

# WEEK THREE

## An Example of a Place: Tvergastein

### THE GLOBAL PLACE-CORROSION PROCESS

When the majority of people were living off the land, with little mobility, it was natural to feel at home at certain places. One stayed at home, left home, or went home. But home was not a building. The advertising of homes to be bought is not an offer of a home in the connotation relevant in our analysis. Home was where one belonged. Being "part of myself," the idea of home delimited an ecological self, rich in *internal* relations to what is now called environment. But humanity today suffers from a place-corrosive process.

Urbanization, centralization, increased mobility (although nomads have proven that not all sorts of moving around destroy the relation of belonging somewhere), the dependence on goods and technologies from where one does not belong, the increase of structural complication of life—all these factors weaken or disrupt the steady belongingness to a place, or even hinder its formation. There seems to be no place for PLACE anymore.

But the loss of place is felt, the longing persists, and so we feel the need to articulate what it means to belong to a place. The movement toward the development of a sense of place is strengthened through a tightening of the interrelation between the self and the environment. This movement is of prime importance in the deep ecology movement. Most supporters of the deep ecology movement are intimately acquainted with urbanization, which actually facilitates the capacity to think globally. People who are completely absorbed in the land have no need for high levels of abstraction and articulation, nor the training to make their *implicit* global attitudes a basis for action.

The implicit global attitude does, sometimes, show itself in action. In the

1950s, when people were asked to contribute money to help fisheries in the south of India, the nonurbanized, relatively poor people in the extreme Arctic of Norway contributed the most. But, of course, what is of most importance to these nonurban people is their homestead. It is clear that only the destruction of fisheries through overkill, and the consequent destruction of local and provincial markets, would make them consider leaving their homestead, their *hjemsted* (home-place).

It is important that those who have experienced the place-corrosive process but who somehow have saved their belongingness to a place (at least in somewhat modified form) should tell others about how their sense of place survived. This may help others to strengthen their motivations. And it may also strengthen and purify the way those who feel they still belong somewhere act out their chosen way of life and priorities.

This introduction may seem somewhat bombastic in relation to my discussion of Tvergastein. Not many people are in the position, or would have the inclination, to identify with a place like Tvergastein. But the development of a place in which a person feels at home and feels a sense of belonging shows exceptionally clearly some of the forces at work in the establishment of a place (or perhaps I should say, "establishment of a place as a Place"). Unfortunately, the reader will have to consider some autobiographical details about how I came to look toward Tvergastein as my future place.

#### GEOGRAPHY

About 200 kilometers east of Bergen there are two great landmarks, the Hardangerjøkul (a dome-shaped glacier about 80 square kilometers, a remnant of when Norway, like Greenland, was covered with ice) and Hallingskarvet (a 40-kilometer long, broad mountain running from east to west). Hallingskarvet is composed of hard, eruptive rocks that were laid bare millions of years ago through the erosion of softer mountains. From its southeastern slopes, one may survey an enormous part of southern Norway (tens of thousands of square kilometers). On these slopes, we find a place called Tvergastein, 1,500 meters above sea level, with a lake named Tvergasteintjernet. Softer rocks have been protected by the overlaying hard, 200-meter, near-vertical part of Hallingskarvet.

The stupendous, majestic Hallingskarvet captured my imagination from the time I was about five years old. For Easter and the summers of my early years, I stayed in a cottage at Ustaoset, a tiny village about 8 kilometers from the mythogenic mountain where I developed my place.

In documents, *Tvergastein* is the name of the cottage at Tvergastein, the place. In terms of geography, the place is the name of the cottage and its immediate surroundings, that is, about 50 feet in all directions from the walls of the cottage. But a wider usage, referring to a greater gestalt, treats the place as comprising the lake, Tvergasteintjernet, and a whole shelf on the slopes of Hallingskarvet as seen from the cottage (which is situated straight under the precipices of Hallingskarvet). Geographically, this is an area a couple of kilometers long and rich in contrasts. Compared to the region of *seter*, "mountain pastures," it is a world apart, reflecting the Arctic conditions at 1,500 meters altitude and 60.5 degrees north, and very different from the 1,000-meter level below (Arctic, yes, but influenced by the Gulf Stream from the west). From Tvergastein, the mountains and glaciers around the great Hardangerfjord are clearly seen—and appreciated.

Even from a distance, Hallingskarvet looks greenish, but is clearly not the result of grass. The place asked to be studied, and the greenish cliffs asked to be recognized as such. But when observed closely, it revealed innumerable patches of beautiful green lichen. The Tvergastein Naturalist Library revealed that a particular species, *Geographicus*, was responsible for the green color. There were lots of other lichens, but they were not identified, because their identification required the use of a microscope. Nevertheless, the surface of the most "barren" parts of the visible surface of Hallingskarvet was alive, even in the narrow sense of consisting of organisms—myriads of lichens on every square foot. The lichens are strangely connected beings; algae intimately interrelated with fungi. A still stranger connection: algae, fungi, humans.

In the summer mornings (at three or four o'clock), the huge shadow of Hallingskarvet keeps the southern and western landscape sleeping in semi-darkness. But already by five o'clock, the sunshine brightens hundreds of small lakes and tiny patches of water on the plains below Tvergastein, and by about seven, the sun appears over the mountain and penetrates the east window of the library, hitting a wooden plate painted stark black, thus contributing to the heating up of the small room.

The early morning sun also lightens up a faraway (thirty miles long) string of metallic electric masts and thick wires—hydroelectric power destined for Oslo, two hundred miles away. Each mast is an elegant structure revealing much love and ingenuity on the part of the engineers, but such a string of masts transforms the landscape. If only a few mountainous landscapes were changed in this way—why complain and feel sorrow? But the number of landscapes without these strange beings diminishes rapidly. There are

now more than two million gigantic masts around. The masts would have a less disturbing character if the power was used to increase the quality of life. But to a large extent, the power is wasted, which contributes to making people unaware of their fantastic material richness. What does a gallon of boiling water mean in the cities? Nothing. At Tvergastein, it is a formidable luxury, enough to satisfy a host of essential services, a gift of nature of the most astonishing character.

#### FLOWERS

When one arrives at Tvergastein from below, all flowers may seem so small, inconspicuous, unspectacular, poor, insignificant. Let us say we point to green patches of *Salix herbacea* (mouse ears). If we say, "Look!" some people would answer, "What? What do you see?" They see tiny, unspectacular leaves like ears of mice (*musore*). These plants ("huddling together") rarely grow one inch from the rock—you see no soil. In front of the cottage, they grow half an inch tall. Of course, they are not huddling together; they are probably having a very good life together. Their flowers—hardly detectable without an observer's squatting down near the plant—are well formed, their reddish nuts very conspicuous after a while.

This plant seems to delight in tiny cracks in the stony ground—cracks sometimes much less than an inch wide. It joins the lichens and "dominates" where no organic life is capable of having a good time. *Salix herbacea* seems to be everywhere at Tvergastein. We walk on the plants without the slightest regret. We make soup of them without thinking about extinction or interference with their habitat.

Whereas we humans only gradually come to appreciate the "mouse-ears," some tiny creatures, a kind of wasp, make red, applelike "houses" on the mouse-ears. If we open the walls of the "house," we see a tiny, white "worm" (larva), which will probably die from exposure. But, as the larvae are so tiny, we don't care very much. Why can't we inspect one of the million interesting red dots on the leaves? Note our ineradicable inconsistency! When interested, I would still (after writing about this "cruelty") disturb such worms. There are fraction-of-an-inch flowering plants of unsurpassed beauty—the *Gentiana nivalis*, with a typically ethnocentric Nordic name: "Jesus blue eyes." In the most authoritative botanical reference work, that of Johannes Lid, the height of the flower is given as seven centimeters, nearly three inches! Most of the specimens in front of the cottage are less than one centimeter. But the dark blue color is so intense that, if you happen by the small

groups of *Gentiana nivalis* on a windless, sunny day in late July, the flowers look incredible and clamor for your attention. Unfortunately (or perhaps fortunately, for the sake of the plant), there are few such days, and in most days of late July, the flowers are closed. The plant is then difficult to find. And the rest of the year—where is it? The plant lives only one year. In order not to become extinct at Tvergastein, the plant must somehow start a new generation from its seeds in July of the next year (or the following July after that, if the next July is cold). Obviously, the existence of the plant at Tvergastein is precarious.

Other flowers are typical Arctic plants, like *Dryas octopetala* ("reindeer rose"). The species has big, beautiful, white flowers—often bigger than the rest of the plant. The plants thrive even where there is no soil to be seen, keeping together so that several hundred might occupy a single square meter. Still richer with white flowers is a square meter of well-shaped, downy-haired *Cerastium alpinum*. More than six hundred specimens of *Cerastium* (between three and four inches tall) filled one square meter at a spot near the famous windy northeast corner of the cottage, a sight of overwhelming richness!

Before leaving the "tiny" flowers, I must mention a particularly delicate, beautiful, and modest plant, *Cassiope hypnoides*. Thousands of these tiny plants create a carpet of green with white spots. The flower's shape is misleading, bending as if unworthy of looking at us. The plant has fragility but no weakness, flowering even in dry summers in spite of its shallow roots and when there is no soil to be seen. It does not creep, but turns its stem straight out into the air—even as high as an inch.

Compared with some of the small flowers, a kind of dandelion (*Taraxacum alpinum* and similar Arctic species) looks at first glance not only crude, but squarely indecent. It need not be higher than an inch, but produces a flower two inches in circumference. But to be just, the "flower" is really a basket of flowers, about a hundred of them. From its seeds, each dangling from a parachute, we should all understand that the "flower" is a luxurious basket. Upon arriving at Tvergastein, you find that not only a few easily changeable attitudes have to be more or less unconsciously modified. Everything is different from Ustaoset (eight kilometers away) and vastly different from the coast (fifty kilometers to the west). Conversely, the adjustment again to the sea coast (not to mention much farther south to the tropical rain forests) is immense, if not terrifying. The flora scream at you. A rose is seen as a caricature of beauty. A tree is unnecessarily tall, grossly overdone, obstructing your alpine freedom of movement. At Tvergastein, attitudes and personality change, at least temporarily. After one week, there is a noticeable difference;

three weeks—that is a very good stay. The last two weeks, the effects of mere contrast are largely gone. You are genuinely *there*. You are not seeing things through glasses from somewhere else. After a month or two, getting back down, and to town, is exciting but painful, harassing.

The distribution of snow is peculiar in windy Arctic mountainous landscapes. If asked, "What is the snow depth at Tvergastein now?" there is no answer. There is no definite thickness, no small area with even distribution. The wind shapes the snow. After a strong wind from the west, there may be two meters of snow east of the east wall. But if "the same wind" reaches hurricane force, all the snow is carried away. There is no snow anywhere near the cottage. There is practically no snow *anywhere* at Tvergastein, even in January. But not far away, five to ten meters of snow might fill a wind-protected valley or gully. This makes skiing in August possible!

There is a highly romantic consequence of the uneven distribution of snow. On some normally snowless protruding cliffs with tiny cracks, a "tiny" flower, which tolerates freezing coldness, uses the light and occasional twenty-hour sunshine to bloom in the middle of May. It is the famous *Saxifraga oppositifolia*, so well-known and so cherished in the Arctic. It is the very first flower in spring, and its red color stands out vividly in a world of snow and rock at Tvergastein. And so, you go skiing and at the same time enjoy the flowery season. Further down (1,200–1,000 meters down), there are no flowers; they appear much later in the season (one reason is that the soil is deeper and frost keeps it rock-hard).

In the precipices of Hallingskarvet, above Tvergastein, the *Saxifraga* also occur in May. The rays of the sun heat up the rocks. When the sun stands at twenty degrees above the horizon, the plants on seventy-degree cliffs (with a minimum of soil) are enjoying rays coming in at a ninety-degree angle—again, a story of the special quality of the Arctic mountain climate. There are beautiful flowers combined with below-freezing temperatures, a hot sun warming the cliffs, and deep, crystalline, new snow in protected areas. With this story about *Saxifraga oppositifolia*, a hero that may even have survived the ice age in Norway, we close our discussion of flowering plants.

#### ANIMALS

Many animals live at Tvergastein and belong there. The mountain mice deserve to be mentioned first. Soon after the cottage was built, some mouse families established themselves under the cottage. Later, when the cottage was enlarged, they were welcome to the big western room. Sometimes a fam-

ily makes a nest there, but mostly they just like to investigate everything in peace and at their leisure. The mice have access to other rooms only upon special invitation. They are never invited to the kitchen.

When a human being enters their room, the mice hide for a couple of minutes, disturbed by the excessive noise, but then go on with their business. Sometimes the human occupiers of the place do not like them to nibble or eat certain things. It is a joy to find out how to limit the mice's access to these things.

When caught, the Tvergastein mice reveal an astonishing diversity of character. Some are very shy, others more easily pacified. One likes to rest on the downy slippers of the human occupier—something that made the person's moving around very awkward. Another mouse is mainly interested in climbing and other sports; another is a great eater but shows few other interests. Still another is far more inquisitive and alert. Most Tvergastein mice tend to bite when handled, making small, neat holes in the fingers. Better not "caress" them!

The mice are at home all the way to the top plateau of Hallingskarvet, that is, as high as there are shelves with vegetation. In wintertime, their nests under the snow keep them warm, at least above freezing temperatures.

After the mice, the reindeer should be mentioned. From time to time, as long as there is snow around Tvergastein, herds of reindeer, one hundred to five hundred individual reindeer, appear near the cottage. One evening, the leaders decided they had been traveling enough and lay down between the cottage and the precipices. Most of the others leisurely lay down behind the leaders. But some restless youngsters kept on moving and lay down in front of the leaders, who had to get up and place themselves ahead of their insubordinates. This happened again, but then the leaders did not bother. One should not take the youngsters too seriously.

Among the carnivores, the *Mustela erminea* (ermine) is exceedingly popular, but rarely seen. If seen, it tends to jump around from rock to rock with unbelievable elegance, speed, and tenacity. Exhibitionism? The tiny *Mustela nivalis* (least weasel) is just as unpopular as its relative, *M. erminea*, is popular. It is capable of getting through the established official mice entrances into the cottage and can track the rodents down under the cottage. The result: indiscriminate slaughter. Now there have been no mice for about three years. The place is not as it should be without mice children carefully inspecting the world outside the cottage every morning for some seconds and then running with lightning speed back to safety.

The sight of the strong, sinister *Gulo gulo* (wolverine) is very rare, and

bears have not been seen around Hallingskarvet since the twentieth century. What's more, it is too high for them to live here. Neither *Gulo gulo* nor bears belong here. But several big birds do—the *Haliaeetus albicilla* (ocean eagle) being the biggest and most regal. If the nest is above, or near, the mountain-climbing routes behind the cottage, the male may treat the climber to an exquisite dive, keeping wings close to its body, and aiming at the intruder's head. It turns away just above the head at the first dive, then gets less interested and impressive, turning away much too soon. Once, the human occupier of Tvergastein felt the bird had shouted, "Abominable!" after a really bad dive. Anyhow, we do not approach their nests.

All in all, compared with the richness and diversity of big animals—animals bigger than mice—in mountains in milder climates, the diversity and numbers of big animals around Tvergastein are poor. This is scarcely because of human interference, I suppose. Lots of ptarmigan are shot, but it is said, apparently with some supporting evidence, that this is not a main reason for the bird's scarcity.

#### GENESIS OF A PLACE-PERSON

How did we, who belong to a place, get to belong there in spite of not being raised there and not having always lived there? Here is one example of the genesis of a place-person, reconstructed from sometimes inevitably speculative evidence.

My father, who died a year after I was born, had a small cottage above the timberline (one thousand meters above sea level) at Ustaoset, a station on the railway between Oslo and Bergen. From the time I was a small boy, my mother, sister, and two brothers (five, ten, and eleven years older than I) lived in the cottage in summertime and at Easter.

Largely rejecting my mother and sister as persons to imitate, I was happiest when my brothers played with me, sometimes in a rough way. When I was still only five or six years old, for instance, they had great fun on a cold, windy day at Easter seeing whether the wind could physically push me up a small hill on skis. Their love was particularly manifest, or so I thought, when I was on the verge of crying because of their wild ways of playing. Perhaps I felt loved mainly through such play.

The steam engine of the train carrying us from below to above the timberline barely managed to do the job. The grade was steep. The vast world above the trees, and the process of getting through the timberline, made an impression so profound and so deeply gratifying that it left an intense long-

ing to get back to that vast world just as soon as I was again in my usual surroundings—a big house on a fairly large, partly forested property in the hilly suburbs of Oslo.

The dense landscape I could see from my window in Oslo was completely dominated by big, dark spruce trees with branches that sorrowfully pointed slightly downward. On windy days, these sinister trees rocked slowly back and forth, murmuring what I would much later articulate as "Damned, damned, you are damned, damned." The feeling of being imprisoned and damned was vivid. It reflected a not entirely happy life situation I need not discuss here. But I mention the fateful trees blocking the view because the contrast with the free view above the timberline is obvious.

Whatever the influences, the experience of elevation (of moving from darkness to light, from being hemmed in to a life in a seeming unlimited and friendly world) was so strong that I attached myself too much to this free-floating longing for the land beyond and above the forests. It promised to be a land of freedom beyond anything imaginable lower down. This is what I felt living at my parents' mountain cottage.

Along the distant horizon toward the north lived the massive Hallingskarvet. It looked different every day while still retaining its supreme poise. When a visitor greeted it some August morning, it might suddenly have turned white from autumn snow, sometimes from the summit plateau down to 1,500 meters, sometimes all the way down to its foot, at 1,200 meters. This is one of the grand characteristics of great mountains: to turn brilliant white in the summer.

This faraway, supreme, powerful, serene, distant, beautiful mountain gradually gained in status, revealing itself to me as the benevolent, protecting father or even divine being. I made Hallingskarvet into the symbol of everything good that was lacking in the world and in myself. When still a boy, I was able to reach its knees; later, I roamed around on its shoulders and on the vast summit plateau with its surface of big, greenish rocks rounded through erosion.

It became a great dream to stay on the mountain—not compelled to get down before darkness or because of rain and thunderstorms. And in 1937, when I was twenty-five years old, I chose the best possible place to build a cottage: not too high or difficult to reach for transporting materials over snow, but high enough on the flank of Hallingskarvet for me to feel that I was living on the mountain and to have a superb view of a large part of Norway through the window.

A friend at Ustaoset who had a horse promised to transport enough

material for a very sturdy wooden cottage eight by five meters big. He told me that he needed fifteen trips to get the material up to the site of the cottage. Because of the difficult terrain and uneven snow, it actually took sixty-two trips. "Madness!" was the judgment of people at Ustaoset: the highest private cottage in Northern Europe and in a climate unsuitable for "normal" cottage life.

#### HUMAN LIFE AT TVERGASTEIN

After staying a while, one realizes that Tvergastein is teeming with life. In summer and early autumn, even the snow slopes become alive, turning reddish from the great populations of the green alga *Chlamydomonas nivalis* (the red pigment is the same one found in salmon). And, after a while, we get a much more realistic view of the excellent living conditions at such Arctic places. Even ecologists sometimes talk about "extreme," "destitute," "difficult," "marginal," "poor," "stressful," "disadvantaged," "harsh," and even "hostile" conditions of life in this place. This is improper, shameful language! Some species of flowers don't become as tall as lower down, but what has tallness got to do with well-being? Where the living beings use the excellent microclimate close to soil, and behind rocks, why bother to climb high into the atmosphere? Most flowers at Tvergastein simply dislike rich soil. Some flourish where no soil is seen. The lichens and mosses grow big and dominate, even where snow covers the ground nine to ten months of the year. *Ranunculus glacialis* (glacier buttercup) grows large and fat at such places, and nowhere else. The snow does not hurt things; it makes life sleep and wait. Admittedly, in winter, there is not much life to be seen, but mammals, like the fox, know where to push away snow and find mice and lemmings. In short, there is generally nothing wrong with life at Tvergastein. But what about humans?

The choice of geographical place was based on a more or less set of requirements, but now the question was, What would the place require of me? What kind of lifestyle, activities, and ceremonies would be appropriate for this place? What would be a life worthy of Hallingskarvet and in solidarity with, and respect for, the other life-forms?

The difficulty and cost of transporting things by horse, together with the obvious peculiarities of the place, clearly suggested a simple lifestyle with maximum self-reliance. Clumsy attempts on my part to produce some vegetables were complete failures. Of the plants, only the mouse-ear was both edible and sufficient in quantity to serve the human occupier of the cottage.

Hunting was possible further down, but distasteful. In short, I had to rely on "importing" things, mostly by rucksack. The question of heating the cottage was central. But the few junipers at 1,400 to 1,500 meters were small and rarely more than two to five inches high. Obviously, they should be protected, living precariously at the upper limits of their reach. Again, the obvious solution was to import. So there were two major unpleasant conclusions. There was no question of living on the land by the land.

But what about wind power? Inquiries suggested that because of the terrific down-slope winds from the precipices of Hallingskarvet, the windmills would have to be specially built and of great bulk. I reluctantly gave up this idea. Solar power was a possibility, but here also, there are complications to overcome.

In 1933, a little firewood was transported by horse, and during the war, by rucksack. Then storms more or less regularly carried away major parts of the roof, despite increasing conservation measures, including cables to hold the roof down. This roof loss, however, resulted in a splendid by-product: enough wood for austere use of firewood through the end of the century! In an attempt to trace the psychological and social determinants of my professional philosophy, some key terms stand out—*unruffledness, equanimity, austerity, distance, aloofness, nonviolence, diversity, egalitarianism*. Most of them seemed to help in forming a lifestyle appropriate to the place.

Several lifestyle issues had to be addressed as I set up my home in Tvergastein:

*Temperature:* obviously very low inside the cottage. But below nine degrees Celsius, everything gets wet, including paper, and the interesting fungi thrive *too well*. A marvelous effect of low indoor temperature for weeks or months is the increased blood circulation near the surface of the skin. A person enjoys a feeling of physical activeness and fitness as if after a hike outside. But during short stays, it is not possible to adapt completely. And so in 1960, I succumbed to a revolution: the acceptance of a rule not to let the temperature drop below fourteen degrees Celsius. The temperature is much lower only in the morning, but on the increase.

*Rooms heated:* normally only one room, 2.5 by 2.5 meters. In this room, there is space enough for two, but it is a little strenuous for a family life of three or four.

*Food:* simple, nourishing. My appetite is inevitably strong.

*Keeping warm:* If one slowly gets uncomfortable, engage in some strenuous exercise. Five minutes of very vigorous muscular movement is enough to heat the human body. A person occupies less than 1 percent of the volume of the room. Why heat more than 99 percent just to heat that little volume?

*Indoor occupations:* research, reading, writing. The usual housework is kept to a minimum. Another occupation: listening to the wind and other kinds of music.

Given that the transporting of food and other essentials is fairly complicated, the reuse concept is central. It is amusing to make extended and surprising use of everything brought in. An important result regarding the quality of life is that everything brought in is looked upon as having more value than before. Hence, one experiences an increasing feeling of quality and richness.

Water carried by hand from sources two hundred to three hundred meters away becomes more valuable. It is important to remember that many calories are needed to melt snow (i.e., a temperature increase from minus one to plus one degree Celsius). For the last twenty years, I have found water under the deep snow but *above* the thick ice along the shore of Lake Tvergastein. Consequently, we carry water from there instead of melting snow. I am surprised that other cottage people don't know about the presence of such water under deep snow along the shores of lakes.

When a person who has *grown up* in a city grows *into* a nonurbanized personal place, how does this affect his friends and relatives? Obviously, there are sources of tension and personal tragedies—or the extension of influence so that one's nearest friends and family also establish a relationship with the same place. For thirty years, there was no serious problem of this kind associated with living at Tvergastein. My closest family and friends approved of the area and its lifestyle. With increasing mobility and other factors, steady life in good company at Tvergastein was getting less frequent. Evidently, the more peculiar and isolated a place, the fewer are the chances to establish satisfactory social relationships. It is impossible to deny that the climate of Tvergastein challenges the main outdoor activities of hiking, skiing, and climbing. More than the low temperatures, the high winds demand toughness and hardiness. With increasing age, fewer people are able or willing to adapt. Big storm number eleven is not as romantic as the first ten.

What is remarkable about Tvergastein and similar places is their capacity to furnish the basis of a life of simplicity of means and richness of ends.

The richness of ends depends on a place's evolution from just a location to a very special personal place. With increasing intensity of commitment, the place will satisfy an increasing variety of needs and will allow for an increasing variety of cherished goals to be reached. The little time and effort spent on the simple means frees up time for dwelling in situations characterized by intrinsic values.

But, for most of us, the personal place cannot permanently satisfy every need. Perhaps the time spent there decreases over the years or is never more than a minor part of the year. This holds true for Tvergastein.

However, it is remarkable how a place, even when it is uninhabited most of the year, largely determines one's attitudes, one's likes and dislikes, and one's general outlook. One is caught up in the place, hopefully with good consequences, but inevitably causing some maladjustments in locality very different from the place.

A personal place occasionally tyrannizes, imposes itself, gives orders. To disobey these orders creates a feeling of guilt or weakness of character. This is unavoidable. Phenomenologically speaking, the orders given by the place and the orders given by oneself are inseparable. Only philosophies that impose a sharp subject-object dualism try to trace a border between the self and "its" geographical surroundings.

In psychology, the concept of superego is common, and using this terminology, one may say that the orders given by the place are parts of the orders given by the superego. This conceptualization is not incompatible with the concept of person-place.

One example is the disposal of trash. In the 1930s, given the geographical remoteness of Tvergastein from human habitation and the mild norms among people enjoying cottage life, solid trash was placed beyond a moderately large rock 150 meters from the cottage. For twenty years, the trash was the object of joyful study because of the enormous number of interesting changes of the flora within a meter of the trash. One plant, *Cerastium alpinum*, benefited tremendously and multiplied and grew to inordinate size, at least five inches. Further, the delicate alpine and Arctic grasses were largely suppressed by coarser, darker species. There were at least one hundred clearly discernible changes within the radius of one meter. Outside this area, no change was seen.

Liquid trash was placed nearer the cottage in a crack between two smaller stones. The effect was the same, but on a grander scale. There was a new world of excessive growth, luxurious, but clearly foreign to the general character of the landscape.

But there were problems. Big, solid things fell to pieces—often smashed when carried away by the wind—which necessitated some kind of burying ground. This was found in deep black holes between enormous boulders in a region without any life-forms except lichens.

Then came the 1960s with the environmental conflicts. Evidently, those engaged in the battle to clean up trash *everywhere* had to be very careful with what they did themselves. So a disagreeable situation arose. More and more trash was carried down the mountain in rucksacks and sometimes transported all the way to Oslo.

The trash example illustrates many relations of importance:

1. "With increasing quantity, quantity changes into quality." This Hegelian slogan is admirably illustrated. With an increasing quantity of trash, it sooner or later degrades a wild place, a mountain, a landscape. But before this happens, when quantities are microscopic, the quality of a place is not disturbed. In environmental conflicts, we must conserve our sense of proportion.
2. The defenders of wild nature against further encroachments by humans tend to view any kind of trash (however diminutive in size or "innocent" in kind) as an evil. Of course, a piece of an orange peel has a color and coarse fabric that cries out as a foreign element in the Tvergastein landscape. But there are limits beyond which it begins to be ridiculous to demand a "cleaning up of the trash." In short: Beware of fanaticism; beware of allowing admirable feelings to run amok. Personal relations with antagonists in environmental conflicts should not be threatened by fanatical demands.
3. "Absolute consistency is impossible." Suppose we wholeheartedly accept the following: P<sub>1</sub>: Remove trash from wild places! P<sub>2</sub>: Tvergastein is a wild place. P<sub>3</sub>: x is a piece of trash. P<sub>4</sub>: x is at Tvergastein. C: Remove x!

What holds concerning the "remove-the-trash" norm holds as well for hundreds of other norms that are important in environmental conflicts. The formulations are short and, of course, vague and ambiguous to some extent. They have an indispensable function as slogans. To use logic before the formulations are made more precise is to ignore important aspects of slogans. But even after the formulations are reformulated, the formal logic of consistency, in any strict sense, is only moderately applicable, because of the nature of normative systems we cannot avoid. "All things hang together"—even in

thinking! It is not here a question of the validity of the formal logic of consistency, but rather of the limitations of application in concrete situations.

### CLIMBING

Classical European music consists of pieces of various degrees of difficulty to perform. In concerts, you are supposed to follow the notes of the compositions. But some nontraditional performers and improvisation by individuals or small bands are very popular today. There are professional musicians and amateur musicians, and the latter form the great majority of music lovers who do more than just listen. Similarly in dancing, there are highly structured, definite sequences of steps, but free improvisations are more popular than ever.

Climbing also offers definite routes of various degrees of difficulty on the one hand and the freedom to improvise on the other. Children climb stairs, chairs, and tables and advance to trees and boulders if any are available. No special equipment is used. Climbing on Hallingskarvet is more closely related to informal dancing, music improvisation, and childish play than to the climbing of established routes described in climbing guides. But let me be more specific about the Tvergastein variety, a fifty-year tradition of climbing.

Hallingskarvet has more than thirty kilometers of precipices, most of them between fifty and two hundred meters high and very steep. The rock itself is hard (eruptive), but there are often loose stones and moss. The rock's moss and loose stone covering and isolation from roads make it rarely visited by climbers. But the climbing, a fifteen- to twenty-minute walk from Tvergastein cottage, is excellent. Many routes are described, but never published. Some climbs were the most difficult done in Norway at the time they were first climbed. But improvisation is the rule.

Full security when climbing is axiomatic. There is no question of taking chances, not even the temptation to do so. But "full security from serious injury" is not the same as "absolute security" (the absence of the possibility of serious injury). It is as with skiing: Neither Tvergastein climbing nor skiing is "dangerous."

In Norway, climbing, but not skiing, is supposed to be dangerous. Why? Skiing, especially cross-country skiing, is part of the general culture, and the vast majority of skiers are not tempted to risk life or limbs (although sometimes limbs!). Though one always risks the *possibility* of getting seriously hurt, the joy of skiing does not derive from seeking extremes of physical

challenge. Climbing, done by a small minority, looks very dangerous to most people. Whereas concern for safety when learning to ski is a subordinate theme, safety is rather central in climbing. But at Tvergastein, the result is the same as with skiing: full security.

It should be unnecessary to discuss the metaphysical background of mountain climbing.<sup>1</sup> It plays a role at Tvergastein, but so does the simple joy of rhythm and movement, of exciting challenges, and the appreciation of lichens, rocks and stones, flowers, animals, the sky.

The high precipice, a fifteen-minute walk from the cottage, has fairly broad shelves in its lower part. The exuberance of the vegetation is astonishing. Flowers are much taller than at the cottage and even farther down. Growing on the shelves are flowers that ordinarily grow only much further down (below one thousand meters above sea level). The reason is largely unknown to the public, but is very clear: The climate in the precipices of Hallingskarvet is generally much milder than below, because there is much less wind. Also, the effect of steepness is favorable to this growth. If the shelf is thirty degrees steep, the rays of the sun strike the vegetation at about a ninety-degree angle at this high latitude.

The nearness of the climbs, the informality, the fabulous view, the beautiful vegetation in between the sheer rock formations, and the milder climate all make it natural to go climbing rather often. In summertime, one may go climbing several times during the day, being away each time for a couple of hours or less. (Daylight is from three o'clock in the morning to ten at night.)

In short, climbing is normally integrated into life at Tvergastein, but it is a sort of climbing that differs from the risk- and competition-colored images of climbing propagated by the mass media.

#### TVERGASTEIN AMATEUR RESEARCH

It is difficult to separate unimportant biographical details from an adequate biographical description. The main thing is that a favored place relentlessly and remorselessly determines the details of one's life. It may enrich life, but may also lead to a manifold of habits and ways of thinking that are peculiar and a source of irritation to anybody not adapted to that special life. I find that attachment to places should not be praised uncritically.

Unlike some of my ecosophically inclined friends, I do not consider science and, above all, research incompatible with profound positive feelings toward nature. Tvergastein as "object" of botanical, zoological, mineralogical,

cal, meteorological, and other scientific research did not detract in the least from the immediate experience of togetherness, of identification and appreciation. On the contrary. In the great naturalist tradition, exemplified by the systematics (taxonomy) of butterflies, the motivation is not mainly cognitive, but conative. Feelings are just as much directing the search as is abstract thinking.

In Einstein's scientific thinking, which is very different from that of a typical naturalist, the external world as a field of lifelong research is essentially impersonal. The very impersonal character in part determined his strong motivation as a scientist:

It is quite clear to me that the religious paradise of youth, which was thus lost, was a first attempt to free myself from the chains of the "merely-personal," from an existence which is dominated by wishes, hopes and primitive feelings. Out yonder there was this huge world, which exists independently of us human beings and which stands before us like a great, eternal riddle, at least partially accessible to our inspection and thinking. The contemplation of this world beckoned like a liberation, and I soon noticed that many a man whom I had learned to esteem and to admire had found inner freedom and security in devoted occupation with it.<sup>2</sup>

This way of liberation leads to abstract thinking and imagination of a special kind: 'All our thinking is of this nature of a free play with concepts; the justification for this play lies in the measure of survey over the experience of the senses which we are able to achieve with its aid.'

The way of liberation through "natural history" is different: very little abstract thinking, very much seeing, listening, hearing, touching. The secondary and especially the tertiary qualities are in focus—the worlds of concrete contents—not the primary qualities studied in physics.<sup>3</sup> There are worlds of minerals, rocks, rivers and tiny rivulets, plants, hardly visible animals or big ones (larger than a centimeter), plant and animal societies, tiny and great ecosystems—all more or less easily available for enjoyment, study, and contemplation. The meaningfulness inherent in even the tiniest living beings makes the amateur naturalist quiver with emotion. There is communication: The "things" express, talk, proclaim—without words. Within a few yards from the gnarled wooden walls of the Tvergastein cottage, there are rich and diverse changing worlds big enough to be entirely unsurveyable.

When I was only fifteen years old, I met the paleontologist Johan Kier. We were in the Jotunheimen, a range that is home to the highest mountains in Norway. He was eager to tell about his exciting search for fossils in Svalbard (Spitsbergen). Clearly, he was engaged emotionally, telling how groups of animals trapped in ash from volcanic eruptions clung together in death. He was yearning for a closer understanding of evolution. Two years later, being permitted to use Norway's biggest library, I found thick volumes with beautiful drawings of one-celled organisms. Evidently, scientists were the only persons who really loved nature and life, attending to even the smallest forms of life with unbelievable accuracy! Poets did appreciate only a small fraction of living beings. It took me decades to get rid of this illusion about scientists and to understand that what I admired was only found among a small minority of them.

At Tvergastein, I could wholeheartedly engage in amateur research. Collections of stones were seen as the Tvergastein petrographical institute, a few quartz crystals and the like formed its mineralogical institute. Thanks to low indoor temperatures and poor ventilation, the institute of fungiology (mycology) had several branches. Temperatures in the kitchen in winter were below freezing, which resulted in interesting glacial formations down the walls. Glaciological institute! Hundreds of questions were formed, few were answered. This intensified wonder. This state of mind plus an appreciation of the richness and diversity of phenomena within reach seemed to be an essential trait of free research—however amateurish.

"To develop the taste and appreciation of what there is enough of"—this has always been a pillar of ecospherical education. With growing insight into the *limits of growth*, that is, growth of material production and interference, the educational motto is getting more important every year. With this introductory note, I shall describe more closely the new branch of amateur research—Tvergastein chemistry.

With a kerosene lamp at the work table close to my head, it was practicable to heat chemical solutions above the lamp and in clear view. The smooth waves of different colors in never-repeated variety cannot but make a profound impression on anybody who is willing to dwell on them. In short: The most elementary chemical processes reveal a fascinating world. Tvergastein chemistry requires very little raw material, very little heating. Boiling more than a few seconds is prohibited, because the room has little ventilation. Gases must be kept under strict control. In short, "the game" has rules that conform to strict ecospherical norms. There is one, and only one, *main* Tvergastein method of making exciting new chemical substances: mixing two

substances that are soluble in water, with the more or less well-founded hope that a certain new, insoluble substance will appear. It is, however, somewhat difficult to get hold of fairly pure substances straight from nature. The valuable self-reliance of the Tvergastein institute of chemistry was severely undercut after a talk with the president of Oslo University, who happened to be a chemist. When expressing my concern about self-made, very impure chemicals at Tvergastein, he naturally was delighted to help create the new branch of (amateur) chemistry by offering me free access to the pure chemicals of his own institute. A helping hand from one institute to another!

Compromise and inconsistency! Consider for instance the 25 grams of bismuth trichloride I acquired—enough for twenty-five experiments at the level of Tvergastein ecological resource utilization. But the compound was presumably made by one of the worst polluting, gigantic chemical factories along the Rhine. I supported the poisoning of this magnificent river and added a little to the North Sea! Worse still, from an amateur point of view, the stuff had a ridiculously high level of purity. The level of arsenic contamination was *guaranteed* to be less than one part per million, for example. This implies that a great deal of energy from coal or gas had been used in a series of wasteful operations to clean the substance of any kind of impurities whatsoever. Such chemicals are far removed from nature: from cliffs to stones, from stones to minerals, from minerals to chemical separations, some of which are not found in free nature at all. There is nothing wrong with such new substances, but we may note the distance of their study from those of a consistent naturalist.

Whatever the inconsistencies, the Tvergastein chemistry is an example of something of central importance in the rich industrial society: to assist youth in the warm *appreciation* and understanding of basic natural processes such as beautiful solutions, miraculous transformation of some substance into others, and the re-creation of thousands of beautiful colors and dyes. Those who are offered the opportunity for such experiences are changed, their life quality enhanced. They can live with less dependence on what there is *not* enough of for all.

Unfortunately, the large-scale realization of ecoeducation requires a new politics, green politics, a politics that does not systematically favor people who concentrate mainly on getting more of what there is not enough of.

Taking naturalist science and research, professional or amateur, as the paradigm of science and research, ecosophies may without inconsistency hail these human undertakings. It is counterproductive, I think, to make science and research negative terms, dyslogisms. From the naturalist amateur

researcher's point of view, there are immense opportunities at Tvergastein, as at other places. *Researcher* fits in with the concept of a personal place. What can we learn from each other? Can tragic developments be avoided?

The classic case of belonging to a place is that of being born and raised somewhere, just somewhere in a geographical sense, and then the place develops into the Place. But when the place is physically destroyed or unfit for living because of other factors, can a different place develop into the Place? Certainly it can, and this happened with the Tvergastein area. The same will happen to many people in the future—they experience a longing and a satisfaction that elicit such utterances as "Here is where I belong!" We may even be drawn to two places, and a conscious choice is possible. In such cases, certainly one thing can be inferred on the basis of experience at Tvergastein: Choose a place that is not so specific that it discourages your intimates. Furthermore, choose a place that you will be likely to be able to master when you are older. Then, this is a place where you can live and die.

Tvergastein is extreme in many ways and unfit for many purposes. The development could only be more or less tragic. But even so, it is difficult for us who have a place where we feel we belong not to be glad and grateful to have one. Why is this so? That is difficult to say.

#### Modesty and the Conquest of Mountains<sup>4</sup>

There are many ways of experiencing mountains. I would rather assert, however, that mountains have innumerable aspects or, even better, that the term *mountain* may be used to designate vastly different entities. What I describe in the following pages are mountains. They are connected with what other people call mountains through some sort of interpersonal, social structure, a marvelous common frame of reference. Thus, I may locate the mountains I speak about, may give details about the minerals of which they are said to consist, may even discuss their age—all this without getting into trouble with identification. The common frame of reference, however, is not the mountains themselves—not the mountains I know. The motive here for trying to describe mountains as I know them is not the rather indifferent detail that I know them, but that many others know them the same way but do not always or consistently act upon their knowledge.

Now, what are they?

The words I use must come as an anticlimax, perhaps. They are very common words, they are crude, and only the reader's intense willingness to go along with me can help me convey what I know. Mountains are big; very big, but they are also great. Very great. They have dignity and other aspects of greatness.

They are solid, stable, unmoving. A Sanskrit word for them is *a-ga*, that which does not go. Curiously enough, though, there is a lot of movement in them. Thus, a ridge is sometimes ascending; there is a strong upward movement, perhaps broken with spires and towers but resuming the upward trend, toward the sky or even toward heaven. The ridge or contour not only has movement up and up, but also may point upward, may invite elevation.

When we are climbing a mountain, it may witness our behavior with a somewhat remote or mild benevolence. The mountain never fights against us, and it will hold back avalanches as long as it can, but sometimes human stupidity and hubris and a lack of intimate feeling for the environment result in human catastrophes—that is, catastrophes for mothers, fathers, wives, children, and friends. (The climbers themselves die in a way that I cannot class as catastrophic.)

So much for mountain appreciation and worship, or the cult of mountains. Many people may have similar sentiments but perhaps will not feel the same way about mountain people. On the other hand, many people feel the same way about mountain people but have no tendency toward mountain worship. This may perhaps be most simply explained through a short account of my own first encounter with mountain people.

When I was fifteen years old, I managed through sheer persistence of appeals to travel alone in early June to the highest mountain region of Norway—Jotunheimen. At the foot of the mountain, I was stopped by deep, rotten snow and could find nowhere to sleep. Eventually, I came across a very old man who was digging away the snow surrounding and partly covering a closed cottage belonging to an association for mountaineering and tourism. We stayed together for a week in a tiny nearby hut. As far as I can remember, we ate only one dish: oatmeal porridge with dry bread. The porridge had been stored in the snow from the previous autumn—that is what I thought the old man said. Later, I came to doubt it, to believe that I had misunderstood him. The porridge was served cold, and if any tiny bit was left over on my plate, he would eat it. In the evenings, he talked incidentally about mountains, about reindeer, about hunting and other occupations in the highest regions. Mostly, though, he played the violin. It was part of the local culture to mark the rhythm with the feet, and he would not give up trying to make me capable of joining him in this. How difficult it was! The old man's rhythms seemed more complex than anything I had ever heard.

The effect of this week, along with similar experiences later, established my conviction of an inner relation between mountains and mountain people: a certain greatness, a cleanness, a concentration on what is essential, a self-sufficiency, and consequently a disregard of luxury, of complicated means of all kinds. From the outside, the mountain way of life seemed Spartan, rough, and rigid, but the playing of the violin and the obvious fondness for all things above the timberline, living or “dead,” bore witness to a rich, sensual attachment to life, a deep pleasure in what can be experienced with wide-open eyes and mind.

It is unnecessary to add that local mountain cultures are incompatible with cosmopolitan and urban ones. The intrusion of new values and life-styles rapidly undermines the alpine culture. In the Himalayas, individual Sherpas and their families have enhanced their wealth and status through expeditions, but their communities and culture have suffered unduly. Their great festivals and religious life are fading. There is, however, some cult of mountains remaining. Thus, Tseringma (Gauri Sankar) is still worshipped. When we suggested to the Sherpas of Beding, beneath Tseringma, that they might like to have its fabulous peaks protected from “conquests” and big expeditions, they responded with enthusiasm. A special meeting was announced, and the families voted unanimously to ask the central authorities in Kathmandu to refuse permission for climbing expeditions to Tseringma. Gönden, the leader of Beding, walked all the way to Kathmandu to contact the administration.

In Nepal, though, as in so many other countries far away, local communities have little chance of being heard. The Sherpas would not mind “losing” the money they could earn from expeditions to Tseringma, but central administrations do not think the same way. As expected, the great alpine clubs the world over have largely ignored Gönden's initiative. Perhaps the organizers of expeditions think that mountains, being great stone heaps, need no ‘protection’ and that the “enlightened” Sherpas certainly would tolerate their climbing friends' going anywhere. The mountain climbers are in part right, but I do not think we should in this case make unrestricted use of the Sherpas' tolerance.

These reflections are supposed to serve the idea of modesty—modesty in human relationships with mountains and with mountain people. As I see it, modesty is of little value if it is not a natural consequence of much deeper feelings and, even more important in our special context, a consequence of a way of understanding ourselves as part of nature in a wide sense of the term. This way is such that the smaller we come to feel ourselves compared with the mountain, the nearer we come to participating in its greatness. I do not know why this is so.

strictly for their own sake. Extended care for life on earth, deepened care for humans!

Mick Smith has the following to say about nature:

While all would agree that "nature" is a prerequisite for social life, to speak of "nature" as being valuable in itself is still symptomatic for many on the left of a moral failure to prioritize the compelling immediacy of human suffering over our maltreatment of the environment.<sup>6</sup>

## Avalanches as Social Constructions<sup>5</sup>

Having been taken at least twice by avalanches, I have never felt them to be social constructions. But every word I utter about them may have social origins, and the same applies to the meanings of these words. The meanings also have individual components in the sense that the conceptions of people who study or have experienced avalanches show marked individual differences. I say I have been taken at least twice, because a third avalanche was so tiny that most people would reject using that term. But had I been carried twenty feet further, I might have perished because my skis had got into an awkward and painful position under very deep snow.

Every word in this narrative, including the word *avalanche*, has, of course, social and individual shades of connotations, but they do not affect the corresponding denotation. I have not used the word *nature* here, but the preceding observation holds for that word as well. In the last hundred years, the great diversity of usages of the word *nature* has been discussed, especially in the context of the history of ideas. Some people prefer to talk about nature as "social constructions," but the more traditional way, the talk about various conceptions and ideas of nature, is not inferior. The use of the term *deconstruction* has elicited much discussion, including the debate on the positive value of deconstruction of construction.

Curiously enough, many people criticize the deep ecology movement's assertion that every living being has intrinsic or inherent value. Critics argue that the statement rejects the wholly social (and individual) nature of living beings in nature, and ignores the vast sufferings of fellow humans. But the view that we have particular duties toward suffering fellow humans does not conflict with the view that it is meaningful to do things for nonhumans

Smith puts quotation marks around "nature," as if he were writing about the word, but perhaps he is not. If not, does he speak about nature? Anyhow, supporters of the deep ecology movement need not consider nature to have inherent value. Especially when we use the word *nature* as a near synonym for the cosmos, I certainly do not apply the term *inherent value* to it. It is not empirically correct, I think, to suspect that certain supporters downplay the efforts to relieve human suffering. It is not uncommon to criticize people who work, for instance, for less painful transport of pigs, while the same people neglect problems of human suffering, but I think we agree that there are limits to what we can tolerate when it comes to such transport. Analogously, we may think that it is morally justifiable to use some fraction of a percent of what is spent on diminishing vast human suffering to defend the richness and diversity of life on this planet. In strange contrast to the usual view among researchers that there are immense differences of conceptions of nature and of ways of relating to nature, Mick Smith concludes: "Almost inevitably, the conclusion of such studies is that there is no singular "nature" as such, only a diversity of contested natures; and that each such nature is constructed through a variety of sociocultural processes."

Basically, it is philosophically rather trivial whether there is only one conception of what is called "nature" or a thousand. Most conceptions have been heavily determined by important magical views or by manifestations of the activity of gods. Fossils are sometimes considered the play of the devil. None of these views is *disproved* by modern natural science. Proofs belong in mathematics.

different things at different times because the conditions they are in are different.<sup>10</sup>

Suppose we put our right foot, which has been exposed to cold air, into the calm sea. We might exclaim, "Delicious!" or "Encouraging!" or "Cheering!" When we then put our left foot, which has not been exposed, into the sea at the same spot, we now might exclaim, "Detestable!" or "Discouraging!" or "Abominable!"

According to Sextus' interpretation, Protagoras' opinion might also be that the sea is *both* encouraging and discouraging, and both delicious and detestable. Consequently, according to Protagoras, as interpreted by Sextus, and as interpreted by me, water has all kinds of qualities, but a sensitive being is only able to experience a limited number of them. What a being will experience depends on its state.

The most interesting interpretation of "matter" is that it comprises all that human beings can ever experience in any state. And the possibility is not excluded that other sensitive beings can experience additional "things" that humans cannot.

The most plausible interpretation of the preceding passage by Sextus is, unfortunately, not consistent with the above addition. This conclusion seems unavoidable if we consider Sextus' next statement:

"Therefore man becomes, according to him, the criterion of the existence of things. For all things, in so far as they appear to men, also exist, while those things that appear to no man do not exist at all."

Strangely enough, "matter" seems to be dependent upon the states of humans; it cannot comprise anything that cannot be apprehended by human beings. The set of states of human equals the set of states of matter. Protagoras' "matter" I take to be an *ens rationis*, a tentative abstract structure invented to somehow support "the appearances," like the elephant or tortoise invented to support the earth.

In what follows, I shall maintain that Galileo's neither-nor position leads to absurdities. The position of Protagoras is deeply problematic, but can be saved from absurdity if somewhat freely interpreted. Furthermore, I shall maintain that it is philosophically tenable to maintain that the world we live in (the *Lebenswelt*) has secondary and tertiary qualities. What we feel about something belongs to the qualities of the world as we know it. What does not have such qualities is abstract structure.

## The World of Concrete Contents<sup>7</sup>

### THE NEITHER-NOR AND THE BOTH-AND ANSWERS

In environmental debates, there is a persistent criticism that those who fight to "save" a natural entity (a river, a wood, a sea, a kind of animal or plant, a landscape) mainly express feelings and subjective likes and dislikes. The objects of this criticism are said to lack a sense of objectivity and ultimately to lack adequate reference to *reality as it is in fact* and not only reality as they feel it.<sup>8</sup>

Effective counterarguments need not be of a philosophical kind. But those who feel at home with epistemology and related more or less abstruse subjects might use this to their advantage.

Suppose we put our right hand, which has been exposed to cold air, into a pot of water, and we exclaim, "Warm!" We then put our left hand, which has not been exposed, into the same pot, and we exclaim, "Cold!" Question: Is the water warm or cold?

Galileo's kind of answer: *Neither warm nor cold*. The water as such, or in itself, is neither warm nor cold. These are *secondary* qualities. The water has only *primary* qualities.<sup>9</sup>

Protagoras' answer, according to Sextus Empiricus: *Both warm and cold*. The water has both qualities, but the condition of the hands has the effect that one of them only registers the warmth, the other only coldness.

Now, this man says that matter is a state of flux . . . and the senses undergo transformation and alternation in accordance with one's age and with other conditions of the body . . . And men apprehend

Environmentalists talk about reality as it is in fact when they talk in terms of feelings.

#### REJECTION OF ABSOLUTIST DING AN SICH CONCEPTIONS

The Galileo type of answer uses a distinction that is useful within limits, but breaks down if absolutized. It is the famous distinction between things in themselves and things in relation to other things. (The term *thing* is taken in a very broad sense.)

Essential to ecological thinking, and to thinking in quantum physics, is the insistence that things cannot be separated from what surrounds them without smaller or greater arbitrariness. Thing A cannot be thought of in and of itself, because of internal relation to thing B. But neither is thing B separable, except superficially, from C, and so on.

As we know them, things have properties referring to sensing, action, and comprehension. Such primary qualities as the shape of a thing vary with the perspective. There is no absolute shape of the thing in itself. No quality of a thing is such that it is separable from others. General relativity excludes even movement or rest. There are no primary qualities. A triangle is either without extension, as in axiomatic, formal geometry, or has a color, for instance, black.

In thought and communication, we need to separate and make distinctions; otherwise, orientation gets to be impossible. The utterance "warm" relates to a whole set or constellation, but nominally and grammatically, the utterance refers in our example just to water. More precisely and specifically, it refers to water in relation to a complex set or constellation of relata, of which the most obvious are the hand, the water, the medium, and the subject's uttering "Warm!"

These relata, individually or collectively, are not things or entities in themselves, in spite of the existence of words and phrases suggesting the possibility of isolating each of them. The relations between the relata are internal. There is similarity between this view and those expressed by the Buddhist formula *sarvam dharmam nihsvabhavam*. Every element is without "self-existence." But the views I defend need no support from Buddhist philosophy. Western traditions suffice.

In short, the both-and answer may be thus formulated: There are no completely separable objects and, therefore, no separable water or medium or organism. A concrete content can only be one-to-one related to an indi-

visible structure, a *constellation* of factors. Concrete contents and abstract structures make up reality as it is in fact. It is misleading to call it *real only as felt by a subject*.

The notion of irreducible constellations eliminates both objectivist and subjectivist views as characterized, for instance, by J. J. C. Smart in relation to color.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, Protagoras' view as interpreted by Sextus is an objectivist view. Water as a piece of matter is cold. Both answers can be saved, however, by expanding the basis of the question: It should be related, not to water as a separable object, but to constellations corresponding to concrete contents.

#### SECONDARY AND TERTIARY QUALITIES AND THE THEORY OF PROJECTION

As late as in the last part of the nineteenth century, mechanical conceptions of warmth and coldness were thought to imply the neither-nor answer. The experienced warmth or coldness is not a property of the water itself. Different temperatures of the water correspond to certain levels of intensity of the motion of its molecules. In its capacity as a primary quality, *motion* is a property of the water in itself. Primary qualities, intrinsic or in the objects themselves, were conceived to be part of *reality itself*. The felt warmth was considered to have only a strange kind of subjective existence: not *in* the brain, not *in* space. General relativity and quantum physics undermined the *thing-in-itself* conception, but did not cause any widespread major change of opinion.

Concrete contents have a one-to-one correlation with constellations; there is an isomorphy between the concrete and the abstract. When we say that the sea is now gray, the water of the sea is only one part of the constellation. Nevertheless, it is somehow the dominant part. We would not say that the air between the sea and us is gray, or that we are gray. The sea has thousands of individual color hues as inherent properties, but not as an isolated thing. One must take the color of the heavens, the color of the plankton, the waves, the senses of the observers, into consideration. The colors of the sea are parts of innumerable gestalts.

According to the traditional doctrine of primary, secondary, and tertiary qualities or properties, color is the *projection* upon the surfaces of things of color-sensations generated by the senses. Only as a consequence of this projection do things *look* green, white, black, and so forth. The perception of greenness in the mind is projected into the external world.

The identification of primary properties with those of objects themselves leads to a conception of *nature without any of the qualities we experience spontaneously*. There is no good reason why we should not look upon such a bleak nature as just a resource. Every appeal to save parts of nature based on reference to sense qualities of any kind becomes meaningless. Every passionate appeal revealing deep feelings, empathy, and even identification with natural phenomena must then be ruled out as irrelevant. The sphere of real facts is narrowed down to those of mechanically interpreted mathematical physics.

Worse still: The question of how secondary and tertiary qualities come to be unreal is often answered by pointing to a (truly miraculous) capacity of the human senses and the human mind to *create* the colors and the beauty. A poet, says A. N. Whitehead ironically, should not praise the roses but himself who makes the roses red and beautiful. (Whitehead is, incidentally, one of the few Western philosophers who clearly opposed the doctrine of primary qualities.)

With these aberrations in mind, I think it might be of value in deep ecology theorizing to suggest ontologies in which secondary and tertiary qualities are at least on a par with the primary ones. The ontology I wish to defend is such that the primary properties (in a narrow sense) are *entia rationis* characteristics of abstract structures, but not contents of reality. Structures may be both, namely, structures of gestalts, but not the ones I now refer to. The geometry of the world is not a geometry *in the world*.

The both-and answer as elaborated here emphatically rejects the theory of projection. *There is no such process as projection of sense-qualities.* The theory is a clever invention that makes it possible to retain the notion that things in themselves retain their separate identity in spite of the bewildering diversity of secondary and tertiary qualities. But the price of this conservation of the Galilean ontology is high. There is no evidence whatsoever of a process of projection.

#### THE SUBJECT-OBJECT DISTINCTION AND THE THEORY OF DUPLICATION

Suppose three people are said to point to *the same tree* but to attribute to the tree three completely different sets of secondary and tertiary qualities. How should we deal with the contradiction?

At a superficial level, contradictions are avoided by certain ways of talk-

ing: "The tree *looks* such and such to *me*." "I *feel* the tree to be such and such." A mere diversity of conscious experience is acknowledged; therefore, no contradiction arises on this level.

Here is how it works: Inside the consciousness of person,  $P_1$ , there is an experience or image,  $E_1$ , of a tree with the following characteristics: ... In  $P_2$ , there is  $E_2$ ; in  $P_3$ ,  $E_3$ , and so on. The experiences  $E_1$ ,  $E_2$ , and  $E_3$ , and so forth, are all different. The tree in the external world confronting  $P_1$ ,  $P_2$ , and  $P_3$  may be *the same*, and its properties are the primary ones, most adequately described by contemporary physics. Consequently, in the example, we get as many as four trees, one external, and three internal. When nobody looks at the tree, the three internal ones disappear and the external one remains.

This way of avoiding contradictions between two or more observers results in the famous *duplication*: There is a tree outside in the external world and a tree inside in the mind of the observer. The tree outside is today conceived in extremely abstract form because of the development of physics, as a structure with no similarity to the internal trees. In the 1890s, the external tree still had some perceptual (*anschauliche*) properties. Since the days of Einstein and Heisenberg, these are *all* gone. But Bohr has shown how this disappearance brings us back to the reality of laboratory constellations with secondary qualities.

The tree in the mind no longer has the character of an image or a copy, because the external tree of physics has no similarity to the internal one. Furthermore, the internal is *in* the mind in a *nonspatial* sense. It is not *in* the brain, because then it would have been seen long ago by scientists. It is not even *near* the brain. If the external tree and the body of the observer are in Rome, this does not imply that the tree in the observer's mind is in or near Rome. The internal tree is no nearer to Rome than it is to the Andromeda nebula. It is not in physical space at all. Where is it?

The tree in the mind is private in principle, belonging to a specific person or animal; it is *subjective*. The tree outside is *objective*, supposedly completely independent of any perceivers and a thing in itself.

All this is rather confusing. The duplication theory does not seem understandable to anybody. Nevertheless, if we take the neither-nor answer as a basic assumption, it is difficult to avoid accepting a kind of duplication theory and a sharp, pervasive subject-object dualism.

The both-and answer is also far from intuitively obvious, at least in our culture. But I think it can be effectively defended.

## SPONTANEOUS EXPERIENCE WITHOUT SUBJECT-OBJECT CLEAVAGE: ABSTRACT STRUCTURES

When absorbed in the contemplation of a concrete, natural thing, a person does not experience a subject-object relation. Nor does a person have this experience when absorbed in vivid action, whether in movement or not. There is no epistemological ego reaching out to see and understand a tree or an opponent in a fight, or a problem of decision. A tree is always part of a total, a gestalt. Analysis may discover many structural ingredients, sometimes an ego-relation, sometimes not. The gestalt is a whole, self-contained and self-sufficient. If we call it "experience of the gestalt," we are easily misled in a subjectivist direction.

When describing a constellation of gestalt relations, we must not let the usual stress on the epistemological subject-object distinction dominate the expression. In a spontaneous experience, there may or may not be any ingredient corresponding to the distinction.

"Tiny me looking into the eye of a big whale" may be a concrete content with an ego-relation as a genuine part. It is different from previous examples because the qualities are not all sense-qualities. The unity of this concrete contact is best understood by stressing its gestalt character. The example refers to a gestalt of a fairly high order, that is, having lower-order gestalts as "parts."

If "cheerful tree" and "dark and threatening tree" are two spontaneous expressions, analysis in terms of relations may conclude that they refer to "the same" tree. But this sameness is definable only in terms of an *abstract structure*, whereas utterances refer to two *concrete contents*.

The structure referred to is abstract and not to be confused with gestalt structures within the concrete content. The tree may have branches and the color may contrast with a dark background. This reveals a structure within the total gestalt. This structure is given *phenomenologically*, as structure within the concrete content. The sameness of the tree defined through abstract structures presupposes location in space of a kind that cannot be conceived as structure of a gestalt. It is an abstract structure, an *ens rationis*, insofar as every theory, including that of gravitation, is human-made.

My analysis at this point presumably implies a rather radical form of nominalism, but I shall not try to make it explicit. I only mention that it is closely related to the view that relations between things, or more specifically concrete contents, are not *part* of the world. Primary qualities, for instance, shape, do not occur in our life space except as contrasts between colors, for instance,

a black circle on white background. The concept "circle" as abstracted from this concrete content is an *ens rationis* according to the above. The nominalism implied here is a nominalism of abstract relations. Problematic is the place of *entia rationis* "themselves" within gestalts of high order. A discussion of this is important, as is the more general question of intentional entities and intentionality, but lies outside the scope of this essay.<sup>12</sup>

## FROM ETHICS TO ONTOLOGY AND FROM ONTOLOGY TO ETHICS

Confrontations between developers and conservationists reveal differences in estimating what is *real*. What a conservationist sees and experiences as *reality* the developer does not see—and vice versa. A conservationist sees and experiences a forest as a unity, a gestalt, and when speaking of the heart of the forest, he or she is not referring to the geometrical center. A developer sees square kilometers of trees and argues that a road through the forest covers very few square kilometers, so why make so much fuss? And if the conservationists insist, the developer will assert that the road does not touch the *center* of the forest. The *heart* is then saved, he or she thinks. The difference between the antagonists is one of ontology rather than one of ethics.<sup>13</sup> The gestalts "the heart of the forest," "the life of the river," and "the quietness of the lake" are parts of reality for the conservationist. To the conservationist, the developer seems to suffer from a kind of deeply based blindness. But the developer's ethics on environmental questions are based largely on how he or she sees reality. There is no way of making the developer eager to save a forest as long as he or she retains the conception of it as a set of trees. The charge that the conservationist is motivated by subjective feelings is firmly based on the developer's view of reality. The strong positive feelings toward development he or she considers are based on objective reality, and as long as the society is dominated by developers, the developer need not be passionate. It is the struggling minorities who are passionate, rather than those who follow the mainstream.

It is important in the philosophy of environmentalism to move from ethics to ontology and back. Clarification of differences in ontology may contribute significantly to the clarification of different policies and their ethical basis. And one of the first things to do might be to get rid of the belief that humankind is something *placed in an environment!*

Starting from concrete contents in our analysis, the is-ought and fact-value dichotomies look a little different than from where Hume started,

namely, from factual and value *affirmations*. Expressions of concrete contents are designations, not declarative sentences.

Expressions of the kind "object *x* has value *y*" immediately lead to the question, Given an object *x*, how do I assess its value *y*? If we start with designations of concrete contents, for instance, "delicious, red tomato to be eaten at once!" or "repugnant, rotten tomato," the evaluative terms are there from the very beginning of our analysis. And there is no separable tomato to value!

In "Is/Ought Dichotomy and Environmental Ethics," David Bennett says that John Passmore and Aldo Leopold "agree on the basic ecological fact, but differ on how to value this fact. Passmore imports a restricted sense of obligation and maintains the fact-value dichotomy. Leopold accepts the community as both a descriptive and prescriptive statement."

Perhaps Leopold's point of view could be explicated by starting with designations of concrete contents of various sorts expressing what Leopold sees and experiences as community. The terms of the designations will inevitably include valuations. There would then be, strictly speaking, no fact that they agree about or any value that they disagree about. Bennett seems to take an ontological point of view, close to that of Callicott, who says: "Ecology changes our values by changing our *concepts* of the world of ourselves in relation to the world. It reveals new relations among objects which, once revealed, stir our ancient centers of moral feeling."<sup>34</sup> The stirring is part of a gestalt and, as such, is not to be isolated from the "objects." I have tried to explicate what kind of change in concept of the world and status of the subject is at issue.

I propose to identify the world with the set of contents, not with structures. This means that the two contents referred to above are two parts of the world. The world has structures, but does not reveal them. We make conceptual constructs to cope with them, but they are all human-made. Gravity does not pull planets!

Between the parts of the world conceived as contents in the form of gestalts, there are internal structural relations. But these are distinguished from the abstract structure found or invented by science. The physicist's "world of science" is entirely one of abstract structure. Even the hues of colors are defined structurally through places in color atlases. The ecosystem concept is used to describe abstract structures, and the movement of deep ecology is to a large extent concerned with abstract structures. The importance of abstract structural considerations cannot be overestimated.

But the factors introduced in abstract analysis should not, as is usually

done, be identified with objects in the world. They do not belong to the content of the world we are genuinely part of. Abstract structures are structures of the world, not in the world.

#### A P P E A R A N C E A N D R E A L I T Y: P E R S P E C T I V I S M

If we permit ourselves to use the terms *realness* and *reality*, I shall maintain that there is no reality "behind" the contents. The abstract structures may be called real, but any definite structure in the form of a theoretical construct is an *ens rationis* and is not "behind" or "underneath" the contents.

What, then, can one say about the distinction between appearance and reality? Does the stress on contents favor appearance? No. If it did, something in the above argumentation has gone wrong.

We have useful kinds of expressions, such as "It appears to be such and such, but it is not really such and such." If I express a content through the words "cheerful tree" and we add, "Let us place it in our window!" then my friend may say, "The tree is in reality very big and cannot be placed in our window. You are deceived by the great distance!" Or, when somebody stands on the southern rim of the Grand Canyon, pointing north toward the northern side, the person may utter, "How is it that there is only moss on the northern rim?" But a friend may not agree: "You are mistaken. The 'moss' is really some woods. The distance deceives you." The appearance-reality distinction in these examples relates to statements that are true or false, not to designations of concrete contents.

If by "appearance" we mean something that by definition or intrinsically is appearance to a person, we have presumed a subject-object distinction that cannot be generalized and adapted to a description of the world as concrete contents.

The rhetoric of environmentalism favors positive evaluation of natural phenomena. But, of course, concrete contents may include the negative. A prisoner in 1977 on Antarctic Dawson Island uttered, "sun, cold and unfriendly," and similar expressions are common in any climate. The ontological emancipation of tertiary qualities does not imply uniformly positive evaluation of natural phenomena. In the terminology of gestalts, one may say that religion has tried to conceive the most comprehensive gestalt to be (intrinsically, of course) good, and Spinoza uses the term *perfect characterizing Deus sive Natura*. But the problem of evil is still open. Nietzsche and others have used the term *perspective* in a way similar to that of the above term *content*: The world is the total set of perspectives. But usually we find

the subject-object distinction implied in perspective. The world is seen by subjects in different perspectives. The tree looks different according to the perspective of the observer. By walking around, we see the tree from different angles. Thus, "perspectivism" may mislead.

Similar reflections hold concerning Dewey's and others' use of the term *experience*. It is too natural to say "experience by whom?" "my experience," "your experience," and so forth. The term *content* does not so easily lend itself to the introduction of a subject-object division. But if used carefully, the term *experience* may not mislead.

#### GESTALT ONTOLOGY AND THE DEEP ECOLOGY MOVEMENT

Our starting point has been the "neither-nor" and "both-and" answers to questions about whether a thing has one quality or another. As already mentioned, elaboration of the answers may lead to different directions, and my elaboration is not the only consistent one. The situation in epistemology and ontology is rather problematic. I maintain that the framework of gestalt ontology is adequate, but scarcely the only adequate one, in any attempt to give the principles of the deep ecology movement a philosophical foundation. *The world of concrete contents has gestalt character, not atomic character.* I know of no better frame of reference than that of gestalts.

This account does not, as mentioned, minimize the importance of abstract structures such as ecosystems (with the stress on *system*). But clearly the theoretical debate centering on such concepts as mature ecosystem shows the human-made character of the conceptual world. When some ecologists negate the existence of mature systems, this does not imply the negation of any content of the world we live in (the *Lebenswelt*).

Humanity has struggled, for about 2,500 years, with basic questions about who we are, where we are headed, and the nature of the reality in which we are included. This is a short period in the lifetime of a species, and an even shorter time in the history of the earth, to which we belong as mobile beings. I am not capable of saying very new things in answer to these questions, but I can look at them from a *somewhat* different angle, using somewhat different conceptual tools and images.

What I am going to say, more or less in my own way and in that of my friends, can be condensed roughly into the following points:

1. We underestimate ourselves. And I emphasize *selves*. We tend to confuse our "self" with the narrow ego.
2. Human nature is such that, with sufficient comprehensive maturity, we cannot help but identify ourselves with all living beings, beautiful or ugly, big or small, sentient or not. The adjective *comprehensive*, meaning "all-sided," as in "comprehensive maturity," deserves a note: Descartes seemed to be rather immature in his relationship with animals; Schopenhauer was not very advanced in his relationship to his family (kicking his mother down a staircase?); Heidegger was amateurish—to say the least—in his political behavior. Weak identification with nonhumans is compatible with maturity in some major sets of relationships, such as those toward one's family or friends. And so I use the qualification *comprehensive* to mean "being mature in *all* major relationships."

3. Traditionally, the *maturity of the self* has been considered to develop through three stages: from ego to social self (comprising the ego), and from social self to a metaphysical self (comprising the social self). But in this conception of the maturity of the self, nature is largely left out. Our immediate environment, our home (where we belong as children), and the identification with nonhuman living beings are largely ignored. Therefore, I tentatively introduce, perhaps for the very first time, the concept of *ecological self*. We may be said to be in, and of, nature from the very beginning of ourselves. Society and human relationships are important, but our own self is much richer in its constitutive relationships. These relationships are not only those we have with other humans and the human community (I have elsewhere introduced the term *mixed community* to mean those communities in which we consciously and deliberately live close together with certain animals), but also those we have with other living beings.
4. The meaning of life, and the joy we experience in living, is enhanced through increased self-realization, that is, through the fulfillment of potentials that each of us has, but that are never the same for any two living beings. Whatever the differences between beings, increased self-realization implies a broadening and deepening of the self.
5. Because of an inescapable process of identification with others, with increasing maturity, the self is widened and deepened. We "see ourselves in others." Our self-realization is hindered if the self-realization of others, with whom we identify, is hindered. Our self-love will fight this hindrance by assisting in the self-realization of others according to the formula "Live and let live!" Thus, everything that can be achieved by altruism—the *dutiful, moral* consideration for others—can be achieved, and much more, by the process of widening and deepening ourselves. Following Kant, we then act *beautifully*, but neither morally nor immorally (in the sense of from duty).

6. One of the great challenges today is to save the planet from further ecological devastation, which violates both the enlightened self-interest of humans and the self-interest of nonhumans and decreases the potential of joyful existence for all.

Now, proceeding to elaborate these points, I shall start with the peculiar and fascinating terms *ego* and *self*.

The simplest answer to who or what I am is to point to my body. But clearly I cannot identify myself, or even my body. For example, compare the following sentences:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| I know Mr. Smith.   | My body knows Mr. Smith.  |
| I like poetry.  | My body likes poetry.   |
| The only difference between us is that you are a Presbyterian and I am a Baptist. | The only difference between our bodies is that you are a Presbyterian and I am a Baptist. |

In the preceding sentences, we cannot substitute "my body" for "I." Nor can we substitute "my mind" or "my mind and my body" for "I." More adequately, we may substitute "I as a person" for "I," but this does not, of course, tell us what the ego or the self is.

Several thousand years of philosophical, psychological, and social-psychological thinking has not brought us any adequate conception of the *I*, the *ego*, or the *self*. In modern psychotherapy, these notions play an indispensable role, but, of course, the practical goal of therapy does not necessitate philosophical clarification of these terms. It is important to remind ourselves about the strange and marvelous phenomena with which we are dealing. Perhaps the extreme closeness and nearness of these objects of thought and reflection add to our difficulties. I shall offer only one simple sentence that resembles a definition of the ecological self. The *ecological self* of a person is that with which this person identifies.

The key sentence (rather than a definition) about the self shifts the burden of clarification from the term *self* to that of *identification*, or rather, the process of identification.

I shall continue to concentrate on the ecology of the self, but shall first say some things about identification. What would be a paradigm situation involving identification? It would be a situation that elicits intense empathy. My standard example involves a nonhuman being I met in the 1940s. I was looking through an old-fashioned microscope at the dramatic meeting of two drops of different chemicals. At that moment, a flea jumped from a lemming that was strolling along the table. The insect landed in the middle of the acid chemicals. To save it was impossible. It took minutes for the flea to die. The tiny being's movements were dreadfully expressive. Naturally, I felt a painful sense of compassion and empathy. But the empathy was *not*

basic. Rather, it was a process of identification: I saw myself in the flea. If I had been *alienated* from the flea, not seeing intuitively anything even resembling myself, the death struggle would have left me feeling indifferent. So there must be identification for there to be compassion and, among humans, solidarity.

One of the authors contributing admirably to a clarification of the study of the self is Eric Fromm:

The doctrine that love for oneself is identical with "selfishness" and an alternative to love for others has pervaded theology, philosophy, and popular thought; the same doctrine has been rationalized in scientific language in Freud's theory of narcissism. Freud's concept presupposes a fixed amount of libido. In the infant, all of the libido has the child's own person as its objective, the stage of "primary narcissism," as Freud calls it. During the individual's development, the libido is shifted from one's own person toward other objects. If a person is blocked in his "object-relationships," the libido is withdrawn from the objects and returned to his or her own person; this is called "secondary narcissism." According to Freud, the more love I turn toward the outside world the less love is left for myself, and vice versa. He thus describes the phenomenon of love as an impoverishment of one's self-love because all libido is turned to an object outside oneself.<sup>16</sup>

What Fromm attributes here to Freud we can now attribute to the shrinkage of self-perception implied in the fascination for ego trips. Fromm opposes such a shrinkage of self. The following quotation from Fromm concerns love of persons but, as "ecosophers," we find the notions of care, respect, responsibility, and knowledge applicable to living beings in the wide sense.

Love of others and love of ourselves are not alternatives. On the contrary, an attitude of love toward themselves will be found in all those who are capable of loving others. Love, in principle, is indivisible as far as the connection between "objects" and one's own self is concerned. Genuine love is an expression of productiveness and implies care, respect, responsibility, and knowledge. It is not an "effect" in the sense of being affected by somebody, but an active striving for the growth and happiness of the loved person, rooted in one's own capacity to love.<sup>17</sup>

Fromm is very instructive about unselfishness—it is diametrically opposed to selfishness, but is still based on alienation and a narrow perception of self. We might add that what he says also applies to persons sacrificing of themselves:

The nature of unselfishness becomes particularly apparent in its effect on others and most frequently, in our culture, in the effect the "unselfish" mother has on her children. She believes that by her unselfishness her children will experience what it means to be loved and to learn, in turn, what it means to love. The effect of her unselfishness, however, does not at all correspond to her expectations. The children do not show the happiness of persons who are convinced that they are loved; they are anxious, tense, afraid of the mother's disapproval, and anxious to live up to her expectations. Usually, they are affected by their mother's hidden hostility against life, which they sense rather than recognize, and eventually become imbued with it themselves . . .

If one has a chance to study the effect of a mother with genuine self-love, one can see that there is nothing more conducive to giving a child the experience of what love, joy, and happiness are than being loved by a mother who loves herself.<sup>18</sup>

We need environmental ethics, but when people feel that they unselfishly give up, or even sacrifice, their self-interests to show love for nature, this is probably, in the long run, a treacherous basis for conservation. Through identification, they may come to see that their own interests are served by conservation, through genuine self-love, the love of a widened and deepened self.

At this point, the notion of a being's interests furnishes a bridge from self-love to self-realization. It should not surprise us that Fromm, influenced as he is by Spinoza and William James, makes use of that bridge. "What is considered self-interest?" Fromm asks. His answer:

There are two fundamentally different approaches to this problem. One is the objectivistic approach most clearly formulated by Spinoza. To him self-interest or the interest "to seek one's profit" is identical with virtue.

"The more," he says, "each person strives and is able to seek his profit, that is to say, to preserve his being, the more virtue does he

possess; on the other hand, in so far as each person neglects his own profit he is impotent." According to this view, the interest of humans is to preserve their existence, which is the same as realizing their inherent potentialities. This concept of self-interest is objectivistic inasmuch as "interest" is not conceived in terms of the subjective feeling of what one's interest is but in terms of what the nature of a human is, "objectively."<sup>19</sup>

"Realizing inherent potentialities" is one of the good, less-than-ten-word clarifications of "self-realization." The questions "What are the inherent potentialities of the beings of species x?" and "What are the inherent potentialities of this specimen of the species y?" obviously lead to reflections about, and studies of, x and y.

As humans we cannot just follow the impulses of the moment when asking what our inherent potentialities are. Fromm means something like this when he calls an approach "objectivistic" as opposed to an approach "in terms of subjective feeling." Because of the high estimation of feeling and a correspondingly low estimate of so-called objectification (*Verdinglichung*, reification) within deep ecology, Fromm's terminology is inadequate today, but what he means to say is appropriate. And it is obviously relevant when we deal with species other than humans: Animals and plants have interests in the sense of ways of realizing inherent potentialities, which we can study only by interacting with these beings. We cannot rely on our momentary impulses, however important they are in general.

The expression "preserve his being," in the quotation from Spinoza, is better than "preserve his existence," since the latter is often associated with physical survival and a struggle for survival. An even better translation is perhaps "persevere in his being" (*perseverare in suo esse*). This has to do with acting from one's own nature. Survival is only a necessary condition, not a sufficient condition of continued self-realization. (An act of self-realization may discontinue self-realization because it leads to immediate death. This opinion goes probably against what Spinoza would say.)

The concept of self-realization, as dependent upon insight into our own potentialities, makes it easy to see the possibilities of ignorance and misunderstanding in terms of what these potentialities are. The ego-trip interpretation of the potentialities of humans presupposes a major underestimation of the richness and broadness of our potentialities. As Fromm puts it, "man can deceive himself about his real self-interest if he is ignorant of his self and its real needs."<sup>20</sup>

The "everything hangs together" maxim of ecology applies to the self and its relation to other living beings, ecosystems, the ecosphere, and the earth, with its long history.

The existence and importance of the ecological self are easy to illustrate with some examples of what has happened in my own country, Norway.

The scattered human habitation along the Arctic coast of Norway is uneconomic and unprofitable, from the point of view of the current economic policy of our welfare state. The welfare norms require that every family should have a connection by telephone (in case of illness). This costs a considerable amount of money. The same holds for mail and other services. Local fisheries are largely uneconomic perhaps because a foreign armada of big trawlers of immense capacity is fishing just outside the fjords. The availability of jobs was decreasing in the mid-1980s.

The government, therefore, heavily subsidized the resettlement of people from the Arctic wilderness, concentrating them in so-called centers of development, that is, small areas with a town at the center. But the people are clearly not the same when their bodies have been thus transported. The social, economic, and *natural setting* is now vastly different. The objects with which people work and live are completely different. There is a consequent loss of personal identity. "Who am I?" they ask. Their self-respect, self-esteem, is impaired. What is adequate in the so-called periphery of the country is different from what counts at the so-called centers.

If people are relocated or, rather, transplanted from a steep, mountainous place to a plain, they also realize, but too late, that their home-place has been part of themselves—that they have identified with features of the place. And the way of life in the tiny locality, the density of social relations, has formed their persons. Again, they are not the same as they were.

Tragic cases can be seen in other parts of the Arctic. We all regret the fate of the Inuit, their difficulties in finding a new identity, a new social self, and a new, more comprehensive ecological self. The Lapps of Arctic Norway have been hurt by the diversion of a river for hydroelectricity. In court, accused of an illegal demonstration at the river, one Lapp said that the part of the river in question was "part of himself." This kind of spontaneous answer is not uncommon among people. They have not heard about the philosophy of the wider and deeper self, but they talk spontaneously as if they had.

We may try to make the sentence "This place is part of myself" more intellectually understandable by reformulations. For example, we might say, "My

relation to this place is part of myself," or "If this place is destroyed, something in me is destroyed," or "My relation to this place is such that if the place is changed, I am changed."

One drawback with these reformulations is that they make it easy to continue thinking of two completely separable, real entities, a self and the place, joined by an external relation. The original sentence, rather, conveys the impression that there is an internal relation of sorts. I say "of sorts," because we must take into account that it may not be reciprocal. If I am changed, even destroyed, the place would be destroyed according to one usual interpretation of *internal relation*. From the point of phenomenology and the concrete-content view, the reciprocity holds, but that is a special interpretation. We may use an interpretation such that if we are changed, the river need not be changed.

The reformulation "If this place is destroyed, something in me is killed" perhaps articulates some of the feelings usually felt when people see the destruction of places they deeply love or to which they have the intense feeling of belonging. Today, more space per human being is violently transformed than ever, at the same time as the number of human beings increases. The kind of "killing" referred to occurs all over the globe, but very rarely does it lead to strong counteraction. Resignation prevails: "You cannot stop progress."

The newborn lacks, of course, any conceptions, however rudimentary, corresponding to the tripartition: subject, object, medium. The conception (not the concept) of one's own ego probably comes rather late, say, after the first year. A vague network of relations comes first. This network of perceived and conceived relations is neutral, fitting what in British philosophy was called *neutral monism*. In a sense, it is this basic sort of crude monism we are working out anew, not by trying to be babies again, but by better understanding our ecological self. It has not had favorable conditions of development since before the time that the Renaissance glorified our ego by putting it in some kind of opposition to the rest of reality.

What is now the practical importance of this conception of a wide and deep ecological self?

Opponents often argue that we defend nature in our rich, industrial society in order to secure beauty, recreation, sport, and other nonvital interests for ourselves. It makes us strong if, after honest reflection, we find that we feel threatened in our innermost self. If so, we more convincingly defend a *vital interest*, not only something out there. We are engaged in self-defense. And to defend fundamental *human rights* is vital self-defense.

The best introduction to the psychology of the self is still to be found in the excellent and superbly readable book *Principles of Psychology*, published in 1890 by the American psychologist and philosopher William James. His hundred-page chapter on the consciousness of self stresses the plurality of components of the wide and deep self as a complex entity. (Unfortunately, he prefers to talk about the plurality of selves. I think it may be better to talk about the plurality of the components of the wide self.)

The plurality of components can be easily illustrated by reference to the dramatic phenomenon of alternating personality. "Any man becomes, as we say, *inconsistent* with himself if he forgets his engagements, pledges, knowledge, and habits . . . In the hypnotic trance we can easily produce an alternation of personality . . . by telling him he is an altogether imaginary personage."<sup>21</sup>

If we say that somebody is not himself or herself today, we may refer to a great many different *relations* to other people, to material things, and, certainly, to what we call his or her environment, the home, the garden, the neighborhood.

When James says that these relata *belong* to the self, it is, of course, not in the sense that the self has eaten the home, the environment, and so forth. Such an interpretation testifies that the self is still identified with the body. Nor does it mean that an *image* of the house *inside* the consciousness of the person belongs to the self. When somebody says that a part of a river landscape is part of himself or herself, we intuitively grasp roughly what the person means. But it is of course difficult to elucidate the meaning in philosophical or psychological terminology.

A last example from William James: We understand what is meant when somebody says, "As a man I pity you, but as an official I must show you no mercy." Obviously, the self of an official cannot empirically be defined except as a relation in a complex social setting. Thus, the self cannot possibly be inside the body or inside a consciousness.

Enough! The main point is that we do not hesitate *today*, being inspired by ecology and a revived intimate relation to nature, to recognize and accept wholeheartedly our ecological self.

The next section is rather metaphysical. I do not *defend* all the views presented in this part of my discussion. I wish primarily to inform you about them. As a student and admirer since 1930 of Gandhi's nonviolent, direct actions in bloody conflicts, I am inevitably influenced by his metaphysics, which to him personally furnished tremendously powerful motivation and which contributed to keeping him going until his death. His supreme aim

was not India's *political* liberation. He led a crusade against extreme poverty, caste suppression, and terror in the name of religion. This crusade was necessary, but the liberation of the individual human being was his supreme aim. It is strange for many to listen to what he himself said about his ultimate goal: "What I want to achieve—what I have been striving and pining to achieve these thirty years—is self-realization, to see God face to face, to attain *Moksha* (Liberation). I live and move and have my being in pursuit of that goal. All that I do by way of speaking and writing, and all my ventures in the political field, are directed to this same end."<sup>22</sup>

This sounds individualistic to the Western mind—a common misunderstanding. If the self Gandhi is speaking about were the ego or the "narrow self (*jiva*) of egocentric interest, the "ego trips," why then work for the poor? It is for him the supreme or universal Self—the *Atman*—that is to be realized. Paradoxically, it seems, he tries to reach self-realization through *selfless action*, that is, through the reduction of the dominance of the narrow self or the ego. Through the wider Self, every living being is connected intimately, and from this intimacy follows the capacity of *identification* and, as its natural consequences, practice of nonviolence. No moralizing is needed, just as we do not need morals to breathe. We need to cultivate our insight: The rock-bottom foundation of the technique for achieving the power of non-violence is belief in the essential oneness of all life.

Historically, we have seen how nature conservation is nonviolent at its very core. Gandhi says: "I believe in *advaita* (nonduality), I believe in the essential unity of man and, for that matter, of all that lives. Therefore I believe that if one man gains spirituality, the whole world gains with him and, if one man fails, the whole world fails to that extent."

Surprisingly enough, Gandhi was extreme in his personal consideration for the self-realization of living beings other than humans. When traveling, he brought a goat with him to satisfy his need for milk. This was part of a nonviolent demonstration against certain cruel features in Hindu ways of milking cows. Furthermore, some European companions who lived with Gandhi in his ashrams were taken aback that he let snakes, scorpions, and spiders move unhindered into their bedrooms—animals fulfilling their lives. He even prohibited people from having a stock of medicines against poisonous bites. He believed in the possibility of satisfactory coexistence, and he proved right. There were no accidents. Ashram people would naturally look into their shoes for scorpions before using them. Even when moving over the floor in darkness, one could easily avoid trampling on one's fellow beings. Thus, Gandhi recognized a basic, common right to live and

blossom, to self-realization in a wide sense applicable to any being that can be said to have interests or needs.

Gandhi made manifest the internal relation between self-realization, non-violence, and what sometimes has been called biospherical egalitarianism.

In the environment in which I grew up, I heard that what is serious in life is to get to be somebody—to outdo others in something, being victorious in a comparison of abilities. What makes this conception of the meaning and goal of life especially dangerous today is the vast, international economic competition. Free market, perhaps, yes, but the law of supply and demand of separate, isolatable "goods and services," independent of needs, must not be made to reign over increasing other areas of our life.

The ability to cooperate, to work with people, to make them feel good, pays, of course, in a fiercely individualist society, and high positions may require this, but only as long as, ultimately, it is subordinated to the career, to the basic norms of the ego trip, not to a self-realization beyond the ego. To identify self-realization with the ego trip manifests a vast underestimation of the human self.

According to a common translation of Pali or Sanskrit texts, Buddha taught his disciples that the human mind should embrace all living things as a mother cares for her son, her only son. Some of you who never would feel it meaningful or possible that a human self could embrace all living things might stick to the usual translation. We shall then only ask that your mind embraces all living beings and that your good intention is to care and feel and act with compassion.

If the Sanskrit word translated into English is *Atman*, it is instructive to note that this term has the basic meaning of "self," rather than "mind" or "spirit," as you see in translations. The superiority of the translation using the word "self" stems from the consideration that if your self in the wide sense embraces another being, you need no moral exhortation to show care. Surely, you care for yourself without feeling any moral pressure to do it—provided you have not succumbed to a neurosis of some kind, developing self-destructive tendencies or hating yourself.

Incidentally, the Australian ecological feminist Patsy Hallen uses a formula close to that of Buddha: We are here to embrace rather than conquer the world. It is of interest to notice that the term "world" is used here, rather than "living beings." I suspect that our thinking need not proceed from the notion of living being to that of the world, but we will conceive reality or the world we live in as alive in a wide, not easily defined sense. There will then be no nonliving beings to care for.

If self-realization or self-fulfillment is today habitually associated with lifelong ego trips, isn't it stupid to use this term for self-realization in the widely different sense of Gandhi or, less religiously loaded, as a term for widening and deepening your self so that it embraces all life-forms? Perhaps it is. But I think the very popularity of the term makes people listen for a moment, feeling safe. In that moment, the notion of a greater self should be introduced to show that if people equate self-realization with ego trips, they seriously underestimate themselves. "You are much greater, deeper, generous, and capable of more dignity and joy than you think! A wealth of non-competitive joy is open to you!"

But I have another important reason for inviting people to think in terms of deepening and widening their *self*, starting with the ego trip as a crudest, but inescapable, point zero. It has to do with a notion usually placed as the opposite of the egoism of the ego trip, namely, the notion of *altruism*. The Latin term *ego* has as its opposite the *alter*. Altruism implies that *ego* sacrifices its interest in favor of the other, the *alter*. The motivation is primarily that of duty: It is said that we *ought* to love others as strongly as we love ourselves.

Unfortunately, humankind is very limited in what it can love from mere duty or, more generally, from moral exhortation. From the Renaissance to World War II, about four hundred cruel wars were fought by Christian nations for the flimsiest of reasons. It seems to me that in the future, more emphasis has to be given to the conditions under which we most naturally widen and deepen our self. With a sufficiently wide and deep self, *ego* and *alter* as opposites are eliminated stage by stage. The distinction is in a way transcended.

Early in life, the social self is sufficiently developed so that we do not prefer to eat a big cake alone. We share the cake with our friends and our nearest. We identify with these people sufficiently to see our joy in their joy and to see our disappointment in theirs.

Now is the time to *share* with all life on our maltreated earth through the deepening identification with life-forms and the greater units, the ecosystems, and Gaia, the fabulous, old planet of ours.

Immanuel Kant introduced a pair of contrasting concepts that deserve to be extensively used in our effort to live harmoniously in, for, and of nature: the concepts of the *moral act* and the *beautiful act*.

Moral acts are those motivated by the intention to follow the moral laws, at whatever cost, that is, to do our moral duty solely out of respect for that duty. Therefore, the supreme test of our success in performing a pure, moral

act is that we do it completely against our inclination, that we, so to say, hate to do it, but are compelled by our respect for the moral law. Kant was deeply awed by two phenomena, "the heaven with its stars above me and the moral law within me."

But if we do something we should do according to a moral law, but do it out of inclination and with pleasure—what then? Should we then abstain or try to work up some displeasure? Not at all, according to Kant. If we do what morals say is right because of positive inclination, then we perform a *beautiful act*. Now, my point is that in environmental affairs, perhaps we should try primarily to influence people toward beautiful acts. Work on their inclinations rather than morals. Unhappily, the extensive moralizing within environmentalism has given the public the false impression that we primarily ask them to sacrifice, to show more responsibility, more concern, better morals. As I see it, we need the immense variety of sources of joy opened through increased sensitivity toward the richness and diversity of life and the landscapes of free nature. We all can contribute to this individually, but it is also a question of politics, local and global. Part of the joy stems from the consciousness of our intimate relation to something bigger than our ego, something that has endured through millions of years and is worthy of continued life for millions of years. The requisite care flows naturally if the self is widened and deepened so that protection of free nature is felt and conceived as protection of ourselves.

Academically speaking, what I suggest is the supremacy of environmental ontology and realism over environmental ethics as a means of invigorating the environmental movement in the years to come. If reality is experienced by the ecological self, our behavior *naturally* and beautifully follows norms of strict environmental ethics. We certainly need to hear about our ethical shortcomings from time to time, but we more easily change through encouragement and through a deepened perception of reality and our own self. That is, deepened realism. How is this to be brought about? The question lies outside the scope of this essay! It is more a question of community therapy than community science: healing our relations to the widest community, that of all living beings.

The subtitle of this essay is "An Ecological Approach to Being in the World." I am now going to discuss a little about "nature," with all the qualities we spontaneously experience, as identical with the reality we live in. That means a movement from being in the world to being in nature. Then, finally, I shall ask for the goal or purpose of being in the world.

Is joy in the subject? I would say no. Joy is just as much or as little in the

object. The joy of a joyful tree is primarily *in* the tree, we should say—if we are pressed to make a choice between the two possibilities. But we should not be pressed. There is a third position. The joy is a feature of the *individual*, concrete unit of subject, object, and medium. In a sense, self-realization involves experiences of the infinitely rich, joyful aspect of reality. It is misleading, according to my intuition, to locate joy inside my consciousness. What is joyful is something that is not subjective; joy is an attribute of a reality wider than a conscious ego. This is philosophically how I contribute to the explanation of the internal relation between joy, happiness, and human self-realization. But this conceptual exercise is mainly of interest to an academic philosopher. What I am driving at is probably something that may be suggested with less conceptual gymnastics: It is unwarranted to believe that how we feel nature to be is not like how nature really is. It is rather that reality is so rich that we cannot see everything at once, but separate parts or aspects in separate moods. The joyful tree I see in the morning light is not the sorrowful one I see in the night, even if, in their abstract structure, they (physically) are the same.

It is very human to ask for the ultimate goal or purpose of being in the world. This may be a misleading way of framing a question. It may seem to suggest that the goal or purpose must somehow lie outside or beyond the world. Perhaps this can be avoided by living out “in the world.” It is characteristic of our time that we subjectivize and individualize the question asked of each of us: What do you consider the ultimate goal or purpose for *your* life? Or, we leave out the question of priorities and simply ask for goals and purposes.

The main title of this essay is partly motivated by the conviction that *self-realization* is an adequate key term expression one uses to answer the question of ultimate goal. It is of course only a key term. An answer by a philosopher can scarcely be shorter than the little book *Ethics* by Spinoza.

To understand the function of the term *self-realization* in this capacity, it is useful to compare it with two others, *pleasure* and *happiness*. The first suggests hedonism, the second eudaemonism in a professional philosophical, but just as vague and ambiguous, jargon. Both terms broadly connote states of feeling. Having pleasure or being happy is to *feel well*. One may, of course, use the term *happiness* to connote something different, but in the way I use the term, one standard set of replies to the question “How do you feel?” is “I feel happy” or “I feel unhappy.” The following set of answers would be rather awkward: “I feel self-realized” or “I do not feel self-realized.”

The most important feature of self-realization as compared with pleasure

and happiness is its dependence upon a view of human capacities or, better, potentialities. This again implies a view of what human nature is. In practice, it does not imply a general doctrine of human nature. That is work for philosophical fields of research.

An individual whose attitudes are such that I would say that he or she takes self-realization as the ultimate or fundamental goal has to have a view of his or her nature and potentialities. The more they are realized, the more there is self-realization. The question “How do you feel?” may be honestly answered in the positive or negative, whatever the level of self-realization. The question may, in principle, be answered in the negative, but like Spinoza, I think the valid answer is positive. The realization of fulfillment—using a somewhat less philosophical jargon—of the potentialities of oneself is internally related to happiness, but not in such a way that by looking for happiness, you will realize yourself. This is a clear point, incidentally, in John Stuart Mill’s philosophy. You should not look hard for happiness. That is a bad way, even if you take, as Mill does, happiness as the ultimate or fundamental goal in life. I think that to look for self-realization is a better way.

That is, to develop your capacities—using a rather dangerous word because the term *capacities* is easily interpreted in the direction of interpersonal, not intrapersonal, competition. But even the striving implied in the latter term may mislead. Dwelling in situations of intrinsic value, spontaneous nondirected awareness, relaxing from striving, is conducive to self-realization as I understand it. But there are, of course, infinite variations among humans according to cultural, social, and individual differences. This makes the key term *self-realization* abstract in its generality. But nothing more can be expected when the question is posed as it is: “What might deserve to be called an ultimate or a fundamental goal?” We may reject the meaningfulness of such a question—I don’t—but for us for whom it has meaning, the answer using few words is bound to be abstract and general.

Going back to the three key terms of pleasure, happiness, and self-realization, the third has the merit of being clearly and forcefully applicable to any being with a specific range of potentialities. I limit the range to living beings, using the word *living* in a rather broad sense. The terms *pleasure* and *happiness* are not so easily generalized. With the rather general concept of ecological self already introduced, the concept of self-realization naturally follows.

Let us consider the praying mantis, a formidable, voracious insect. These creatures have a nature fascinating to many people. Mating is part of their self-realization, but some males are eaten when performing the act of

copulation. Is he happy; is he having pleasure? We don't know. Well done if he does! Actually, he feeds his partner so that she gets strong offspring. But it does not make sense to me to attribute happiness to these males. Self-realization, yes; happiness, no. I maintain the internal relationship between self-realization and happiness among people and among some animal groups. As a professional philosopher, I am tempted to add a point inspired by Zen Buddhism and Spinoza: Happiness is a feeling, yes, but the act of realizing a potential is always an interaction involving one single concrete unit, one gestalt, I would say, and three abstract aspects, subject, object, medium. What I said about joyfulness in nature holds for happiness in nature. We should not conceive them as merely subjective feelings.

The rich reality of the world is getting even richer through our specific human endowments; we are the first kind of living beings we know of who have the potential to live in community with all other living beings. It is our hope that all those potentialities will be realized—if not in the near future, then at least in the somewhat more remote future.

## Section 2:

### THE LONG-RANGE DEEP ECOLOGY MOVEMENT

over the old and the present over future generations.<sup>133</sup> The ideal of deep ecology would be a world in which lost epochs and distant horizons take precedence over the present. It is not by chance, then, that it continually hesitates between conservative romantic themes and "progressive" anticapitalist ones. In both cases, the same obsession with putting an end to humanism is being asserted in at times schizophrenic fashion, to the point that one can say that some of deep ecology's roots lie in Nazism, while its branches extend far into the distant reaches of the cultural left.

<sup>133</sup> Devall, "The Deep Ecology Movement," p. 301.

## five

### Nazi Ecology: The November 1933, July 1934, and June 1935 Legislations

"*Im neuen Reich darf es keine Tierquälerei mehr geben (in the new Reich cruelty toward animals should no longer exist)*" Excerpted from a speech by Adolf Hitler, these sympathetic words inspired the monumental law of 24 November 1933 providing for the protection of animals (*Tierschutzgesetz*). According to Giese and Kahler, the minister of the interior's two technical advisors who were responsible for drafting the legislative text, the goal was to at long last translate this message from the *führer* into concrete reality—a task that would have been impossible, it seems, before the coming to power of a National Socialist government. This at least is what they explain in a book they published in 1939 entitled *The German Law for the Protection of Animals*.<sup>1</sup> Assembled in some three hundred tightly printed pages are all the legal provisions relative to the new legislation, as well as an introduction explaining the "philosophical" and political grounds of a project whose breadth was indeed unequalled at the time. It would soon be complemented, on 3 July 1934, by a law limiting hunting (*Das Reichsjagdgesetz*), then, on 1 July 1935, by a landmark of modern ecology, the law for the protection of nature (*Reichsnatur schutzgesetz*). The three, ordered by Hitler, who made them his pet projects—though they also corresponded to the wishes of numerous and powerful ecologist associations of the period,<sup>2</sup>—bear the signatures of the

<sup>1</sup> Giese and Kahler, *Das deutsche Tierschutzrecht* (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1939).

<sup>2</sup> In particular of the *Bund Deutscher Heimatschutz*, founded in 1904 by the biologist Ernst Rudorff, and the *Staatliche Stelle für Naturdenkmalspflege in Preußen*, created in Berlin in 1906. On these associations and, more generally, on the nature protection movements under the Nazi regime, one should

principal ministers concerned: Göring, Gürzner, Darßé, Frick, and Rust, in addition to that of the chancellor. Curiously, while these laws were the first in the world to reconcile a broad ecological plan with the concern for real political intervention, we find no trace of them in today's literature devoted to the environment (aside from a few allusions made by adversaries of the Greens and particularly vague as they rely on second-hand references). We nonetheless are dealing with a very elaborate series of texts that is fully representative of a neoconservative interpretation of what would later be called "deep ecology." An analysis of these texts is, therefore, in order.

First let us be clear about our objective. The troubling proximity between the love of one's native soil which motivates certain fundamentalist ecologists and the fascist-leaning themes of the 1930s has often been highlighted. In the preceding chapters we have had an opportunity to consider the ways in which these comparisons may sometimes have been appropriate. But we must also be wary of the kind of demagogery that invokes the horrors of Nazism to disqualify any ecological concerns *a priori*. The presence of an authentic interest in ecology at the heart of the National Socialist movement is not, in my view, in and of itself, a pertinent objection to a critical examination of contemporary ecology. On that basis, we would also have to denounce the construction of freeways—which, as we know, was one of the priorities of Hitler's regime—as fascist. Guilt by association, here as elsewhere, is inappropriate.

That said, these important legislations nonetheless lead us to reflect on the fact that an interest in nature, while it may not imply a

read the works of Walther Schoenichen. A committed National Socialist himself, holder of the Chair for the Protection of Nature at the University of Berlin, he was writing a series of works until the late 1950s on Germany's mission in the matter, including two essays on the contributions of Hitler's regime: *Naturschutz im dritten Reich* (Berlin, 1934) and *Naturschutz als Völkische und internationale Kulturaufgabe* (Jena, 1942), which no doubt constitutes one of the best commentaries one can read on the significance of Nazi ecology in the eyes of those who were involved in developing it. In it, notably, the legislations are situated within the intellectual history of German romanticism.

hatred of men ipso facto, does not exclude one either. Hitler's words upon inaugurating the *Tierschutzgezetz* give one pause after all. Before entering into the exceptional content of these laws, we must examine the disturbing nature of this alliance between an utterly sincere zoophilia (it was not limited to words but was borne out in law) and the most ruthless hatred of men history has ever known. The fact that we will not use this observation to hastily condemn all forms of ecology must not prevent us from considering its significance.

The love of nature, such as deep ecology invites us to experience it, is accompanied, both among "reactionaries" and "progressives," by a certain penchant for deplored everything in the culture that results from what I refer to as "separation" (but which can also be designated pejoratively, if one prefers, as "uprootedness"), and which the Enlightenment tradition has always seen as a sign of that which is properly human. All forms of thought that consider man a *transient* being, whether Judaism, post-Hegelian criticism,<sup>3</sup> or French republicanism, define him as the antinatural being *par excellence*. Given this, it is not surprising that the Nazi draws his gun to shoot the stateless person, the person who is not rooted in a community, when he hears the word culture. It is not surprising either that he would do so while preserving intact the love of the cat or dog who shares his life.

In this respect, the philosophical underpinnings of Nazi legislation often overlap with those developed by deep ecology, and this for a reason that cannot be underestimated: in both cases, we are dealing with a same *romantic and/or sentimental* representation of the relationship between nature and culture, combined with a shared revalorization of the *primitive* state against that of (alleged) civilization. As the biolo-

<sup>3</sup>The school of Marburg, but also Husserl's phenomenology, could serve as references here. With the notion of "transcendence" or of "existence" as peculiar to the *Dasein*, Heidegger also fit in with this tradition, which is in fact why his adherence to Nazism, though deep and lasting, was only *partial* and never extended to the "biologist" and vitalist side of the ideology. That many of his disciples are now seeking to eradicate this thought on what is peculiar to man, on authenticity, by which Heidegger still belongs (somewhat) to the tradition of humanism, is a sign of the times that does not auger well.

gist Walther Schoenichen, one of the primary Nazi theoreticians for the protection of the environment, has continually insisted, the 1933–1935 laws are the culmination of romanticism, “the perfect portrayal of the popular-romantic idea” (*die Darstellung der völkisch-romantischen Idee*).<sup>4</sup> Significantly, despite his aversion to the United States, land of liberalism and plutocracy—an aversion we find today still intact among many young German ecologists—he recognizes a kinship between the love of the ‘Wilderness’ and that of “*des Wilden*”: in both cases, a certain desire to return to a lost natural virginity is expressed in words that, attesting to a common origin, designate the same “primitive state.” And Schoenichen salutes the mid-nineteenth-century development of American national parks as a decisive event in the development of a proper relationship to nature. He emphasizes, in all seriousness, that the designation itself is felicitous, since it at least includes one word that tends in the right direction . . .<sup>5</sup>

### The Two Conceptions of Nature

We are not trying to lend credibility here to the opinion that says that Nazism is the pure and simple continuation of romanticism and, as Schoenichen claims, its adequate realization. No doubt it would be absurd to consider Hölderlin or Novalis the founding fathers of National Socialism, just as it would be to view Stalin as Marx’s most faithful interpreter. And yet, the principle of the Nazi laws do indeed embody a theme that is central to romantic sentimentalism’s struggle against the classicism of the Enlightenment: true nature, which must be protected at all costs against the misdeeds of culture, is not the nature that has been transformed by art, and thus *humanized*, but the raw, virgin nature that bears witness to the origins of time. It is impossible to understand Nazi ecology without understanding that it was inscribed in the context of an age-old debate on the status of nature as such. It is important to briefly mention what was primarily at stake, which is crucial in this context.

As early as the mid-seventeenth century, two antinomies por-

<sup>4</sup>Schoenichen, *Naturschutz als völkische und internationale Kulturaufgabe*,

p. 45. <sup>5</sup>Schoenichen, *Naturschatz im dritten Reich*, p. 46.

trays of nature appeared in the course of a debate that opposed the aesthetic school of classicism and that of “sentimentalism.”<sup>6</sup> Not only were the status of beauty and art at stake in this debate, but our philosophical and political attitudes with respect to civilization in general, insofar as the process of cultural development distances us irrevocably, it is argued, from the alleged authenticity of our lost origins. For the classical artists, whose chosen homeland was France, this distancing was positive. What is more, for them the idea of an original and authentic nature had, in truth, no meaning. Here is why: beginning with Cartesianism and its struggle against medieval animism, the idea took form that true nature is not the nature we perceive directly through our senses but the nature we grasp through an effort of the *intellect*. According to Descartes, it is through reason that we apprehend the essence of things. And what the French classics would call “nature” is precisely this essential reality, which is opposed to the appearances that are readily able to be perceived. Thus Molière, who wanted “to paint from nature” in his comedies, did not describe the daily lives of ordinary men but sketched the *idealized model of essential character*: the miser, the misanthrope, the Don Juan, the hypochondriac, and so on.

The archetype of this “classical” and rationalist vision is of course the French-style garden, which is based entirely on the idea that, to arrive at nature’s true essence or, rather, at “nature’s nature,” it is necessary to employ artifice, to “geometrize” it. For it is through mathematics, by use of the most abstract reasoning, that one grasps the truth of reality. As Catherine Kinzler writes: “[T]he French garden, crafted, pruned, designed, calculated, overtly subtle, artificial, and forced is ultimately, if we want to get at the bottom of things, *more natural* than a wild forest . . . What is presented for aesthetic contemplation is a cultivated, controlled nature, pushed to the extreme, more real and more fragile at the same time because its essence is only reluctantly revealed.”<sup>7</sup> In the eyes of the French classics, there-

<sup>6</sup>I’ve analyzed the terms of this conflict elsewhere, in my book *Homo Aestheticus* (Paris: Grasset, 1990); [Luc Ferry, *Homo Aestheticus: The Invention of Taste in the Democratic Age*, translated by Robert De Loaiza (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).]

fore, the English garden is not natural: in the best of cases, it has only the appearance of being so. It does not attain the truth of reality. What is worse, it can turn to affectation and mannerism, since it incarnates neither nature in its brute state nor its essential mathematical truth. As for wild landscapes, forests, oceans, and mountains, they can inspire only horror in men of taste: their chaotic disorder conceals reality. While the harmony of geometrical figures evoke the idea of a divine order, nature in its virgin state presents to the mind only pagan images, bordering on the diabolical. This in fact is why the Alps, now considered a prime tourist attraction, were perceived throughout the classical age as a mere hideous obstacle that was burdensome to cross.<sup>8</sup> The beautiful, from this perspective, could lie only in the *artificial* presentation of a truth of reason, not in the display of sentiments that the restoration of an original state allegedly concealed by civilization might inspire in us. Nature should be disciplined, polished, and cultivated, in short, when all is said and done, *humanized*.

It was against this classical vision of beauty that the aesthetics of sentiment revolted. Far from being mathematical, crafted, and human, here true nature is associated with *original authenticity*, the feeling for which we have lost, as Rousseau would have it, due to the culture of sciences and the arts. Thus what is natural is not at issue here, as it was among the classics, but rather what is *not yet denatured*, what is in its "primitive state." Forests, mountains, and oceans reassert their place against the artifice of geometry. But there is more: not only can nature not be humanized through civilization—it only gets lost—but men, despite their pretensions, are part and parcel of nature. They must, therefore, remain faithful to it. Hence the defense by Rousseau and the first romantics of those who are designated, significantly, as "naturals": the Caribbean natives as yet uncorrupted by the taste for luxury and artifice, as well as those "proud, pure-hearted mountain men," whose

very isolation has protected them from evil.<sup>9</sup> The myth of the golden age and a paradise lost returns. Accompanied, as is wont to occur, by the inevitable discourse on the "fall," foreshadowing the anti-humanist theme of the "decline of the West."

It has often been noted how far this aesthetics of sentiment still lies from romanticism in its maturity. The latter even presents itself as a synthesis of the opposition between classicism and the sentimental. Nature is defined as "Life," as the "divine" union of body and soul, of sensibility and reason. Yet the separation between sentimentalism and romanticism is less distinct than is ordinarily asserted: even in their philosophy of history the romantics would preserve the idea of a lost golden age, as well as the notion that beauty has more to do with sentiment than with reason.

It was essentially these two themes that Nazi ecology would retain, opposing French, rationalist, humanist classicism, full of artifice, and the "*German*" image of an original nature—primitive, pure, virgin, authentic, and irrational, because accessible *only through the paths of sentiment*.<sup>10</sup> This original nature is even defined by its extrahuman character. It is *outside of and prior to man*: outside of his

<sup>9</sup> Robert Legros perfectly described the birth of this new sensibility, which breaks with French classicism: "This nature is the nature of origins. It is 'original' in the sense that it is not yet tamed, organized, disciplined, subjugated. It is all purity, innocence, blossoming, enthusiasm, freshness, spontaneity . . . And the mountain offers us the image of this 'original' nature, both virgin and plentiful. The effervescence of the flowers and the overflowing of rivers, the play of waterfalls and the wild herbs, the purity of the air and the fresh feel of the forests, here is nature in its true state, a nature that is not yet denatured . . . It is not only manifested in the Alpine landscape but also in the customs of the mountain folk. Living in harmony with original nature, the inhabitants of the Alps are themselves impregnated with a 'natural' spirit, meaning that they are not corrupted by civilization, deformed by artificiality . . . Through the ideal of an originally pure and generous nature the myth of a golden age takes form in the heart of the mountains," *ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>10</sup> Alfred Brümler devoted a chapter to the German specificity of the esthetics of sentiment as opposed to the French character of classicism in his work on *Das Irrationalitätsproblem in der Logik und Ästhetik des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts*, republished in Darmstadt by the *Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft*.

<sup>7</sup> Catherine Kinzler, *Jean-Philippe Rameau: Splendeur et naufrage de l'esthétique du plaisir à l'âge classique* (Paris: Minerve, 1983).

<sup>8</sup> See Robert Legros's wonderful introduction to the travel journal of the young Hegel in the Alps (éditions Jérôme Millon, 1988). I am restating here one of its fundamental themes.

mathematical reasoning, and prior to the appearance of artificial culture, for which human folly and vanity alone are responsible.

In his 1942 work on the *Protection of Nature as a Popular (völkisch) and International Cultural Task*, Walther Schoenichen specifies the appropriate way to understand the notion of nature from a National Socialist perspective. The information he provides is quite interesting: starting with the basic idea that it is "obvious" that "respect for the creations of nature is etched in the blood of Northern peoples," he explores the fact that the word "nature" is derived etymologically from the Latin "*natura*." This origin is troublesome—too southern, almost French; Schoenichen prefers for it to be immediately replaced with the Greek *phusis*, which means "to grow, to be born," and which gives the noun *physis*, from which the word "physique" is derived. This philosophical operation brings us to the following conclusion: "We can, according to the preceding, consider it certain that the concept of nature designates, first and foremost, *objects and phenomena which occurred on their own, without man's intervention*." Here we are at the opposite extreme from the "humanized" nature of the classics. And this is precisely the point for Schoenichen, who insists on the value and significance of the Greek etymology, according to which "the lack, even the exclusion, of any intervention by man is the trait that characterizes nature." Thus we can and must Germanize (*verdeutschen*) the word nature, changing it to *Urhandschaft*, "earth" or "original land"! With such a definition, Nazi ecology essentially preestablishes a link between the aesthetics of sentiment and what would later become the central theme of deep ecology: the idea that the natural world is *worthy of respect in and of itself*, independent of all human considerations. Thus Schoenichen particularly emphasizes the texts of Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl, which foreshadow the "environmentalist" critique of utilitarian—hence *anthropocentric*—justifications for ecology: "The German people need forests. And even when we no longer need wood to warm the outer man . . . it will be all the more necessary to warm the inner man. We must protect the forest, not only so that the stove will not go cold in winter, but so that the pulse of the people may continue to beat in joyous, vital warmth, so that Germany will remain German." In good logical order, this deconstruction of the primacy of individual interests concludes with a clear and dis-

tinct call for the rights of trees and rocks: "For centuries, we have been bombarded with the idea that it is progress to defend the rights of cultivated lands. But now we are saying that it is progress to demand the rights of the wild nature next to these lands. And not only the rights of the wooded lands, but also of the sand dunes, swamps, garigues, reefs, and glaciers!"

### The Critique of Anthropocentrism and the Call for the Rights of Nature

Both of these elements are especially present in the most important law, which affects the protection of the animal kingdom, this "living soul of the land" (*die lebendige Seele der Landschaft*) in Göring's words. In it we find a long and meticulous analysis by the principal drafters, Giese and Kahler, of the radical innovations of the National Socialist *Tierschutzgesetz* with respect to all prior legislation on this issue, domestic or foreign. By their own admission, this originality lies in the fact that, for the first time in history, the animal, as a natural being, is protected *in its own right, and not with respect to men*. A long humanist, even humanitarian, tradition defended the idea that it was indeed necessary to prohibit cruelty toward animals, but more because it translated a bad disposition of human nature, or even risked inciting humans to perform violent acts, than because it was prejudicial to the interests of the animals themselves. It was in this spirit that the Grammont law had prohibited the *public* spectacle of cruelty toward *domestic* animals (bulldogging, cockfighting, and so on) in France since the mid-nineteenth century.

If one compares the *Tierschutzgesetz* with the laws that were adopted in other European countries at the end of the 1920s, it does indeed seem to stand out in its clear desire to put an end to anthropocentrism.<sup>11</sup> It is necessary to quote the texts, which are exemplary in their precision:

. . . the German people have always had a great love for animals and have always been conscious of our strong

<sup>11</sup> Only the Belgian law of 22 March 1929 can be compared to it, but England itself, to say nothing of the countries of southern Europe, does not punish cruelty toward wild animals.

ethical obligations toward them. And yet, only thanks to the National Socialist Leadership has the widely shared wish for an improvement in the legal provisions affecting the protection of animals, the wish for the establishment of a specific law that would recognize the right which animals inherently possess to be protected in and of themselves (*um ihrer selbst willen*), been achieved in reality.

Two indicators, which predominate in the inspiration for this new legislation, manifest its nonanthropocentrist nature. According to the drafters of the law (and aside from certain exceptions, including that of Belgium, they are correct in this), in all other legislations, including those in Germany before National Socialism, cruelty toward animals had to be performed in *public and against domestic animals* in order to be punished. As a result, the legal texts did not threaten "punishment serving to protect animals themselves, intending to defend them against acts of cruelty and bad treatment," but were meant in reality "to protect human sensibility from the painful experience of having to participate in an act of cruelty toward animals." It is now a matter of curbing "cruelty in and of itself, and not because of its indirect effects on man's sensibility." The lawmaker emphasizes that "*cruelty is no longer punished with the idea that one must protect man's sensibility from the spectacle of cruelty toward animals, men's interests are no longer the backdrop here, but rather it is recognized that the animal must be protected in and of itself (wegen seiner selbst).*" Acts of cruelty committed in private will, therefore, be just as reprehensible as others.

In the same spirit, Nazi legislation innovatively anticipates the most radical demands of contemporary antispeciesism by surpassing the anthropocentrically inspired opposition between domestic and wild animals.<sup>12</sup> This is the object of paragraph 1 of the law, which "*is valid for all animals. In the present law, the term 'animal' will be understood*

<sup>12</sup>We should note, nonetheless, that the drafters of the law refused to consider animals as legal subjects of the same rank as German citizens. But it is significant that the question is explicitly mentioned and discussed, and that the negative outcome does not result in the idea that animals do not have rights *in and of themselves*.

*to mean all living beings designated as such by current language as well as by the natural sciences. From a penal standpoint, therefore, no distinction will be made between domestic and other types of animals, or between inferior and superior animals, or between animals that are useful or harmful to man.*" Thus we have a text which, at the opposite extreme from the Grammont law, could be signed wholeheartedly by today's deep ecologists.

Without entering into the details of this law, it should be noted that it carefully examines all the decisive questions that are currently being discussed by the defenders of animal rights: from the prohibition against the force feeding of geese, to that of vivisection without anesthesia, it proves to be fifty (or more) years "ahead" of its time.

Two further points on which the *Tierschutzgesetz* is particularly prolix and detailed again allow one to think that the love of animals does not imply that of men: one is an entire chapter devoted to the Jewish barbarity involved in ritual slaughter, which is henceforth prohibited. Another devotes inspired pages to the feeding, resting, aeration conditions, and so on, with which it is appropriate, *thanks to the blessings of the national revolution currently underway*, to arrange for the transportation of animals by train . . .

#### The Hatred of Liberalism: Paradise Lost and the Decline of the West

The theme of the "fall," of "dereliction," is omnipresent in these laws. Original and authentic nature is contrasted with the destructive barbarity inherent to the modern liberal economy. This is emphasized from the start, in terms that are significant, in the preamble to the *Reichsmärschutzgesetz* of 26 June 1935, thus reestablishing a connection with the romantic vision of a history in three stages—the golden age, the fall, the restoration:

Today as before, nature, in the forests and the fields, is an object of longing (*Lebensucht*), joy and the means of regeneration for the German people.

Our native countryside (*heimatliche Landschaft*) has been profoundly modified with respect to its original state, its flora has been altered in many ways by the agricultural and foresting industries as well as by the unilateral reallocation

of land and a monoculture of conifers. While its natural habitat has been diminishing, a varied fauna that brought vitality to the forests and the fields has been dwindling. This evolution was often due to economic necessity. Today, a clear awareness has emerged as to the intellectual, but also economic, damages of such an upheaval of the German countryside.

Before, one could only grant half measures to the "natural monument" protection sites created at the turn of this century because the people's vision of the world (*weltanschauliche Voransetzungen*) was wanting. Only the metamorphosis of the German man was to create the preconditions for a efficient protection of nature.

The German government of the *Reich* considers it its duty to guarantee our fellow citizens, even the poorest among them, their share in the natural German beauty. It has, therefore, enacted the law of the *Reich* with a view toward protecting nature . . .

A great deal could be said about this text. First, we find the romantic confusion between the cultural and the natural that enables us to make sense of ideas such as that of "natural German beauty," or of the "natural monuments" (*Natürdenkmale*), which paragraph 3 of the law defines in terms reminiscent of deep ecology's plan to turn wild areas into legal subjects: "Natural monuments, in the sense intended by this law, are original creations of nature, the preservation of which is in the public interest due to their importance and to their scientific, historical, patriotic, folkloric, or other significance—these include, for example, boulders, waterfalls, geological accidents, rare trees . . ." The law thus provides for the creation of "protected natural zones" (par. 4).

But contrary to a persistent legend, what we see especially is that while the Nazi regime was oriented toward modern technology, it was also equally hostile to what we would now call economic "modernization," perceived as destructive to particular ethnic qualities as well as to original nature. It is here that we find a true "homage to difference," a reinstating of diversity in opposition to the one-dimensionality

of the liberal world. For the ideology that underlies liberalism, Schoenichen reminds us in the context of his defense and illustration of the 1935 law, is characterized by "the leveling influence of the general culture and of urbanization, which constantly and increasingly presses back the particular and original essence of the nation, while economic rationalization gradually eats away at the original specificity of the landscape."<sup>13</sup> According to a theme that would be readopted as much by German neoconservative revolutionaries as by sixties leftists, by Heidegger and by Marcuse, by Alain de Benoist and by Felix Guattari, it is necessary to learn to reindividualize, to redifferentiate groups and individuals, countering the vast tendency toward homogenization ("Americanization") which is the central dynamic of global capitalism. In its National Socialist version, this antiliberal theme translates into the idea that after the first two stages of history—the golden age and the fall—only the remaking of the German people (*die Umgestaltung des deutschen Menschen*) will lead us to the end of history, in other words, to the redemption that will enable us to rediscover our lost origins. Paradoxical as it may seem today, it is thus perfectly logical that the laws protecting nature would extend into a third worldism concerned with respecting the plurality (the "wealth and diversity") of ethnic differences.

### Third-Worldism and the Praise of Difference

We have to be ignorant or prejudiced not to see it: Nazism contains within it, for reasons that are in no way accidental, the beginnings of an authentic concern for preserving "natural," which is to say, here again, "original" peoples. In the chapter devoted to this subject in his book, Walther Schoenichen cannot find words harsh enough to condemn the attitude of "the white man, the great destroyer of creation": in the paradise he himself is responsible for losing, he has paved only a path of "epidemics, thievery, fires, blood and tears!"<sup>14</sup> "Indeed, the enslavement of primitive peoples in the 'cultural' history of the white race constitutes one of its most shameful chapters, which is not only streaked with rivers of blood, but of cruelty and torture of the worst

<sup>13</sup> Schoenichen, p. 21.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 411.

kind. And its final pages were not written in the distant past, but at the beginning of the twentieth century." Schoenichen proceeds to trace, with great precision, the list of the various genocides that have occurred throughout the history of colonialization, from the massacre of the South American Indians to that of the Sioux—who "were pushed back in unthinkable conditions of cruelty and infamy"—and the South African bushmen. The case of the latter is particularly symbolic of the misdeeds of liberal capitalism: they were killed because they had no notion of ownership. Game having disappeared from their region, this hunting people was forced to "steal" goats belonging to the colonists—the word "steal" must be placed in quotes, since bushmen had no concept of private property. And as they were thrown into prison without any idea of what was happening to them, they allowed themselves to die of starvation: "Thus an interesting people was exterminated before our very eyes, simply because an exogenous policy imposed on the indigenous population refused to understand that these men could not abandon their hunting lives to become farmers from one day to the next . . ."<sup>15</sup>

This indictment, written in 1942 by a Nazi biologist who saw the *Naturschutzgesetz* as a means to remedy these misdeeds (does it not protect all forms of wild life?), is not without interest. Its designated target is liberalism and, more specifically, French-style republicanism. But it also has a positive goal: to defend the rights of nature in all its forms, human and nonhuman, so long as they are representative of an *original state* (*Ursprunglichkeit*). On the first point, Schoenichen's attacks are clear. They throw in question capitalism's greed. For in the context of a different world vision, it "would have been entirely possible to find a reasonable compromise between the claims of the conquerors and the basic needs of the primitive peoples. It is primarily the liberal vision of the world that is responsible for having stood in the way of such a solution. For it recognizes no motivation other than economic profitability, which raises to the level of a moral principle the exploitation of the colonies for the sole benefit of the mother country." This naturally provides an occasion to assail the French theory of assimilation, which is, according to Schoenichen, "drawn directly from the principles of the

Declaration of the Rights of Man of 1789." Thus "the old liberal theory of exploitation always constituted the backdrop for French colonial policy, so that there was no room for a treatment of primitive peoples that tended in the direction of the protection of nature."

In opposition to this "assimilationist" vision of the primitive state, Nazi policy advocates an authentic recognition of differences: "The natural policy for National Socialism to follow is clear. The policy of repression and extermination, the models for which are furnished by the early days of America or Australia, are just as unthinkable as the French theory of assimilation. Rather it is appropriate for the natives to flourish in conformity with their own racial stock." It is necessary then, in all cases, to leave the natives to their own development. The only recommendation, which according to Schoenichen is obvious "from the point of view of a National Socialist vision of the world" is the prohibition against mixed marriages, precisely because they imply the disappearance of differences and the uniformization of the human race. Now as before, the extreme Right assails inbreeding in all of its forms, assigning to ecology the task of "defending identity," which is to say "preserving the ethnic, cultural and natural milieux" of peoples—beginning, of course, with one's own: "Why fight for the preservation of animal species while accepting the disappearance of human races through widespread inbreeding?"<sup>15</sup> Indeed . . .

Like the aesthetics of sentiment and deep ecology, which also place new value on primitive peoples, mountain folk, or Amerindians, the National Socialist conception of ecology encompasses the notion that the *Naturvölker*, the "natural peoples," achieve a perfect harmony between their surroundings and their customs. This is even the most certain sign of the superiority of their ways over the liberal world of uprootedness and perpetual mobility. Their culture, similar to animal ways of life, is a prolongation of nature; it is this ideal conciliation that the modernity issued from the French Revolution has destroyed and which it is now a matter of restoring.

<sup>15</sup> Bruno Mégrét, lecture at a colloquia on ecology organized by the National Front on 2 November 1991.

Of Nature as a Cultural Trait and of Culture as a Natural Trait

Thus the unity of nature and culture in the life of the German nation must be reinstated, each element passing into its opposite to find its true essence, in keeping with a romantic theme that refuses to separate the cultural and the natural, which was the tendency of Enlightenment thought. The authors of the 3 July 1934 law on hunting specify this in their introduction: "The two-centuries-old development of the German hunting law has reached an outcome of great importance for the German people and *Reich*. This legislation has not only enabled us to overcome the splintered state of the German law, which was reflected until now in twenty different regional laws, and to thereby arrive at a legal unity, but set itself the task of preserving wild animals (*der Wilder*, one of our most precious cultural assets), and of educating the people to develop a love and understanding of nature and its creatures." Thus wild animals (*das Wilde*) are defined as one of Germany's "cultural assets," not as something that preceded all civilization. Conversely, the love of nature, a cultural trait if ever there was one, is presented as being rooted since time immemorial in the biological constitution particular to Germany:

The love of nature and its creatures as well as the pleasure of hunting in the forests and fields is deeply rooted in the German people. This is how the noble art of German veneration developed over the centuries, backed by a Germanic tradition that has existed since time immemorial. Hunting and game must forever be preserved for the German people, as they are among our most precious assets. We must deepen the German's love for our national territory, reinforce his vital energy and bring him rest after the day's work.

Fishing, hunting, and tradition . . . We should specify right away that the goal of the law is not only to introduce legal unity to culture and nature, but also to situate it within the framework of an authentic ecological system of thought. Thus it is necessary to *limit* the right to hunting in order that it concur with the stated need for

preserving the natural environment. In this sense, the law of 1934 is undoubtedly the first to redefine the role of the hunter in modern terms. According to a theme destined to a long posterity, the hunter goes from being a simple predator to one of the main architects of environmental protection, even of a restoration of original diversity, forever threatened by modern uniformization:

The duty of a hunter worthy of this name is not only to hunt game, but also to maintain it, to care for it so that a healthier state of game, stronger and more diversified in terms of species, will develop and be preserved.

The sixth section of the law is devoted to establishing limitations on the right to hunt, limitations based not only on the need for security, public order, and even the protection of the landscape, but also on the need to "avoid cruelty to animals." It is in the name of this desire, dear to Hitler himself, that certain types of hunting using painful traps were prohibited. The *Reichsjagdgesetz* turns out to be the key pin of the National Socialist ecologist platform: in it, man is no longer positioned as master and possessor of a nature which he humanizes and cultivates, but as *responsible* for an original wild state endowed with intrinsic rights, the richness and diversity of which it is his responsibility to preserve forever.