ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS AND ECONOMICS: VALUES & CHOICES

Conference Program

June 29 – July 2, 2016  |  Pace University  |  New York, New York
WELCOME

Thank you for joining us at the 2016 Annual ISEE Conference at Pace University. This year, the conference will focus on the values and choices of environmental ethics and economics and will ask the question: Can environmental philosophy avoid a sustained critique of the current political-economic system and remain a sincere participant in the environmental community?

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

CONFERENCE LOCATION

Pace University, 1 Pace Plaza, New York, NY 10038 (building 2 on map below)

DIRECTIONS

General directions to campus, including mass transit options, can be found at: pace.edu/about-us/directions-to-all-campuses/nyc-campus
PARKING

We encourage attendees to use mass transit to reach Pace University's downtown campus. Designated parking is not available on the New York City Campus. Limited meter/street parking and private parking lots are located nearby.

REGISTRATION

Registration will begin at 1:00PM on Wednesday, June 29.

Enter through the main entrance of One Pace Plaza. Check in at the registration table in the main lobby to pick up your name badge. You will need this badge throughout the conference to travel freely around the campus. Please remember to bring a photo ID with you to register.

After you obtain your name badge, you may proceed down the hall either to the left or right side of the lobby to the East Wing. Once you enter the East Wing, please proceed to the Bianco Room.

We would like to thank the following sponsors:

Dyson College Institute for Sustainability and the Environment (DCISE)

About the Dyson College Institute for Sustainability and the Environment

DCISE’s mission is to bring together faculty, students and academic programs from across Pace University to address current and emerging environmental issues, including sustainability, resilience, climate change, pollution, environmental injustice, and the growing urbanization of the 21st century.

Contact DCISE
861 Bedford Road - Environmental House
Pleasantville, NY 10570
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The Pace Institute for Environmental and Regional Studies (PIERS)

About the Pace Institute for Environmental and Regional Studies

PIERS aims to foster a sustainable relationship between people and nature by studying the diverse ecological, political and economic, social and cultural values of New York City and the Hudson River Valley Region.

Contact PIERS
41 Park Row, 7th Floor – room 718
New York, NY 10038
piers@pace.edu
pace.edu/piers
## SUMMARY AGENDA

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WEDNESDAY June 29

Registration: Lobby, One Pace Plaza, 1PM – ongoing
Welcome: Bianco Room, 5:45PM – 6:00PM
Keynote: Bianco Room, 6:00PM – 7:00PM
Reception: Bianco Room, 7:15PM – 9:30PM

All conference sessions are held at One Pace Plaza - Civic Center

THURSDAY June 30

Morning Session: 9:00AM – 12:00PM

Session 1: Are the Choices of Homo economicus Rational?
Room: Eddie Layton Student Union | Chair: Robert Chapman, Pace University

- “Governance by Indicator: How shall We Assess Countries’ Climate Targets?” Ewan Kingston (Duke University, Durham, NC)
- “Is Climate Change Morally Good from Non-Anthropocentric Perspectives?” Toby Svoboda and Jacob Hagg-Misra (Fairfield University, CT)
- “The Ethics of Nudging for Sustainable Energy Consumption,” T.J. Kasperbauer (University of Copenhagen, Denmark)

Afternoon: 1:00PM – 6:00PM

New York City Excursions

- Biofuel
- Highline Park/Whitney Museum
- Big Bus Tours
- Walking Tours
- GrowNYC - Youthmarket

Evening Sessions: 7:00PM – 9:00PM

Session 1: Re-imagining cities beyond growth: ‘concrete’ utopias and the transformation of the Social Imaginary
Room: W613 | Chair: Barbara Muraca, Oregon State University

- “Rethinking space and time with the Degrowth movement,” Barbara Muraca (Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR)
- “Concrete Jungles as Concrete Utopias,” Elizabeth Lanphier (Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN)
- Contesting social normalization through practices of urban space-commoning,” Angelos Varvarousis (Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain)

Session 2: Animal Welfare
Room: W614 | Chair: Andrea Gammon, Radboud University

- “Valuing Animals: A Reply to Varner,” Nicolas Delon (New York University, NY)
- “And the Lion Shall Eat Straw like the Ox: Animal Ethics and the Predation Problem,” Jozef Keulartz (Radboud University, Nijmegen, Netherlands)
FRIDAY July 1

Morning Sessions: 9:00AM – 12:00PM

Session 1: Valuing Ecological Systems
Room: Eddie Layton Student Union | Chair: Gregory Mikkelson, McGill University
- “What does ‘soil is valuable’ mean? Beyond mere food production,” Kazauhik Ota (Tokyo University, Japan)
- “Rewilding the Historic Landscapes,” Martin Drenthen (Radboud University, Nijmegen, Netherlands)
- “Lessons in Balancing Economics and the Environment,” Marty Rowland (The Henry George School of Social Science, New York City)
- “The Economy vs. the Ecology: A Stark Difference of Ontology,” Ronnie Hawkins (University of Central Florida, Orlando)

Session 2: Ethical (R)evolutions: Human, Animal, Plant and Beyond
Room: W610 | Sponsored by the International Association for Environmental Philosophy
- “The Ethics of Life: Plant vs. Animal,” Jeffrey T. Nealon (Pennsylvania State University, PA)
- “Adventures in Phytophenomenology,” David Wood (Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN)
- “Distributed Intelligence: How Plants (make us) Think,” Elaine Miller (Miami University, FL)
- “The Other of the Other: Ethical Extensionalism and the Future of Continental Ethics,” Jessica Polish (Berea College, KY)

Early Afternoon Session: 1:00PM – 3:00PM

Session 1: Environmental Values and Market Values
Room: W613 | Chair: Judith Pajo, Pace University
- “Killing Nature to Save It? Ethics, Economics and Rhino Hunting,” Mike Hannis (Bath Spa University, Bath, UK)
- “Where Economics Should not Tread,” Donald S. Maier (Independent author and researcher)
- “Economic Growth vs. Ecosystem Sustainability – Not Either/Or,” Marty Rowland (The Henry George School of Social Science, New York City)

Coffee Break: 3:00PM – 3:30PM
Bianco Room

Late Afternoon Sessions: 3:45PM – 6:30PM

Session 1: Alternatives to Neoliberal Capitalism
Room: W614 | Chair: Toby Svoboda, Fairfield University
- “Civilization and its Discontents: Economy and Nature in Thoreau and Monbiot,” Andrea Gammon (Radboud University, Nijmegen, Netherlands)
- “Satoyama and Non-Capitalist Life-Affirming Thought,” Rika Tsuji (University of North Texas, Denton, TX)
- “The Age of Anthroponomy,” Jeremy David Bendik-Keymer (Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH)
- “Intersectional Environmental Ethics,” Benn Johnson (University of North Texas, Denton, TX)
Session 2: Sustainable Development and Unlimited Economic Growth  
Room: W613 | Chair: Ghassan Karam, Pace University

- “From Strong Sustainability to Degrowth,” Ralf Doring (Thunen-institut fur Seefischerei, Hamburg, Germany)
- “Nature vs. Capital in the 21st Century,” Gregory Mikkelson (McGill University, Montreal)
- “Hans Jonas and Political Responsibility in Technological Civilisation,” Lewis Coyne (University of Exeter, UK)

Special Session: 6:30PM – 7:30PM  
Author meets critics: Steven Vogel discusses his recent book

Room: W614

- Author Meets Critics: Thinking Like a Mall: Environmental Philosophy After the End of Nature, Steven Vogel (MIT Press, 2015)
- Panel: Andrew Revkin, Jeremy David Bendik-Keymer

Conference Dinner: 8:00PM – 10:00PM  
Bianco Room

SATURDAY July 2

Sessions: 9:00AM – 12:00PM

Session 1: Environmental Justice  
Room: Eddie Layton Student Union | Chair: Ian Smith, Washburn University

- “Environmental Ethics and Justice in the Islamic Tradition,” Hassan A.N. El-Fawal (Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, NY)
- “Agenda 2030, Genetic Engineering and Cultural Imperialism,” Jennifer Welchman (University of Alberta, Edmonton, CA)
- “The Role of Water and Land Footprint within Environmental Justice,” Rita V. D’Oliveira Bouman (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway)

Session 2: Prefiguration: The Poetics, Ethics, and Politics of Wonder  
Room: W614 | Sponsored by the International Association for Environmental Philosophy

- “The Wind -A Philosophical Study” Jeremy Bendik-Keymer (Case Western Reserve University, OH)
- “Make Yourself (Not) at Home: Nostos-poetics as Preliminary to Eco-poetics” Sarah Gridley (Case Western Reserve University, OH)
- “A Dignity of One’s Own: The Open Soul and Ecological Justice” Amy T. Linch (Pennsylvania State University, PA)

Conference Ends: Eddie Layton Student Union
Conference Abstracts

The Age of Anthroponomy

Jeremy David Bendik-Keymer, Case Western Reserve University

The following problem characterizes the Anthropocene:
• Starting some 12,000 years ago, humans acquired the ability to kill at a distance and initiated the great megafauna extinction of the borderline Holocene world, thereby initiating extinction behaviors that have repeated with great acceleration over the past five hundred and especially one hundred years.
• Starting some five hundred years ago, colonialism initiated a highly integrated and extractive world system that laid the foundation for a massive expansion of human economy, externalizing costs onto vulnerable people and species.
• Starting some two hundred years ago, a fossil fuel energy regime took hold over increasingly all parts of the globe until climate change had been caused.
• Some sixty years ago, powerful human societies began irradiating the entire biosphere in their weaponization of nuclear fission.

Yet common human values spread across all the major religious traditions, wedged deep into the cultural traditions of many societies globally, and articulated normatively within many major institutions of internationalism commonly attest to:
(1) Benevolent intentions towards future generations
(2) Humane & just concern for the poor or powerless
(3) Preservationist desires for the rich world of life in which we have come to be.

Accordingly, various scales of humankind all converge in having the aggregate effects of human livelihoods outstrip, undermine or defeat common human values.

My response is to argue that in the Anthropocene, we have no civic choice but to work for anthroponomy. Anthroponomy is the collective self-regulation of humankind by humankind so that the effects of our aggregated livelihoods do not undermine our common human values. Anthroponomy, were it possible, would be a way to bring intentionality to vast human scales. The question is how that is possible and what basic features it contains.

The Role of Water and Land Footprint within Environmental Justice

Rita d’Oliveira Bouman, Norwegian University of Science and Technology

Presently, humanity faces several global environmental challenges that will impact very differently individuals and nations. The fast growth of human population and of industrialization creates a pressure on resources, being freshwater and biologically productive land among the most relevant ones.

One way to understand the impact of human action on resources is to quantify the total environmental pressures via footprints. Footprinting is widely used by environmental scientists, with great success among the public and policy-makers. It assesses consumer’s responsibility by accounting for the total direct and indirect effects of a product or a consumption activity. Such measurement creates a principle of (sole) consumer responsibility, which is highly debatable. In addition, the methodological principles give space to pertinent questions about how fair the procedure itself is. Although the limitations of the methodology are recognized by scientists, the moral implications, for both individual and collective justice (nations), have not been fully addressed in an ethical perspective.

By analyzing UNEP documents, we aim at understanding the moral role of footprinting as an assessment tool in the context of environmental justice.

We intend to present and discuss some of the tensions and limitations of water and land footprints as means to quantify (in)justice in resource use. For that purpose, we will address (1) the dual approach of consumption and
production footprints in terms of fairness; (2) how procedural justice affects the results of this methodology, with implications on global environmental policy; and (3) the eventual constraints of land and water footprints as ‘tools’ for environmental justice.

**Critical Reflections on the IPCC’s Recent Acknowledgement of Ethical Limitations of Economic Reasoning in Climate Change Policy-Making**

*Donald A. Brown, Widener University*

Working Group III of The Intergovernmental Panel On Climate Change 5th Assessment in new chapters on Ethics and Equity in Sustainable Development acknowledged a few ethical limitations of economic reasoning in climate change policy making on mitigation strategies. For instance IPCC acknowledged that economic rationality does not always deal adequately with distributive justice issues and that the need to adjust national climate policies on the basis of equity doesn't mean that any national interpretation of what equity requires is entitled to respect such as claims that national economic self-interest can be a valid way of interpreting what equity requires. This paper will begin with a review of the IPCC conclusions relevant to the ethical limitations of economic reasoning about climate change mitigation policy formation. Next the paper will argue that there are many additional ethical problems with how economic reasoning has been used to justify inadequate climate change policies that IPCC should also acknowledge in future IPCC reports. Based upon recent research in 23 countries, the paper will identify economic reasoning that was the actual basis for national climate change policies when nations formulated their international emissions reductions commitments, commonly known as INDCs, before the recent climate change conference in Paris in November of 2015. The paper will identify specific ethical problems with the economic justifications for weak national INDCs. The paper will conclude with a set of recommendations to IPCC on expanding the work of the 5th Assessment Report on identifying ethical problems with certain kinds of economic reasoning about climate change policy formation.

**Beyond Freedom and Utility:**
**Hans Jonas on Political Responsibility and the Ecological Crisis**

*Lewis Coyne, University of Exeter*

Hans Jonas is well known in Germany and Italy for his imperative of responsibility for future generations and the biosphere. As a political counterpart to this “emergency ethic” Jonas argued that capitalism and liberal-democracy ought to be supplanted with a political economy that could safeguard the existence of life on Earth. Drawing on Plato, Hobbes, and Marxist-Leninism, the alternative Jonas outlined is often regarded as a repugnant eco-tyranny. I will reconstruct Jonas’ argument and address the above criticism, ultimately finding it to be overly simplified. I argue that Jonas’ alternative to capitalism and liberal-democracy is in fact developed in two stages. Firstly, he advocates a robust form of the precautionary principle based on what he calls the “heuristic of fear”. Though clearly irreconcilable with neoliberalism, it is in principle compatible with Scandinavian or Germanic social market economies. The second step is Jonas’ statecraft: that if democratic governments should fail to implement the above regulatory framework, the state would be duty-bound to override popular opinion. Jonas does not, therefore, primarily advocate a paternalistic form of government on the grounds of its inherent desirability – on the contrary, he argues that we should seek to avoid such a situation – but he is willing to sacrifice democracy if necessary. I will argue that his diagnosis of the problem is astute, as is his call for much stronger precautionary regulation, even if his statecraft remains distasteful. Overall, he deserves greater attention as a political theorist who can help us navigate and survive the present century.

**Valuing Animals: A Reply to Varner**

*Nicolas Delon, New York University*

In his 2012 *Personhood, Ethics, and Animal Cognition*, Gary Varner argues that some animals are in some circumstances replaceable. His view is based on Harean two-level utilitarianism, recent animal cognition research, and a tripartite normative classification of animals as persons, near-persons and merely sentient animals, ranking from higher to lower
irreplaceability (i.e. constraints against killing). The ranking maps normative constraints (moral status) onto axiology, i.e. the value of the lives of different animals. The ranking is purportedly not about the *worth* of individuals themselves.

Varner’s replaceability thesis entails that some forms of animal husbandry will be permissible, and optimific, in specific circumstances. He uses the example of the Great Plains Buffalo Commons proposal. “Humane sustainable agriculture” follows from Hare’s utilitarianism, given the economic, ecological and welfare benefits of implementing a form of demi-vegetarianism. Such “utopian visions” (vs. “prelapsarian” and “contemporary”) are formulated at the critical level. Yet they can be approximated, taking into account implementation costs and overall benefits, thus helping shift the goal posts of common morality at the intuitive level. Under Varner’s assumptions about replaceability, it follows from critical reflection that neither a vegan utopia nor the continuation of factory farming can be optimific.

I question Varner’s assumptions about the value of lives and their normative implications. In particular, I question the assumption that the impersonal value generated by particular lives tells us anything about moral status. I show that Hare’s utilitarianism entails the permissibility of humane husbandry only under problematic assumptions about the harm of death (and the benefit of existence) for the merely sentient. However, I suggest that Varner’s defense is much stronger than most contemporary sustainability-based cases for conscientious omnivorism.

**The Greifswalder Theory of Strong Sustainability and degrowth**

*Ralf Doring, Thunen-institut fur Seefischerei*

The Greifswald Theory of Strong Sustainability was developed in co-operation of environmental philosophers and ecological economists. It combines normative arguments on our responsibilities for current and future generations (intra- and intergenerational justice), the conceptual debate on weak vs. strong sustainability including possible constraints for economic growth, a new concept for natural capital with practical applications (e.g. fisheries). It was developed as an answer to the increasingly vague understanding of the sustainability concept in the political arena, which gives politicians the possibility of subsuming under it all sorts of different programs and strategies. A sharper definition of the concept is needed that offers a non-arbitrary orientation ground for action to end the further loss of essential parts of natural capital without becoming too rigid and exclusive of differences.

In this paper we give firstly a short overview about the philosophical background of the theory and about the conceptual debate on weak and strong sustainability. Secondly, we depict our concept of Natural Capital, which draws on Georgescu-Roegen’s systematic framework of fund, stock, services, and flows and focuses on a central characteristic of nature: its (re)productivity. Accordingly, natural capital consists of living funds, non-living funds, and stocks. In the following chapter we explain how Georgescu-Roegens framework is able to form an essential background for the conceptualization of degrowth. In the final part we will then show how the Greifswalder approach can help to identify ways for a long term sustainable use of renewable resources as part of degrowth.

**Rewilding and historic landscapes.**

*Martin Drenthen, Radboud University*

European landscapes are layered landscapes. Typically, they are the results of a long history of interplay between human and non-human influences. Likewise, protecting and conserving these landscapes demands a recognition of the role of history. Both heritage landscape protectionists and traditional nature conservationists stress the value of the history and genesis of specific landscapes. They are sensitive to the way nature has developed itself found a place within a given historical context. As a result, conservationists often decide to bring back old historic land use practices in order to prevent species that have been dependent on these practices lose their habitat. Cultural heritage concerns and nature conservation come together, they present complementary perspectives which are both based on specific interpretations of the meaning of a layered historical landscape.

But today, a new paradigm is on the rise: rewilding – a radical form of nature restoration. Rewilding seems to challenge this traditional approach to conserving and restoring cultural landscapes. It questions whether anything good has come from this interplay of culture and nature. Rewilding seeks to make way for the *wildness* of nature: that which
has a nonhuman origin and resists human appropriation. It seems to question the very idea that landscapes should be understood in terms of meanings that are mediated by human culture. In other words: the legitimacy of the humanized historical landscape itself is under criticism. What does this mean for an appropriate approach to layered historic landscapes?

**Environmental Ethics and Justice in the Islamic Tradition**

*Hassan A.N. El-Fawal, Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences*

In the Islamic revelation tradition *Quran* and *Hadith*, a code of conduct *vis a vis* our planet is established. For the Muslim, the *Quran* is the verbal scripture from God, while creation, inanimate and animate, is the sensory scripture that expounds on the verbal. Whether the written verse or the environment, the word *ayah* (sign/miracle) is used. Defining the role of humanity, God announces “I shall establish on the earth a steward/vicegerent (*khalifah*).” This stewardship is predicated on avoiding *tholm* (injustice) and establishing *'adl* (justice) even at cost to self. Thus what God bestows is *amana* (trust) for which the steward is responsible and accountable. *Muhammad* reminds us: “The earth is beautiful and verdant, and God has made you His stewards in it and He sees how you acquit yourselves.” With this understanding, *Muhammad*, 7th century, codified giving it moral-sacred status, the *hima* (sanctuary/protectorate) system of environmental protection. The sanctity with which this protectorate, inclusive of water, flora and fauna, was understood is such that “*hima*” is used by *Muhammad* to analogize what God commanded not be breached. Consistent with this worldview are injunctions against hunting, water pollution, desertification and even “collateral damage”, inclusive of that to vegetation and animals, while cultivation and land reclamation are promoted with the status of *sadaqah* (charity). “...do not corrupt on the earth after it has been well ordered, this is for your own good” is an invitation for sustainability between the steward and the planet based on *'adl* and not short-term economic expediency.

**Ecological limits, economic growth and the meaning of freedom**

*Augustin Frangniere, University of Seattle*

For a few decades, there has been increasing awareness of the finiteness of our planet in terms of carrying capacity and natural resources. This begs the question of how to transition from a society organized around affluence and indefinite economic growth to a society abiding by the physical limits of the Biosphere. The central thesis of this paper is that the changes in economic practices and infrastructure needed to achieve such a transition (possibly including a shift to a steady-state economy) will also require a substantial modification of social and political norms, foremost among which is freedom.

As compared to equality, for example, the concept of liberty has so far attracted surprisingly little attention from the environmental philosophy community. Yet, I argue that it will play a central role in shaping sustainable societies. It is so because some conceptions of liberty are likely to help enable change, whereas others might on the contrary resist it (see for example the resistance of libertarian think tanks to climate regulation, in the name of liberty). Some conceptions of liberty are also more compatible than others with the idea of living, and even flourishing, within the bounds of stringent ecological limits.

To illustrate this, I use Philip Pettit’s typology of liberty and argue that the current social and economic order holds a conception of liberty (namely option liberty) that fosters rather than dissuades economic growth and its associated environmental impacts. I also argue that a slightly modified version of Pettit’s own republican conception constitutes an appealing alternative that is much more in line with the environmentalist agenda.

**Civilization and its discontents: Economy and nature in Thoreau and Monbiot**

*Andrea Gammon, Radboud University*

In one of *Walden’s* most famous passages, Henry David Thoreau writes: “I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately ...I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout...
all that was not life.“ Here and throughout the book, the question of economy–both in the sense of thrift as well as in the sense of the prevailing financial structures and arrangements–is central. Thoreau’s famous experiment in simple living and self-sufficiency is, at its root, an experiment in economy: through his retreat to Walden Pond, he forges a personal economy removed from the encumbrances and preoccupations of the societal life of his day. A sanctuary of near solitude in nature, Walden Pond is the place from which Thoreau can formulate his critical reflections on society and economy.

In the present-day debate about rewilding, George Monbiot, a British journalist and one of its most outspoken advocates, makes something of the same move, routinely positioning rewilding as a retreat from dull and deadening modern life. He laments: “Our survival in the modern economy requires the use of few of the mental and physical capacities we possess...it feels like a small and shuffling life. Our humdrum, humiliating lives leave us, I believe, ecologically bored.” Monbiot’s vision of rewilding differs in many ways from Thoreau’s personal retreat, but it urges the same movement, familiar in environmental thinking and writing in the West, of withdrawing into nature (or the idea of nature), motivated by discontent with society and its economy. In this presentation, I sketch the dissatisfactions at issue in the respective retreats of Thoreau and Monbiot–dissatisfactions that are centrally economic–and how withdrawing into nature does or does not reformulate them, but this is in an effort to engage a larger question of economy in environmental philosophy. I suggest that in engaging this question, we might consider how the response to this question has often taken the form of resistance to the economic status quo through retreat into nature (or ideas of it) and how this seems to promise a refuge from or a refutation to its demands.


Mike Hannis, Bath Spa University

Complex relationships between economics, ethics and environmentalism are illustrated by a study of ethical discourse around the legal trophy hunting of a rare and endangered black rhinoceros in Namibia, by a US enthusiast who paid $350,000 for the privilege. He and the Namibian government were both widely condemned by animal welfare groups, but many commentators and conservation professionals defended the widespread (if counterintuitive) practice of raising funds for conservation by selling rights to shoot individuals of the very species being conserved. The primary focus here is not on the (disputed) conservation outcomes, but on the dominance of economic reasoning in the debate, and in particular on how an apparently ‘wrong’ action is seen to become ‘right’ if it raises money for a good cause. This phenomenon is explored using hypothetical analogous cases. In the trophy hunting case, several ethical considerations seem to be rendered invisible or illegitimate by financial considerations, including the interests of the individual animal, local perspectives, historical context, contemporary power relations, and pre-shaping of future management decisions. The calculative consequentialist logic of the market displaces other forms of ethical reasoning, marginalising critique and further consolidating its own hegemony. But this is not a triumph of utilitarianism over other ethical approaches: little trace remains of Bentham’s egalitarianism, or of JS Mill’s concerns with the qualities of pleasures, and their effect on character. It is rather a triumph of economics over ethics, in which almost everything is commodified into commensurable ‘capital’, thereby erasing other ways of understanding the world.

The Economy vs the Ecology: A Stark Difference of Ontology

Ronnie Hawkins, University of Central Florida

Most people today pay more attention to the economy than they do to the ecology; for most, it is the world of dollars and debt that feels most real, the land beneath their feet a mere “externality” in their lives. But the ontology of the two is vastly different. The difference can be illustrated by contrasting what is produced through the process of photosynthesis with what is produced through the calculation of compound interest: one provides necessary sustenance for all life on Earth; the other is a string of abstract symbols, meaningful only within the conceptual world shared by a single species of primate. That the latter is a human construction whereas the former a biological reality existing without us for billions of years is in some respects so obvious as to be thought “uninteresting” by many philosophers, who tend to assume the same inversion of ontological primacy in their own day-to-day lives. But recognizing the importance of the distinction is key to activating our agency to confront climate change: we humans created the economy, and we can re-create it; its rules—which, obeyed deterministically, have set us to destabilizing our life support system—are not laws of nature. Insights from social psychology and neuroscience may help us
understand our current conceptual trap, and how to escape it. And we ought not be so timid; philosophers grasping the true ontological priorities bear heavy responsibility for putting economists in their place.

**Intersectional Environmental Ethics**

*Benn Johnson, University of North Texas*

A revised structural approach to environmental problems can provide a complex and accurate way of doing environmental ethics, but unless it also includes a refocusing on actions, it will likely be co-opted by the current system of domination. The following paper provides a complex account and attempts to offer ways of thinking about and beginning to implement activism as philosophy. The approach builds on anarchist, ecofeminist, and gardening works to build a critically active outlook toward environmental issues. The paper makes a distinction between radical and rhizomic causes of environmental issues, and argues that any serious solution to environmental problem must address the rhizomic nature of that problem - causes are partial, interconnected, and subterranean.

The paper uses critical mass bicycle rides and permaculture as two examples and analogies for reacting to environmental issues, and discusses how these types of actions can be used as intersectional tools for the nourishment of anti-capitalistic/patriarchal/anthroparchal/racist (/other?) worlds. While the paper is not a complete solution for environmental issues, it rejects approaches that would narrow-mindedly focus on something like capitalism or anthropocentrism as the cause of environmental maltreatment, and attempts to build a framework for resituating ourselves in light of the issues we face.

**The Ethics of Nudging for Sustainable Energy Consumption**

*TJ Kasperbauer, University of Copenhagen*

Nudges modify people’s decision frameworks in order to steer their choices in particular directions. As government-sanctioned nudges have increased, so have criticisms of their ethical permissibility. My goal in this paper is to evaluate the ethical permissibility of nudging specifically for energy consumption. I argue that energy consumption is “massively architectured,” which means that consumption behavior is largely determined by factors external to individuals (e.g. social norms and energy infrastructure). I suggest that energy consumption is more massively architectured than other behaviors that are common targets for nudging (e.g., food consumption). I make four points in support of this claim: 1) energy infrastructure is largely unaffected by the behaviors of individuals, 2) there are fewer choices involved in energy consumption, compared to other types of behaviors (like food consumption), 3) research on nudges show that consumption behavior is easily altered by seemingly trivial circumstantial factors, and 4) people do not seem to have robust preferences regarding their energy consumption. I further argue that nudging energy consumption behavior is justifiable precisely because it is so massively architectured. The most common objection to nudges is that they are paternalistic. A closely related objection is that nudges reduce human autonomy and agency. However, these objections seem unconvincing in the case of nudging for energy consumption, given massive architecture. Altering energy policies through nudges is not any more paternalistic than the policies already employed, and in many cases might actually increase autonomy and agency by providing choices where previously there were none.

**And the lion shall eat straw like the ox**

*Animal ethics and the predation problem*

*Jozef Keulartz, Radboud University*

Animal ethicists of all colors struggle with the so-called ‘predation problem’. They generally believe that, if animals truly have a right to life, then we ought to protect them from being killed by their predators. For ethicists in favor of interfering with nature on behalf of prey animals, there are two ways in which the incidence of predation could be significantly reduced. One is to reduce the number of predators, for instance through sterilization. The other is to genetically turn carnivores into herbivores.
It is, however, generally recognized that any attempt to eliminate predators will have potentially catastrophic ecological ramifications. In the absence of predators, herbivore populations will expand beyond the environment’s carrying capacity. To reduce the number of herbivores that severely suffer from starvation and disease, one will need to resort to such measures as selective sterilization and therapeutic hunting.

To avoid this so-called predation reductio (ad absurdum), and to avoid the danger of producing more harm than good, many animal ethicists agree that there is a basic presumption against interference with animals in the wild. But such non-interventionism also runs up against limits. During the current stage of the Anthropocene, a hands-off policy with respect to wild animals losses credibility to the extent that the distinction between classic in situ (on-site) and ex situ (off-site) conservation is becoming blurred to the point of disappearing entirely, together with reminiscent distinctions such as wilderness versus captivity and nature versus culture.

After having sketched these pitfalls of (interventionist and non-interventionist) animal ethicists who claim that predation is morally wrong, I will defend the opposite claim: that predation is good. I will do so not only from a holistic framework commonly used by environmental ethicists, but also from an individualist framework preferred by animal ethicists.

**How should we assess the fairness of countries’ climate change mitigation targets?**

*Ewan Kingston, Duke University*

Currently the aggregated national mitigation pledges (NDCs) in the UN climate negotiations significantly overshoot the projected emissions pathway that gives us a good chance of keeping a global temperature rise to “well below” 2 degrees Celsius. There is a clear need to assess which countries are closer to bearing their fair share of the total greenhouse gas reductions that are needed to reach the safe pathway. One way to do this is to assess what a fair target would be for each country. However, the current projects which try to do this in a rigorous way (e.g. Climate Action Tracker, Civil Society Review) suffer significant problems. They either rely on controversial assumptions about how to quantify “common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities” (CBDR-RC), use questionable methodology, or give results that are too vague and indeterminate to be practical. A pragmatic approach to assessing the fairness of countries’ NDCs may be needed to supplement these approaches. Instead of interpreting CBDR-RC quantitatively, we can use it to determine the appropriate reference group against which countries’ mitigation plans should be judged. Thus we can measure rankings of mitigation effort among similar groups. Differing views about the importance of historical responsibility for climate change can be accommodated by giving high-income group countries two rankings, one in comparison to other countries in its same historical-emission group, and one in comparison to other countries that share its income group. I defend this approach from criticisms and show its practical advantages over target-based approaches.

**Divest-Invest: A Moral Case for Fossil Fuel Divestment**

*Alex Lenferna, University of Washington*

This paper critically examines the question of whether institutions have a moral obligation to divest shares that they hold in the fossil fuel industry. After a brief overview of the fossil fuel divestment movement and the rationale underpinning it, the paper provides a moral analysis, which concludes that there is a prima facie moral case to divest from fossil fuel companies particularly from companies whose business models are out of line with a safe climate and/or whose lobbying practices and misinformation prevent progress on climate change. I argue that the case for divestment is supported by a number of mutually reinforcing moral reasons, such as the responsibility of institutions to avoiding contributing to substantial, grave, and unnecessary harm through their investment policies, ensuring their own integrity, showing moral leadership, and not contributing to injustice. The paper provides both consequentialist arguments grounded in the potential impacts of fossil fuel divestment. It also provides more pure moral reasons for divesting which do not depend on the consequences of divestment, but which appeal instead to principled approaches to investment and acting in consistence with moral values. The final section of the paper responds to some common objections to divestment, including charges of hypocrisy, and worries about the politicization of institutions. It concludes that these objections are typically unsuccessful in derailing the moral case for divestment.
Where economics should not tread

Donald S. Maier, Independent author and researcher

It is safe to say that, for many decades, much of planet’s despoliation has been sponsored by blinkered pursuit of increased economic value. In the last two decades, many observers have eschewed the most obvious interpretation of this fact – as evidencing a need to consider restricting economic markets in certain ways. Rather, it has been taken as evidence that properly valuing environmental goods requires a more unblinkered pursuit of increasing economic value by means of expanding economic activity to include market transactions in environmental goods.

This essay recounts serious normative errors that underlie this conclusion. These include: (i) how economic valuations fail to satisfy plausible normative requirements for environmental goods, (ii) the normative unimportance of economic values, and (iii) how market-derived values push aside or corrupt other, normatively important values. Because option value often plays a large role in economic valuations of environmental goods, this species of economic value receives special attention.

The essay then moves from these errors in theory to their implications in practice: Condoning or authorizing actions on their basis is likely to lead to more environmental destruction rather than less. This likelihood is evidenced in the normative framework of the UN-sanctioned Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity & Ecosystem Services (IPBES); key elements are transcribed from publications of the World Business Council on Sustainable Development (WBCSD). Given its provenance, it is unsurprising that the framework’s market-based principles rationalize the principal aims and modus operandi of some of the planets’ most destructive corporations.

Nature vs. Capital in the 21st Century

Gregory Mikkelson, McGill University

Economist Thomas Piketty has detailed a compelling mass of evidence for capitalism’s tendency to increase inequality. However, the theoretical model he used to explain this rests on much shakier ground than the empirical pattern itself does. Furthermore, this model has a disturbing implication: any slowing of economic growth for environmental reasons would exacerbate inequality.

I present empirical evidence refuting a key assumption, and a key prediction, of Piketty’s ecologically problematic theory. I then explain why these results support political philosopher David Schweickart’s call to replace capitalism with economic democracy (ED). The key assumption is that returns on investment are independent of overall economic growth. The key prediction is that per-capita GDP growth should slow increases in economic inequality. Besides refuting these aspects of Piketty’s otherwise convincing work, the data imply that ED’s twin aims of equality and sustainability are mutually compatible. And they confirm Schweickart’s assertion that capitalism depends on environmentally-damaging economic growth (whereas ED would not).

Finally, I offer a complementary set of reasons why ED would catalyze a more harmonious relationship between humans and the rest of nature than capitalism can. Recent social science indicates that the public at large behave more ethically, and favor environmental protection more strongly, than do the wealthiest minority. Yet under capitalism, the latter group exerts predominant control over the economy. This indicates that shifting power away from this minority and onto the majority – precisely what ED would do – would yield a better ecology.

Re-imagining cities beyond growth: ‘concrete’ utopias and the transformation of the Social Imaginary

Barbara Muraca, Oregon State University

Economic growth (embodies in the symbol of modern cities) has played a crucial role for the stabilization of modern, industrialized societies. Now, from a means to guarantee prosperity it has turned into a goal of its own. Far from going ‘green’ at all, growth at any cost increases the pressure on the environment, increases dramatically social inequalities, and erodes the basis of democracy. The traditional answers of ‘green’ NGOs oriented towards nature conservation and
often embracing alliances with green growth models, do not seem to be able to adequately address the problem and end up reinforcing inequality and discrimination. Instead, a radical social-ecological transformation is needed in which growth-addiction looses its grip and real democracy, autonomy, and solidarity are strengthened within the collectively negotiated biophysical conditions for our life on Earth. New social movements, social experiments, and innovative practices all over the world embody radical alternatives to the dominant Social Imaginary colonized by growth. In particular, cities are becoming key fields of action where new modes of relation, production, and solidarity are being experimented.

This session presents three different ways in which the Social Imaginary of modern, Western societies can be transformed by alternative visions, experiments, and practices: how the degrowth movement as a concrete utopia rethinks and reconfigures space and time; how in the city as ‘concrete’ utopias alternatives forms of living together pave the way to a radical transformation; how actual heterotopias where new social relations are created may form the backbone of a future socio-ecological transformation.

1) **Rethinking space and time with the Degrowth movement: a (concrete) utopia for the transformation of the Social Imaginary**

*Barbara Muraca, Oregon State University*

The degrowth movement that originated in Europe at the end of the 90s under the headline of ‘degrowth for ecological sustainability and social equity’ has been increasingly influential as a platform for fruitful alliances between different social and environmental movements worldwide. As I claim in the paper, it can play the role of a ‘concrete utopia’ that radically challenges the social imaginary of modern growth-societies while drawing on some of its increasingly unhonored promises, such as securing well-being, social justice, and democracy. Following Bloch and more recent works in utopian studies, we can say that concrete utopias envision and anticipate the real-possible, which is already slumbering in the meanders of the actual world, and enhance it with a militant optimism. Accordingly, concrete utopias have both a *prefigurative* and a *performatif* power: they envision alternative imaginaries, by opening spaces for subversive, collective practices that are already hidden in the contradiction of the present. In the paper I will present how in the degrowth movement space, time, and relations are re-imagined and re-enacted in a radical, alternative way. Social experiments create spaces in which alternative ways of conceiving needs, desires, and their satisfaction, are not only envisioned, but also experienced. By provisionally suspending the pervasive impact of dominant societal imaginaries, social experiments can crack open the established understanding of what is considered to be real and give room to alternative imaginaries, practices, and experiments of common living.

2) **Concrete Jungles as Concrete Utopias**

*Elizabeth Lanphier, Vanderbilt University*

The contemporary “back-to-the-land” movement, in romanticizing rural life, reifies social and economic inequalities. This paper will engage Heidegger’s methodology to offer a critique of his own complicity in this agrarian idealization and to unveil the elitism perpetuated by “green” values rooted in a certain social imaginary of the countryside. By further disclosing the negative projection of cities that can be traced through Heidegger, the influence of Tolstoy before him, and the bourgeois city-dweller since, I will suggest a radical rethinking of the role and possibilities of cities, through three main moves.

The first briefly sketches the connection between Tolstoy, Heidegger, and the contemporary bohemian bourgeois, in which an elite class romanticizes the rural. The second move is a Heideggerian critique of such idealization, in order to unveil it as illusion which reifies economic inequality within cities by further displacing negative dispositions onto the low-to-middle class urban dweller. Such projection fails to recognize the urban-dweller already living environmentally responsible practices through public transportation, efficient use of space and pooling of public resources. Furthermore, this mode of being fails to recognize the city as ready-to-hand or equipment for environmentally ethical living if the tools of the city itself were supported and developed.

The final move offers a positive account of the city as a concrete utopia. Reimagining the city as being-with-others in collaborative living through the practices of urban living that have gone unrecognized by mainstream “green” values, class hierarchy is leveled, while real environmental care is made possible.
3) Contesting social normalization through practices of urban space-commoning

Angelos Varvarousis, Autonomous University

The modern industrialized city was dominated by the quest for achieving universal and absolute order. This “city-machine” has been heavily criticized in that it produced anti-human environments. In an effort to re-humanize the city, neoliberal capitalism offered a new image; that of an urban archipelagos, associated with a multifaceted experience of urbanity. While the former view of the city offers a generalized inter-class promise of progress, the latter relies on the promise of an individualistic process of self-actualization. Yet, both images have at their core the same imperative, namely capitalism reproduction based on economic growth. In order to ensure this target they employ distinct, albeit complementary, mechanisms of socio-spatial ordering which, using Foucault’s terminology, lead to a process of social normalization.

In the last years we are witnessing the emergence of new social movements, grassroots initiatives and counter-hegemonic discourses that are not revolving around economic growth, such as the Occupy movements, fragments of the Arab Spring, the Commoning movement all over the world, the Degrowth movement in the global North, the Buen Vivir and Ubuntu in the global South. Although not majoritarian, these movements have managed to mobilize large masses around an alternative plan that no longer relies on the growth imperative and is based around the notions of Commons & Democracy. They invent new forms of grassroots solidarity that often exceed the boundaries of established socio-spatial taxonomies which imply that solidarity is only possible within communities of similar people. By reversing the existing taxonomies and contesting hegemonic social ordering, those initiatives constitute contemporary social laboratories, actual heterotopias where new life forms and social relations are created and contested and may form the backbone of a future socio-ecological transformation. Such heterotopias usually emerge locally, but they often radiate globally and can potentially expand when a widespread loss of faith in current societal promises triggers a generalized “liminal” condition.

What does “soil is valuable” mean? : Beyond mere food production

Kazuhik Ota, Tokyo University

Soil is a finite natural resource that is not attracting attention commensurate with its importance. Soil needs a long time to recover from damage and for sustainable use of soil resources soil investigation is essential because soil character differs from region to region. In recent years, the concept of soil resources conservation has been in transition from mere food production increase orientation to focus on maintaining of manifold ecosystem services. In the International Soil Year 2015, the “World Soil Charter” which was revised after 34 years stated that soil conservation activities need concern themselves not only with physical, chemical and biological - but economic and cultural. Also in Japan, for integral soil use, a Soil Conservation Basic Act is being created. A new philosophical definition of soil is called for. However, philosophical treatment of soil is still insufficient we are left with only Sauer (2011) and Thompson (2011) and a few other works.

This paper aims at submitting a definition of soil which can induce the re-evaluation of environmental and market value of soil in each region. First, we will view soil from the standpoint of Sato’s (2011) resource theory: owners of the resources are not aware of all possible methods of use for the resources. In addition, Watsuji’s (1935) Landschaft theory will help us make a clear distinction between “resource” and “tool”. Soil resources can serve a variety of ends other than food supply. To do this, it will be necessary to accept that soil is an undetermined entity.

Economic Growth vs Ecosystem Sustainability – Not Either/Or

Marty Rowland, Henry George School of Social Science

Many express the belief that there is a natural conflict between ecology and economy. It is actually otherwise, that a robust / resilient ecology is the precursor of sustainable economics. It is so in that money (the medium of exchange of wealth) and the natural elements (i.e., soil, water, air, and ecosystems) are each common property according, respectively, to Werner (2015) in his A lost century in economics: Three theories of banking and the conclusive evidence,
and George (1879) in his *Progress and Poverty*. Werner identifies the deceit that banks supposedly lend what others deposit, when (actually) “lent” money comes from thin air. It is just as easy to originate and provide credit to those who create ecological value as it is to those who do not. George held that urban land values increase due only to past and current social investments in public infrastructure and services (including clean water, pollution control, roads, and schools). As with banks, wealth is created where none before existed. That there may a conflict between ecology and economics can only be a conscious choice – a choice that can be reversed, and that is the opportunity environmental philosophers may aspire to influence. Clearly, there is: a) Sufficient money for that which society desires; b) readily accessible revenue (i.e., land value-only taxation) available to maintain public works; and c) plenty of wealth within a growing community to adaptively manage ecosystems that are kept resilient by policies that minimize impacts from human settlement.

**Lessons in Balancing Economics with the Environment**

*Marty Rowland, Henry George School of Social Science*

Good economics typically means private interests prosper without necessary regard to values represented in natural systems, leading to a perceived conflict between ecology and economics. But this view is losing currency. Imagine a not-too-distant future when ecological considerations drive economic growth; what precursors could lead to that outcome? Were new institutional arrangements crafted to identify and capture wealth that is naturally and cooperatively created? Do lessons exist from which we can hypothesize? This paper presents three that characterize cooperative, equitably efficient methods of ecosystem management developed by Ostrom (1990), Rowland (2000), and Roe and Van Eeten (2001). Each lesson illustrates a principle of increasing economic values through cooperation and respect for natural systems. The late Nobel Economics Prize recipient Elinor Ostrom identified principles shared by those who are economically successful in collectively managing groundwater, irrigation water, forests, fisheries, and pasture land among several temporally, geographically, and culturally dispersed populations; environmental economist Rowland identified factors important to the transition toward Ostrom-style water resource management in Tampa and other regions of the U.S.; and business management policy analysts Roe and Van Eeten identified a framework for the balanced management of interests between those who extract wealth from / through nature and those who assure nature’s functions are protected, so that there is wealth to extract in the future. With these examples, the environmental philosopher may discern a fruitful pathway for advocacy of environmental ethics through increasing economic value in and from the commons.

**Is Climate Change Morally Good from Non-Anthropocentric Perspectives?**

*Toby Svoboda and Jacob Hagg-Misra, Fairfield University*

Anthropogenic climate change poses some difficult ethical quandaries for non-anthropocentrists. While it is hard to deny that climate change is a substantial moral ill for humans, many non-human organisms and ecosystems stand to benefit from plausible climate change scenarios. Modelling studies provide evidence that net primary productivity (NPP) could be substantially boosted, both regionally and globally, as a result of warming from increased concentrations of greenhouse gases. The same holds for deployment of certain types of climate engineering, which can also benefit some organisms by increasing the diffusivity of light. This has a surprising implication: from certain non-anthropocentric perspectives, some plausible scenarios of climate change and climate engineering might bring about morally better states of affairs when compared to both pre-industrial and emission-mitigation baselines. We present existing evidence that certain emissions trajectories and climate engineering scenarios are likely to benefit non-human organisms on the whole, using NPP as a proxy for non-human flourishing. We then argue that, on a non-anthropocentric perspective that affords independent moral value to non-human organisms or systems, there is reason to deem such emissions trajectories and climate engineering scenarios to be morally better than prominent alternatives, including aggressive mitigation. If we are to take non-anthropocentrism seriously, then we should view current discussions of the ethics of climate change and climate engineering as incomplete, for they pay little attention to the well-being of non-human organisms in their own right. However, giving non-anthropocentric perspectives a more prominent place might substantially alter how we view climate ethics, as it would challenge the widely held views that climate change and climate engineering constitute absolute moral ills.
Satoyama and Non-Capitalistic Life-Affirming Thought

Rika Tsuji, University of North Texas

One might say that the history of humans always accompanies the destruction of natural environment. Nowadays, it is not an unusual thing to say that all of environmental issues will be solved by the extinction of Homo sapiens, as seen in the theme of colonizing Mars! Obviously, a critical view toward our lifestyle of mass production and consumption is necessary. However, criticism of capitalism is different from a self-negating termination of Homo sapiens; Homo sapiens are not inherently capitalists. The problem is the equation of capitalistic-anthropocentrism with anthropocentrism as humanness in general. A capitalistic-anthropocentric view is one in which a person sees a biotic community only in regards to potential economic use without sincere social and ecological responsibility. What we need to consider is not our existence but our destructive philosophical and structural system. Criticism of the system should not be confused with the criticism of the species Homo sapiens. Instead, this paper will propose non-capitalistic life-affirming philosophical thought as one way of addressing the needs of satoyama, Japanese patchworks of agrarian landscape and wild communities including secondary forests. This approach will be life-affirming in that people can relate their lives to the natural environment, considering their obligations or roles in the environment. For example, the satoyama conservation movement in Japan shows the failures of capitalistic anthropocentric thought and the necessity of non-capitalistic life-affirming thought. This paper will help us to see why non-capitalistic life-affirming philosophical thought is important as opposed to a capitalistic-anthropocentric view.

Agenda 2030, Genetic Engineering, and Cultural Imperialism

Jennifer Welchman, University of Alberta

The 15 goals of United Nations’ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes ending hunger, via achieving targets such as: doubling “the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers;” implementing “resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters;” and maintaining “the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species.” Genetic engineering of staple crops is one means being explored to achieve these. But many environmental and conservation groups oppose all GE crops arguing all GE crops threaten the genetic integrity of non-engineered varieties and their wild relatives. I will argue that such opposition too often relies on (1) outdated Western cultural assumptions about ‘miscegenation’ and (2) unacknowledged ‘cherry-picking’ among disputed species concepts. When this is the case (it isn’t always), anti-GE arguments aren’t simply flawed intellectually, they are culturally imperialist. Social justice would seem to require their reevaluation.

Difference, Discourses, and Animism: A Critical Engagement with Murray Bookchin’s Social Ecology

Sean Wilson, Elon College

The notion of difference features heavily in Murray Bookchin’s social ecology. Bookchin routinely gives value to recognizing difference within the human social world, among the beings inhabiting the more-than-human world, and (most controversially) between humans and other kinds of living beings. In this essay, I home in on Bookchin’s emphasis on difference and build upon it in two ways that are inchoately hinted at in Bookchin’s works. First, I use Bookchin’s emphasis on difference to analyze and critique certain environmental discourses. In particular, I argue that discourses that allude to an undifferentiated transcendental humanity or to overpopulation as the cause of the environmental crisis serve to shift undue blame for the environmental crisis onto disadvantaged social groups. Second, I consider Bookchin’s insistence on ontological difference within his project of developing an animistic way of being in the world (i.e., a worldview that reveals an ethical, sacred or otherwise spiritual essence in plants, animals, and/or objects). Following Bookchin, I argue that recognizing ontological difference between humans and other kinds of livings beings is valuable for avoiding the potential dangers in the development of animism and in ensuring that human-type essences are not privileged or taken to be the transcendent norm within an animistic worldview. After arguing in favor of the value of recognizing ontological difference in the development of animism, I turn to the works of feminist theorist Luce Irigaray in order to suggest that “wonder” may be the proper attitude to guide the development of an animistic worldview.