

Moral Pluralism, Skillful Means, and Environmental Ethics

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J. Baird Callicott claims that moral pluralism leads to relativism, skepticism, and the undermining of moral obligations. Buddhist ethics provides a counterexample to Callicott; it is a robust tradition of moral pluralism. Focusing on one of the most significant texts in Buddhist ethics, Śāntideva's Bodhicaryāvatāra, I show how it draws on a multiplicity of moral principles determined by context and skillful means (upāya kauśalya). In contrast to Callicott's description of pluralism as detrimental to moral life, I suggest that South Asian Buddhist traditions provide a model of moral reasoning that is both robust and flexible, a model appropriate for the many kinds of moral obligations that arise in the context of environmental ethics.

I Introduction

Since the simultaneous spread of awareness concerning environmental challenges and Buddhism in North America during the 1960's, it has been a widely held belief that among world religions, Buddhism is uniquely attuned to the natural environment.¹ In an oft-cited article, Lynn White, Jr., argued that the root cause of the ecological crisis was the devaluation of nature and anthropocentrism of Western religious and philosophical traditions.² In contrast, he suggested, Asian traditions are more holistic and conceive of humans as interdependent with the environment. Succeeding scholarship has led to more nuanced views of both Western and Eastern traditions and their relations with non-human nature. Nevertheless, the association of Buddhism and ecology, as evidenced in an extensive literature, has continued to be popular among scholars, Buddhist practitioners, and environmental activists.³

Donald Swearer has constructed a five-fold taxonomy with which to order the vast literature on Buddhism and ecology: eco-apologists, eco-critics, eco-constructivists, eco-ethicists, and eco-contextualists.⁴ According to Swearer, eco-apologists argue that Green Buddhism is a "natural extension of the Buddhist worldview."⁵ Eco-critics, on the other hand, claim that Buddhism, with its emphasis on liberation and world negation, is incompatible with environmental ethics. Eco-constructivists, Swearer says, are those who believe that Buddhist traditions contain resources for constructing an environmental ethic. Eco-ethicists argue that any authentically Buddhist environmental ethic must be evaluated according to Buddhist ethics, not simply derived from Buddhist metaphysics. And finally, eco-contextualists insist that Buddhist environmental ethics that actually engage with the environment are necessarily embedded in local practices and traditions.

While this paper is a contribution to the discourse on Buddhism and ecology, it does not fall into any of Swearer's categories, or Ian Harris's earlier taxonomy.⁶ Though I am sympathetic to what Swearer terms eco-constructivism, I will not draw on conceptual resources from Buddhist traditions to construct a metaphysics of nature or a Buddhist environmental ethic. Rather, my purpose here is to argue that South Asian Buddhist moral traditions, with their moral pluralism, offer an appropriately pragmatic model of moral reasoning for contemporary environmental ethics. I will begin with a sketch of the debate on monism and pluralism in environmental ethics. Some environmental philosophers argue that moral pluralism is necessary to respond to all our various moral responsibilities. In defense

of monism, J. Baird Callicott claims that pluralism leads to relativism, skepticism, and the undermining of moral obligations. In the second part of my paper, I will argue that Buddhist ethics provides a counterexample to Callicott; it is a robust tradition of moral pluralism. Focusing on one of the most significant texts in Buddhist ethics, Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, I show how it draws on a multiplicity of moral principles determined by context and skillful means (*upāya kauśalya*). In contrast to Callicott's description of pluralism as detrimental to moral life, I suggest that South Asian Buddhist traditions provide a model of moral reasoning that is both robust and flexible, a model appropriate for the many kinds of moral obligations that arise in the context of environmental ethics.

II Monism, Pluralism, and Environmental Ethics

One method of categorizing moral theories is according to their relation to moral principles. Utilitarianism and natural law theory, for instance, share a formal structure in that each is grounded in a supreme moral principle. In utilitarianism, for example, all moral reasoning must be derived from the principle of utility. Such theories, founded upon one overarching moral principle that provides unity and coherence, are monistic. Some theorists reject moral monism, arguing instead for a pluralism that acknowledges the legitimacy of a multiplicity of independent, basic moral principles.⁷ These principles may well be in tension, or even mutually incompatible; but, it is said, they can be consistent with the phenomena. Pluralists argue that there is no one monistic theory that can encompass the whole moral realm, with all its complexities; there are, however, moral theories that can provide principles that are true for some kinds of moral acts, intentions, or states of affair. Moral pluralism, they claim, is not a form of relativism, but an appropriate and necessary response to the multiple kinds of moral concern in our lives. A third kind of moral theory, moral particularism, associated with David McNaughton,⁸ Jonathan Dancy,⁹ and perhaps illustrated in some existentialist ethics, rejects the need for any moral principles. Instead of deriving judgments from a supreme moral principle or a plurality of self-justifying moral principles, particularists argue that the moral features of acts, agents, and states of affair arise contextually and cannot be grasped by universal principles. Instead of following moral principles, particularists claim, moral agents must cultivate the discernment of specific, contextualized moral landscapes.

The debate between monists and pluralists has been particularly pertinent in environmental ethics.¹⁰ During the 1960's and 1970's, faced with growing evidence of environmental degradation, some scholars attributed the state of the environment not just to destructive environmental practices, but to the traditional moral and metaphysical frameworks that seemed to justify these practices. Motivated in large part by concern for the environment, some philosophers called, in the words of Richard Sylvan, for "a new, an environmental, ethic."¹¹ This environmental ethic would lead us to be more responsive to the needs and values of non-human nature. A variety of theories were proposed and debated that recognize not just the value and moral standing of human subjects, but also of animals, non-sentient natural beings, and even ecosystems and the earth itself. In the early years of environmental ethics, philosophers generally sought to achieve a monistic theory that could encompass all our moral responsibilities. According to Christopher Stone, in their quest for a monistic theory, environmental philosophers were caught in internecine, theoretical debates that lost sight of engaging practical policy questions.¹² To move beyond abstract doctrines, Stone advocates moral pluralism in environmental thought so that philosophical debates could be more applicable, to better respond to the original motivation of environmental ethics.¹³

Moral pluralism in the context of environmental ethics has been developed by Andrew Light,¹⁴ Bryan Norton,¹⁵ Anthony Weston,¹⁶ and others, who promote an environmental philosophy that can be applied to practical environmental policies. Moral pluralists, who generally see themselves as environmental pragmatists, do not look for one supreme principle that will cover all questions of environmental practice.¹⁷ Rather, they admit that in some instances, for example questions concerning the treatment of farm animals, animal rights or sentientism might be the best theory. However, when

considering what to do about an invasive species that is degrading an ecosystem, an ecocentric ethic that is not as attentive to the suffering and needs of individual animals might be the most prudent to follow. Moral pluralists acknowledge that we have moral obligations to salmon, pets, mountains, children, elms, works of art, fellow-citizens, and watersheds. However, they argue, we possess different moral obligations derived from different principles for these distinct entities. When theories such as animal rights and ecocentrism lead to incompatible results, instead of rejecting one theory wholesale in the pursuit of monism, pluralists and environmental pragmatists argue, we should prudently determine which moral principle to apply to a particular situation.¹⁸ Instead of debating the one, right, univocal metaphysics of morals – ecocentrism versus anthropocentrism, biocentrism versus sentientism, deep ecology versus social ecology, etc. – pluralists and pragmatists seek agreement on practical policies that can be derived from a variety of moral principles.

In “The Case Against Moral Pluralism”¹⁹ and “Moral Monism in Environmental Ethics Defended,”²⁰ J. Baird Callicott argues that moral pluralism weakens our moral obligations. “With a variety of theories at our disposal, each indicating different, inconsistent, or contradictory courses of action,” Callicott writes, “we may be tempted to espouse the one that seems most convenient or self-serving in the circumstances.”²¹ Even if sincere, Callicott claims, pluralism provides no basis for determining which one of multiple incompatible principles to follow in any given circumstance. Finally, according to Callicott, moral pluralism results in the dissolution of moral responsibility in general for it leads to the skepticism and nihilism he associates with “deconstructive postmodernism.”²² Without a unitary and systematic metaphysics of morals, Callicott insists, we lose both our moral and intellectual coherence and any foundation from which to argue for an environmental ethic.²³

III Moral Pluralism in Śāntideva’s *Bodhicaryāvatāra*

As with other internally diverse and rich traditions, Buddhism can be characterized as morally pluralistic in part, because there are so many different kinds of moral reasoning and teaching. Indeed, scholars have recognized the contours of eudaimonistic virtue ethics,²⁴ utilitarianism,²⁵ and Kantian ethics²⁶ in Buddhist moral traditions. Additionally, it has been argued, some Buddhist moral strategies constitute a form of ethical particularism, for they emphasize context and do not follow any general principles.²⁷ As I have argued elsewhere, it is a mistake to believe that Buddhist ethics can be characterized as a whole – it is simply too diverse – and assimilating Buddhist ethics to Western moral principles loses the complexity and uniqueness of Buddhist moral traditions.²⁸ Nevertheless, characterizations of Buddhist traditions in Western categories can be helpful in sketching the contours of Buddhist ethics²⁹; taken together they support the claim that Buddhist ethics is a form of moral pluralism.³⁰ In what follows, I will argue that even within one text, Śāntideva’s *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, there is a pluralistic approach to ethics. I believe that the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* provides a good counterexample to Callicott’s claim that pluralism leads to moral skepticism and nihilism, because Śāntideva’s text is one of the most significant texts in the history of South Asian and Tibetan Buddhism.

There is widespread agreement with Frank Reynolds and Charles Hallisey, who claim that the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* is “‘perhaps the best single source’ for the study of classical Mahāyāna ethics.”³¹ Indeed, many discussions of Mahāyāna ethics in South Asia focus on the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*. The current high regard for Śāntideva’s work is not new or unique to Western scholars. Shortly after it was composed, the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* spread quickly amongst Indian monastics, with whom it remained popular until the demise of Mahāyāna Buddhism on the sub-continent.³² In Tibet, the popularity of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* seems to have increased. The famous “*Prajñāpāramitā-paricchedā*” (Perfection of Wisdom Chapter) was employed as a philosophy textbook in Tibetan scholastic curricula. The various Tibetan schools produced their own commentaries with very different interpretations of Śāntideva’s text, but they all agreed on its significance as an authoritative exposition of what doxographers termed “*Prāsaṅgika*” Madhyamaka.³³

The *Bodhicaryāvatāra* was also popular outside scholastic environs. Variations on Śāntideva's presentation of the *anuttara-pūjā* (Supreme Worship) were widely practiced in Tibetan traditions. And his elaboration of the bodhisattva path became a primary inspiration for two important genres of Tibetan literary production: *lam rim* (stages of the path) and *blo sbyong* (mind training).³⁴ Moreover, Śāntideva's psychologically astute moral advice and often powerful and evocative language have had a broad appeal to lay practitioners. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* was the first Buddhist text translated for the newly converted Mongolians, an indication of the high status of Śāntideva's work in Tibet. Though there may be other candidates, it is not without reason that some contemporary scholars claim that the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* "has been the most widely read, cited, and practiced text in the whole of the Indo-Tibetan Buddhist tradition."³⁵

Śāntideva employs a plurality of ethical strategies in the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*. However, one is tempted to interpret it as a form of eudaimonistic virtue ethics because the text is structured according to the development of the six virtues, or perfections (*pāramitās*), of the bodhisattva. Chapter V treats the perfections of generosity (*dānapāramitā*) and moral discipline (*śīlapāramitā*). Chapters VI through IX address the remaining perfections respectively: patience (*kṣāntipāramitā*), vigor (*vīryapāramitā*), meditative contemplation (*dhyānapāramitā*), and wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*). Śāntideva provides an account of the nature of the virtues and how they are to be cultivated. His presentation of the Middle Way is a map of the bodhisattva path oriented towards the telos of *bodhicitta*, the awakened mind characterized by great compassion (*mahākaruṇā*) and the perfection of wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*).³⁶

Śāntideva further seems to endorse a virtue ethic with his understanding that there are no universal rules applicable to all situations. Rather, one must attend to each singular situation and then determine the proper course of action.³⁷ Thus, Śāntideva argues, a bodhisattva motivated by compassion and guided by wisdom, should transgress general rules, such as the precepts and the monastic rules of conduct.³⁸ Instead of following rules at all times, even the proscriptions against killing, stealing, and lying,³⁹ a bodhisattva ought to determine what is best in a particular context. Śāntideva does not treat skill in means as a unique perfection, as is done in many Mahāyāna accounts of ten, instead of six, perfections. Nevertheless, the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* clearly states that one who is skillful (*kauśalya*) in strategy, method, or means (*upāya*) ought to do those actions which are generally proscribed, if it will diminish suffering in the world.⁴⁰ Śāntideva addresses skillful means in the context of his presentation of moral discipline, as if to emphasize that rules of conduct are designed to make the practitioner mindful and aware, and not conceived as unchanging laws determining every action.

Śāntideva's commitment to relieving suffering through any means, including the transgression of prohibitions against violence, might lead one to interpret the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* as a form of utilitarianism. Śāntideva takes it as a given that suffering is to be avoided as such, regardless of whose suffering it may be.⁴¹ At times, Śāntideva does recognize a positive value in suffering. However, this positive value is only justified when it serves to diminish overall suffering, as when it motivates the aspiring bodhisattva.⁴² Indeed, Śāntideva makes the calculation that it is appropriate to sacrifice oneself for someone who is equally or more compassionate, but not for someone who is less attentive to the sufferings of others, "That way, there is no overall loss."⁴³ Clearly, there are elements of utilitarianism functioning in the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*.

In contrast to utilitarianism, however, like Kant, Śāntideva believes that motivation is a primary locus of moral significance. Śāntideva is committed to dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*), the doctrine that no single causal power, including individual moral agents, can be regarded as solely responsible for external states of affair.⁴⁴ Thus, we cannot be held solely responsible for the consequences of our actions in the world; we are only responsible for our own states of mind.⁴⁵ Śāntideva argues: "the perfection is the mental attitude itself," and "since I cannot control external events, I will control my own mind."⁴⁶ While there is a family resemblance to Kantian ethics, Śāntideva does not share the Kantian understanding of moral responsibility for an autonomous will. According to Śāntideva, the activity of our minds is also dependently originated and thus not free in the Kantian sense.

The attempt to reduce Śāntideva's ethics to a monistic Western moral category would make his writings appear inconsistent and confused. It would also be a mistake to interpret the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* as a uniquely Buddhist moral monism. Rather, grounded in the doctrine of dependent origination, Śāntideva provides rich descriptions of the moral significance of intention and consequence, character and action, without seeking to circumscribe all moral activity under one principle. In contrast to Callicott's claim that pluralism leads to moral skepticism and nihilism, the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, with its central place in more than a millennium of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist ethics, suggests that pluralism, with its flexibility, can provide a robust ethic applicable in daily life.

IV Conclusion: Moral Pluralism, Skillful Means, and Environmental Ethics

In response to a series of metaphysical questions in the *Cūḷamāḷunkya Sutta* – such as whether or not the world is spatially or temporally finite, whether the self is identical to the body, etc. – the Buddha tells a parable about a man wounded by a poisoned arrow.⁴⁷ If prior to allowing the surgeon to remove the arrow, the wounded man were to insist upon knowing the caste, name, physical characteristics, and native place of the shooter, or the kind of bow and arrow employed, he would die. This story is often interpreted as the Buddha, whose teaching began with an account of the pervasiveness of dissatisfaction, claiming that, instead of concerning oneself with metaphysical speculation irrelevant to liberation, one should pursue practices that are liberating from the mental defilements that cause suffering. The Buddha's response is read by some contemporary scholars as an anticipation of Kant's employment of antinomies and the Kantian critique of metaphysics; others interpret the Buddha's silence on metaphysical questions as Wittgensteinian. According to this reading, the Buddha regarded philosophy as a therapy and found metaphysical speculation to be dangerous and not simply useless.⁴⁸

Gadjin Nagao notes that the Buddha employed silence in a variety of different ways depending on his interlocutor and the context of their conversation.⁴⁹ Because elsewhere the Buddha makes specific claims concerning the very questions about which he is silent in the *Cūḷamāḷunkya a Sutta*, regarding the Buddha's silence as primarily an anticipation of Kant or Wittgenstein is inadequate. Instead, it seems that the Buddha practices skillful means, and recognizes that metaphysical frameworks are sometimes beneficial and sometimes detrimental. Moreover, the Buddha may provide different metaphysical frameworks, guided by what he thinks is best for the particular audience. According to Mahāyānists, all the Buddha's very different teachings were geared towards the different capacities of the student. Some Indian Buddhist texts even advocate teaching non-Buddhist doctrines, such as Śaivism, to those who lack the capacity to understand the Buddha dharma.⁵⁰ What all teachings could agree on, however, was the importance of removing the arrow of suffering.

Global climate change, pollution overload, resource depletion, the degradation of the land where we live, work, and play, and the various other environmental challenges we face, are conditions that lead to enormous suffering for sentient beings; they constitute an immense poisoned arrow we have unleashed upon ourselves and our fellow creatures in the web of life. Śāntideva and other Mahāyānists in South Asia did not consider all views to be equally valid or equally true. Mahāyānists constructed detailed doxographic hierarchies; full liberation, they believed, was only possible with the correct understanding situated at the top of the hierarchy of doctrines. According to Śāntideva, the proper understanding of the lack of inherent existence of all conventionally constructed phenomena was necessary to fully relinquish attachments that cause suffering. Nevertheless, he shared many views with others regarding the kinds of actions, traits, intentions, and states of affair that alleviate suffering. Similarly, there is much agreement that can be reached on practical policy matters amongst environmental philosophers. Indeed, not only can agreement be reached among those who advocate ecocentrism and biocentrism, deep ecology and animal rights, but more importantly, between non-anthropocentrists and those who disregard non-human values, or those inspired by eco-kosher practices,⁵¹ or members of the Creation Care movement.⁵² Forging this agreement would be the task of what Andrew Light calls “*metaphilosophical* environmental pragmatism.” Light characterizes

metaphilosophical environmental pragmatism as a pragmatic compatibilism amongst thinkers with competing metaphysical commitments working together on practical policy issues.⁵³

I am not suggesting that all theoretical debates be set aside, for practical policy determinations are inevitably grounded in metaphysical systems. Nevertheless, when environmental philosophy takes place primarily at the level of metaphysics and abdicates the realm of policy to the social and natural sciences, it abandons much of its capacity to contribute to a more sustainable future. Buddhist ethics provides a model of pluralistic moral strategies that are compatible with competing metaphysical frameworks. The doctrine of skillful means would suggest that we should be more pluralistic and pragmatic; the reception of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* and other historically significant approaches to Buddhist ethics suggest that pluralism can augment moral commitments without leading to skepticism and nihilism.

Endnotes:

¹ I am grateful to Jim Behuniak and Brian Schroeder for comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

² Lynn White Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science* 155 (1967): 1203-07.

³ See, for example, Duncan Ryūken Williams, "Bibliography on Buddhism and Ecology," in *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*, edited by Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryūken Williams (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 403-25. This bibliography is partially updated at <http://environment.harvard.edu/religion/religion/buddhism/bibliography.html> (accessed August 16, 2006).

⁴ Donald Swearer, "An Assessment of Buddhist Eco-Philosophy," http://www.hds.harvard.edu/cswwr/publications/buddhism_seminar/swearer.pdf (accessed August 16, 2006).

⁵ Swearer, "Assessment of Buddhist Eco-Philosophy," 3.

⁶ In "Getting to Grips with Buddhist Environmentalism: A Provisional Typology," Ian Harris introduces a five-fold scheme [Ian Harris, "Getting to Grips with Buddhist Environmentalism: A Provisional Typology," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 2 (1995): 173-90]. First, there are texts by traditional Buddhist figures, most prominently Tenzin Gyatso (His Holiness the Dalai Lama), who claim, without detailed justification, that Buddhism possesses a robust environmental ethic and a cosmology in harmony with contemporary ecological thinking. The second category is composed of texts written by Buddhist scholars who are also environmental activists, such as Joanna Macy. As with the first category, these texts are grounded in the idea that Buddhist traditions of theory and practice possess resources for addressing the ecological crisis. Unlike the first category, however, these texts include interpretations of specific Buddhist ideas, such as dependent origination, Buddha nature, the Hua-Yen understanding of interpenetration, and Zen interpretations of the enlightenment of natural objects, such as mountains, trees, and streams. Harris's third category consists of texts written by and devoted to Asian engaged Buddhists who do work in sustainable development and protecting natural resources and describe their motivations and activity in a Buddhist framework. Scholarly discussions that critically engage Buddhist traditions while emphasizing Buddhist resources for environmental thought constitute the fourth category. Harris cites Lambert Schmithausen as an example, but many of the contributors to the Harvard volume, *Buddhism and Ecology*, would fall into this category. These texts reveal an understanding that premodern traditions cannot be lifted wholesale and applied to modern contexts informed by ecological science and sentiments. Nevertheless, they seek to show that Buddhist traditions can provide singularly Buddhist contributions to contemporary debate and practice. Harris's fifth category, which has relatively few examples, consists of those texts which argue that Buddhism, because it is essentially world-negating, necessarily lacks an environmental ethic. Such texts insist that any works in the previous categories have so betrayed Buddhist traditions that they constitute a form of detraditionalization; "Green Buddhism," or "Ecobuddhism," according to these scholars, is simply an inauthentic form of Buddhism, a phenomenon of the global, postmodern religious marketplace.

There are other texts at the interface between Buddhism and ecology which do not quite fit into Harris's typologies, for instance scholarly work on engaged Buddhist environmentalism in the West, and meditations, rituals, poems, and prayers by Thich Nhat Hanh, Gary Snyder, Joanna Macy, and others, that constitute some of the central practices and inspirations of "Green Buddhism." Perhaps, Swearer would categorize such texts as "eco-apologetics."

⁷ See, for example, Michael Stocker, *Plural and Conflicting Values* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); Neil Cooper, *The Diversity of Moral Thinking* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981); Thomas Nagel, "The Fragmentation of Value," in *Mortal Questions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979): 128-41; and, the collection of essays devoted to moral pluralism in *Ethics* 102 (July 1992).

⁸ David McNaughton, *Moral Vision* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988).

⁹ Jonathan Dancy, *Moral Reasons* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993); and *Ethics Without Principles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

¹⁰ To understand how "monism" and "pluralism" are employed in the literature on environmental ethics, see Christopher D. Stone, *Earth and Other Ethics: The Case for Moral Pluralism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988); and Peter S. Wenz, "Minimal, Moderate, and Extreme Moral Pluralism," *Environmental Ethics* 15 (1993): 61-74.

¹¹ See Richard Sylvan (Routley), "Is There A Need For A New, An Environmental, Ethic," *Philosophy and Science: Morality and Culture: Technology and Man: Proceedings of the XVth World Congress of Philosophy* (Varna, Bulgaria: Sofia Press, 1973), 205-10.

¹² There are, of course, some exceptions. Arne Naess's deep ecology, Peter Singer's animal liberation, and Tom Regan's animal rights theory, have crossed over the borders of academic philosophy and benefited activists.

¹³ Stone, *Earth and Other Ethics*.

¹⁴ Andrew Light, "Callicott and Naess on Pluralism," *Inquiry* 39 (1996): 273-94; "Materialists, Ontologists, and Environmental Pragmatists," *Social Theory and Practice* 21 (Summer 1995): 315-33.

¹⁵ Bryan Norton, *Towards Unity Among Environmentalists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); "Integration or Reduction: Two Approaches to Environmental Values," in *Environmental Pragmatism*, ed. Andrew Light and Eric Katz (New York: Routledge, 1996), 105-38.

¹⁶ Anthony Weston, "Beyond Intrinsic Value: Pragmatism in Environmental Ethics," *Environmental Ethics* 7 (Winter 1985): 321-39; and "Before Environmental Ethics," *Environmental Ethics* 14 (Winter 1992): 323-40.

¹⁷ See the essays collected in *Environmental Pragmatism*, edited by Andrew Light and Eric Katz (New York: Routledge, 1996).

¹⁸ For accounts of the incompatibility of ecocentrism and animal rights, see Mark Sagoff, "Animal Liberation and Environmental Ethics: Bad Marriage, Quick Divorce," *Osgoode Hall Law Journal* 22 (1984): 297-307; and Baird Callicott, "Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair," *Environmental Ethics* 2 (Winter 1980): 311-28. For a more conciliatory account of animal rights and ecocentrism, see J. Baird Callicott, "Animal Liberation and Environmental Ethics: Back Together Again," *Between the Species: A Journal of Ethics* 4 (Summer 1988): 163-69.

¹⁹ J. Baird Callicott, "The Case Against Moral Pluralism," in *Beyond the Land Ethic: More Essays in Environmental Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 143-69.

²⁰ J. Baird Callicott, "Moral Monism in Environmental Ethics Defended," in *Beyond the Land Ethic*, 171-83.

²¹ Callicott, "The Case Against Moral Pluralism," 155.

²² Callicott is not alone here. Pluralism and particularism are often said to be forms of moral skepticism. For what is perhaps the best defense of morality without any necessary foundation in principles, see Dancy, *Ethics Without Principles*.

²³ Instead of moral pluralism, Callicott advocates a unified moral theory grounded in membership in a variety of moral communities, a position he grounds in Humean moral sentiment theory, Darwin's evolutionary account of morals, and Leopold's land ethic.

²⁴ See, for example, Damien Keown, *The Nature of Buddhist Ethics* (London: Macmillan, 1992), especially 193-227. Also, see David E. Cooper and Simon P. James, *Buddhism, Virtue and Environment* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005); James Whitehill, "Buddhism and the Virtues," in *Contemporary Buddhist Ethics*, ed. Damien Keown (Richmond: Curzon Press, 2000), 17-36; Ichimura Shohei, "Buddhist Dharma and Natural Law: Toward a Trans-Cultural, Universal Ethics," in *Buddhist Ethics and Modern Society: An International Symposium*, ed. Charles Wei-hsun Fu and Sandra A. Wawrytko (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 383-405; and Susanne Mrozik, "The Value of Human Differences: South Asian Buddhist Contributions Toward an Embodied Virtue Theory," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 9 (2002): 1-33. For a very different view, critical of virtue theory approaches to Buddhist ethics, and indeed, to employing Western ethical categories for the interpretation of Buddhist traditions, see Stephen J. Lewis and Galen Amstutz, "Teleologized 'Virtue' or Mere Religious 'Character'? A Critique of Buddhist Ethics From the Shin Buddhist Point of View," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 4 (1997): 138-59.

²⁵ See, for example, Gunapala Dharmasiri, *Fundamentals of Buddhist Ethics* (Antioch, CA: Golden Leaves Publishing Co., 1989). For an account of the ways in which Buddhist ethics can be described as similar and dissimilar to utilitarianism, see Keown, *The Nature of Buddhist Ethics*, 165-91.

²⁶ See, for example, Phillip Olson, *The Discipline of Freedom: A Kantian View of the Role of Moral Precepts in Zen Practice* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993).

²⁷ See Charles Hallisey, "Ethical Particularism in Theravāda Ethics," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 3 (1996): 32-43.

²⁸ William Edelglass, "Ethics and the Subversion of Conceptual Reification in Levinas and Śāntideva," forthcoming in *Deconstruction and the Ethical in Asian Thought*, edited by Youru Wang (New York: Routledge, 2007), 151-61.

²⁹ See Hallisey, "Ethical Particularism in Theravāda Ethics": 43

³⁰ Hallisey suggests that Buddhist ethics is pluralistic in "Ethical Particularism," a position he clarifies in "A Response to Kevin Schilbrack," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 4 (1997): 184-88.

³¹ Frank Reynolds, "Buddhist Ethics: A Bibliographical Essay," *Religious Studies Review* 5 (1979): 47; Charles Hallisey, "Recent Work on Buddhist Ethics," *Religious Studies Review* 18 (1992): 277.

³² Luis O. Gomez, "A Mahāyāna Liturgy," in *Buddhism in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 184.

³³ For discussions of how the commentaries were employed to support each school's own particular philosophical doctrines, see Paul Williams, *Altruism and Reality: Studies in the Philosophy of the Bodhicaryāvatāra* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1998); and *The Reflexive Nature of Awareness: A Tibetan Madhyamaka Defence* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1998).

³⁴ Michael Sweet, "Mental Purification (*blo sbyong*)," in *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*, ed. José Cabezón and Roger Jackson (Ithaca: Snow Lion, 1996), 245.

³⁵ Vesna A. Wallace and B. Allan Wallace, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life* (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 1997), 7.

³⁶ According to Damien Keown, there is a formal resemblance between Buddhist ethics in general and virtue theory because in both cases the virtues constitute both the cause and the manifestation or realization of the goal. While this view may work for his analysis of the Theravāda, it neglects the Madhyamaka distinction between the supramundane perfection (*lokottarā pāramitā*) practiced by the realized bodhisattva and the mundane perfection (*laukikā pāramitā*) practiced by the aspiring bodhisattva.

³⁷ Śāntideva, *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, trans. Kate Crosby and Andrew Skilton (New York: Oxford University

Press, 1995), 37 (V.38).

³⁸ Śāntideva, *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, 41 (V.84). See also *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, V.42, where Śāntideva argues that when motivated by compassionate generosity, the aspiring bodhisattva can transgress the rules of moral conduct.

³⁹ In the eighth chapter of the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, Śāntideva notes examples of all of these from various Mahāyāna sūtras, and the circumstances under which they are allowed.

⁴⁰ *Upāya* is often claimed by Mahāyāna authors to be the primary observable characteristic of the bodhisattva. The term *upāya* came to have two related meanings. First, *upāya* refers to the compassionate prudence that leads one to correctly break a precept for the sake of alleviating suffering. Second, *upāya* is also employed to refer to the collection of merit, the collection of compassion, that together with the collection of wisdom (*prajñā*) constitutes the path to buddhahood. These two senses of *upāya* are related, for, Mahāyāna authors often argue, skillful means is present in the other six perfections. For a discussion of the relation between skillful means and the other perfections, see Mark Tatz, *The Skill in Means Sūtra: Upāyakauśalya* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1994), 12-14, 27-28. See also Michael Pye, *Skillful Means: A Concept of Mahāyāna Buddhism* (London: Duckworth, 1978).

⁴¹ Śāntideva, *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, 97 (VIII.102-03).

⁴² Śāntideva, *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, 51, 97 (VI.12, VI.21, VIII.105).

⁴³ Śāntideva, *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, 41-42 (V.86-87). For a discussion of this calculation in the context of South Asian Buddhist discussions of the gift of the body, see Reiko Ohnuma, "Internal and External Opposition to the Bodhisattva's Gift of His Body," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 28 (2000): 60.

⁴⁴ Śāntideva, *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, 52-53 (VI.22-33).

⁴⁵ Kant famously argued that intentions cannot be responsible for events in the world, which are governed by natural laws. Thus, when Kant defines the categorical imperative, he declares, "what is essentially good in the action consists in the mental disposition, let the consequences be what they may" [Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. J. Ellington (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981), 26 (Ak. 416)].

⁴⁶ Śāntideva, *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, 34-35 (V.10, V.14).

⁴⁷ Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, "Cūlamālunkya Sutta: The Shorter Discourse to Mālunkya-putta," in *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995), 533-36.

⁴⁸ Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught* (New York: Grove Press, 1959), 12-15.

⁴⁹ Gadjin M. Nagao, "The Silence of the Buddha and its Madhyamic Interpretation," in *Mādhyamika and Yogācāra: A Study of Mahāyāna Philosophies*, ed. and trans. Leslie S. Kawamura (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 35-49.

⁵⁰ See, for example, the *Kāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra*, cited in Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 51.

⁵¹ Arthur Waskow, "What is Eco-Kosher?" in *This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, Environment*, ed. Roger S. Gottlieb (New York: Routledge, 1996), 297-300.

⁵² See J. Matthew Sleeth, *Serve God, Save the Planet: A Christian Call to Action* (White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green, 2006).

⁵³ Light contrasts metaphilosophical environmental pragmatism with *philosophical* environmental pragmatism, which employs American pragmatism against other competing metaphysical frameworks for environmental philosophies. For Light's discussions of the distinction between philosophical environmental pragmatism and metaphilosophical environmental pragmatism, see "Compatibilism in Political Ecology," in *Environmental Pragmatism*, 161-84; and "Environmental Pragmatism as Philosophy or Metaphilosophy? On the Weston-Katz Debate," in *Environmental Pragmatism*, 325-38.