### a2 gender (short)

#### They will say discourse first but the assumption that language shapes reality is empirically flawed – they must support their claim by proving that we MEANT to be -<\_\_\_>-

Roskoski & Peabody, Florida State, 91

(Matthew and Joe, 1991, A Linguistic and Philosophical Critique of Language "Arguments,” <http://debate.uvm.edu/Library/DebateTheoryLibrary/Roskoski&Peabody-LangCritiques>, Date Accessed: 7/8, JS)

Initially, it is important to note that the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis does not intrinsically deserve presumption, although many authors assume its validity without empirical support.The reason it does not deserve presumption is that "on a priori grounds one can contest it by asking how, if we are unable to organize our thinking beyond the limits set by our native language, we could ever become aware of those limits"(Robins 101). Au explains that"because it has received so little convincing support, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis has stimulated little research**"** (Au 1984 156). However**,** many critical scholars take the hypothesis for granted because it is a necessary but uninteresting precondition for the claims they really want to defend.Khosroshahi explains: However**,** the empirical tests of the hypothesis of linguistic relativity have yielded more equivocal results.But independently of its empirical status, Whorf's view is quite widely held. In fact, many social movements have attempted reforms of language and have thus taken Whorf's thesis for granted. (Khosroshahi 505). One reason for the hypothesis being taken for granted is that on first glance it seems intuitively valid to some. However, after research is conducted it becomes clear that this intuition is no longer true. Rosch notes that the hypothesis "not only does not appear to be empirically true in any major respect, but it no longer even seems profoundly and ineffably true" (Rosch 276). The implication for language "arguments" is clear: a debater must do more than simply read cards from feminist or critical scholars that say language creates reality. Instead, the debater must support this claim with empirical studies or other forms of scientifically valid research. Mere intuition is not enough, and it is our belief that valid empirical studies do not support the hypothesis. After assessing the studies up to and including 1989, Takano claimed that the hypothesis "has no empirical support" (Takano 142). Further, Miller & McNeill claim that "nearly all" of the studies performed on the Whorfian hypothesis "are best regarded as efforts to substantiate the weak version of the hypothesis" (Miller & McNeill 734). We additionally will offer four reasons the hypothesis is not valid. The first reason is that it is impossible to generate empirical validation for the hypothesis. Because the hypothesis is so metaphysical and because it relies so heavily on intuition it is difficult if not impossible to operationalize. Rosch asserts that "profound and ineffable truths are not, in that form, subject to scientific investigation" (Rosch 259). We concur for two reasons. The first is that the hypothesis is phrased as a philosophical first principle and hence would not have an objective referent. The second is there would be intrinsic problems in any such test. The independent variable would be the language used by the subject. The dependent variable would be the subject's subjective reality. The problem is that the dependent variable can only be measured through selfreporting, which - naturally - entails the use of language. Hence, it is impossible to separate the dependent and independent variables. In other words, we have no way of knowing if the effects on "reality" are actual or merely artifacts of the language being used as a measuring tool.

#### focusing solely on the language used to describe something masks the problem and makes it harder to confront

Meisner, professor of environmental studies at York University, 1995 (Mark, “Resourcist Language: The Symbolic Enslavement of Nature”, Proceedings of the Conference on Communication and Our Environment, ed: David Sachsman, p. 242)

Changing the language we use to talk about non­human nature is not a solution. As I suggested, language is not the problem. Rather, it seems more like a contagious symptom of a deeper and multi-faceted problem that has yet to be fully defined. Resourcist language is both an indicator and a carrier of the pathology of rampant ecological degradation. Further­more, language change alone can end up simply being a band-aid solution that gives the appearance of change and makes the problem all the less visible. In a recent article on feminist language reform, Susan Ehrlich and Ruth King (1994) argue that because meanings are socially constructed, attempts at introducing nonsexist language are being undermined by a culture that is still largely sexist. The words may have shifted, but the meanings and ideologies have not. The real world cure for the sick patient matters more than the treatment of a single symptom. Consequently, language change and cultural change must go together with social-moral change. It is naive to believe either that language is trivial, or that it is deterministic.

### 2AC Subalterity [general]

#### The excuse of distance and inaction is a cop-out. There is no neutral position from which this takes place. Their self-effacing gesture reinforces privilege and only requires the subaltern to achieve political change

**Kapoor 08** (Ilan, Associate Professor at the Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University, and#34;The Postcolonial Politics of Development,and#34; p. 45-46)

But Spivak is quick to examine the other side of the equation. She reproaches Western researchers/academicians for sometimes too easily distancing them- selves from postcoloniality by uncritically situating the native informant as authentic and exotic 'insider': they say '"O.K., sorry, we are just very good white people, therefore we do not speak for the blacks." That's the kind of breast- beating that is left behind at the threshold and then business goes on as usual' (1990a: 121). By placing themselves as 'outsiders', they duck their own complicity in North-South politics, often hiding behind naivete or lack of expertise, all the while congratulating themselves as the 'saviors of marginality' (1993: 61). This inside/outside separation either helps contain and depoliticize ethnicity, or puts the onus for change and engagement exclusively on the Third World subaltern (or on the native informant as its representative). Thus, for Spivak, it is dangerous to assume that one can encounter the Third World, and especially the Third World subaltern, on a level playing field. Our interaction with, and representations of, the subaltern are inevitably loaded. They are determined by our favourable historical and geographic position, our material and cultural advantages resulting from imperialism and capitalism, and our iden- tity as privileged Westerner or native informant. When the investigating subject, naively or knowingly, disavows its complicity or pretends it has no 'geo-political determinations1, it does the opposite of concealing itself: it privileges itself (1988a: 272, 292). It is liable (as discussed above and detailed further below) to speak for the subaltern, justifying power and domination, naturalizing Western superiority, essentializing ethnicity, or asserting ethnocultural and class identity, all in the name of the subaltern. In so doing, it is liable to do harm to the subaltern. As Linda Alcoff writes, 'Though the speaker may be trying to materially improve the situation of some lesser-privileged group, the effects of her discourse is to reinforce racist, imperialist conceptions and perhaps also to further silence the lesser-privileged group's own ability to speak and be heard' (1991: 26).

Also you don’t know me – FUCK YOU for assuming I’m an elite, white, male, or that I speak from a position of privilege. Their interregation of our “situatedness” in reference to our advocacy is not only Stalinist because it justifies spying on people to figure out “who they are” but also pedagogically bankrupt and

#### shuts down debate

**SUBOTNIK 98**

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Having traced a major strand in the development of CRT, we turn now to the strands' effect on the relationships of CRATs with each other and with outsiders. As the foregoing material suggests, **the central** CRT **message is not simply that minorities are being treated unfairly**, or even that individuals out there are in pain - assertions for which there are data to serve as grist for the academic mill - **but that the minority scholar himself or herself hurts and hurts badly**.

An important problem that concerns the very definition of the scholarly enterprise now comes into focus. **What can an academic** trained to [\*694] question and to doubt n72 **possibly say to Patricia Williams when effectively she announces, "I hurt bad"?** n73 **"No, you don't hurt"? "You shouldn't hurt"?** "Other people hurt too"? Or, most dangerously - and perhaps most tellingly - "What do you expect when you keep shooting yourself in the foot?" If the majority were perceived as having the well- being of minority groups in mind, these responses might be acceptable, even welcomed. And they might lead to real conversation. But, **writes Williams, the failure by those "cushioned within the invisible privileges of race and power**... to incorporate a sense of precarious connection as a part of our **lives is... ultimately obliterating**." n74

"Precarious." "Obliterating." **These words will clearly invite responses only from fools and sociopaths; they will, by effectively precluding objection, disconcert and disunite others**. **"I hurt," in academic discourse, has three broad though interrelated effects**. First, **it demands priority from the reader's conscience. It is for this reason that law review editors, waiving usual standards, have privileged a long trail of undisciplined - even silly** n75 **- destructive and, above all, self-destructive arti** [\*695] **cles.** n76 **Second, by emphasizing the emotional bond between those who hurt in a similar way, "I hurt" discourages fellow sufferers from abstracting themselves from their pain in order to gain perspective on their condition**. n77

[\*696] **Last, as we have seen, it precludes the possibility of open and structured conversation with others**. n78

[\*697] **It is because of this conversation-stopping effect** of what they insensitively call "first-person agony stories" **that Farber and Sherry deplore their use.** "The norms of academic civility hamper readers from challenging the accuracy of the researcher's account; it would be rather difficult, for example, to criticize a law review article by questioning the author's emotional stability or veracity." n79 Perhaps, a better practice would be to put the scholar's experience on the table, along with other relevant material, but to subject that experience to the same level of scrutiny.

If **through the foregoing rhetorical strategies CRATs succeeded in limiting academic debate**, why do they not have greater influence on public policy? **Discouraging white legal scholars from entering the national conversation about race**, n80 I suggest, **has generated a kind of cynicism in white audiences** which, in turn, has had precisely the reverse effect of that ostensibly desired by CRATs. **It drives the American public to the right and ensures that anything CRT offers is reflexively rejected.**

In the absence of scholarly work by white males in the area of race, of course, it is difficult to be sure what reasons they would give for not having rallied behind CRT. Two things, however, are certain. First, **the kinds of issues** raised by Williams **are too important** in their implications  [\*698]  for American life **to be confined to communities of color.** If the lives of minorities are heavily constrained, if not fully defined, by the thoughts and actions of the majority elements in society, **it would seem to be of great importance that white thinkers and doers participate in open discourse** to bring about change. Second, given the lack of engagement of CRT by the community of legal scholars as a whole, the discourse that should be taking place at the highest scholarly levels has, by default, been displaced to faculty offices and, more generally, the streets and the airwaves.

#### The alternative is silence and inaction which reinforces oppression and turns the critique

Blomley 94 (Nicholas K. Blomley – Professor of Geography at Simon Fraser University, 1994, “Activism and the Academy”, http://www.praxis-epress.org/CGR/CG\_Whole.pdf) //MD

So why the silence? Several reasons spring to mind. One likely option is that, for many, it is not an issue, given that many progressive academics seem to think that “activist” work is not **really** “intellectual” work. If people engage in “external” struggle, they do so “on their own time,” as citizens. Certainly this is something that tenure committees seem to believe. For example, my university carefully codes it as “community service” and weighs it as some small percentage of my total academic worth. That uncoupling of the categories “academic” and “activist” seems**, for me,**  difficult to sustain. I was struck by the view of one friend, who noted that she did not see herself as an academic occasionally engaged in activism, but **thought of herself** as an activist who happens to be an academic. It could also be said that such a distancing evades a special charge – what Noam Chomsky once termed the political “responsibility of intellectuals.” Intellectuals in the academy enjoy a special privilege that comes from political liberty, access to information, and freedom of expression. “For a privileged minority”, Chomsky (1969, 324) insists, “Western democracy provides the leisure, the facilities, and the training to seek the truth behind the veil of misrepresentation, ideology and class interest through which the events of current history are presented to us.” **To neglect that responsibility is,** at the very best, **to acquiesce to oppression.** There are more recent reasons for this self-silencing, perhaps, as we come to embrace a postmodern humility, and caution against speaking for the Other.Although such a prudence is laudable, it can also all too easily become a self-serving excuse for inaction. We certainly need to be alert to the perils of the academic colonization of community life, but we should also avoid any romantic assumptions of some authentically ‘pure’ field of activism. The activists I have encountered have all had complex, and occasionally self-serving, agendas. As we all occupy multiple subject positions, so activism is a field of contradiction and diversity.

### 2ac framing top

Conceded that your role as an academic is to evaluate conceptual approaches to environmental praxis – the alternative is not an environmental practice all I need to win is that the aff practice is comparatively better than status quo environmental praxis

The role of the ballot is which team best develops a relationship to Mexico’s ecosystem we’ll win that our methodology is superior to theirs

-Castellano indicates that interrogating how people institutions and ecosystems interact is a prerequisite to good policy

-Reitan indicates that problem solving requires a change in worldview and that pragmatism is key to identify which debates really matter and how to mediate those debates

-Bell and Russel indicate that as an educator you should promote discussion about societal narratives that legitimize environmental destruction

Weston means we solve this, we result in a non anthropocentric conception

Transition wars mean humans backlash against the environment

#### Permutation do the plan and < > - embracing environmental prudence is best

**Plumwood, 02** [PF PHILOSOPHY - UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY, VAL, Environmental Culture: The ecological crisis of reason, p. 126-9]

It is sometimes argued, against any concern with human-centredness, that an ethic based on human interests is not only all that is needed for the conservation of nature but all that is conceivable. 6 We are humans; we cannot avoid thinking in terms of our own interests. In fact, if somehow we actually could put our own interests completely aside, we would be left with a totally useless ethics. No one would find it compelling. An ethics that considered only effects on nature and ignored humans would be irrelevant to the practical politics of environmental activism and would cut itself off from real policy debates. 7 This objection certainly has to be taken seriously. We do need. as humans. to take good care of ourselves. not leaving ourselves unsafe, unprotected or unprovided for. in short. to be prudent. 'Prudential' argument in this context then would be argument for avoidine: certain environmental practices which considers the effect of those practices on the safety, survival and welfare of human beings. Ozone depletion and pollution harm human health, overfishing destroys resources for future humans, global warming could unleash potentially catastrophic climatic change and extremes. and so on. If the core theoretical distinctions of environmental philosophy indeed must tell us that it is human-centred to take good care of human interests, if they force us to condemn as human-centred all such prudential criticisms of our treatment of nature that refer to the damage its degradation does to human beings, then they would make the ideal of escaping human- centeredness quite impractical. And if, as some critics go on to argue, the ideal of avoiding human- centredness also provides only vague alternative reasons for avoiding environmentally-degrading actions, it is a real liability for practical action. But are we in fact forced to condemn as human-centred all prudential types of environmental argument? I think this is a misinterpretation of human-centredness as well as a misinterpretation of prudence. Consider for a moment the parallel case of egocentrism. We would usually say that someone was egocentric if, among other things, that person consulted only their own outcomes, welfare or interests in deciding what courses of action to follow, and ignored outcomes for others or failed to consider them as presenting reasons for or against the action being considered (this is the extreme case - often we would say someone was egocentric when they just gave other people's interests excessively low weight). But the definition of prudence as taking care of and protecting yourself does not imply that you cannot also take care of others, any more than your taking care of orange trees means that you cannot also take care of lemon trees. Considering your own interests does not imply that you cannot also consider others' interests as well as, or as related to, your own. Prudence does not consist of counting only one's own interests as reasons for acting or not acting, as in this case, but in taking one's own interests into account in a consistent way, and counting injury to them as among your reasons for avoiding an action. The idea of prudence says nothing about consulting your own interests to the exclusion of others. That is not prudence any more than it is rationality - it is selfishness, or egocentrism. Similarly, the ideal of avoiding human-centredness does not imply at all that humans should not be prudent, or that we cannot consider the effect of environmental damage on our own human interests along with the effect of our actions on other species and on nature generally. The critics' obiection rests on identifying prudence with something much stronger - with a kind of species selfishness that treats other beings solely as means to our own. human ends. Kant tells us that humans are to be conceived as ends-in themselves and cannot be treated as merely means to our ends, and though Kant himself restricted this kind of standing to humans, environmental philosophy typically proposes to generalise it. But the crucial phrase here is 'no more than'. We must inevitably treat the natural world to some degree as a means. for example. as a means to food. shelter and other materials we need in order to survive. iust as we must treat other people to some degree as means. In the circus, the performers may make use of one another by standing on one anothers' shoulders, for example, as a means of reaching the trapeze, but our obligation to avoid using others solely as means (or instrumentalising them, as philosophers term it) does not imply banning the circus. What is prohibited is unconstrained or total use of others as no more than means. reducing: others to means - tying some of the performers up permanently, for example, to use as steps 8. In short. then. prudential reasons and non- prudential reasons for action are not mutually exclusive; prudential and non-prudential reasons can combine and reinforce one another. and may not always be sharply separate. since any normal situation of choice always involves a mixture. The problem lies rather in the refusal to go beyond questions of human well-being and the (exclusion of non-humans from morality and value as no more than tools. unworthy of any moral consideration in their own right. Only by identifying prudence with this radical kind of species selfishness can critics discover a malaise in en vironmental ethics. There is a difference between prudence and egocentrisrn between a sensible concern which considers our own interests, perhaps together with the interests of others and a selfish and exclusive preoccupation with our own interests which fails to consult the interests of others at all. (One can see why the dominant global order might have wanted us to confuse them, and in whose interests it would be to do so). To be prudent in our dealings with nature is both essential and benign from the perspective both of nature and of ourselves; while to be governed by egocentrism or by instrumentalism in our dealings with nature is damaging but far from inevitable.

#### Detaching theory and practice mean they don’t solve

Schlosberg 13 (David Schlosberg; Environmental Politics Volume 22, Issue 1, 2013 Special Issue: Coming of Age? Environmental Politics at 21; “Theorising environmental justice: the expanding sphere of a discourse”; pages 37-55; KDUB)

This focus on the relationship between practice and theory has also been central to my attempts to understand the ‘justice’ of environmental justice (Schlosberg 2004, 2007). Many attempts to define environmental or climate justice have been too detached from the actual demands of social movements that use the idea as an organising theme or identity. This does assume that there is a value to movement practice – that theory can, and should, actually learn from the language, demands, and action of movements. Why, the more purist academic or sceptic might ask, should we prioritise what activists believe or do? But the question should not be about who is the best judge of a conception of justice – activists or theorists. The point is that different discourses of justice, and the various experiences and articulations of injustice, inform how the concept is used, understood, articulated, and demanded in practice; the engagement with what is articulated on the ground is of crucial value to our understanding and development of the concepts we study. It continues to be unfortunate that there are those in the study of environmentalism, or in the theoretical realm, who simply cannot see the importance, and range, of these articulations at the intersection of theory and practice – especially when movement innovation is as broad and informative as it is in environmental justice.

Hirokawa is a solvency deficit they don’t have an answer to – incremental changes produce new contexts that open up the space for alternative paradigms to emerge

-Reitan indicates that problem solving requires a change in worldview and that pragmatism is key to identify which debates really matter and how to mediate those debates

Applied ecology is superior to pure ecology in the context of Mexico because it is solution rather than problem oriented, institutional structures also ONLY accredit applied ecology which means the aff is key to alt solvency

#### Eco-pragmatism avoids totalizing theory and allows solutions to the environmental issues of the squo

Hirokawa 2 (Keith Hirokawa, J.D. from the UConn and LL.M. from the Northwestern School of Law, 2002, "Some Pragmatic Observations About Radical Critique In Environmental Law," Stanford Environmental Law Journal, Volume 21, June; lexis; Kristof)

By rejecting commitments to theory, pragmatists are denied the benefit of having a justifying principle (such as free will, equality, utility, ecocentrism, etc.) under which they can rally support. However, what pragmatists lose by rejecting meta-theory they replace by widening the field of potential solutions. **Avoiding commitment to** a **substantive meta-theory frees the environmental thinker from worry about whether the solutions proposed for a given problem are consistent with an ultimate theoretical grounding**; that is, the pragmatist is not bound by deductive reasoning within the confines of any particular analytic scheme. Visionary reasoning becomes an eclectic array of possibilities, limited only by those contextual needs that make the inquiry important in the first place. The turn to pragmatism thus symbolizes a rejection of the alleged [\*251] relationship between theory and answers to practical questions. To the pragmatist, this rejection comes for very good reason. Competing conclusions can often be derived from the same incomplete set of premises, and divergent theories can often produce the same conclusions. Pragmatists redirect human inquiry to avoid the indeterminacy of theory, since the "knowledge of obstacles is not itself an obstacle unless it leads to defeatism; for pragmatists it serves as a spur to seek a way to overcome those obstacles." n118 In the final analysis, although theories are important, the pragmatist warns against theory commitments, because theories provide "no more than commentary on practice, based on premises drawn from that practice itself." n119 Accordingly, the pragmatic position against theory is not a broad, sweeping dismissal of every idea derived from a theoretical framework. n120 Rather, **the pragmatist is free to consider a variety of ideas, approaches and solutions without committing to particular theoretical foundations**. The method and strength of problem solving, n121 if not the purpose, is to ensure conversation participants [\*252] that their theories are duly considered. n122 **The resulting formation of policy is "inclusive, treating current theories as perspectives, each of which can add to the understanding of law**." n123 **Pragmatism**, then, **is a helpful tool** (especially **to environmental debate**) **because of its freedom from any particular method of inquiry and any particular metaphysical "good"** of society. For the pragmatist, **theories** "**are not** Euclidean axioms or Kantian categorical **imperatives, but** graffiti, **practical guidelines to be noticed** by the alertly street-wise **when context makes them applicable**." n124 **When unbounded by consistency** with or loyalty to any particular theory, **all relevant ideas become useful to the resolution** of a dilemma. The lesson from pragmatism is that to see the law as something more than a refined, yet interminably eclectic conglomerate of ideas, taken from all forms of social and cultural practices, would be to give too much credit to our insight into the nature of justice. The resulting amalgam - the plurality of perspectives arranged for inclusive discourse - is not mandated by pragmatism. n125 Nonetheless, since pragmatism is in its most useful capacity when put to the task of dispute resolution, pragmatism inevitably finds itself confronted with opposing and incompatible perspectives. A pragmatic conclusion is one in which those opposing and incompatible perspectives are represented. To this end, some pragmatists have tried to surmount the foundationalists' problem of theory-hope (that the right theory will supply the right solutions) by proposing pluralist perspectives to bridge the gaps between competing paradigms. Pluralism serves as a helpful model for pragmatism's [\*253] application. n126 In summary, pragmatic inquiry illustrates three main themes. First, **pragmatism embodies "anti-foundationalism" in that it** is not loyal to any particular substantive theory. Second, pragmatism **allows negotiation between** purportedly **uncompromising positions for the purpose of solving real problems, due** in large part **to its lack of dependency on any "truths" claimed** in these positions. Finally, particular theory determines the right answers to difficult questions. The **pragmatist uses these tools to transcend barriers between alternative perceptions by critically examining such perspectives to determine how each of them can be applied in a helpful, non-exclusive manner**. **These tools can be applied to debates over environmental protection, which were** above portrayed as **deadlocked dialogues between deeply held beliefs**. Below, the problems of frustrated belief are contrasted to examples of pragmatic environmentalism, verifying the potential benefits of legal pragmatism for advocates and judges engaged in environmental disputes.

#### Shallow ecology is comparatively superior – our subject position ensures that ontological commitment will always be rooted in humanity – their arg discredits ecological academia

Avery 4 (STEPHEN AVERY; “The Misbegotten Child of Deep Ecology”; Environmental Values, Vol. 13, No. 1 (February 2004), pp. 31-50; KDUB)

Hand-in-hand with this ontological commitment, however, is the belief that this holistic ontology entails a non-anthropocentric ethic. Within the literature this entailment is almost universally accepted, so much so that deep ecology is often characterised by its non-anthropocentric stance. It is my contention, however, that such an entailment is misbegotten. The development of a non- anthropocentric ethic is a problematic task that must be aborted. The debate between those advocating and those opposing a non-anthropocentric ethic has been one of the most prominent and long-running debates within environmental philosophical circles. Supporters of a non-anthropocentric or ecocentric ethic seek to locate intrinsic value in the non-human world, thus providing all creatures an equal right to 'live and blossom' . However, in this endeavour, such ethicists fail to recognise the essentially practical nature of ethics and the consequent impossibility of separating human concern and value from any environmental ethical consideration. Invariably, non-anthropocentrists, at least those who wish to avoid the inherent misanthropic consequences of a consistent application of non-anthropocentric ethics, develop a hierarchy of needs to solve this problematic practical application. These hierarchies, however, lead ulti- mately to a question-begging ethical preference for the human species. Despite the rejection of non-anthropocentric ethics, I believe that the deep ecological ontological commitment does have merit. However, intrinsic in deep ecologists' failure to develop a viable environmental ethic, I believe, is a lack of understanding of the derivation of ethics from ontology. As Heidegger claims, 'Before we attempt to determine more precisely the relationship between "ontology" and "ethics" we must ask what "ontology" and "ethics" themselves are'.2 In pursuing this question it becomes apparent that ontology itself is derivative of what Heidegger calls fundamental ontology. Fundamental ontol- ogy offers the recognition that we, as humans, have no ontological access except through our own understanding of what it is to 'be' . For this reason I believe that, to meet deep ecology's ontological conception, a distinction needs to be made between shallow and deep anthropocentrism. Like its namesake, deep anthropocentrism is suggestive of a deeper connection between humans and the world, a connection that has its roots in the human condition. Such a connection can be contrasted with 'shallow' or 'formal' anthropocentrism, the idea that we necessarily view the world from a human perspective. The need for a deep anthropocentric distinction follows the conception that ontology itself is not possible outside a fundamental human standpoint.

#### No link our praxis reframes environmental policy

Callicott 2 (J. BAIRD CALLICOTT; Environmental Values, Vol. 11, No. 1 (February 2002), pp. 3-25; “The Pragmatic Power and Promise of Theoretical Environmental Ethics: Forging a New¶ Discourse”; KDUB)

THE PRACTICAL EFFICACY OF THEORETICAL ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY I have no quarrel whatever with the bottom-up approach to environmental philosophy. I myself was a recipient of a three-year grant from the bi-national Great Lakes Fishery Commission to work with an ichthyologist and an aquatic community ecologist to re-envision fishery management policy in the Great Lakes for the new millennium. My role was precisely to clarify such fuzzy conservation concepts as biological integrity, ecosystem health, ecosystem management, ecological restoration, ecological rehabilitation, ecological sustainability, sustainable development, and adaptive management; and to examine the values that have driven, drive, and will drive fishery management in the Great Lakes in the past, present, and future (Callicott et al. 1999). I do have a quarrel, however, with the representation of the bottom-up, Pragmatic ap- proach as a competitive alternative to theoretical environmental philosophy and to the invidious comparison that environmental Pragmatists make between the two, virtually insisting that theorists should stop their pointless and pernicious theorising (Norton 1992, 1995; Minteer 1998). I believe that the two -theory and practice - should be complementary, not competitive. Further, I think that theoretical environmental philosophy is powerfully pragmatic; that theory does make a difference to practice. What difference? First, the convergence hypothesis - which Norton (1991 : 241) confesses is merely 'an article of environmentalists' faith' -is not a credible article of faith because it is hard to believe that all Earth's myriad species, for example, are in some way useful to human beings (Ehrenfeld 1976, 1988). Many may represent unexplored potential new pharmaceuticals, foods, fibres, and fuels. But many more may not (Ehrenfeld 1976). Many species that have no actual or potential resource value are critical agents in ecological processes and/ or perform vital ecological functions or 'services'. But many more do not (Ehrenfeld 1988). Many non-resource, non-ecological-service-provider species are, nevertheless, objects of aesthetic wonder and/or epistemic curiosity to the small percentage of the human population that is aesthetically cultured and scientifically educated. But such amenity values that endangered non-resource, non-ecological-service-provider species have for a tiny human minority afford them little protection in a world increasingly governed by market economics and majority-rule politics. In short, conservation policy based on anthropocentrism alone - however broadened to include potential as well as actual resources, ecosystem services, and the aesthetic, epistemic, and spiritual uses of nature by present and future people - is less robust and inclusive than conservation policy based on the intrinsic value of nature (Ehrenfeld 1976, 1988). Second, in setting forth the 'convergence hypothesis ' , Norton ( 1 99 1 ) focuses exclusively on the content of anthropocentric and nonanthropocentic (or intrin- sic) values and the environmental policies they support But if we focus instead on the formalities, as it were, or structural features of the policy discourses involving, on the one hand, claims of intrinsic value in nature and those, on the other, that only involve anthropocentric value claims, a hypothesis contrary to the 'convergence hypothesis' is suggested. Perhaps it should be called the 'divergence hypothesis'. Broad recognition of the intrinsic value of human beings places the burden of proof on those who would over-ride that value for the sake of realising instrumental values. For example, an intrinsically valuable human being not wishing to sell a piece of property at any price may refuse any offer to buy it. Their intransigence, however, may be trumped if benefits to the public rise beyond a certain threshold. If, for example, the recalcitrant owner's property stands in the way of an urban light-rail train track, then the property may be 'condemned' , and the owner paid fair market value for it, whether he or she is willing to sell it or not. If nature were also broadly recognised to have intrinsic value the burden of proof would shift, mutatis mutandis, from conservators of nature to exploiters of nature (Fox 1993). If something has only instrumental value, its disposition goes to the highest bidder. If that something is some subsection of nature - say, a wetland - conservationists must prove that an economic cost-benefit analysis unequivocally indicates that it has greater value as an amenity than it has, drained and filled, as a site for a proposed shopping mall. But if the intrinsic value of wetlands were broadly recognised, then developers would have to prove that the value to the human community of the shopping mall was so great as to trump the intrinsic value of the wetland. The concept of intrinsic value in nature functions politically much like the concept of human rights. Human rights - to liberty, even to life - may be over-ridden by considerations of public or aggregate utility. But in all such cases, the burden of proof for doing so rests not with the rights holder, but with those who would over- ride human rights. And the utilitarian threshold for over-riding human rights is pitched very high indeed. As Fox (1993: 101) puts it: The mere fact that moral agents must be able to justify their actions in regard to their treatment of entities that are intrinsically valuable means that recognizing the intrinsic value of the nonhuman world has a dramatic effect upon the framework of environmental debate and decision-making. If the nonhuman world is only considered to be instrumentally valuable then people are permitted to use and otherwise interfere with any aspect of it for whatever reasons they wish (i.e., no justification is required). If anyone objects to such interference then, within this framework of reference, the onus is clearly on the person who objects to justify why it is more useful to humans to leave that aspect of the nonhuman world alone. If, however, the nonhuman world is considered to be intrinsically valuable then the onus shifts to the person who wants to interfere with it to justify why they should be allowed to do so: anyone who wants to interfere with any entity that is intrinsically valuable is morally obliged to be able to offer ^sufficient justification for their actions. Thus recognizing the intrinsic value of the nonhuman world shifts the onus of justification from the person who wants to protect the nonhuman world to the person who wants to interfere with it - and that, in itself, represents a fundamental shift in the terms of environmental debate and decision- making

#### Pragmatism is necessary because it can overcome the prevalent anthropocentric mindset, only the perm solves.

**Light**, Andrew, Assistant Professor of Environmental Philosophy and Director, Environmental Conservation Education Program, **2002** (Environmental Ethics: What Really Matters What Really Works David Schmidtz and Elizabeth Willott, p. 556-57)

In recent years a critique of this predominant trend in environmental ethics has emerged from within the pragmatist tradition in American philosophy.' The force of this critique is driven by the intuition that **environmental philosophy cannot afford to be qui­escent about the public reception of ethical argu­ments over the value of nature.** The original moti­vations of environmental philosophers for turning their philosophical insights to the environment sup­port such a position., **Environmental philosophy evolved out of a concern about the state of the grow­ing environmental crisis,** and a conviction that a philosophical contribution could be made to the res­olution of this crisis. **But if environmental philoso­phers spend all of their time debating non­-human centered forms of value theory they will ar­guably never get very far in making such a contri­bution.** For example, to continue to ignore human motivations for the act of valuing nature causes many in the field to overlook the fact that most people find it very difficult to extend moral consideration to plants and animals on the grounds that these entities possess some form of intrinsic, inherent, or other­wise conceived nonanthropocentric value. It is even more difficult for people to recognize that non­humans could have rights. **Claims about the value of nature as such do not appear to resonate with the or­dinary moral intuitions of most people who**, after all, **spend most of their lives****thinking of value**, moral obligations, and rights **in exclusively human terms.** Indeed, while most environmental philosophers be­gin their work with the assumption that most people think of value in human-centered terms (a problem that has been decried since the very early days of the field), few have considered the problem of how a non-human-centered approach to valuing nature can ever appeal to such human intuitions. The particular version of the pragmatist critique of environmental ethics that I have endorsed recognizes that **we need to rethink the utility of anthropocentric arguments in environmental moral and political theory, not nec­essarily because the traditional** nonanthropocentric **arguments** in the field **are false, but because they hamper attempts to contribute to the public discus­sion of environmental problems, in terms familiar to the public**.