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Luc Ferry's Critique of Deep Ecology, Nazi Nature Protection Laws, and Environmental Anti-Semitism

ABSTRACT: *Neo-Humanist Luc Ferry (1995) has compared deep ecology's declarations of intrinsic value in nature to the Third Reich's nature protection laws, which prohibit maltreatment of animals having "worth in themselves." Ferry's questionable approach fails to document the relationship between Nazi environmentalism and Nazi racism. German high art and mass media historically presented nature as dualistic, and portrayed Untermenschen as unnatural or inorganic. Nazi propaganda excluded Jews from nature, and identified traditional Jews as cruel to animals. Ferry's idealization of Humanism under reports the pervasiveness of anti-Semitism in European thought, including the French Enlightenment. © 1999 Elsevier Science Inc.*

THE NAZIS AND THE NEW ECOLOGICAL ORDER

In *The New Ecological Order*, the French philosopher, Luc Ferry (1995) critiques deep ecologists and animal rights advocates, including Arne Naess (1989), Christopher Stone (1974), Bill Devall & George Sessions (1985), and Peter Singer (1975), for granting rights or intrinsic value to nature. Ferry, who touts a renewed Humanism and is best known for his critique of French post-Modernism and Marxism (Ferry & Renaut, 1990), dismisses the trend toward elevating the moral status of nature, which he identifies with utilitarian antecedents. Ferry is troubled by the deep ecologist's call for a revolutionary new biocentric world order, fear of an apocalyptic environmental future, suspicion of technology, and "preference for nature" to

the supposed exclusion of human interests. Ferry holds that a few individuals opting for the greater good of the earth or for the nonhuman requires undemocratic procedures.

In *The New Ecological Order*, Ferry dedicates an entire chapter to Nazi Ecology, particularly to animal protection legislation passed on July 3, 1934, (*Das Reichsjagdgesetz*, literally "the national hunting law") and to nature protection legislation passed on July 1, 1935 (*Reichsnaturschutzgesetz*). Ferry (1995, p. 100) argues that the Nazi legislation gives animals and nature protection because they have intrinsic value, or because nature is worth protecting "in and of itself (*wegen seiner selbst*)." Ferry (1995, p. 107) concludes: "The *Reichsjagdgesetz* turns out to be the key pin of the National Socialist ecologist platform: in it, man is no longer positioned as master and possessor of a nature which he humanizes and cultivates, but as *responsible* for an original wild state endowed with intrinsic rights, the richness and diversity of which it is his responsibility to preserve forever." Ferry's suspicion of "intrinsic value" in nature, echoes concerns of other scholars about the monism proposed by early German ecologist, Ernst Haeckel, and its potential equalization of human worth with that of other organisms (Gasman, 1971; Burke, 1985).

Historians commenting on the Nazi environmentalism have also investigated possible continuation of Nazi thought into contemporary environmentalism, but have arrived at less damning conclusions than Ferry. In analyzing the Green political party, Anna Bramwell (1994) writes: "The biologic point of view that saw man as one with nature had been part of the tradition encouraged by the Nazis." She holds, however, that after the fall of the Third Reich, "any talk of holism, or a love of nature that adduced certain values from nature or strove to adapt humanity to those values, was suspect . . .," and the German educational establishment abandoned the "tainted philosophical baggage of the past [including] the discredited rhetoric of land and folk."

In *The New Ecological Order*, Ferry accuses the Nazis of being antihuman, and then by analogous definition of the deep ecologists as antihuman, he links the two movements together. Utilizing only two pieces of legislation, he generalizes the intent of a few passages to explain the ruthlessness of an exceptionally violent period of world history. Ferry neglects, however, to document the relevant antihuman characteristics of National Socialism, and fails to prove German environmental and animal protection legislation produced specific despicable antihuman acts during the Third Reich. Although virulent racism was the most death-dealing element in National Socialist ideology (Burleigh and Wippermann, 1991; Dawidowicz, 1975; Goldhagen, 1996; Gordon, 1984; Graml, 1988; Mosse, 1985; Yahil, 1990), Ferry mentions Nazi anti-Jewish policies primarily in regard to the ban on the ritual slaughter practices necessary to *Kashrut* (the Jewish dietary laws). Ferry also does not fully investigate the philosophy of the Eugenics movement which declared many humans to be "unfit" and thus "below" the standard "set" by nature. Eugenics divides humanity into those who should be incorporated in the natural order, and those who should be excluded (Proctor, 1988; Aly et al., 1994; Weindling, 1989). By implicating hunting laws, and avoiding the Holocaust, Ferry appears to be naively touting the French Enlightenment and old fashioned Euro-American democracy, while providing little real insight into

the actual roots of the Third Reich's destructive social policies. Ferry suggests that assigning nature worth in itself somehow undermines moral concern for humanity. If this concept is reversed, however, one might ask: if the Nazis thought there was intrinsic value in nature, why didn't they think there was intrinsic value in people? If the National Socialists were considerate of dogs, cows, and wild boar, why weren't they considerate of children? Western ethicists, going back to St. Augustine of Hippo, have long suggested that a major moral rationale for discouraging cruelty to animals, is that the practice of kindness to "lower" creatures encourages the development of compassion toward humans.

The purpose of this essay is to demonstrate that there was something dreadfully wrong with Nazi environmentalism, but it was not the simple inclusion of animals in the moral order, or a passion for *Urwald* (ancient woodland). I propose that the most serious danger was that Nazi environmentalism was *exclusive*, and placed "undesirable" races and non-Germans *outside* the natural order. Nazi environmental racism was solidly rooted in traditional anti-Jewish myths and was based on social and religious fears much older than philosophical concerns for *ding an sich*. The central elements in National Socialist disassociation of Jews from the national landscape were actually widespread in European anti-Semitism, and had roots in 18th- and 19th-century nationalism, romanticism, and social Darwinism.

To test Ferry's concepts, I identify three modes of environmental racism that are pervasive in European art and literature and then investigate the images of nature present in artistic sources, held in high regard, not just by National Socialists in general, but by Adolf Hitler himself. Although my examples from film and opera are not all specifically Nazi productions, they capture the sentiments of German nationalism prior to and during the Third Reich. I ask four questions: 1) Do these German works present nature as equal with humanity and are all natural objects of equal "worth in themselves?" 2) Is there anything morally questionable about the presentation of forests in these works? 3) Is humane treatment of animals tied in anyway to violence towards humans? And, 4) Are nationalistic German productions consistent in declaring nature's "worth in itself?"

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENTAL ANTI-JUDAISM

Although European anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism are very culturally complex, several environmental themes are extremely common in European art and popular belief depicting Jews (Bratton, 1997). One of the oldest is a contrast between Christianity as organic and oriented toward living nature and Judaism as materialistic, and thereby oriented towards the earth and the inorganic. A typical example is the west altar screen (*Letzner*) at Naumburg Cathedral where Christ on the cross on an arch between the two doors is depicted as Bonaventure's "tree of life." Grape, oak, hazelnut, and spring wildflowers wind around the capitals, symbolizing the economic success and fertility of the region (Schulze, 1995; Schubert, 1983).

Across the register, Judas at the last supper sticks his hand in a bowl and then takes carefully counted and inorganic gold from the high priest. In the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the implication is the gold-bound Jews wish to destroy Christ as the renewer and source of all living. The wall of the screen supports "a most curious Green Man. His face is formed almost entirely of bark instead of leaves as if to signify that with the death of Christ he too has had to withdraw all signs of life into himself" (Anderson, 1990, p. 99). A pre-Christian icon of human relationship to nature is thus incorporated in anti-Jewish art. Medieval arts, folk lore, and theology also associated the Jews with hell, often illustrated as a cave, and with Satan, who controlled the inorganic forces of nature, such as the wind. A second early theme is Judaism as false, evil, or an undesirable product of the natural order. Medieval Christian art linked Jews to smelly or lowly animals, such as pigs and donkeys (Trachtenberg, 1983). Numerous stained glass windows, carved choir stalls, and illustrated manuscripts represent Judaism as a false tree, sometimes bearing skulls or snakes, while Christianity is the true tree or vine (Schreckenberg, 1996). Church art also depicted the Jews as people of the barren, desert wilderness of the Exodus, in contrast to arising from lush, well-vegetated Europe.

A third theme, which emerges in rational European 19th-century letters is the concept that Judaism or the Jewish people are "unnatural" or exist outside the realm of healthy nature. Johann Gottlieb von Herder deemed the Jews "an alien Asiatic people" and called them "a parasitic growth on the trunk of other peoples" (Katz, 1980, p. 60). Johann Gottlieb Fichte was more vehement; he believed: "A mighty state stretches across almost all the countries of Europe, hostile in intent, and engaged in constant strife with everyone else . . . This is Jewry" (Katz, 1980, p. 60). Georg Wilhelm Fredrick Hegel, in "The Spirit of Christianity and Its Destiny," viewed the Jewish people as arising from the essence of their cultural origins. Jewish essence was "an aloofness and a possible estrangement from the world, physically as well as socially. Abraham was a stranger on earth, a stranger to the soil, and to men alike." Jewish separation extends past the physical earth into the sphere of metaphysics. Hegel held that "Abraham regarded the whole world as simply his opposite . . . he looked at it as sustained by a God who was alien to it." This approach of course made the Jew the special favorite of his one god, but it gave Judaism "a contempt for the whole world." Jacob Katz (1980, p. 70) summarizes: ". . . in Hegel's description, Judaism appears as an unnatural, inhuman, petrified social system, the product of a peculiar metaphysical bent of the human spirit." Raymond Keith Williamson (1984, p. 49) similarly concludes: "Thus, at the very foundation of Jewish life, in Hegel's view, was a sense of alienation whereby all nature, other people, and even their God were regarded as alien and therefore as threatening." Hegel's analysis is one of the first that fully casts Judaism as *unnatural*—not belonging to the organic or compatible with it. Hegel presents this a projection of historic Jewish philosophy or mind-set. The state of *unnaturalness* is thus inherent to Judaism, and it is a choice of Jews.

Hegel's criticism of Judaism appeared in new guise among the young, radical Hegelians of the mid-19th century. Heinrich Leo in 1828, declared that the Jewish nation

differed from all others because it had "a truly corroding and decomposing mind" (Katz, 1980, p. 161). He continued: "In the same way as there exist some fountains that would transmute every object thrown into them into stone, thus the Jews, from the very beginning until this very day, have transmuted everything that fell into the orbit of their spiritual activity into an abstract generality." Leo thereby also concludes the Jews divorce themselves from the natural, and reasons the Jewish aptitude for abstraction gives them an advantage in commerce.

Ludwig Feuerbach considers polytheism superior to Judaism because "the polytheist approaches nature as it reveals itself to the senses and conceives of it as an object of aesthetic admiration as well as of scientific observation and inquiry. The Jew, on the other hand, in his conception of nature transcends its immediate appearance and projects behind its creator" (Katz, 1980, p. 163). The Jewish creator God manipulates nature at will for the benefit of his elite nation of priests. These unnatural acts benefit only the "selfish" chosen people. Feuerbach thought Judaism was based on two major qualities: utilism (*Utilismus*, the desire for profit) and egoism. Feuerbach managed to not only relate the *unnatural* Jew to divine interference in natural process (which was already immutable in scientific circles), he tied the *unnaturalness* to the myth of Jewish materialism and love for money. He claims, in *The Essence of Christianity*:

The significance which Nature in general had for the Hebrews is one with their idea of its origin. The mode in which the genesis of a thing is explained is the candid expression of opinion, of sentiment respecting it. If it be thought meanly of, so also is its origin. Men used to suppose that insects, vermin, sprang from so uninviting a source that they thought thus, because the nature of vermin appeared to them so vile, they imagined an origin corresponding to this nature, a vile origin. To the Jews Nature was a mere means towards achieving the end of egoism, a mere object of will . . . (Feuerbach, 1957, pp. 114-15)

In the above passage, originally published in 1841, Feuerbach presents Judaism as a radical departure from "nature religion," a departure that is not just anthropocentric, but completely oriented towards the Jews as differentiated from other people. The audience for Feuerbach's work was both steeped in Romanticism and preoccupied with the great surge of scientific study emerging in Europe. Nature had been deified, and relationship to nature had already become a standard for social virtue.

RICHARD WAGNER'S *SIEGFRIED*

Richard Wagner, who consciously wove images of German heritage and the *Volk* into his operas, written in the 19th century, also incorporated the "Jew as evil animal" as a major motif. The National Socialists played Wagnerian refrains during their political rallies, and considered his productions to be genuine examples of undegenerate German high art. Wagner was openly anti-Semitic (P.L. Rose, 1992; Katz, 1986) and published racially derogatory essays, such as "Judaism and Music" and "What is a German" (Lee, 1994; Cord, 1995; Wagner, 1991). Marc

Weiner (1995) demonstrates that Wagner's operas repeatedly denigrate characters who are Jewish stereotypes. Weiner concentrates on physical features, and proposes Wagner's Jews are mimics of true Germans, and are wretched *Untermenschen* (sub-humans) who may be distinguished by their bad odor, high (and unmanly) voices, and club feet. Although Weiner makes little commentary on Wagner's complex sets and stage environments, such as caves, he finds that Wagner associates his Teutonic heroes with appealing animals, while relating his Jewish stereotypes to less lovable creatures.

In Wagner's *Ring des Nibelungen*, for example, Weiner finds:

The animal motifs . . . are consistent metaphorical representations of the physiological signs that Wagner, in his essays, interprets as highlighting differences between races. In the tetralogy, heroes are associated with beautiful, lithe, and powerful animals, while those figures evincing traits associated with Jews, such as avarice, egotism and lovelessness, are likened to lowly, disgusting, and clumsy creatures. As the superhuman, superior being, Siegfried is close to nature, to the creatures of the forest (birds, foxes, wolves, bears, and deer), and even to the fish of the streams with which he compares himself. (Weiner, 1995, pp. 90-91)

Weiner suggests that it is the entrance of the slimy, toad-like dwarf Alberich into the clear, sunny waters of the Rhine "that brings about the demise of the natural state" (p. 92). Siegfried, in fact, mocks Alberich for his ugly countenance, and directly calls him a *Kröter* (toad). Siegfried describes the Nibelungen as "ugly, disgusting and gray, small and crooked, hunchbacked and limping, with hanging ears, dripping eyes" (p. 96). Wagner thus represents nature as polarized between the beautiful and ugly, the clean and slimy and worthy and unworthy—hardly an egalitarian view. Weiner (1995, p. 91) proposes that Wagner utilizes "animal motifs representing the antithetical natures of the German and the Jew . . .," which is a subtle, but powerful, argument against the assimilation of "unnatural" Jews into German culture.

Wagner develops ancient forests and individual venerable trees as the nurturing environment for Siegfried and his magic sword. According to Weiner (1995, p. 98), "Siegfried voices his natural antipathy [to the Nibelungen] under the linden tree, the home of his natural soulmate, the Forest Bird, and therefore it is fitting that, after having murdered Mime [Alberich's brother], he speaks to the bird of its brothers and sisters, whom he sees in the branches above him, and longs for a similar family." In this case, the "natural" integrity and wholesomeness of the forest is used to justify slaying an *Untermensch*. Wotan places the sword *Notung* in the stem of a giant ash tree, and as in Arthurian legend, only the true heir of the Teutonic gods, Siegmund [Siegfried's father] can withdraw it. In *Das Rheingold*, Wagner situates his ancient gods (icons of German culture) on "glittering pinnacles," or lounging in a "flowery meadow," while the earth-associated Nibelungen are at home in a subterranean cavern which appears to lead to "ever narrower passages" on all sides (Wagner, 1977). Just as Wagner's fauna is dichotomous, so are his stage environments. His ancient trees are exclusive and rebuff all but the off-spring of the northern gods. The Aryan pantheon, the well-spring of Teutonic culture, resides in the open peaks and fruitful, organic forests and

meadows. The hateful Nibelungen are, in contrast, ground-dwelling toads, and denizens of the dark and confined underworld.

FRITZ LANG'S *SIEGFRIEDS TOD*

A second example of encounter with ancient forests and animals comes from an expressionist film produced during the "golden era" of German cinema in the Weimar Republic. Not long after the armistice ending World War I, Fritz Lang (1924) directed a silent version of the Siegfried myth and the resulting visual masterpiece became one of Hitler's favorite movies, *Siegfrieds Tod* [*Siegfried's Death*] (Kracauer, 1947; Eisner, 1986). The film opens with a lithe, handsome, blond Siegfried making a sword at a Nibelungen forge. Marc Weiner's list of "Jewish" characteristics apply well to Lang's version of Mime the Smith, who looks almost exactly like the bent, hairy Mime in Wagner's *Siegfried*, as performed at Bayreuth at the turn of the century (in a plate presented by Weiner [1995]). When Siegfried is finished with his blade, he emerges from a cleft in the rocks underneath two giant trees. The lumpy, chubby, misshapen Nibelungen send him off through the supposedly impassable Wotan wood on a quest to find the beautiful lady Krimhild.

The blond knight mounts his pure white horse and rides through a forest of giant trees, reminiscent of Arnold Böcklin's painting *The Unicorn* (Hartley et al., 1994). Scruffy Mime, in contrast, looks like a pile of decaying leaf litter creeping back across the forest floor to a rocky crevice. Siegfried is upright and organic, like the ancient wood. His origins in the *Urwald* represent the forces of life and the values of the eternal. Lang's camera then focuses on a dragon, sitting by a forest pool. When the Teutonic knight sees the beast, he springs off his horse and moves forward to attack, even though the dragon has not moved towards him. The agile swordsman bounds around the phallic, and thereby sexually symbolic dragon, and ultimately stabs him in the eye. As the dragon bleeds to death, Siegfried climbs down into the pool, and allows himself to be drenched in the dragon's blood. The knight tastes the blood, as if it were natural instinct, and thenceforth can understand the speech of birds. These images do not portray the protection of nature, but rather conquest of its ancient life-force. Siegfried draws his power and strength and an invincible skin from the animal that lies bleeding above him.

After defeating the ancient beast, Siegfried enters a land of mist, where the only tree is leafless, twisted and dead. A dwarf king, who is short, humpbacked, hook-nosed, and limping, jumps out of the black tree and attacks the Aryan knight from behind. Siegfried wrestles him to the ground and takes off his magic cap, which makes the king invisible in this border realm. The king promises Siegfried all his gold in return for his life. Siegfried follows the hobbling little man deep into a cavern, where the king's servants are manufacturing a crown for the giant of the north. Although Siegfried is admiring a sword from the king's horde, the vicious dwarf attacks from behind a second time. Siegfried slays him with a single blow, and the king and his servants turn to stone.

The protagonist and antagonist in this sequence look much like the trees with which they are associated. The elf king has long, knotted fingers and a craggy face,

much like the branches of the dark, diminutive, gnarled tree in the mists. The elf king is a troglodyte and belongs to the inorganic realm of the earth, rather than to the organic realm of the forest. When slain by Siegfried, he returns not to the sphere of the spirit or the mystic wood, but to the static form of stone. The film presents the Aryan as natural, upright, and tied to the organic, while mastering it completely. The elf king, in contrast, is a Jewish stereotype fitting many of Weiner's criteria, and is associated with the nonliving, including both the fruitless tree and the temptations of material wealth in gold and jewels, and is of subterranean origin. The little king also fits the Weimar stereotype of the Jewish capitalist as undercutting the German military in World War I, thereby stabbing the *Volk* in the back. Although Lang denied he was being purposefully anti-Semitic in creating the character, the make-up artist used a Jewish Habimah theater troupe as a model (Eisner, 1973). Lang's *Siegfrieds Tod* presents the treacherous dwarf king as even more crippled, hump-backed, and twisted than the villainous Mime. Again, nature and humanity appear in juxtaposition. The Aryan is associated with the organic and the noble forest, while the ugly, degenerate *Untermensch* arises from the floor of a cave and returns to stone.

LENI RIEFENSTAHL'S *OLYMPIAD*

The National Socialists controlled film production and censorship in Germany, from 1933 to 1945, and excelled at the production of propaganda films. At Adolf Hitler's request, Leni Riefenstahl (1935) directed several documentaries, including two films of Nazi party rallies, and her two-part feature on the 1936 Olympics in Berlin (Hinton, 1991; Hoffman, 1996; Hull, 1969). One of the central themes of Riefenstahl's National Socialist sponsored films is creative power or new creation. In *Olympiad* (Riefenstahl, 1938) Part I, "Festival of the People," the film unfolds "with a prologue set in ancient Greece. Mist and night suggest the spiritual realm as the camera prowls across the grassy landscape littered with stones of antiquity, remote and mysterious. In a series of tracking shots dissolve from the Ionic colonnade of the Erechtheum to a full view of the Parthenon, white and majestic against a clouded sky" (Ott, 1986, p. 172). Male and female Greek statues appear "shrouded in mist or mysterious silhouette" until the camera focuses on the torso and genitalia of the discus thrower, which then fades into a well-muscled human male, swinging a discus. After a series of shots of beautiful human nudes, the film follows a young Greek torch bearer to Germany. *Olympiad* thus claims the continuation of Greek ideals of human beauty lies in the Berlin games, and in the Third Reich (Welch, 1983). In "Festival of the People," Hitler materializes as an ever-present father figure. He is the only individual who appears repeatedly in close-up shots of the stadium, where low-angle shots place him above the athletes. Like a father he is very expressive, sometimes smiling, sometimes frowning and clapping like mad when the Germans win.

In Part II, "A Festival of Beauty," the opening frames show several natural settings including rain soaked oak leaves, birds, and squirrels. These fade into a group of men running through the forest. At first they are just shadows, but as they splash out

of a pond, their nude buttocks clearly appear. Heading into a sauna, they stand naked and dripping with water, much like new born infants. Their moist faces also associate them with the rain drenched oaks. The final shots of the sauna are completely filled with well-muscled, adult men, with genitalia, shadowed but central in the frames. Taylor Downing (1992, p. 71) notes: "The men massage each other with birch twigs. There are close sensuous shots of limbs, muscles, faces. The naked men dive into the lake . . . Man and nature in harmony. The sun is up now. The day has begun."

This scene is followed by running cadres of athletes at the Olympic village. These introductory segments are ultimately balanced with the final frames of the athletic competitions, where divers bound in to the sky and then plunge into the water below. "As the sky darkens, the divers soar into the clouds. Reason is suspended by the ecstasy of their silhouetted flight as they appear to strive for the infinite. Finally, the last diver disappears, zephyr-like, into a turbulent cloud bank"(Ott, 1986, p. 176). The Olympic flame dies and fades into to a great, multi-rayed star.

In Riefenstahl's creation events, nature produces not just human, but masculine power. In *Triumph of the Will* (1935), lines of marching males gather and actualize the natural. Not only do men, specifically Aryan men, usurp creative forces, they center all meaning in a single nation and ultimately in a single human figure. It is important to understand that the Nazis were not practicing old Teutonic nature worship, which did not deify human leaders or tribal organization. Much like modern industrial technology, the Nazis instead were drawing the energy of nature into the human. Nor do Riefenstahl's films portray "man and nature in harmony," as Taylor Downing suggests. The Aryan male is growing out of and rising above the natural.

Riefenstahl's subtle editing raises the Aryan male above women and other races of men. Her documentary of the Nürnberg rallies, *Triumph of the Will*, simply excludes the non-Teutonic. There are no Jews, gypsies, or Slavs in the idealized new Nazi world. In *Olympiad*, Riefenstahl captured Jesse Owens (an African-American) in some of his gold medal finishes, but he is shown in relaxed postures after the victories, and does not receive the attention one might expect. In a subtle racial comment, Riefenstahl not only favored low-angle shots of German and Japanese athletes in laurel wreaths, which make them look as if they are elevated or towering over the camera, she placed three race sequences at the end of Part I, where first a white hurdler beats "a dangerous rival," an African-American. The Finns (German allies) then best everyone in the 10,000 meters. Finally, the Japanese conquer the field in the marathon. Riefenstahl's camera repeatedly catches the noble Japanese runner (as the Asian master race), in between cuts to grain fields, tree branches, and the heavens. The natural world of the ideal German state is either exclusive, and no *Untermenschen* appear, or, when forced to entertain outsiders, idealized nature lifts the master races to victory.

THE ETERNAL JEW AND JUD SÜSS

Director Fritz Hippler released one of the most violently racist of all Nazi propaganda films, *The Eternal Jew* (*Der Ewige Jude*), in 1940, as the

Third Reich was bringing its government-sanctioned program of genocide into full implementation. Just as Wagner and Lang have aligned Aryans with good animals and *Untermenschen* with bad or ugly animals, Hippler uses the recent achievements of biological science, such as the development of germ theory of disease and genetic theory of inheritance, to support his discriminatory portrait of both eastern European and German Jews. In one sequence, Hippler presents the Jewish people as spreading across Europe and Asia, much like cholera or some other infectious disease. On his map, the lines, indicating Jewish "wanderings" creep along, until they form a spider-web like network (Hornshøj-Møller, 1995, p. 214), or a maze that looks like a spreading bacterial culture. In another, he compares the historic migrations of the Jews to those of disease-carrying "wandering brown" rats. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler had compared Jews to a "horde of rats in a bloody fight among themselves" (Hornshøj-Møller, 1995, p. 215).

The film presents close up shots of dozens of rodents pouring out of walls and devouring stored grain, as the narrator remarks:

These Jewish migrations remind us of the mass wanderings of a similarly restless animal, the rat. The rats have accompanied humans as a parasite from their beginnings. Their home [*Heimat*] is Asia. From there they wandered out in massive hordes over Russia and the Balkans to Europe. By the middle of the 18th century they had already completely spread through Europe. Toward the end of the 19th century they employed the growing shipping traffic and also settled in America, Africa and the Far East. (Hornshøj-Møller, 1995, pp. 84-85)

The comparison to Jewish immigration here is purposeful and aimed at the United States and countries where supposed *Untermenschen* "dominate." The script also elicits the old fears of invaders from the east. The narrator continues as rats creep out of grain bags, run through a kitchen cupboard and crawl out of a ditch or sewer:

Where the rats emerge, they bring destruction into the Land, they devastate human property and means of nourishment. In this way, they spread diseases—plague, leprosy, typhoid, cholera, dysentery, and other such ailments.

A flood of rats then hop over vegetables and boxes and dash along a wall. The narrator then dryly reports in scientific tone:

They are sneaky, cowardly and vicious and they usually appear in great hordes. They represent, among the animals, the hidden deceitfulness and underground destructiveness that is no different than what Jews do among men.

The rats run at the camera and then by it. The film cuts to a man and woman with thin, haggard faces trudging along a ghetto street, as the rat sequence ends. The scene with squirming, scurrying rodents, crawling over each other is intended to shock and to elicit the common human fear of rats (Hornshøj-Møller, 1995, p. 215). It also is the image of chaos and disorder.

Hippler incorporates images of Jewish culture and folk life to demonstrate how unlike the Germans the Jewish people actually are. Hippler's script emphasizes racial

separation by referring to the Jews as “mongrelized . . . with Negroid admixture” (Hippler, 1940). The film also emphasizes cultural separation by presenting Jewish butchers slaughtering animals as prescribed by Mosaic law and letting the blood drain from a wound to the throat. The titles advise the “sensitive viewer” not to watch scenes that are among “the most horrifying ever captured.” The German narration refers to the activities as *grausam*, or “horrible.” During the dispatch of a cow, the narrator declares that “Jewish law has no love and respect for animals in the Germanic sense.” Following the unusual killing of an unbound animal, which thrashes about, the film presents the Nazi attempts at banning the Jewish practices. The narrator blames the “Jewish press” for blocking the legislation and comments: “Considering the well-known German love of animals, it would otherwise have been impossible for Jews to continue their cruel torture of innocent and defenseless animals unpunished” (Hippler, 1940). The film also makes supposed Jewish cruelty genetic by claiming that these vignettes “reveal the character of a race that hides its senseless brutality behind the facade of pious religious customs.” The titles claim that the National Socialists have tried to ban kosher slaughter as “unworthy of a civilized nation.”

The sequence of the animal and biological motifs in *The Eternal Jew*, first compares Jews to undesirable species, asserts that they are parasites, and then shows Jews supposedly in “inhuman” practices. The bleeding of the cattle and sheep in the film also suggests the supposed bleeding of the German economy by Jewish bankers and capitalists. During the instability of the Weimar period, right-wing politicians blamed the Jews, England, and others for Germany’s floundering economy (Berghahn, 1987; Peukert, 1987; Heiber, 1993). The butchering is not surprisingly the prelude to a pre-war speech by Hitler, where he claims the Nazi regime will make the Jews work, instead of living off the productivity of other races. Hitler declares, “Should the international finance Jews, inside and outside Europe, push people into another world war, the result will not be a victory of Jewry but the destruction of the Jewish race in Europe.” The film, in an entirely unsubtle fashion, thus implies that the Third Reich is justified in taking death-dealing action against these inhuman and degenerate outsiders. There is no evidence in the film that the Third Reich is elevating animals above humanity in general, but there is definite evidence of elevating “good” animals above Jews, or *Untermenschen*. Further, *The Eternal Jew* utilizes supposed Jewish mistreatment of animals to exclude Jews not just from the ranks of decent and moral humanity, but from the entire realm of “healthy” nature.

Working at Josef Goebbels request, director Viet Harlan also released the anti-Semitic film *Jud Süß* in 1940. One of Harlan’s major techniques in constructing a Jewish business man as an inhuman villain is to make him an effete courtier, divorced from nature and natural relationships. At the beginning of the film, Süß is unable to drive his own carriage. He orders the driver to push the horses and an accident results. Still indifferent, he begs a ride from a blond German woman, who competently guides her horses through the gates of Stuttgart. Through the film Süß never rides astride. When the solid German middle class decide to remove him and the decadent aristocrats from political power, their horses gallop freely through the German night. *Jud*

Süss argues that Jews are divorced from the natural and therefore lack normal human relationships.

In developing the character of a shyster, Rabbi Loew, Harlan (following the Hegelians) presents Judaism as a false religion that has no knowledge of nature. In a scene where the Rabbi attempts to cast the Duke of Württemberg's horoscope, the film presents the rabbi as inventing the movements of the heavens. His only other interests are the costs of draperies and of *Süss's* gold bed. The rabbi is lame and overweight. Thus the character represents Jewish ill health and lack of environmental fitness. The Nazi version of *Jud Süß* argues that "lame" Judaism does not know or understand the natural world.

DISCUSSION

Political ideologies are not necessarily consistent or coherent in terms of their philosophy of nature. The Nazis, in fact, were masters of contradiction, and frequently honored positions or views that were logically incompatible. These artistic sources valued by the Nazis do, however, present some favored or repeated themes, including all three of the historic motifs identified previously. The Nazi cosmic order is strongly dualistic. Not just humanity, but the natural world divides into over/under, good/evil, and beautiful/ugly. Toads and rats are not merely lower, but are disgusting, undesirable creatures, which do not have "worth in themselves." Humanity similarly divides into the perfect and beautiful and the imperfect and degenerate. The artistic productions are filled with themes of ascendancy: of men over women, of Aryans over other races, and of humans over nature. Luc Ferry (1995) points out that the Nazi *Jagdgesetz* protects "all living beings" and makes no distinction between "domestic and other types of animals, or between inferior and superior animals, or between animals that are useful or harmful to man." Yet both Fritz Lang and Fritz Hippler distinguish strongly between "inferior and superior," both in the cases of humans and of animals.

The ideal of the *Jagdgesetz* was apparently not actual practice, nor did it prevent Nazi use of negative images of animals in propaganda films. Julius Streicher presented Jews as "bad" animals, such as pigs and vampire bats, in the Nazi newspaper *Der Stürmer*, and Fritz Hippler followed suit with "the rats" in *The Eternal Jew*. Further, even early in World War II, German troops looted local populations and without authorization killed livestock. Omer Bartov (1992, p. 92) cites official Wehrmacht documents in 1941 reporting "wild requisitions of cattle and poultry" and "a high incidence of the 'senseless' slaughtering of cattle" in occupied territory on the eastern front. Hardly just an animal rights question, the troops' actions frequently took the "inhabitants' last remaining food reserves and livestock," leaving villagers and peasants to starve. The Nazi practice of eugenics was strong cultural denial that all creatures have worth, as it separated both the animals and humans into "fit" and "degenerate."

The greatest threat presented by Third Reich animal protection legislation was actually the implication of Nazi propaganda that some "inhumane races" are unwilling

and unable to comply. As is true of many forms of discrimination, the racist state accuses the "outsiders" of actions similar to their own evil deeds. The National Socialist campaign against Kosher slaughter filled a need to portray Jews as violent and cruel, while at the same time accusing Jews of shirking military duty during World War I. Supposed Jewish mistreatment of animals is un-German, and thereby enhances the portrait of the Jew as an undesirable alien. It is inappropriate to equate National Socialist priorities to the "bio-sphere egalitarianism" of the deep ecologists, which considers questions such as the worth of spiders and toads and lacks such course and blatant racism.

One of the most dangerous juxtapositions in the artistic examples is the removal of Jews and other ethnic groups, not just from humanity, but from the sphere of the organic. When Fritz Lang's Siegfried swings his sword and "returns" the crippled little dwarf king to stone (his supposed original state), the Teutonic hero is casting the Jewish stereotype outside the ecological order. The hooked-nose, hunch-backed dwarf falls below the subhuman, and descends beneath the animals and plants into the realm of the earth. Nazi literature cast Jews as "earth-centered" (meaning "dirt" rather than "planet"-centered) and thereby lacking souls. *The Eternal Jew* refers to the Jewish people as "soulless." Hermann Rausching reports that Adolf Hitler confided to him that:

The Jew is the anti-man, the creature of another god. . . . I have stood the Aryan and the Jew over against each other, and if I call one of them a human being I must call the other something else. The two are as widely separated from each other as man and beast. Not that I would call the Jew a beast. He is much further from the beasts than we Aryans. He is a creature outside nature and alien to nature. (Sklar, 1977, p. 146)

This statement is strikingly similar to the ideology of today's white separatist "Christians," some of whom believe that only Aryans or white people lived in the Garden of Eden, and other races emerged from the earth outside the garden and are still "mud people" (Ridgeway, 1995). Today's neo-Nazis still divide humanity between organic (and ascendant) and inorganic (and lower) spheres.

Interestingly, recent studies of racist images in films produced in the United States, have tied wild or "uncivilized" nature to images associated with ethnic minorities. James Snead (1995) points out the potentially anti-African-American subtexts in *King Kong* where a natural giant, captured in Africa and transported to New York endangers women and disrupts urban peace. Eric Greene (1996) identifies threatening racial stereotypes in *Planet of the Apes* where intelligent animals capture and control human beings. These cases, however, appear to reverse the German pattern, and rather than removing the threatening figures by placing them outside the sphere of the organic, present "the Others" as animals crossing boundaries into the human realm or as monstrous aberrations of nature. The latter motif is also found in films conveying fear of the feminine (Creed, 1993).

The images in the films, particularly the Nazi productions, do not support Luc Ferry's (1995, p. 107) claim that National Socialism pursued policies that no longer positioned man "as master and possessor of a nature which he humanizes and culti-

vates" but instead made the German "responsible for an original wild state endowed with intrinsic rights, the richness and diversity of which it is his responsibility to preserve forever." Both Weimar and Nazi films repeatedly utilize natural images to prove Aryan ascendancy. Siegfried is certainly the conqueror when he slays Fafner the dragon, and happily bathes in his blood. Riefenstahl's "creation" sequences draw the life-giving powers of nature into the Aryan race. Hitler does not become the servant of *Heimat* (homeland), but rather becomes both deity and the nation. Despite the Nazis strong identification of the Nordic soul with nurturing in Nordic soil, the natural imagery in these artistic productions ultimately enhances human status.

Although the Nazis had a passion for all that was Germanic, their actual policies, rooted in what Jeffery Herf (1984) terms reactionary modernism, emphasized development of both technology and heavy industry. Some National Socialists were nature romantics, but this was not true of the entire party. Hitler was usually more interested in building and bombing than in caring and preserving. Nazi propaganda films, such as *SA-Mann Brand* or *Hitler Junge Quex*, present the Hitler youth movement as enjoying healthy outings in the forest (Welch, 1987). The central theme of these films, however, is the battle for the streets. These films associate "healthy" nature with young Nazis, thereby enhancing Eugenic philosophies. Nazi interest in protecting ethnicity, unlike the deep ecologists, was extremely exclusive and concentrated primarily on ethnic Germans, and to a lesser extent to other "Aryans," some of whom, like the British and French, they considered to be degenerate or tainted with non-Aryan blood.

Rather than pursuing harmony with nature, Nazi thought in practice has several strongly antinatural themes. Nazi ideology usurps the power of creation, removing it both from women and from organic realm, and for that matter from religion. In the creation sequences of *Olympiad*, women are not present and do not participate in the "new creation" events. Nature similarly is drawn into the Nazi movement. The trees become men and the land becomes the Aryan nation and ultimately Hitler. The forests, ancient and modern, become metaphors for the German nation. Pagan fires and church steeples are subsumed by a new masculine-Aryan order. This encourages both concentration on human interests and disregard for human destructive capabilities. Nazi ideology also expresses an excessive will to order. Our current scientific understanding, in contrast, finds the earth's ecosystems are both structured and chaotic, while constantly accommodating change.

Nazi ideology emphasizes the natural and unnatural in limiting ways which reduce diversity. When the nude Aryan men in *Olympiad* rise out of the primordial pond, the diversity of nature has been concentrated and limited to a single species, a single gender, and a single racial type. This is a denial of the natural variety of the cosmos. The Nazi value of "pure" blood also undermines the inherent value of diversity in life. Nazi thought strongly compartmentalizes existence and orders the world into dichotomous categories. Nature is, in contrast, full of gradients, and states that are difficult to classify. Nazi ideology believes the National Socialist state has the authority to separate the "natural" and the "pure" from the "unnatural" and "impure," that is, to categorize and value the external world. This denies the concept that both all

humanity and all nature have inherent value, based either on creation by God or, for the philosophers, on the values produced by self-interest. One must conclude Nazi thought actually devalues nature and also removes any concept of value arising from self-worth. This is one of the reasons that declaring Jews and gypsies to be "unnatural" was so devastating—it denies the right to self-existence to these ethnic groups. Although Nazi thought is fraught with internal contradictions, it rejects the relevance of "in-between" or heterogeneous cases. The Nazis are projecting themselves on nature and capturing selected images within themselves, rather than attempting to understand how nature actually functions or what it "IS."

Ferry accuses the Germans of rejecting the humanized landscape of the French Enlightenment and the geometric gardens of French classicism. Ferry (1995, p. 93) claims that "the philosophical underpinnings of Nazi legislation often overlap with those developed by deep ecology, and for this reason can not be underestimated: In both cases, we are dealing with a same *romantic and/or sentimental* representation of the relationship between nature and culture, combined with a shared revalorization of the *primitive* state against that of (alleged) civilization." Riefenstahl's *Olympiad* begins, however, with a Greek runner carrying the torch of civilization to Germany. The Third Reich claimed to be the true heir of western culture, not its antithesis, and argued that German art, philosophy, and music were superior to that of any other nation. Ferry infers that today's interest in protecting the environmental rights of indigenous peoples is suspect, because it suggests that "primitive" or "natural" peoples are in harmony with their surroundings, rather than falling to the curse of uprooted modernity. Ferry (1995, p. 105) suggests that the deep ecologists believe that "Their [primitive peoples'] culture, similar to animal ways of life, is a prolongation of nature; it is this ideal conciliation that modernity issued from the French Revolution has destroyed and which it is now a matter of restoring." The idealization of a primitive or "golden age" or of nonindustrial environments is commonplace in western art and philosophy and is at least as old as Roman concepts of Arcadia. Ferry's casual association of Nazi admiration for ancient forests (an adaptation of romanticism) with deep ecology's concerns for indigenous peoples does not make the two approaches ethical analogs (although they almost certainly share some historic roots). A dedicated Nazi would, in contrast to the deep ecologist, believe that environmental management by African tribes or by South American "first peoples" is vastly inferior to that of "civilized Aryans."

Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut (1990) have previously attacked German philosophy of the 19th and 20th centuries and its French proponents as promoting "antihumanism." Ferry rejects both the "the Heideggerian deconstruction of modernity" and the "antihumanist" preference for nature, including David Ehrenfeld's (1981) *The Arrogance of Humanism*. He critiques the ecofeminists for taking a stand against Descartes and his subject-object dualism (and in passing asserts that ecofeminists "hate Western civilization and modernity"). Ferry avoids, however, tackling the question of "the other" in the case of Heidegger and again neglects to conduct a full search for racism in Heidegger's concepts of *Volk*, Being-there, Being-together, and *Ortschaft*

des Seins (the place of being). Jean-Francois Lyotard (1990) concludes that "Heidegger's thought remains bound to the theme of 'place' and 'beginning' . . ." both of which the Nazis denied to the Jews.

Ferry believes separation from nature or "uprootedness" is, from an Enlightenment perspective, a sign of being properly human. Ferry (1995, p. 93) states: "All forms of thought that consider man a *transcendent* being, whether Judaism, or post-Hegelian criticism, or French republicanism, define him as the antinatural being par excellence." Ferry misses the important difference between being transcendent over, ascendant from, and completely external to nature. Nazi thought places Aryans over nature, and Jews and other non-Aryans exterior to it. As Linda Schulte-Sasse (1996, p. 79) has pointed out, effective Nazi propaganda films, such as *Jud Süßs*, dehumanize Jewish characters via abstraction. "The Nazi fantasizes Jews as a kind of void." The trend towards associating "the other" with microorganisms instead of large mammals, or with the inorganic strong dehumanize. The concept that the "other" is *unnatural*, and has no ties with or love for the living, abstracts the Jewish people completely and also removes them from the realm of "inherent value in nature."

Luc Ferry is so intent on attacking the deep ecologists and other movements he considers to be part of the new ecological left, that he has adapted his analysis of Nazi environmental philosophy to current politics rather than delving fully into National Socialist history. My major protest is not that I believe the deep ecologists aren't sometimes given to sentiment and nature romanticism (they certainly are); nor do I disagree with Ferry's finding that Nazi laws and current environmental philosophy use language implying inherent value (they certainly do). The most serious concern about Ferry's position is he greatly underreports the direct tie of Nazi environmentalism to anti-Semitism and misses its importance as the deadly link in the animal protection case. This situation is ironic because in the chapter following his analysis of the Nazis, Ferry accuses the environmental left and even the ecofeminists of racism. In touting the French Enlightenment, he pens not a word about the Enlightenment origins of the so-called "Jewish problem" in Europe, despite the fact that many overview volumes on anti-Semitism include chapters on Voltaire and his colleagues or on the French Republic (Wistrich, 1991; Harrowitz, 1994). A detailed account may be found in Arthur Hertzberg's (1990) *The French Enlightenment and the Jews: The Origins of Modern Anti-Semitism*.

By presenting French Humanism as a polar opposite to National Socialism, Ferry creates an illusion about the historic realities of both philosophies. Humanists, for example, struggled with the issues surrounding Jewish emancipation in Europe. As Linda Schulte-Sasse (1996) points out, Nazi films in assuming "autonomous" art can serve as a behavioral model for an emerging bourgeoisie," as well as in utilizing the "familiar narrative models" of bourgeois tragedy, sometimes reflect Enlightenment values. The Nazis used eighteenth-century dramas as foundations for films, and Schulte-Sasse (1996, p. 36) concludes "the affinities between a 'high' Enlightenment [dramatic] tradition and Nazi . . . kitsch are no more an anomaly than National Socialism is a historical aberration." The film *Jud Süßs* utilizes a Humanist argument when

it depicts Judaism as unable properly to “know” or understand nature. Raising the value of nonhuman nature becomes dangerous primarily when some humans are assumed to be external to or divorced from the natural.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Ferry’s arguments lack historic depth. He presents the National Socialist perspective on nature as far more consistent and unified than was actually the case. Further, inherent value appears to have been a minor theme, while dualism in nature and environmental racism were major underpinnings of Nazi policy and propaganda. Any comparison of contemporary environmental movements with the Third Reich needs to be carefully constructed to avoid misleading conclusions concerning which ethical ideals are dangerous to human interests and which are not. Ferry’s fails to prove that, *by itself*, finding intrinsic value in nature perpetrates major societal evil. There can be little doubt, however, that the leaders of the Third Reich intended the dualistic and exclusive environmental racism in *Jud Süß* and *The Eternal Jew* to be death dealing and dehumanizing.

A THEOLOGICAL AFTERTHOUGHT

Ferry does not reflect on whether anyone on the contemporary environmental scene, other than the deep ecologists, have an interest in intrinsic or inherent value in nature. Since there is more than one way to develop a holistic philosophy of nature, Ferry’s deprecation of attributing basic worth to nature has negative implications for contemporary Biblically based ecotheology, including Jewish interpretation. This is a disturbing irony, considering one of the greatest crimes of the Third Reich was its attack on the legitimacy of Judaism as a religious faith. The first book of the Torah (Book of Genesis) declares that God saw the creation and said it is “good,” thus awarding the nonhuman a form of inherent value. Bernstein and Fink (1992, p. 8) in *Let the Earth Teach You Torah: A Jewish Guide to Ecological Wisdom* comment: “An environmental crisis occurs when an entire civilization overlooks the inherent value of air, soil, water and species, and approaches the natural world as a tool box of resources to use for its own gain. If our obliviousness to the gifts of nature is the root of the environmental crisis, then the task at hand is to learn to see and appreciate nature and God’s presence in all of life.” They then cite Rabbi Bahya Ibn Pakuda’s admonition in 1070 CE to “meditate on creation.” Jewish theology considers humans, however, to be the crown of creation and beloved of God, so the worth of the Creation should never degrade the value of human beings (Hadassah and Shomeri Adamah, 1993; A. Rose, 1992). Bernstein and Fink (1992) note that there is essential relationship between *adam* (earthling) and *adamah* (earth).

The perspective of the Hebrew scriptures is holistic, rather than dichotomous. One might argue that the Nazis protected some “good” animals because they possess “worth in themselves,” while the Hebrew scriptures, in contrast, both declare all the

created order to have "worth in God" and would find the Creation incomplete and empty if part or all of humanity were excluded from it. As the examples presented in this essay indicate, the Nazi danger lies in placing some people at the pinnacle of the organic, while damning other human beings to the shadowy realm external to the living cosmos. Ferry insists on strong human-nature dichotomy. Jewish interpretation has a balance both the Nazis and Ferry lack—it can value the human and the nonhuman simultaneously, believing both are integrally and eternally linked, in divinely ordained unity.

Inherent value in itself is conceptually vague and may be interpreted in a number of different ways. It may be "weak," implying only that things have worth due to their own self-existence; it may be "moderate," such as the theological concept of nature as divine handiwork where nature is "good and beautiful"; or it may be "strong," such as the inherent value inferred by religious beliefs that nature is itself divine or filled with spiritual power. The simple declaration of "inherent value" by itself does not determine the relationship between the human and nonhuman—a further ethical context must be developed. The first step in constructing a humane philosophy of nature is declaring all humanity to belong to the ecological order and worthy to share the blessings of relationships with the nonhuman. In the Nazi mind those things within the Germanic universe had intrinsic value, and all things and beings outside it had no value at all.

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