being beyond the tradition of the metaphysics of presence and uncovering the ontological difference that this tradition has forgotten orient the discussion. Of course, Zabala's approach is also heavily influenced by that of Gianni Vattimo, with whom he has studied and worked for a number of years (having edited or co-

edited several volumes of or about Vattimo's work, as well as serving as his co-author). Key among the philosopher's ideas that Zabala appropriates is that of "weak thought," which aims to move beyond the metaphysics of presence (as well as the legacies of both Kantian critique and Hegelian dialectic) by emphasizing the inescapably historical and interpretative nature of both truth and Being. In one of the book's discussions of Vattimo's thought, he explains, "we have not been able to answer the fundamental question of philosophy – why *is* Being, and why *is* there not rather nothing? – because … there is no sufficient reason to explain why Being is" (93). This ultimate lack of reason is what marks Being as weak, and thus what ostensibly makes the brand of hermeneutics that Zabala has inherited from Vattimo the most appropriate philosophical method for addressing Being. If the primary ontological question is not to be "What is the essence of Being?" or "Why is there Being rather than nothing?" but instead "How is it going with Being?" then, this book argues, our attempt at an answer needs to take into account first and foremost the temporal, historic, and finally indeterminate – that is, weak – nature of Being's occurrence.

Right at the beginning, Zabala states explicitly, "The thesis of this book is that philosophy since Plato has not only been a 'forgetfulness of Being,' as Martin Heidegger explained in *Being and Time*, but an expression of Being's remnants, that is, the remains of Being" (xi). Of course, the history of metaphysics from Plato through Nietzsche, characterized as it is precisely by its forgetfulness, does not contend with Being as remaining but instead attempts to interpret Being in terms of presence. The titular expression "the remains of Being" and its variation "Being's remnants" thus play crucial roles in Zabala's exposition, as he makes the case that Being can no longer viably be thought except as that which has always already departed, "remaining" only in the traces that philosophy must continually reinterpret.

The perpetuity of this task, though, problematizes the notion of the end of metaphysics out of which Zabala's argument proceeds. He seems to take the idea that philosophy is now situated "after metaphysics" as given. However, he repeatedly emphasizes that the post-metaphysical thinking that is philosophy's task must emerge *from within* metaphysics, implying that "within metaphysics" in exactly where philosophy remains. The tension between these two orientations is not a novel product of Zabala's account, of course; it is characteristic of Derrida's notion of the closure of metaphysics, and even the Heideggerian account of the end of metaphysics that provides this book's motivation. The problem is that Zabala does not take address it with the same attention and clarity

of thought that he applies to other, related ideas. His discussions of the ontological difference, of historicity and eventuality, and of the relationship of Being to language exhibit not only careful consideration and rigorous scholarship but also valuable insights. The question of where we stand with regard to metaphysics, however, moves rather quickly into a discussion (no less important) of the distinction between *Überwindung* and *Verwindung* – overcoming in the sense of leaving behind, and overcoming in the sense of "getting over," (i.e., learning to live with). Following both Heidegger and Vattimo, Zabala claims that it is the latter sense in which we should "overcome" the metaphysics *after which* the ontology of remnants comes; yet, it is precisely this sense of overcoming which suggests that philosophy may not now, or ever, be finished with metaphysics.

Part of this difficulty does get worked out in the various ways in which Zabala both explains and puts to use the Heideggerian concept of *Destruktion* (and its descendants). In the first chapter of the book, which lays out the Heideggerian background of the work as a whole, he states that "this term [*Destruktion*] is at the center of Heidegger's philosophy and that all his thought should be understood as a destruction of metaphysics" (26). It is the Heideggerian destruction of metaphysics that undoes the traditional interpretation of Being as presence and thus makes it possible to bring to light the ontological difference. Since Zabala argues that an ontology practiced with this difference constantly in mind will be able to think Being only as what remains and never as what is fully present, he sees Heideggerian destruction as the starting point of a trajectory that leads naturally to the project undertaken in his book. Yet, he is also careful to point out the differences between the properly Heideggerian version of destruction later modifications of it – particularly Derrida's *déconstruction*. While this distinction is important, and Zabala is certainly correct to indicate it, as the book progresses it is not always clear how adamantly he means to apply it. What does remain clear, though, is the relationship between destruction/deconstruction and the object of his ontology of remnants: it is on the basis of these that philosophy can appropriate its past hermeneutically in order not only to come to terms with Being's remnants but also to generate new remains.

The second chapter focuses on the work of six post-Heideggerian philosophers, making the case that each of these provides an example of the kind of "generation of Being" that is called for after the destruction of metaphysics. Once again, this "after" remains problematic, though, because in the work of each of the six figures – Schürmann, Derrida, Nancy, Gadamer, Tugendhat, and Vattimo – we find a variation on the theme of

destruction itself. Regardless, Zabala's argument is that from their work emerges (each in its own way) new and decisive approaches to Being as that which remains, approaches that at least point the way toward a "getting over" of metaphysics even if they are still grappling with its legacy. The book's presentations of these six philosophers are not meant to serve as introductions to their thought, and Zabala forthrightly explains that his readings are not necessarily faithful to their originals. At the same time, he clearly does not assume familiarity with these thinkers on the part of his reader; in each section, his reading includes brief explanations of relevant basic concepts.

Ultimately, what Zabala does in his interpretation of each of these figures is sift out those ideas most pertinent to the ontological question he is pursuing and then utilize them to further his pursuit. Consequently, throughout this chapter the variations on *Destruktion* offered by each of the philosophers in question get treated with special attention, though not always with consistency. For example, in the first section on Schürmann, while Zabala expertly interprets the idea of anarchic economies in which Being occurs (or "presences"), he claims that Schürmann "sharply distinguishes between 'destruction' and 'deconstruction'" while Derrida does not (58). However, in the next section (much like in the first chapter), he clearly explains the distinction between Heidegger's "destruction" and Derrida's "deconstruction" (68) – a distinction that is explicit in the latter's writing on the subject. Similarly, Zabala does a superb job of concisely explicating Gadamer's notion of conversation (*Gespräch*) and Tugendhat's formal-semantic analysis – as well as, importantly, their relation to Heideggerian *Destruktion*. However, it is not entirely clear how easily the two can both be appropriated by the same hermeneutical project. Zabala notes both that Gadamer finds fault with traditional metaphysics in that, since its ancient Greek inception, it has focused solely on the meaning of statements rather than the event of conversation (82), and that Tugendhat wants to reformulate ontology precisely by focusing on the understanding of sentences (86). These tensions are not directly addressed, though one does get the sense that further exploration of them may indeed prove to be productive of exactly the kind of generative hermeneutics that Zabala is advocating.

Ultimately, the second chapter has a somewhat transitional feel to it: after establishing the state of ontology in and after Heidegger in the first chapter, the six examples of post-Heideggerian thought in the second chapter form a bridge that guides the reader toward the more constructive part of Zabala's project that appears most fully in chapter three. It is in this

third and last chapter – regrettably, the shortest in the book – that Zabala begins to offer his own original contributions to the discussion he has been conducting. The most important part of this, in terms of the overall argument of the book, is a fuller explanation of what he has earlier alluded to as the "generation of Being." Zabala's understanding of what it means to "generate" Being is closely tied not only to his understanding of the nature and efficacy of hermeneutics but also to his conviction that the remains of Being are disclosed in discourse. Thus, each of the examples that he discusses in chapter two, as well as the Heideggerian thought that serves as their basis, generates Being insofar as it interprets Being in conversation with a philosophical tradition that precedes it. Furthermore, insofar as each interpretation will necessarily differ in some respects, the event of Being that occurs in (and as) each interpretation will differ. "Being is not the same eternally," Zabala explains, but "it is always becoming through its own remnants" (103). Thinking Being as remaining – and here the active sense of "to remain" is emphasized – thus highlights an unavoidable plurality of Being that in principle cannot be unified by reference to either presence or dialectics. Since Being has always already happened, since it is always already given, it's the remnants with which it is the business of philosophy to contend are always already multiple. Thus, Zabala argues, a hermeneutic ontology that is anarchic in Schürmann's sense (i.e., without a static ultimate principle), discursive in Gadamer's sense (i.e., modeled on conversation rather than apophantic statements), and above all historic in the weak sense expounded by Vattimo is not only best adapted to take account of the legacy of metaphysics but also best prepared to open up new possibilities for future philosophy from within this legacy.

Zabala's argument for the efficacy of the hermeneutic ontology that he advocates in this book is certainly strong and clearly articulated. With its emphasis on the inherently plural character of the remains of Being, however, one might expect his approach to be more explicitly open to a plurality of philosophical methods. This may indeed be an implicit consequence of the position staked out in this book, despite the privilege it gives to its own brand of hermeneutics. In the end, though, the criticisms raised here are only minor ones. It is fair to say that the largest complaint to be had about this book regards its brevity, because the project it undertakes – articulated with the utmost erudition and clarity – is an ambitious one worthy of being engaged in at much greater length. This book is certainly a significant and valuable contribution not only to contemporary hermeneutical thought but also to any discussion of post-Heideggerian ontology, and further work from Zabala along the same trajectory should be eagerly welcomed.

Michael Barnes Norton *University of Dallas*

The Philosophy of Viagra: Bioethical Responses to the Viagrification of the Modern World
Edited by Thorsten Botz-Bornstein
Rodopi B.V., 2011. Pp. 227. ISBN 978-90-420-3336-8. Pbk $64.

If you think reading a book about Viagra and sex might leave you turned on, you are wrong. If you and/or your lover are currently using Viagra without having first consulted your moral compass for direction, you may wish to leave *Philosophy and Viagra* hidden at the bottom of you lingerie drawer until you have had your fill of the pick-me-up drug. The fifteen essays of T*he Philosophy of Viagra* may leave you feeling informed and contemplative, but not at all amorous.

The first four chapters delve into a traditional philosophical analysis of moral issues surrounding the use of Viagra by formulating arguments to determine if various early philosophers would promote the use of the drug. The elderly metic Cephalus, embraces his impotence and the resulting energies to devote to philosophy, nonetheless he is deemed lacking moderation, so the author of the first essay, Sophie Bourgalt, decides he would thus partake of Viagra. Plato, on the other hand, promotes not maximum health, but health in moderation because excessive care of the body sacrifices time that could be spent finding meaning. Thus he would forgo Viagra: "One ought to welcome old age, for it is in this precious period that one can engage in the best kind of erotic activity: contemplation" (Republic 498b-c). Diogenes, according to Robert Vuckovich, despite having a penchant for public masturbation, would not approve of the use of Viagra because of the danger that it could make one a slave to one's passions as well as to the drug. Aristotle's psuedoerectile propensities are easier to deduce, according to Thomas Kapper. In *Ethics*, Aristotle examines three types of friendship extensively. The first are friendships of utility. In the realm of sexual friendships of utility, prostitution would be an example, which Viagra might actually improve. Similarly, Viagra might actually perk up friendships of mutual pleasure, which constitute the second type of friendship, an example of which might be a one night stand. But the highest order friend exists in teleia philia, or perfected friendship. It is selfless, virtuous and profoundly moral. Each friend works to help the other become more virtuous. This is the type of friendship that Viagra could threaten because "Viagra can provoke selfishness in the male…the raw sensuality can blind him to the wants and needs of his partner" (p50). This topic, that Viagra makes the man selfish, comes up frequently in many of the essays in this volume, but without much evidence or argument to

support it. If a man has been married for twenty years and is depressed because he is unable to have the sort of physical intimacy he once enjoyed with his wife in the past, why would the use of Viagra cause him to suddenly become insensitive to her needs? Viagra enables him to have an erection, it does not change his moral disposition or his ability to empathize with his wife. The argument that is repeated in several of the essays, that males will be self-centered in their use of Viagra, and that the woman is not consulted are tangential to the issue at hand. If a man is considerate of a woman's sexual preferences while he is capable of producing his own erection, there is no reason to assume he will become an inconsiderate brute after ingesting Viagra. Finally, though, Kapper decides that Aristotle would, indeed try Viagra, out of curiosity.

The Stoics, however, would absolutely condemn it. Happiness is based on reason, not pleasure and passions are a sickness which can overcome reason, leading to unhappiness. Viagra has the potential to amplify passion and thus, is to be avoided.

According to Kevin Guilfoy's interpretations of *City of God*, *Soliloquies*, *Confessions* and *On the Good of Marriage* written in the fourth century CE, St. Augustine would forbid the use of Viagra for an unmarried man, but give qualified approval for those who are married. People experience lust and a loss of control over their desires as a result of original sin, thus, Augustine spent most of his life being opposed to sex. People should work to be free of sexual desire, so Viagra use would be out of the question. Later in life Augustine came to realize that, even though chastity was the higher good, love and faithfulness in marriage is also an, albeit lower, good to which, Guilfoy extrapolates, Viagra might contribute. As a man ages and his sex drive wanes, he moves toward the higher good, celibacy. The use of any drug such as Viagra, which would invert this happy circumstance, would be viewed by Augustine as potentially damaging to one's soul.

In *Virility, Viagra and Virtue: Re-Reading Humane Vitae in an African Light*, Anthony Okeregbe interprets the papal encyclical from an African perspective to determine its stance on Viagra, though it was written before the drug's release. He concludes "the viagrification of sex is a physiological, hedonistic pursuit that undermines the sacred and more profound uses of sex" (p. 99). The Humane Vitae forbids contraception and, for similar reasons, according to Okeregbe, would also ban the use of Viagra. Both are considered unnatural, sex is intended for procreation, and Viagra focuses too much on the physical act while disregarding the social and emotional aspects of sex. The application of the Kantian notion of the intrinsic value of humans, which is an influence in the *Humane Vitae*, forms Okeregbe's

structured assault against the "glorification of the penis" which the Viagra culture inculcates.

Other essays address bioethical issues involved in the use of Viagra. Robert Redeker claims Viagra has led man to conceive of his body as invincible. He refers to this new human as appliance-man. "The appliance-man has no free will. With Viagra, liberty has disappeared because, from the beginning, it is clear that the parts needed for the sexual act will 'function.' Liberty presupposes incertitude. Therefore, Viagra negates the will as much as liberty within the realm of sexuality. The new body without soul is also a body without self: it is an unspirited (desanime) and de-egoized (desegoise) body. In the case of the Viagra-body, it has become impossible to separate soul/self or psyche/ego from body because this body has *absorbed* both the soul and the self. This is the reason why I name it "egobody"" (p. 72). I thought he named it appliance man. In any case, the argument that one loses one's self or soul because one gains 'liberty' regarding one's penis is tenuous at best.

Claude-Raphael Samama uses a psychoanalytic interpretation to conclude that even though Viagra can supplement sex, it cannot change its essence. Echoing other contributors, he argues that since Viagra does not create desire, and the erection depends on the initiation of desire before the drug can operate, the actual sex act is a result of a phantasm. He explains in great detail how mental representations of sexual encounters can differ between men and women and warns that reciprocity is necessary. He also sees the explosion of internet products promising erections as symbolic of en masse "postmodern renunciation of natural virility" (p. 140).

Thorsten Botz-Bornstein, in his *Viagra and the Virtual*, incorporates Redeker's egobody into his own argument that Viagra makes virility virtual in that it is a potential determined by socio-cultural functions which are both physical and psychological. He poses the question to Redeker "How can the body be soulless if there is desire?" Viagra creators claim that the drug cannot produce an erection unless desire exists as a prerequisite. Botz-Bornstein points out the error in this line of thought: "Real desire is not a potential quantity readily available within a linear script of foreplay to intercourse to orgasm. It is part of a politics of pleasure "fought out" in real space" (p92). He too, concludes when people use Viagra they are without soul and self. Imagine a man who is unable to have sex with his wife of twenty years, whom he loves, due to a physical impediment. After a painfully long time, he is prescribed Viagra which makes him able to find a closeness with his spouse he thought he would never experience again. In what manner would this act be soulless or lacking in self? Redeker and

Botz-Bornstein make interesting conjectures but they remain abstractions without contexts.

Gender issues are discussed from a variety of perspectives. *In Enhancing Desire Philosophically: Feminism, Viagra, and the Biopolitics of the Future*, Connie C. Price, recognizes sex as a political entity and claims Viagra underscores the objectification of women. She recommends a "psychiatric boot camp" to train men in the art of "affective justice" to counterbalance the unbridled freedom Viagra affords them. It would not be a bad idea for all genders (notice I did not write 'both') to bone up on their interpersonal skills. Some of Price's feminism devolves into utter sexist utterances:

"The plausibility of generating affective justice, that is, a new ethos with sex as a human creative and loving activity from the heart of the transformation, along with education, fitness, art, and politics, is of course the most hilarious joke imaginable among men" (p 85). Hey, some of my best friends are men and sometimes they evince actual feelings, (at least they appear to). The stereotype that women are more emotional and have more at stake emotionally than men in sexual relationships is trite and sexist, especially in a post-contraception world.

Bassam Romaya also expresses hostilities toward Pfizer because of their inequities in the promotion of Viagra. In *Erectus Interruptus: All Erections are not Equal*; he describes in fascinating detail the process by which a woman surgically becomes a man (called a transman). Penis construction (phalloplasty), a long, painful series of surgeries, is not for sissies, nor is it for the poor, since the series of surgeries costs over $100,000. Unfortunately the resulting penis is not capable of an erection without a prosthesis, even after all the expense and suffering. But another type of penis, which he gives the unfortunate appellation of micropenis, can be fashioned, through a process called metoidioplasty, from the woman's clitoris and does, indeed, respond in favorable ways to Viagra-like drugs, though its size prohibits penetration. Romaya quickly brushes aside the cyborg and egobody arguments of philosophers from the anti-virtual sex school represented in previous chapters and objects to Pfizer's neglect to market their product to the transmen market. After acknowledging that the small population of transmen does not justify a costly ad campaign to push Viagra their way, he finds another rationale for a discrimination claim. Transmen are not courted by Pfizer because their erections do not result in procreation. Yes, Viagra can facilitate erections (called transerections) for female to male transsexuals but no ejaculation, hence no children can result. "The development and marketing of Viagra reveal in no uncertain

terms a direct bias against non-cisgendered (heterosexual) erections, setting up a false dichotomy in which transerections are deemed unworthy of equal sociocultural, sexual, and clinical consideration" (p199). It is difficult to imagine a member of the marketing staff at Pfizer, even as vilified as they are in this compilation, saying at a staff meeting "I don't care how many thousands of transmen there are, or how profitable a market segment they comprise, until their erections lead to procreation, I'm not selling to them!"

Herbert Roseman and Donal O'Mathuna highlight Viagra as an example of the medicalization of what used to be natural occurrences of life. The main thrust (ahem) of Roseman's argument is that researchers' desire for financial gains led to the biochemical findings that resulted in the creation of Viagra. He asserts that because the financial gains from the sale of Viagra amounted to billions of dollars, the integrity of the researchers was severely compromised. A logical connection is lacking. If Viagra were donated to impotent men would the researchers' behavior then be deemed ethical? Furthermore, Roseman builds an argument that the use of Viagra does not actually improve one's quality of life, as extensive surveys done by big pharma claim. He first attacks their claims by saying that Viagra could be used in unethical ways, for example by facilitating sex outside of marriage, or promoting unwanted sexual demands on one's partner. Again, it is not the Viagra which causes the unethical behavior, but the will of the user. His second line of attack is a (too) lengthy attack (there is even an appendix) on inductive conclusions in general and Likert scales and factor analysis in particular. In a way he has a point, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to see that the overwhelming popularity of Viagra may be an indicator of its contribution to millions of people's quality of life. His goal, however, is the opposite conclusion.

Donal O'Mathuna's arguments are more to the medical ethical point. The medicalization of erectile dysfunction has deflected research and treatments from the interpersonal and social contexts in which ED is immersed. He grants that some men have a biological cause for their ED and Viagra can, in those cases, help. He also admits surveys have indicated many women are satisfied when their male partners use Viagra, though there are some who do not welcome their husbands' newly invigorated advances. But he encourages people to accept the fact that as bodies age they lose some of their functioning abilities and to question market forces which persuade us to manipulate our bodies to behave in ways that are chronologically unnatural. His most ethically persuasive arguments are made in a section about medical markets and justice. He writes "…10 percent of global

health research funding is spent on diseases that afflict 90 percent of the world's population" (p. 124). The vast treasures invested in broadening the goals of medicine to include things like sexual satisfaction would be more acceptable if the goals of caring for primary medical concerns like malaria, pneumonia, diarrhea and tuberculosis were realized first.

Roman Meinhold also writes about the "pathological pathogenization" trend in which capitalilsts characterize formerly normal life events as illnesses in order to maximize profits. His application of melioration, or the tendency of humans to compare their circumstances to an ideal, and pathologization to the Viagra phenomenon is intriguing, but nothing that has not already been applied to consumer goods in general. Ads cause people to become dissatisfied with themselves, or, in the case of sexuopharmaceuticals, come to believe they have a medical condition, so people buy Viagra to ameliorate. The practice of Western medicine is guilty of not only ignoring the affective and psychological domains, but actually causing mental illness by making people anxious or depressed because they feel they do not measure up.

Thorsten Botz-Bornstein's piece, *America and Viagra or How the White Negro Became a Little Whiter: Viagra as an Afro-Disiac*, posits Viagra as so cool as to have gained cultural icon status. Whites attempt to accomplish the mythic sexual voracity of blacks but since white men's use of Viagra is chemical, therefore technical, it results in a soulless type of sex. Similar to the way white males try to be cool by listening to gangsta rap, but miss the mark because they have not experienced the settings from which the genre emerged, white men do not fully embrace the black male sexual power because, as Botz-Bornstein writes "Racial and sexual realities are not artificial realities of a virtual desire, but erotic realities able to create real desire" (p. 155). Sex with the aid of Viagra is again depicted as virtual, unnatural, technical, and an example of the Freudian uncanny.

According to this compilation, Viagra is a nefarious, female (and other genders)-oppressing, soul-killing, pharma conspiracy to subjugate humanity. Then why is it so wildly popular? That is the one phenomenon which is glaringly not investigated in this compendium, because, according to Okeregbe and Kapper, even the Pope and Aristotle, given the chance, would partake of Viagra. It seems Viagra can't please anyone, except the 20,000,000 men who regularly use it in addition to, arguably, that many more women who are the recipients of the fruits of the effects of the drug.

Janet L. Testerman *Gulf University for Science and Technology*

About the contributors:

Molly Sturdevant

Molly Sturdevant completed her PhD at DePaul University, Chicago IL, USA in 2009, and is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Saint Xavier University, Chicago IL, USA. She has also studied in New Zealand, Germany, and briefly at Radboud University, Nijmegen. She researches and publishes in the areas of early modern philosophy, late medieval and early modern developments in ontology and first philosophy, environmental ethics, and philosophy of nature.

Ben Almassi

Ben Almassi is an assistant professor of philosophy at the College of Lake County, in Grayslake Illinois. He wrote his dissertation on the role of trust in expert testimony in the social transmission of scientific knowledge at the University of Washington, in 2009, and continues to work on issues at the intersection of practical ethics and social epistemology. Ben lives in Chicago with his partner Negin, a naturalist and environmental educator.

Richmond Eustis

Richmond Eustis is assistant professor of English and Spanish at Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, La. He is a seasonal backpacking and sea kayaking guide in the northern Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Northwest. He earned a doctorate in comparative literature from Louisiana State University in 2010. Eustis's dissertation, "Reading Out of Doors" engages current debates in literature and ecology by analyzing texts from medieval Iraq, Renaissance Italy and Spain, 19th and 20th century United States, among others.

MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSIONS

We invite submissions for the fifth issue of *Perspectives*. We are looking for papers that offer a unique perspective on any philosophical topic. We also seek book reviews on recently published work. Please send submissions to: Perspectives Journal, School of Philosophy Newman Building, UCD, Belfield Dublin 4, Ireland.

Please contact the editors (perspectives@ucd.ie) or check the website (www.ucd.ie/philosophy/perspectives) if you have any questions or for current submission deadlines. All articles and reviews are published at the discretion of the editorial staff.

MANUSCRIPT PREPARATION FOR ARTICLES

CRITERIA FOR ARTICLES:

Submissions should be between 5000-7000 words. Please include a brief abstract (120 words) with keywords. Also include a brief biography for the contributorís page, should you paper be accepted. Make sure to include all relevant contact information, including a permanent e-mail address. Contributors are asked to email their submissions to perspectives@ucd.ie

The manuscript should be typed, double-spaced, justified, on one side only and footnotes (also double-spaced) should be at the end of the text. A margin of at least one inch on each of the four sides of the sheet should be left. Paragraphs should be indented or marked by a double return. Block quotations (usually anything over forty words) should be indented two spaces from the left, without quotation marks. Use double quotes and single within for quoted matter in the text itself. Please mark all sub-headings clearly and flag them A, B or C in the margin if necessary to show their relative importance. Footnotes should be brief and kept to a minimum. Citations of works should be presented in the APA style. See http://apastyle.apa.org/ for APA style guidelines.

Numbers: Spell out numbers from one to ninety-nine unless used with units, e.g. 2km; ages, e.g. a 10-year-old girl; or passages with a lot of statistics. Use minimum digits, e.g. 121-7 not 121-127.
Percentages: Use 10 per cent in the text, % is acceptable in tables.
Abbreviations and contractions: Use full stops after abbreviations (p., Ch.) but not contractions or acronyms (Dr, St, BBC, USA). Please note: ed. eds, etc.

CRITERIA FOR BOOK REVIEWS

Word length (min.-max.): Review: 2000-2500.

Please conform your review to the following style (Heading and Text):
[Heading:]
Title
By [Authorís Name]
Publisher, date. Pp. [please include preliminary pages: e.g., ëxi + 235í]. ISBN # . Hbk/Pbk
Price [for example: ëHbk £23.00 ($35.00).í].
[Text:]
No indent for the first paragraph, indented thereafter. All double-spaced. Page numbers after first page. All quotations from the book under review should be followed by the relevant page reference in parentheses. Book titles mentioned in the review should be underlined/italicised and followed by publisher and date in parentheses/brackets. Reviews should not contain footnotes or endnotes.
[End with:]
Your Institution Your Name

N.B. Please email your submission to perspectives@ucd.ie

Finally, when Adobe proofs/queries later arrive by email for your review, please either mark your corrections on your proofs and send them back to us by regular mail, or just email your corrections to us (perspectives@ucd.ie) clearly indicating by page, paragraph, and line number what revisions should be changed/accepted.

Editor contact details:
Hugo Newman, Pegah Lashgarlou, Catherine Lawlor.
Perspectives Journal
UCD School of Philosophy
Newman Building
Belfield, Dublin 4
Ireland
perspectives@ucd.ie
www.ucd.ie/philosophy/perspectives

ISSN 2009-1842