# A2 Environment Kritiks

## Top Level

### Practical Action Key

#### Their vague criticism of ideology that supposedly underlies environmental destruction does nothing – only including practical solutions like my aff can solves the kritik

Richards 11 [(Tim, author of the Sustainable Haverford plenary resolution,founder of Citizens for a Green Mt. Airy; advised by Gest Professor of Global Philosophy Ashok Gangadean) “Beyond Environmental Morality: Towards a Viable Environmental Ethic(s),” The International Journal of Environmental, Cultural, Economic and Social Sustainability Volume 7, Number 2, 2011]

What is wrong with environmental ethics? Who could impugn such an ostensibly noble thing? I hold that modern environmental ethics is foremost among the forces that keep our species from evolving to be more ecologically adapted or ‘environmentally friendly.’ The dialectic is approximately this: unwittingly, in fighting the actions and institutions that are degrading the environment, environmental activists, employing our modern environmental ethics, merely oppose the consciousness that created environmental problems to begin with – namely, that humans are separate from ‘nature’ and can use it however they wish. Activist remedies, therefore, will merely react negatively to this state of affairs; thus, we get the picture that humans and their economy are evil, nature and its economy is good, and that if we do not completely leave nature alone then we should at least inflict as little damage as possible. We inherit a portrait of human self-hatred where the best possible world, ecologically speaking, is one devoid of the human species entirely. With such a flawed guiding vision, it is little wonder that the environmental movement has yet to gain sweeping power and reforms globally. It is my view that morality is a failed vehicle for handling environmental problems. For example, though we know that our burning of fossil fuels is environmentally destructive and bad for our health, we are forced to do so anyway because our current industrial system has evolved upon this premise. Moralize as much as we like, finger wagging and admonishment will not change the basis of our economy – we still drive our cars, use our coal-fired power, and rely on extractive industries. Decrying such activities as evil merely opposes these practices and contributes nothing to forward a fundamentally different alternative, neither intellectually nor practically. Reframing the basic story and approach such that we humans, as an integral part of nature, can contribute positively as vital, productive parts of the whole would represent an explosion of the superstructure of what is presently considered possible. Once we transcend environmental dualism and contemporary environmental morality, all manner of ideas and possibilitiesd emerge, as if on the dawn of a new day. Humans do not have to be detrimental to the environment; we are not fundamentally flawed in this respect despite what environmental moralists might say. By going beyond the contemporary environmental morality and environmental dualism exemplified by modern environmental ethics as a field, we as ethical thinkers and activists can begin to be effective in our efforts to advocate for a more ecologically adapted society with environmentally conscious lifestyles.

### A2 Responsibility for nature

Links to Ks that claim: we are responsible for the well-being of nature as guardians; we have the capability to destroy all of earth and with such power comes responsibility;

#### The world doesn’t really need us and claiming that we bear responsibility for its survival is the highest arrogance

Margulis 98 [(Lynn, renowned biologist and University Professor in the Department of Geosciences at the University of Massachusetts Amherst) “Life on Earth doesn't need us” the Independent 02 September] AT

HUMANS ARE not the centre of life. Nor is any other single species. Life has existed at the planetary level for at least 3,000 million years. To me, the human move to take responsibility for the living Earth is laughable - the rhetoric of the powerless. The planet takes care of us, not we of it. Our self-inflated moral imperative to guide a wayward Earth, or heal our sick planet, is evidence of our immense capacity for self delusion. Rather, we need to protect ourselves from ourselves. We are at the point of a very big crisis indeed in global biodiversity. Over 40 per cent of the land mass of the earth is now devoted to human agriculture. The cities are eating up the open spaces with their garbage and concrete. The forests are being taken over by agriculture. There is simply no way that this can be allowed to double in the next generation, which is the rate at which we are going. Why should Homo sapiens, as the species is inaptly named, of all species, continue? There are anything up to 30 million species alive today. But 99.9 per cent plus of those that ever existed are extinct. It's not much use appealing, as many environmentalists do, for the saving of one particular species, one type of snail, when we're destroying their whole habitat. There is no scientific reason to think that we, even with space travel, are going to survive as a species for ever, certainly not by biting off the hand that feeds us, which is exactly what we are doing. I came to this view through my collaboration with the independent scientist and inventor, James Lovelock. Our Gaia hypothesis, rejected by some as the fantasy of New Age crystal-swingers, demonstrates how biology is essential to the understanding of how Earth works. Gaia is not, as many claim, a theory of the Earth as a single living organism. Yet the Earth, in the biological sense, has a body sustained by a complex physiology. Life is a global phenomenon, and the Earth has thus been alive for most of its history. James Lovelock had already thought up the idea of a living Earth in the mid-Sixties, years before I met him, when he consulted for NASA. His major contribution was the electron capture device, a detector used to measure concentrations of certain reactive gases in the air, such as chlorofluorocarbons, which led directly to chemists understanding how the ozone layer was being destroyed. Borrowing a term from physiology, Lovelock pointed out that our planetary environment is "homeostatic". Just as our bodies, like those of all mammals, maintain a relatively stable internal temperature despite changing conditions, the Earth system keeps its temperature and atmospheric composition stable. In engineering terms, Lovelock wrote, atmospheric temperature is regulated around given set points by negative feedback. His claims that life sets environmental temperature at an optimum were misunderstood, criticised or, more frequently, ignored. Lovelock increasingly thought of this planetary regulatory system as central to understanding life on Earth. The term Gaia was suggested to Lovelock by William Golding, author of Lord of the Flies. In the early Seventies, they both lived in Bowerchalke, Wiltshire. Lovelock asked his neighbour if he could replace the cumbersome phrase "a cybernetic system with homeostatic tendencies as detected by chemical anomalies in the Earth's atmosphere" with a term meaning "Earth". "I need a four letter word," he said. Golding suggested "Gaia", the ancient Greek word for "Mother Earth". As such, Gaia provides an etymological root of many scientific terms, such as geology, geometry and Pangea. The sum of planetary life, Gaia, is an emergent property of interaction among organisms, the spherical planet on which they reside, and an energy source, the sun. Furthermore, Gaia is an ancient phenomenon. Trillions of jostling, feeding, mating, exuding beings comprise her planetary system. Gaia is a tough bitch and is not at all threatened by humans. Planetary life has survived for billions of years before humanity was even the dream of a lively ape with a yearning for a hairless mate. Politicians need a better understanding of global ecology. We need to be freed from our species-specific arrogance. No evidence exists that we are "chosen", the unique species for which all the others were made. Nor are we the most important one because we are so numerous, powerful and dangerous. Our tenacious illusion of special dispensation belies our true status as upright, mammalian weeds. In popular culture, the confused idea of Gaia strikes mythological chords. Gaia resonates with our longing for significance in our short Earth-bound lives. We have, for centuries, personified nature. It is unfortunate that Gaia theory has been used for this vaguely spiritual agenda by mystics, and some of the more scientifically-illiterate environmentalists. But the planet is not human, nor does it belong to humans. Now, a new scientific organisation, Gaia: the Society for Research and Education in Earth System Science, is bringing the lessons of global biology to a wider audience. Few of us will ever be able to get the unique perspective provided by seeing the Earth from space, but the Gaia society will help us share the planetary perspective of those who have. The urgency for developing the larger, interconnected perspective facilitated by Gaia has never been more pressing. Despite our very recent appearance on the planet, humanity combines arrogance with increasing material demands, even as we become more numerous. Our toughness is a delusion. Have we the intelligence and discipline to vigilantly guard against our tendency to grow without limit? The planet will not permit our consumption of resources and production of wastes to continue to increase. Runaway populations of bacteria, locusts, roaches, mice and even wild flowers always collapse. They choke on their own wastes as crowding and severe shortage ensue. Diseases follow, taking their cue from destructive behaviours and social disintegration. Even herbivores, if desperate, become vicious predators and cannibals. Cows will hunt rabbits or eat their calves, many mammals will vie for the meat of their runted litter mates. Population overgrowth leads to stress, and stress depresses population overgrowth - an example of a Gaian-regulated cycle. We people eat just like our planet mates. We cannot put an end to nature; we can only pose a threat to ourselves. Runaway climate change and further intensification of industrial agriculture would do just that. But the notion that we can destroy all life, including the bacteria thriving in the water, tanks of nuclear power plants and deep-sea volcanic vents, is ludicrous. Many species, especially those in the four non-animal-kingdoms - plants, fungi, protoctists and bacteria - do not need humans to take care of them. The assertion made by some politicians and propagandists that, by preserving biodiversity, we can somehow preserve the whole planet's life is just a further example of our big-headed delusion. However close humanity itself may be to causing its own extinction, or at best its irrevocable disintegration, most other species will carry on regardless. It's just the delusion of our culture that we will conquer death. I hear our non-human brethren sniggering. "Got along without you before I met you, gonna get along without you now," they sing. Most of them, the microbes, the whales, the insects, the seed plants and the birds are still singing. The tropical forest trees are humming to themselves waiting for us to finish our arrogant logging so they can get back to their business of growth as usual. And they will continue their cacophonies and harmonies long after we are gone.

## Framework/Perm Generics

These cards are generic and we didn’t cut them ourselves

### Reps---Judge Choice

### Cede The Political

### Roleplaying

### ROB

### AT VTL

### Ivory Tower

#### The aff solves – humans are different in degree, but not kind – recognizing our differences from other forms of life is critical to an appreciation of the cosmos – the active engagement of the 1AC is the most productive way to solve the K, the neg’s cynicism merely reifies our role as ivory tower observers, who must be disengaged unlike other entities

Harman, 2005 (Graham, critically acclaimed Heidegger scholar who spent 10 years reading everything Heidegger wrote [even in German,] Associate Provost for Research Administration at the American University of Cairo, “Guerrilla Metaphysics: Phenomenology and the Carpentry of Things,” p. 238-241)

What must be rejected from the start is the prevailing model of humans as transcending or negating the world, as critics who break loose from animal bondage and stand in a windy, starry space of freedom. We should be equally suspicious of those hermeneutic versions of critique that merely add the caveat that perfect transcendence is impossible. For even when this proviso is added, it is still a question of trying to rise above what is taken for granted and seeing it "as" what it is. Both models support the peda­ gogically influential idea that philosophy is a kind of critical thinking less attached to the world than other modes of dealing with objects, a style of cognition opposed to the gullibility of the unreflective. Some people put this model of philosophy to work by mocking the triviality of "ontic" acts, dismissing major political and scientific events as beneath their attention, perhaps even forbidding their children to read newspapers due to the merely superficial, ontic character of journalism. Others enact critical thinking by challenging their peers to endless oral disputes, assertively poking holes in each other's argumentation, competing to free themselves ever more decisively than their rivals from all naive presupposition-the sort of pushy, clambering atmosphere that would have crushed such melancholic loners as Plato and Spinoza. Indeed, there are many who think that philosophy amounts to nothing more than this: the ability to knock down all comers. In one sense, critical thinking deserves praise for acting as a cor­ rosive fluid on dogmatic tradition, and our educational institutions must encourage this skill at the introductory level. But at a later stage it easily becomes counterproductive, for there is a sense in which the great thinkers are always far more childlike and gullible, far more involved with some mesmerizing central idea than all of the wary, uncommitted, replaceable critics. For contrary to popular belief, it is not philosophers, but only ironists, transgressors, blase hipsters, lizards, and cows who remain relatively free of fascination with the world around them and reduce to dust whatever they might criticize or even eat, converting all objects into terms com­ mensurate with themselves. To be a critic is to eat the world, leaving no seed left over to blossom in the spring. This is not to say that only philosophers are able to avoid this tempta­ tion, since it is not a lower form of human who devotes herself to chem­ istry, opera, sports leagues, epic poems, fashion shows, or petroleum commodities. What distinguishes humans from animals is not some sort of critical distance from our surroundings, but rather an expansive fascination with all domestic and exotic things; no animal knows the gullible attach­ ment to things that humans enact in the practice of religion or the labor of designing a submarine. We are not more critical than animals, but more object-oriented, filling our minds with all present and absent objects, all geographical and astronomical places, all species of animal, all flavors of juice, all players from the history of baseball, all living and dead languages. We do not remain in the holistic prisons of our own lives where things are fully unified by their significance for us, but face outward toward a cosmos speckled with independent campfires and black holes, packed full with objects that generate their own private laws and both welcome and resist our attempts to gain information. We even devote endless fascination to objects that turn out not to exist-empty fears, phantoms, rickety theories, cartoon characters, false friends, glacial highland monsters. No animal is ever duped or hypnotized as deeply as we ourselves can be. If we are critics and analysts, then we analyze only in order to gullibilize ourselves still further, inserting ourselves into worthier forms of naivete than before. As we develop we become more innocent and more fascinated, not less so. This may be the ultimate lesson of the famous three metamorphoses of Nietzsche's Zarathustra. The distinction between critique and fascination is no mere toying with words, but suggests a very different style of philosophy from the more popular model of critical/analytical thought-a kind of constructive thinking. While it is certainly better to train students to pick apart flaws in argu­ ments than to leave them as easy prey for sophistry and propaganda, these are not the only two options, and both are too easy to improve us as thinkers. What we really need are not more critical readers, but more vulnerable ones, readers so hungry for the unexpected that they can "recognize a good [idea] when they see [it], 21 to paraphrase William James's view of the essence of higher education. But this implies the rare ability to become dissatisfied with the dominant trench warfare of one's own age. For this reason, when asked by friends to define philosophy, I have taken to saying that philosophy means to find ideas that bore us and invent ways to make them obsolete. But this is difficult, and requires as much scrupu­ lous respect for reality as the construction of bridges and power plants whose failure would result in the deaths of thousands. It cannot be allowed to degenerate into a kind of ultra-hip mannerism.22 There is now available a useful English edition of the early reviews of Kant's Critique ofPure Reason, which are shocking in their ability to miss the point. Reading these reviews we discover numerous reasonable criti­ cisms of Kant that persist to this day, and even a number of discerning compliments. Yet none of the first reviewers is able to recognize the revo­ lutionary kernel in Kant's now idolized book. There is plenty of "critical thinking" at work in these reviews; the authors are not fools. Their chief deficiency is subtler than this-they simply overlook the surprising treasure that lies before them, and enlist Kant's book into the existing leaden-paced trench warfare between well-known opponents that dominated their era as it does every era. Put differently: the reviewers had too little capacity for surprise, a capacity that Paul Berman has recently identified with wisdom itself. 23 Wisdom means the ability to be surprised because only this ability shows sufficient integrity to listen to the voice of the world instead of our own prejudice about the world, a goal that eludes even the wisest of humans a good deal of the time. While the critical intellect surveys the land from its lofty tower, punishing gaffes and discrepancies wherever it finds them, only inventive thinking is able to be surprised, because only such thinking stays in close contact with the contours of the world, listening closely and in silence to its mysterious intermittent signals. Somewhere, Santayana writes that laughter and worship are the two things that take us beyond the boundaries of this world. I would say the opposite: that laughter and worship are what bind us to the world more tightly than anything else. The same holds for thinking as a whole, which, cements us to the universe rather than freeing us from it, since freedom really occurs only in the self-aborption of laziness, indifference, selfishness, or animal need. In this sense, any engineer who invents a new electronic device is already far more of a thinker than the critical Heideggerian intellectual who complains vaguely that we should "stop and think" before using the tool. If the machine in question is truly an abominable invention, then it is best opposed not by some anemic critical proofreading of its possible misdeeds, but rather by a compelling invocation of all the counter­ machinery threatened by the new device (marshland, folk dances, the autonomy of local farmers). For similar reasons, it is a weak criticism of a historical work to com­ plain loosely that it has not "proven" all of its claims; a stronger critique would be to summon up all of the major historical actors that were down­ played or omitted in the historian's account. Likewise, it is relatively fruit­ less to scan through a philosopher's book and expose its numerous redundancies and non sequiturs as analytic philosophy trains us to do; far more devastating is to place before the reader a series of questions that the philosopher never posed, the neighboring ideas never ventured, the ignored new alternatives never considered, or the simple predictability, nit­ picking tedium, and lack of gambler's spirit in the work lying before us. While relatively few books are hopelessly riddled with errors, numerous books are too boring to be worth our time. What is most important is never critique, but invention and counter­ invention. As Michel Serres puts it: "philosophy is an anticipation of future thoughts and practices . . . Not only must philosophy invent, but it also invents the common ground for future inventions. Its function is to invent the conditions of invention.,,24 To invent always means to put oneself in motion along with what is invented, to hitch oneself to the wagon wherever it goes, to travel elsewhere than one was. By contrast, to critique with­ out innovating implies that we remain where we already stand and merely chop down the trees planted by others, the reactionary gesture par excellence. If enlightenment was once a matter of debunking traditional pieties, it should now be a matter of creating new ones-not arbitrarily, but rigorously and in accordance with the demands of the tectonic plates of the world. Unfortunately, there are moments when it seems that the most treasured whipping boy of the critical intellectual is still the Wizard of Oz, the hypocritical zero who manipulates the world with illusions until his curtain is finally torn to shreds and his deceptions exposed. While such debunking may be necessary work at times, we should not forget that it is mainly the work of dogs (cynics, to say it in Greek). And instead of releasing seven hundred dogs from the city pound to tear away even more curtains and expose ever more frauds by the mighty, the work of the thinker should be to find the counter-wizard, or to pave the way for him oneself.

# A2 Dualism K

## A2 Dualism K

### Top Level

#### Perm do both

#### Perm do the aff and all non-mutually exclusive parts of the alt

#### They deny the fundamental independence of the world from humanity – any risk my representations are productive is a reason to prefer the perm

Cronon 95 [(William, Professor of History, Geography, and Environmental Studies at the University of Wisconsin–Madison) “The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature” Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature, New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1995, 69-90] AT

In critiquing wilderness as I have done in this essay, I’m forced to confront my own deep ambivalence about its meaning for modern environmentalism. On the one hand, one of my own most important environmental ethics is that people should always be conscious that they are part of the natural world, inextricably tied to the ecological systems that sustain their lives. Any way of looking at nature that encourages us to believe we are separate from nature—as wilderness tends to do—is likely to reinforce environmentally irresponsible behavior. On the other hand, I also think it no less crucial for us to recognize and honor nonhuman nature as a world we did not create, a world with its own independent, nonhuman reasons for being as it is. The autonomy of nonhuman nature seems to me an indispensable corrective to human arrogance. Any way of looking at nature that helps us remember—as wilderness also tends to do—that the interests of people are not necessarily identical to those of every other creature or of the earth itself is likely to foster responsible behavior. To the extent that wilderness has served as an important vehicle for articulating deep moral values regarding our obligations and responsibilities to the nonhuman world, I would not want to jettison the contributions it has made to our culture’s ways of thinking about nature.

### A2 Wilderness link

#### Representations of wilderness are key to limit human domination and foster respect for the nonhuman other – the perm unlocks productive use of my discourse

Cronon 95 [(William, Professor of History, Geography, and Environmental Studies at the University of Wisconsin–Madison) “The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature” Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature, New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1995, 69-90] AT

If the core problem of wilderness is that it distances us too much from the very things it teaches us to value, then the question we must ask is what it can tell us about home, the place where we actually live. How can we take the positive values we associate with wilderness and bring them closer to home? I think the answer to this question will come by broadening our sense of the otherness that wilderness seeks to define and protect. In reminding us of the world we did not make, wilderness can teach profound feelings of humility and respect as we confront our fellow beings and the earth itself. Feelings like these argue for the importance of self-awareness and self criticism as we exercise our own ability to transform the world around us, helping us set responsible limits to human mastery—which without such limits too easily becomes human hubris. Wilderness is the place where, symbolically at least, we try to withhold our power to dominate. Wallace Stegner once wrote of the special human mark, the special record of human passage, that distinguishes man from all other species. It is rare enough among men, impossible to any other form of life. It is simply the deliberate and chosen refusal to make any marks at all…. We are the most dangerous species of life on the planet, and every other species, even the earth itself, has cause to fear our power to exterminate. But we are also the only species which, when it chooses to do so, will go to great effort to save what it might destroy. (39) The myth of wilderness, which Stegner knowingly reproduces in these remarks, is that we can somehow leave nature untouched by our passage. By now it should be clear that this for the most part is an illusion. But Stegner’s deeper message then becomes all the more compelling. If living in history means that we cannot help leaving marks on a fallen world, then the dilemma we face is to decide what kinds of marks we wish to leave. It is just here that our cultural traditions of wilderness remain so important. In the broadest sense, wilderness teaches us to ask whether the Other must always bend to our will, and, if not, under what circumstances it should be allowed to flourish without our intervention. This is surely a question worth asking about everything we do, and not just about the natural world. When we visit a wilderness area, we find ourselves surrounded by plants and animals and physical landscapes whose otherness compels our attention. In forcing us to acknowledge that they are not of our making, that they have little or no need of our continued existence, they recall for us a creation far greater than our own. In the wilderness, we need no reminder that a tree has its own reasons for being, quite apart from us. The same is less true in the gardens we plant and tend ourselves: there it is far easier to forget the otherness of the tree. (40) Indeed, one could almost measure wilderness by the extent to which our recognition of its otherness requires a conscious, willed act on our part. The romantic legacy means that wilderness is more a state of mind than a fact of nature, and the state of mind that today most defines wilderness is wonder. The striking power of the wild is that wonder in the face of it requires no act of will, but forces itself upon us—as an expression of the nonhuman world experienced through the lens of our cultural history—as proof that ours is not the only presence in the universe. Wilderness gets us into trouble only if we imagine that this experience of wonder and otherness is limited to the remote corners of the planet, or that it somehow depends on pristine landscapes we ourselves do not inhabit. Nothing could be more misleading. The tree in the garden is in reality no less other, no less worthy of our wonder and respect, than the tree in an ancient forest that has never known an ax or a saw—even though the tree in the forest reflects a more intricate web of ecological relationships. The tree in the garden could easily have sprung from the same seed as the tree in the forest, and we can claim only its location and perhaps its form as our own. Both trees stand apart from us; both share our common world. The special power of the tree in the wilderness is to remind us of this fact. It can teach us to recognize the wildness we did not see in the tree we planted in our own backyard. By seeing the otherness in that which is most unfamiliar, we can learn to see it too in that which at first seemed merely ordinary. If wilderness can do this—if it can help us perceive and respect a nature we had forgotten to recognize as natural—then it will become part of the solution to our environmental dilemmas rather than part of the problem. This will only happen, however, if we abandon the dualism that sees the tree in the garden as artificial—completely fallen and unnatural—and the tree in the wilderness as natural—completely pristine and wild. Both trees in some ultimate sense are wild; both in a practical sense now depend on our management and care. We are responsible for both, even though we can claim credit for neither. Our challenge is to stop thinking of such things according to set of bipolar moral scales in which the human and the nonhuman, the unnatural and the natural, the fallen and the unfallen, serve as our conceptual map for understanding and valuing the world. Instead, we need to embrace the full continuum of a natural landscape that is also cultural, in which the city, the suburb, the pastoral, and the wild each has its proper place, which we permit ourselves to celebrate without needlessly denigrating the others. We need to honor the Other within and the Other next door as much as we do the exotic Other that lives far away—a lesson that applies as much to people as it does to (other) natural things. In particular, we need to discover a common middle ground in which all of these things, from the city to the wilderness, can somehow be encompassed in the word “home.” Home, after all, is the place where finally we make our living. It is the place for which we take responsibility, the place we try to sustain so we can pass on what is best in it (and in ourselves) to our children. (41)

# A2 Anthro K

## Top Level

### Top Level A2 Anthro

Most of these were super generic stuff – anything with an empty header below had cards we pulled from backfiles

## Link Level/Offense

### A2 Human Impacts Link

### Baudrillard Turn

### Fem Turn---Ecofem

### Fem Turn---“Anthropo”

## Impact Level

### Anthro =/= Destruction

### Human Values Good

### Extinction 1st

## Alt Solvency

### Pragmatism Perm

### Inev

### A2 Be One with Nature Alt---Inev and Turn

### A2 Human Suicide

### A2 Panpsychism/Rationality

#### They link to themselves – if any human attempt to shape the world is anthropocentric, asking you to vote negative links to the K. If the K is true it can’t be a reason to vote neg – only a risk of our offense

#### The kritik solidifies the human/nature divide by treating humans as uniquely responsible for “observing” the cosmos while other entities can act.

Harman, 2005 (Graham, critically acclaimed Heidegger scholar who spent 10 years reading everything Heidegger wrote [even in German,] Associate Provost for Research Administration at the American University of Cairo, “Guerrilla Metaphysics: Phenomenology and the Carpentry of Things,” p. 241-245)

The theme of representation is one of the recurrent problems of philosophy. Certain special entities known as sentient organisms are granted a unique ability to perceive images of the world, rather than merely responding to it with blind causal force as subsentient entities are supposed to do. The hermeneutic school ofHeidegger and his successors claims to have left the problem of representation in the past. For hermeneutics there is supposedly no magical gap between humans and the world, since humans are always already involved with objects, and hence there is no pure representation of the world free of the prior interpretation and use of objects. In one sense this is a clear step forward, but in another it yields no progress at all. For with the notion that human beings are rooted in a specific factical life rather than standing at a distance from the world and observing bloodless images of it, we do come one step closer to dethroning the privilege of human beings in philosophy. Yet hermeneutics still ascribes to humans (and perhaps even to animals) an apparently miraculous power: the ability to convert the sheer impact of the world into pictures or simulacra of such impact. Humans still transcend the world and contemplate it, even if only partially, and this makes humans different in kind from mere paper, sand, or gold. It is still humans alone who can perceive the world, and the philosophical gap between sentient and inanimate or object and appearance is still taken as a given. This in itself would not be so bad, since most of us would willingly concede important differences in the structure of conscious and unconscious objects. But the question is whether the gap between conscious and unconscious entities is so unspeakably vast that it needs to be built into the very foundation of ontology in a way that the chasms between mammal and reptile or plant and fungus never are. For hermeneutics, there is still an absolute gulf between two types of entities, with humans and possibly animals on one side and all remaining objects on the other. A crucial ontological structure-the as-structure-is ascribed to certain entities and denied to others. But this means that Heidegger grounds his ontology in an ontic rift between specific types of objects. And in fact, he has no hope of explaining how the as-structure magically arises only for certain objects and not others. Nor does he ever attempt such an explanation. I have suggested that the real stakes in ontology lie at a far more primitive level than any of the well-known special properties of human being. The as-structure is found even in inanimate matter; the dual axes of the world are everywhere and not just in some anxious, mournful human space that would exclude such supposed inferiors as almonds and glass. One possible antidote to this bias would be to embrace panpsychism and claim that even rocks and milkweed must already show crude traces of cognitive power. Such doctrines are now wildly out of fashion, and are generally exiled to the wastelands and gullies of the philosophical world, the eternal homeland of renegades, outliers, pariahs, hermits, vagabonds, and unemployable cranks. It would take a short memory to think that such theories will remain unfashionable forever: most abandoned concepts return someday in modified form, as the crop rotation of history brings every fallow field back to life sooner or later. Yet reviving panpsychism would not solve our current problem, since this refreshingly freewheeling theory actually preserves the central problem of human-centered philosophy: namely, it still assumes that cognition is something so poignantly special that ontology cannot live without it. After all, no one ever claims that inanimate matter must possess other human features in germinal form, such as five-fingered hands, a spinal cord, taste buds, laughter, or musical skill. I have yet to hear anyone speculate that rocks and maple sap display a primitive form of language. In this respect, even philosophical cranks have proven themselves to have limited imaginations. For some reason it is sentient perception alone that is deemed so important that certain fringe schools allow it to balloon into an ontological feature of objects as a whole. And this merely displays the well-worn assumption that there is something magically unique and inexplicable about the ability to create images of things rather than merely submitting to their blows. When hunters and gatherers came to develop agriculture, few historians deny that this change is of staggering importance for human history. This shift is much more than a difference of degree: it is a revolution that triggers the unforeseen rise of cities, armies, monarchies, and bureaucratic specialists. Even so, no one tries to convert agricultural life into some sort of magic ontological principle; no philosopher carves up reality into entities that farm and entities that do not. When birds first developed wings at some point in their evolutionary history, this was a crucial shift that opened a new reality and new lifestyle to these creatures, inviting them for the first time to long-distance migration and the building of nests in trees. Despite this landmark step in the history of animals, no philosopher sees the gap between winged and nonwinged creatures as immeasurably vast. No school of "panpterists􀈐' steps forth to claim that even dirt and sunlight must have wings in some imperceptible, germinal form. Heidegger makes an important mistake by locating one of his pivotal ontological features (the as-structure) in certain kinds of objects at the expense of others. For him, only one kind of entity transcends, nihilates, or rises above the world to see it "as" what it is, and that entity is human Dasein. To use a term that Heidegger himself avoids, only one kind of entity is conscious, and for this reason the very existence of human beings is supposed to introduce a vital cleft into being itself. This is not only a typical case of human arrogance in philosophy, but also has an air of voodoo or fetish about it-like some tribal myth in which the world was a lifeless soil until sprinkled with talking magic beans. We will never overcome this voodoo ontology by joining forces with the panpsychists and demanding that the special powers of human consciousness also be divvied up among dust, cactus, water, and melons. Instead, we overcome it only by denying that the special features of human consciousness are built into the heart of ontology at all. The history of the universe is packed with numerous fateful revolutions: the emergence of the heavier elements from hydrogen; the birth of solar systems; the breakup of Pangaea into multiple continents; the emergence of muticellular life, the beaks of birds, and the gills of fish; the first dreams in early animals; the domestication of cows and dogs; the shift from papyrus to paper; navigation across open sea rather than playing it safe along the coasts; electricity and telephones; phenomenology, quantum theory, and psychoanalysis; the atomic bomb, smart weapons, credit cards, steam engines, atonal music, internal combustion, and blood transfusions. My claim is that sentient consciousness, human theory, and language all belong on the same list with these other examples, and not on some sanctified ontological throne from which they might proclaim that conscious images of the world are infinitely different from the inanimate causal impacts of that world. There is no absolute gap between objects and images, but only ubiquitous gaps between one object and the next. Images are merely sensual objects, and sensual objects lie always and only on the interior of real ones.