Changing Protection Policies and Ethnographies of Environmental Engagement

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Abstract: *Attempts to protect nature by control of human intervention in areas demarcated for biodiversity have given rise to difficult questions of practicality and social justice. This introduction to a set of studies by anthropologists on the relationship between conservation and local community responses to protection measures, looks at the twin processes of rethinking conservation in socially inclusive ways and theoretical developments in viewing human relationships with environments that emphasise their interactive qualities. Whereas oppositional contrasts between nature and society characterised both conservation and anthropology in most of the twentieth century, more mutualistic frameworks are now emergent. Participatory conservation seeks to give voice to local concerns and indigenous perspectives, while social theory has increasingly recognised the cultural and political baggage that accompanies attempts to impose natural states on environments characterised by histories of human–environmental engagement. A central focus is given to the dynamics of place in this special issue, so that the impacts of global agendas for nature protection are viewed from the grounded positions of people's lives and their ways of thinking about and dealing with the changes brought*

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about by conservation measures, which reconfigure relations of community, territory and resources

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INTRODUCTION

RE-PLACING NATURE is a collection of studies that puts new approaches and theoretical developments in environmental anthropology in dialogue with contemporary issues of environmental protection. Divisions between nature and society are apparently being replaced in ideas and administrations of global environmental protection, as well as in anthropological theory, by new convivialities in the relationships of people, biodiversity and environments. These 'big picture' shifts need to be critically assessed through ethnographic investigation. Changes in protection policy ideas may represent primarily rhetorical movements rather than relationships on the ground: the extension of even 'people-friendly' biodiversity agendas can still impose nature–society dualism in places where anthropologists have in the past only imposed it analytically. For Kay Milton (1999), for example, looking at the meaning of 'nature' to western conservationists, it is precisely the non-human quality of nature that provides a motivation for protection.

The idea of this special issue is to look at a range of contexts where environmental protection initiatives have been put into practice, to examine the diverse social repercussions of conservation in these cases, and to discuss changes in understandings of nature–society relationships. While an enormous rethinking process about nature has been underway in the last decade among natural and social scientists, policy makers, and environmentalists (Adams 1996; Ghimire and Pimbert 1997; Brechin et al. 2002; Greenhough and Tsing 2003), most policy-oriented discussions concentrate on resource management (Natcher et al. 2005) and rarely admit the sorts of qualitative questions emerging from ethnographic detail that anthropologists want to ask. What effects do conservation interventions have on patterns of local environmental engagement in particular places? How can the dialogues of significance and value around locality, which nature protection engenders, be adequately recognised, understood and responded to? These are questions that should be taken more seriously by anthropologists and other environmental disciplines.

This collection was originally conceived in the lively conversations that were happening in the Department of Anthropology in Manchester during the late 1990s. A clutch of research students were writing up under the direction of Tim Ingold, taking forward his phenomenologically inspired environmental anthropology, characterised by the 'dwelling perspective' (Ingold 1992, 1996, 2000). At the same time, there was a strong legacy of Marilyn Strathern's (1992) theoretical contributions to discussions of nature, society and the indi-

vidual, through considering, especially, the cultural implications presented by new technologies of procreation. These two currents of theory and ethnographic exploration produced a climate of radical thinking that was as critical of essentialist representations of nature, as it was of the conventional anthropological instrument of cultural construction. I came into these debates as a research fellow with a project looking at the effects of changing understandings of the Himalayan environment, and noticed strong parallels between the critiques of nature in social anthropological theory, and the crisis in policies for environmental protection, that through a combination of expediency and reflection on experience, were in search of alternatives to strict nature conservation. A workshop was organised in September 1998 called 'Contesting Nature', to enable a dialogue between some international key thinkers on people–environment relationships (Kay Milton, Tim Ingold, John O'Neill, Roger Jeffery), a slightly younger cadre of researchers connecting their empirical case materials with new theoretical pathways, and others who brought original perspectives into the conversation (Green, Krauss).

The motivation for calling together the workshop to discuss environmental protection was to examine the implications of two developments in the understanding of human–environmental relatedness. First, on a practical level, policies to protect nature have changed dramatically in the last two decades to incorporate the reality of human presence in, or dependence on, areas designated for protection. North American-style wilderness preservation is now recognised as not being a viable option for the many areas of biodiversity concern around the world that contain or are surrounded by human communities, whose livelihoods and cultural worlds are deeply engaged with biodiversity (Stevens 1997). Secondly, within anthropology, the ways in which we now think about human ecology have moved beyond the nature–culture opposition that framed previous generations of anthropological enquiry. The interpretive clarity that nature and culture once seemed to offer has been overtaken by a world in which the certainty of nature as both a reality and a concept has diminished (Strathern 1992). At the same time, cultures are no longer seen as the discrete, ecologically adapted, formative meaning-structures they were once presumed to be (Brosius 1999). The relationship between these two developments concerning the fate of nature is the connecting thread of this special issue. It has a specific aim of bringing attention to mis-placed approaches to environmental protection, and draws on ethnography's attentiveness to holistic analysis of people's lives in places, as a counter to the objectification of nature as separate from human relations.

Nature conservation can be seen as one of the formative expressions of the nineteenth century's awareness of modernity and its consequences, linked both to an aesthetic of new urban–industrial lifeways (Cronon 1995), and to perceived risks to colonial profitability through ecological degradation (Grove 1995). As an early modern response to the effects of industrial and extractive

capitalism, conservation solutions tended to ghetto-ise nature in enclaves of bio-authenticity or resource reserves that excluded human intervention, territorially emplacing a nature/society divide. Nature was 'purified' of its social networks (Latour 1993). Behind the popular amenity aesthetic of American wilderness and in the European colonies' forest administrations, this first indication of environmental concern only remoulded the patterns of extractive colonialism from a *laissez-faire* form to one of centralised direction in schemes of national heritage formation and 'scientific resource management' (Hajer 1996). The basic policy of nature protection as one of demarcated domains had to wait over a century after initial formulations, such as the Forest Department in India and the national parks in the USA (both in the 1870s), for another, socially reflexive environmental paradigm to emerge.

In the 1960s and 70s the question of 'who speaks for nature' was raised vociferously, by critics of environmental pollution in the industrialised world and by spokespeople of popular resistance movements opposing the alienation of communities from lands, forests and other common property resources. The authority and rationale for conservation based on a simple dichotomy of human and natural interests began to fragment. What were once seen as unambiguously pristine environments came to be acknowledged as substantially 'anthropogenic'. Responding to environmental social movements and evidence for the limited effectiveness of top–down conservation management, as well as to financial constraints, in the 1980s and 1990s participatory protection models of 'conservation with development', 'joint forest management', 'community conservation', and 'park buffer zones' have become widely established. These recognise some legitimacy to diverse claims on the resources of protected areas, and acknowledge risks to economic and cultural survival of local human populations living under proscriptions of nature protection (Stevens 1997).

These shifts can be seen as reflecting a breakdown of the nineteenth century antithesis of nature and society, which both social science and nature protection emerged from. The theorist of risk Ulrich Beck claims that 'At the end of the twentieth century nature is society and society is also 'nature'. Anyone who continues to speak of nature as non-society is speaking in terms from a different century' (Beck 1992: 81, by which he of course meant the nineteenth century). For Beck, nature is now so integrated by culture that 'all our highly bred possibilities of distancing and excluding ourselves *fail*' (Beck 1992: 81, original emphasis). By contrast, Milton (1999) gives a very clear exposition of reasons for western conservationists' continuing foundational attachment to preserving the human/non-human divide. Her account of the sacred and dogmatic basis for conservationists' valuation of non-human nature suggests a far greater tenacity in the idea of its autonomous principle and agency, than the pronouncements of its passing anticipated. Milton argues that conservationists are motivated to invest sacred qualities in nature as a meaning-giving context for

their lives (while others may view development and progress in similar fashion). This amounts to a fairly compelling explanation for moral and political engagement with environmental issues within western culture, but I have to admit to a certain chilling sensation on facing the stark clarity in which Milton presents this life-agenda. My response stems from having lived among people on the end of chains of impact that such culturally-specific worldviews entail for people far away, who have no comparable sense of non-human context, but who have to face on a daily basis the consequences of the social power of the worldview described by her.[1] Milton's analysis, by implication, gives cause for viewing with caution the conviction among sections of conservationists signed up to more 'participatory', 'people-friendly' and social justice-oriented conservation policies.[2] Her interpretation can be seen as holding a strong degree of 'ethnographic' philosophical validity, by statements such as Dobson's that '[un]surprisingly, sustainable development is about development, and environmental justice is about justice, but perhaps more surprisingly, neither is really about the protection of the environment as such' (Dobson 2000: 54). That Milton's characterisation of reasons for environmental defence do not have to be generalised *to all* environmentalist positions can be seen in various of the contributions to Sachs (1993), in Guha and Martinez-Alier (1997), and for an example of 'mutualistic', non-dualist strands of social ecology thinking see Morris' (1996) discussion of Bookchin.

Contemporary changes in how environmental protection is thought about are not simply to do with discovering new approaches in policy and theory. They are deeply entwined with developments in global economy and social change. Post Cold War adjustments of trading patterns, investment and rural subsidies have rendered many areas of agricultural production unprofitable, while the market for ecotourism, and scientific interest in bio-prospecting have grown. In this context, environmental restoration has acquired in practices of governance, something of the mantle of local benefit and common good through consumption and 'stewardship', that 'productionist' support for livelihoods and employment once held. New kinds of relationships among people, places, identity formations and environmental processes are being worked out in this reinvention of locality (Creed and Ching 1997; Gupta 1998; Goodman 2002). Simultaneously, advances made in biotechnology have brought about a 'new capitalisation of nature' (Escobar 1995, 1999; Castree 2001) and a generic valuation of biodiversity as a source of material for bio-technological commodification (Bryant 2001).[3] Arguments for involving people in the picture of nature protection include not just those stemming from positions of environmental justice (Peet and Watts 1996), but also from neo-liberal market valuations of biodiversity through potential benefits from bioprospecting guided by indigenous knowledge (Hayden 2003), and from rationalisations of finances in the administration of protected areas influenced by pressure for state deregulation and NGO involvement.

All is perhaps not so clearly transformed as the passage of Beck quoted above argues, and there are examples of back-and-cross-tracking in both dualistic and novel hybridising ways. This is not so surprising when it is remembered how diverse is the coalition behind conservation (Weizsäcker 1993; Hajer 1996; Takacs 1996; Guha and Martinez-Alier 1997). While conservation policies may have introduced rhetorics of human inclusion into their scope, the distant-nature conservationist mind-set is still a popular motivating current among scientists and publics (Brockington 2002; Brechin et al. 2002). Versions of bio-centric deep ecology, and aspects of global biodiversity programmes embody reformed incarnations of nature as social antithesis.[4] The flurry of reports on the death of nature around the year 1990 may have been premature, and the spectre of a world autonomous from human activity continues to haunt ways of thought and projects for environmental restoration, manifesting itself in quite vigorous forms (Brockington et al. *in press*). Moreover, the task of achieving people participation in environmental projects has been far from easy, and attempts to bring about 'win–win' integration of human and environmental objectives continue to highlight the problem of thinking in terms of these abstracted elements. In the recently legitimised interface between biodiversity and people, a new kind of environmental anthropology wary of the old nature–culture antithesis and attentive to creative experiments in eco-sociality is required. Calling together a group of anthropologists to discuss their research in contexts of nature protection, was intended as a means of comparing examples of the ways in which changing conservation discourses and projects have had effects in specific places, and to examine the oppositional, or other responses to nature protection in people's perceptions and engagements. There is no consensus among the contributors to this issue about the advisability of keeping or dropping the term 'nature' as an analytical category in our articles. Where we are agreed is in the goal of locating environmental protection within histories of social relations, and in ongoing debates about theorising social life as placed in environmental interaction. Anthropology has value as a generalist and 'holistic' approach to human locatedness, and as such it brings insights from positions that are not necessarily specialised in environmental studies, but which can give accounts that ask questions beyond that specific framing.

ETHNOGRAPHY IN THE ENVIRONMENTALIST AGE

For all that strict nature 'preservation' may no longer be regarded as theoretically tenable, the increasing media-assisted popularity of conservation among influential groups, and its new global governmental reach in socially modified forms, represents a phenomenon that calls on anthropologists to think differently about their research situations than in terms of the classic model of the ethnographer in splendid isolation. The ecological chapter of an ethnographic

monograph used to be a convenient introductory device for conveying the reader into a distant and exotic environment of unfamiliar landscapes, animals, plants and cosmologies.[5] Contemporary ethnographic research, by contrast, is increasingly likely to involve an encounter with organisations dedicated to making people aware of something called 'the environment'. Internationally sponsored environmental salvage, and campaigns for the ecological conscientisation of local communities have been underway with renewed vigour since the Rio '92 Earth Summit and its Agenda 21. After years of anthropological coaching in the analytical inappropriateness of imposing western understandings of nature and landscape that insert an objectifying gaze onto ecological surroundings, ethnographers now find the communities they study bombarded with instructions and incentives to do so. Items of local cuisine have become taboo 'endangered species', and the use of timber for house construction has become a threat to habitat sustainability. Encounters with explicit formulations of the environment as being materially threatened by human activity have become a factor in ethnographic reality, and these formulations that were once recognisably culturally specific, are no longer a straightforward criterion for defining difference between cultural universes.

This is all rather confusing to the recent generation of fieldworkers reared on the milk of debates in anthropology about nature since the last thirty years (Ortner 1974; Strathern 1980; Ingold 1992, 1996; Bender 1993; Hirsch and O'Hanlon 1995). These debates have focused particularly on exposing nature as an inadequate category for comparative cultural analysis. They have argued that nature plays such a powerful cultural role in giving meaning to Western notions of, for instance, technological progress (Pfaffenberger 1992), nationhood (Olwig 1993), and society (Strathern 1992), that given its essentialising purifications and 'othering' effects, its use as a means to understanding non-Western patterns of environmental relationships is rendered suspect. Nature operates as perhaps the single most pervasive construction through which modernity has organised the perception of the world (Williams 1976; Thomas 1983). If we were to understand how people in our differently located research communities go about their social lives of environmental interaction and symbolic communication, that component of the idea of nature which constitutes a domain opposed the human was supposed to hinder rather than help our ethnographic entreprise (*pace* Levi-Strauss, for whom the nature/culture opposition was the primary dialectic in his entire intellectual project).

Some examples of this encounter between the modernist objectification of the environment and its effects on local understandings of people's environmental relations will illustrate the point. In Milton's (1996: 125–6) discussion of 'the myth of primitive ecological wisdom', she draws on Richards' work on the Mende of Sierra Leone, who could not understand the protective stance that conservation slogans encouraged them to adopt for 'saving' their forest. In their conception, it was rather the forest that protected people, so an alto-

gether reversely imagined asymmetry of power, agency and responsibility was being asked for in the idiom of 'saving' the forest. In northern India, Gooch (1998) describes the processes that established a forest protected area which was to cut off migratory routes and pastures for the Gujjar buffalo-herding nomads. They were forced by the Forest Department to give assent to a document signifying their agreement not to return to the forest. Gooch recorded the comments of an old woman:

> *'It would be better if the government just killed us all at once. We have no land and now they are taking the forest from us. We have nothing. Even the bear has a better life than we do. It has got somewhere to creep in for the night, but the Gujjars have nowhere.'* (Gooch 1998: 25).

Gooch goes on to describe how the threatened removal of forest access rights made a context where the Gujjars strategically re-invented themselves as a 'forest people'. This identity was, though, in many ways a novelty and a departure from their subsistence idioms and poetic imagery, that had not previously used the forest *per se* as a generalised category. In other words, faced with the loss of rights to be in the forest during seasonal periods of their pastoral movements, '*forest* and *forest knowledge* [took] shape out of the background in which it was submerged and became *visible*' (Gooch 1998: 105, original emphasis). A dialectic of environmental protection and lifeway identity emerged in the course of their new formation as 'Forest Gujjars' in their social movement for recognition of ecological entitlement.

As a third example, Van Helden (n.d.) describes how attempts to bring forest conservation policies in Papua New Guinea have run up against radically different project approaches to involving local communities to protect the environment. Fundamental differences between project methodologies promoting, on the one hand, long-term confidence-building and community empowerment, and on the other, providing incentive structures for sustainable logging, have resulted in incompatible versions of what conservation should be about, and the local people have picked up on the evident disparities of impact and benefit flowing from the project orientations of different national and international NGOs. How forests come to be constituted as objects for protection, thus necessarily carries the imprint of different social models for valuing trees and environments. The contradictions between these models and the benefits they deliver cannot be disguised, or straightforwardly brought into dialogue, and they provide an unstable basis for producing the environment as a coherent categorical entity.

These examples highlight in different ways some repercussions of environmental protection, that take on quite particular meanings and trajectories, articulating with the dynamics of locally significant representations of human–forest dependence, and relations of power between affected communities, states

and NGO agencies. They all demonstrate problems in transposing a notion of environments as objectifiable entities in need of protection that subsequently have to be renegotiated into relations of care, entitlement and sustainable use. Among the alternatives to dualistic objectifications of nature–culture is the approach offered by Tim Ingold's 'dwelling perspective' of human–ecological engagement (Ingold 2000). This enables significant new research questions to be posed, because it throws into doubt the way that anthropologists have tended to think of people's relationships to their environments as being acquired through the mediation of cultural symbols and beliefs. Instead of thinking in terms of culture as a model of learned classifications that order the meanings people give to their surroundings, imposing cultural constructions on the material world of nature, Ingold suggests that knowledge of the world is gained via engagement and interaction with it, and through people's perceptions of environmental 'affordances'. He brings our attention to the very real material processes of people's skills in using tools, and in knowing the properties and behaviours of animal and plant species, as well as how these interactions with the non-human are enfolded in perceptions of effect, value and relationship. If, ontologically speaking, people understand environments primarily through engaged practices of dwelling rather than through mediations of concepts, this opens up important new ways of thinking about the anthropological effects of nature conservation. When observers have noted cases of resistance to conservation, these have often been explained in terms of economic consequences for people's livelihoods (and it is through economic incentives that conservation programmes try to garner support for their projects, examples of which are given by Green, Campbell, Mazzullo, and Krauss in this issue). What the dwelling perspective makes clear is the radical ontological dissonance that can be expected by positing an objective material environment detached from human involvement. This is most striking when Ingold discusses hunter–gatherer peoples:

> *'The sense in which hunters and gatherers see themselves as conservers or custodians of their environments should not...be confused with the Western scientific idea of conservation. This...is rooted in the assumption that humans—as controllers of the natural world—bear full responsibility for the survival or extinction of wildlife species. For hunter–gatherers this responsibility is inverted. In the last resort, it is those powers that animate the environment that are responsible for the survival or extinction of humans.'* (Ingold 2000: 68).

It is not then merely a matter of compensation or alternatives for livelihood support, that is necessary to forge consent for conservation. These kinds of solutions, based on economistic assumptions of human behaviour being motivated by rational cost–benefit calculation of resource alternatives, appear

from the policy perspective as the more benign and people-friendly components of 'participatory conservation'.[6] Such measures of substituting alternative livelihoods to ones of ecological dependence do not, however, address a key anthropological reality. This is that the regulation of resource use as a management of the environment (conceived as an externalised and controllable object), frequently involves a 'cultural' transformation in the ways that people place themselves in their relational contexts of being alive. This is obviously an extreme scenario in the case of hunter–gatherers without even ideologies of 'property'. Additionally, it has to be said that practices similar *in effect* to conservation have been widely observed. Against the 'tragedy of the commons' thesis that only by private property institutions and state intervention can spirals of ecological degradation be avoided, there are many ethnographic examples of how people have historically restrained and avoided over-use of valuable common-access environments (Feeny et al. 1990; Posey 1999; Borrini-Feyerabend et al. 2004). Yet many of the contributors of *Re-Placing Nature* are writing about contexts in which conservation does entail an enforced disengagement of people from habitual use of their environments, by external regulation. Environmental protection puts into place the same conceptual disjunction of an internalised cultural model held in people's heads, from a nature 'out there', that Ingold (1992) identifies in the logic of cultural construction. The logic of protection likewise imagines a culture of conservation intervening to mediate human–environmental interaction through classifications of appropriate and inappropriate activity, and categories of designed landscape, based on evaluations of what environments would look like if free of human presence.

Whether people now living under conservation regimes can be said to have previously enjoyed wholly unmediated relationships to the affordances of their environments can be reasonably questioned, or at least the language and implications of the term 'mediation' need clarification. At what point, for instance, do indigenous property systems that differentiate environmental entitlements based on group identity, gendered inheritance regimes, and unequal collective rights need to be considered as 'mediations' of engagement? The existence of practices which regulate differential resource access between persons and groups does not necessarily undermine the phenomenological dimension of the dwelling perspective, (which is more about attending to concrete processes of activity in the world, rather than starting from points of categorical abstraction), but the mediations of environmental interaction by social control, hierarchies of authority, and exclusionary effects of property and inheritance, suggest the need for a politics of environmental engagement to complement the phenomenology.[7]

Another thing that could be offered by a politics of environmental engagement is a combining of a dwelling perspective with an account of people's capacity to reflect on their own practices. People's reflexive skills tend to be displaced by the important points that are made in the dwelling perspective about skill

not being to do with internalising sets of rules and procedures. People do make comparisons with the way they do things as compared to how other people do things, and they also project into the future how they might do things differently (Milton 1993). Without this complementary dimension of conscious positionality with regard to alternative modes of engagement, the dwelling perspective appears to be of limited comparative applicability, restricted to contexts of relative stasis.

Linked with the kinds of differentiation in the ways that people access and claim varying kinds of rights to ecological engagement, and observe how others do things, is the circulation of morally evaluative representations *about people's relationships with particular environments.* Within any community this affects how people talk of activity, knowledge, and connection to place through dispositional differences between, for example, women and men, children and adults, or between other social collectivities of language, class and ethnicity status. Typically within ethnographic monographs such differences are discussed in terms of the division of labour,[8] and strong continuities with framings of the (class, ethnic, and gender) division of labour exist in how people's environmental relationships come to be talked about in conservation contexts. The ways in which discourses of social and ethnic identity enter the moral contexts of environmental interaction in different places (Figure 1) are brought out in many of the articles in this issue. Lund focuses on the different roots and routes of people living in the Spanish Alpujarra that privilege specific kinds of knowledge and claims for the authenticity of local landscape. Koehler discusses the eco-essentialist representations by environmental organisations of the Bantu and Baka people's forest connections in Cameroon. Green draws

Figure 1

Map of the world showing study sites

on the problematic effects of iconic land-and-people imagery for the Sarakatsani as compared to other less photogenic, and 'typically' Greek, associations of land and people that have been affected by decades of out-migration, and by changes in the way village people interact with their environments. Krauss draws a contrast between outsiders' perception of the people of Alentejo in Portugal as 'uncultured', and the coastal environment, which is portrayed in publicity as relatively unspoilt, and in which the people are rarely visible. Campbell describes the stereotypic ethnic characterisation of the Tamang as uncooth, *jangali* people, in the eyes of Nepalese park officials that is an historical legacy of the state's command of mountain populations and their environments through corvée labour. Harris connects the typecasting of Brazilian floodplain people as living lazily in natural abundance to the history of class relations and the elite's project of national development. Mazzullo discusses the selective associations made in environmental legislation between Sami collective identity and a variety of Lappland subsistence and commercial practices, that do not conform to centrally held stereotypes of 'proper' indigenous behaviour.

The question that I suggest is cumulatively raised by this collection is whether a politics of environmental engagement can be built around the dwelling perspective?[9] In the various contributions to this issue, resistance to political interventions in human–environmental relationships in the name of nature conservation, could be interpreted through the displacement to particular dwelling ontologies. This displacement is effected by the radical distancing of people from their surroundings, institutionalised by objectifying nature. This perspective would make visible a positioned, motivational level of human–environmental relationality beyond a mere calculated reckoning of costs and benefits of conservation, which more economistically orientated accounts of human behaviour rely upon. Programmes such as those of the Global Environmental Facility, and the UNDP Park–People project work on assumptions that conservation entails effects of material deprivation for local communities, and therefore that some of the benefits accruing to conservation authorities, such as from tourist revenue or managed resource harvesting, ought to return to local communities through the funding of development schemes for income generation, and alternative livelihoods. These projects have their particular problems with how communities are institutionalised in this process (see Campbell here, and on the Joint Forest Management experience in India see Sundar et al. 2001 and Sarin et al. 2003). The idea of material substitution for loss of access to local environments reduces ecologically emplaced ways of life to a source of income at best. They formulate people's environmental needs as an instrumental matter of technical regulation and economic equivalence, that is continuous with the logic of putting a price on biodiversity (see O'Neill's article), rather than as a question of how in any given context people's environmental engagements are intrinsically practices of social action that occur in, and constitute, fields of identity and power.

The ethnographic studies included here explore these fields as encountered in the process of fieldwork. They introduce different registers and networks of signification and interactional practice particular to each case, but they collectively highlight people's sensitivity to effects in redistributions of power and legitimate agency that arise from rendering these registers and networks explicit—as prohibited or ecologically harmful. Practices of environmental engagement thus become subject to eco-ethical evaluation, and often, in practice, to criminalisation, as a new register of signification and interaction for the affected communities. Issues of environmental justice are raised in the articles by Krauss, Campbell, Mazzullo and O'Neill, where the writers attempt to present aspects of moral complexity that arise from straddling the dichotomy of human and environmental values. Krauss' moment of anxious gastronomic reflexivity (page 362, this issue) when presented with a meal of otter, is perhaps emblematic of the dilemmas ethnographers face in such situations. Anderson and Berglund neatly describe the ethnographer's doubt as to whether '…*one is attacking the wrong target. After all, wealthy as they may be, we assume that high-profile or transnational environmental organisations will never shape tomorrow's world as powerfully as the alliances of states, corporations and militaries*' (2003: 6). The (in)justice issues can be seen in a broader context, which is that of environmental democracy and citizenship, and the potential for responsible and artfully creative negotiation of practices of convivial environmental engagement.

To varying degrees all the contributors have committed personal histories of intellectual and applied endeavour to enhance, value, appreciate and understand the environment. For none of us is the environment a purely discursive construct but a part of total lived experience, and in our anthropological reflections on environmental protection our critiques do not come from the position that it is pointless to protect the environment. What makes the anthropological perspective on environmental policy and management distinctive is the questioning it brings to the human relational context such interventions entail, to the kinds of expertise that are acknowledged and ignored, and to the ethnographic scrutiny of their intended and unintended 'downstream' effects for environments and people.[10]

Anthropology offers possibilities for thinking radically about ecological *praxis*, looking beyond discourse and resource framings, to the contexts of intentional action in which sociality extends across the human/non-human divide (Viveiros de Castro 1998), and attending to creative experimentation in the associations of people and things (Latour 1998). It involves the diverse sources of human experience, kinship, and well-being that affect how people engage with their environments, and that will ultimately determine the relationships that can be made with environments irrespective of planning, because they are about motivations. The ethnographer's enquiry therefore opens out a set of questions about protection rather than offering managerial prescriptions. What

this methodological locatedness can ask is to what extent conservation can be successfully brought about through the means of protected areas, and to what extent the existence of protected areas, acts as a means of extending state control over awkward and unprofitable peripheries, and their socially marginal populations (Ferguson 1990)?

PLACE

Re-Placing Nature explores alternatives to nature as a spatialised realm of non-human bio-physical authenticity, by giving focus to anthropology's ability to describe, analyse, and compare the manifold ways in which people make connectedness with place. The philosopher Edward Casey (1996) indeed claims anthropology to be the discipline most attuned to the human sensibility to diversity of places. Protected areas for conservation tend, by contrast, to be built on standardised administrative ideas for spatial and zonal regulation (to a great extent shared with commercial forestry), which categorise biotic qualities and appropriate human use-management regimes, but do not address the lived-in experience of place, central to peoples' sense of environmental relationship. Often it is precisely those aspects of lived-in, tacit, relatively unreflexive or customary qualities of dwelling in place, with its associated practices of habitual livelihood provisioning from the affordances of the environment, which conservation projects aim explicitly to change by regulation, and to render reflexive.

The list of categories of protected areas produced by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN 1994) establishes a hierarchised typology of site designations that, progressing down the list, incrementally admit people into the ambit of protected areas. The top priority includes 'Strict Nature Reserve', and 'Wilderness Area' the definition of which stipulates they should be 'without permanent or significant habitation'. The second ranked 'National Park' is for guarding 'ecological integrity', and excluding 'exploitation or occupation inimical to the purposes of designation of the area', but in which 'environmentally and culturally compatible' social uses including social, scientific, educational and recreational activities are permitted. At the bottom of the list, the sixth and final category is that of 'Managed Resource Protected Area' 'containing predominantly unmodified natural ecosystems', for which protection is designed to maintain biological diversity, but which offers sustainable use of products for community needs. There is a firmly planned framework in these designations to circumscribe human intervention. While human use is tolerated in certain conditions, the ecological integrity of place comes first.[11]

The language of ecological 'integrity' and 'pristine', or relatively 'unmodified' landscapes has particular consequences for how human presence is subsequently conceptualised and integrated with the environments of protected

areas. There is a privileging of homeostasis and ecological equilibrium, which both obscures scientific debates over anthropogenic influence and the validity of presumptions about intrinsic ecological propensities to achieve conditions of climax vegetation (Fairhead and Leach 1995; Blaikie 2001: 143), and at the same time naturalises resident human communities as part of environmentally determined patterns of adaptation. Brosius (1999, 2001) has offered important perspectives on how traditional anthropological understandings of a 'topology of simple locality' need to be questioned. Within this stylistic framing of topology certain people appear appropriately placed, others not:

> *'... the emergence of concern about the destruction of tropical rainforests has resulted in the valorization of particular categories of subject who we feel should live in them: indigenous peoples (how often have we heard them referred to as 'guardians of biodiversity'?). Excluded by this topos are categories of people who should not live in rain forests: peasants and migrants from urban areas.'* (Brosius 1999: 282).

Practices of eco-governance in protected areas put into place regulations on movements of people, animals and 'natural' things within desired topological states. This effects a new territorialisation of life process, mediated through bureaucratic surveillance, check-posts, patrols, and permits. Legitimate 'user groups' or other collectivities are established on the basis of property, birth, ethnic affiliation, or licensing arrangement. Livestock are discriminated in terms of their relative impact on preferred habitats (goats being particularly singled out as undesirable aliens), and administratively imposed boundaries become the constructed sites for controlling the territorial range of people's use and exchange of environmental products. Regulated homeostasis becomes the technique and rationale of conservation human ecology, and with increasing areas of the world coming under such regimes, a wholly different picture of people–place relationships emerges in relation to them, than is at work in the de-territorialising global circulation of people, products and capital.

  Homeostatic topologies are, ultimately, invented steady states requiring boundary maintenance. They allow little room for the people affected by their imposition to respond to livelihood conditions, which are often as dependent on external relationships and flows to other places and their different social, ecological and economic affordances, as they are on what local resource entitlements provide. Topologies of homeostasis have proven so inimical to communities' propensities for exchange and relationship beyond bounded territorial units, that protected areas have been obliged to address the socio-economic effects of imposed topologies through new categories of graded territorial demarcation such as 'buffer zones' and less restrictive 'conservation areas'. Yet within more socially 'friendly' perspectives of sustainable development, alternative approaches to locality offer more dynamically networked images of

place. In a discussion of approaches to the ecological and poverty problems of the Hindu Kush–Himalayan region, Rhoades argues that enabling bridging connections between people with particular ecological niche associations is a likely way out of place-constricted subsistence poverty that can act to the detriment of stressed habitats, on which groups of people may depend too intensively. He argues that 'mountain peoples' (note, though, the possibilities of topo-morphism in such a phrase) have the potential to use a 'politics of location' to avoid being simply manipulated in global politico-economic processes, and that international environmental discourse can become a means of promoting this potential advantage of location (Rhoades 1997: 27).

If the concepts of place deployed by conservation programmes understandably confer a primacy to biological perspectives of location, the alternative views being offered here to reposition thinking about people and place consist of broadly three elements. The first is the phenomenological unity of people's dwelt activity with their surroundings. The second is the making of certain kinds of knowledge and practice as 'local', and the third is the recognition of place distinctiveness within discourses of governance.

While scientists may understand nature in terms of the objective properties of things, anthropologists have mapped the diversity of ways in which people around the world interact with their environments relationally, in mutual attendance with non-human surroundings. This mutual attendance has been differentiated by typologies of relationship such as 'giving' versus 'reciprocal' environments (Milton 1996), or 'totemic' in contrast to 'animic' modes of interacting with the non-human world (Descola 1996; Ingold 2000). In such characterisations, people–land relations vary enormously in how human identity is conceived, how dwelling is lived socially, and in how rights to residence and produce are configured. When this comparative range is held in mind, the cultural specificity of modern attitudes of seeing places as detachable from the presence of people's participation in a 'sentient ecology' (Ingold 2000: 10) becomes apparent. Places and landscapes can be seen to have become separable from people, and made into objects, when colonial era science and law produced an idea of the autonomous human individual as biologically substantialised and given animation through culturally transmitted knowledge, turning the land that individuals occupy into 'no more than a kind of stage' Ingold (2000: 139). Conservation thinking which makes biospheres a stage for authentic biological presence therefore replicates a stark separation of geographical entity and human residence carried over from the logics and biopolitics of conquest.

The articles in this collection push the dwelling perspective to yield insights for conservation in particular places. They take different tracks, and pursue various connecting vines between ethnographic understories and theoretical canopies, very much shaped by the conditions encountered in fieldwork. As a result, they offer vantages on the consequences for people's place relation-

ships from hard worked-at points of view. Dusty hot trails, chill breezes, lurking presences, and inundations stamp their realities on the circumstances brought into light. Campbell's comparative treks in Himalayan protected areas result in questioning that aspect of Ingold's dwelling perspective which suggests unmediated, seamless interaction with place. He looks at the effects that the criminalisation of much subsistence activity has had in mediating Nepali villagers' ecological engagement through the regulated topologies of protected areas, and the resultant secretive acts of forest provisioning that continue out of others' sight. Green reflects on the consequences of a diminished task-scape of an aging population in Greece's Epirus mountain villages, as the place changes from one of livelihood activity to an abandoned backwater that is being transformed into a spectacle of nature for outside visitors. Koehler explores via rich central African ethnographic detail what is a central problem within both the phenomenology of place, and the positioning of conservation discourses. This is whether some people, in this case the Baka pygmies, may be considered more 'authentic' dwellers of place than others? Lund concentrates on the repercussions of the routes and roots of place-making, as immigration to Spain's Sierra Nevada has turned its landscape into a site of contested claims to speak for locally authentic practice, and whose version of what is natural takes precedence. Harris provides an intensive examination of dwelling activity in the Amazon floodplain to demonstrate the constant attention of people to the changing character of the land–water interface, and specifically the 'port' that each family needs to readjust every few days for mooring a boat. He argues that knowledge of daily skills appropriate for such an environment are learnt through processes of personal development, and participation, rather than through instruction. Yet such is the misperception by powerful outsiders of the practical knowledge required for life in this place, which appears to operate as a local economy without formalised landed property, that the skilful achievement of community reproduction gets translated in terms of mere laziness.

This leads on to the second aspect of place relationships underscored by this collection: how aspects of social practice, cultural difference and power become localised in place. The articles by Green, Lund, Krauss, Mazzullo and Campbell all discuss local economic histories of place-based livelihoods in processes of transformation that have met obstacles in the form of environmental regulations. Local subsistence mobility combined with external migratory labour patterns are commonly part of the picture, and the communities involved are deeply conscious of their relation to wider economic opportunities, and transnational networks. This makes the notion of local people as 'stuck in place' singularly inappropriate. Place-based livelihoods need to be understood through accounts of life histories, social change and aspirations, rather than being slotted into the naturalistic narrative box of communities geared to 'survival', or simply replicating traditional values. The articles by

Lund and Mazzullo are particularly good examples of how biographical illustrations can be used to discuss place-bound reifications of social categories, and people's responses to them.

Recent work on local knowledge (Pottier 2003) has moved significantly away from producing accounts of indigenous or local environmental knowledge among populations once imagined to be in need of scientific enlightenment, to focus instead on the relations between orders and powers claiming local, national or universal status. In this recognition of interfaces where borders are crossed over, discourses of the local are recontextualised, along with knowledge of the environment, what counts as the environment, and who are decisive actors in environmental processes. Williams (2000), for instance, offers an intriguing insight into Chinese scientists' control over how representations of soil conservation measures intended to improve the interactions between Mongolian pastoralists and the conditions of grasslands feed into wider scientific information networks. Williams notes how the story of a place, and the effects of the scientists' presence on the ground, are told within active localisations that maintain ethnic and knowledge hierarchies. In an innovative approach that contests the way 'local knowledge' has been used by anthropologists, Raffles (2002) suggests that 'intimacy' is a way through the problems of implied boundedness that place-specific knowledge can carry, which reinforce differences of the parochial and the universal. In his discussion of scientists' changed understandings of Amazonian tree root depths, Raffles instead argues for more symmetrical relations between kinds of knowledge, and for recognition of their possibilities for travelling and being transformed into objective knowledge. This symmetricality of perspective achieves more than the intellectual category of 'local' can accomplish, with its inferiorised opposition to the universal.

A corollary of the redirection of intimately generated knowledge into objective and universalisable forms, is the manner highlighted by Pottier, in which many studies of participatory development have been shown to mask processes of 'disambiguation', and 'negotiated translation' (Pottier 2003: 17–20). In the circulation of knowledge about the effects of conservation and development interventions on local realities, anthropologists have come to recognise the interplay of intentional miscommunications between project workers and beneficiaries. For example, commenting on attempts to dissuade Batak swidden cultivators in the Philippines from cutting new patches of forest, Novellino argues that when agreements are arrived at for community stewardship of public forests, it is not 'local knowledge' that is given voice in this process, 'but very often the experts' interpretation of people's strategic accounts about their knowledge' (Novellino 2003: 292). These new directions in locating intimate knowledge of place within dynamic relationships to exteriorising discourses, open up a field of 'equivocation' (Viveiros de Castro 2004) between ways of knowing, where the anthropologist, and other inventive bro-

kers, are positioned to translate across conceptual languages, rather than re-
duce or silence differences into a presumed univocality. Examples of such
univocality that are most pertinent to conservation, are the presumption of the
environment being spontaneously visible as a non-human domain, and sec-
ondly, the idea that local people can be persuaded to alter their ecological re-
lationships by material incentives to adopt alternative subsistence patterns.

Moving to the third element of place to be discussed here, the case studies
in this collection show how the profiling of certain areas as in need of biodi-
versity protection, and/or as potentially benefiting from being characterised as
destinations for nature tourism, provides a new kind of rationale for admini-
strations of nature. Especially with the new global rationalisations of food
economies (Goodman 2002), many places have become designated as appro-
priate for biodiversity rather than agriculture, and their post-productionist re-
gional economic futures have been planned with a view to exploiting their
landscapes and cultural heritage. In this vein, Europe's Natura 2000 pro-
gramme is echoed in the contributions by Mazzullo, Green, and Krauss, which
explore local perspectives on the effects of being regionally repackaged in this
way. Campbell's and Koehler's cases involve places that have become glob-
ally iconic environments of mountain and tropical forests respectively. There
are very different ways that these designations of biodiversity uniqueness en-
fold and represent resident human communities, but they reveal continuities in
global eco-governance with the sibling colonial narratives of forest protection
and ethnic essentialism: in the Baka pygmy case, often locating them in nature
while their Bantu neighbours are set against it; and in the Himalayan case,
population increase in mountain villages is, even in participatory conservation
literature, portrayed as destined to degrade forests (in the natural course of
events).

The extent to which these representational framings have altered, with envi-
ronmental expertise becoming more pluralised in post-colonial conditions,
and with diverse sets of stakeholders empowered under projects of sustainable
development, is a question that requires close empirical scrutiny and regional
contextualisation of how national economies, scientific communities and so-
cial movements have taken up environmental agendas. Greenhough and Tsing
(2003: ix–xi) have shown how comparing South and Southeast Asia, quite dif-
ferent post-colonial contexts emerge in the positioning of forests, citizens,
states, and regional cultures in discourses of change. Igoe's (2004) and Brock-
ington's (2002) analyses from East Africa, present studies of conservation that
demonstrate powerful continuities in how post-colonial states there have been
motivated to see tourism-oriented conservation policy as a financial support
for national development, that require considerable acts of land alienation.
Here pastoralist peoples have been vulnerable to perceptions of their pasture
lands as being only provisionally occupied, and their livelihood strategies as
being characteristically fluid, and geographically distributed, so they do not

acquire the fixity to place that the notion of property carries, when settled agriculture is practised. Even under community conservation programmes, the institutions in which this policy operates are those directly linked to 'fortress conservation' approaches (Brockington 2002: 10), and the characteristic motivation for indigenous NGOs to find global environmental allies centre on the experience of land alienation under neo-liberal wildlife interests (Igoe 2004).

Other arguments for a new significance of territoriality and citizenship afforded by environmentalist networks in transnational arenas have been made by Gupta in relation to farmers' movements (1998). In a similar vein, Escobar (2001) has brought attention to recent thinking about the politics of place as a counter to the idea of the disempowerment of place through globalisation, and the tendency to associate locality with reactionary political forces, or with notions that the poor are, for example, 'trapped in place'. Seeing places as sites of effective difference, Escobar discerns strategic creativity in how emplaced understandings and social relationships with territory encapsulate the life-project of communities in Pacific Colombia. This kind of agency in place-based collective identifications find echoes in the articles of this issue (e.g. Mazzullo), but the ethnographic attendance to people–place relationships at everyday levels often shows such collective identifications to be the effects of tactical alliances made in oppositional contexts (Baviskar 1995). The important point to stress is that whatever new contexts of symbolism place might operate in, people's sense of place does not come first and foremost from a distinct social world of normative values and pre-formed identities, or from 'structures of feeling'. The social qualities of place are constituted through activity, participation, and perception of human and non-human life process in contexts of 'relational ways of knowing'.[12] Increasingly, ethnographers are discussing how social relations are made visible and brought into being through processes of engagement and interaction with elements of landscape, and the contextualising memories of past activity. Bamford (1998, n.d.) brings this issue directly into the context of conservation projects in Melanesia, where she discusses an environmental INGO's difficulties in relating to the fact that the Kamea people do not have an idea of landed property as an object over which rights can be transferred integrally between stable social groups: 'Descent does not define rights in property so much as the flow of land and other resources comes to concretize and define intergenerational human relationships' (Bamford n.d.: 23).

Many of the articles here deal with the fact that despite policy overtures to incorporating issues of legitimate local environmental entitlements within protected areas, they tend not to be interested in the scope of power associations among people, things, and species relations in the singularity of places. Conservation arrives in places with particular, socially embedded ecologies of difference, at particular moments of history. Ann Gold has written an exemplary study of ecology, place, power, and memory in Rajasthan, India: 'As

stories of Ghatiyali's past unfolded, they made it appear unique: the stories of a singular place, its named localities and inhabitants' (Gold 1997: 74). Gold explains why at Indian Independence in 1947 the coming of democracy was responded to by villagers slaughtering the wild boar, protected by Maharajas for hunting (to the despair of farmers), and by destroying the jungle that sheltered them. Her work on memories and specific associations of the environment help to 'reveal various kinds of power at work on the landscape', in such a way as to produce a convergence between understandings of 'increased human freedom and decreased constraints on the use and abuse of the natural environment' (Gold 1997: 81). These kinds of local histories that affect how environments are perceived are unavoidable contexts that contemporary conservationists need to face up to, but which generic, de-politicised and techno-managerial approaches to the environment efface through treating human–environmental relationships as systems amenable to objective, expert regulation. They ignore the connections of power and environment that people have lived through, which in the Rajasthani case described by Gold, have resulted in the fact that natural abundance may be inseparable from memories associated with 'brute political power and economic exploitation' (Gold 1997: 81).

'Place' is not then a term that has to imply fixity, boundedness, and lack of movement (Feld and Basso 1996). It is rather a term that is intended to evoke contextual groundings for history, presence and mobility, in the collective living, breathing activity of conscious actors who, more than likely, spread their life interests in multiple locations. Places call forth situated perspectives on social and environmental change, and are the sites of meaningful encounter between agents in these processes. Recent discussions in anthropology on place and fieldwork are thrown in special light by issues raised through environmental protection. While it has become common to reflect on the lingering naturalistic legacy of fieldwork (from evolutionist and colonial vantage points), that Gupta and Ferguson characterise as 'natives in their natural state' (Gupta and Ferguson 1997: 38), ethnographers have become keenly aware of elements of this attitude among conservation agencies. Differently inflected versions of such emplacement range from eco-harmonious paragons of natural virtue, to natural-born forest-fellers, or soil degraders (Williams 2000). Gupta and Ferguson argue that anthropology's unique perspectives are gained not from a simple commitment to 'the local', as concrete specificity, but through an 'attentiveness to epistemological and political issues of location' (Gupta and Ferguson 1997: 39).

The contributions by Green, Campbell, Mazzullo, Lund, Krauss, Koehler, and Harris all discuss how examples of 'authentic' ecologies are the outcome of historical relationships between power centres and peripheral hinterlands. These ethnographic cases demonstrate how putting place in nature socially, through attending to local environmental engagements over history, and in relation to structures of power, implies wholly different understandings of envi-

ronments than conservation perspectives which project ecological scenarios independent of human intervention, or that view human presence as a basic 'category error' (Brockington et al. *in press*). Contrasting to the openness of place and identity in a supposedly de-territorialising world, regimes of environmental protection entail imposed borders of communication and exchange across communities. They put into effect a re-territorialisation of human activity and a surveillance of movement and subjects, reflecting a presumed integrity of place in the desire for managing nature.

Foregrounding the idea of place as to do with people in motion and in history, acts as a counter to conservationists' understandable project of asking what would a particular 'area' look like if left to its own biotic potentialities. However, a problem with more polemical statements advocating the phenomenology of place is that the legitimacy of biologists' theoretical 'what if?' questions appear to be dismissed out of hand as antediluvian quests for a Kantian 'First Moment' (Casey 1996: 14). This involves an extreme anthropocentrism. The fact that many people anthropologists work with do have cultural narratives of the origination of place, and the making of places into locations fit for humans, such as by founding ancestors or 'culture-heroes', should not exclude asking potentially valuable questions of ecological temporality and change. This kind of questioning is clearly a valid scientific exercise in its own right, and in conjunction with archaeological pollen analysis and the excavation of petrified forests etc., can obviously advance the understanding of the history of particular environments and the effects on them of human activity. I personally find it fascinating to walk in forests or over hills in the presence of a biologist, reading centuries of species interaction into signs contained in present-day landscapes and plant communities. What needs to be remembered is, on one hand, the trend in historical ecosystems theory is now to question the idea of presumed stable climax vegetation (thinking more in terms of open disturbance and flux, rather than balance), and on the other, the erasure of human presence in this questioning belongs to a colonial genealogy of perceiving foreign lands as *terra nullius* (O'Neill this issue, and Posey 2000).

Insisting on 'placing' nature is here meant to bring simulated projections of possible 'restored' ecological outcomes back to the reality of working with human–environmental relations, and to recognise that biological knowledge is also located in an undeniable relationship to present processes of social change (Leach and Fairhead 2002). As Latour (1987) and Richards (1997) have pointed out, the advances of comparative taxonomic biology came about in no small part through the assistance offered to early travelling European scientists by 'locals' who grasped the object of their quest, and revealed the knowledge of place being sought after. Ellen and Harris (2000) discuss how this relationship came to be expunged from scientific representations of how knowledge was arrived at in later colonial times. As more work continues on

the colonial roots of environmentalism, the historical resistance of eco-degradation science to acknowledge the evidence that *places make a difference* to explanatory grand theories of human impact are emerging with strong implications for contemporary conservation approaches that over-privilege the global picture.[13] For O'Neill (in this issue), the abstract, un-placed, discourse of global environmentalism makes assertions about environmental goods and ethics that are taken as universal and not relative to time, place, and culture. He argues that context-rich ethnographic environmental description has no lesser intrinsic universal value than context-thin generalising accounts. Similarly, von Weizsäcker has commented on the way certain kinds of science and knowledge were configuring global ecology at the beginning of the 1990s: 'The new term 'biodiversity' . . . has definitely lost the specificity of place, time and context and is based on a purely additive theoretical simplification. Species have become quantities instead of unique and irreplaceable qualities' (Weizsäcker 1993: 124).

Re-placing nature then is a call for the 'eco-ayatollahs' (Takacs 1996) of biodiversity protection to come back to earth, and to the here and now. Of course anthropology as a discipline looks jealously at the commanding authority of biologists as academic spokespersons for the science of life, and it struggles to assert claims for a right also to speak and be heard (Rabinow 1997; Franklin 2001). Our strategy has to be that science is a conversation between people asking different kinds of questions, and that there will always be new flows of information and shifting standpoints available to ask other relevant questions, including those of the conditions of possibility of scientific knowledge. As far as nature protection is concerned, anthropologists need not limit themselves to issues of human injustice in the implementation of conservation programmes, or to the culturally embedded practices of science. The contribution of place-based knowledge to current agronomic and pharmaceutical research seems to increase apace, and the crises in paradigms for future world agriculture has led techno-, and ethno-proponents to examine ever closer the inventiveness of indigenous systems of agro-biodiversity (Partap and Sthapit 1998), again discovering uniqueness of place to be a fertile position from which to ask questions about the productive and co-evolving relatedness of life forms (Dahlberg 1987).

CONSERVATION AND COMMUNITIES

It is an important point to locate the debates about the environment and nature in a processual time frame. As Sarah Green says at the beginning of her contribution, 'nature and culture are concepts on the move'. The current climate of discussion is one in which as far as policies towards protected areas are concerned, a big shift in rhetoric has occurred away from the wilderness model of national parks designed to minimise human interference, towards

recognising that without a consensual basis for conservation, no amount of policing can produce a sustainable future for nature protection. Since the late 1980s 'conservation with development', 'community conservation' (Stevens 1997; Adams and Hulme 1998) and 'participatory' approaches in general have replaced coercive ones, in policy at least. These changes do represent a significant divergence from earlier patterns of thought in which development and environment were two extreme poles that entailed either transformation or preservation. Adams and Hulme, though, remark that while no-one has seriously defended 'fortress conservation' recently, and the narrative switch to community conservation in academic circles and international conferences is palpable, 'it is erroneous to assume that such changes in discourse translate directly into changed policies and practices' (Adams and Hulme 1998: 16). Even if 'fortress conservation' is not so visible these days (but Brechin et al. 2002 warn of its recovery, and see Brockington 2002), other familiar narrative components of the edifice of modernist nature are still around. The contributions here reveal a continuing prevalence of pristine imagery among conservationists with problematic political effects.[14]

The turn by conservationists from relying on assumptions of protected area implementation by benign state auspices to look instead towards communities as vehicles for delivering conservation policy, follows a general trend in decentralising development practice.[15] But what assumptions of 'community' are thereby mobilised? Leach et al. (1999) have criticised naive expectations among 'participatory' optimists, that communities can do for conservation what governments could not. They point out that 'community' is a term that poorly reflects 'the real institutional matrix within which resources are locally used, managed and contested' (Leach et al. 1999: 240), and offer some anthropological insights to counter the idea that local practice can be unproblematically formalised into structures for environmental protection. They stress the informal, contingent, and flexible qualities of practice:

> *'...multiple institutions are involved in natural resource management. Most of these are not dedicated to the purpose or dependent on it in any functional way—marriage and kinship exchange networks 'do' many other things besides their role in land access for instance—yet are important in mediating the endowments and entitlements of certain social actors.'* (Leach et al. 1999: 240).

In a comment that converges in part with Ingold's critique of cognitive model-based constructionism in how people interact with environments, Leach et al. (1999) suggest that 'design-oriented responses almost inevitably gloss over complexity and dynamism, assuming that steady states—ecological or social—are achievable and supportable' (Leach et al. 1999: 241). With the flurry of conservation projects since the 1980s that have aimed at putting into practice 'bottom-up' participatory approaches favouring empowerment, in-

digenous knowledge, and community-based natural resource management, it is frequently assumed that local institutions of decision-making and/or shared cultural values can be identified to perform conservation roles of collective regulation, and user surveillance. While this policy turn-around has come about in no small part through the dedicated engagement of anthropologists and others to change the mind-set of bureaucracies and aid agencies, and to promote the notion that people can organise themselves to guard and take care of common property resources using valuable knowledge of local ecological processes, many anthropological problems remain concealed in this process. Bina Agarwal (1998) has pointed to the lack of attention to gender equity in the revival of traditional resource management institutions in India. Mosse (2001) has highlighted how participatory approaches can become simply a new language of patron–client networks in flows of development funds. Siva-ramakrishnan (1998) has described how rather than forests being an objective entity, heterogeneous community interests and state foresters all have particular and divergent kinds of desired forests as their objective.[16] Arun Agrawal (1995), Sillitoe (1998), and Ellen and Harris (2000) meanwhile argue that the appropriation of indigenous environmental knowledge as a development tool, that can be instrumentally objectified, misrecognises the relational contexts of practice in which such knowledge is generated and socially distributed.[17]

Aspects of negotiation and resistance by people to being co-opted into conservation programmes as 'communities' come in several of our articles. Mazzullo's discussion of local responses to the 'Natura 2000' wilderness designation of northern Finland identifies various ways in which legitimate subsistence practices, and the cultural identities of those pursuing them, are boxed up in the regulatory differentiation of appropriate and inappropriate actors and activities. His contribution reveals through biographical cases how different ecological subject positions disturb the clarity of representations suggesting Sami eco-essentialism. Green offers some sharp observations, both bleak and amusing, of the responses to processes of 'reverting to nature' in the abandoned Greek backwater of Epirus. She points out that the local people have little option but to engage with the intensity of E. U. interventions in the region:

> *'Some made fairly predictable...complaints about their area being turned into a living museum, with the irritating implication that they themselves might be expected to be a part of that (as indigenous people). Others enjoyed indulging in the irony, laughing at how, in order to become properly modern, they were going to have to do an awful lot of work to make themselves traditional.'* (Green, pages 450–451, this issue).

Green discusses the possibility of interpreting local people's responses to reifications of culture and nature as resistance, but argues instead that both human stereotypes of themselves, and the construction of fenced-off areas for a

boar-sanctuary, are recognised as potential sources of income. The ageing communities of Epirots no longer appear to hold to an intimate connection with place as a relationship that can of itself yield any livelihood except through the mediation of tourism and European assistance. Different arguments for the lack of resistance to external stereotypes are made by Harris. Though labelled by Brazilian elites as inefficient occupants of the Amazonian floodplain, he argues that *caboclos* do not explicitly challenge such representations. Instead, through their activities of reproducing everyday life, they accomplish an 'historical mission' of generational continuity (Harris, page 474, this issue), against both social stigma and a market undervaluation of their produce from community-based, skilled ecological practice.

By contrast, Krauss gives a depiction of the 'rhetorical traffic' between nature and culture in Alentejo, Portugal. He draws on the local history of marginality and resistance to explain why a nature park with its otter protection policies became a potent symbol of power. He brings our attention to the fact that by separating nature out of social relations, a new culture of nature is thereby created which reconfigures power relations in the name of nature and culture (Krauss, page 356, 368, this issue). The arrival of interests for the protection of unspoilt Atlantic coastline is located by Krauss in a history of the communities of the area having lived, prior to 1974, under a regime of quasi-feudal landownership maintained by force and a naturalisation of social hierarchies. Subsequently, the landscape embodied the project of the landless to gain land rights, but the nature park, administered by members of the central elite only show concern for human presence in terms of traditional agriculture and archaic images of artisanal pottery and fishing. For Krauss, environmentalists and others perceive the locals as lacking culture, which explains their absence in the range of studies made of the park ecosystem, and the scientific representation of what counts as salient 'environmental fact' (Krauss, page 360, this issue).

Campbell discusses limits to the incorporation of local knowledge and practice by national park and conservation authorities in Nepal. In the Langtang national park's attempts to implement a buffer zone concept, villagers contested the land title issues surrounding an area designated as a demonstration plot, and sought to balance the authority of the park by arguing for their buffer zone management committee constitution to be registered instead with the more democratically accountable Chief District Officer. Hence they attempt to exploit the fact that conservation authorities are but one organ of the state in a heterogeneous field of governmental agendas, many of which have quite contradictory projects for developing village communities in the mountains. The uncertainties surrounding particular project funding cycles tend to undermine prospects for long term relationships with communities and park authorities. Other policy attempts to mobilise community consent for conservation have depended strongly on prospects for tourist income to compensate

for diminished access to forest resources. Several examples show how tourism is a very partial and unreliable means of distributing benefits from protected areas to communities.

If 'communities' have arrived in conservation policy designs, they tend not to be the fluid, heterogeneous, argumentative and fractious realities known to ethnographers. Leach et al. (1999) propose that processes of explicit negotiation between different internal and external interests are necessary for community participation in conservation to be at all effective, but even then they insist that the question has to be raised whether there is any equality among parties in the capacity to voice arguments and be heard. They advocate making power relations between the parties clear. Revealing and objectifying power inequalities is, however, an act which political anthropologists have identified as part and parcel of practices of domination. John Gledhill, for instance, (another Manchester-based participant in discussions around the theme of this collection) remarks

> '...it is easy to delude oneself into thinking that power can be undermined simply by revealing it and talking about it. It is intractably embedded in social practices and situations that cannot be deconstructed in reality simply by possession of insight and the ability to objectify.' (Gledhill 1994: 224).

Indeed, representations of power relations as locatable within a delimited political structure (which participatory conservation projects especially latch on to), may well obscure their social foundations and manner of operating in practice (Gledhill 1994: 14). Bourdieu's (1977) comments on the work of 'misrecognition' in power relations, would further cast doubt on appeals to make power explicit. Overlaying organisational and leadership terminology onto fluid community relations performs a claim for authority roles, rather than describe the actual range of practices and contexts in which power relations may operate.

The articles here describe dialogues of community and landscapes of power, that are emergent in the dynamic creation of collectivities and alliances made through engagement and conflict. Conservation measures can have enormous effects on formal and informal local power structures. These operate through requirements to form precise memberships of resource user groups (Campbell, Mazzullo), through rhetorical manipulation of images of backwardness (Koehler, Krauss, Lund), or through appropriating the distribution of environmental entitlements from processes of local, or non-existent, accountability (Campbell, Green, Harris). The contributions analyse instances of problems of communication with conservation authorities, and of negotiating between groups of unequal power, when the terms of how to place nature are struggled over in both institutional structures and in people's subjective perceptual frames of understanding the world. The contributors' ethnographic explorations of the diverse lived con-

texts where placings of nature evoke comment, resonate with Blaikie and Jean-renaud's (1997) identification of difficulties facing conservation agencies in achieving the 'new conventional wisdom' of consensual agreements with local communities:

> *'The plurality of understandings and the variety of competing interests (some of them decidedly anti-conservationist) begs the question of the equal nature of the negotiations between outside agencies and local people. The former have their scientific agendas, and the latter have all sorts of contingent interests in biodiversity conservation. Frequently, there is disagreement between the two parties and also among local people themselves.'* (Blaikie and Jeanrenaud 1997: 68).

When communities have been vested with a potential to do what top-down conservation has been incapable of, this devolved rule over the environment of course comes with many strings attached. The effects of instrumentalising communities for purposes of environmental governance change the relationships of community and state. Sundar et al. (2001) argue that in India's Joint Forest Management Programme central control is extended as much as local actors are empowered. Furthermore, the social existence of the environment shifts to become an explicit register of inequalities. Bina Agarwal's extensive survey of community forestry experiences in South Asia points to the way that rather than forests serving as a counter to inequalities based on ownership of cultivated lands, their capture by village elites and predominantly male interests, can create new property rights in communal lands that had previously acted as a means of balancing precisely such differentiations (Agarwal 2001: 1626). An alternative, and more optimistic scenario is described by Arun Agrawal (2005) in his 'environmentality' approach, which interprets the survival of village-protected forests since the 1930s in Kumaon (north India) as examples of successfully devolved and well adapted conservation mindedness. Agrawal emphasises the production of 'environmental subjectivities'. He argues that after adopting forest responsibility in autonomously regulating their own civil forest protection schemes, villagers have thereby willingly enacted central policy 'at a distance', in terms of a rationally modern project of statehood that minimises uncertainty in the conditions affecting people's lives. However, his study follows a largely common property focus for handling power and subjectivity, and lacks the ethnographic dimension pursued in this collection, as to how the environment is perceived, and dwelt in, on an everyday basis. Let us look again at power.

COMMUNITY AND POWER

The more conservation projects are required to devolve authority to communities, the more such communities will reflect in some way the kinds of effec-

tive understandings for ordering the world that conservation promotes. In her study of a community forestry project in western Nepal, Nightingale (2005) has identified the ways that expert forestry knowledge and mapping techniques sit easily with literate sections of the community, whereas the inclusive, flexible, and compromise-oriented committee for village decision-making offers an alternative source of power for the illiterate families of low castes, who are able to appeal to precedence in order to discuss the justice of particular decisions. Nightingale's theoretical concern is to locate how the policy of community empowerment can be viewed as a feature of neo-liberal economic processes.[18] In many ways community regulation can be seen as opposed to individual rights, but the consequence of recognising community authority over forest decision-making is to put the forest as a resource into a domain of public value, where individuals hold rights and exercise choices. Moreover, when resource owners have been legitimated, be they collective or not, commercial or industrial interests can then negotiate access and recompense for resource use, as studies of trends in India's Joint Forest Management have noticed (Sarin et al. 2003).

A comparison with Hayden's (2003) work on bio-prospecting in Mexico reveals the remarkably strong parallels that exist in the place communities hold in the thinking behind compensation for knowledge and genetic material acquired by pharmaceutical companies in research for new drugs. Approaching the human–nature axis from a different angle, the bio-prospecting experience has encountered very similar problems to conservation in imagining that stable communities exist, which can be encouraged to participate with scientific interests through incentives provided by prospective benefits, to be distributed in recognition of 'their' knowledge. Hayden brilliantly demonstrates that indigenous knowledge since before conquistador times has never been 'localised' in the way imagined by regimes of intellectual property rights. Although bio-prospecting's imagined communities have proven elusive, as have the anticipated drugs, the comparison between bio-prospecting and conservation is worth following for the authority that is now given in both activities to formalised relationships with local human communities, in respect to the preservation of natural communities.

If the powerful global interests of conservation and bio-prospecting are required by international conventions and property laws to approach nature via local communities, are communities of ecologically dependent people to be governmentalised by conservation, or privatised by commercial interests in biodiversity? Or are there other things to say about social relations, power and the environment from other positions? My suggestion is that the dwelling perspective can be used to help open up this field.

In a lively debate of Agrawal's thoughtful intervention in debate about how conservation principles can be devolved and appropriated in local communities' mind sets and institutional capacities, Ajay Skaria critiques his approach to power. Agrawal's treatment of power is in terms of how hegemony cannot

operate as a vertical imposition of central authority, and needs a participation from below, that in this case requires the environment to be perceived as a non-human domain capable of rational management. Skaria's critique turns on the notion of the impossibility of a 'governmentalised totality', and he argues that though Kumaoni councils may achieve environmental outcomes consonant with the state's goals, this need not be read as a 'governmental intimacy' in Agrawal's terms. As the forest councils were instituted precisely because the state could not directly control the forests, they can instead be seen as belonging to a 'politics beyond governmental power' (Skaria in Agrawal 2005:184). In a line of argument that dovetails with Pottier's treatment of 'disambiguation' above, Skaria questions whether the category 'environment' that constitutes the object of the state's intentions is the same as, or is translatable as, that with which the Kumaonis operate. For Skaria, the environment as object of government 'is displaced by other techniques of the self, other histories' (in Agrarwal 2005: 185).

Here we see a space opened up for thinking about the politics of environmental engagement, which would take the idea of an environmental subjectivity beyond the extent to which people might contribute to funds for village forest protection, and into the different sorts of understandings and relationships (possibly at variance with those propounded by village leaders), that people may have with forests, what kinds of trees and wildlife they preferably contain, and the intimate pleasures, fears, freedoms and solidarities they give rise to. The point here is to make explicit the cultural work that has to be done in order for people to see a forest or landscape as a singularised entity that is primarily the property or domain of a secular authority, rather than as the surroundings that directly enable and affect their lives. This could appear as an apolitical position in a conventional sense,[19] but when ethnographers look at power relations it is not simply collective organisations that need to be considered, but the very constitution of selfhood and collectivity in places such as among pastoralists on open rangelands, families in field clearings on remote mountainsides, or fisher communities on spread-out archipelagoes. In such places central power appears intermittently and in particularized forms, even if people have satellite TV. Social modes of environmental engagement present an active and materially confronted set of barriers and passes to trans-local institutions, and the advocates of environmental protection need to recognise from afar how this environmental influence on power is intimately constituted. The contributions in this issue will take the reader into the new constellations of people, power and environments, where relationships with the environment have become a defining concern.

CONCLUSION

These articles collectively bring to the fore how apparently contingent interests in biodiversity are the very stuff of peoples' interactional lives and rela-

tional ways of knowing. In contrast to approaches to conservation that respectively privilege objective scientific knowledge, or the formation of the environment as a discursive ordering of the world, or as an object in the play of global power relations, there is an alternative that anthropology can offer.[20] By doing ethnography we find experientially unfamiliar, qualitative connections between territory, livelihood, personhood, and gender, through a kinship that people in everyday life make with human and non-human species.[21] The most interesting thing an anthropologist can ask about human–environmental relations in fieldwork is what connections and locations matter, and how do people talk about them? It is not to find 'nature' conveniently lurking beneath vernacular understandings, or to see how the connections and locations can be explained by familiar concepts of nature. It is to develop a sensibility for how social living in relationship with particular kinds of environments generates practices and associations, which can offer novel views and interpretive depth (see O'Neill's celebration of anthropology from a philosopher's position). These may well not be compatible with the way in which nature operates as a sorting-house of cause and content for an urban society, that understands itself as fundamentally differentiated from a non-human world, and in which identifying with environmental goals is a matter of personal choice.

When 'the environment' appears within fieldwork it is likely to do so in particular institutionalised programmes, or in relation to particular commodifications of the environment and wildlife (Anderson and Berglund 2003), and not necessarily as the totalising category of all that surrounds us. This is seen in the specific, 'environmentally' marked connections that are made in Koehler's discussion of African ivory trade, Lund's observations of tourism and settlers in Spain, Mazzullo's remarks on the ptarmigan snare ban for the Sami, Krauss' commentary on the Portugese campaign to protect otters, Harris' discussion of moralistic evaluations by the Amazon floodplain, Green's analysis of ecological restoration in the Greek mountains, and Campbell's account of protected, crop-raiding wildlife. Ethnography's environmental encounters demand attention to histories of partial, and parcelled-up, introductions of the idea of environment. One of the comparative values of this collection is in the collation of a range of contexts that demonstrate different ways in which elements of eco-discourse and practice have become articulated with local narratives of history and identity. It is by no means the same story in each place, and the advantage of ethnographic contextualisation is to reveal place-specific dynamics in the relations among people, species and power.

Are eco-discourses actively resisted or positively appropriated? It helps to keep a sense of development within eco-discourses, and to take notice for instance that the age of safari-hunter-turned-conservationist, has been eclipsed by a more varied set of actors (Guha and Martinez-Alier 1997). It has to be said, though, that the specific cases of conservation discussed here tend toward an image of elite power in formulations of environmental governance: that eco-discourses contain a set of imperatives which are notably self-affirming in their

capacities for legal and scientific validation against local perspectives and contestation.[22] A very common perception in the articles is of conservationists belonging to a historical succession of intervening and powerful outsiders. Krauss comments that Portugese environmentalists are seen as striving for total control over daily life, and that the people of Alentejo counter this with the declaration that 'It's not only otters which live here, but people too!' (Krauss, page 367, this issue). As John O'Neill argues, this is in no way intrinsic to positions that take up the defence of the environment, but it does reflect a powerful strand in the history of environmental protection (see especially Hajer 1996). It is widely suggested that productive appropriation of environmental discourse will increasingly become part of collective identity formations and the exercise of new kinds of citizenship (Gupta 1998; Macnaghten and Urry 1998; Agrawal 2005), and that national and trans-national frameworks of conventions and rights will be taken up as avenues for political action by collectivities and alliances of various orders. Escobar's work (1998) on the autonomous take-up of the biodiversity agenda by Colombian social movements, and Amita Baviskar's (1995) study of the Narmada Dam conflict show growing confidence, and also desperation to do so.

For Philippe Descola, conservationists as exponents of Western 'naturalism' fetishise nature as a 'transcendental object'. In discourses of protection that depend on transnational conventions and intensified human intervention, he sees nature as having lost its 'autonomous principle', and 'the dialectics of reciprocity amount to no more than a metaphor in which to couch an impossible aspiration to supercede dualism' (Descola 1996: 97). *Re-Placing Nature* is an attempt to look at the possibility of a different outcome in which an explicit ecology of human engagement provides a more coherently placed 'global' environmental scope than diverting environmental attention to sectioned-off enclaves of natural authenticity, to the bewilderment of local people. Seeing the environment as a relational entity reveals questions about human responsibility for it, and makes explicit the reflexivity to be exercised in evaluating different scenarios in environmental protection. It should mean we need to ask better questions about the implications of our agency, our intentionally evolving relationships to life in places and in bio-social communities, and not confine the environment to a sacrosanct domain of non-relationship.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. Problems presented by the human/non-human divide and the idea of the environment as context are taken up ethnographically in my article on Nepal in this issue.

2. Adams and Hulme (1998) review community conservation projects in Africa, and highlight the need for 'change in the organisational culture of conservation agencies (to see local residents as 'partners' not 'poachers') and in the social norms of rural residents (to respond to wardens and rangers as 'partners' and not as corrupt policemen). Neither of these is likely to be achieved in a short-term project' (Adams and Hulme 1998: 21).

3. Bryant discusses how in contexts of developing countries, new kinds of consciousness and practice towards nature under post-modern capital are apparent. Rather than the targeting of known resources such as minerals and timber, 'a premium is placed on the conservation of local natural resources (restyled biodiversity) because long-term commercial prosperity is premised on the ability to 'prospect' for new species and genetic profiles that might lead to new products (for example, a cure for cancer developed by a pharmaceutical firm).' (Bryant 2001: 166).

4. Takacs noticed the alliances behind promoting biodiversity as a singular project: 'the terms *biological diversity, natural variety,* and *nature* have been around for quite awhile. Under the rubric of *biodiversity,* these terms are repackaged to unite amorphous, diverse endeavours in a streamlined, do-or-die conservation effort with biologists at the helm.' (Takacs 1996: 75).

5. Derek Gregory writes of how through colonial discourses of travel writers and natural historians 'the strangeness of other natures eventually became *familiar in its very strangeness*' (Gregory 2001: 99).

6. A key example of this approach of providing economic incentives for people to indentify with conservation objectives as stakeholders is the UNDP Parks and People programme.

7. Basso (1996) discusses how phenomenology can be given more socially contextualised interpretive value, than some of its rather atomistic characterisations of human engagement with the world would otherwise suggest. Kapferer (1997) gives a phenomenologically-inspired account of social being as projected into relationships with others, while remaining healthily sceptical of resorting yet again to western philosophy for analysing ethnographic diversity.

8. See Guyer (1991) and Leach (1992) for especially insightful accounts of gendered divisions of labour in African farming ecologies.

9. Bryant (2001) asks similar sorts of questions of discourse approaches to the environment. He admits that conceptualisations of political ecology have benefited from recognition that discourse matters but comments that 'a poststructuralism based on discourse analysis has much to explain before it offers the comprehensive account of the politicised environment that it aims to provide' (Bryant 2001: 167). In contrast to Bryant's quest for a 'logic' to guide 'a world of 'socionature'' (Bryant 2001: 167), the quest

of the dwelling perspective has been to ask how well we understand the qualities of people's environmental interactions and perceptions at all.

10. Paige West gives an account of how her experience of fieldwork in the presence of an international NGO in Papua New Guinea, made her reflect on its co-option of 'traditional subjects of anthropological enquiry', the incorporation of which changes the characteristics of doing anthropological research. She concludes that the typification of people of Crater Mountain by the INGO as ignorant and environmentally destructive is accompanied by usage of anthropologised terminology concerning indigenous peoples. By justifying the project through appeal to moral imperatives transcending local rights, she argues that the importance of local knowledge, environmental history, and the qualities of socio-environmental relations are displaced and silenced. 'They create a conservation reality based on an imagined primitive and a misuse of anthropological ideas.' (West 2001: 69).

11. The idea of transferable methods for regulating human activity in protected environments, does result in occasionally bizarre place-blind administrative practices. Orlove reports that in the 1980s, Peru's CENFOR (Centro Nacional Forestal) issued licences for Lake Titicaca National Reserve residents to harvest reeds based on a contract model derived from categories and quantities of Amazonian resource extraction (Orlove 2002: 202).

12. Ingold, in commenting on Bird-David's (1999) article on animism and 'relational epistemology', suggests that 'relational knowledge' is far from particular to hunter–gatherer societies, and does not get simply supplanted by modernist conceptions of mind and behaviour. 'The difference is rather that within the context of the modern state and its political, economic and educational institutions, relational ways of knowing have lost much of their authority. But they continue to operate nonetheless and remain deeply embedded in the experience of everyday life.' (Ingold in Bird-David 1999: 81). Beyond colonial, and 'pre-modern' locations, even in post-industrial and urban landscapes the dwelling concept has been usefully applied 'as a frame for understanding the richness or density of things actively together in the world' (Jones and Cloke 2002: 217).

13. Saberwal (1999) offers an excellent historical account of how in north India the fragility of soil, forest and water conditions in the Siwalik foothills was inappropriately extended to the greater Himalayan range, to the detriment of pastoralists' forest access. He writes of the 'desiccationist' forest science prevalent in the 1930s Indian Forest Department: 'The suggestion that all human land use led to deforestation and that this deforestation had specific, predictable results, irrespective of the range of physical conditions under consideration, is a classic example of [simplifying the inherent complexity of ecological interactions]. Foresters could point to all sorts of calamities to assert the importance of forests—the

collapse of earlier civilisations, obviously high levels of soil erosion in the Hoshiarpur Siwaliks or the American Bad Lands. In each of these instances, foresters could use the irrefutable facts of history, in conjunction with their model of how nature worked, to 'prove' the correctness of their model, and thereby the potentially disastrous consequences of any further reduction in forest cover.' (Saberwal 1999: 140).

14. I received through the post at home a 2002 WWF wildlife survey on how much people care about wildlife. It asks among its nine questions 'Tiger bones and rhino horn are used in traditional oriental medicine and the species are facing extinction as a result. Do you think this is justified?' The three answer boxes to tick are 'Yes', 'Yes, because people are entitled to their own cultural beliefs' and 'Not at all'. Another question asks what WWF's priorities should be among its 'wide number' of work areas, none of the seven of which even suggest that conservation might have important work to do in reconciling environmental objectives with social justice. Half of the space on the survey form consists in information about how to donate money to WWF. The focus on iconic endangered species, and the reference to entitlement to cultural *beliefs* removes any possibility for understanding the issue of conservation as to do with wildlife habitats that also sustain the livelihoods of the poor. This did come as a surprise given the amount of public funds WWF receives for 'social ecology' projects, and the work it has done to convince development aid donors that their activities do not simply prioritise biodiversity over human interests.

15. Many states that have taken up biodiversity conservation have been far from benign or consistent in pursuance of the biodiversity agenda. A BBC film by Matt Frei juxtaposed Indonesian president Suharto's promotion of endangered turtles to devasting effect with alternated images of Suharto's affection towards the reptiles and scenes of rampaging forest fires caused by the effects of extractive logging companies. Scott (1998) describes high modernism's nature projects as most pernicious where there has been no means for contestation by active citizenship.

16. Sivaramakrishnan comments on the notions of community underlying India's Joint Forestry Management: 'The idea of community was most often translated in forest policy as the locus of governance, that is the level at which the state does not create institutions but battens on what it perceives as existing and sturdy community institutions. This externalisation of managerial transactions is also an externalisation of costs and a recognition of darkness in state knowledge. Hence the definition of community also serves to define the limits of direct control. Control remains a tricky business. If, on the one hand, it stands on the shoulders of community, on the other, control also attempts to bend community to its needs. There is, then, at work in JFM...a tension between using the community and destroying it' (Sivaramakrishnan 1998: 289).

17. Ellen and Harris remark that '[t]he failure to take into account the co-existence and interconnections between both empirically and symbolically motivated criteria within any system of knowledge inevitably leads to limited understandings and perhaps even fundamental failures of understanding about how IK operates and how it is situationally successful' (Ellen and Harris 2000: 26).

18. For Nightingale, community forestry projects foster rule-governed subjectivities responding in appropriate ways to advantages presented by professional expertise in the better management of forest resources. Communities in this model are assumed to have a shared culture which is the source of collective values, that individuals then apply in practical choice behaviour. This can be contrasted to a situation where the rules of the game and the determination of values are located in the arena of practice, where differentiations of people and things are negotiated.

19. See Paulson et al. (2003) for a review of the range of new dimensions to power being explored in political ecology, complementary to the directions taken here.

20. This is not to imply that there is a unitary anthropological approach to matters environmental. Fairhead and Leach (1998) and Leach and Fairhead (2002) for instance, argue very persuasively through a discourse approach, but ultimately their compelling account of knowledge of the West African environment depends on their narrative of how farming settlements practically transformed savannah ecologies into forest pockets, through the farmers' interactional preferences for human–arboreal associations and their activities of planting. In other words, it is through a distinctive way of asking questions about how people are positioned in histories of ecological interaction, that anthropology resituates issues of human agency and environmental effect.

21. Von Weizsäcker's comments in a way which anthropologists will find resonances from fieldwork, that 'it may be helpful to put aside the comprehensive terms from time to time and quit looking at 'Biodiversity' and 'Humanity'. Some stories can only be told when people have faces, and plants and animals have names' (Weizsäcker 1993: 128).

22. See van Helden for an analysis of how 'scientific' reporting of environmental conditions and subsistence practices can be driven by criteria for funding by international conservation agencies.

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