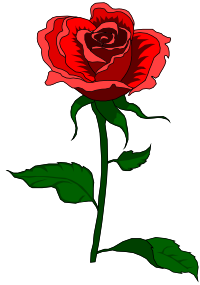UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS
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Environmental Ethics and Artificial Nature

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Environmental Ethics and Artificial Nature

> I take the initial task of constructing an adequate environmental ethics to be the statement of some set of principles from which rules can be derived proscribing the behaviors include in the set which virtually all environmentally sensitive individuals agree are environmentally destructive. The further task of refining an environmental ethic then involves moving back and forth between the basic principles and the more or less controversial behaviors, adjusting principles and/or rejecting intuitions until the best possible fit between principles and sets of principals and sets of proscribed behaviors is obtained for the whole environmental community. [1]

Bryan Norton seems to suggest in this passage that even the most basic notions in environmental ethics may need analysis. It is also plain that the development of an environmental ethics is meant, at least in part, as a defense of nature. A major environmental issue is the placement of humans and human activity in the scheme of things that we call the environment. What part, if any, does human activity play in the natural world? If humans feel they lack a direct role in nature, it will be hard to encourage the urban citizen to value nature? If human activity is considered as nature-degrading or nonnatural, perhaps is it a useless game trying to preserve or conserve. This is an unfortunate result of increasing awareness of our impact on the

environment is a detachment from nature and this feeling is not helped by using

economic language or highly abstract approaches or understanding nature.

The difficulty is the idea that human activity is apart from nature.   To understand

and deal with this, let us first consider this word "nature". What does one mean by the

term nature?   We all have some basic understanding of the term, admittedly

ambiguous but serviceable. Is this not enough? I believe that only a negative response

is possible.

Borrowing from Tom Regan, "The development of what can be properly be

called an environmental ethics requires that we postulate inherent value in **nature**."[2]

The term nature, without qualification, is constantly redefined, misused and

misunderstood. To use such a term without qualification is looking for trouble at the

foundational level of ethical theory since environmental ethics is certainly concerned

with nature.   Are humans part of nature? How is it that humans can be considered

natural but the technology of humans is not? How is it that a gibbon can search for ants

with a wet stick in nature, but early humans using tools were making the first venture in

planetary despoliation? An analysis of the term nature is needed since it is the basis of

the endeavor.

Robert Elliot uses the term nature in multiple senses, refining and redefining

according to purpose. In Elliot's own words, for the term nonnatural "We could simply

say that they are the properties other than the natural properties but that is not very

illuminating." [3] I agree with Elliot that this will not do. But an ambiguous definition is

worse than none at all.

Senses of Nature: Grande et Petit

A first sense of the term 'nature' can be related to how Charles Darwin used the term in *The Origin of the Species*. Certainly this serious study of nature made a massive impact on how humans though about the world, shifting away from catastrophe theories.

> We shall understand what is meant by the natural system: it is genealogical in its attempted arrangement, with the grades of acquired difference marked by the terms varieties, species, genera, families, orders, and classes. [4]

Clearly Darwin meant a human inclusive scientific idea of nature. But this meaning is limited to species or organisms. Nature as a group of organisms or life-nature.

Humans, one of many species, take a place in life-nature. They are an organic part (either made up of elements of nature or a result of natural processes) or members of species that are part of nature. But what some of what humans create, e.g. cars and houses, may not necessarily be natural, i.e. a part of life-nature.

Extending this life-nature idea slightly, Mortiz Schlick recognized a "criterion of life" as a distinction of nature as either organic or inorganic. [5] This includes nonliving material or material that is on the cusp of life. But following this distinction down to the line of demarcation, "we cannot say what the essential quality is that which differentiates an organic from an inorganic body"[6] any more than we can definitely determine the living from the non-living.

Aldo Leopold clearly meant that inorganic land is part of and not separable from nature, especially in a scientific sense.[7] The Land Ethic includes the biotic community with organic and inorganic elements in a co-relational system, i.e. an ecosystem dependant on the animals, the soils and the minerals. Considering that the idea of a

biotic community is a common element of the environmental movement, this idea of

nature is minimally expected by most environmentalists.   Life-nature [petit nature] is far

to limited a sense for environmental ethics.

A second connotation of the term nature, the largest possible at the other end of

the spectrum, is the idea that all matter in the universe is nature or grande nature.   The

term nature might infer the universal system of things or a super-ecosystem. Thus,

humans and animals, culture and technology are all a part of nature. In this sense,

human culture is just part of the human ecosystem.

Rolston's intrinsically based valuation theory implies that "humans, in their

valuing of nature, ought to *follow* nature". [8] As Rolston points out, 'natural' laws bind

humans. Following nature is pre-determined in this sense of grande nature. Humans

are definitely part of nature if only because we are incapable of crafting outside the laws

of nature [physics]. It may turn out we can do things that we might have though unlikely

according the laws of nature as we understand them if only because humans lack a

complete understanding of these laws.[9]

> There is a foundational sense in which human craft can never produce any
> unnatural chemical substances or energies. All humans can do is shift natural
> things around, taking their properties as givens. There is nothing unnatural about
> the properties of a computer or a rocket. Much as a warbling vireo or a wild
> strawberry, they are assemblages of completely natural things operating under
> natural laws [10]

But for many, "nature is the matter of the universe" [Grande nature] is far to

encompassing. Nothing conceivable is nonnatural might be carte blanche for

despoliation. Moore merely considers the idea of   "Nature is identical with the Universe"

as one of many connotations and but do seem overly thrilled with the idea.[11]

In *Faking Nature,* Robert Elliot rejected the idea that "Absolutely everything is natural". He writes, "On this, the broadest view of the natural, everything that *goes on* within the universe is natural" but then suggests the notion that "the distinction between the natural and the non-natural was made in terms of the distinction between what was and what was not a product of culture and technology."[12] This notion, the basis of Elliot's attack on restoration, is paradoxical in the context that it is used but has a useful alternative.

Human Culture and Technology as Nonnature

A common thread in discussing what is natural often seems to result in problems in accepting human culture and technology as part of nature. The term 'natural' is defined in a dictionary as "pertaining to nature [a little circular here], produced by nature; not artificial, acquired, or assumed, in conformity with the laws of nature; regulated by the laws which govern events … happening in the ordinary course of things." [13] So artificial plays a role in the term nature. Flipping several hundred of pages in the dictionary we find 'artificial' defined as "made or contrived by art, or by human skill and labor; feigned, fictitious … by human skill or contrivance." [14]

Thus, we get the notion that nature and humans culture are separable since humans craft their culture in a manner unique [so far] in the universe. Is this conception so much of a surprise? Consider the following passages from Aristotle's *Physics*:

> Trees grow of themselves therefore they are natural objects. Houses grow, but only as a result of the acts of carpenters and masons. Houses therefore are artifacts.[15]

> All the things mentioned [animals and their parts exist, and the plants and simple bodies (earth, fire, air, water)] present a feature in which they differ from things which are not constituted by nature. Each of them has within itself a principle of motion and stationariness (in respect of place, or of growth and decrease, or by way of alteration). On the other hand, a bed and a coat and anything else of that sort, qua receiving these designations-i.e. in so far as they are products of art – have no innate impulse to change. But in so far as they happen to be composed of stone or of earth or of a mixture of the two, they do have such an impulse, and just to that extent – which seems to indicate that nature is a source or cause of being moved and of being at rest in that to which it belongs primarily …[16]

The notion that humans impart something to objects by either considering them or by crafting them seems to be extremely Aristotelian in flavor.   There exist "natural products" and "artificial products" in the universe.[17] The difference between trees growing and houses growing is that trees come forth and take part in an ecosystem. Houses are products that no longer are part of the ecosystem. They are artifacts that are part of the human crafted world. The house has within itself principles, or parts, of nature but it does not fully contain principles of Aristotelian motion and stationariness.

Now how can this be? On the one hand we have the thought that humans are indeed part of nature, yet objects we create are not considered natural but are artificial, that we are part of something which human is surrounded. In this way, artifacts humans create do not engage the something which humans are surrounded but engage only the realm humans. Human artifacts, created by skill or contrivance, are not meant to be part of nature and in this way are nonnatural.   It is not the act by humans that makes an artifact. It is that the object is not meant to fit into the natural system.

A refinement of this sense of nature is possible. A thing is artificial not because is has been moved to the human realm but because humans have manipulated the object. That is to say, it is because humans craft an item that it becomes nonnatural.

Since the human touch makes the item artificial, this automatically transfers the property of nonnatural. This is the idea that makes the artificial = nonnatural.   As G.E. Moore puts it, one definite connotation of the term nature means, "Nature *doesn't* include our minds & mental processes."[18] We can call this nonnatural artificial.

From this sense we get the general feeling that human endeavor has a generally bad or negative impact on the natural world.   It becomes very difficult to evaluate any policy that has human tainted options, for example, human managed environments. No matter what course of action is chosen, the course is always nonnatural. What is nonnatural is easily identified as a result "contrary to nature" and is open to the nonnatural criticism.

The Quabbin[19] reservoir is a purely managed environment resulting from human manipulation. The area represents a nonnatural site and the above sense of natural leaves no solution that is not of the nonnatural type except perhaps an attempt at a total return to the "original" habitat and the draining of the reservoir. Not exactly an option

There also exists a potent misperception that natural is always good and nonnatural is not. Is this not the appeal that sustains organic food market?

Consider the common items sugar and aspartame. In the sense that Elliot certainly means to use nature and natural, and perhaps the occasionally sense that Rolston uses the terms natural, sugar would probably be considered a natural thing. Aspartame, on the other hand, is a craft of humans that occurs only within the construct of human activity. [20] Relate this to the idea that protecting nature and the natural is a positive value or a good.   The result is the literal meaning of equating natural sugar as a good product and nonnatural aspartame is automatically a suspect or evil product.

"Natural" becomes the acid test of good environmental policy.   Arsenic and snake venom are as natural as sugar but certainly are not suggested food additives. Americans die each year because they overdose on "natural products" that are believed to be powerful enough to cure cancer while at the same time peddled as harmless products that can do no harm.

The term natural is as slippery as the term moral and as philosophers we should be cautious. Consider how an act might be neither moral nor immoral depending on the rationale and circumstance. We consider some acts amoral simply because a moral agent lacks. The rock that dislodged and fell on its own did strike the gentleman, but the rock is certainly not morally responsible. Technological changes or human crafting adds to the existence of an originally natural object. A natural object can be qualified as one relating to human culture or not in the same way an action can be qualified by a moral agent or not. How this is done makes a world of difference in the resulting understanding of nature.

When Elliot claims that "Moore's theory is non-naturalist, which is to say that the property of being intrinsically valuable is not a natural property of those things that have intrinsic value" it is precluded by Elliot's assumption that nonnatural is not distinctive from artificial. This would also mean that intrinsic value is artificial in terms of the thing being valued, which is it must be claimed as human crafted. At worst, the value is actually human centered and anthropocentric. In part, Elliot's initial conception of nature leads to his difficulty with Moorean intrinsic value.

> It is clearly not this idea of the natural that environmentalist have in mind when they urge us to desist from polluting the air, from turning productive land [to nature] into desert, from disrupting the ozone layer, claiming that, in some sense or other, these things are contrary to nature, or non-natural.[21]

Elliot rejects this conception of nature because he feels that it would not "provide a basis for morally condemning some actions or attributing intrinsic value to some thing". [22] Obviously this rejects the pragmatic argument that despoliation harms the human ecosystem and should therefore be avoided for our own survival. He wants to make the distinction that human culture and technology is nonnatural because human culture and technology is often the emotional and felt enemy of environmentalists and this is a stronger based for augmentation.   Technology! Products of human culture! – Despoliation! See? See?

Beavers are generally not considered[23] as moral agents and therefore their houses do exist in nature in a different fashion than ones humans build in nature.   Both are natural in the sense that they exist in the universal system, one in the ecosystem where the beaver lives and one in the ecosystem humans live. Both houses may completely upset the local ecosystems. The beaver's house might drown out ducks and ruin fish spawning. The human's house might destroy field mice burrows and cut off coyotes from hunting areas. Both can be natural structures with negative impacts on the local ecosystem.   Yet the human house has a property that that the beaver's lacks: the human house is a result of a moral agent's actions. "Although always acting deliberately, humans may conduct themselves more or less continuously with nature as it is proceeding upon their entrance."[24] We think, design, plan, and execute plans as moral agents with responsibilities that differ from the beaver.   We can identify potential negative impacts. Despoil as we build in full knowledge of the despoliation.   Planning and acting are simply part of human ethical activity and can be, unlike beaver activity,

judged as ethically good or bad on the context of the universal system in terms of disruption, continuity and other parts of the system.

But even if humans are capable of creating or recreating objects that were non-artificial, the value of the restored object is lessened because of the human touch. Even if at first it is hidden or unknown, once we become aware of human involvement we might value the object less because humans created or managed the object.

A main point against restoration for Elliott is based on the premise that restored objects (landscapes or ecosystems) by humans end up demonstrating or absorbing human culture. The "genuinely natural" object "therefore, possesses a relational property that the other [a human crafted one] lacks and the relational property in question is an important determinant of that" object's value.[25] Restoration can only be considered unnatural and therefore lacks the value of nature. Restored areas have no relational value to corresponding spontaneous nature areas and even represent a negative value in that the restored area represents the loss of spontaneous nature. This neither represents the reality of nature nor the restorationist philosophy.

Restoration is perhaps not as valuable as the original object, landscape, garden, and ecosystem, whatever. Not because the restoration contains the non-natural or artificial. Natural trees and flowers might bloom in an identical pattern and placement to the original, so much beyond the closest examination for the human touch that one might not know it was created unless told. Its all about human culture versus not of human culture. The landscape is better if not crafted by humans, but resulting from spontaneous nature.

Holmes Rolston in Environmental Ethics[26] makes a complicated list of values of nature, listing some important characteristics that isolate nature from non-nature. For Rolston, "Whatever their options, however their environments are rebuilt, humans remain residents in an ecosystem."[27] Humans are part of nature, however, not objects that humans make:

The elements that make up human craft are natural elements, i.e. elements one might find in the periodic table or even subatomic parts like electrons. The combination, the whole made up of natural parts, can be considered artificial in the sense that it is not meant to fit in the natural system. Artificial objects do not fit with the all that surrounds it. The computer or rocket is made up of items that come from nature, but the computer does not exist in spontaneous nature, the system of which humans are a part, but exist in the artificial spectrum humans have crafted, artifactual as in nonnatural.

UNIVERSE
- THE NATURAL

Human crafted
= non-natural?

Some other

universe?
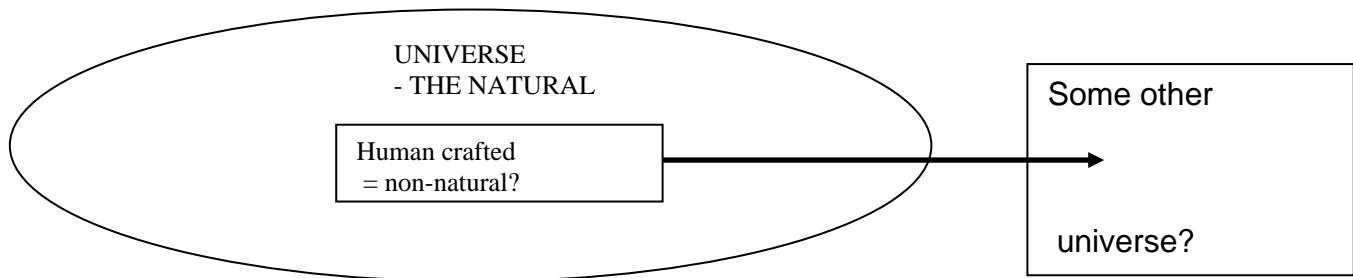
Still, within this necessary obedience to the laws of nature humans do have option. Submit we must, but we may nevertheless sometimes choose our route of submission. Something remains "up to us"" Humans alter the course of spontaneous nature. That forces us to a second extreme –asking whether, in what we may call an *artifactual* sense, humans can follow nature. The feeling that deliberation exempts humans from the way nature spontaneously runs suggests the possibility that agentive conduct is unnatural. Here nature is defined as the aggregate of physical, chemical, and biological processing excluding those of human agency. [28]

Humans alter the course of "spontaneous nature".[29] This is Rolston's split of nature into what he calls "spontaneous nature"[30] and "artifactual nature."   Rolston is definite about why he makes this distinction. It is the human component. Unfortunately, Rolston sets artifactual nature outside of nature. Human crafting is ultimately not part of nature for Rolston either. It is the act of crafting *by humans* that makes the object artificial, which brings the object into the realm of human culture [Elliott].

J. Baird Callicott suggests that a transition from natural to nonnatural takes place as a "transmogrification of organic to mechanical processes"[31] a reference to Rene Descartes. Descartes called animals machines and Callicott is talking about treating animals in this way, not simply about using machines on animals. This is the idea of cows and pigs as meat machines. By brining animals into human culture and transforming their existence into the arena of human culture, we mechanize their existence. A nonnatural or artificial existence with the animals as natural components within this artificial system.

An immediate objection might be that houses are objects humans create and are just part of our "ecosystem", getting back to the idea of grande nature. That the misidentification of the artifactual world is only an extension of natural human activity and is part of the ever-changing ecosystem of the planet in the exact way a beaver's house is a natural extension of the beavers natural existence in a stream. [32]

Further, the judgment that the beaver's house is natural and the human's is not is a judgment based on the species that did the crafting. To use species as the measure of distinction, in this case as the distinction between the nature and nonnature, was

identified by Mary Midgley as speciesism.[33] If the distinction between a beaver house and human house is merely based on the origin of craft by a human, we automatically prejudge human activity in a biased manner. Midgley points out that this is an inadequate basis for distinction of value, and I believe it is not an adequate distinction of natural and non-natural.

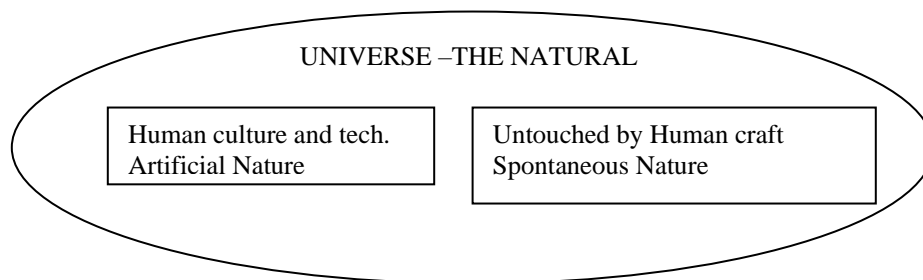### Human Culture as Artificial Nature

The essential problem is the assumption that nonnatural is the artificial. By lumping together artificial with nonnatural, the psychological-ethical baggage of each becomes confused. Artificial objects, processes or ideas are automatically less valued, not valued or negatively valued. It often leaves us thinking that human culture and technology is a wrong thing, as a negative moral or ethical consideration in environmental ethics. It becomes extremely difficult to sift proper action from all human behavior, if all human actions, such as restoration, are deemed poor ethical activities because they are human activities.

An alternative sense of the term nature and relating to the term artificial is possible and necessary to get on with a theoretical basis for an environmental ethic. An artifact is one "made or contrived by art, or by human skill and labor; feigned, fictitious … by human skill or contrivance" but it still can "pertains to nature", one that results from natural laws as an object crafted by moral agents existing within the ecosystem of the planet.

How can human artifacts be outside the universe of things that humans inhabit? This is a sort of Russell's paradox of the universe. The paradox starts with the universal

set that contains all other sets, say set U. Then we state the set inside set notation as the set containing the set of all sets. This set {U} is paradox because the set U should contain the set {U}. The idea that the universe of things, including humans, has an outside (or other space) that contains the things humans create is a form of Russell's paradox.

Formation of this paradox is a result of Rolston and Elliot switch-hitting between the connotations of natural. I suggest that the idea or human culture and technology in environmental ethics should be not be a conflict between natural and nonnatural, but a serious pair of distinctions of nature: artificial nature and spontaneous nature. This is similar to Norton's treatment the anthropocentrism /nonanthropocentrism debate. Rather than considering a distinction between anthropocentrism and nonanthro- pocentrism, we can think in terms of a split of anthropocentrism into weak and strong.

UNIVERSE –THE NATURAL

Human culture and tech.
Artificial Nature

Untouched by Human craft
Spontaneous Nature

By definition, an artifact is human crafted. Instead of distinguishing nature by a human bias, let us identify a *type of nature* by its artifactual property, i.e. crafted by a human. Call this artificial nature as compared to spontaneous nature.

We can side step a direct objection by Midgely.   In fact, by extending Midgley's idea of mixed community, we can fold back our idea of artificial nature on the whole of nature, claiming artificial nature as part of the human community of things.

In Elliott's art example, the origin of a painting is a serious question. But the oil paint, the canvas and the frame remain genuine instances of real and perhaps valuable art. The origin or artist then, is the issue, not the supplies. A copy is a fake, in the sense of not crafted by the artist identified. A landscape is a fake, in terms that it is crafted by human culture and technology and not because its parts are nonnatural. The formal garden might be a fake rendering in terms of spontaneous nature, artificial. But is not a fake in terms of nature. The formal garden is, as anyone might describe it, a rendering of nature by human culture and technology.   Transmogrified nature maybe, as the cow and pig existence is transmogrified by human culture and technology, but not nonnatural. The flowers still grow and the cow still moos. As Callicott puts it, "Physics and ethics are, in other words, equally descriptive of nature."[34]

Consider a plastic formal garden. Here the fake is in both in terms of a rendering of spontaneous nature and in terms of artificial life-nature. But this weird garden is a legitimate rendering of nature. As legitimate as pointing to a photograph of the real thing and saying "there is spontaneous nature."

Distance, Beauty, Integrity and Stability

What does this distinction give us? First, while we have partially disarmed the baggage of natural versus nonnatural for the human situation. A thing can be artificial, spontaneous nature or somewhere in between.   A possible technique would be utilizing a line through the two extremes. A thing can be placed in terms of its closeness to spontaneous nature. Along this line, like a real number line, we eventually cross over from spontaneous nature to artificial nature.

Spontaneous   Artificial
Nature   Nature

Asking "Is that bush natural" translates to "How spontaneously natural is that

bush?" If the evidence suggests that the bush was found like that and we assume it has

never been manipulated by human contact, then it is very far on the scale of

spontaneous nature. The same bush in the New York central park is one that was

placed there by man so it has some distance from spontaneous nature. The same bush

in a Dallas area is farther along the line towards artificial nature, since the Dallas bush

needs plenty of mechanical hydrology to keep the bush alive. Exotics are purely natural

things but they can exist on this scale close to the artificial nature end, since their

existence is a result of human manipulation.   This approach avoids the contradictory

language of describing a perfectly natural species as nonnatural in an exotic setting.

Another advantage is the lack of a starting point. We can hardly identify the

original state of a landscape its original state of "spontaneous nature". Natural as it was

ten years ago when it was greener or ten centuries ago when it was under an ice pack?

It makes sense if our model of nature lacks a particular point corresponding to original

spontaneous nature. There does not exist an ultimate spontaneous nature.

Second, no point is both [or neither] spontaneous natural and artificial nature.

For example, zero is a number on the real number line that is neither negative nor

positive. There is no zero in our set. There is a continuous process that goes from the

identifiably spontaneous natural to the identifiably artificial natural. Distance between

two objects is just a measure of the relative artificialness or wildness.

For Elliot, this would give a method of condemning actions. One can say that an object, like a plastic formal garden, is very far from spontaneous nature and none would disagree. But one would do so without putting down technology and humans as *the culprits*. In other words, humans can positively manage ecosystems judging by the distance from spontaneous nature.

> It is sometimes thought that the more civilized humans become, the further we get *from* nature. This is true, but science and technology also take us further *into* nature. A pocket calculator is, in this perspective, not so much an exploitation of nature as it is a sophisticated appreciation of the intriguing, mathematical structure of matter-energy, properties enjoying an even more sophisticated natural use in the brain of the fabricator of the calculator.[35]

Rolston is trying to get across the idea that the distance from spontaneous nature is not all that bad in some situations.   Meaning that valuation does not need to be simply spontaneous nature for the environmentalist.   We can learn to understand the value of artificial nature in the balance of spontaneous and artificial.   If we say nature is valuable, then we might talk about the beauty, integrity and stability of the nature.

Beauty can be used, as humans already do use it, to describe the arctic tundra, the Blackman original and the newborn gorilla. Humans look at views and vistas, the sublime and the majestic of the spontaneous natural world. Some of the value of beauty might be our understanding of how distant human effort is from these areas.

Integrity might be related to fakes. Value is based on what the object represents. A landscape painting represents spontaneous nature. Thus, its value is based on the actual existence of the landscape, lessening the distance between the copy and the original. The value in the painting is that is depicts a landscape that is a minimal distance from a perfect form, an imagined ideal of what we might expect of a

spontaneous landscape at a certain time of existence. Integrity, perhaps in a platonic

sense here, might be a comparison to a held "form" in our minds of what nature should

be.

The integrity of an object in relation to its ecosystem might be a measure of that

object from the ecosystem. The living duck is pretty close while the squeaky plastic

bathtub ducky is much farther away.

Do we try to stamp out exotics because they are nonnatural? Even if we say

they are not natural to this ecosystem, how does one avoid headaches if one says the

animal is natural there in Zimbabwe by not here in Florida? The exotic cannot be both

natural and nonnatural. An exotic is not welcome because it has distance in terms of a

particular ecosystem, not because it is nonnatural or natural.

Stability of a system is dependant on the distance of its relative parts. There has

to be some distance from one discrete stage of the ecosystem to another, otherwise the

ecosystem does not evolve.   Without some distance the system will not function. But

too much distance will either shift the stability to another level. A great distance will

shatter the system entirely. Sometimes a small distance actually can end up creating

more destabilization that a large distance because the impact on systems is often

unpredictable. Not because of complexity, but because complex system are sensitive

to initial conditions. [36]

Value in nature

In terms of Elliot's indexical value theory, "property is recognized as value-adding

if it is one of those properties that must be taken into account in a careful act of

evaluation." (pp. 16-7). This is similar to Whitehead's idea that values in nature are in

"proportion to self-conscious activity"[37]. Rolston states, "Like science or recreation, valuing before nature is an interactive event".[38] The need to be objective is felt but "Humans, by and large, will be valuers."   The "value that a thing posses but only because it stand in a certain relation to the subjective states of some valuer."[39] (As an anthropogenic thing here) Goes farther with idea that existence of intrinsic value not factual[40].

Now let us attempt to address Elliot value theory using spontaneous nature and artificial nature. Value adding properties are related to the distance from spontaneous nature. The closer to spontaneous nature, perhaps the more value added. Intrinsic or not, the value is, in part, a consideration of distance from spontaneous nature.

What this does not allow is the dismissal of human crafted things.   If restoration can be though of as an attempt to work towards eliminating the distance from spontaneous nature, then it works as an argument to avoid despoliation, to avoid creating distance from spontaneous nature when possible. Even temporary despoliation has negative value. Indeed, return to spontaneous nature may not be easy or even possible.

The hand waving that Elliot and others use is avoided. It is useless to dismiss any human manipulation in situations that necessarily require human management if artificial nature is part of nature. Consider Elliot's statement that we have value only until we decide that some other human concern over-rides the value:

> This is not [to] say that there may not be a few cases in which despoliation is morally defensible; where we think it is permissible to act, on the basis of some very good justification, to reduce natural value with, perhaps, restoration in mind. (p. 114)

By placing human craft directly into nature, human considerations can only include consideration of spontaneous nature. In other words, one cannot separate humans from nature anymore than we can separate nature from humans. The human responsibility and duty to spontaneous nature is as tenable as responsibility and duty to other humans. It might be that the question of whether value comes from humans or from entities in spontaneous nature is mute.   One cannot consider values of any entity fully separated if they are members the same ecosystem.

Rolston states that an "Objective perspective systemic nature is valuable intrinsically as a projective system", with humans only one sort of its projects[41]. That humans came late time-wise is not a good reason to reject human centered instrumental value. "There goes a vicar"- identifying human/seeing a role in community, and "There goes a valuer" - identifying human/ seeing a role in ecological community is an interesting comparison[42]. But, vicar does not have a related word in the way valuer has value. The role in the community is still the vicar, the human. The value might be the role of the human in the ecological community.

As Rolston points out, in an environmental ethic, what humans want to value is not compassion, charity, rights, personality, justice, fairness or even pleasure and the pursuit of happiness. Those <u>values</u> belong in interhuman ethics – in culture, not nature- and to look for them here is to make a category mistake. What humans value is ecology, a pregnant Earth, a projective system in which … individual can prosper but are also sacrificed indifferently to their pains and pleasures[43].

"With beauty we cross a threshold into a realm of higher value; the experience of beauty is something humans bring into the world."   Do we always have to worry

about whether the beauty is in us or in the objects we perceive or somewhere in between? Leopold seems to suggest that beauty is simply something to be recognized irrespective of its origin. As we see the beauty in nature, we do see it through the lenses of the human perception but we do not necessarily see it separate from human existence. Our eyes are indifferent to seeing spontaneous nature as opposed to artificial nature. It is often after intellectual consideration that we often see what type of nature we are experiencing.

So what does this terminology give us? In environmental ethics, nature is best described as spontaneous nature or artificial nature. Humans are definitely part of nature and we share our livelihood and our values with others within ecosystems. While we dominate and expand artificial nature, we should realize that spontaneous nature is valuable humans create artificial nature and can only allow spontaneous nature to develop. Finally, while artificial nature is unavoidable near human activity, artificial nature can be both beautiful and valuable. We can judge closeness to the wild by looking at the distance of artificial nature from spontaneous nature. Humans can and will choose by necessity to create artificial nature in place of some spontaneous nature, but can do so at the smallest distance possible from spontaneous nature. We can be comfortable with our place in nature if we choose to value spontaneous nature by respecting its value, by mimicking its existence and by avoiding its destruction. By understanding our place in nature.

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[1] Bryan G. Norton, "Environmental Ethics and Weak Anthropocentrism", in *Environmental Ethics* 6 (1984), p. 132
[2] Tom Regan, "The Nature and Possibility of an Environmental Ethics" in *Environmental Ethics* 3 (1981). Emphasis mine.
[3] Robert Elliot, *Faking Nature: The ethics of environmental restoration* (Routledge 1997), p. 7
[4] Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species*, (Harvard Press, 1964), p. 456
[5] Mortiz Schlick, *Philosophy of Nature*, (Greenwood Pres, 1968), p. 73

[6] Schlick, *Philosophy of Nature*, p. 77

[7] Aldo Leopold, "The Land Ethic", in *A Sand County Almanac*, (Ballantine, 1966) particularly the section of the Land Pyramid, pp.251-255

[8] Holmes Rolston, III, *Environmental Ethics: Duties to and Values in The Natural World*, (Temple University Press 1988), p. 32

[9] Rolston, *Duties to and Values in The Natural World*, pp. 33-4

[10] Ibid., p.5

[11] G.E. Moore, *Lectures on Philosophy*, (Goerge Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1966), p.3

[12] Elliot, *Faking Nature*, p.117

[13] *The New Webster Dictionary of the English Language*, International Edition, (processing and Books Inc. 1967)

[14] *Webster*

[15] W.T. Jones, *A History of Western Philosophy, Volume I: The Classical Mind*, Second Edtion, Harcourt, 1970), p. 227

[16] Aristotle, "Physics-Book II.1", in *The Pocket Aristotle*, edited by J.D. Kaplan translated by W.D Ross (Pocket Books 1974), p.26

[17] Aristotle, "Physics-Book II.1", p.43

[18] Moore, *Lectures*, p. 3

[19] See Jan E. Dizard, *Going Wild: Revised And Expanded Edition: Hunting Animal Rights, and the Contested Meaning of Nature* (University of Massachusetts Press 1999)

[20] I admit here that not all artificial objects will turn out to be of human origin. Perhaps we will find that some animals construct items that are artificial, certainly an aliens who happen by will have constructed an artificial item or two.

[21] Elliot, *Faking Nature*, p.117

[22] Ibid.

[23] Even if a beaver is a moral agent, it is not a moral agent in the same fashion as a human, i.e. its understanding of consequences is very restricted compared to a human and thus cannot be held to the same level of accountability.

[24] Rolston, *Duties to and Values in The Natural World*, p. 35

[25] Elliot, *Faking Nature*, p. 80 Elliott is specifically taking of a forest, but any object that can have both a natural and non-natural origin works in this statement

[26] Rolston, *Duties to and Values in The Natural World,* pp. 3-27

[27] Ibid., p. 3

[28] Ibid., p. 34

[29] Ibid.

[30] Might be ascribed to Artistotle's treatment of nature in Book II of Physics where Aristotle compares nature with artifacts by considering attributes of chance and spontaneity

[31] J. Baird Callicott, "Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair" *in Defense of the Land Ethic: Essays in Environmental Philosophy* (SUNY 1989), p. 35

[32] Some one we read mentioned this but I cannot find the reference.

[33] Mary Midgley, "The Significance of Species"*, The Animal Right/Environmental Ethics Debate: The Environmental Perspective*, Eugene C. Hargrove editor, (SUNY, 1992) (pp. 121-3)

[34] J. Baird Callicott, "Intrinsic Value, Quantum Theory, and Environmental Ethics" *in Defense of the Land Ethic: Essays in Environmental Philosophy* (SUNY 1989), p. 170

[35] Rolston, *Duties to and Values in The Natural World,* p. 6

[36] See my next essay with Dr. Gunter on system structure and environmental ethics.

[37] Alfred North Whitehead, *The Concept of Nature: Tarner Lectures*, (Cambridge 1955), p. 5

[38] Rolston, *Duties to and Values in The Natural World,* p. 204

[39] Elliot, *Faking Nature,* p. 24

[40] Ibid., p. 33

[41] Rolston, *Duties to and Values in The Natural World,* p. 198

[42] Ibid., p. 204

[43] Ibid., p. 225