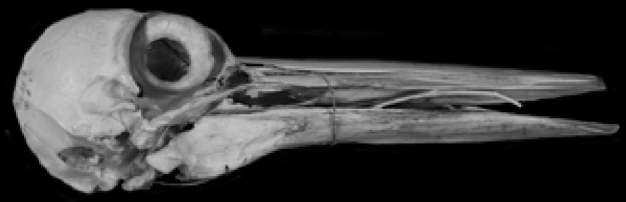

Ivory-Billed Woodpecker

2

Anthropocentrism Reconsidered

CAE will begin this chapter by telling a nonfiction story that is impossible to accurately tell. The reason it is impossible to tell is because we do not know the intention of the key actor. The intention must be inferred from the occurrence, and this process of interpretation is very much open to the biases and expectations of the narrator. Be that as it may, we will try to tell it.

This story is about a bonobo named Kanzi, who currently lives in the Iowa Primate Learning Sanctuary in Des Moines. Kanzi was born in captivity, and has an ape mother, Matata, and an adoptive human mother, biologist Sue Savage-Rumbaugh, who raised Kanzi from shortly after his birth. Sue immersed Kanzi in an English language environment in which he began to learn the meaning of words, which he expresses through the use of a lexigram keyboard (although he also has limited vocalizations and knows some sign language). Kanzi appears to know over four hundred words.

Here is the story as narrated by Bill Fields, a sanctuary researcher and one of Kanzi's internatural partners. Kanzi has a room that is separated from an attached room by glass, so that he can be observed without anyone having to enter his space. On this particular day, Kanzi's human mother was in an argument with a colleague over what video format should be used for the archive. As the argument grew increasingly heated, Kanzi banged on the glass, prompting Bill to enter his room. Kanzi "said" to Bill that he needed to punish the person who was acting aggressively toward Sue. Bill replied that he could not intervene in this way. He deferred to human etiquette. Kanzi said that Bill should punish the aggressor or he would bite Bill. Bill did not intervene. Twenty-four hours later, as Kanzi was being transferred from one to space to another, he broke away from Sue. He ran into Bill's office, where he bit off one of Bill's fingers and mangled his hand. Consequently, Bill refused to speak to Kanzi. Kanzi called for Bill repeatedly over a period of months. He wanted to resume their association. Bill insisted that he would not see Kanzi until Kanzi apologized. Kanzi replied that he had not done anything that required an apology. After eight months of Bill's silent treatment, Kanzi finally apologized with a hug and a submissive scream reinforced by saying "yes" when asked if his humble actions constituted an apology.

Beyond the material events (and short of using the most tortured of science-speak, even these are nearly impossible to describe without prejudice), how can we interpret what happened in this story? Was there a linguistic exchange? Was this a collision of bonobo and human culture in internatural space? Or, more specifically, was this a collision of bonobo and human models of justice in internatural space? Did Kanzi give Bill an ultimatum (a very complex thought pattern)? Why did Kanzi wait twenty-four hours to bite Bill, or could we say, carry out the threat? Or were the bite and the "ultimatum" unrelated? Why did Kanzi think an apology was not necessary, and why did he finally agree to apologize? For those charged with the imperative of never anthropomorphizing, this story has to blow some circuits. As nonrational as it may be, and certainly unscientific, the desire to go all in on anthropomorphizing this situation is amazingly intense. CAE wants to agree with Savage-Rumbaugh that Kanzi is an "ape at the brink of the human mind." We begin to wonder whether anthropomorphism, or its sibling anthropocentrism, are always such bad things. For understanding another species within strict scientific parameters, they are probably so, but in terms of connecting or bonding with other species or ecological systems less common to human experience, perhaps not. For building a more empathetic awareness of the natural world, and for all the internatural relationships we have on a daily basis, anthropomorphism and anthropocentrism might be necessities. There is an affirmational desire in anthropomorphism and anthropocentrism that can be harnessed in a manner that motivates people to work for the environment and nonhuman creatures alike.

If we examine the well-known animal-saving initiatives, anthropomorphism plays a significant role. The "cute factor" is often sited as a key nonrational motivator in these campaigns—but *why* is a creature cute or charismatic? CAE would say this is an anthropomorphic response. Baby mammals are cute because they are an extension of human babies, with their large, probing eyes and petite size. Moreover, we can project onto them qualities that we find desirable in our own children, such as innocence and playfulness. The animals with which humans strongly identify are those that are easiest to anthropomorphize—the majestic big cats, the soaring eagles, the playful dolphins, and the cuddly pandas. At other times the bond exists because we believe they are close to us in consciousness, as with whales and great apes. When we examine the continuum of our attraction and disgust for other animals, it seems very apparent that those animals most like us skew toward the attractive side and those that we identify with least skew toward the repulsive. For example, humans tend to like animals that are dry. We tend not to care for wet and slimy creatures. We tend to prefer fur to scales, and vertebrates to invertebrates. Good news for tigers and polar bears; bad news for the tumbling creek cave snail (which is also endangered).

Our anthropocentric feelings for these animals result not only from their perceived similarity to us, but also from our desire to be like them. We project the qualities we find noble onto nonhumans and let them mirror these qualities back. Associating human characteristics with animals is engrained in us, and often, in its positive form, manifests in objects like totems, mascots, coats of arms, and other insignia. Of course, through negative aesthetic bias we associate the worst with nonhuman life as well. No one wants to be a weasel, a slug, or scum, but for the most part the human inability to disassociate our own qualities from those of animals is the basis for empathy for them, for the environment that sustains them, and for the planet we share. Anthropocentrism and the humanism that emerges from it is also the basis of the ideology that has supported environmental progress in the US. CAE will now move away from this rather whimsical discussion to examine how the forces of humanism (with all its anthropocentrism) and true antihumanism (with all its contempt for any life beyond the ego) have battled over the environment.

Why Conservative Americans Love John Locke

CAE will just come right out and state that any discourse or movement (with few possible recent exceptions) in the US that has been of benefit to the environment has had anthropocentrism at its foundation, and conversely, that most of the bad that has happened has been in part due to its absence. To be sure, anthropocentrism can be very ugly given that its key principles are that humans are at the center of all life, and that the good is measured by what is beneficial to humans. But we should not take these principles in isolation. Once put into a social and historical context and framed within a humanistic perspective, these prideful notions may not be as environmentally dangerous as they first appear—particularly if we contrast them with those of capitalism in its raw neoliberal form. In US-style neoliberalism, the *individual* human is the center of all things and the good is measured by how much benefit an individual reaps. Humanity as such is not a meaningful category, and is certainly not worth any investment as that would lessen or negate potential benefits to the individual. In neoliberalism, it is "every man for himself," and all other subjects and objects are merely resources to be used to better one's station or to lower someone else's. Investment in environmental sustainability is a waste since the individual is finite. Resources need only last for a lifetime. But CAE is getting ahead of ourselves.

If we want to understand the environmental debate over land and resources in the US, we must review the work of John Locke (1632–1704). Locke was a British revolutionary and philosopher who championed the goal of destroying the monarchy and ending the divine right of kings. He wanted to reset the chain of being so that humans were at the top, sharing the world as equals, and creating forms of governance that reflected these new social relations. Lockean philosophy was of exceptional significance in colonial and revolutionary America, and would continue to be, long after many of its key ideas had been disassociated from Locke in the popular imagination and transformed into traditional political wisdom. Locke's ideas were pivotal in the American development of ideas about individual rights, land use, and property rights, and none of Locke's works was more significant than *The Second Treatise of Government* (1690).

For Locke, the starting place for understanding property and government was providence. Humans are on earth for a purpose, and that is to move through time improving their quality of life. God the Creator has made humans and earth as a perfect potential (divine property). Human purpose is to develop oneself and the environment as a way to serve God by completing His work, thus creating natural property. The key to development is labor. Labor is important on two levels. First, it is through labor that value and property are created. An apple on a tree is but a potential placed there by God to be used by people. It is incumbent upon an individual, when confronted by such potential, to pick the fruit, lest it go to waste. Should an individual not answer the call, thus allowing the fruit to rot, he (Locke acknowledged only male labor) would be guilty of idleness and refusing God's command to complete His work. Conversely, if the fruit is picked, through his labor an individual may now take ownership and may consume the fruit or take it to market to sell to others, thus bestowing upon the apple a value that it did not have prior to the act of picking it.

Second, labor becomes important in and of itself. In the North, among the Puritans and other Protestants, this made perfect sense. When a person works he is following in the footsteps of the Creator, and perhaps more importantly, shielding himself so that sin may not find its way into his soul. Idle hands are the Devil's workshop, so the best protection from temptation is constant work. For those who had broken from the Catholic tradition with its emphasis on prayer, reflection, and introspection as means to commune with that which is holy and as means to protect oneself from sin, the only safe engagement with a world in which worship was limited was work. This same ethic was popular in the Protestant South as well. Idleness was not acceptable. This concept was used as one of the justifications for slavery. Many slaveholders were of the belief that they were protecting the souls of their slaves by keeping them in constant toil, for otherwise they would assuredly be led into temptation. Poor white people were browbeaten with this principle (for surely they would not be poor if they were working as they should). A "cracker"—someone who is "cracked" in the head because they are ignoring their duty to God by living in idleness—was profoundly looked down upon (and often considered to be of a station lower than a slave for his refusal to work). A man's relation to hard labor was a direct measure of his character. As these notions evolved into partisan political ideology, they became the basis for the conservative contempt for any type of welfare, as well as for those who accept it. Conservatives did not recognize any type of structural economic, historical, or social disadvantage. Blame for an impoverished state of being always fell upon the individual as a personal problem (a character defect), and never on the system as a social problem.

There is one more very sad chapter regarding idlers in America, and that is the story of the indigenous North Americans. Lockean theory was taken to mean that those who built a lifestyle around the sin of idleness, mocking God with their refusal to answer the call of providence by developing the land, should be forcibly removed or exterminated so that those of a more industrious character could develop the resources. The indigenous people with their nomadic low-production communities were acting as a hindrance to God's work. Many of those participating in the destruction of native peoples and/or their cultures believed they were carrying out the will of God, and thus doing what was right for the environment and the nation. CAE should note, however, that like the doctrine of "manifest destiny," this application of Lockean philosophy was contested. Conquest by imperialist means was not a consensus position.

The consequence of this collection of ideas was profound in the American experience. The idea that one should work hard and develop the land in a frontier nation was a given. In terms of the colonizers, it was in everyone's best interest, from the wealthy to the poor. Locke was widely embraced from north to south, and most certainly among the founding fathers. The westward expansion was nonstop, always with the idea of public land development, and in turn led to the enclosure and privatization of massive tracts of land. However, Locke did provide some limits on development that were very similar to anarchist ideas on personal property. Locke believed that land enclosure should be limited to the amount of land an individual (or family, because the Bible recognized this social unit) could work. If land was lying fallow, or if its fruits were left rotting, another individual would have the right to claim that land or product. So not only were there limits to claims, but the claim had to be continually worked. There was no resting on past achievement.

A second important development for environmental relations is contained in this ideological package. Locke is suggesting—and the founding fathers and subsequent administrations, all the way through the nineteenth century, did declare—that all public land was open to development. And all land that was not in private hands was public. This was a practical way to build a nation, but as an ideology it became an environmental disaster as the land ran out. In all fairness, Locke could never have foreseen the development of forms of power beyond that of the flesh of people and animals. Steam and electrical power were too far on the horizon. Nor could he ever have dreamed that the US would make corporations individuals. Locke was not a supporter of mass inequality, so CAE believes he would have had to seriously update the limits he proposed had he been able to see what development had wrought by the late twentieth century, and how his system of limits had been inverted into a justification for limitless development and resource exploitation.

A final consideration for environmental relations is the meaning of "waste." This would become a very contested word by the end of the nineteenth century, but for the early history of the US, the meaning was fairly stable and enjoyed a near consensus. Waste was the failure to maximize the potential of a given resource. Locke thought of this in primarily agrarian terms. Ten acres of cultivated land could produce more than one hundred acres left to nature. Locke appears to associate high production with wealth and abundance, and not with any negatives, as God has provided all that humans could ever need. The implications of this idea of waste for the actual land can be somewhat surprising to the environmentally sensitive reader. "Wilderness" becomes an extreme negative in this ideological system because it is immediately associated with waste. Wilderness is any land not being developed to its full economic potential. Wilderness is the land equivalent of a human who is an idler. They are the abject and the unacceptable. Like waste, wilderness would also become a contested concept by the end of the nineteenth century.

The Lockean State

Locke begins his consideration of governance with a reflection on humans in a state of nature. This presocial (although prepolitical would be a better term) state is set in contrast to life in the Hobbesian world famously expressed as "nasty, brutish, and short." While Locke would agree with Hobbes that in a state of nature each individual is sovereign, he did not believe that the state of nature was anarchy. There were laws of nature that guided interrelations among individuals. There was a sense of justice and injustice. This tempered the population of individuals, so there was no war of all against all, but there were most certainly disputes, and disputes were settled by the individuals involved in the disagreements in both just and unjust ways. For Locke, this was not optimal, and thereby fell into the category of the undesirable, if not of sin, particularly when disputes ended in death. No means existed to justify death in a dispute, and murder was a violation of divine property. Humans were to be developed like any other resource, so murder, even in the event of perceived injustice, was unacceptable. On the other hand, Locke thought that a sentence of death from a fair and impartial judicial system as a way to remedy an injustice was acceptable, and he considered it to be a legitimate use of political power.

In order to avoid problems of injustice among sovereigns, associations of individuals came together to make a contract to form a government. Political power is thus brought into being, and is described by Locke thus:

> *Political power*, then, I take to be a *right* of making laws with penalties of death, and consequently all less penalties, for the regulating and preserving of property, and of employing the force of the community, in the execution of such laws, and in the defence of the common-wealth from foreign injury; and all this only for the public good.

In this single sentence, we find so many of the fundamental principles of conservatism in the US. Government should be limited in scope, and minimal in function. Its primary reason for being is judicial. It is there to resolve property disputes in a fair and unbiased manner in accordance with the laws that have been legislated through common agreements. Its second function is to provide a common defense, which is done through "force of the community." While this idea is certainly an anachronism in the face of postmodern warfare, it lingers, and is part of the reason that many conservative Americans fear having their guns confiscated or regulated.[1] This idea is further reinforced when we realize that Locke, again in contrast to Hobbes, believed that the social contract is one among equals who will remain equal after political power is established. This not a contract between ruler and ruled. Such a situation is tyranny, and is to be rebelled against. A state that usurps power as a mechanism for rulership cannot stand, and it would be within the rights of the citizenry to overthrow this power. This defense of liberty and citizen rights within the state, as well as the defense against usurpers from without, cannot occur without an armed citizenry. Such was US colonial revolutionary theory. Combine this idea with the belief that firearms were a fundamental tool of production and protection on the frontier, and it is very clear how conservative subcultures developed that are very attached to their weapons. Having these objects of production are worth whatever chaos or sacrifice must be endured. (CAE does also recognize a third component that is never spoken by the right, and that is the pleasure and intoxication that some people find in death and/or destruction. We need only look at any of the machine gun rallies documented on YouTube to witness a contemporary form of Dionysian revelry.)

Locke's Environmental Legacy

Again, we cannot blame Locke himself for the environmental disaster that his contribution to social thought bequeathed, because he could not know what was coming technologically or legally. However, the way in which conservatives (especially libertarians) still embrace Locke's ideas nearly verbatim (with the exception of the limits he set) is ruinous for the environment nationally and globally. CAE will briefly go down the list. First, people may do as they please on their own property as long as they are developing it (this is a particularly glaring problem in the US, seen in the 2017 devastation of Houston by flooding during Hurricane Harvey, due primarily to unrestricted, unregulated development). Second, the regulation of property erodes liberty on a secular level, and is an evil on the divine level as it retards providence. Third, all undeveloped land is wasteland. God has provided us with these resources and expects us to use them. Fourth, all land that is not in use is open for claim and development, and that includes all public land. (For many decades this was true in the US, as many public lands were exploited by ranchers and the extraction industries. In the early twentieth century, most of these practices were stopped or regulated, but the desire to reappropriate the lands never went away. It has long created furious anger among those who would benefit from a reopening of the land to agriculture and industry.[2]) Fifth, God has provided adequate resources that will last as long as humans inhabit the planet. Sixth, land development is providential in nature. Seventh, in this new chain of being (absent king and aristocracy), all nonhuman forms of life are "inferior creatures." This idea is not necessarily a problem when all creatures are viewed empathetically as life, but in the context of the Lockean world, where inferior status reduces a nonhuman creature to nothing more than a resource, it can only be problematic.

In addition to these problems, there are two large general ones that have emerged and are a direct danger to the environment: individualism and divinity. Individualism is the greater danger of the two when viewed in the Lockean context. Everything other than the ego represents only utility. Humans are collectively unimportant, and the fact that an individual may be a human is of no particular value or meaning. Individualism has contempt or at the very least indifference to humans, humanism, and, dare we say, anthropocentrism. Understood in this way, individualism represents an unempathetic and cruel aggregate of sociopaths (much like conservatives consider those who do not share their view of the world). This is where divinity comes in. The world is not a cruel place. It is a place of abundance where each individual has the means to care for him or herself. Human failure is due to sin conjoined with defective character traits. Humans do not need to take care of one another (no one is their brother's keeper), because God has freed us from that need. God is our shepherd, and we as individuals need only take care of ourselves both materially and spiritually.

Europeans are often mystified by why US conservatives are so tied to religion (and Protestantism in particular) in terms of governance and policy making, especially given America's constitutionally explicit separation of church and state. The reason is that they cannot maintain the plutocratic economic structure they desire without it. Without it, political positions such as anti-regulation (of anything, including the environment) and anti-welfare could not be justified. There is no other ideological justification that has any authority in US culture that would find such positions acceptable. American conservatives are by necessity ideologically stuck in the eighteenth century with no way out, much to the delight of the church industry. This is also, in part, why originalist interpretations of the constitution are so important to them.

In the end, this combination of individualism and divinity makes conservatives very suspicious of any system. Not just governmental or economic systems, but ecological systems as well. Rachel Carson convinced them of nothing. On the other hand, any anthropocentric individual (including some conservatives of a nonreligious disposition) will readily admit that if we want to keep humankind at the top of the food chain, preservation of the environment that allows for this status is a necessity.

The Anthropocentric Environmentalists

By the mid-nineteenth century in the US, the infant stages of a counterbalance to maximum growth at maximum speed in regard to use of natural resources began to surface. Proto-conservationist and philologist George Perkins Marsh (1801–82), who wrote the book *Man and Nature* (1864) and later redeveloped it as *Physical Geography as Modified by Human Action* (1874), was influential in changing the terms of environmental debate. His sophistication lay in the fact that he believed the romantic argument was untenable in such a pragmatic culture. Awe and ecstasy extracted from natural beauty were not of interest to most (and especially not to the powerful economic elites), nor was poetry a rhetoric of persuasion under these cultural conditions. Instead, he turned to economic reason topped with a rather stiff moralism. Those of the Lockean tradition understood this manner of speech. He was also willing to put humans at the center of the debate, but refused to do it at the level of individualism. For Marsh, consideration of what is good for all, as well as what is good for future generations, was fundamental to policy regarding natural resources.

In *Man and Nature*, Marsh argues with a clear subtext of (human) collective good, and goes so far as to say that without humans, the earth would settle into a state of senescence (clearly incorrect, but that is not of concern here). In certain conservationist moments, he does mention that conserving land would be good in that it would preserve indigenous plants and animals, but his primary concern is what makes a healthy environment for humans now and *in the future*. Marsh begins by redefining waste. He does not see it as the underdeveloped. Instead, he makes a proto-Taylorist argument: Yes, we want maximum production and profit, but we misunderstand what maximum efficiency is. What is being called maximum efficiency is actually wanton destruction. It is a product of immaturity, somewhat like children eating sweets until they are sick. A balance needs to be struck between business and stewardship. To clear-cut forests and leave a desert behind is not an efficient use of resources. Marsh was also somewhat of a historian, and believed that ancient civilizations had made this very mistake. This was an early argument for the importance of keeping reserves of resources and the development of means that allow continuous use of resources without ending in their exhaustion (in other words, sustainability). Until such measures are taken, Marsh thought we would only see the worst of humans through their destructive impulses. He very much tried to establish a moral high ground, and supported it through an economic argument about how people can get the most from forests, soil, and water.

The answer as to how to implement these ideas was through administration. Marsh himself was not a reformer, but his argument did win a considerable number of converts, and most significant were those in the Interior Department. Within this department, a political predisposition arose that aimed at reigning in frontier excess and environmental destruction, and began to think of environmental administration and use of public lands in a more future-oriented way.

Over the long term, Marsh's legacy is that he began a viable alternative argument to aesthetics and developed the foundation of the economic argument for conservation in the US. Like the aesthetic argument that is the heart of this book, the economic argument is just as profoundly anthropocentric. It boils down to the proposition that biodiversity and resource management are good because they increase the potential for products and resources to be harvested from the environment that will benefit humans in general (as opposed to just profits for a few). However, the argument that making more species available for exploitation over a longer period of time will fertilize the ground for a more robust economy for all was no doubt distasteful to the more environmentally liberal-minded of the time period. They were not of the belief that the economy trumps humanity's higher callings and qualities regarding relationships among living things. Unfortunately, within capitalist society, where economy comes first, this rhetorical form of economic argument will not go away (and has not). Environmentalists have to fall back on it to one degree or another, and it is probably the only rational means to persuade neoliberals to change course in regard to the environment.

In spite of the growth of bureaucratic mediation between labor and nature, romanticism did not disappear. To the contrary, it began to organize, and turn its philosophical position into policy. Enter environmentalists' favorite writer, naturalist, and activist, John Muir (1838–1914). He and friend and colleague Joseph LeConte would bring the poetry back, and defend the perspectives of Walt Whitman, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, which represented a continuance of the idea that nature has an underlying moral harmony, and that one learns morality through communion with nature. But what Muir and LeConte were most concerned with was aesthetics (the scenic). Indeed, this is what makes them so deeply anthropocentric. For Muir, human experience is fundamentally different from that of the creatures who inhabit the wilderness. In nature, and especially in spectacular places of perfect form such as the High Sierras, people can have a totalizing aesthetic experience—a feeling of holiness, of ecstasy, of awe, or of the sublime. Areas most inclined to produce this effect were the places Muir and the Sierra Club sought to protect most. An aesthetic hierarchy was produced as a means to choose which lands should become parks and/or, later, monuments. Human experience was the key to the hierarchy. The mundane landscape was of little interest; rather, it was the places of grandeur that were to be protected, the places where people could look at nature in its most powerful form in terms of its effect on humans. In his case for protected public lands, Muir catapulted the idea of the importance of looking at nature (preferably directly), a tradition that continues to this day, and around which a huge industry has been built in direct tourism and in media that use nature as their subject. His advocacy for sending people into nature for intense and overwhelming experiences far beyond those of everyday life was a smart tactic in building a public will to protect the parks from the business interests that wanted that land back in production. The deep emotional bonds people built with the parks made them politically dangerous to disturb.[3]

Like all good romantics, Muir was a man who could live with personal contradiction in a manner that made sense. Muir was very fond of the idea of powerful individualized experiences of nature, and believed that it was a good idea to seek solitude in one's communion with nature, but part of the reason for this was so that individuals could realize how small they are—what a tiny, finite spark a person is in this great cosmos. Such profoundly individualized experience ironically deheroicizes the individual, but that is not the big contradiction. More significantly, Muir believed that communing with nature is important in order to build "fraternity." Experiencing nature together with others is very significant on a number of levels. First, it builds or strengthens the bonds of love and friendship among those who experience nature collectively. Second, it helps people to understand the public good and the value of collective investment. That one and all own these cathedrals of nature and that we may experience them at will demonstrates that what is good for one can be good for all in a manner that creates a transcendental shared happiness, rather than a separate, parallel happiness that the individualist would associate with public affairs.

Muir does not stop there. We remember that in the Lockean universe, people are measured by their relationship to labor (the production of value). Muir would have none of this. While certainly not a believer in zero work, he questioned whether labor is the core of a person's character and whether the surplus value produced through work is really any kind of luxury. For Muir, the highest state of being is total aesthetic experience, and that can only be acquired in nature—not at work. Muir viewed the Puritan work ethic as the recipe for a mundane life. He called for vacations so people could pursue higher callings in nature. He saw the nose-to-the-grindstone attitude as counterproductive to a person's humanity. It was time to stop working so much and have some fun; give up the mundane for the exotic; forget the conflict of toil and embrace nature's harmony; and do so with family, friends, and other enthusiasts to create emotional bonds, rather than the utilitarian relationships and associations that come with work.

Muir attacked the Lockean world on all fronts. Nature is good and complete in and of itself, and should be experienced in this form. Individualism and parallel happiness is not as important on human grounds as the aggregate happiness produced in community. Labor is not the measure of a person, nor does it create riches. At best, labor helps us produce the value necessary to allow us to take time in nature to enjoy aesthetic pleasure and higher human pursuits. Muir is preaching not just a worldview, but a whole new lifestyle. The lesson that Muir seems to be teaching is that we conserve, not because it is good in and of itself, or because, as with Marsh, we need to Taylorize our resources; we conserve because it is good for *people*, as that is how we discover the higher purpose of our own humanity.

Now to an even bigger contradiction, and a very strange bedfellow for environmentalists: Theodore Roosevelt (1858–1919). A staunch individualist who thrived on personal achievement and glory, he advocated for what he called a "strenuous life" in which individuals would repeatedly seek the greatest challenges to individual survival and steadfastness. Among his favorites were war and, perhaps second to that, big game hunting. These two forms of adventurist pleasure also brought twinges of anxiety for Roosevelt. Since there was not enough war for youth to test themselves, something had to take its place. For some it would be American football—a game that, at the time, had few rules and was ultraviolent, typically with serious injurious consequences that were sometimes deadly (the worst year was 1905, when nineteen deaths occurred). Roosevelt himself had to intervene to lower the intensity of the violence. For Roosevelt, if war was not an option, the second-best situation for the development of character was answering the call of the wild with weapon in hand for confrontation with the savage beasts of the wilderness. Thus, while he was worried about the proper socialization of the American male, he became equally concerned about the need for wilderness as a site where proper stress could be applied to youth. Not to mention that he and his comrades at the Boone and Crockett Club (a group he founded in 1887 consisting of one hundred economically elite conservationists with an interest in hunting) wanted wild areas to hunt in as well. This predisposed Roosevelt to support public lands and parks. And he figured out that, as president, he could order the conservation of huge allotments of land as national monuments. He went on to do what Marsh had suggested many decades earlier: manage the parks through administrative institutions with tremendous power to act independently in setting policy for the lands (politics without politics). So while some of the lands would continue to be worked, they would be worked as renewable resources, and environmental devastation would stop. Some lands would remain fully protected, and more wilderness areas would be designated as parks and monuments for their protection.

Herein lies the contradiction. While Roosevelt was an advocate of individualism, he also understood the need for collective investment, and saw public lands as an excellent form of public investment. Facing the savage beasts aside, Roosevelt viewed communing with nature as a social good where people build bonds with one another and experience our connectedness, "fellow feeling," and brotherhood. He saw nature as a place where social differences in conflict can play out in a positive way through shared recognition of common ground. At the time, he was particularly concerned with class conflict. At this point in American history, the distribution of wealth in favor of the rich was greater than it had ever been, or would be, until present-day America. Roosevelt believed that the parks and monuments, these common shared lands, could bring the classes back together and lessen the animosity between them. To his mind, while investment in public lands as a vehicle for individual expression or as a conservationist gesture was important, investment in scenic wilderness for its social value was equally so.

Roosevelt's bureaucratic paradigm of conservation and land management remains in place to this day (although it is under heavy attack), and the Rooseveltian ideology of conserving nature remained until the 1960s, when a new ecological perspective emerged.

In the early 1960s, people with environmental sympathies were captivated by the systems theory of ecology, best expressed to the public imagination through Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962). Carson (1907–64), a marine biologist and conservationist, may not have been the first to speak about nature as a flowing system of interconnections—that honor probably goes to Fairfield Osborn and his work *Our Plundered Planet* (1948)—but she was more convincing. She found the mechanism that spoke not only to liberal humanists predisposed to an attraction to nature, but to middle-class suburbanites who did not have the fate of humans on this planet on their lists of major concerns. Her explanation was concrete and expressed clear and immediate danger for all. Her description of the flow of DDT through the ecological system made a compelling case for the profundity of the concept of nature as an interconnected and interdependent system. The movement from air, water, and soil, to the plants and animals of land and sea, to the human food supply, and finally to our own bodies made an impression. If the planet was being poisoned, so too were people. Humans are a part of the system even if we (believe that we) have dominion over it. Should the ecosystem collapse, humans will die with it.[4] If a reader only gets through the first chapter, "A Fable for Tomorrow," the core of the persuasion is what a planet of toxins will mean for humans, rather than the argument that not polluting the planet is good in and of itself. While *Silent Spring* can be read as a document that challenges human centrality in the world, and attempts to nudge it toward a more marginal position, a reader can get through this book with anthropocentrism intact, and all is well and good, as the constituencies who were needed to see that DDT was banned were not alienated. The slogans inspired by her work to eliminate DDT were not "save the song birds" or "keep our aquifers pure;" rather, they insisted that this must be done to save the children and provide them with a habitable world in which to mature.

CAE must also reiterate that there was a sizable population that Rachel Carson did not convince of anything. Those who were still committed to the colonial ideology of the eighteenth century remained as suspicious as ever of systems, and believed that maintaining them overdetermines the actions and freedoms of individuals. Why attack herbicides and pesticides when weeds and insects must be controlled, and when controlling them makes yields and profits higher, and expands job opportunities? For this demographic, regulation of industry is never a good idea, especially when driven by ecological alarmism.

Anthropocentrism is not necessarily the enemy, and has in fact enabled healthier forms of necropolitics as well as environmental consciousness itself. Historically, it has been a key element in the persuasive rhetoric of those who truly care for the environment, and it has helped their arguments resonate with potential allies. Anthropocentrism and anthropomorphism are the foundation of empathy, connectedness, and investment in the natural world. To be sure, they are not useful concepts for scientific study, but they are of great use in poetics and aesthetics. Much of ecological struggle is being fought in this nonrational territory—which leads us next to ask: Is there a human tendency toward the nonrational?

Notes

1. In the South, guns were also considered a necessity by slave owners and supporters of slavery in order to maintain mastery over slaves and to put down slave revolts. After slavery, the residue of this practice transformed into a means for race control, and finally into stockpiling weapons for an upcoming (mythic) race war. These emerging post-slavery practices transcended regional concentration, and became lightly distributed through-

out the nation. Presently, most conservatives appear to be indifferent to the former, and only a small minority is participating in the latter.

2. By way of example, consider the two Bundy uprisings. The first was in 2014. Nevada rancher Cliven Bundy had refused to renew his license to graze cattle on federal public land in 1993. In 2014, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) obtained a court order directing Bundy to pay one million USD in back fees. Bundy refused to pay, saying he had an inherited right to use the land. The BLM closed the allotment that Bundy was using and began to round up his trespassing cattle. At one of the cattle gatherings, Bundy and his supporters, who included sovereign citizens and various militia groups (many of whom were armed), showed up to reclaim the cattle. In order to de-escalate the situation, the BLM agreed to release the cattle. Bundy still grazes his cattle on public land, has not paid back fees, and has not renewed his license. It is amazing to think how perfectly Locke's ideas on property rights in regard to public land, the right to rebel against oppressive rule, and the inherent mistrust of regulation and administration have been perfectly preserved, even though this form of land use interpretation for public lands has been relatively dormant for the past century.

The second uprising occurred in 2016 when Ammon Bundy (Cliven's son) and supporters from local militias and sovereign citizens' groups occupied the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. Their primary demand was for the refuge to be returned to the state of Oregon, and completely taken out of federal hands. This was in part a continuation of the Sagebrush Rebellion, in which Utah senator Orrin Hatch attempted to pass legislation that would limit designation of land and wildlife protectorates (although since the election of the Trump administration a form of this bill is back). The bill failed, but the Reagan Administration slowed the designation process considerably. The ultimate goal of the uprising and the legislative action was to return as many public lands as possible to state control, where ranching, extraction, and other industries would find a more sympathetic and cooperative political system.

3. Americans' love of their national parks and monuments is about to face its biggest test ever from the greed of business interests and their supporters. At the writing of this chapter, the test case is Bears Ears National Monument in Utah, where the right hopes in an unprecedented move to rescind its monumental status in order to allow further development, primarily by the extraction industries. The monument is very new (created by

Obama in his final days as president) and notably not a park. It is located in a deeply conservative state as well as a site that has been heavily contested for decades. In a mixed blessing, the monument status has not been rescinded, but the acreage is going to be reduced. We do not yet know by how much, or which industries will able to access the newly unprotected land. No doubt considerable blowback is on the way, and this order will certainly end up in court. Other parks and monuments appear to be safe at the moment, but should this test case work out, more attacks on parks and monuments should be expected.

4. Carson managed to make a major contribution to transforming environmental stewardship into a nonpartisan issue for the majority of people in the US; this would continue until Reagan, and then deteriorate rapidly into the merciless partisan warfare over the environment that exists in the US today.