AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Barbara Muraca

An overarching explanation for environmental degradation has been humans’ disconnection from the natural world. Utilizing Whiteheadian theory, I offer that there is no disconnection. Rather, I propose that there is a dearth of relational acknowledgement. I suggest that the Cartesian dualism and modern science led to an illusory belief that the world consists of discrete entities. This belief has reinforced a ubiquitous sense of individualism and this perception has framed the problematic intrinsic and instrumental axiologies of environmental ethics. I present that if we are to halt and reverse environmental destruction, we must acknowledge the relational character of the environment. I utilize ethics of care to demonstrate our need for recognizing relationships and taking responsibility for our actions. Acknowledging relationships with each-other and the land will be fundamental in restoring our environment. I argue that through gardening and local foods we can cultivate a better understanding of our reliance upon each-other and the land. In addition, we reduce global human/land exploitation and oppression. An axiological discourse which is reflective of the world’s relational quality will emerge as the process of cultivating reciprocal relationships blossoms.
Food for Axiology: Acknowledging Relationships

by
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I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

________________________________________
Daniel S. Piquette, Author
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For Relationships
INTRODUCTION

“I have come to believe that the idea of an individual, the idea that there is someone separate from their relationships, is simply an error.” Mary Bateson

I first came across this statement as an undergraduate. Steeped in a scientific epistemology, I questioned the sanity of such an outlandish assertion. The idea that I was not an individual ran contrary to just about everything I had been taught. Did I not have personal choices? Could I not be alone in a room? Did I not have personal rights? Could I not die and the rest of the world would continue on without me? Wasn’t I the only one who knew what it was like to be me? The answer seemed to be yes. I would have sworn that I was a discrete individual.

Bateson laments that many westerners raise their children as autonomous individuals, asserting that independence is one of the highest values we hold in our culture; that when they turn eighteen, children are legally adults and should be self-sufficient (Bateson 2010). Bateson distresses over the fact that many children are taught not to rely on anyone and that to accept assistance is considered a sign of weakness—irresponsibility (Bateson 2010). This was my experience. While I initially cringed at the idea, my recent philosophical education presented a new lens to examine Bateson’s statement. I was awestruck how her insight challenged my worldview and placed before me a journey of ever increasing wonder.
“Philosophy begins in wonder. And, at the end, when philosophic thought has done its best, the wonder remains” Alfred Whitehead.

This project took fourteen billion years to complete. My contribution, persuaded by wonder, began a couple years ago. I could not comprehend why people are such wonderful, wonder-filled creatures yet are capable of so much harm. How could so many have so little and so few have so much? How can we allow our actions to cause the extinction of species? How can we destroy the very thing that sustains us—earth? I found answers to these questions. My answers, however, only lead to more wonder. It is my hope that this project will do the same for you.

My wonder began, at least in part, when I started to really consider Bateson’s ideas on individualism. I applied her thoughts to my ecological background and found that her ideas carried weight. Considering the relational character of our environment, I soon came to believe that she was right, that nothing can exist outside of relationship. The idea actually isn’t all that abstract. Deeply considering this, I applied her idea to a discourse suggesting that the destruction and exploitation of the natural environment is a result of a human disconnection from nature. In my undergraduate years, I cited many authors, read many books, and wrote many papers positing that people must re-connect with nature before it’s too late.

The first chapter, Individualized Nature, addresses this very fallacy—that humans can disconnect from something of which they are a part. In order to show this a fallacious statement, I found myself having to [re]define nature. Using personal experience and beliefs and philosophical thought from Alfred Whitehead, Frederick Ferré, and Hans
Jonas, I present a less than intuitive yet compelling way to conceptualize nature. Further, following Whiteheadian criticisms of a Cartesian Dualism and modern scientific methods, I formulate an argument that the two—Descartes’ dualism and modern science—were largely responsible for the emergence of a discourse laden in individualism and discrete objectified entities—a discourse profoundly embedded in western society and philosophical thought.

In chapter two, Value Numbering One, I show how Descartes and modern science “poisoned” (Whitehead 1925) modern philosophy. I focus primarily on the field of environmental ethics and examine the works of three philosophers; John O’Neill, Eugene Hargrove, and Paul Taylor. Each have contributed greatly to the field of environmental ethics in their own unique ways. O’Neill presents three ways in which environmental philosophers have utilized intrinsic value in philosophical arguments and then takes an objectivist’s approach to suggest that humans are not the sole assessors of value in the world. Eugene Hargrove utilizes a weak anthropocentric approach suggesting that something is intrinsically valuable aside from any use; known by way of emotion. According to Hargrove, something can have value just by being there, it doesn’t have to do anything. I then present a biocentric argument championed by Paul Taylor. Taylor suggests that there is nothing overtly special about humans; we evolved with different survival characteristics. The world has value with or without the presence of humans. Like Hargrove, Taylor suggests that the environment does not have to do anything, just being there, it is valuable.
While I appreciate their work as it has contributed to environmental preservation and conservation they do, however, all have something in common; a discourse bifurcating nature and an assertion that a designation of instrumental value is ultimately devaluing. I present an argument requesting philosophers to reconsider instrumental as relational. I believe relationships should be embraced rather than trying to conceptually remove them from philosophical arguments—a product of the Cartesian Dualism and modern science. My biggest challenge in this chapter is the very thing that I accuse my fellow ethicists of; using a discourse saturated with individualism and a bifurcated nature to present my thoughts on relationality. I find myself lost in the translation between my ontology and the vernacular in which I have to describe it. We need a new vision from which a new discourse can emerge. This vision, I propose, can be found in embracing relationships, a fundamental characteristic of ethics of care.

In chapter three, Gleaning from Virtues and Care, I explore two moral theories not typically associated with the environment. With current environmental ethics being saturated in a discourse influenced by the Cartesian Dualism and objective modern science, I investigate both Nichomachean Virtue Ethics and ethics of care with the hopes of gleaning characteristics which may be useful in framing a new environmental ethic founded on a relational and interdependent nature as I define in chapter one.

In Nichomachean Ethics, which is highly problematic for environmental ethics, I have found the idea of a virtuous person very appealing. I also examine the work of Carol Gilligan who challenged the moral development theory of her predecessor, Lawrence Kohlberg. Gilligan found that many of the women who participated in Kohlberg’s
research never progressed to the level of morality of that of a man. Refusing to believe these findings to be accurate, Gilligan challenged the structure of the theory which marginalizes the partial, relational, and emotive characteristics most women embody. Gilligan’s work, which exposed the differences between male and female moral conceptualizations, is the basis for the ethics of care.

I was very interested in investigating ethics of care for a number of reasons. Ethics of care challenges long standing moral theory. It introduces the feminine perspective which in many ways is contrastingly different from the masculine. The masculine perspective, in regards to solving moral dilemmas, calls on abstraction, impartiality, and justice whereas the feminine perspective emphasizes care, partiality, and relationships. As I am challenging decades of environmental ethics, akin to care ethicists challenging an enduring moral theory patriarchal in nature, I wanted to examine the strengths and weaknesses of their arguments. Ethics of care additionally embodies themes which I believe are missing from environmental ethics; the emphasis on care, relationships, and responsibility. In regards to the ethics of care, I present the work of two feminist philosophers, Nell Noddings and Virginia Held.

Chapter four, A New Ethic for a New Vision, is devoted to my environmental ethic which is founded on an interdependent, relational, and ever-becoming nature. I utilize gleaned characteristics from virtue and care ethics; partiality, virtuous care, relationships, and responsibility, and I construct an ethic based on the relational character of nature. The ethic posits our responsibility to improve on that with which we are in relationship.
In chapter five, Food for Axiology, I show how the Cartesian Dualism and modern science influenced the atomization of food. Combined with the industrial revolution, I present how bifurcated ideals led to a globalized and industrialized food system. Using an abbreviated historical approach, I show how many people are being disenfranchised from food choices and are additionally becoming deskillled in regards to food provisioning, which leads to intensifying food insecurity and further jeopardizes food sovereignty. I also present how the industrialized agricultural system is responsible for much of the current environmental exploitation, cultural disintegration, and human oppression occurring worldwide. I defend an argument that through examining foodways one can see the relational nature of the world. I additionally suggest that by utilizing community gardens and local foods much of the global exploitation and oppression can be minimized. I offer two community garden ethnographies as evidence which suggest that people develop reciprocal relationships with both land and others, experience community cohesiveness, witness decreased crime, develop culturally, and increase food security and sovereignty.

My thesis has two main goals. First, it is my hope that environmental ethicists will become aware of the individualized and bifurcated nature of our discourse. In doing so we can incorporate the relational nature of nature into our theory and cease demanding that instrumental is devaluing. Instrumental relationships are inescapable and therefor are of the highest value. Second, it is my hope that people will cultivate a better understanding of how their actions—demonstrated with food—can have implications
globally and that we have a responsibility to improve on the consequences of our relational interactions.

This paper begins by explaining how the world is intricately relational and ends with guidance on which bell pepper to buy at the store. The scope of this thesis is broad to say the least. Many of the concepts are not intuitive and sequentially build on one another. I have made every attempt to progressively revisit concepts and provide adequate examples to conceptualize my philosophical ideals. And so we begin…
CHAPTER ONE – INDIVIDUALIZED NATURE

“We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. . . .

We aren’t going to have peace on Earth until we recognize this basic fact of the interrelated structure of all reality” Martin Luther King Jr.

I begin with a thought experiment in the form of a dialogue. I make this move first as I feel the progression of the discussion between the two characters nicely illustrates the foundation of why I defend Bateson’s assertion that the idea of an individual, the belief that something can exist outside of relationship, is an illusion. The purpose of the forthcoming dialogue is to loosely define nature as I have come to understand nature—the foundation of my thesis¹. Additionally, the dialogue introduces my theory that the discourse saturated in individualism² materialized from the Cartesian Dualism and modern science. I present an argument suggesting that they led to a discourse which marginalizes relationships. While I don’t suggest that relationships are denied, I present that scientific methodologies work in such a way that relational characteristics are isolated from subjects—science relies on abstractions. I defend this argument using primarily the works of Alfred Whitehead.

¹ I further define nature and defend this view with the philosophical thought of Alfred Whitehead.
² I formally define “individual” later in the chapter. I must first define nature and present how the idea of an individual materialized before I can present my definition as the basis for my definition of an individual rests on my understanding of nature. Nature, therefore, must be defined first.
The two subjects in the dialogue, Niché and Ryan, are both college students. They are frustrated with the environmental problems challenging the world today. The dialogue begins with an overarching explanation heard all too often both inside and outside of academia; that a cause for environmental degradation is humans’ disconnection from the natural world.

One A: Dialogue: The Semantic Grounds for Perceived Disconnection

Ryan – I wish I could unlearn everything we’ve been taught in this environmental justice class. There is so much exploitation and destruction of the environment happening all around us and it seems many don’t care. It’s as if people don’t realize we are dependent on the earth for survival.

Niché – The problem is that we’re disconnected from nature.

Ryan – Disconnected from nature, how do you figure that?

Niché – Well we’re not living naturally like everything else.

Ryan – So you’re saying that if we want all these environmental problems to cease, we have to go back to living in caves, be hunter gatherers and live off the land like all the other non-human animals? Is this what you mean by being connected to nature? There is more to a human life than just surviving.

Niché – That’s the story we like to tell ourselves. But, I feel like that once the basic needs have been met, human flourishing is a matter of the heart. That all these external
wants and desires many think define them as successful beings are a human construction. But we’re getting off point here. The point is that when we moved away from nature and started manipulating the environment to quench our desires. We disconnected from nature.

Ryan - Would you say that we are part of nature?

Niché – Of course. We evolved like every other species on this planet. We are dependent upon it for survival and are subject to natural laws.

Ryan – Yet you claim we are disconnected from it. If we are a part of something how can we be disconnected from it? Do you know what nature is? I mean, if you claim that we are disconnected from something wouldn’t it hold true that you should be able to define it?

Niché – It seems some have stated that nature was a place where humans didn’t live.

Ryan – So you’re saying that nature is some place?

Niché – Yes, it is some place; some place that has not been altered by humans. But as Bill McKibben pointed out, there doesn’t seem to be any place left that hasn’t been altered by humans. Yet we still seem to believe that nature somehow exists despite this. We still see non-human animals running about, procreating, and carrying on. We still see nature’s force in hurricanes and tornados and we still consider places like Yellowstone as natural wonders. Yes, nature is a place, but, it is so much more. If you consider the etymology of the word nature, it comes from the Latin word, *nascent*, which means “giving birth”—Mother Earth. So think about
that. The origin of the word is not a noun. To give birth suggests action, therefore, nature must be an action too. But an action must have something to act on, therefore the actions are represented by forms. Forms both abiotic and biotic alike. So while the discourse on nature looks primarily at the forms, it’s really the underlying process that we need to focus on. That’s what we’re disconnected from, the processes.

Ryan – I’ll buy that. But, you stated we’re subject to nature’s processes.

Niché – So?

Ryan – Well if we’re subject to those processes how can we possibly be disconnected from them?

Niché – Well we’re not.

Ryan – So we’re not disconnected from nature?

Niché – No, we are. Maybe we’re not. This is confusing. We don’t act the same as nature. Nature tends towards diversity and complexity which seems to foster resiliency. Alternatively, processes developed by humans tend towards uniformity and simplicity which appears to foster fragility. So that’s definitely a disconnect.

Ryan – No, I don’t think that’s a disconnect. That’s an aberration. Imagine a symphony. If we consider nature a symphony, humans seem to be out of tune with the rest of the band, but we’re still part of the band. Just because we act differently from other creatures and from the diversifying processes does not suggest a disconnection from nature. Like you said, we are still subject to natural forces.
And it seems these natural forces are going to challenge us even more as this disharmonious human behavior further influences natural processes—climate change. We are not, however, disconnected. Something is happening, but I don’t agree with you that we’re disconnected from something that we’re a part of.

Niché – Then what’s going on?

Ryan – Well let’s think about this for a minute. Nature seems to be a process, a verb, represented by what appear to be forms, nouns. It seems the tendency is to think about nature as the latter. I believe that’s where we need to focus—how we think about and understand nature. Let’s consider how our discourse surrounding nature began. Our original discourse about nature was as if it was some place. For instance, in the Bible it was suggested that nature was some inhospitable treacherous place for humans to tame. It seems we have tamed much of it.

Niché – In other words, you’re talking about our conceptualization of nature.

Ryan – Exactly. Look, I agree, it seems as if there is a disconnection between humans and nature. But I think *disconnected* is the wrong definition. Let me see if I can’t better describe what has been wrongly coined as disconnected. I’ve been thinking about this a lot and it seems to me that there were two events instrumental in developing, or I should say, helping to frame our current worldview and these additionally forged our current axiological discourse; Cartesian Dualism and modern science. The dualism, put forth by Descartes, suggests that the mind, not the brain, but *thought itself* was separate from the body. Descartes rationalized that material things were mechanistic and void of life.
Niché – Wait, what does this have to do with nature?

Ryan – I’m getting there. The body was insignificant to Descartes. All that mattered was human thought, it gave humans agency. Essentially, Descartes separated the physical and metaphysical realms. His ideas led to a discourse which offered people a way to step back from themselves and the world and describe them as separate entities knowing that the human, because of the mind, was the most meaningful species. Modern science helped support these thoughts.

Then, through Isaac Newton’s scientific innovations, researchers trusted that they could quantify nature, and even the human body, piece by piece, describe each discrete section, then reassemble all the parts and optimistically develop an understanding of the whole. Essentially, they atomized the world.

Niché – So how does this explain the discourse that we’re disconnected?

Ryan – We began to study the world as divided and separate—as discrete individual objects. Doesn’t it make sense that a discourse suggesting that we’re disconnected would emerge from that epistemology?

Niché – Sure, that makes sense. So in other words you’re saying that it’s the way that we dissected and defined the world into discrete entities which created the discourse and that is why people like Leopold suggested that we’re disconnected from nature. The discourse that allowed me to believe it’s possible to disconnect from something that I know I belong to. So, it’s the discourse that is the problem.
Ryan – Yes, but I wish it was that simple. Studying this discourse, I came to understand how, in our new industrialized world, we began to put faith into only what we could empirically quantify. It appears that many developed an acceptance that our emotions were unsubstantiated and some even considered them untrustworthy, at least using the epistemology of science. We developed educational and judicial systems based on supportable facts. Over time, less attention was given to creativity and the humanities and more consideration was given to objective facts which could be substantiated through the scientific method.

Niché – That is my experience going to school. What are you saying? I’m not putting all this together.

Ryan – Ok, tell me what you’ve heard so far.

Niché – Nature was seen as and believed to be a place that was unaltered by humans. While nature is represented in forms, nature is actually a process. We are a part of that process. Descartes suggested and further supported the idea that humans were the pinnacle beings on the planet because of our agency which had nothing to do with our material bodies. It was only our consciousness that mattered. Modern science then developed an empirical methodology studying the world as discrete entities, apart from any process. I’m still not making the connection.

Ryan – You have all the pieces, but you’re caught up in the discourse. What is it that Descartes and modern sciences left out?

Niché – The processes?
Ryan – More or less, but it’s more than that.

Niché – Sentiment, or subjectivity? We can’t quantify emotion and intuition so we leave it out of scientific epistemological methods.

Ryan – Great, but there is one more. What is it that you and I have between us? How is it that you and I are standing here having this conversation?

Niché – So you’re talking about interactions and relationships.

Ryan – Yes! Our overarching discourse and ontology of the natural world is based on the idea of separation. Not only are intuition and sentiment left out of scientific methodology, relationships, apart from study subjects, are isolated and are considered variables. Science tries to reduce variables. Scientists study things as discrete objects or relationships between objects in abstract non-relational environments. Science, it seems, has failed to sufficiently acknowledge the complex web of relationships.

Niché – We have this sensation that I am “in here” and you are “out there” and that we are separate. I see how Descartes’ dualism and modern science support that idea. That it appears I can only experience consciousness within this body; that I must be separate.

Ryan - There doesn’t seem to be a disconnection. Even though we have conceptually disconnected ourselves from natural processes and relationships, there is no way, at least in my opinion, that we can consider that an *actual* disconnection. It seems
we are not adequately acknowledging relationships, that what we have is a conceptual disconnect.

**One B: Descartes’ Dualism**

Before I discuss one of Descartes’ contributions to philosophy, I believe it’s important to pause here. The dialogue served as a means for me to introduce to the reader *my* definition of nature and the overall territory of this first chapter. I want the reader to understand that when I refer to nature in this paper, I am referring to nature as a process represented by forms in flux, flux being constant change—ever-becoming. In future instances where I use another’s definition of *nature* or if I refer to *nature* as a place or as something different than I have just defined, I do so in *italics*. Otherwise the reader can assume that I am referring to nature as a verb. Additionally, I define the environment analogously—a verb. Here, nature and environment are used interchangeably.

I find it ironic that the same philosopher who inspired me as an undergraduate to doubt the epistemology of science and my own deeply held beliefs; the philosopher who inspired me to study philosophy at the graduate level, is the same philosopher who I now present as instrumental in framing the problematic discourse I challenge.

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3 I later make reference to an internal nature/environment. This may seem incongruent with my argument, that there is an internal environment and external environment suggesting a dualism, akin to Descartes’ claim. However, while I suggest a distinction between the two, they are in direct relation with each other—interdependent and inseparable. This distinction is important in regards to how we (humans) experience life. The two environments will be further defined in the Whitehead discussion.
René Descartes (1596-1650), devoted his philosophical work to discover a path to an “unshakable certitude,” a *quid inconcussum* (Hakim 2006, 241). Descartes was known for his mathematical genius and it was here, in the language of math, that he believed he could approach certitude. Descartes hoped to mathematize knowledge, to create a collective language, *universal mathematics* (Hakim 2006). Believing that mathematical deduction was the key to certitude, Descartes devised four methodical rules: “(1) to accept nothing as true, and to use in making a judgment only what is presented to the mind so clearly and distinctly it cannot be doubted; (2) to divide each problem into its essential parts; (3) to begin with the things that are easiest to know and proceed to the more complex; (4) to make sure nothing is omitted” (Hakim 2006, 242-3). The potential for criticism in regards to something clear and distinct in the mind was answered in Descartes’ belief that knowledge was innate.

Through his method of doubt, Descartes offered, “I could feign [doubt] that I had no body, that there was no world, nor any place in which I might be.” However, “I could not feign [doubt] that I was not,” eventually articulating, “I think, therefore I am (cogito ergo sum)” (Hakim 2006, 243, [my insertion]). Descartes did not intend for *cogito ergo sum* to be considered as one ideal. Rather, he proposed that it presented two: the first, the *self as thinking*, and a second, the *self as being* (Hakim 2006). To Descartes, these were two distinct selves which allowed him to surmise three truths: Man, God, and the world.

Man exists, there can be no doubt—I think therefore I am. However, as presented in *Sixth Meditation: On the Existence of Material Things*, Descartes surmised that sensations experienced through the body, as opposed to that which is innate, could be
doubted. Descartes reflected that at one time he saw objects in the distance that appeared
rounded, but as he got closer he could clearly see that they were towers and indeed
square—his senses were untrustworthy (Hakim 2006). This revelation allowed Descartes
to postulate that there was a definitive distinction between the mind and the body.
Knowing that he could not doubt that he was thinking, and that his body was imperfect,
Descartes’ second truth, God, was justified in that a perfect being must be responsible for
our perfect (undeniable) innate thought (Hakim 2006).

As senses could be doubted, it would appear that Descartes would find difficulty
in defending his third truth, the world. In regards to, “ideas received by way of the
senses” (Hakim 2006, 245), Descartes suggested that these sensations come to us
uncontrolled and at times unwanted, therefore, they must exist. However, as they can be
misleading, Descartes concluded that which presents the stimulus to our mind must be of
a different nature, apart—distinct—from the human mind. Therefore, there must be,
according to Descartes, a definitive distinction between the body and the mind (Hakim
2006).

This distinction between the mind and the body is known as the Cartesian
Dualism. Early criticism of ways of knowing were answered by Descartes by his
certainty that knowledge is innate as opposed to a tabula rasa as suggested by a host of
philosophers, for instance, Aristotle and Locke. Seeking certitude, Descartes felt that any
epistemology by means of the senses could be put into question and verified false. To
avoid falsifiable vulnerability, it was crucial that Descartes make an absolute, clear, and
undeniable distinction between the mind and the body. Although intimately related, the
mind and body were two distinct substances. For if the body was imperfect, so could be the mind. It was this perfect mind, innate in its nature, which gave people value—agency. The body, on the other hand, mechanical in nature, “has no need of a soul, it is not enlivened” (Hakim 2006, 246). According to Descartes, all material things function according to laws of physics. It was this idea, that lifeless materials are solely mechanical, which gives humans the ability and the right, because of our innate perfection, to manipulate and control the material world for our own benefit.

One C: Modern Science and Whiteheadian Philosophy

As I present the evolution of modern mathematics and science, the reader will see my critique of the Cartesian Dualism unfold. In the concluding paragraphs of this chapter, I present my overall thoughts on the association between modern science and Descartes’ philosophy and the implications thereof.

The sixteenth century saw the beginning of an ontological shift: a progression of mathematics and the emergence of technological discoveries. These led in part to the disruption in Western Christianity largely defined now as the Protestant Reformation (Whitehead 1925). Prior to this social shift, many philosophers were more concerned with why as opposed to how things happen. If we look back to the evolution of modern ideas we find Greek and Ionian philosophers (Whitehead 1925). With exception to Aristotle, most philosophers had not achieved a scientific mentality (Whitehead 1925). “The Greek genius was philosophical, lucid and logical. The men of this group were asking philosophical questions. What is the substratum of nature? Is it fire, or earth, or
water, or some combination of any two, or all three?” (Whitehead 1925, 7). They were very interested in mathematics and made remarkable discoveries of theorems through the use of rigid deductive reasoning. However, their methods, advanced for the time, combined with an entirely different ontology of the world, impeded their ability to make inductive generalizations from their deductive reasoning (Whitehead 1925). This changed radically with the introduction of modern mathematics.

“The science of Pure Mathematics, in its modern developments, may claim to be the most original creation of the human spirit... The originality in mathematics consists in the fact that in mathematical science connections between things are exhibited which, apart from the agency of human reason, are extremely unobvious. Thus the ideas now in the minds of contemporary mathematicians, lie very remote from any notions which can be immediately derived by perception through the senses; unless indeed it be perception stimulated and guided by antecedent mathematical knowledge” (Whitehead 1925, 19).

What we see developing from modern mathematics is a reliance upon the abstract. In his early mathematical theorems, Galileo reported what was most interesting was not the continued motion of celestial bodies, rather, it was changes in their motion (Whitehead 1925). Disregarding Galileo’s interest in constant change, Isaac Newton formularized Galileo’s findings into his first law of motion: “Every body continues in its state of rest, or of uniform motion in a straight line, except so far as it may be compelled
by force to change that state” (Whitehead 1925, 46). Newton’s law contains within it a fundamental principle characterized by modern science—“the concept of an ideally isolated system” (Whitehead 1925, 46).

Here lies one of Whitehead’s chief critiques of modern mathematics—the primary tool of science; the reliance upon an idealized set of conditions. These conditions, according to Whitehead, make science useful only in the realm of the abstract (Whitehead 1925). For instance, it is universally recognized in mathematics that a group of eighty oranges can be subdivided into two groups of forty. In ideal conditions this will hold true. However, in the event someone miscounted, the division no longer applies. This is an oversimplified but realistic example. If we utilize Newton’s first law of motion, we can calculate the earth’s orbital velocity to be roughly thirty kilometers per second. In an entirely isolated system—a vacuum—mathematicians could, and have, calculated the exact velocity. I don’t believe there is a reputable physicist who would deny the margin of error in regards to the earth’s velocity; they know it’s an estimation. The speed of sound, for example, assuming an air temperature of 59 degrees Fahrenheit, is 761.2 mph. Again, ideal conditions must be met in order for the theorem to hold true. However, as of late, abstractions such as these have become more and more factual and relied upon as mathematics becomes more complex—mathematics builds on previous equations. While this abstraction is of concern to me and to my thesis, I believe the methodology of science is one of our greatest epistemologies. Science is needed and has greatly contributed to society. Science has placed men on the moon and cured diseases. I have a degree in biology. I do, however, fully support Whitehead’s criticism, “Science
repudiates philosophy. *In other words, it has never cared to justify its faith or to explain its meanings; and has remained blandly indifferent to its refutation by Hume*” (Whitehead 1925, 16).

Another repercussion of modern science is the associated isolation of entities outside of their relationships, performed in hopes of developing an understanding of a material’s essential characteristics. The mathematical abstractions previously presented demand that any given object be examined in an ideal controlled setting to reduce error. This *error* that science is trying to reduce *is* the existence of interdependent relationships associated with all matter. Scientists are fervently trying to define entities outside of complex relationships in the hopes of producing predictable, reliable, and expected outcomes. That is *never* the case—“*nothing ever really occurs in exact detail. No two days are identical, no two winters*” (Whitehead 1925, 5). However, most of our postulates defining everything from human physiology to the wing beat pattern of *Drosophila melanogaster* are based on, albeit extensively tested, ideal conditions in controlled settings. These abstract deductive findings are then inductively generalized into a practical system where variable conditions are not controlled. Whitehead refers to this as the Fallacy of Misplaced Concreteness. Abstract findings are not entirely applicable in the practical.

What I find confounding is the compulsion scientists seem to have to eliminate variables in order to confidently present findings. How can science make a claim of certitude from an abstraction; something isolated from all its relationships, its variables? *It doesn’t seem that we can present facts about the world by eliminating facts about the*
world. There are undeniably varying degrees of relatedness with all things. In the process of reducing variables, science and mathematics have individualized nature.

**One D: Defining the Individual**

Intuitively, there seems to be such a thing as an individual, an organism. I do sense that I am discrete. “But individualism does not mean substantial independence” (Whitehead 1925, 70). I return to this idea momentarily. I must first state that I am not suggesting that scientists and philosophers deny the relational characteristic of nature. What I argue here is the scientist’s overzealous attempt to isolate relations and/or to abstract apart from complex relationships. Relationships are so pervasive that science can’t confidently suggest a correct ontology of the world without their removal; relationships skew data as they can’t all be accounted for, or controlled. Science has become so consumed with controlling settings and isolating variables that it further perpetuates the separateness discourse.

But what of this sensation that we all seem to have, of a separate self? I seem to be discrete. I experience the world around me (and in me) by means of sensations, thoughts, and emotions. These all seem to be contained within me. I have the sense that I am me, alone, and separate. This is our internal environment—how we experience life. I would prefer not to enter the argument of the soul/self. It is, however, unavoidable as it seems to be the basis of our current axiology. I present a brief explanation here which will be expanded in the following chapter where I critique current environmental axiology.
At this point in human evolution, and we may never know how, when, why, and where our soul/self comes from. Although I postulate, I don’t make definitive claims as to the origin of the self. Any theory as to the origin of self is as compelling as the next—the atheist, the Christian, the Buddhist, Descartes, Nietzsche, and many others have all proposed an origin, yet, the fact is, there is no fact as to the origin of the self, if it even exists.

I propose that our material body and consciousness are in interdependent relation with each-other just as they are with nature. Descartes obviously argues that the body and thought are separate. “His argument fails, because he abstracts God from the historic universe. Thus the conclusion depends upon meaningless phrases respecting the unknown. We and our relationships are in the universe” (Whitehead 1938, 113). I, my self, may or may not be my body as Descartes suggests. Nonetheless, it is undeniable, as Descartes determined, I am because I think that I am. However, I can only think that I am because I have a body. Here is what we know:

A. The physical body emanates from nature.
B. Consciousness, as we experience it, can’t be experienced without a body

Hence

C. Consciousness, to be experienced, is dependent upon nature.

The self, therefore, can’t be experienced without consciousness, which can’t be experienced without of physical form, which arises of nature. The self—our internal environment, known through senses and thought, is in interdependent relation with the external environment.
Regardless of the origin of consciousness, due to our evolutionary design, we sense the outer environment by way of our inner environment. One might ask how I can make the claim that we are intricately connected to the outer environment.

In regards to spatial forms, Whitehead makes the following argument: “If A and B and C are volumes of space, B has a standpoint from the aspect of A, and so has C, and so has the relationship of B and C. This aspect of B from A is the essence of A. The volumes of space have no independent existence” (1925, 65). Thus, if we divide volume, the material within that volume is equally divided. Therefore, when material is removed from a volume of space, to study it for example, we are not developing an understanding of their essential character. In removing a material/entity from the environment, its essence is lost.

Another relational explanation is that forms are ever-becoming. Physical forms are being constructed and deconstructed continuously—a state of flux comprised of both space and time. There are no fixed objects—there are no nouns, only verbs (Chopra and Tanzi 2015). As Deepak Chopra presents, that within one year our bodies will have replaced ninety eight percent of our cells—our bodies are the external environment (Chopra and Tanzi 2015). As I eat and breathe my body takes in matter from the external environment and is converted into new internal cells. As my cells are broken down, they are emitted in a myriad of ways and are utilized by the outer environment. Forms are constantly exchanging matter.

While an organism such as a human may experience life as an individual through an interior environment of senses, we can see that our existence, our very essence, is
defined by the external environment from which we are inseparable and in which we emanate from. “There is no possibility of a detached, self-contained local existence. The environment enters into the nature of each thing” (Whitehead 1938, 138). Humans internally experience the external environment—our internal environment is the external world.

**One E: Final Meditations**

Descartes surmised there was a distinct separation between material and mental substances. The creation of this dualism is most unfortunate as all matter, biotic and abiotic alike, including the human body, was instantaneously de-valued. This division, according to Hans Jonas, is at the heart of our current environmental crisis (Morris 2013). Additionally, “The effect of this sharp division between nature and life has poisoned all subsequent philosophy” (Whitehead 1938, 150). In regards to Descartes’ four rules it seems that science has adopted the first three and has utterly denied the fourth; “To make sure nothing is omitted” (Hakim 2006, 242-3). In fact, it appears that to utilize the epistemology of science as ontological evidence, Descartes’ fourth rule is entirely contradictory. The thought that this fourth rule is omitted is as disastrous as the de-valuing of nature. Had Descartes’ fourth rule been implemented in the scientific method, I would be looking for a different thesis topic. This is not the case.

Jonas states that, together, the Cartesian Dualism and modern science “restructured the way humans understood the world and their place in it” (Morris 2013, 22). Descartes informed us that there is a distinction between our minds and our bodies
(material in general) which operated according to concrete *natural* laws and was confirmed by science. This bifurcation is the foundation for scientific materialism—the physical realm is the only true reality as the metaphysical world is unquantifiable. Out of this new mechanized understanding of our internal and external environments emerged an associated discourse which defined materials as fixed nouns. The discourse of abstract individuality allows for the manifestation of outlandish ideas that we are disconnected from something that we are inextricably and undeniably a part of—nature. This is the power of discourse: “*discourses have consequences in that they influence our behaviors in the world; that is, they constrain and enable not only expression of ideas but also actions* (McIntyre, Thille, and Rondeau 2009, 83).

The distinction of discrete entities made it easier to determine what substances contained value and what could be used or manipulated into something even more useful. Descartes informed us what was intrinsically valuable; human thought. Socially constructed needs, wants, and desires informed us what was instrumentally valuable. Mathematical and scientific innovations combined with inquisitive people allowed for technological advances which made it possible to extract the *individual objects* we wanted from *nature* with the convenience of narrow vision.
“Let no one say “merely” instrumental value. If instrumentally valuable, then really valuable. It would be a fatal error for ethics to honor only intrinsic value. Everything deserves respect according to its degree and type of value. Confusing instrumental with intrinsic value is unhelpful, but despising instrumental value is perverse” (Ferré 2001, 134)

I strongly agree, yet, concurrently find Frederick Ferré’s quote disheartening. I appreciate Ferré’s challenge to the suggestion that instrumental value is unpalatable which I discuss in detail later in this chapter. Ferré’s quote, however, pains me because it displays how pervasive our current axiological discourse is; a philosophical discourse influenced by the Cartesian Dualism and modern science; a discourse which implies a bifurcation of nature, hence, a bifurcation of value.

It appears that is inescapable to talk about the value of nature without referring to and further using our current axiology, which is rooted in the distinction between instrumental and intrinsic values. This is unfortunate. I am challenged to defend an argument for a unifying value using the same problematic bifurcated language I oppose.

In this chapter I present three examples of our current axiological discourse. I begin with John O’Neill’s review of the three senses of intrinsic value used in environmental ethics. I present his critiques of each then summarize his call for an

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4 I define instrumental value later and provide reasons as to why it is at times considered devaluing in the field of environmental philosophy.
objectivist’s ethic utilizing a strong interpretation of evaluative properties. I then present Eugene Hargrove who advocates for a “weak anthropocentric” environmental ethic.

Known by way of emotive responses independent of instrumental use, Hargrove defends that non-human entities have intrinsic value. The final environmental philosopher I examine is Paul Taylor who advocates for a biocentric or “Life Centered” environmental ethic. While I have the utmost respect for all their contributions to the advancement of environmental ethics, and while their arguments are philosophically superb, I show how their arguments are not representative of an environment in a constant state of flux—ever-becoming. I show how their ethics reflect a bifurcated discourse originating out of a Cartesian Dualism and modern science where complex relational characteristics are not denied, but are purposefully isolated, or unacknowledged. The overall intention of this chapter is to present, expose, and dismantle the problematic bifurcated discourse saturating environmental ethics today; to define my understanding of instrumental and intrinsic valuing; to acknowledge another form of value often left out of environmental ethic arguments; and to reveal an all-encompassing value which is representative of an ever-becoming nature.

Two A: Three Forms of Intrinsic Value – John O’Neill

John O’Neill describes three senses of intrinsic value in regards to environmental ethics. In the first sense, O’Neill suggests that intrinsic value is synonymous with non-instrumental. O’Neill explains that something has intrinsic value if it is an end in itself. That it is good for its own sake and has not the need to be of use in order to be of value.
O’Neill suggests that after infinite regress, there must be some objects that have value beyond their use (O’Neill 2003).

The second sense is explained as, “Intrinsic value is used to refer to the value an object has solely in virtue of its intrinsic properties” (O’Neill 2003, 131). Meaning, it is valuable in its non-relational properties. O’Neill suggests there are two interpretations to non-relational value:

(i) “The non-relational properties of an object are those that persist regardless of the existence or non-existence of other objects (weak interpretation).

(ii) “The non-relational properties are those that can be characterized without reference to other objects (strong interpretation)” (O’Neill 2003, 134).

O’Neill suggests that the idea of non-relational value is nonsense. I concur. He explains that if any property is “irreducibly relational” (O’Neill 2003, 134), then rarity can occur. Rarity, O’Neill explains, can only be characterized in relationship to something else. If there is a rare bird species, for example, it must be defined as rare in relationship to its habitat and/or other bird species. Therefore, the argument commits a fallacy in that if a property can be defined as rare, it is done so in relationship to its environment (O’Neill 2003).

The third sense, according to O’Neill, is an intrinsic value that could be used synonymously with ‘objective value.’ O’Neill interprets this as an object which has value independent of valuers. This may in fact be the case that all beings/objects have value in
and for themselves, without the presence of valuers. The last man argument, O’Neill admits, may in fact defend this premise (O’Neill 2003).

In regards to the different senses, O’Neill mentions that they are often conflated, particularly senses one and three (2003). O’Neill reminds the philosopher that they are indeed distinct. Presenting work from *Nature’s Economy* where Worster suggests that there are many who feel *nature* has intrinsic value, that *nature’s* value does not come from humans and is not just a “storehouse” for human resources (O’Neill 2003), O’Neill suggests there is a danger in using the different intrinsic values interchangeably as each sense has its own meta-ethical consideration. For instance, a subjectivist meta-ethics suggests that humans are the only evaluative source of values, whereas an objectivist meta-ethics suggests that only humans have intrinsic value, hence a world without humans has no value.

Despite this, O’Neill defends an objectivist’s environmental ethic. He posits that for the objectivist, evaluative properties of an object are real properties. There are two interpretations of real properties which are both independent of valuers (the third sense) (O’Neill 2003). The first interpretation, a weak interpretation, suggests that evaluative properties are properties “*that exist in absence of evaluating agents*” (O’Neill 2003, 135). This interpretation utilizes primary and secondary qualities. According to O’Neill, this interpretation and argument fails for many reasons, one being that secondary properties are not real properties of objects and are indeed observer dependent (O’Neill 2003). The second interpretation, strong, suggests that properties “*can be characterized without reference to evaluating agents*” (O’Neill 2003, 135).
Using the strong interpretation, O’Neill makes a convincing argument suggesting that objects can be characterized as being “good for” (O’Neill 2003, 136) something else without reference to evaluative human agents. O’Neill offers an example of a gardener who enjoys growing roses. In trying to protect her roses from pests, the gardener could use a pesticide which is ‘good for’ killing pests. Conversely, a mild winter, as O’Neill explains, is ‘good for’ some pests. A mild winter being good for pests is entirely independent of the gardener. This statement assumes that flourishing is good. The gardener hopes her roses flourish and here we also assume that flourishing for the pest is good—that while insects are harmful to the roses, in regards to their own existence, to have their species flourish, is good. Here, we run into the problem of who is to decide what is good. Presenting his counter argument, O’Neill backpedals to Aristotle’s mediations concerning the “relationship of friendship to human flourishing” (O’Neill 2003, 139).

My aim here was to present a compelling example of an objectivist’s view which presents that humans are not the sole evaluators. However, despite O’Neill’s best intentions, an unsolicited anthropocentric evaluation of what is good emerges. After I present the ethics of Hargrove and Taylor, I further defend how this discourse is saturated with Descartes’ mind and body dualism and modern science.

**Two B: Weak Anthropocentrism – Eugene Hargrove**

Eugene Hargrove advocates for a “*weak anthropocentric*” environmental ethic (Hargrove 1992). Before I present his argument, I feel it’s important to note that
Hargrove believes there to be four standpoints ethicists utilize to defend the environment, “(1) non-anthropocentric instrumental value, (2) anthropocentric instrumental value, (3) non-anthropocentric intrinsic value, and (4) anthropocentric intrinsic value” (Hargrove 1992, 177). While he admits a non-anthropocentric value would be highly beneficial to the field of environmental ethics, Hargrove suggests that bypassing human judgment is improbable and the non-anthropocentric theory will likely never be formulated (Hargrove 1992). I agree.

Hargrove mentions that deforestation around the turn of the century led to conservation strategies by people such as Gifford Pinchot. While it was a wise move, conservation efforts focused primarily on instrumental value (Hargrove 1992). In the mid 1900’s environmentalists started calling for a new system of valuing. Hargrove suggested that environmentalists and philosophers witnessed that the land could produce an emotional response independent of any instrumental use (Hargrove 1992). For example, standing at the entrance to Carlsbad Caverns. Hargrove advises that the cave does not have to do anything, just being there is wondrous. This subjective response informs him that the value comes from the cave and is known anthropocentrically. There is no factual data here informing us that it’s valuable yet we know subjectively that it is valuable (Hargrove 1992). Hargrove refers to this as weak anthropocentric intrinsic value.

Hargrove clarifies that weak anthropocentrism does not suggest instrumental in nature. Rather weak anthropocentrism is the acknowledgment that non-human entities have intrinsic value, aside from any instrumental use—O’Neill’s first sense (Hargrove 1992). Hargrove presents an example of an ornamental knife. The knife, he argues, can
function (demonstrating instrumental value) but it can also be valued intrinsically. Hargrove suggests, “the judgement of the owner and others who take time to consider the matter will likely be that it is too beautiful (or good) to use (assuming that using the knife will mar its beauty)” (Hargrove 1992, 184, author's parenthesis). Hargrove argues that valuing the knife for its beauty does not require any fancy metaphysical tricks or mysticism, “[A]ll that is required is an act of judgement” (Hargrove 1992, 184). If asked why the knife is valuable, the owner will not claim that it is intrinsically valuable, according to Hargrove, the owner will simple say that it is valuable because it is beautiful—aside from any instrumental use (Hargrove 1992). Trying to make the claim that being beautiful is instrumental, a move a non-anthropocentric pragmatist might use, “demeans and trivializes it” (Hargrove 1992, 184). Hargrove demands there be a separation between instrumental and intrinsic values.

“Maintaining the distinction between intrinsic and instrumental value, in contrast, allows us to be certain things aside and exempt them from use. Because instrumentalists’ approach to valuing natural objects is the primary approach in economics, the valuable contribution that can be made by an intrinsic approach has been neglected” (Hargrove 1992, 184).

As I will scrupulously explain shortly, we can see here how Hargrove exhibits a need to categorize. Not only does his writing reflect ideas of a bifurcated nature, Hargrove wants the reader to understand that instrumental value is problematic and can actually lower the value of objects. I disagree. I turn now to Paul Taylor.
Paul Taylor advocates for a “Life-Centered” intrinsic value. Taylor speaks to the importance of developing an understanding that all life is inherently valuable. In the development of Taylor’s biocentric ethic, he methodically expounds his rationale for a biocentric view on nature. Taylor states there are four critical components which support the claim that all life has equal inherent value: That humans are members of the Earth’s community; the world is an organic system; that all life are teleological centers; and finally that humans are not superior to other beings (Taylor 2003).

In Taylor’s life-centered ethic he states the “central role” of the idea that humans are not superior to all other life is “due to its special relationship” (Taylor 2003, 79) with the first three proposals. The argument is first made that humans are members of the Earth’s community. Taylor reminds us that humans evolved over time just as every other species (Taylor 2003). He states that although we do have physical and social differences, it does not negate the fact that we, like all other non-human life, are subject to genetic and natural laws.

Secondly, through an ecological perspective, Taylor demonstrates that the Earth is an organic system. He is quick to point out that everything is interwoven through millennia of evolutionary processes and hence, each individual is dependent on one another for a healthy and functioning system. I agree! If the individuals are unhealthy, so is the system. Taylor is also quick to address that this functioning system is independent of any moral consideration; it is a biological fact (Taylor 2003).
Taylor’s third component, which supports the claim that humans are not superior, suggests all living beings are teleological centers. In order to establish this life-centered view, Taylor invites us to look at the relationships we have personally developed with non-human life and the relationships scientists have developed as a result of studying non-human life. He points out that as one becomes more familiar with their subject, we can indeed begin to imagine what life might be like from their perspective. Taylor is not suggesting that we be able to understand what it is actually like to be a tree, rather to develop the ability to recognize what actions would be beneficial, detrimental, and neutral from its perspective. Taylor confirms that if we can see what is beneficial from another life forms perspective, from an ethical position, it is in fact a teleological center (Taylor 2003, 79).

In consideration of the first three components of the life centered ethic, in Taylor’s opinion, and to “any rational and scientifically informed thinker” (Taylor 2003, 83), we must now accept that there is nothing particularly valuable within the human which would suggest that we are superior to non-human life. The realization that we are moral/rational beings is, in Taylor’s opinion, simply a trait that evolved over time which helped the human animal to adapt to nature just as the tree developed the ability to generate its own food or the cheetah developed running capabilities. According to Taylor, there is absolutely nothing about our traits which we could consider a higher merit (Taylor 2003).

Taylor expands on his argument considering the different qualities of humans. At one point in time some humans were devalued by others. They still are. Many people
have different qualities about them which help/hinder them in adapting to life, both socially and physically. Taylor emphatically states that we do not devalue any human based on any merit system (Taylor 2003). Every person, regardless of age, health, physical, and mental capabilities is considered to have equal inherent worth. In light of the first three components—that humans are members of the Earth, that the Earth is an organic system, and that there are teleological centers of life on this planet other than our own—under this ethic, Taylor demands that we must now offer all life on Earth the same intrinsic value that we’ve bestowed upon ourselves.

Taylor uses the first sense of intrinsic value in that the non-human world is valuable independent of any use, that it is valuable in and for itself. He also seems to insinuate that the earth has value independent of any valuers (the third sense), in that humans need not be present to ascribe value. However, he is suggesting that non-humans do indeed value their environment just as a human would, which suggests that he is not using the third sense. If it weren’t for the fact that Taylor suggests that nature is valuable apart from instrumental use, I would support Taylor’s ethic without reservation. Yet again, we see the ever pervasive discourse that instrumental is degrading and intrinsic value is severed from any use.

Two D: An Environmental Ethic Review

O’Neill advocates for an objectivist’s perspective that nature is valuable independent of valuers—the third sense. I find O’Neill’s ethic very attractive and useful. It suggests that there is a good, a value, that does not have to be defined by humans.
Humans seem to have the need to interject and interpret the good—what is it good for, and, how does it affect us—humanity? This is concerning as we are biased and are at many times misinformed. We can also see the deleterious effects of Descartes’ dualism. Imprinted in our minds, and we can’t seem to avoid it, is the idea that humans are the evaluators of good, because, as Descartes argued, our minds are of the utmost importance. And while I fully support O’Neill’s antagonism towards the second sense, non-relational, he makes little reference to the importance of relational characteristics. Which, I argue, is a result of the individualization of nature, a symptom of Descartes and modern science.

Eugene Hargrove, on the other hand, not only mentions the relational character, he suggests they are instrumental in *nature* which he deplores. I should rephrase, he suggests instrumental is devaluing (Hargrove 1992). To avoid all instrumentality in order to define intrinsic value is to avoid all relational character. And while Hargrove argues that instrumentality in fact devalues something, I maintain instrumentality makes it even more valuable. While it may be that after infinite regress something like a cave has value in and for itself, ignoring and/or denying all the instrumental relationships does not strengthen the argument that something has intrinsic value, rather, it reduces it to a mere abstract as we ignore all the absolutely wonderful things a cave does. A cave, after all, is simply a hole in the ground. However, when one considers everything that a cave does in addition to just sitting there being appreciated because one finds it aesthetically pleasing, we find it even more valuable. Caves provide homes to bats and bears, they function as a system for water movement, and many are archives of ancient human culture. Caves
additionally provided homes and shelter to people. To ignore all its instrumentality, hence relationships, takes away from a cave’s value. An argument he suggests decreases its value.

While I maintain a righteous attitude towards Hargrove’s distaste for instrumentality, I fully support his argument that we can know that something is valuable by means of emotional response. When one feels that something is valuable, it is “[N]o further explanation is needed” (Hargrove 1992, 184). Nevertheless, I feel that what he states his emotion is depicting, an object apart from any instrumental use, is misplaced. Something is not valuable apart from its instrumentality, I argue it is valuable because of it. This is the pragmatist argument Hargrove finds appalling. I expand soon.

I find Paul Taylor’s ethic most convincing. I agree, there is nothing special about the human. We have different characteristics. As I presented in the first chapter, the human is just as much as a part of the interconnected web of nature as anything else. Everything around us is the result of a fourteen billion year process. However, akin to most environmental philosophers, Taylor’s ethic reflects the same bifurcated discourse that affects Hargrove and O’Neill. Taylor maintains that something does not have to do anything to be valuable. And while they may all be right, instrumentality is not degrading, in fact, it is essential, inescapable, and should therefore be honored in the highest regard. It is nature’s instrumentality; its relational properties; its ever changing

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5 I expand on the importance of emotional responses in forthcoming paragraphs. The generation of emotions, I agree with Hargrove, do inform us of value.
functionality that defines nature’s essence. Instrumentality, as Ferré suggests, should not be discarded.

**Two E: Instrumental, Intrinsic, and Value: Cracking the Dictionary**

I had a friend once tell me that if I thought I understood a word to look it up in the dictionary anyway. And while I understand philosophers may have different interpretations, I feel it’s important to understand how others outside of philosophy interpret the meanings of words. Furthermore, if environmental ethicists are hoping to collaborate with other agencies and apply environmental ethics to contemporary environmental problems, it’s critical for us to communicate ideas with the understanding that there may be different interpretations of terminology.

The word *intrinsic* is an adjective and is defined as; *belonging to a thing by its very nature* (Merriam-Webster). To me this suggests that intrinsic is an internal quality and/or characteristic. I feel as though the definition provided succinctly and sufficiently defines intrinsic. The word *instrument* has multiple meanings. I forgo the definitions that refer to musical instruments and legal documents. An instrument, according to Merriam-Webster, is a tool, implement, or a means by which something is accomplished. Instrumental then is “*serving as a means; helpful*” (Merriam-Webster). For example, a hammer is an instrument that helps one drive a nail into a board; a hammer is instrumental in driving nails.

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6 I build on the importance of an internalized intrinsic value later in the chapter.
7 Momentarily I offer my definition of instrument.
Value, additionally has multiple definitions in both noun and verb forms. Noun\textsubscript{1} as I will henceforth refer to it as, means relative worth, merit, or importance. For example, the value of a college education. Noun\textsubscript{2} refers to a “person's principles or standards of behavior; one's judgment of what is important in life.” Verb\textsubscript{1} means to “estimate the monetary worth of (something).” Verb\textsubscript{2} is to regard or esteem highly. For example, she values her relationship with him (Merriam-Webster).

In considering value noun\textsubscript{1}, one can say that a college education, an example given by Merriam-Webster, is valuable in and for itself. This definition suggests that something has an internal (intrinsic) value. This seems to be the interpretation Hargrove champions in regards to a cave.

If we turn to value noun\textsubscript{2}, we see that this value is within us; what we value and cherish. This form defines what standards, principles, and behaviors a person holds dear to their heart and implementing these values creates good character. It must be stated that while these characteristics are indeed a noun, in order for the individual to be in good character they must act within the boundaries of their internally held values. If they fail to act in such a way that fulfils what they hold valuable, it can be said that they act in bad character. Or at least acting in contradiction with what they consider to be the highest guidance of their lives. I expand on noun\textsubscript{2} momentarily.

In examining value verb\textsubscript{1}, we can see that this applies to an economic paradigm. This interpretation is what Hargrove warns of—something that is used to create monetary value,
“…the reduction of intrinsic value to instrumental terms demeans and trivializes it, giving a counterintuitive advantage to (instrumental) resource exploitation by turning nature preservation into a peculiar, and largely indefensible, special case of resource exploitation and consumption” (Hargrove 1992, 185).

Just as Hargrove warns, it’s crucial that an ethicist understand how an economist, for example, may interpret instrumental—solely as a means to an end.

Let’s turn to value verb2. To say that one values something suggests that the value comes from within her to something outside of her—an application of noun2, for example. Using the dictionary example, that a girl values her boyfriend, we see that this verb2 form must be applied to something. The fact that it is a verb suggests action. Interjecting some philosophical language, I suggest it makes the girl value-able; she is able to value. For example, Hargrove is able to value the cave.

I investigated the meanings in Merriam-Webster to satisfy my own curiosity and to see what assistance it offered in presenting my definition of instrumental value. It was of no assistance in helping me to define instrumental value. Merriam-Webster was, however, instrumental in reminding me of a form of value, noun2, which otherwise I would not have considered.
Two F: Defining Instruments

I define instrument(al) broadly—something necessary for an action to take place. Let’s begin with the simplest of examples. A hammer, for instance, is an instrument that can be used to drive a nail. It can also be used for many other things: a weapon, a decoration, if made out of plastic, it can be an instrument for building parent-child relations. A hammer is an inanimate object and is essentially an extension of the hand—the hammer performs a function. And while I demonstrated that a hammer can in fact, like Hargrove’s knife, signify something “more valuable” than what its intended use is, a hammer is really just a hammer. Most would likely suggest that a hammer deserves no moral consideration. It’s replaceable and seemingly insignificant. Ferré might suggest, however, that to a carpenter, a hammer is “really valuable” (Ferré 2001).

I could list many things like hammers; combs, chairs, and scissors which are all essentially “useful” things and all can all perform a myriad of functions. Let’s turn to life forms. A cow, for example, can be considered an instrument for many things. Cattle, like many ungulates, break up soil as they graze, promoting the absorption of rain water. They additionally fertilize soils. Their stool provides habitat for insects which birds feed on. Some of these examples, like O’Neill presented, are arguably outside of human interest. Cows also provide food for humans. A cow is not an inanimate object and depending on one’s worldview, may or may not deserve moral consideration.

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8 This is not my argument. I am not suggesting that Hargrove is correct in that something is more valuable because it has value aside from its use. At this point I’m still trying to show the distinction between the two values; instrumental and intrinsic.
Humans are also quite useful. Here we start to see concerns in regards to treating a human “merely” as an instrument. I’ll come back to this point. A mother is an instrument. Her breast milk sustains her newborn’s life. Both parents, assuming of course they have an interest in the child’s welfare, are instrumental in raising their child. The formation of relations between parents and children are instrumental. For example, loving a child is instrumental not only for a child’s emotional well-being, but also for physical development. Same sex interactions are instrumental in forming gender roles. While in school, relations with other children are instrumental for developing social roles. Religions are instrumental in forming worldviews, as are educational systems. It seems that all human interactions are instrumental in some fashion or another—each relationship performs some sort of function.

Trees are instrumental in providing homes to hundreds of species (Wilson 2013). Trees are also instrumental in converting carbon dioxide into oxygen. Oxygen is instrumental for most life (there are anaerobic life forms). And while oxygen is inanimate and likely deserves no moral consideration, there seems to be something essential about it—something worth protecting.

An instrument, as I define it, is something fundamental for an action to take place—an instrument performs a function. We can see the importance of instrumentality from the smallest level; the repositioning of an electron on a cycloalkane is instrumental for the attachment of a bromine molecule, to the grandest of scales; the rotation of the

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9 There is much discussion inside and outside of philosophy regarding the benefit and detriment of gender roles. I simply present them here as an example.
10 I expand in detail later in this chapter. This concept is of utmost importance when considering normative guidance.
earth is instrumental in turning day into night. The birth of a child is instrumental in bringing joy, and grief, into the lives of a parents just as oxygen is instrumental in sustaining that child’s life. I maintain that all relationships are instrumental in nature. Every relationship results in some form of interaction which is an instrument for something to happen. These may be infinitesimal in magnitude, or galactic.

Many of these definitions suggest beneficial outcomes. There are, however, instruments that seem less beneficial (from a human perspective). A tornado is an instrument of destruction. So is a bomb. Pine beetles are instruments of destruction. Although, from their perspective, they are flourishing. As mentioned earlier, a hammer can be used to cause harm. Just about any physical object can be used to cause harm. Insensitive words can additionally cause harm. So we see that instruments, depending on one’s perspective, can be beneficial, or harmful.

Humans, unlike hammers, we are told, deserve moral consideration. Hence, Kant’s imperative that one should never be treated solely as a means. This seems a valid concern. As Descartes suggested and as was later confirmed by Kant, humans are “agents” and deserve moral consideration. It’s pretty much universally recognized, by humans, that humans have intrinsic value. Many philosophers have been trying to extend this intrinsic value to non-human animals and the environment. A human, according to most, is deserving of moral considerability whereas a hammer is not. It seems alright to treat a hammer merely as an instrument, but not a human.

At what point then do we consider that a human is being treated solely as a means, an instrument? I suggest it’s when a person no longer has a choice, her free-will
has been denied and she is being told what to do regardless of her wants and desires. A hammer, alternatively, has no free-will, nor wants or desires. Yet, while I know a hammer is replaceable (unless of course there is some sentimental attachment—my grandfather used it to build the house I reside in, for instance), there is unease that arises accompanying the consideration of throwing away a perfectly good hammer. It seems a waste. I feel like even Hargrove would suggest that the emergence of that feeling needs no further explanation. This is a similar feeling, albeit comparatively miniscule in magnitude, when I contemplate polluting the oxygen I breathe. Neither the hammer nor oxygen have any moral considerability. Yet, there seems to be something wrong with the idea of being wasteful and polluting, even if the materials are inanimate.

With an understanding that all relationships result in some fashion of instrumentality, that an instrument’s functionality can be beneficial or harmful, knowing that an emotive response suggesting a seemingly random instrument should not be wasted, polluted, or needlessly destroyed, I return to value noun2.

**Two G: Value Noun2, It is an Inside Job.**

Value noun2 suggests that humans have internal values. That we hold socially agreed upon11 values which guide our actions. Many of these values are formulated into laws, some guide moral character, and some are fashioned rationally—there is overlap.

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11 Many suggest different etiologies of these internal values and this has been debated for 2,500 years. I maintain that they are socially agreed upon allowing for cultural variability and feel it is fruitless to enter the debate on whether or not values are innate or learned.
Here are a few examples of these values: Honesty, worth, service, compassion, prudence, restraint, empathy, integrity, accountability, equality and responsibility. I could easily add to the list. Values such as these, at least in our culture, are used to define good character and are typically associated with some form of emotional response—unease if violated, peace and serenity if performed—pleasure and pain if we were to ask Aristotle. These internal values are often a measure of one’s contribution to their community and are equally used for one to assess themselves—their own actions. If for example, one wishes to have peace of mind, honesty would be the correct action; a hypothetical imperative. Being honest would require that one not lie, cheat, or steal. It would also suggest that one should remain true to personal and societal values; destruction of personal or public property, for example, would not only be disrespectful, it would be dishonest. Depending on the situation, these values could have moral considerations.

I believe we can agree that hammer abuse would neither be legally nor morally binding. Murder, on the other hand, seems to incorporate legality, morality, and rationality. But what of hammer abuse? Although one may frown at the behavior, few would condemn a man for angrily throwing a hammer on the ground in the event of a bent nail. The hammer has no wants or desires, it’s inanimate. Yet, we feel trepidation at the thought of throwing away a perfectly good hammer, even a slightly used one. It appears, nonetheless, that we live in a disposable society, that when something is worn out, simply replace it. Embedded in western culture is the idea of replace-ability. Diverting from the days of the Great Depression where people frugally patched holey

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12 When applying this principle, replace-ability, to people we can easily see how one could be treated solely as a means.
jeans and sewed buttons back on shirts, many in western society have adopted a disposable mentality—simply throw it away and buy a new one, whatever it may be. This disposable mentality is a cause for environmental exploitation and additionally confirms Hargrove’s economic concerns. Interestingly, many state that to unnecessarily create waste is incongruent with their values. There seems to be, however, a tremendous amount of waste happening. There are many examples of people acting contrary to both personal and societal values.

Maintaining good health is deemed valuable in our culture. Nevertheless, all one needs to do is look at the prevalence of obesity, diabetes, and other food related illnesses to see that people act contrary to our value of good health in making their meal plans. I dedicate the final chapter to food. I also suggest that protecting and conserving that which sustains us, oxygen for example, would additionally be a universal value. It would seem contrary to our personal and societal good to pollute and destroy something that our lives are entirely dependent upon. Yet, globally, humanity manages to pump nearly thirty eight billion tons of carbon into our atmosphere yearly (Klein 2014). Our society, I argue, would likely universally agree that human exploitation is immoral. Yet, corporations are following each other to third world nations where people, including children, are forced to work in atrocious working conditions making only cents per day or as slaves. Despite mass media coverage, first worlder’s buy the cheaply produced goods, ostensibly without a second thought. We claim to live by our values yet many ignore or

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13 In the fifth chapter I discuss our disenfranchisement from food. Many of the food options people have are due to a globalized industrialized food market forcing people to eat contrary to their values. Many do, however, make the choice to eat nutritionally deficient foods.
rationalize every purchase, turn of the car key, and filling of their super-sized personal trash bins. What is happening!

Are we teaching people to not take responsibility for their actions? I suggest we are. Our neoliberal values propagating infinite growth demand that we do. If we hope to purchase cheaply produced goods and/or attain material and financial wealth, given the earth’s finite resources, one must be able to look beyond human and environmental exploitation.

It appears that our sense of individualism necessitates the need to act contrary to what traits we hold valuable. Living in individual households, eating individual meals, driving our individual cars to our individual offices where we use our individual staplers, we find that we need more resources from the environment to support this westernized individual way of life. Because the earth can’t infinitely support this lifestyle, we have developed a society where it is not only acceptable, it is encouraged to not take responsibility for our actions—to be dishonest. If pulled over for speeding, it’s common practice to deny it. If charged in a larger crime, the first conversation with a defense attorney will result in a statement that has something to do with never admitting fault! When buying shoes assembled by children, one might say, ‘what choice do I have? It’s not my fault they work there. I can’t afford anything else.’ Is this abstention from guilt not what our current climate change discourse is telling us? That no one person is at fault? I’ve heard many people tell me that their contribution is so small, “[W]hy should I change?” These value incongruences seem to be coping strategies to maintain an unsustainable way of life. It is as if we have stopped examining our actions and holding
ourselves accountable to our very own personal values in pursuit of a neoliberal agenda. Or worse, [re]creating values which support environmental exploitation and human oppression.

While ethicists have been trying to extend humanity’s intrinsic value to the non-human environment, many have neglected our internal personal values and their contribution to environmental degradation. We can claim a cave is valuable; we can demonstrate that an inanimate compound is vital to our survival; we can announce that children are forced to work in immoral conditions, and yet, members of our society can act contrary to socially held values and will destroy the very environment which sustains them. We ignore and/or deny the pleas of human equality in our daily choices. This is a result of an objective scientific epistemology and our sense of individualism made worse by a discourse which places little emphasis on an interconnected and ever-changing world—many are not listening to their emotions and don’t see the relational character of the world. Emphasis has been placed on objective facts while simultaneously marginalizing subjective responses.

This suggests to me that environmental degradation is not only about finding external value in the world, it’s equally about acting with integrity in regards to our own personal and societal values. The external environment, after all, is a reflection of our internal environment. We’ve been focusing on the external environment, trying to change it, it’s time to look inward.
Two H: Final Meditation

Introducing internal values at this point in the thesis may seem nonsensical. The argument was complex enough challenging a discourse driven by the Cartesian Dualism and advancements in modern science which categorized nature—the substance of the first chapter. In this chapter I presented and challenge long standing philosophical arguments that are desperately trying to convince a society that nature does indeed carry with it intrinsic value apart from any instrumental use. A value until recently reserved only for humans. It may seem that I am suggesting that there is only instrumental value in nature. At this point that could be construed as accurate. Yet before I can argue the significance of that statement I must address the need for the introduction of the personal values; value noun.1

In the first chapter I stressed the importance of making a distinction between external and internal environments. I argued that nature is an ever-changing process—a flux. Out of this flux emerge impermanent, ever-changing forms. To be experienced, consciousness is dependent on the forms, as is the self14. The individual, as I defined, experiences their form by way of senses in their organismal body; I can see, touch, taste, smell, and hear. An individual in the form of a human can’t experience the world as a beetle, let alone as another human. As with other species, humans gather into communities and form societies, languages and customs. Out of these social interactions humans develop agreed upon social norms defining good and bad behavior. As I

14 A Reminder. From an experiential perspective. I make no claims as to the origin of the self, only that it requires a physical form to be experienced.
mentioned earlier, I won’t enter the debate of whether or not values are innate or learned. It is a futile argument in my opinion. We can agree, however, that we do have values. This internal value, I argue, is our intrinsic value. They apply to our thoughts and behavior. Our intrinsic values are a means for us to define ourselves as humans and dictate right and wrong behavior. If the philosopher criticizes that I have once again made humans the keepers of intrinsic value, I respond by suggesting that they have missed the big picture. If value arises with the forms, then all forms, biotic and abiotic alike, have this same intrinsic value. We [humans] conceptualize it anthropocentrically. Each species, it seems, has some system by which they know the difference between right and wrong behavior within their society. When a mountain lion cub reaches a certain age, for example, it must leave the parental habitat or be killed. Fish have mating rituals. Ants have caste systems. Plants compete for resources. Other species may or may not conceptualize their intrinsic values in the same fashion as humans. A lioness may or may not value a shade tree on a blistering summer day in the same manner a human does, regardless, she utilizes it. She may allow another lioness to join her, she may not. How she comes to determine that is known only by her and her species. Other species have societal customs, this we can agree on. How their norms are fashioned and are conceptualized, will, at least for now, remain a mystery.

I return to the human. Intrinsic values define what we see as valuable outside of our experiential human form, in the external environment. This too, I argue, is influenced socially. Hargrove and I both sense that caves are valuable—it’s feels as though they should be preserved. Someone else may not. These intrinsic values are therefore
situational in *nature* and are influenced by worldviews. If the world is seen as individual and separate, that is how the world will be valued. This *is* currently how many value the world. Instrumental value, as Hargrove defines and warns, is dangerous because many see the world as mechanized and separate, therefore, commodifiable.

The purpose of the first chapter was to dissolve the dichotomy between the body and the mind. The experience of consciousness is dependent on the body which is dependent on nature. There is no separation except that which we have constructed in the mind as a result of the Cartesian Dualism and modern science. Now here it gets tricky. I just made the argument for an internal—*intrinsic*—value. A value that we sense (just like sight and sound) as an individual and it is influenced by how we see and interpret the world—our worldview. Just a few moments ago in the section defining instrumental value, however, I suggested that value is misplaced, that the value lies in the process—an overarching instrumental value. However, if there is no separation between nature, the body, and the mind, there can only be one type of value. It seems I have suggested there are two types of values; an instrumental, representing the process, and an intrinsic, experienced by the individual regardless of species. Now let me rephrase the first sentence of this paragraph. Out of the process of nature emerge forms, consciousness arises with the forms, values are associated with consciousness just as any other sense. Like hearing and sight, value is sensed with our body by way of emotion; as Hargrove argued, we *feel* that something is valuable. Just as a child is told what color red is or what a rose smells like, our society interprets, based on our worldview, what the value sensation represents. Value, I propose, arises from the process into the forms and is
defined, at least in part, by a worldview. Value arises from the process and is experienced intrinsically, just as our senses are. We sense nature as valuable because we are nature, we are the process. Value is a part of the interdependent and interconnected process.

This idea is not new. Many Indigenous cultures never saw a distinction between themselves and the world. The relatives of the Indigenous were trees, rocks, birds, and bugs and everything else (Cordova 2007; Suzuki 1997). They treated the world as kin. And while I would love to enter the world of the Indigenous, we must move forward in this thesis.

Summarizing, emerging from the Cartesian Dualism and modern science was a distinction between the mind and the body. The world now experienced as categorized; discrete objects in abstract bubbles. From that categorization emerged a dualistic discourse and axiology—a mechanized nature valued instrumentally and an intrinsically valuable human. I argue that our discourse must be redirected to focus on relationships. While we struggle to develop a new discourse incorporating relationships into our dialogue, we must address our intrinsic values as they have been influenced by the idea of an individual, separate and discrete. We must learn to respect that which we are connected to, be held accountable for our actions—encourage integrity. It’s time to start caring.

“Our enjoyment of actuality is a realization of worth, good or bad. It is a value experience. Its basic expression is-Have a care, here is something that matters! Yes-that is the best phrase-the primary glimmering of consciousness reveals, something that matters” (Whitehead 1938, 116).
“Ethics tells us how to live, yet we are not the same as we once were, and neither is the world in which we live. The need for a new ontology is based on the fact that the scope of human action has changed, and a new understanding of the human is needed to inform an ethics that has relevance in a changed and changing world” Hans Jonas (Morris 2013, 18)

Any new environmental ethic, in my opinion, must include solutions to moral dilemmas as well as everyday disturbances. Eliminating human oppression seemingly requires moral consideration. Throwing an empty Big Mac container from a car window, while disrespectful, does not. Alternatively, sometimes people make ostensibly mundane choices when the consequences thereof are quite concerning. The food we purchase, for instance, may not necessitate moral consideration. Yet, if food purchased contributes to human oppression then a seemingly simple choice between which tomato to buy is no longer a simple decision. Many of the daily choices we make may have global exploitive and oppressive impacts. We need a new ontology so that people can see these impacts and make informed choices.

Without developing a new and more realistic understanding of the relatedness and instrumental effects of a world in flux, ethics will continue attempt to provide normative guidance to that which is inevitable. Jonas proposes that, “[E]thics lags behind action and
consists of weak attempts to circumscribe the potentially negative consequences of actions already set in motion” (Morris 2013, 15). Living in western society, I can’t go to the store and buy food without contributing to environmental exploitation and human oppression. Oppression and exploitation are embedded in our global food market.

Making normative claims in a world where one is forced to make immoral choices in order to flourish does not necessitate the need for a new ethic, it dictates the need for a new vision in which an ethic can emerge.

As I presented in the previous chapter, contemporary environmental ethics appears to have been heavily influenced by a western vernacular which implies human superiority, individualism, and a bifurcated nature. Most contemporary arguments are based on trying to extend a human intrinsic value to an instrumental mechanized nature. I showed how this is problematic and presented an argument that suggests humans don’t need to extend intrinsic value to anything non-human; value, like senses, arise with form.

We need a new vision which will produce a new language in which a new ethic can emerge. Nevertheless, this transformation will not happen instantaneously. Therefore, an interim ethic is needed to lessen the disharmonious human impact on each other and the environment in which we exist. In this chapter I explore one classic moral theory, Nichomachean Virtue Ethics (NE) and a contemporary ethics of care with the intent of gleaning fundamental characteristics for an emerging environmental ethic.

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15 It pains me that I have to write both environmental exploitation and human oppression. If I just write environmental injustices I’m afraid the reader won’t see all the implication. A result of a bifurcated discourse.

16 This topic is greatly expanded in chapter five.
I first present a succinct overview of Nichomachean Virtue Ethics (NE)\textsuperscript{17} and assess its potential contribution to environmental ethics and offer a brief critique of its usefulness and difficulties associated with environmental ethics. I then present the work of psychologist and feminist Carol Gilligan who contested the moral development framework championed by her mentor, Lawrence Kohlberg. Disputing a moral framework where justice is defined by an overarching impartiality, Gilligan’s work introduced the need to consider context and a dependence upon relationships. I follow the work of Gilligan with two philosophers who defend the ethics of care, Nell Noddings and Virginia Held. I offer to the reader how the perspective of the woman in moral philosophy is contrastingly different from that of a man. In conclusion, I present the gleaned characteristics from ethics of care and NE and illustrate how they are useful as a framework for an emerging ethic which I present in chapter four.

Three A: Virtue Ethics

Aristotelian NE is a teleological philosophy founded on virtuous action that will ultimately lead a subject to the greatest good, eudaimonia (Irwin 1999, NE 1095a)—translated as a good human life, a fulfilled life. In order for one to achieve eudaimonia they must voluntarily act and think in a virtuous manner. Aristotle argued that virtue is a state of being as opposed to a feeling or a capacity. For one is not praised for being angry, “\textit{but only the person who is angry in a particular way}” (Irwin 1999, NE 1106a, 5).

\textsuperscript{17}I considered not presenting NE as it is highly problematic for environmental ethics. However, because many claim that care is “virtue like” I wanted to explore the idea of virtuous care. I feel as though, properly presented, care can be improved on by incorporating virtuous character.
Additionally, one is not praised for having the capacity of experiencing an emotion (Irwin 1999, NE 1106a, 10). Therefore, Aristotle proclaimed, that virtue must be a state. Virtuous states, however, are not fixed. Rather, virtuous states fall on a continuum.

Virtuous action lies between a virtue and a vice. For example, excessive courage would lead to rash behavior, whereas one who is deficient in courage would be considered cowardly (Irwin 1999, NE 1104a, 5-25). Therefore, Aristotle argued that virtuous action would be an intermediate between the virtue and vice, and would vary from individual to individual and from circumstance to circumstance. This median is referred to as, The Doctrine of the Mean (Irwin 1999). The eventual reward for acting in a virtuous manner is eudaimonia. Conversely, the consequence of acting in a non-virtuous manner is pain (NE 1104b, 5).

Pleasure and pain, according to Aristotle, are fundamental guides to right action (Irwin 1999, NE 1104b, 5). “For pleasure causes us to do base actions, and pain causes us to abstain from fine ones” (Irwin 1999, NE 1104b 10). Additionally, proper upbringing is vital. One must be taught by virtuous teachers. Let’s examine the virtue of courage for an example. If one were to enjoy and gain pleasure from running in to a burning building just for the sake of doing it, Aristotle would likely consider this rash behavior. Alternatively, if one were to avoid fire in all situations, even if her family were singing and roasting marshmallows around a campfire, Aristotle would likely consider her cowardly. However, the firefighter who has appropriate fear, yet proceeds confidently and cautiously in a situation where a non-firefighter would find it terrifying and painful, performs her job well, and either enjoys it, or at least does not find it painful, Aristotle
would call this person courageous, hence, virtuous. On the other hand, if a firefighter were to find the situation as painful as a non-firefighter, she would be considered cowardly (Irwin 1999, NE 1104b, 5).

Virtue, according to Aristotle, is not inherent. Intellectual virtue is learned and virtue of character comes from habit (Irwin 1999, NE 1103a, 15-30). Returning to the firefighter example, a new recruit will not have the same knowledge nor experience as her captain. The captain has likely had years of experience establishing intellectual and character virtues. We would not expect a new recruit to exhibit the same virtuous character as the captain. The new recruit would gain intellectual and character virtue by reading similar books and articles and by making good and bad decisions at fire scenes, and, seeking the opinion of her captain. All character virtue is learned from experience and defined by a prudent moral exemplar (Irwin 1999, NE 1107a). The pleasure and pain she gains from her work is dependent upon the intellectual knowledge gained from her captain and from fire scene experiences. If the captain has been a prudent exemplar, the recruit will, over time, be able to experience the greatest good. If, however, the captain did not have the knowledge needed to be a good example, according to Aristotle, the pleasure and pain experienced by the new recruit would also be skewed.

Three B: A Virtuous Critique

I appreciate the idea of a virtuous person—one’s character is such that allows them to experience eudaimonia. I feel as though many criticize NE as the emphasis is placed on a virtuous person and not actions. This is a valid concern. There needs to be
normative moral guidance referencing the intention of their action. If a person’s ultimate
desire is to experience eudaimonia and they act only in such a way that rewards them
with eudaimonia, I would suggest that this is selfish behavior and not virtuous—acting
“good” only because they want the reward. Alternatively, I would consider a person
virtuous if their intention is to help others and is consequently is rewarded with
eudaimonia.\textsuperscript{18}

In regards to applying NE to the environment, I argue there are two conditions
insufficiently met; the need for moral exemplars and proper upbringing. There are a
minority of moral exemplars who could act as normative guides as defenders of the
environment. In this minority, NE is a practical ethic for environmental work. However,
considering neoliberalism, there are conflicting worldviews—one that suggests
fulfillment is achieved through environmental protection and restoration, and the other
that suggests fulfillment is gained through subduing the land and gaining material and
financial wealth. An environmental moral exemplar, I argue, would be overshadowed by
boisterous and convincing neoliberal exemplars offering instant gratification of materials
and finance. This scenario is happening now. The current worldview is such that it
endorses a neoliberal agenda. Until the path of acquiring fulfillment is redefined through
a new vision, many will look to the neoliberal exemplar.

The neoliberal would be doing right, virtuously, by supporting the current western
capitalist system. Technological advances allow this neoliberal type to be even more
virtuous. Only one hundred years ago, standing on springboards, lumberjacks had to

\textsuperscript{18} I support this interpretation of virtuous character and use it henceforth.
hand-cut trees using pull saws. Fifty years ago chain saws were acquired. Today, one
behind the actuators of a D9 tractor with an attached “Tree Stripper” can fell a 70 ft. fir
tree, strip it of its limbs, cut in into 20 foot lengths, and stack it—in under a minute.
Moreover, children and adults are inundated by media which present a myriad of
pathways to eudaimonia; embark on a two week cruise through the Alaskan channels,
purchase a new car, or a video game—be fulfilled now is the message. An exemplar who
advocates for not polluting water or abstaining from buying goods produced in sweat
shops does not offer fulfillment to people who have been conditioned by a globalized
capitalist regime to accumulate goods and monetary wealth. The need for a different path
to eudaimonia is paramount. As long as people are conditioned to accumulate and don’t
recognize the effects of their actions, there is little hope of an environmental moral
exemplar being influential for the majority.

In regards to proper upbringing, reinforced lessons of accumulating material
wealth are in contrast to environmental protection advocates. Habitual generational
Teaching of accumulating and hoarding ideals spawns exemplars who are misinformed
about what I argue generates fulfillment. People are being taught to be imprudent and
reckless towards the environment. I should restate that. People are not being taught to
recklessly destroy nature for material wealth, they are being taught that material wealth
equals fulfillment and are not taught of material wealth’s externalizations—people are
misinformed.

Therefore, I argue, that the conditions necessary—the need for appropriate
upbringing (Irwin 1999, 1104b, 10) and the need for prudent moral exemplars (Irwin
1999, 1107a)—do not carry an overarching presence in the populace for one to act virtuously towards the environment. In order for NE to be applied practically as an environmental ethic, the majority of the people would have to know why they should act virtuously towards the environment, must decide for themselves to act, and, “must do so from a firm and unchanging state” (Irwin 1999, 1105a, 30). Given the state of environmental awareness, lack of proper upbringing, and prudent virtuous exemplars, NE is insufficient as a normative guide to the environment. We can, however, hold on to the idea of virtuous action. I turn now to the ethics of care.

**Three C: Ethics of Care**

I am interested in ethics of care for a couple reasons. First, ethics of care challenges classic moral theory. Ethics of care invites ethicists to reconsider their conception of morality. Its introduction into contemporary moral theory brought with it a worldview of the marginalized. Ethics of care is about a new point of view; a new vision. Ethics of care additionally embodies themes which I believe are missing from environmental ethics; the emphasis on care, relationships, and responsibility. It exemplifies the wisdom of our interdependent need for one-another. That a human can flourish only because of intricate dependent relationships. That no individual is entirely self-sufficient. And finally, as a former health care provider and patient, I have experienced first-hand the importance of caregiving and care-receiving.
Three C one: Carol Gilligan

Lawrence Kohlberg formulated a moral developmental scheme in which Carol Gilligan later determined that women did not typically attain the same level of moral development as a man (Gilligan 1977). The first stage in Kohlberg’s theory on moral development is that of blind egoism; the individual acts solely out of self-interest. The second stage illustrates instrumental egoism where an individual can see social norms and is able to differentiate between right and wrong. The third stage involves a social relationship perspective. In this stage the individual can recognize good and bad intention. The fourth stage requires that one be able to recognize abstract normative guidance. Stage five is based on contractual agreements; the individual should be able to recognize how contracts can be beneficial to two or more parties. The sixth and final stage suggests that one who can recognize a mutual respect as a universal principle is considered as fully morally developed (Kohlberg 1973).

In light of Kohlberg’s findings, Gilligan suggests that, “developmental theory has not given adequate expression to the concerns and experience of women” (1977, 481). Moral developmental theory has largely been characterized from the male perspective and is laden with masculinity (Gilligan 1977). Gilligan suggests that perspectives which are masculine in nature favor individual separateness as opposed to interdependent relational connections. Gilligan laments that the woman’s bias towards relational thinking has been largely ignored (Gilligan 1977). The “feminine voice” (1977, 481), according to Gilligan, must be considered in moral development.
Gilligan explains that her predecessor, Kohlberg, essentially developed his criteria from the work of Kant who formulated his moral theory on the basis of universal rationality (Gilligan 1977). Therefore, it was of no surprise to Gilligan that women typically did not score much higher than the third level as the top three stages focus primarily on that which a “rational human” would do in abstract situations (Gilligan 1977). Women, alternatively, identify right and wrong behavior not solely rationally, but additionally consider the feelings of all involved and situational context (Gilligan 1977). Blindly stating that an action be considered right or wrong for any given abstract situation, which stage four implies, is therefore, according to Gilligan, difficult for women. Feelings such as tact, gentleness, care, reciprocity, and the desire that no-one be hurt are held in high regard by women whereas these same feelings “mark them as deficient in moral development” under Kohlberg’s theory (Gilligan 1977, 484). Subjective attributes prevent many females from reaching the highest stages of morality as determined by Kohlberg.

Kohlberg defended criticisms that women can’t reach the same moral development by reverting to the division between “thinking and feeling, justice and mercy” (Gilligan 1977, 488). Considering a moral dilemma, according to Kohlberg, people should revert to justice and rationality to make moral decisions. Gilligan maintains that that groundwork is followed because our society is patriarchal in nature (Gilligan 1977). Gilligan continues suggesting that women have historically reverted to rationality and justice because they have deferred to men owing to power relations which
men hold over women. These power relations have marginalized the female voice (Gilligan 1977).

The female voice is one of care for others, the desire for no-one to be hurt, "a responsibility to discern and alleviate the "real and recognizable trouble" of this world" (Gilligan 1977, 511 authors internal quotes). The male voice, alternatively, holds the protection of personal rights and self-fulfillment in high esteem. The protection of rights and responsibilities for the men are carried out through non-interference with others; laws are established to prevent the interference of another’s personal rights. Women, on the other hand, incorporate their ideas of rights and responsibilities through equity and reciprocity (Gilligan 1977). Typically, females actively help those in need whereas males passively do so through the protection of rights (Gilligan 1977). Therefore, asking women to make moral claims in hypothetical abstractions is unreasonable as the specifics in each situation must be determined. According to Gilligan, if one is to determine what is equitable to parties involved, context must be considered (Gilligan 1977).

Considering their subjective attributes, the overall desire of females interviewed in Gilligan’s research was that no-one be hurt. The problem for the female: how much does one help others before they harm themselves? Thus, this conflict between others and the self is a moral problem for the woman and must be resolved if one is to reconcile moral conflicts (Gilligan 1977).

"The "good woman" masks assertion in evasion, denying responsibility by claiming only to meet the needs of others, while the "bad woman" forgoes or renounces the commitments that bind her in self-deception and
betrayal. It is precisely this dilemma—the conflict between compassion and autonomy, between virtue and power—which the feminine voice struggles to resolve in its effort to reclaim the self and to solve the moral problem in such a way that no one is hurt” (Gilligan 1977, 491, authors internal quotes).

This demands balance. What separates men from women is the discourse on selfishness and responsibility. Causing pain is considered selfish and immoral whereas providing care is one’s moral responsibility (Gilligan 1977). The consideration of ensuring that no-one was being hurt was the criteria which prevented most women from moving beyond Kohlberg’s third level of moral development as they needed assurance that people would not be harmed. Abstractions could not guarantee those assurances (Gilligan 1977).

The differences between male and female moral conceptualizations, exposed by Gilligan, is the basis for the ethics of care.

**Three C two: Kittay, Held, and Noddings: the Ethics of Care**

Just what is care? What does it mean to be caring? Feminist philosopher, Eva Kittay, suggests that, “[C]are is a multifaceted term. It is a labor, an attitude, and a virtue” (Kittay 2002, 259). I obviously have no conception of what it is like to understand care from the female perspective. I do have, however, an experiential perspective from my nursing career. I find Kittay’s succinct introductory definition as compelling as her expansions on each topic.
As with my definition of nature, labor denotes action. Care is a process of providing care to oneself and others to maintain health (Kittay 2002). I make no distinction between physical, mental, or spiritual health. The only difference is the mode of care provided. For instance, one would not put a cast on an arm for depression. Kittay offers, and I agree, that care, “is most noted in its absence, most needed when it can be least reciprocated” (Kittay 2002, 259). Kittay explains that as an attitude, care represents an “affective bond” (2002, 259) and an engaged investment in one’s health and welfare (Kittay 2002). The care provider must be engaged affectively, according to Kittay, else it is not care being provided. And if one is solely providing a service without a compassionate dedication and concern for the well-being of the one who is cared for, then care is not virtuous in nature (Kittay 2002)\textsuperscript{19}. There must be an emotive component to care. Virtuous care—good care—“is cultivated as a virtue by some who can provide it for intimates and strangers alike” (Kittay 2002, 260).

In my nursing tenure, I witnessed both virtuous and non-virtuous care. There is a remarkable difference in the well-being of both caregivers and care-recipients. If a nurse’s heart is not in it, it is recognized. That is my experience. Care must include all three attributes—labor, attitude, and virtue—otherwise, it is not care. Please bear this in mind as I present the work put forth by Held and Noddings.

\textsuperscript{19} This is the condition that I maintain is critical for care to be characterized as virtuous. One must have an intention of wanting to provide care. Not providing care solely because it’s promised that eudaimonia will be acquired. Eudaimonia is secondary to a compassionate desire to help. To provide virtuous care, in other words, one would provide care regardless of eudaimonia, yet, would acquire fulfillment because their intention was pure.
According to Held, feminist philosophy was developed because classical moral theory does not incorporate the perspective of women. An aspect of concern is that dominant moral theories are directed toward public lives and fail to recognize the significance of private relationships between families and friends (Held 2006).

“Thus the dominant theories have assumed that morality should be sought for unrelated, independent, and mutually indifferent individuals assumed to be equal. They have posited an abstract, fully rational ‘agent as such’ from which to construct morality while missing the moral issues that arise between interconnected persons in the contexts of family, friendships, and social groups” (Held 2006, 541).

Advocates for ethics of care argue that without considering the context of persons in close relations, classic moral theory is incomplete because moral dilemmas have been pre-solved in an abstraction. Context must be considered. Held proposed that, “The well-being of a caring relation involves the cooperative well-being in the relation, and the well-being of the relation itself” (2006, 540). Any relationship, therefore, is a cooperative relationship and it’s in the best interest of both parties within a relationship to cultivate the best relationship possible. Adding to Kittay’s definition of care, Held defines ethics of care as,

“... hospitable to the relatedness of persons. It sees many of our responsibilities as not freely entered into but presented to us by the accidents of our embeddedness in familial and social and historical
contexts” (2006, 543) and “works with a conception of persons as relational” (2006, 542).

Noddings suggests that obligations to care are delineated through reciprocal relationships: “Our obligation is limited and delimited by relation. We are never free, in the human domain, to abandon our preparedness to care” (2013, 702). Noddings demands that we must offer care to those with whom we are in a reciprocal relationship (Noddings 2013). But who do we look to for moral guidance?

Some moral theories, such as NE, embody a moral exemplar to offer normative moral guidance. The moral exemplar in feminist ethics of care, according to Noddings, is a mother20 (Noddings 2013). A mother naturally wants to care for her child21. Therefore, the normative guidance is a natural desire. “A mother’s caretaking efforts on behalf of her child are not usually considered ethical but natural” (Noddings 2013, 699).

In addition to Noddings’ affirmation that a mother’s care towards her child is a natural desire, she also maintains there are ethical components to offering care. Noddings distinguishes between ethical care and natural care (Noddings 2013)22. Ethical caring is generated from remembrances of previous relationships (Noddings 2013). Considering ethical caring, one may sense an obligation to act, yet choose not to act. For example, if a woman sees an elderly stranger trying to open a door, she may feel an initial desire to

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20 A mother, in my opinion, is a poor choice for a moral exemplar because of too many reasons to list here. Needless to say I do not support Noddings on her choice and suggest the application of a mother as a moral exemplar is quite narrow.

21 I feel it absurd to assume every mother experiences this—a victim of rape, for instance. Alternatively, I suggest that many others besides mothers naturally want to care. I later make the argument that this desire is our intrinsic value. This natural desire is why I have brought Noddings work into this discussion.

22 I make no distinction between the two.
assist. However, the desire may quickly fade or maybe she rationalizes that it is not her responsibility. The initial desire to open the door, according to Noddings, is an ethical reason to care—to act on. The woman does not naturally want to help open the door as she would if it were her child, yet she initially feels that she should (Noddings 2013). The generated feeling, according to Noddings, is evidence which suggests the woman is obligated to open the door23. But is the woman really obligated to open the door? Noddings offers guidance.

Because a desire to care arises and dissipates many times each day, Noddings offers criteria which defines our obligation to act. Our obligation to care, according to Noddings, is twofold, “the existence of, or potential for present relation, and the dynamic potential for growth in the relation, including the potential for increased reciprocity and perhaps, mutuality” (2013, 703)24. The existence of and potential for a relationship, Noddings argues, is a mandatory obligation to act (Noddings 2103). If a friend, for example, is standing at a door with her arms full of groceries, one would be obligated to help. The second part of the criteria, potential for growth, reciprocity, and mutuality, according to Noddings, “serves to put our obligations into an order of priority” (2013, 703). If one must choose between opening the door for a friend or a stranger, one must open the door for their friend first25. Because there is potential for reciprocity and growth, in regards the example of the elderly stranger, Noddings suggests that the woman has a responsibility to open the door.

23 I do not endorse this argument.
24 I do, however, endorse her idea that if there is a potential for improving a relationship, it is the responsibility of those involved to make the necessary changes.
25 Nor do I endorse this argument
Most people, according to Noddings, have felt the initial desire to assist someone in a time of need, even a stranger. Occasionally, the desire may rapidly dissipate. However, when someone never, “feels the pain of another, who never confesses the internal ‘I must’ that is so familiar to most of us, is beyond our normal pattern of understanding. Her case is pathological and we avoid her” (Noddings 2013, 700).

Held suggests that most people understand their dependence on other humans for their own survival (Held 2006). Because humans are dependent on other humans for survival, “…the moral claim of those dependent on us for the care they need is pressing, and there are highly important moral aspects in developing the relations of caring that enable human beings to live and to progress” (Held 2006, 538). The ethics of care emphasizes our moral responsibility to care for one another.

Held maintains that persons in caring relations are acting for self and for others (Held 2006). Ethics of care was not intended to develop egoist or altruistic demands. Rather, the ethic of care, as Noddings suggests, was to be one of reciprocal relatedness (Noddings 2013). If a man opens a door for a friend, the friend will return the act. It is not that the men owe it to one another because they are friends, it is because they are in relation with each other (Noddings 2013). It is the relationship itself, as opposed to the individuals within the relationship that is of utmost importance (Held 2006). Cultivating healthy and reciprocal relationships is the foundation of ethics of care.

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26 I suggest that while some do understand our dependence on one-another, our sense of individualism and self-sufficiency has helped marginalize this wisdom.
27 I expand on this narrow definition of a relationship in future chapters.
The flexibility within the ethics of care allow for the, “capacity to reshape and cultivate new relations...” (Held 2006, 543). The ethics of care, therefore, is not rigid, it allows for fluid relationships which change over time. Children, for example, have one type of relationship with their parents while living at home and a different relationship after they move out. When children are young they are completely dependent on their parents to thrive. As children grow, the relationship evolves into one of interdependence.

“This person starts out as a child dependent on those providing care to
this child, and we remain interdependent with others in thoroughly
fundamental ways throughout our lives. That we can think and act as if we
were independent depends on a network of social relations making it
possible for us to do so. And our relations are part of what constitute our
identity” (Held 2006, 542).

**Three D: A Caring Critique**

The critique I present of ethics of care is not necessarily a critique of the overall theory, although it may be encompassed. I offer my critique as it relates directly to environmental ethics and this thesis in particular.

Ethics of care contributes much to contemporary moral theory. Its theory necessitates the re-examination of solving moral dilemmas solely through rationality and impartiality and stresses the importance of subjectivity, partiality, and relationships. I find
this highly attractive and useful in my ethic. There are problems, however, adopting ethics of care as a foundation.

Feminist, Alison Jagger, criticized the work of Gilligan suggesting that she used the same patriarchal language to criticize Kohlberg’s work (Jagger 1991). Jagger pointed out that Gilligan’s argument was rational and impartial. A new language, according to Jagger, is needed if feminists are to have their voice heard (Jagger 1991). I find her criticism painfully ironic. As I mentioned in the last chapter, I must make my argument using the same discourse in which I criticize. Speaking to the need for a new worldview is one thing, using vernacular that does not represent the importance of creating that worldview is problematic to say the least. Gilligan likely had the same problem. How do we develop a language with only a glimpse of the worldview? This is our crux!

Another critique of Gilligan’s work was that her sample of students was homogenous (Jagger 1991). The subjects she interviewed were mostly college aged, affluent, white females. This is a slant critique. In other words, the voice of the marginalized was not likely representative of the whole. If the voice of the marginalized is to count in moral theory, all the marginalized should be heard. Not just a select few who are attending the same university. Noddings makes a similar move. Using a mother as a moral exemplar eliminates the male perspective, women who have no desire to be a mother, and countless others. Yes, a mother can be a virtuous care provider, yet if one can’t relate to that perspective, the exemplar serves little purpose.

Another critique of Noddings’ work is her assumption that the mother *naturally* wants to care for the child—the difference between ethical and natural caring. Only a
mother, according to Noddings, can experience natural care. All other caring, Noddings
maintains, is characterized as ethical. If a mother was the only person who experienced
natural care, it seems to suggest she should be held in higher regard than all others. It’s
almost as if Noddings is trying to reverse power relations assuming there is something
special about a mother more than all other humans—all other life forms.

Ethics of care, like most moral theories, still focuses on humanity. There is no
environmental discussion in ethics of care. There is no voice for the marginalized non-
human animals, plants, or any other materials in ethics of care. Albeit from a different
perspective, ethics of care is as effected by the Cartesian Dualism as the philosophers
presented in the previous chapter. The ethics of care’s myopic vision toward human
agency is troublesome for environmental ethics.

The mother knows that her child is dependent on her to thrive. I find this
interesting because it appears that many have forgotten that we are absolutely dependent
upon nature. Any mother (or anyone for that matter) should be concerned about the
environment in which their child lives and the food they ingest. Both Held and Noddings
advocate for enriching relationships with those with whom we are in dependent and
reciprocal relations. At what point does taking care of the environment become as critical
as taking care of a child? Is there a distinction between the two? Have we reached that
threshold? These are the questions I ask myself.

28 I am aware of ecofeminism and attempts have been made to develop environmental care ethics. There
was not the space here for their inclusion. I am more interested in what can be gleaned from these theories
as I trust that a new ethic must emerge with a new worldview. The new worldview must be the foundation
for a new ethic, not re-fashioning ethics founded on a worldview saturated with human exceptionalism,
individualism, dualisms, and an epistemology which uses abstractions as evidence.
Both Held and Kittay referenced care as akin to a virtue. I think it is. While problematic as a foundation, there are characteristics of NE ethics and ethics of care which are quite useful in my ethic.

Three E: Final Mediation: Framework for an Ethic

I am in turmoil. Without pulling a Heidegger and inventing a new language, how do I create an environmental ethic that is not steeped in the same mechanized, individualistic, and anthropocentric language that I’ve criticized O’Neill, Taylor, Hargrove, Gilligan, Noddings, and Held for using? I don’t. I am forced to use a language that represents our western culture’s current ubiquitous worldview. I am a part of this culture. Yet, I have a different ontology of nature, or so it would seem as demonstrated by the compelling, albeit contrasting arguments made by my fellow environmental ethicists. Their arguments were developed through their understanding of the world, from their perspective, using the language of our culture. I make my arguments based on my perspective of the world, however, the vernacular I must use is not reflective of my standpoint. The aforementioned ethicists did not create a worldview and a language around their ethics, their ethics were created with a language which represents their associated worldview. Hence the reference to Jonas’s ideals at the beginning of the chapter. We need a new ontology—a new worldview from which a new language can emerge, from which a new ethic can emerge.

Reviewing; westerner’s language represents a worldview influenced by Descartes’ dualism and modern science. A worldview in which agency is relatively
uncontested as a human characteristic. Environmental ethicists have been trying to extend this agency to *nature* for decades. Arguments have originated from the anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric perspectives. Ethicists have creatively interpreted intrinsic and instrumental values so as to incorporate the non-human world. Still, environmental destruction proceeds unprecedentedly.

Challenges to classic moral theory from the marginalized have created doubt as to the validity of rigid normative guidance deemed just by a patriarchal majority. Environmental ethicists need to take heed to this challenge and revisit their own perspectives of the world. I have illustrated a view of nature seldom spoken of in western culture. The relational character of nature, as I have described, is an indication that current philosophical discourse and axiologies are not representative of the world in which existence is experienced. My challenge to contemporary environmental ethics and its current axiology is valid. However, without the language to create an ethic, what is to be done in the meantime? Everything we can.

A new ontology is needed. Environmental ethics need to be reconsidered until such time as a new language emerges: it will emerge. There are philosophical principles we can garner for use in the development of a new environmental ethic. While extending ethics of care and NE directly to the environment is problematic, much can be gleaned. The following characteristics, I believe, are necessary in the creation of a new ethic. With a new worldview as a foundation, relationships must be the keystone of an

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29 This makes it seem as there is a human world and non-human world. Hence, the problem with our bifurcated view of nature and associated discourse. I included that terminology intentionally.
overarching environmental ethic. Interdependent and inseparable relationships is the

*nature* of nature. Care, as defined by Kittay—virtuous in character—is critical in
forming, maintaining, and further developing relationships. Relationships throughout the
universe have varying degrees of relatedness; partiality and situational consideration must
be incorporated. Nature is fluid and ever changing, so must be an ethic. With intrinsic
value\(^3^0\) as a guide, the paving beneath the keystone of relationships in a new
environmental ethic will be responsibility—a responsibility towards self and others.

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\(^3^0\) As I have defined in the previous chapter. I expand on in forthcoming paragraphs.
CHAPTER FOUR: A NEW ETHIC FOR A NEW VISION

“We don't set out to save the world; we set out to wonder how other people are doing and to reflect on how our actions affect other people's hearts.” Pema Chödrön

My ethic offers a practical means by which one can use their intrinsic values as a guide to improve relationships. Pema Chödrön’s quote embodies this idea. My ethic, though useful, is not ideal if one does not understand the relational nature of nature. Hence, the need for a new vision.

I believe Noddings is for the most part correct when she asserts that we are responsible towards those with whom we are in closest relation. However, “those with whom” must be substituted with “that with which.” Wrong pronouns.

A vision of nature as I have defined it involves more than human relations. Some of the most intimate relations we have are not with people. Following procreation, birth, and breastfeeding no other relations are as intimate as those experienced through the inhalation of air and the consumption of food and water. Those necessary ingested materials are reconfigured and transformed into our cells—they are truly incorporated, they become who we are. This is true for all life. Our utmost responsibility, it would seem, is to make certain that these ingested elements are of the healthiest type. Not only for our own bodies, but additionally

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31 In later paragraphs, I define why we are responsible. Ultimately, it is our intrinsic values.
for the bodies of all living things. Because the food chain is circular, it’s in our best interest to improve the health of all life. If lives are indeed valuable, then that which constructs our ever-becoming physical form must be held in the highest regard—literally, “you are what you eat.” Given this, our first responsibility is to that which gives us form.

What of other relations? Here again, I believe the ethics of care prescribes correct action when it asserts that we are most responsible to those with whom we are in closest relations and with whom have the potential to improve on and build reciprocal relations. Considering globalization, the awareness must be cultivated that people are in direct relation on a large scale with those who produce their food, clothes, and gadgets. Goods utilized are made of earthly materials and are assembled by fellow humans from around the globe. If materials are extracted in a manner that could be improved upon, being in relation with this process, it is a responsibility of the consumer to better that relationship. If the person who fabricates the resources is exploited for their services, again, being in relation, it is the responsibility of the consumer to improve the relationship. In our globalized world, our relationships extend far beyond line of sight. This reality must be reinforced through our educational system and media. The ethics of care and I both support patriarchal hands-off laws which protect the rights of people and the environments in which they exist. We additionally advocate for the hands-on elimination of pain and suffering—as Gilligan suggested, to make certain that no-one is hurt, including ourselves.
Care should be provided with a caring attitude. The inclusion of feelings cannot be understated. The scientific method snubs subjectivity as it is difficult to quantify. Dispassionate ideals have been infused into everyday thinking so that more emphasis is placed on objective facts rather than subjective responses. I believe this exclusion of feelings from our daily decisions is, at least in part, responsible for environmental exploitation and human oppression. Westerners, with ideals of a separation between the mind and body, and through a scientific epistemology founded on objectivity, have alienated themselves from their own subjectivity. Our science must include subjectivity.

“A new scientific revolution is needed and may well be in progress. A feminist approach to science will emphasize the relatedness of things to one another and will accept the possibility of intrinsic values in subject matters to be studied—thus, remitting the relevance of subjectivity for approaching what is to be understood. It will be a science of appreciation including tenderness, not simply manipulation” (Ferré 1996, 297).

Deemphasizing emotion has reinforced a mechanized nature. The value of a modern objective world is defined primarily monetarily. Incorporating ‘virtuous’ care—engaged care provided from the heart—will help to reinfuse subjectivity into a society which has largely become hijacked by objective facts to determine right action.

As previously mentioned, patients in hospital settings sense differences between people who provide care with attention and intention from those who don’t. More examples: a friend who expresses enthusiasm and interest in conversation is revered over one who is inattentive. When in need, the help of a friend who is eager to
lend a hand is admired over one who displays antipathy or inconvenience. For instance, an acquaintance may show up to help move, the indifferent assistance, however, is easily distinguishable from a virtuous, compassionate, caring friend. The same juxtaposition holds true for environmental care. The virtuous conservationist seems to have a vested interest in the well-being of the environment. Reemphasizing the importance of subjectivity is essential in the development of expressing virtuous care. What is of utmost concern is the intention behind the care given. Care given because one feels better for doing so is selfish care. Care given because one has a vested interest in helping and wants to care is virtuous care.

Stargazing, it’s hard to imagine how actions carried out on earth could affect a star forty trillion light years away. True, but, are those stars not a part of one’s experience here? Aren’t stars humbling? Don’t stars make one consider vastness of the universe? Haven’t stars acted as maritime navigational guides? Have not children (and adults) wished upon a star? Based on Whitehead’s volumes of space described in chapter one, is not our presence defining a star’s essence, is it not ours? Yes. While actions here on earth may not affect the existence of a star physically,\textsuperscript{32} stars apparently affect our existence. Although reactions from relationships with stars for many may go unnoticed, stars offer an example of the varying degrees of relational relatedness.

I am in direct relation with the food I eat, my siblings, my parents and my friends. I have a different relationship with store clerks and gas station attendants. I have a different relationship with a local farmer and one who lives in Brazil. It turns out my

\textsuperscript{32} As far as we know.
relationship with the Brazilian farmer may in fact be more intimate though we have never physically met. I have different relationships with my cats than I do with my goose. I have different relationships with the ladybugs which eat aphids from my kale than I do with the yellow and black striped cucumber beetle which has a taste for my vegetables equaling mine. I have a different relationship with monarch butterflies visiting my azaleas than I do with those in the Amazon. Nonetheless, I am in relation with them all. Given these varying degrees relatedness, an ethic must incorporate partiality and welcome situational considerations—context.

A philosophical goal has been to develop a moral theory and more recently an environmental ethic that will umbrella all life, for all time to come—a fixed ethic that will work in all situations. As I have demonstrated, the only constant in the universe, outside of a mathematical abstraction, is change. A new ethic must be as fluid as the environment. This notion expands on the needed situational characteristic as described above. Each environmental decision and each solution to oppressive conditions has many different constituents and each vote must count. Here, I argue, the entity whose existence is most marginalized should be allowed to cast the first vote.

If children in Mexico are being exploited, being paid a penny a pound to pick blackberries for westerners, the voice of the children should be the loudest. Additionally, those who purchase blackberries have a responsibility for improving that relationship. Though the children are out of sight, on the other side of the world, have no familial connection, will likely never meet, the consumer is in a relationship with them. It is the
consumer who is continuing the relation with the grower. Another example: if a Guatemalan farmer had her land acquisitioned by an industrialized agricultural giant and is forced to grow broccoli for a westerner’s desire to eat healthfully, not only is the agricultural giant responsible, but the consumer has a responsibility to better the relationship with the Guatemalan farmer.

Whose voice counts for the non-human animal, for trees, shrubs, water, air, food, and ecosystems alike? Because we lack interspecies communication, the same voice which informs us that the exploitation of a human is wrong; our own intrinsic values. That voice that tells us what is valuable, what is right and what is wrong. If one suggests this leads to ethical egoism, I reply suggesting that our intrinsic values, if we are listening to them, inform us to enrich not only our own lives but equally the encompassing environment around us. One who is selfishly concerned with their own wellbeing has been alienated from their own intrinsic values—known subjectively—and can’t see how their wellbeing is dependent on the environment. Given our relationship with nature, to better nature is to better ourselves, to harm nature is to harm ourselves.

Most, I argue, in our neoliberal culture, care about the welfare of people and the environment. Most don’t want to hear about famine and children being exploited in developing countries, it’s heartbreaking. Most people would not consider contributing to the cruelty of animals, in fact it is a law. Most people would not dump petroleum in their water supply. Most people are concerned about the quality of air they breathe and the food they ingest. If people do hold these values, and I believe they do, why then are we

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33 I am in no way discounting the corporate involvement. I address this further in the following chapter.
polluting our environment, eating poor quality foods, contributing to the cruelty of animals, and exacerbating oppression with just about every purchase we make? First, we are embedded in a neoliberal capitalist market where westerners have been disenfranchised from food and other goods, and second, emphasis has been placed on the self; my self over your self; the individual over relationships; the objective over the subjective. Over time, our values were alienated.

In a sense, both Noddings and Hargrove are correct. Noddings suggests a mother experiences a natural desire to care\textsuperscript{34}. Hargrove suggests that one feels the value of a cave. These sensations, I suggest, are one in the same and emanate from our intrinsic values which emanate from nature. These sensations have the ability to guide our actions. However, intrinsic values—values which define what is valuable and right from wrong—are being marginalized by objectivity and individualism.

Awareness of the relational character of nature must be cultivated. People need to be made aware of how their choices contribute to the destruction of the environment and to human oppression. It is up to each individual to evaluate their decisions and determine how they can better their relationships. With awareness of a situation, one must listen to intrinsic values when making choices. One may argue here that having to consider each choice we make will paralyze us—that we will have to stop throughout the day to carefully consider the impact of our actions. I respond by stating this is the best thing that could happen to us. Many go through the day on automation. The realization of

\textsuperscript{34} Mothers, I argue, are not the only people who feel this natural desire. As previously mentioned, this is a significant critique for Nodding’s ethic of care.
disenfranchisement from choices and alienation from values would immediately surface. It’s time to slow down and evaluate the consequences of our actions.

Hypocritically, I offer an abstract patriarchal thought experiment: if at a store, a person with awareness of her relationships with food producers has a choice between a twenty five cent tomato grown unsustainably in Mexico, picked by an eleven year old making one cent per pound in harsh conditions, or a tomato for one dollar which was grown sustainably on a local farm, picked by a neighbor for a decent wage, it seems she has a responsibility to buy the locally grown tomato. With the understanding and awareness of how actions may contribute to the exploitation of land and the oppressive treatment of the Latino girl, the emotions generated by intrinsic values guide the decision to buy the local food. As Aristotle suggested, pleasure and pain are guides. Additionally, I argue that purchasing the local tomato would be the logical and rational choice.

Here one may criticize and suggest that people would rather not buy the cheap tomato but they have no other option; they only have so much money. It isn’t their fault the industrialized food system forces one to buy food unsustainably and oppressively produced. My response, life is expensive! I am not referring solely to our pecuniary choices. In order to live, one must kill; animals are killed, plants are killed. This is the nature of nature. Carnivores and herbivores alike must kill to live. Even strict herbivores kill animals. Even vegans kill animals. As soon as something is eaten, it removes the possibility that that food can be eaten by another life form—once food is ingested, that food is no longer available for anything else. Life is expensive. The cost for me to live on this planet is immeasurable. Every day that I live comes at the expense of other lives,
plants and animals alike. It is far past time for neoliberal westerners to acknowledge this high cost of life and re-evaluate what is truly needed in their lives. Awareness of the relational character of life is fundamental in determining what is truly needed. We need a new ontology. Taking responsibility for our actions, listening to the voice of the oppressed, we must make the decision to either buy the expensive tomato, or go tomatoless. Of course, each situation must be considered individually. I presented an abstract tomato situation in which all information was not known. There may be circumstances which warrant buying the twenty five cent tomato.

One may criticize that in a neoliberal society, improving relationships between people could actually worsen environmental destruction. Or one may find my argument that we must first protect that which we are in closest relationship with—elements that construct our forms—complete hogwash. They may say to themselves “I will help people, but protect worms in a garden, no way.” A philosopher may suggest that with an attitude of helping only humans an increase in environmental exploitation is sure to ensue. I argue otherwise. One who helps to improve the relationships of only humans who are oppressed, marginalized, in poverty, those who can’t afford to eat or are forced to eat nutritiously deficient food can’t help but to better the environment in which they live. If the lives of the marginalized are improved, their living conditions too will be healthier; fewer neighborhood toxic waste dumps, cleaner air and water, less trash, fewer diseases, better buildings, and restored cultural traditions. Just about anyone could add to this list. If one is suffering because of environmental degradation or globalization, and

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35 There are many more considerations here as westerners are being exploited just as those who cultivate their food through disenfranchised food options. I expand in the following chapter.
there are many who fit this category, bettering the lives of those people will improve the overall environment.

Why should one disrupt their livelihood for the sake of another? I offer it’s not a disruption if one hopes to develop better relationships, to live with integrity, to have virtuous character, to act in harmony with their intrinsic values. Do we really want to teach our children not to take responsibility for their actions, that when the law is broken, deny it? When our children ask why we did nothing to stop climate change, do we want to tell them that our contribution was so small that we didn’t think it mattered? Do our children’s lives matter? We have a responsibility, not only to others, but to ourselves if we really are the moral species we make ourselves out to be. Using the ethic of care concept, “discern and alleviate the real and recognizable trouble of this world” (Gilligan 1977, 577) it can be seen how a positive change can be cultivated in our own lives and the world around us.

We must recognize the relational character of nature, develop a new ontology, listen to intrinsic values, virtuously care for one-another, and accept responsibility for our personal actions. But how does one start? How does one develop this relational vision? It is easier than one might think, and it can be done through food.
"Food has a distinctive feature, one that sets it off from the rest of material culture: it is ingested, it is eaten, it goes inside. In a small-scale society, moreover, it is and is understood to be the product of the labor of known individuals, the output of their blood, their sweat, their tears. As output of one person and as input into another, food is a particularly apt vehicle for symbolizing and expressing ideas about the relationship of self and other" (Meigs 1987, 355).

Thus far I have unveiled how ideas of individualism and separateness are simply illusions which slowly materialized over time with the introduction of the Cartesian dualism and modern science. A vernacular, influenced by a dualism which divided the mind from the body, the subjective from the objective, spread like weeds in an untended garden. I showed how current environmental ethics is steeped in this bifurcated discourse and how it has limited the ability, capacity and inclination to value all the richness the world embodies. Because of pecuniary driven materialist exploitation of things usable, environmental ethicists have avoided valuing all things instrumental. In doing so, environmental ethicists have marginalized nature’s most valuable characteristic, its interdependent, undividable web of relationships. Suggesting that things are valuable aside from any use ignores all the intricate relations, whether it be a cave, a fiddler crab, or a carrot—they are neither isolated nor discrete. Embrace the use, don’t devalue because of it. Ethics of care is a valuable antidote to this limited world view because it embodies relationships. It forces one to consider more than the individual object—as if
that could even exist. Additionally, using ethics of care, context must be considered and all voices heard. More than cold hard facts can inform one on what to do. Our subjectivity is just as much a part of our lives as objectivity and must be considered equally. Feelings, like instrumental use, are not devaluing, rather, they not only increase value, they inform us what is valuable. And once relationships are recognized and valued, an ethics of care calls on us to improve relationships, acting responsibly with intention and attention.

Why food? Why use food to mend ideals of individualism? Why use food to reinforce an ever-becoming relational nature? Why use food to challenge the mind body dualism and scientific abstractions? Why use food as a guide to generate a new—all-inclusive—axiology? Why use food as an example to defend a caring pluralistic environmental ethic founded on relationships and responsibility? Because food is ingested; food, aside from air, is the most intimate relationship any living organism has. “Next to breathing, eating is perhaps the most essential of all human activities, and one with which much of social life is entwined” (Mintz and Du Bois 2002, 102).

So how can food answer all these questions? Maybe the best way to see how strengthening relationships with our food is a means by which environmental reform can emerge is to examine the history of food provisioning methods. However, to present a comprehensive genealogy of food is exceeds the span of this thesis. Nevertheless, a succinct historiography will clearly demonstrate how being disenfranchised from food leads to environmental exploitation and oppression. And while human disenfranchisement from food is compelling alone, I present specific examples of how
gardening and local foods reinforce the acknowledgement of relational characteristics, socially, culturally, and environmentally.

In this chapter I present a brief historiography of human food provisioning. I begin with the omnivore’s dilemma, a theory which suggests that humans do not know instinctively what to eat. Then, progressing quickly from fifteen thousand years before present, I offer the more recent industrialization of food. Although presented in brevity, the distant historical changes in food provisioning are important to understand current foodways. More recent changes in food production are expanded on, specifically focusing on the industrialization of food and globalization. I then offer ways in which food helps to foster awareness of dependent environmental and human relationships. Two ethnographic case studies are presented, both demonstrating how reciprocal relationships are being cultivated in community gardens. A critique of community gardens is included as a reminder that not all problems can be solved by spending time in a garden. I conclude the chapter with a final meditation reinforcing the value of food in our lives.

Five A: The Omnivore’s Dilemma and Historic Foodways

Although everything is edible at least once, attempting to conceptualize the process of learning what didn’t kill or make one ill is futile—an evolutionary process on the grandest of scales. It’s not as if humanoids arrived in Africa one to two million years ago and found themselves at a loss for what to eat; their knowledge of edible foods evolved over time. Regardless of the evolutionary process, humans are omnivorous. The success of omnivorousness, according to Gillian Crowther, is the desire to try new
foods—neophilia (2013). The fear that an unknown food may lead to illness or death, neophobia, kept people from simply eating whatever looked good (Crowther 2013). Hunters and Gatherers, within their respective regions, knew what was edible and what was not. As tribes moved about, trial-and-error likely guided new food options. During these times it would have been vital to be in close relation with community members insofar as errors in sampling new foods need not be repeated.

Humans are not able to sense nutrient value. We therefore rely on taste to determine food preferences (Crowther 2013). Nevertheless, Crowther suggests that, “we do not know instinctively what we should eat, yet slowly edible status and names have been conferred. For this reason the omnivorousness of humans has been presented as causing a dilemma—what to eat” (Crowther 2013, 8). Until recently, the last few hundred years, diets were determined by region (Crowther 2013). Significant changes in food provisioning over the last twelve thousand years created a new culture around food.

While a detailed historical account is excessive, the domestication of plants and animals played a significant role in human food culture. This transformation was not instantaneous but progressed over generations and continues to transform food provisioning even today among indigenous cultures (Crowther 2013). Approximately ten to twelve thousand years before present, for reasons unknown, people began to domesticate plants and animals (Crowther 2013). Along with this domestication came varying degrees of stewardship and the development of irrigation. Domestication brought

36 Possibly in an effort to develop food security. There are many hypotheses regarding this transformation.
Divergence from hunter and gatherer food provisioning led to three basic types of societies; pastoralists, horticulturalists, and agriculturalists. Each had its own unique characteristics, however, what is of most importance here is the development of sedentary societies (Crowther 2013). This was especially true for agriculturalists—the societal structure which most closely resembles current food provisioning methods today.

Agriculture progressively intensified over the years, secondary to irrigation, tool, and storage improvements. As intensification advanced, populations increased which in turn produced more laborers. The progression of larger populations, high yielding crops, and technological advancements continued for centuries. “Consequently, agriculture—and its contemporary form, industrial agriculture—have become the most dominant forms of food production in the world, incrementally transforming the global food economy” (Crowther 2013, 52).

Five B: Current Foodways

Coinciding with revolutionary industrial advancements was an equally impressive agricultural revolution. Early food preservation techniques such as pickling, smoking, wind and sun drying, and salt curing, were essentially replaced by canning (Truninger 37). While I could continue and it would be interesting to discuss all the intricacies of foodways over the last 10,000 years, the main focus of this short section was to introduce how the development of sedentary agricultural societies produced intensified crops and larger populations.
The Dutch navy made the first canning attempts in the mid eighteenth century and the technique was largely perfected with the discovery of pasteurization in 1861 (Truninger 2013). With the advent of canning, crops from expanding colonial tracts of arable land and meats from terrestrial and aquatic species were harvested and stored at previously inconceivable quantities—increasing food security (McKenzie 2007; Truninger 2013). Other technological advances further increased take.

In the early nineteenth century John Deere released the steel plow. The turn of the twentieth century saw steam tractors replace the horse. Although pesticides were introduced in the early nineteen hundreds, chemical fertilizers released in the nineteen sixties brought about an increase in crop production never before seen (McKenzie 2007; Truninger 2013). Food was being produced at astonishing rates and then stored for months, even years. These technological advances allowed for the production of food on a massive scale. Small farms soon became a thing of the past, relieving people from the necessity of growing their own food.

With the introduction of industrialized agriculture and the ability to buy food at the store, rural societies dwindled as people moved to cities where they were cut loose from their agrarian pasts and began to learn and practice new technological trades.

Shawn McKenzie, of Johns Hopkins, defines industrialized agriculture as: “Modern farming methods that depend on synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, large amounts of irrigation water, major transportation systems, factory-style practices for raising livestock, and machine technology” (2007). New agricultural advancements were promising in a world prone to famine. Having witnessed increased crop production as a
result of this new industrialized agriculture, the Green Revolution emerged. The “Father of the Green Revolution,” Norman Borlaug, took this technology to developing countries, India for instance (McKenzie 2007). Borlaug, with his introduction of western agricultural techniques, increased production upwards of one thousand percent in some places and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1970 “for saving a billion people” (McKenzie 2007). Some people weren’t saved. Some places did not see increased production. Some places witnessed collapsed agricultural lands, ecosystems, communities, and cultures.

I believe Borlaug had good intentions for reducing global famine. The globalization of agriculture, nevertheless, led to an international food industry. And while many had tasted international foods prior to the mid twentieth century, the introduction of a global food market prompted the most insatiable neophilia. Unique ethnic foods from around the globe were mass produced and shipped to affluent countries. Additionally disturbing was the introduction of the westernized industrialial food into other cultures.

Global industrialized agriculture, if it were expected to grow economically, needed more resources to make it profitable. This need of industrialized agriculture has led to many environmental and social problems. Industrialized agriculture is heavily reliant upon synthetic inputs such as pesticides and fertilizers; it tends towards concentrated production, exploiting land and creating animal waste problems leading to health concerns; requires the use of specialized equipment and increases the need for fossil fuels; requires enormous amounts of water; leads to unthinkable amounts of food waste with estimates exceeding thirty percent; creates oppressive working conditions
regardless of civil rights; and through vertical and horizontal integration it disenfranchises\textsuperscript{38} people from their food and leads to the deskilling of both consumer and farmer (McKenzie 2007; Truninger 2013; Crowther 2013; Loo 2014; Jaffe and Gertler 2006; Braverman 1974).

High levels of energy were added to the agricultural system. Energy inputs, such as fertilizers, quickly became part of the capitalist market—more money was generated the more these products were used, creating circularity in the system. While it seemed to stimulate immense economic wealth, the livelihood of small farmers was compromised. Wildlife was jeopardized. The environment was jeopardized. The welfare of farm animals and the nutritional value of food were overlooked. Food quality, the environment, and culture were seemingly traded for quantity and profit (Crowther 2013; Loo 2014; Truninger 2013).

Through the global market exchange, food items, like other natural resources, became commodities and were traded worldwide. Trading led to a manipulate-able price market where large growers capitalized, making it difficult for local food production to remain a viable means of providing sustenance (Crowther 2013). The removal of the people from their agrarian roots was instrumental in disenfranchising them from their food\textsuperscript{39}. The global market drove many changes in food production and consumption and separated people from their cultural subsistence patterns. Either by being presented with

\textsuperscript{38}To be discussed in detail momentarily.

\textsuperscript{39}It is important to understand that not all have been removed from their agrarian roots. There are many local farmers around the world producing much food. Some are incorporated into the global market, some are not. What is important is that the spread of industrialized agriculture continues, as does the disenfranchisement.
too many options or, conversely, having traditional foods removed, many found it difficult to know what to eat—the omnivore’s dilemma.

With the agricultural revolution in full swing, the boundaries of cultures began to blur. As the global market grew, regionally cultural foods were passed from society to society. As food left its respective regions, many cultural characteristics left with it. As cultures broke down, people became more and more confused about what to eat (Crowther 2013). At this point, the global market began to dictate food options. Big agricultural companies found the processed food market highly profitable, and being subsidized by governments, was able to produce even more inexpensive food. Monocrops grown on large tracts of land were being processed into a wide variety of delicious tasting food, if enough chemicals were added. Processed foods became the standard of the modern food industry. Many people began to eat the more flavorful and less nutritious options—the least expensive and also the most profitable. As this phenomenon proceeded, the omnivore’s dilemma progressed to what French sociologist, Claud Fischer, named the gastro-anomie. The difference between the omnivore’s dilemma and gastro-anomie, according to Fischer, is the type of food options available (Crowther 2013). Processed industrial fast food became the preference of many people; for some it was and still is the only option. Processed fast foods produced efficiently in large scale operations made it highly profitable. Because people were being fed inexpensively government agencies frequently overlooked nutritional value (Crowther 2013). Associated with the industrialization of food we began to see a rise in non-communicable

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40 It is important to note that “anomic” is defined as the lack of social or ethical standards in an individual or group.
medical conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and cancers (Crowther 2013).

**Five C: Disenfranchised and Deskilled is what’s for Dinner**

Disenfranchisement from food suggests that one’s choice in food options has essentially been removed (Loo 2014; Rowe 2010). Big agricultural companies such as Monsanto, Cargill, Tyson, and ConAgra control the vertical and horizontal food system integration (McKenzie 2007). Monsanto, for example, through internal expansion and acquisition, controls much of the seed production and distribution globally. Companies like Monsanto have monopolized agricultural systems on the horizontal plane. Seeds for most crops must be purchased from these agricultural companies as seed saving is largely illegal due to patenting laws. Companies such as Cargill control the vertical market—farm to table—meaning much of the trade is funneled through companies owned and operated by Cargill. For example, a cattle rancher, knowingly or not, is forced to use feed from Cargill suppliers, forced to use Cargill slaughtering facilities, Cargill packaging facilities, and Cargill transportation and distribution facilities. Because it operates under subsidiary names, Cargill is not typically a household name. Many are unaware that the aforementioned facilities are solely owned by large corporations such as Cargill.

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41 Many corporations have legally obtained the right to patent the genome of a plant thereby owning the life form. In owning the genome people are legally bound to buy seed as opposed to saving it.
42 Forced in that other options are not economically feasible and/or there are no other options within any given region.
Walking into a supermarket it may feel as if one is presented with choices. However, the hundreds of food producers identified by unique labels are actually subsidiaries of corporate giants. Roughly ten food distributors, PepsiCo, Nestle, Coca-Cola, Kellogg's, Unilever, Danone, Mars, Modelēz, Associated British Foods, and General Mills profit from over ninety percent of the food sold in most major supermarkets (McKenzie 2007; Truninger 2013). For the most part, people don’t make food choices. They are provided with options, most of which support these corporate giants. Most food options are highly processed and nutritionally deficient—gastro-anomie. Many food options come from agricultural processes which exploit the environment and oppress people—all removed from the consumer’s knowledge under the guise of catchy slogans, deceptive marketing, and aesthetically pleasing labels.

Consumers, unless they are looking, don’t see the relationships they are forced into with people and their environments around the globe. Many don’t understand that the food they buy is cultivated and picked by young girls and boys in horrid working conditions. Their family’s lands are “acquisitioned” and they are forced at times to produce crops they would rather not eat, crops for western consumers who are oblivious to their suffering (Fischer and Benson 2006). The diversity of culturally significant crops are traded for large monocrops, the seeds of which are illegal to save, and farmers are forced into the integrated food market. Farmers and their children are paid little to nothing. Poor crop production leads to a families losing their farms to corporate giants for failing to meet quality or quota (Fischer and Benson 2006; Loo 2014).
Global industrialized agriculture has led to food production deskilling\textsuperscript{43}. For thousands of years people had to understand local weather and climate patterns to determine crop schedules; they had to distinguish between beneficial and harmful insects. People likely understood that if crops failed it would be a long hungry winter. The importance of healthy soil was paramount. However, North American hegemony has led to a \textit{“McDonaldization”} (Jaffe and Gertler 2006). McDonaldization has many deskilling characteristics. \textit{“Work is reorganized to be more efficient, predictable, and calculable”} (Jaffe and Gertler 2006, 144). This leads to impersonal labor control at both the macro and micro levels. If an employee’s responsibility, for instance, rests solely on adding a predetermined amount of potatoes to a basket, press a button to lower them into hot oil, and be ready to remove the fries and salt them when prompted by a timer, it requires very little management to monitor this employee. This focused deskilling is seen not only in franchised fast foods but additionally in most professions. In deskilling, there is a, \textit{“loss of pure knowledge and skills”} (Braverman 1974). In the workforce, deskilled people earn less money and are easily replaced.

These deskilling practices permeate modern food production. Foods are processed in a manner that is standardized and consistent. Things look and taste exactly the same each time. When one walks into a supermarket she can expect to see every orange bell pepper looking virtually the same. These homogenous looking foods are produced by providing farmers with specific seed and techniques. Questions regarding production, harvest, and distribution are defined by the market. Essentially, all that is required of the

\textsuperscript{43} I focus primarily on food. However, the deskilling of many other trades has occurred simultaneously.
industrialized farmer is to know how to turn the key of his overpriced farm equipment and follow the specific guidelines of when to plant, water, apply fertilizers and pesticides, when to harvest, and what products are sellable and what is to be discarded. What we see here is the atomization of food. Like nature and the individual, food is being produced in isolatable components.

Most don’t know how to grow their own food (Jaffé and Gertler 2006). This was true for me and most of my acquaintances. Many have neither the time, the skill, nor the space to grow their own food. Additionally, many don’t have the time or skill to cook from scratch. The industrialized food market has made it quick and easy to cook, just add water and microwave.

The ultimate in food security is not the availability of multiple food options, rather, it is having the knowledge and capacity to grow one’s own food (Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004; Kingsley, Townsend, and Henerson-Wilson 2009). And while this is unrealistic for many people, it is not unrealistic for people to investigate who produced and distributed their food and by what processes. This is done best through local foods. Gardening, whether it be in the back yard or in a community garden, and purchasing local foods are means by which people can not only better their relationship with food and other people, they are also a means by which people can reduce global exploitation and oppression.

44 While this is oversimplified and not always the case, the fewer the decisions the farmer needs to make, the less the corporate giants need to pay her for services and products provided. This of course is not true for all farmers, however, the deskilling of farmers is the norm in industrialized agriculture (Jaffé and Gertler 2006).
Five D: Acknowledging Relationships

It takes time and effort to learn how to cultivate, process, and store food—it is the ultimate in food security (Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004; Kingsley, Townsend, and Henerson-Wilson 2009). The tangible experience of putting your hands into the soil while conversing with family, friends, and/or community members builds relationships with people, and the environment (Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004). But it is far more than that, for we can also chat over fast food burgers at the park. Why a garden then? A garden takes work. One can't simply walk into a garden, toss in a few seeds and walk away. The garden must be cared for, watered, weeded, and nurtured. Once a garden is planted responsibility must be taken for it else the garden fails. For if reliant on feeding oneself from a garden, all or in part, care must be taken to cultivate nutritious food (Firth, Maye, and Pearson 2011; Ober et al. 2015; Poulsen et al. 2014; Teig et al. 2009; Kingsley, Townsend, and Henerson-Wilson 2009).

Working and cooperating with others builds trusting, reciprocal relationships (Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004; Michaels 2013; Poulsen et al. 2014). Very few of us could take sufficient time off our jobs to work in the garden. However, working together with family, friends, and neighbors, people learn to help and trust one-another. A study out of University of California - Davis showed that interactions were seven to ten times greater in community gardens than one would have at supermarkets (Komaroff 2010). Community gardeners have stated how relationships with others have blossomed and grown along with the food in their garden. New relations involving mutual reciprocity cultivate healthy social norms and behaviors. These new social norms in and around the
gardens have weeded out much of the crime in their neighborhoods (Teig et al. 2009; Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004).

If one desires to grow food, it is essential to understand the seasonal climate conditions (Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004). Yes, one can look at the calendar and see what month it is, but to focus on the seasonal changes gets one aligned with the cyclical ecological clock. As climate change increasingly alters typical growing seasons, whether one is a home or community gardener, or even a large agricultural farmer, it is of utmost importance to watch the changing climate for different growing and harvesting patterns, lest an entire crop is lost to an early freeze, or whatever the case may be.

To create time in linear schedules in order to grow food is difficult. However, I found that the benefits of growing my own food go far beyond health and food security. For me it led to a deepening connection with the land. I also found myself spending less money at the store. The cultivation of healthy reciprocal relationships with people and the environment, the knowledge of the origin of my food, having increased food security, being outside more, eating healthier, the realization of my dependence the environment, are all things that benefited me as a result of growing my own food.

There is something quite amazing about piercing the visually bare ground with a pitch fork, rocking back, and as the ground up-heaves, watching as golden potatoes seem to appear magically from the soil. This was something that up until three years ago I had not experienced – the first time I watched potatoes materialize from the ground was heartfelt. Digging potatoes from the ground wasn't even the best part. Sitting down together to eat with my new friends who helped plant, cultivate, and harvest the potatoes
was the best part. Prior to that time, I knew that someone somewhere grew my food, but I knew not where, nor who.

In a study done by Jonathan Kingsley et al. (2009), people interviewed stated that the community garden was a "sanctuary," a place to get away from all the stress of daily life, a place where people could gain social advice and support. Additionally, many stated it gave them a sense of well-being and the feeling of being useful and productive—it gave them a sense of self-worth. Some cultures believe that the karma of those who grow and prepare food enters into the food and then becomes ingested by the consumer. Food, according to many, should be grown and prepared with love and compassion.

The growing, gathering, and preparation of food offer people and cultures valuable lessons in commensality and reciprocity. Commensality, the sharing of food, provides people the ability to develop and reinforce ties, create new friends and memories, and reminds people of the value of eating with one-another (Crowther 2013: 151: Komaroff 2010). Crowther states, “Sharing food is instrumental in creating social groups, and it forms loyalties and obligations that are so intimately tied to our being that we often overlook the power of food to maintain and create those relationships” (Crowther 2013: 152).

Reciprocity is, at least in part, developed through long-term sharing. As individuals become accustomed to giving and receiving, they develop an obligation—a want, a desire, bound—to give to one-another (Crowther 2013). Reciprocity joins people through continued interactions of “give and take” (Crowther 2013). I found this to be true myself. I canned many jars of food; jams, salsas, fruits, and vegetables. As I offered my
food to others, as a gesture of friendship, or simply as a gift, without exception, I was given back food in return. Likewise, when I was gifted food from someone else, I returned the favor. I can say I felt obliged to. These relationships continue to build. Reciprocity readily happens with children as well (Ober et al. 2015). Our current industrialized agricultural system does not develop this obligation to help each other. Sure, one must pay to receive food, yet, there is no obligation to do so. Wanting to eat and having the obligation to feed oneself can be accomplished through any financial transaction with any supplier. The seller has no obligation to the buyer other than to provide the purchased product.

Reciprocity is additionally seen with human/land interactions (Hale et al. 2011; Poulsen et al. 2014; Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004; Teig et al. 2009; Michaels 2013). If people hope to cultivate ongoing abundant harvests, they must give back to the land, treat it with care, and be good stewards. Provided environmental conditions cooperate, the land gives to those who care for her. The land also gives to those who don’t care for her, however, for not as long. People become tied to the land through reciprocal relationships. Most cannot appreciate this “give and take” process within the industrialized food system.

Working with the environment, returning nutrients to the soil, keeping pests off, and keeping crops watered cultivates a relationship with the land (Komaroff 2010; Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004; Poulsen et al. 2014; Kingsley, Townsend, and Henerson-Wilson 2009). The more responsibility one takes for a garden, the more it produces. The more the garden produces, the better one eats. Growing one’s own food
reduces their carbon footprint as the food ingested does not arrive from hundreds or thousands of miles away (Komaroff 2010). Additionally, developing local agrarian relationships releases one from oppressive relationships most don’t consider[^45]. If, aside from procreating and birthing, food really is the most intimate relationship we have, and I believe it is, then those who produce my food are in closest relation with me. Spatial considerations don’t seem to apply here. Whether Luke, a local neighborhood gardener, or Esmerelda, a Guatemalan slave, grows my food, the relationship that I have with each is essentially the same. One difference is that I personally hand Luke five dollars for his labor and product as opposed to giving my five dollars to a corporate giant who exploits Esmerelda. Knowing this, I believe I’d rather give my money to Luke, even if my food has blemishes and I get a less quantity. I also have a better chance of cultivating a longstanding relationship with Luke than I do with Esmeralda. I can, however, better my relationship with Esmeralda by not supporting her exploitation[^46].

The practice of consuming homegrown and local foods also frees one from the industrialized agricultural integrated system. Each food purchase made either contributes to the integrated food system, does not contribute, or contributes in some varying degree. The fewer hands that food passes through, the less one contributes to the industrialized global agriculture. If a bell pepper is labeled as an Argentinian product, for instance, the process to get that pepper from the plant to the plate is extensive. Like any pepper, it must be grown and harvested, maybe by someone named Astrid who had to douse it in

[^45]: I am not suggesting that local agrarian relationships are not subject to oppression. Many migrant workers, for instance, are marginalized and oppressed.

[^46]: There are many unknowns in this scenario. That is why care ethics is so valuable insofar as it examines the context of each situation.
pesticides and herbicides. Then, an Argentinian pepper must be evaluated, maybe by someone named Raul (who may or may not make enough money to buy food for his family dinner) to see if it meets the quality of a saleable pepper; the pepper is then shipped to a local packaging company, transferred to a large holding area, stacked in a box onto other boxes of peppers, loaded onto a diesel powered ship (likely leaking oil through a cracked seal); it travels for days or even weeks on the open sea, is unloaded at a US port from where it is taken to an enormous distribution center, packaged with two other peppers on a black Styrofoam tray (that will take over five hundred years to decompose), is then wrapped in cellophane (that sea birds mistake for fish), put into another box and driven to a regional distribution center; it is then taken inside, counted and loaded onto another truck (which each tire took seven quarts of oil to produce) and driven to a superstore loaded with other foods from around the globe; the pepper is unloaded and inventoried, unboxed by a guy maybe named Chris (working the night shift because it was the only job he could find to feed his family), taken to the produce department by someone who could be named Amy (who can’t afford the food she’s restocking—she’s forced to purchase canned food as fresh peppers are too expensive for her salary) where glimmering lights highlight the features of a perfectly grown bell pepper. And, everyone along the arduous pepper journey also buys peppers and other foods, each with its own complex web of relationships. While expensive, somehow this pepper, the Argentinian pepper, is still cheaper than Luke’s locally grown pepper. Luke cultivated his pepper in a garden without the use of chemicals. Each Tuesday, Luke walks out and clips a few peppers from the plant and places them in a wicker basket. Luke loads them in the back of his 1972 Datsun pick-up and drives one-quarter mile to the farmers’
market. Luke’s pepper is not more expensive because he is a greedy thief, but because Astrid’s and the other Argentinian’s labor and land were exploited by the industrialized agriculture giants who have lobbied and received government incentives and subsidiaries to produce cheap food to which your taxes dollars contribute. Yes, at the store you’re paying twice for your food. If one had the capacity and knowledge to personally grow food, considering industrialized agriculture, maybe it isn’t all that labor intensive after all.

**Five D one: New York City Case Study**

I chose to present this study not only because it stresses the importance of reciprocity, community, health, food security, and education, this case study put forth by Laura Saldivar-Tanaka and Marianne E. Krasny also stresses the importance of developing and maintaining one's culture. And while this study focuses primarily on a few small Latino communities in New York City, it can easily be universalized.

Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny chose to work with the Latino population in New York City because they typically reside in poorer neighborhoods. They usually lack adequate open space for the development of community gardens and meeting places in general. Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny were curious as to what role the community gardens played in the Latino community. Hoping to ensure a representative sample of different Latino community gardens throughout New York City, Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny, with the assistance of non-profit garden organizations and city agencies, chose a total of twenty gardens which included seven different neighborhoods within three municipalities, Brooklyn, Bronx, and Manhattan. During 2002, Saldivar-Tanaka and
Krasny conducted twenty seven open-ended interviews with thirty two gardeners. Each gardener was asked thirty\(^{47}\) questions pertaining to "demographics, crops and planting practices, activities, facilities, garden history, and issues facing the community garden" (Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004). Additionally, Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny spent 80-100 hours observing gardening activities and engaged in informal conversations, "These observations took place during gardening activities, such as watering the plants, weeding, planting, and harvesting, as well as during social and cultural activities, including meetings, block and birthday parties, barbecues, and theater performances" (Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004).

Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny presented that the average age of the gardens were between five and twenty five years. Furthermore, a 1993 policy led to the cessation of assigning lands to be zoned for gardening. Without exception, each of the twenty gardens were formed because community members wanted to clean up vacant lots and remove hazards such as, "trash, abandoned cars, gangs, and drug sales" (Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004). In fact, many of the community members now refer to the gardens as "a beautiful place" (Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004). The gardens provided community members with fruits, vegetables, spices, and herbs – most of which were culturally relevant. The food cultivated was, for many of the gardeners, the sole source of food during the growing season. But the gardens provided far more than just healthy food. Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny also found that the gardens were places of significant social events where people of all ages would go to chat, catch up on community news, relax,

\(^{47}\) Specific questions were not included in the published paper.
Many gardeners stated that they would rather go to their garden and sit as opposed to other nearby parks. Additionally, major social events such as birthdays, holidays, and weddings were held in the gardens.

Overall, Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny found that while agricultural gains were of importance, the crops were overshadowed by the importance of open space and community development—not only did the gardens provide food, they helped create reciprocal relationships within the community in a safe environment. Furthermore, each of the community gardens in this study afforded the community members the ability to be useful in their neighborhoods. The gardens helped the Latinos to develop a sense of accomplishment when they "cleaned up" their neighborhoods (Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004). Having the ability to control and make decisions as to what they could grow in their gardens helped them maintain their Latino culture.

**Five D two: Baltimore Case Study**

There is a community vegetable garden at City Hall in Baltimore! But that is not what this case study is about. This case study, put forth by Melissa N. Poulsen, Kristyna R. S. Hulland, Carolyn A. Gulas, Hieu Pham, Sarah L. Dalglish, Rebecca K. Wilkinson, and Peter J. Winch explores the perceived benefits of community gardens located in Baltimore, MD. I present this case study because I feel that it objectively represents the advantages of community gardens, not only to the individuals and community gardeners, but to the entire urban environment.

Dissimilar to the NYC case study where government officials restrict land use for community gardens, Baltimore city officials embrace them. Poulsen et al. were attracted
to doing their case study there in part because Baltimore officials are supportive of community gardens whereas many other municipalities are less accepting, which creates obstacles in the formation and maintenance of community gardens. Poulsen et al. believed that because city officials were supportive, their findings would be more reflective of what community gardens can actually do if garden members were not having to battle city councils. Baltimore officials are supportive of community gardens because they have an abundance of degraded, vacant/abandoned space. Accompanying these abandoned areas are food deserts, especially in the lower income districts. With plummeting property values and lower incomes, people are finding it far more difficult to put food on the table. The City of Baltimore felt that community gardens could not only help create green spaces and convert degraded lots into gardens, they could also help the people get access to healthy food.

With the assistance of Johns Hopkins University Center for a Livable Future, Poulsen et al. decided on sixteen of the one hundred food producing community gardens located in Baltimore. The "selected gardens represented neighborhoods with varying income and demographics" (Poulsen et al.). Extensive interviews were conducted with twenty eight people of varying ages, from early twenties to late seventies, nineteen females, twenty three whites and five blacks. Twelve open ended topics were introduced in the interviews such as what is grown and why, personal and community benefits, atmosphere, and the importance of the community garden as a source of food security. Additionally, two focus group interviews were conducted with a total of eleven people lasting eighty five minutes each. The same twelve topics were discussed.
Poulsen et al. found that, “the term “oasis” arose in several interviews with gardeners” (Poulsen et al.). Merriam Webster defines oasis as, “a fertile or green area in an arid region,” and “something that provides refuge, relief, or pleasant contrast.”

Apparently the members of the community gardens felt as if they were creating urban oases throughout the city of Baltimore. Poulsen et al. found that these urban oases were cultivating personal health and wellbeing in the community gardeners. Reports of improved body and physiological health were abundant. One interviewee mentioned how much he appreciated the tactile feel of the plants and soil combined with the senses of smell and taste. Poulsen et al. presented that one gardener explained how she views gardening as a way to exercise spiritual practices such as “patience, exertion, discipline, love, and humbleness” (Poulsen et al. 2014). She also sees gardening as a way to connect with the natural rhythm of the earth by modeling one’s activities around the seasonal activities of the garden (Poulsen et al. 2014). Another gardener stated it was highly meditative and relaxing, and, described how it makes him feel closer to nature.

The benefits, however, extend far beyond the individuals: "Gardeners frequently mentioned sharing everything from food, to gardening tips, to tools, creating a connection between garden members" (Poulsen et al. 2014). Previously absent reciprocal relations were formed between many members. These social bonds created trust between members. Many presented that they now feel safe in their neighborhoods, a feeling that did not exist before. The benefits did not stop at the small community level either. Members of other community gardens share the sense of accomplishment in the beautification of the city—making use of vacant land and helping to solve the food desert
crisis. There are far fewer hungry people in Baltimore because of all their efforts. And, less crime (Poulsen et al. 2014).

**Five D three: Critiques of Community Gardens**

There are positives and negatives to just about everything, including community gardens. In an ethnography of community gardens in Chicago, Christine Dunford found that in the neighborhood she studied for ten years, Chicago city officials used community gardens as a means to “greenwash” their marginalized communities (2009). In this case study, the marginalized were African Americans. Following up on a *Chicago Tribune* article which stated that community gardens were revitalizing the impoverished North Lawndale neighborhood, Dunford found that in actuality not much had changed. The people of North Lawndale were still facing the same problems of crime, poverty, pollution, discrimination, and lack of quality food. Dunford states, “*Community vacant lot gardens—indeed many “empowerment” and “life of quality” strategies – are merely microremedies to problems rooted in larger structural forces of racial and class discrimination*” (Dunford 2009, 224). In turn, community gardeners, Dunford laments, tried to use the community gardens as a means to gain attention to their neighborhood—to get city officials to see what was really happening in their area, however, they were still overlooked. While the gardens did not solve deep rooted problems, Dunford admits many community members did enjoy gardening and benefited from some community building, however, it was nothing like what was being depicted by city officials (Dunford 2009).
Other problems associated with community gardens are not nearly as compelling as what Dunford presented in her Chicago ethnography. Community garden participants reported problems with gardeners not doing their part in regards to weed mitigation (Drake and Lawson 2015; Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004). Many community gardens have regulations on what gardeners can and cannot grow which causes tension among members, especially when ethnicity is taken into consideration (Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004). The use of fertilizers and chemical pesticides are other highly contentious topics (Drake and Lawson 2015). Moreover, there are other macroscale challenges, for instance, problems associated with zoning permits, funding difficulties, and a lack or excess of participants. Considering the lack of available open space in most urban communities, many feel that land used for community gardens could be better utilized. Some people advocated the need for more children and dog parks. Others support businesses which stimulate economic growth, and some promote more parking (Drake and Lawson 2015; Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004).

It is quite sad that some municipalities have used community gardens to distract from deeply entrenched social injustices. It is sad many of these gardens were created possibly without the community input or even a desire to have one. Nevertheless, despite intentions, even Dunford stated that some appreciated having the gardens. Even if poorly utilized, a weedy garden is more attractive and healthier than an empty lot littered with abandoned cars and trash. If only one person benefited, then I argue it’s still a benefit. Even if a person did not benefit it’s likely that it created a better habitat, birds may have benefited.
Of course people will have differences. While people may have disputes about whether or not to use pesticides or what types of produce can or can’t be grown, at least they are learning how to resolve conflicts. At least people recognize that they are in relationship with one another. Either they come to a compromise or one moves on, severing the relationship. Either way, the relationship is bettered as the conflict is resolved. I am biased, but I feel like a garden is better than a parking lot any day.

However, much of these criticisms are abstract in *nature* and each situation must be evaluated with all the parties involved. This is the essence of ethics of care—to hear all the voices.

**Five E: Final Meditation, Bound by Food**

It is obvious to me that not every person is interested in or has the ability to grow their own food. While I focused primarily on cultivating food in community gardens, it is the essence of home and community gardens that is of utmost importance. To understand the relationship between the land and our food; to fully understand the amount of time and effort that it takes to grow food; that it is difficult for one person to be self-sustaining; that reciprocal relationships between people can be fostered; that at one point the fate of every civilization was determined by their ability to gather, hunt, and/or grow food. One doesn’t see the fragility of our lives and our dependence upon nature while strolling down the aisles of supermarkets with shelves teeming with internationally produced foods—in that setting, it appears is as if we will never run out of food. Pushing squeaky wheeled baskets through air-conditioned corridors, lights strategically placed to
catch the glimmer of frost on enticing pints of fashionable ice cream, one can’t fully appreciate the energy it takes to produce food and the importance of a healthy environment.

We are what we ingest. We are the environment around us, and whether we see it or not, we are in interdependent relationships with it and our fellows. With food, we have the ability to cultivate caring, reciprocal relationships. If people have the full realization of the processes required to produce food, especially by cultivating food themselves, it seems more would advocate for, insist upon, and pursue cleaning up rather than destroying the environment. Cultivating reciprocal relationships with fellow gardeners helps break down the illusory perception that people are self-sufficient, individual, discrete beings. That while we appear to be individuals, we are reliant upon others for survival. Developing the awareness of our food web relationships and with a responsibility to improve these relationships, we can immediately see how fast change for the better can happen. It is in the development of conscious, caring, reciprocal relationships with each-other, our food, and the land that we may realize our relationship with nature and enhance and embrace our own survival in the process.

Our disenfranchisement from food has made many blind to the effects of our food choices. Our removal from the production and distribution is cause for concern. Considering a globalized food industry, with each food purchase made we can be assured that, either by way of pollution from unsustainable transportation/production, the saturation of herbicides/pesticides, or the oppression of fellow humans, the environment and people are somewhere being harmed. This is unacceptable. By cultivating our own
foods either by our own hands or in the hands of local farmers, we can decrease exploitation and oppression while cultivating on-going caring and reciprocal relationships with people and the environment.

Of course not every place has the climate to grow food locally. This we can chalk up to lack of insight and human arrogance—cities like Las Vegas should not exist given their arid climates. Regardless, people in those cities too can help in the process by understanding the consequences of their actions in regards to food purchases. Taking responsibility for our food cultivates many opportunities to do our own part in ending exploitation and oppression. We must first see how our food options harm environments, cultures, and people’s lives. As people begin to see the relationships that globalized industrial agricultural systems force them into, I believe that they will cultivate care about the welfare of the oppressed and will demand change. I feel like many people are unaware of the current industrialized farm-to-table process and that awareness will foster a bettering of the relationships involved.

If we are to have food justice, it can’t be determined solely by whether or not one has food. Not only does the presence of food matter, the consumer must have a voice in the process by which it is produced (Loo 2014). We see implications of the land and people being used solely instrumentally to supply food to those who have the ability to receive it. Taking responsibility for improving relationships in our food decisions releases people and their environments from oppressive and exploitive harm. Being responsible for our own food production helps to cultivate spatially closer relationships where impacts can be assessed directly. Food binds our social/cultural constructs and working
together in a food community develops food sovereignty. Being responsible for our own foodways forces us into the awareness of environmental and human dependence. Having awareness of relational bonds, our intrinsic values will guide us.
CONCLUSION

“A human being is a part of the whole called by us universe, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feeling as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty” Albert Einstein

I used food as a cultivator for a new axiology because of its universalizability. Food is everywhere and everyone must eat, always. In these times of reduction and categorization, influenced by the Cartesian dualism and modern science, if exploitation of the environment and oppression of humans are to stop, establishing a new vision on common ground is essential. Food is traceable. One can literally track the origin of every morsel consumed. The web of relationships tied to every bite of food extends far beyond human hands. Food, like humans, and crabs, and grass, and birds, is woven into the web of the process—the flux. Food was the obvious choice to conceptually bind all together, to show that spatiality does not determine the intimacy of one’s relationships. Food was the practical choice to illustrate that regardless of awareness, one contributes to exploitation and oppression. Each person, then, once informed and enfranchised, gets to make a conscious choice to contribute to the employment of another, or to their
enslavement. Today, because of our globalized food market, awareness is baffled and these choices are obscured. A new awareness is called for.

Food, *that which feeds us*, additionally comes in forms other than carrots, kumquats, oxygen, and water. Sights, sounds, and other sensations are also ingested. Just as what we eat is transformed into our cells, what is *sensed* also influences our becoming. If one is inundated with violent sights and sounds, the mind begins to look for and see violence. If one is surrounded by love and compassion, love and compassion are seen. If one sees all the forms in the world, including oneself, as individual and distinct, it becomes easy to justify the needs and desires of the individual self over those of all others. However, if we trace our foodways, the web of relationality is revealed. Food is one window through which every aspect of the world and its ever-becomingness can be seen. One glimpse of nature’s relational web offers insight to its inescapabilty, even in what many consider the mundane.

The chair I sit on, for instance, was crafted from the trunk of a tree—oak, I believe. When I look at it with awareness of the flux of ever-becoming, I see more than a chair. I see squirrels on muscular hind legs with nimble hands, scurrying about stashing nuts; I see birds, agile, alert and strong-clawed, pecking beetles and larvae from cracked bark, carefully fashioning nests on precarious limbs; I see mosses, lichens, and licorice ferns. When I look deeply into the chair I see droplets of rain absorbed through the leaves and roots. I see soil—teaming with innumerable microbial cells and mycelium of fungi, decomposing dead plants, feeding the tree. There is a lot that one can see in a chair. If you look.
I see more. A chair must be crafted. Like the globalized food industry, there are equally as many energy inputs involved in the manufacture a chair. First and foremost, one must cut down a tree. A logger needs a saw of sorts to fell the tree. Saws are manufactured in factories by people. The factories in which saws are manufactured are composed of wood and metal that were constructed by other people. The logger, the people who manufacture the saws in the factories, and the people who build the factories all need to eat—we know that process. Many of these people likely had children who learn not these lessons in school and are safe within their homes constructed of wood which was harvested by loggers with saws that were manufactured in other factories. Do you see that we have not yet cut down the tree? The chair I am sitting on connects me to the natural world and to my fellow people. I can no longer see a chair as simply a chair. Without looking deep into the chair, it’s easy to convince ourselves that nature, and other people, are not a part our lives. Looking more deeply, we see clearly that they are.

We also learn, if we look closely, that just as our relationships are not limited spatially, our relationships are not limited temporally. Astrid did not pick the bell pepper simultaneously as the consumer bought it. Her efforts, and the efforts of the land, occurred in the consumer’s past. And the one who buys the pepper creates the conditions to keep Astrid, and people like Astrid, working in the same oppressive conditions. The consumer not only supports Astrid’s oppressive past, but condemns her to an equally oppressive future. Purchasing a new chair supports the chair industry practices of the past and cultivates the future motivation for that industry. Virtually every decision made affects those near and far, past and present and future. Although disenfranchised from
much, and although most of the processes that contribute to what we purchase are out of the line of sight, we are responsible.

Ethics of care embodies responsibility. The characteristics of ethics of care were the obvious choice for this thesis—nature in flux is ever-becoming because of its relationality. With the understanding that relationships are pervasive far beyond the comprehension of most consumers, ethics of care challenges us to improve those relationships. I believe that top-down solutions work well but the conditions necessary for change must be ideal. Those who are creating the rules are also the same who exploit and oppress. We can plea and beg, yet “they” seem to be getting what they want. And they seem to want more of whatever it is they think they need. Oh, and by-the-way, there is no “they”—only us. Industry initially quenched the thirst of wants and desires. Corporations are now in control. And as long as the industries are in charge and making the rules, it’s up to each of us to make responsible choices. Sadly, our choices have been reduced to options, and the industries provide the options.

But if each of us investigate, learn the history of the options available, question the necessity of desires, moderate neophilia, and each make a difference by improving intricately bound relationships, even if one consider their contribution infinitesimal, it is nonetheless a contribution. And when made with awareness, informed by intrinsic values, relations are improved. This is the essence of ethics of care. Each is responsible, regardless of the magnitude of the outcome. Each choice that reduces exploitation and oppression, each choice that shortens the distance of food origins, each choice that decreases the number of handlers, loosens the grasp of a disenfranchising globalized food
industry and increases food security and sovereignty. Daily, we have the choice to be a benefit or a detriment in the world. And if I mindfully, or unmindfully, contribute detrimentally, I find, eventually, sooner or later, that I am hurting myself. We are as much a part of Astrid’s life as she is of ours.

Environmental ethicists should now be able to see the shortcomings of our arguments. Devaluing instrumentalness has weakened and limited theory. Hargrove makes the claim that a cave is valuable just because it is; that it doesn’t have to do anything. I showed how it does do things, like provide homes to bats and bears. But what the cave, or a tree, or a valley, or a mountain really represents is an ever-becoming process, the flux. The value has been misplaced—the cave is valued as a fixed noun as opposed to an ever-becoming process. In embracing the process and relational web, the ethicist can increase the value by demonstrating interconnectedness. There is more in need of protection than just a cave, just a tree, just a valley, or just a mountain.

A new ethical theory cannot compete with industrialization and material greed without embracing all of the inseparable relationships. Environmental ethicists and all people influenced by a bifurcated vernacular are tardy in challenging Descartes’ claim on the senses. Yes, they can be misleading. But as I have shown, mathematics and an objective science are misleading. Essentially, they only apply in ideal, abstract conditions—outside of the ever-present reality of complex relationships. A fallacy. While science is invaluable, a worldview—a vision—founded on duality, objectivity and empirical evidence, has succeeded in alienating us from our own intrinsic values. In breaking down the mind-body dualism, a rich relationship between the subjective and
objective emerges. It’s far past time that that connection is made. Just like instrumentality, relationality can increase the value of a cave. When we utilize both objectivity and subjectivity to solve dilemmas we find ourselves with two axiological tools as opposed to one. If they are found to conflict one-another, as they often do, deeper investigation is demanded. No longer should we defer to a patriarchal concession to objectivity, rationality, and impartiality. Embrace subjectivity. Embrace responsibility. Embrace the process, the flux.

Here is what I find most fascinating: a pepper is not just sitting around being a pepper. A pepper is either growing, decaying, or has been consumed and is being transformed. Regardless, it is ever-becoming. The only way a person can be responsible is by doing responsible acts. Responsibility then, is either happening or the opposite is, irresponsibility. Like the pepper, responsibility is either growing, decaying, or being transformed. Either way, it is ever-becoming. In order for one to be considered as caring they must provide care with attention and intention—virtuous care. Like responsibility, care too is an action. Additionally, our intrinsic values are not simply sitting there informing us what is valuable. Inherent in values is the suggestion of a course of action. And as the awareness of the nature of the world is cultivated, intrinsic values become ever-more informative. Caves, and trees, and valleys, and mountains are never static. They too are a verb, tied to an ever-becoming process. Wonder too is something that is be done, else a noun we become.
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