

From Enlightenment to Enchantment: Changing the Question

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My starting-point is contemporary crisis: most fundamentally and dangerously, ecocrisis. However, the chief features of that crisis – climate change and biodiversity crash, including habitat destruction or degradation and mass species' extinctions – are more-or-less direct consequences of industrial capitalism and human overpopulation. Its causes being anthropogenic, it would therefore be more accurate to describe ecocrisis as ecocide. Furthermore, having no other home or mode of existence, humanity is also destroying the basis of its own integrity, viability and ultimately existence; hence ecocrisis is also a human crisis, and ecocide collective suicide.¹

With this situation in mind, I want to consider Kant's response in 1784 to the question, 'What is Enlightenment?' and Foucault's reprise exactly two hundred years later, as well as (even more briefly) how the same question was recently taken up by Matthew Taylor.² The point is to see, first, how their answers stand up now; second, whether those answers now point towards a better response; and third, whether indeed a better question emerges from that response. In doing so, I'm not under any illusion that philosophy leads the way, so to speak. Nonetheless, philosophies or worldviews or metaphysics do, it seems to me, play a role in what happens beyond that of mere epiphenomena or ideological window-dressing; so it is defensible, and in some ways and contexts helpful, to question them. I also have no interest in psychobiography; what matters here are discourses, especially as they are influentially taken up by others who may not ever have heard of their authors. But I want to add that 'discourse' refers not to putatively abstract theory (as if such a thing were possible) but to practices, including theoretical practices, which are therefore necessarily both embodied and embedded.

Kant's Enlightenment

Kant's essay targets humanity's immaturity, which he attributes to 'the inability to use one's understanding without guidance from another.' It needs no hindsight to be struck by his negative construal of seeking guidance for how to know and act; in blaming 'laziness and cowardice', he leaves no room for humility, for example. The corresponding positive virtue for Kant is, famously, exercising 'the freedom to use reason publicly in all matters.' Hence 'the motto of enlightenment', '*Saper Aude!*': dare to know! Only that will result in more true knowledge and fewer errors: the enlightenment he identifies with 'human nature, whose essential destiny lies precisely in such progress.' Then there is the politics of the Emperor Frederick II's position that

¹ For further discussion and detail, see my *Ecological Ethics: An Introduction*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011).

² These texts are freely available on the internet. Matthew Taylor, 'Twenty-First Century Enlightenment', London: RSA, 2010: <http://www.thersa.org/about-us/rsa-pamphlets/21st-century-enlightenment> (accessed 28.9.14).

Kant extolls in closing, to the disadvantage, significantly, of republicanism: ‘Argue as much as you want and about what you want, but obey!’ That is, obey the chief political authority.

Such a crudely schematic appraisal yields only the bare bones of the Enlightenment, but it is enough to confirm three things. (1) The impulse given it by its most influential voice was profoundly masculinist as well as rationalist, downgrading emotion and the body and, by clear implication, the feminine and Earthy. (2) In identifying the progress resulting from reason as humanity’s destiny, it was teleological as well as universalist, but in strictly anthropocentric terms. And (3) that the political dimension of that universalism was specified as narrowly discursive. Another point, perhaps less-remarked, is Kant’s almost monadic individualism, in which any ‘external’ guidance is to be rejected.

So far, so well-known; but let me remind you that we are interested here not in Kant but in the extent to which these values and views subsequently became part of dominant disembodied discourses. The ground was already well-prepared, of course, by Cartesian rationalism, dualism and scientism, itself drawing upon Christian and Platonic theology. So to keep even the Enlightenment from distracting us, I will borrow the approach of the late Stephen Toulmin and encapsulate it as the moment when the project of modernity, which predated and has arguably outlived the Enlightenment, achieved a measure of self-consciousness. Of course, to speak clearly of ‘modernity’ is hardly less general or demanding, but Toulmin’s excellent account makes it easier to do so.³

Foucault’s Enlightenment

Foucault suggests as much, describing Kant as setting out ‘the attitude of modernity’, and modernity itself ‘rather as an attitude than as a period of history.’ I agree, although we may link the two by supposing that in all times and places, most attitudes are present in some form or another, but in certain historical epochs and locations, some attitudes will be encouraged and become dominant while others are discouraged and thus less so.

Foucault points out that Kant links ‘the universal, the free, and the public uses of reason’, which combination then becomes the criterion for what constitutes reason. This raises the question, what becomes of reason if it turns out, not just empirically but in principle, that it is never and cannot be universal (identical everywhere and always), free (unconstrained), and even public (unaffected by personal and/or power-political considerations)? The result would not qualify as reason for Kantians and other rationalists, but the rest of us need not regret losing the conception of rationality that Bernard Williams has criticized as rationalistic.⁴ It was largely in order to defend such a conception and distinguish legitimate from illegitimate reason, Foucault suggests, that Kant embarked on his Critiques; one result is that ‘the Enlightenment is the age of critique’. As Bruno Latour remarked, ‘anyone who has never been obsessed by the distinction between rationality and obscurantism, between false ideology and true science, has never been modern’.⁵ Here, as so often, religious roots are apparent, this time in the iconoclastic ‘critique’ of idolatry.

³ Stephen Toulmin, *Cosmopolis: the Hidden Agenda of Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

⁴ Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (London: Fontana Press, 1993), p. 18.

⁵ Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester, 1993), p. 36.

Foucault also notes shrewdly that since progressive change can only be self-initiated, it has to be supposed that ‘man’ can escape immaturity ‘only by a change that he will bring about in himself’. Thus for Baudelaire, whom Foucault sees as an exemplar, the modern is ‘the man who tries to invent himself’. Thus both individually and collectively as ‘man’, the Enlightenment’s ‘autonomous subject’ – which includes its Romantic version, in this and other fundamental respects – starts to resemble a flight from relationship (both dependence and interdependence) which threatens to terminate in outright and, ironically, extremely childish solipcism. But Foucault substantially agrees with Kant, although he replaces the latter’s search for the necessary epistemological limits to knowledge with the historical (‘archaeological’, ‘genealogical’) study of ‘whatever is singular, contingent and the product of arbitrary constraints’. Such ‘permanent critique of ourselves’ (an echo of Trotskyite, and later Maoist, ‘permanent revolution’) is nonetheless in the service of ‘a permanent creation of ourselves in our autonomy’.

Finally, Foucault rejects what he calls ‘the blackmail of the Enlightenment’, namely the demand to either accept or reject it en tout, in a simplistic and authoritarian way. Rather, ‘We must proceed with the analysis of ourselves’ – which, for Foucault as for Kant, is the only kind that matters – ‘as beings who are historically determined, to a certain extent, by the Enlightenment.’ And what is at stake in such an analysis is the question, ‘How can the growth of capabilities’ – that is, ‘our’ capabilities – be disconnected from the intensification of power relations?’

Just to show that such questions retain some cultural vigour, I will also mention a more recent exposition, Matthew Taylor’s lecture in 2010 for the Royal Society of Arts on ‘21st-century Enlightenment’.⁶ Drawing on Tzvetan Todorov’s recent *In Defense of the Enlightenment* (anatomised by John Gray, predictably but no less accurately for that, as childish fundamentalist),⁷ Taylor selects three Enlightenment values for modernisation: autonomy, universalism, and human ends. Autonomy, he says, needs to be supplemented by an awareness of our social and natural dependencies. Universal human rights too depend on widening and deepening our capacity for empathy. Lastly, the progress of ‘human ends’ is imperilled by the steady erosion of reasoning about ends, including ethics, by a bureaucratic emphasis on the rationality of rules. (Note, however, that the rights and the ends remain purely human.)

Reevaluating the Enlightenment

Taylor’s last concern was voiced much earlier by Max Weber, who worried about ‘formal’ reason about means inexorably replacing ‘substantive’ reason. So this might be the place to remind you of Weber’s famous definition of modernity: ‘The fate of our times is characterised by rationalisation and intellectualisation and, above all, by the “disenchantment of the world”’. (One could adduce Marx, among others, in related vein; but don’t forget that Weber had the advantage of knowing, and taking seriously, the work of both Marx and Nietzsche.) And what is the contrast class, as it were? It is ‘The unity of the primitive image of the world, in which everything was concrete magic, [which] has tended to split into rational cognition and mastery of nature, on the one hand, and into ‘mystic’ experiences, on the other’.⁸

⁶ Taylor, see ref. 2 above. See also Madeleine Bunting, ‘Comment’, *The Guardian* (14.6.2010).

⁷ See Gray’s excellent *Enlightenment’s Wake*, 2nd edn (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007).

⁸ H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 155, 282.

As Foucault himself admitted towards the end of his life, it was unfortunate that he had not read the work of Frankfurt School (which grew directly out of Weber's) earlier on in his own. If he had, he would have encountered a critique of modernity arguably more radical than his; for despite Foucault's reputation, he never renounced reason but rather redefined power to include and arguably even thereby entrench it. In which case, the argument between him and Habermas was domestic, concerning the best way to deliver the goals of the Enlightenment-in-modernity; there was no critique of those ends as such. But I will resist the temptation to stray further into intellectual history and return to the question, where are we now?

In response, I want to begin by evaluating those ends themselves in the light of the crisis I mentioned at the outset. It will help us to do so if we realise the extent to which contemporary modernity entails not the failure but the fulfilment, however perverse, of the Enlightenment programme. And by 'modernity', to clarify sufficiently to proceed, I mean the triple engine of capital, techno-science, and the nation-state, driving and being driven by an ideology of progress for man (now politely redefined as 'humanity') through 'the rational mastery of nature'.⁹ This dynamic and ambition have certainly survived, and survived into, postmodernity, even if most of their political and popular legitimacy has not.

Most fundamentally, then, we see the triumph of the human subject – in practice, still largely if not overwhelmingly male – in pursuit of overwhelmingly anthropocentric ends, and still considering itself autonomous – which is to say, putatively disembodied and disembedded, socially as well as ecologically, with any significant others always in danger of being treated contemptuously if not brutally. (No 'external guidance' here!) We see reason – now realised as bureaucratic, economic and scientific rationalisation – and universalism, in its most successful form: the market logic of commodity capitalism. (These are now applying their demonic ingenuity to the commodification of ecocrisis itself: a market price for 'ecosystem services', carbon trading, 'green' technologies, etc.).¹⁰ We see the continuing hypervaluation of 'progress', similarly defined, such that any resulting problems are treated as only susceptible of solution by more progress. We see the continuing rejection of any limits, whether in human or non-human nature, in principle. And many if not most of us are quite free to argue as much as we want and about what we want – blogs being an obvious instance – but most of us obey... Having considered the alternatives, how we obey.

All these things without exception have been ably and thoroughly criticised, and there is no need for me to rehearse that here. I also don't mean to suggest that there is no significant resistance whatsoever. All I want to do is propose that in the tiny corner or, more optimistically, dimension of modernity broadly called philosophy, given the 'success' of modernity on such a murderous as well as suicidal scale, it is time to stop trying to refine the ideals of the Enlightenment and replace them with something else; above all, perhaps, something more humane.

In trying to do so, we cannot begin *ab initio*. There is no scratch, bottom line, or Year Zero from which to start;¹¹ so we will, as Foucault says, be influenced by

⁹ Val Plumwood, *Environmental Culture: the Ecological Crisis of Reason* (London: Routledge, 2002).

¹⁰ See the work of Sian Sullivan, e.g. 'Ecosystem Service Commodities – A New Imperial Ecology?', *New Formations* (2010) 69: 111-128.

¹¹ Respectively: Stephen Toulmin, *Return to Reason* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 178; Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Contingencies of Value. Alternative Perspectives for Critical Theory* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 149; and, with added irony, the Khmer Rouge.

what we are trying to replace. That does not commit us to either unthinking repetition or point-by-point opposition, however. Nor should we be afraid of correcting pathological imbalance by trying to move in another direction; that too would be to succumb to intellectual blackmail. In any case, I am not raising a placard that says, ‘Smash the Enlightenment!’ but suggesting an alternative that would, in practice, be a supplement. And I agree with Foucault that it is ‘necessary to make the future formation of a ‘we’ possible’: a ‘we’ that is not previous to questioning but its result’.¹²

From Enlightenment to Enchantment

Given all this, what are the minimum non-negotiable *desiderata* for a viable alternative? I guess most of us could agree in principle on a return to, recognition and revaluation of and even reverence for what makes life possible and, arguably, worth living. Shall we start with the Earth, and the earthy? And, integrally, bodies and bodiment?¹³ And equally, sex-gendered difference – especially, given its ongoing suppression and repression, the feminine? And last for now but certainly not least, relations, relationships, and the relational? Which is also to say, both the ecological and the ethical.

In order to help refocus our attention on, and indeed desire for, such matters, I think it might help now to ask a different question: not, what is Enlightenment? but, what is enchantment? For insofar as Weber’s insight about the terminus of enlightened modernity is correct, enchantment is just what it has occluded, suppressed and attempted to destroy. As Zygmunt Bauman put it, ‘The war against mystery and magic was for modernity the war of liberation leading to the declaration of reason’s independence....To win the stakes, to win all of them and to win them for good, the world had to be de-spiritualized, de-animated: denied the capacity of subject’.¹⁴ In searching for a radical alternative, therefore, enchantment would seem to be a logical place to start.

In a nutshell, enchantment is about *wonder* as modernity is about *will*; and what is needed is not a more efficient or refined will, but will qualified, contextualised and hopefully guided, even restrained, by something else. By the same token, enchantment is unbiddable; it can be invited but definitively not commanded. Hence the ancient understanding of *faërie*, which precisely coincides with the wild (*faërie* is nothing if not ecological) as ‘the ancient universe that prevails here on Earth wherever human beings are not in control’.¹⁵ It is not anthropocentric, let alone Promethean or Faustian. Nor androcentric; even in classical myth, arguably already decadent,¹⁶ its strongest exemplars are Aphrodite and the sexually ambiguous Hermes.

I am also taking a hint from Weber here; for ‘concrete magic’ is, if you remember, just what is lost in the process of modernist disenchantment. The term is apt. The *sine qua non* of enchantment is that it is an experience and world that is both ‘spiritual’ (‘magic’) and ‘material’ (‘concrete’). In enchantment, both those supposedly foundational distinctions which we have had drilled into us in recent

¹² Quoted in *University Publishing* 13 (1984), p. 15.

¹³ Ralph Acampora, *Corporal Compassion: Animal Ethics and Philosophy of Body* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006).

¹⁴ Zygmunt Bauman, *Intimations of Postmodernity* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. x.

¹⁵ Mark Dickinson, personal communication; thanks also to Anthony Thorley for ‘unbiddable’. On the wild, see Gary Snyder, *The Practice of the Wild* (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 1990).

¹⁶ See Sean Kane, *Wisdom of the Mythtellers* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1998).

centuries – between experience (epistemology) and world (ontology), and between spirit or mind and matter – appear in all their sectarian contingency. So too does the impassable gulf between knowing subject and known (but according to Kant, ultimately unknowable) object. And what replaces the object is another subject – in enchantment, ‘an object is an incompletely realised subject’ – and a world/ experience that is entirely relational rather than causal: ‘nothing has happened but everything has changed’.¹⁷ For the same reason, enchantment is entirely participatory, and where there is apparently no participation (such as in external observation or control, ‘objective’ assessment, etc.), it too is absent.

‘Here on Earth’: enchantment is not some off-planet heaven, or hell. It is transcendence in immanence, in which bodiment and embeddedness are absolutely integral: the place where we started, to coin a phrase, but known for the first time. Simultaneously ‘concrete’ – *this* place, *this* person, *this* music, *this* food – and ‘magic’: ineffably spiritual, unplumbably mysterious. This Earth itself, for example, in all its complex and subtle particulars. And ourselves, when we are enchanted.¹⁸

Now it should not be surprising, given its energy and ingenuity, that the modernist hybrid of capital, technoscience and the state has already embarked on colonising and enclosing the very things that make enchantment possible, especially the Earth and the living ‘material’ body, and on mastering and managing enchantment itself. In addition to the colonisation and commodification of ‘ecosystem services’ that I have already mentioned, there are the ultra-sophisticated methodologies (well-funded, significantly) of modern bioscience. And what else is the multi-billion-pound industry of advertising and public relations, to say nothing of its close and almost equally profitable relative, electronic pornography? If I am right, however, these enterprise will, or rather must, fail – and that, to the very extent that they apparently succeed.

Why? Because if enchantment is, as I maintain, inalienably wild and unbiddable, then what is being successfully produced and managed in order to target consumers and generate profit is something else: a simulacrum of enchantment. Indeed, if enchantment cannot be captured alive, this simulacrum is its externally animated corpse. In any case, to mark the difference, I call it ‘glamour’. Glamour bears much the same relationship to enchantment as pornography does to erotic love – not coincidentally, a principal site of enchantment.

Concerning the body and materiality, I have emphasised their centrality to enchantment. Does that not invite their neo-Darwinian theorisation and bioscientific/ biomedical manipulation and exploitation? Again, no. Such objectivising abstraction (without which such enterprises would be impossible) partakes wholly of ‘enlightened’ modernity, with its disenchanting effect; so it cannot coexist with the body and the material which is integral to enchantment. For that, a different kind of truth is required: the body as active agent and as lived, as well as living – of which Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Luce Irigaray and David Abram are the preeminent philosophers.¹⁹ (Not, I would add, Foucault, for whom bodies merely passively bear and reproduce the power-relations inscribed upon them.) In this construal, subjectivity

¹⁷ Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, ‘Exchanging Perspectives. The Transformation of Objects into Subjects in Amerindian Cosmologies’, *Common Knowledge* 10:3 (2004) 463-84, p. 470. The second remark was made in the course of four lectures Viveiros de Castro gave on the same subject in Cambridge in 1998.

¹⁸ See the classic discussion in J.R.R. Tolkien, ‘On Fairy-Stories’, pp. 9-73 in *Tree and Leaf* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988) [1964].

¹⁹ See my ‘Revaluing Body and Earth’, forthcoming in Emily Brady and Pauline Phemister (eds), *Embodied Values and the Environment* (London: Springer, 2012).

is never disembodied, while the material is, in Val Plumwood's words, 'already full of form, spirit, story, agency and glory'.²⁰ I would add that in such a world, the appropriate (one might say almost say 'default') mode is what it always has been: neither theism nor atheism, but animism.²¹

One implication of all this is that enchantment will always slip the nets prepared for it, and even as it sometimes occurs where and when it is invited (principally by artists of all kinds but also, in a qualified way, in religious ritual), it will continue to appear where and when it is not. For as Latour points out, *contra* Weber's worst fears, we have never been entirely or permanently modern. (To be that would amount, I take it, to psychosis.)

Nonetheless, we cannot rest in that blithe truth. I believe that upon pain of continuing in our present destructive and self-destructive course, we urgently need to rediscover and honour enchantment in the world and in our lives. Without that, all the scientific research, policy statements, committees and NGOs in the world will not suffice to establish a right relationship with the Earth and our fellow Earthlings. And that is my conclusion, except before closing I want to touch upon one example and enter a couple of important provisos.

Climate Change: Changing the Solution

One example is climate change. Most basically, after decades of IPCC assessments, the Kyoto Protocol, various G8 conferences, emissions are still rising. As Mike Hulme comments, 'Perhaps this particular way of framing climate change (as a mega-problem awaiting, demanding, a mega-solution) has led us down the wrong road.' Quite, and the still more spectacular failures of a single, universal and enlightened carbon-market, or political treaty, or geoengineering intervention, or mass spiritual conversion await in the wings. Perhaps, as he adds, in place of a 'universalised and materialised climate change... we must now particularise and spiritualise it.'²²

But let me sharpen the issue by pointing out that the 'enlightened' attitude I am criticising operates on the side of the angels too. For example, William Rees, who developed the concept of 'ecological footprint', despairs that 'intelligence and reason are not the primary determinants of human behavior'. Rather, 'brutish passion and instinct often overwhelm the godly gift of reason'. Rees realises that it is the 'economic growth paradigm' ('industrial capitalism') which is 'wrecking the ecosphere', but he attributes that to the 'biological drivers' of our 'lower' brain centres.²³

From my point of view, this attribution is less plausible than the one I have put forward here, namely of said economic system as a perverse realisation of 'reason'. Beyond that, what are Rees's rationalist exhortations but the lineaments of anthropocentrism, the very structure of values and ideas of human exceptionalism and privilege that is implicated in every upwards ratchet of ecocide? And as such, in ecological terms, a spectacular failure? What will 'save' us, if anything, is not what apparently separates us from other animals but a conscious recognition and revaluing

²⁰ Plumwood, *Environmental Culture*, p. 226.

²¹ See Graham Harvey, *Animism: Respecting the Living World* (New York: Columbia University press, 2006).

²² Mike Hulme, *Why We Disagree About Climate Change. Understanding Controversy, Inaction and Opportunity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 333, 330.

²³ William E. Rees, 'Are Humans Unsustainable by Nature?' Trudeau Lecture (28.1.09).

of what we share: the true commons, and common good, of our embodied and embedded life as Earthlings.

Another example (which, like the preceding, deserves more elucidation than I can give it here) is genetic engineering. Hark to the words of an influential scientist, writing in its early days:

The old dreams of the cultural perfection of man were always sharply constrained by his inherited imperfections and limitations.... The horizons of the new eugenics are in principle boundless – for we should have the potential to create new genes and new qualities yet undreamed of.... For the first time in all time, a living creature understands its origin and can undertake to design its future.²⁴

Now what about this programme, as laid out here, is not in the spirit of the Enlightenment – not, indeed, its rhetorical fulfilment?

I would like to add that whenever cultural justifications for horrors are produced (female genital mutilation, the mass slaughter of songbirds, bull-fighting, etc.), the contemporary progressive response is usually two-fold: to insist that (1) the crimes can only be indentified and addressed thanks to universal Enlightenment values, and that (2) the solution is to overpower local cultural dynamics with the same. The first proposition, however, is nonsense, as one counter-example alone should suffice to show: there is an entire, venerable and profound tradition, entirely uninfluenced by the Enlightenment – namely, Buddhism – the foundational value of which is compassion and the relief of suffering.²⁵ As for the second assumption, if I am right, then any such attempt is doomed either to fail or to ‘succeed’ imperialistically; whereas the more hopeful strategy (although also without guarantees of success, of course) is to locate, articulate, and strengthen countervailing *local* cultural values.

Two Provisos

The first proviso is that I am decidedly not arguing for a new universal metaphysics according to which the world is ‘really’ enchanted. The point noted about the disenchanting effect of monist and universalist objectivism, whether ‘spiritual’ or ‘material’, applies here too. Enchantment is a personal experience (whether individual or collective) – which is to say, embodied and embedded – or it is nothing. In an account that bears much repeating, the anthropologist Irving Hallowell, interviewing an old Ojibwe man by the Beren’s River in northern Manitoba, asked him, “‘Are *all* the stones we see about us here alive?’” (Formally, in the Ojibwe language, they are.) ‘He reflected a long while and then replied, “No! But some are.”’²⁶ That is, could be, in lived life. For the assertion that *everything* is *necessarily* alive, merely inverting our currently dominant view to the contrary, is no improvement; the authoritarianism of a universalist mode remains untouched.

²⁴ Robert Sinsheimer, ‘The Prospect of Designed Genetic Change’, *Engineering and Science* (April 1969) 8-13, p. 11.

²⁵ See David E. Cooper and Simon P. James, *Buddhism, Virtue and Environment* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010).

²⁶ Irving Hallowell, ‘Ojibwe Ontology, Behavior, and World View’, pp. 19-52 in Stanley Diamond (ed.), *Culture in History: Essays in Honour of Paul Radin* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), p. 24.

The second proviso is that enchantment is by its nature not only unpredictable but intermittent, temporary and/or incomplete. As they say of love, it lasts forever while you are in it; but only then. Boundaries and limits may be crossed, but they are not eliminated. (This is why enchantment has always been regarded by religions with universalist ambitions as inferior or counterfeit.) Put another way, as indigenous myth and folklore recognises, you cannot live in *faërie* (and remain human) forever. Indeed, the prerequisite for a healthy (non-grasping/ non-addictive) relationship to enchantment is, paradoxically, a strong ego and the ability to handle disenchantment.

Jan Zwicky's analysis is helpful here. She identifies the 'lyric' as experiences of wordless clarity and beauty which deepen rather than transcend specificity, contingency and vulnerability. She contrasts this with the 'technological', a world of use-values, resources, and manipulation, and then a mediating third mode: the 'domestic', which 'accepts the essential tension between lyric desire and the capacity for technology.... To become domestic is to accept that one cannot live in wordlessness. This is compatible with wanting to'. (It also permits kinds of use which differ from exploitation.)²⁷

The upshot of these two provisos is that for purposes of practical philosophy (and I follow Wittgenstein in holding all philosophy to be ultimately practical), what we need to develop is not exactly a philosophy of enchantment but one which can accommodate it without analysing, reducing or explaining it away in terms of something else. More: a philosophy which encourages a *modus vivendi* that recognises and values enchantment.

Renewing Humanism

Following Toulmin's lead again, I would like to suggest one promising candidate for such philosophy (metaphysics, ethics, politics). It is not the only one – others include ecofeminism, civic republicanism, and communitarianism, as well as philosophical Daoism²⁸ – but it can certainly hold up its head in such company. I am thinking of Michel de Montaigne's Renaissance humanism: sceptical, in the true – that is, classical – sense of the word, not the arrogant dogmatics of scientism; tolerant, not patronisingly but from a genuine recognition of the existence and importance of others; and above all, humane, without its object being limited to humans. Equally, it is difficult to read Montaigne's essays without noticing their acceptance of the reality of natural or we might say 'ecological' limits, but also of the reality of the sacred. Any such philosophy must indeed be both ecological and post-secular.²⁹ Yet he is often critical of institutionalised religion, as we too must be, notably its effects on indigenous peoples; and he writes respectfully, sometimes ruefully, of embodied life, sex, and (within fifteenth-century European limits which no longer constrain us) of women. In all these respects, Montaigne offers a model which contrasts tellingly, point by point, with that of both the secular modernists and their reactionary anti-modernist opponents, the 'One World' of both resistance-is-futile economic

²⁷ Jan Zwicky, *Lyric Philosophy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), pp. 258, 534.

²⁸ For a good recent discussion, see the relevant chapters by Val Plumwood, Dobson and Eckersley respectively in Andrew Dobson and Robyn Eckersley (eds), *Political Theory and the Ecological Challenge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), and *Daodejing: "Making This Life Significant": A Philosophical Translation*, transl. and ed. Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall (New York: Ballantine Books, 2003). See also Gray, *Enlightenment's Wake*, pp. 274-276.

²⁹ See my 'Post-Secular Nature: Principles and Politics', *Worldviews: Environment, Culture, Religion* 11:3 (2007) 284-304.

globalisers and global religious imperialists. It also contrasts with the arrogant, masculinist and anthropocentric enterprise, with its techno-cornucopianian faith in unending progress, that has assumed the mantle of humanism today.³⁰

Of course there is a place for reason in such a philosophy. But intellectualism has badly misled us about reason. As against the modernist fantasy of ultimate control, to which rationalism has all too easily lent itself, Toulmin points to the unavoidability of plurality, ambiguity and uncertainty – qualities of life which classical and Renaissance scepticism emphasised – and the humility they entail. He advocates recognising and revaluing four kinds of practical knowledge which the modernist counter-revolution, beginning three and a half centuries ago, has displaced and suppressed: ‘the oral, the particular, the local, and the timely.’³¹ Bodiment, embeddedness and enchantment are of the same family. And they have enormous positive potential, to which I hope this paper will contribute its mite.

³⁰ See David Ehrenfeld, *The Arrogance of Humanism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), Christopher Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and its Critics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991), and Teresa Brennan, *Globalization and its Terrors. Daily Life in the West* (Routledge 2003). On Montaigne, see David Lewis Schaefer, *The Political Philosophy of Montaigne* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).

³¹ Toulmin, *Cosmopolis*, p. 30.