

**Love and ecology as an integrative force for good and as resistance to the
commodification of nature and planetary harms: Introducing Fluminism.**

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ABSTRACT

Key planetary boundaries are being exceeded by anthropogenic impacts, and at some pace (Rockstrom, et al). Climate change and biodiversity decline, consequences of human/nature discordance, are impacting all aspects of human and non-human life and in all places on the planet. Human dominion has extended in the form of socio-political orientation towards the globalised, capitalist economy, and in particular to the ‘tragedy’ of limitless growth (Plumwood, Castree). In the UK, the principal approach to nature conservation from the scientific community is now hegemonic financialisation and Natural Capital accounting (Daily, et al), a glove to fit the neoliberal ‘invisible hand’ (Adam Smith). Depersonalisation and reductionism persists as non-human nature is simply deemed utility to humans ~ Natural Resources ~ when in fact nature is an ever dynamic and complex matrix/flow, of individual lives and supporting elements, forming inter-connections, of which we are a part. I present Fluminism, a new love ethic and philosophical position, alternative to biocentrism (Taylor), ecocentrism (Naess) and anthropocentrism (Passmore), and innately insubordinate to the consumption patterns of a divisive and distorted socio-political and economic value system. Emotion and rationale are inseparable (Milton), and in terms of axiology, love is largely incommensurable with commodification and, therefore, I propose Fluministic love serves to resist the debasing of nature by market force. I defend the use of neologisms and introduce Spring Theory to help redefine human language as evolutionary and part of the flow.

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## 1.0 Introduction.

My work is an a eco-philosophical investigation into the potential of emotion (Milton, Nussbaum), with particular regard to love as resistance to the harms of the commodification of nature (Castree). I will explore these harms and how my new love ethic may counter them. Further, I contend love as foundation for life itself, manifest in the interconnectedness between all beings.

Ecology is essentially the study of relationships. Human and/or non-human, life exists via strong bonds or interconnections (Haeckel, Naess, Morton). All life depends upon the flow of a myriad of these interconnections. We humans are biological and social beings, in a great sense, symbiotic with other life forms. <sup>1</sup> Relationships are strengthened via language in multiple forms, indeed a world of biosemiotics exists between all living beings (Wheeler), experience and even memory.

Human love is an emotion crucial in forming positive relationships of *care* (Nussbaum). In looking to care, conserve, preserve and proliferate existential life on Earth then love is a strong, perhaps the strongest, motivation for action. Therefore, love as devotion (Battson), reciprocity (Wall-Kimmerer) and mutualism (Kropotkin<sup>2</sup>), expressed as care, serves to resist the parasitism and exploitation of the commodification of nature.

Further, being *in love with nature* is a ‘self-realisation’ that we are one and the same (Naess, Weir <sup>3</sup>). I will explore creatively, and in some detail as in that between the fly and the flag iris, *Rhingia. c* and *Iris pseudacorus*; devotion expressed as ‘being.’ Their symbiotic union and process of cross-pollination may inspire similar devotion within ourselves for the common good.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, the microbiome. <<https://hmpdacc.org>>

<sup>2</sup> Kropotkin, P. *Mutual Aid via the online The Anarchist Library* <<https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/petr-kropotkin-mutual-aid-a-factor-of-evolution>> (1902)

<sup>3</sup> Weir, L. *From respect for nature to agency as realisation in response to the ecological emergency*. PhD Thesis, University College Cork (2014) <<https://cora.ucc.ie/handle/10468/1969>>

By contrast, objectification and then subjugation of non-human life follows beneath the banner of Natural Capital Accounting, heralded by advocates such as pro-growth economist Dieter Helm, Chair of the UK's Natural Capital Committee <sup>4</sup>.

“Without an economic price, [nature] has too often been assumed to be of zero value.” <sup>5</sup>

I contend there are serious conflicts with this approach, which may put nature at further risk. Assigning monetary values results in a psychological and spiritual disconnect from our intimate dependence upon interconnected non-human lives, with negative consequences, and amplifies an already pervasive anthropocentrism <sup>6</sup>, edified by Passmore and Grey, dominant in Western normative ethics.

The symbiotic ~ mutualistic and commensalistic ~ relationships between beings, as demonstrated by *flows* between mycelium networks and tree roots in the woodland floor, <sup>7</sup> (Simard) are clear evidence that co-operation not competition is conducive to natural succession and this will be argued by narrative scholarship. Further, Simard's research on Mother Trees demonstrates the interactions of an acutely nurturing and caring nature; demonstrative love, care.

I call this form of love, the fusion of love and ecology, Fluminism. Further, Fluminism is an *environmental ethic* that primarily values interconnected life processes essential to abundance in our one biosphere, therefore individual life forms and ecosystems are indispensable to that end. As we too are nature, we ought recognise in ourselves a similar power for good, in that we may apply, step into the same flows (Heraclitus), generating abundance and diversity within our one biosphere.

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<sup>4</sup> Gove, M. Sec of State Defra. *Farming for the next generation*. <<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/farming-for-the-next-generation>> Oxford Farming Conference (2018)

<sup>5</sup> Natural Capital Committee. *The State of Natural Capital: Towards a framework for measurement and valuation* <<http://nebula.wsimg.com/66000b802a5cab1425b1e05d9a716835?AccessKeyId=68F83A8E994328D64D3D&disposition=0&alloworigin=1>> (2013)

<sup>6</sup> Routley, R. *Is There a Need for a New, an Environmental, Ethic?* Proceedings of the XVth World Congress of Philosophy, Varna, 1: 205-10. Reprinted in "Environmental Philosophy: from Animal Rights to Radical Ecology", (ed. M. Zimmerman et al.), Prentice Hall: New Jersey, 1993, pp.12-21. (1973)

<sup>7</sup> Simard, S.W. *Shading influences net carbon transfer among ectomycorrhizal tree seedlings in the field*. In: Topa, M.A., Rygielwicz, P.T., Cumming, J.R. (eds.), Dynamics of Physiological Processes in Woody Roots, October 8-11, Ithaca, NY. Boyce Institute for Plant Research, U.S. E.P.A., IUFRO Root Physiology and Symbiosis Working Party. *Booklet of Abstracts*. (1995)

Borne from this neologism, follow two more, Sanguimund (blood/earth) and Praximund (process/earth), supporting Fluminism in both interconnections of matter that matters to life (Mathews), and a deep respect (Taylor) and sanctity for that life and processes, thereof. Scientific progress in areas of communication within and between all species, species porosity, symbiosis and the hologenome, point towards strong foundational relationships previously unknown to humans (Margulis/Sagan).

The definition of evolution must now include a communal flourishing of those holobionts, but also in the context of an ensuing struggle to adapt amidst adverse human impacts of the sixth global extinction event (Ehrlich, Kolbert) 8. By seeing ourselves as integral, not separate, to these interconnected, mutualistic, flows of life, nature is not simply an external source of strength, it is also within.

Unlike ecocentrism and deep ecology (Leopold, Naess, Sessions), I propose it is the interconnections, the processes, the perpetuation of life-love demonstrated as care, not the overall ecosystem which requires the vital protective emphasis and focus. The problem with ecocentrism is that it reduces the worth of the individual ~ species are worth killing for the good of the 'human' idea of what is 'whole.' How may we as human beings judge what constitutes the boundary of any ecosystem? Ecosystems are rarely, if at all, defined by boundaries, bar perhaps for the impositions of human hard engineering. Instead, by valuing the processes, the interactions, individuals are generally indispensable and boundaries are of less concern. I disagree with the main tenet of deep ecology that the whole, including non-organics, is worth more than the individual and of individual flourishing. I have been sympathetic to biocentrism (Taylor), particularly biocentric consequentialism (Attfield), but biocentrism does not truly reflect the absolute necessity of the dynamic, ongoing processes of nature. So I have come up with something I cannot find reference to. It is new. This is the reason for creating a neologism ~ *Fluminism*. Fluminism is egalitarian. Each one of us, therefore, hold capacity to resist the destructions of exclusive socio-political forces that covet neoliberal capitalism and the objectification of nature as an externality. Nature is not stock in trade. It is from within to without.

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8 Ceballos, G. Ehrlich, P.R. & Dirzo, R. *Biological annihilation via the ongoing sixth mass extinction signaled by vertebrate population losses and declines* PNAS Plus - Biological Sciences - Ecology: PNAS 2017 114 (30) E6089-E6096; published ahead of print July 10 (2017)

I will defend my reasoning for creating neologisms, and in doing so, conclude a philosophy of language for further discussion which I call *Spring Theory*, as a response to the work of Austin, Searle and Lawson. Continuing on from acknowledging emotions as integral to motive/action leading to realisation/being, words can be more like magnetised compression springs, partly conceptualised, and then experienced through space-time to plump up context in our linguistic commons. In sharing, inherently functional to language, we consciously (or sub consciously) re-form meaning. Words become part of us and our identities. As such, fluminism becomes more than a noun, or a *speech act* (Austin). We *realise* we are part of the flow and act accordingly in *being* (Weir, Naess, Fox).

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2.0 The logic of love: relationships and devotion.

“The heart is itself a structured counter-image of the cosmos of all possible things worthy of love; to this extent it is a microcosmos of the world of values” Max Scheler. ⁹

Nussbaum refers to the structural role of the narrative in affecting emotions and, therefore, actions:

“We cannot understand [a person’s] love ... without knowing a great deal about the history of patterns of attachment that extend back into [the person’s] childhood. Past loves shadow present attachments, and take up residence within them. This, in turn, suggests that in order to talk well about them we will need to turn to texts that contain a narrative dimension, thus deepening and refining our grasp of ourselves as beings with a complicated temporal history.”¹⁰

Science helps us to make decisions, but we are human with a strong attraction to narratives and art as well as statistics and mathematics. So I use narrative scholarship within my own work as expression of this (see 2.1 et al). As foundation for an environmental ethical paradigm, the demonstrable acts of love, from deep within the self to deep without, offer the kind of agency *in being* that is required of us all. This is to live in union with all life and, importantly, *process*, in our one biosphere.

Further, I propose this love is neither Spinoza’s God¹¹ nor Hume’s Naturalism¹², but in material interconnectedness between all things. Neither is it a tyrannical truth, we humans, as agents within our one biosphere, with a multiplicity of values and local, cultural perspectives, may actively choose to enhance our own lives by the assisting of other beings in their ecological processes. Love is, to a great extent, a choice.

⁹ John Wild (Ed) et al., *Selected Philosophical Essays Max Scheler*. Northwestern University Press (1973) p.116

¹⁰ Nussbaum, M. C.. *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions*. Cambridge University Press. Kindle Edition. (1st edition 2001) pp2-3

¹¹ Spinoza’s monism, that God is a singular *self-subsistent substance*, with both matter and thought being integral.

¹² Hume’s philosophical belief that all is caused by, and manifested in, natural properties, a key precursor to the scientific method, reductionist, valuing super-natural or spiritual explanations with less to no value.

Even to the most analytical of intellectual human minds, thought, emotion/feeling and action are inextricably linked. Our selves are not closed systems. Some speak of attachments, others relationships. But we reach from deep within our own consciousness and extend far beyond our physical existence. We are each a dialectic, of unique identity and assimilable of the living and non-living environment around us. We react and respond to stimuli and stimuli can react and respond to us. Our actions are causal and consequential. German Idealist, J. G. Fichte in *Foundations of Natural Right and System of Ethics*, relates the context of the I and the not-I in unity:

“Fichte thinks the I must posit itself as an individual among other individuals, if it is to posit itself “as a rational being with self-consciousness.” The presence of others checks the freedom of the I, because the principles of morality and natural right both require that individual freedom cannot interfere with the freedom of other individuals.”¹³

Fichte refers, of course, to human community but I contend similarly in the context of all interconnected life.

A thought without emotion, William James “feelingless cognition,”¹⁴ seems inhuman, nay un-lifelike. That all living beings are merely machines in the Cartesian sense, mind-body dualism, fails to recognise the interconnectedness of even our own the limbic and autonomy nervous systems with all other stimuli, both internal and external. Importantly, affect is proven to be instrumental, alongside reason, to human moral decision making (Teper et al¹⁵). There is no separation between within and without.

Hence, nurturing the specific idea of a love of nature by attachment, *close observation* (Kahn, Kellert), and experience through feelings follows with little argument. Alexander von Humboldt, the great German geographer and author of *Cosmos*¹⁶, was an early

¹³ McQuillan, C. German Idealism. The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy <<http://www.iep.utm.edu/germidea/>>

¹⁴ James, W. *What is an Emotion?* via Green, C.D. Classics in the History of Psychology, York University, Toronto. <<http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/James/emotion.htm>> (1884)

¹⁵ Teper R., Zhong C.-B., and Inzlicht M. *How Emotions Shape Moral Behavior: Some Answers (and Questions) for the Field of Moral Psychology, Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 9, 1–14, (2015)

¹⁶ Humboldt, A von. *Cosmos*. 1964 (via archive.org) <<https://archive.org/details/cosmos01humbgoog>>

advocate of such a methodology. His interdisciplinary depth, unifying science with nature and human society is influential in a new crop of cross-disciplinary centres of excellence, such as at Bath Spa University:

“bringing humanities and sciences together to build creative responses to environmental challenges.”¹⁷

If channeled productively, fear or anger, as negative emotions, may provide important incentive for effecting change, but following on from Humboldt, love nurtured as devotion is, I assert, more powerful as a long-standing positive force for good. Innate love for nature, biophilia (Wilson), may be less strong since either it is dissipated by societal norms, such as non-ecoliterate education, or it remains suppressed across the population by neoliberal market forces and competition for employment. Therefore, beyond James-Lange theory¹⁸, human emotions are a response to many stimulations, not only the physiological. We respond to others on multiple levels, and they with us, rather like the fly and the flag iris.

2.1 The fly and the flag iris ~ pollination (narrative scholarship).

Observe the most intimate union between flower and fly, what we call the process of cross-pollination, though the words ‘process’ and ‘pollination’ are remarkably poor in communicating the magnificence of what manifests.

As observer, I stand in a rhos meadow bristling with life, overwhelmed by curiosity for the behaviour of another. I carefully lean slowly over the scene in hope not to disturb.

She, the hover-fly, of the species *Rhingia campestris*, has caught my eye elsewhere, her winged-iridescence registering on my retinal cells with luminosity and grace. My brain is stimulated, deep furrows of experience over decades, to follow her movement through the air. She alights on the signal of a freshly unfurled yellow flag sepal, glowing in full sun. And I am rewarded.

¹⁷ Research Centre for Environmental Humanities <<https://www.bathspa.ac.uk/courses/pg-environmental-humanities/>>

¹⁸ Coleman A.E., Snarey J. *James-Lange Theory of Emotion*. In: Goldstein S., Naglieri J.A. (eds) *Encyclopedia of Child Behavior and Development*. Springer, Boston, MA (2011)

A sense of kinship, or kincentrism, consumes me.¹⁹ My emotional and rational responses are inseparable. For a moment, I try to imagine being her, with a conscious detachment from my own sense of self but it is not easy. I absorb the scale of the huge arc of yellow surrounding me, and the touch of the cool epidermis cells beneath my padded, clawed feet. I carry a few dimpled pollen grains on my back, brushed on by an anther from another iris. They don't disturb me too much, I'll maybe flick them away later. I give up imagining and just observe (Brentano).

The little hover-fly raises her front legs to the iris anthers, and places her tiny feet on the pollen. She looks closely at what she is doing, her long proboscis extending to consume what she has found. The intimacy is gentle, loving, a tenderness in touch that we may not even acknowledge could exist without either imagination or technology. It is described best as pure devotion. She spends time, very slowly for a vulnerable fly, exuding devotion.

Her senses are way more luxuriant than our own, her feet are also tongues, with added chemoreceptors enabling her to both touch and taste her protein-rich food. She licks and savours every crum, an evolutionary calling to eat and be healthy.

Chemical molecules from the pollen have contacted her dendrite and neuron cells, sending electrical impulses, like waves, through her nervous system to her brain. She then directs muscles to take action, gently extending her proboscis and salivating to feed. With her soft mouthparts, labella, like two grooved sponges, she soaks nutrition up and into her esophagus. Like us, she enjoys it very much, her reward centres lighting up in her brain. All the while, her eggs will be nourished inside her to be laid in number for the few to flourish.

There's more. This is the symbiosis of flora and fauna, a miraculous relationship going back fifty million years. Gifts of food are exchanged for sexual reproduction. And it

¹⁹ Salmon, E. *Kincentric Ecology: Indigenous perceptions of the human-nature relationship*. <[http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1890/1051-0761\(2000\)010\[1327:KEIPOT\]2.0.CO;2/abstract](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1890/1051-0761(2000)010[1327:KEIPOT]2.0.CO;2/abstract)> (2000)

happens every moment of every day, across the globe. Eros lives (Griffin), and thank goodness for it. I have a basic understanding of the overall sequence of events, but I cannot sense the quantum scale, the electrical depolarisation of atoms in order for cells to communicate. I just have to imagine it, trusting in the science learned from others. Does the fly sense the quantum? She might. If there are beings on this Earth that do, without tools and devices, then they are indeed miraculous and we should refrain from blasting them with toxic sprays in the meanwhile.

The pollen, flower-sperm, on Rhingia c's back from another flower's anther will rub against the sticky stigma lip under the petal, as she reaches deeper and deeper for pollen. From this point, germination begins and the microscopic process of double fertilisation is set in motion. More quantum changes are underway.

The quantum and the cosmological, flows of matter and other phenomenon between beings in the Ghedeist ²⁰(Albrecht), the complex flows of light, water, nutrition, cows, cow pats, neurological electrical impulse, imagination, Rhingia c, cross-pollination, yellow flag, flight, quantum, cosmos, renewal, death... this is the fluminist's altar. We humans are neither gods nor holy-appointed stewards (Palmer).²¹ We are a part (Naess, Fox). This is the miracle of life itself.

But we have exerted huge and irreversible pressures on this magnificence. We scavenge and parasitise by feeding from the produce of this sublime process, amongst others, but it is the flower and the insect who have evolved together over millions of years in this devoted union. We may well be causing other unions in our ignorance, which may take hundreds of thousands of years to fully take shape. But the fly and the flower exist now. We need to respect them and leave them in peace. We've destroyed much, and it has to stop. A critical mass of devotion is needed, previously unknown in human history, as there are now more humans than ever before.

²⁰ Albrecht, G. A. *The Ghedeist* <<https://glennaalbrecht.wordpress.com/2016/06/06/the-ghedeist/>> (2016)

²¹ Palmer, C. *Stewardship: a Case Study in Environmental Ethics* 1st published Ball, I. et al., *The Earth Beneath: A Critical Guide to Green Theology* (London: SPCK, 1992), pp. 67-86. Reprinted Berry, R.J. (ed.), *Environmental Stewardship: Critical Perspectives, Past and Present* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), pp. 63-75.

There is even more ~ the trophic function of the flower and the fly. *Rhingia c.*, and even her larvae growing and feeding in cow dung nearby, will also be food for other species. Her existence and death mean they too are able to exist. The illusive spotted flycatcher has flown all the way from Africa to rear her young here and my hover-fly may well end up in their devoted beaks. This devotion, the love for life and living, is a powerful force. There is no doubt, there would be no life without it. It is ancient ~ a form of love so powerful as to energise evolution. I imagine the story lies deep in the earliest records of life, somewhere, tucked away perhaps, in stromatolites, which supplied Earth with no less than oxygen itself. Colossal devotion must have existed in the face of all hostility and, as a metabolising strength, within and between us now, and of all living beings into the future. As we move into increasingly turbulent times, the union of the flower and the fly is a devotion of incalculable value, a love, I suggest, worthy of the deepest respect and celebration.

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### 3.0 The illogic of pricing nature.

Love, in symbiotic belonging and attachment to community extended as nature 22 (Baumeister/Leary) stands to resist the externalities and negative impacts of market force 23 (Battson), unlimited growth and associated planetary harms. 24 (Anderson/Bows). Metaethics of value pluralism supports commensurabilities between the majority of human values (Chang) and could be projected through and out of the Anthropocene, however, reductionism of the single monetary unit used as a valuation tool for ecosystems in politics and commerce (Daily) trumps the sanctity of life, homogenises nature for human need, and perpetuates the globalised economic paradigm of extreme capitalism (Castree). Personal strength, united in community, is required in order to resist capitalist approaches purporting to conserve by pricing ‘free’ goods and further enclosing the commons. Whilst in servitude to the whims of a free market, nature is still vulnerable, perhaps even more so. The threat of destruction towards all life on Earth, and declines in both biodiversity and abundance, remains. Monetary valuation is far from being a protective cloak. Natural capital accounting purporting to support economic growth further objectifies nature, erodes the commons and perpetuates unfair land distribution patterns.

Pricing something for sale severs ties between *owner* and *owned* to varying degrees (Titmuss), because in order to part with and exchange for cash or bartered goods one needs to feel less emotionally attached. Living beings as commodity for instrumental value in economic accountability is not morally neutral (Sandel, see below). It presents ethical problems in two main ways. Firstly, it severely impinges on the ‘owned’ in freedoms, flourishing and moral worth. As such, secondly, it impoverishes the moral standing of the owner and buyer in their contract.

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22 Baumeister, R. & Leary, M. *The Need to Belong: Desire for Interpersonal Attachments as a Fundamental Human Motivation* Vol. 117, No. 3, 497-529 (1995) “Belongingness is thus crucial if love is to produce bliss.”

23 Battson, G. *Has the World Gone Mad?* Seasonalight <<https://seasonalight.wordpress.com/2016/07/21/has-the-world-gone-mad/>> (2016)

24 Anderson, K. & Bows, A. *Beyond ‘dangerous’ climate change: emission scenarios for a new world.* *Phil. Trans. R. Soc. A* (2011) 369, 20–44

This corruption manifests also in the monetary valuation of livestock, human organs and pets. One of the most well documented and argued dysfunctional commodification of living beings is in the monetary valuation, and then selling and buying, of other humans ~ slavery. Modern humans assume slavery is immoral and unethical. Slavery is illegal under many international conventions <sup>25</sup>. Similarly, it may be argued that any kind of monetary valuation and trade of living beings, from the blue whale, to the tree sapling, down to yeast and other single-cell organisms <sup>26</sup> impinge upon freedoms and flourishing ~ the sanctity of life.

Like everything else in our capitalist society, the monism of money is all pervasive. But the reduction of all life measured to a single monetary unit is impossible without losing essential elements of what it means to be human ~ being part of the very same system of interconnected life in our one biosphere. Advocates say Natural Capital and Payments for Ecosystem Services are just two of many ‘tools in the box’ to conserve nature, though targeting government and business. Market-bias politicians are already going to work on the idea, with the onset of Biodiversity Offsetting<sup>27</sup>. But in order to change the way all people value nature, regardless of government or business, to value by the £ \$ € is an exclusive act, not inclusive. And as a value, money is incommensurable with so many other critical values such as justice and love. Conflicts may arise from trying to weigh one value against another. Sometimes, it’s impossible. Just look at the radical incomparability of money and love (Sandel):

“...there is a danger in viewing love and friendship as commodities that can be bought and sold on the market. I think it’s important to preserve a certain distance about the way we think about friendship, dating and love from market metaphors and a market mentality.”

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<sup>25</sup> Liverpool Museums, *Outlawing Slavery* <<http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism/learning/slavery-today/about-slavery/outlawing-slavery.aspx>>

<sup>26</sup> You may ask, what harm could the cultivation, distribution and sale of yeast prevail? I would argue, by reducing diversity, since there are hundreds of varieties yet only a few sold.

<sup>27</sup> The Houses of Parliament: Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology. Post Note: *Biodiversity Offsetting* <[http://www.parliament.uk/documents/post/postpn\\_369-biodiversity-offsetting.pdf](http://www.parliament.uk/documents/post/postpn_369-biodiversity-offsetting.pdf)> (2011)

“Markets are not morally neutral.”<sup>28</sup>

When money is metric, corruption becomes a real danger. Money as metric combined with an absence of other measured values are often reasons why conflicts fail to resolve.

Nature is our life support but we are also intrinsically part of nature. Val Plumwood crucially argues:

“Human-centred culture damages our ability to see ourselves as part of ecosystems and understand how nature supports our lives. So the resulting delusions of being ecologically invulnerable, beyond animality and ‘outside nature’ lead to the failure to understand our ecological identities and dependencies on nature...

...This failure lies behind many environmental catastrophes, both human and non-human.”<sup>29</sup>

Follow the commodification argument through, and we must then also price ourselves. As there are so many of us on Earth, then perhaps we ought to consider we are cheap. Does this assist in government and business decision making? Logically, it could. Morally, it should not. Nature is intensely interconnected, no-one species more important to the overall picture than any other.

Ecosystem services exist in all manner of ways between all species. Reciprocity and interdependencies are intrinsic to life (Wall-Kimmerer). Some processes we do not fully understand and may never fully fathom. Critically, there are species more or less important to different humans in diverse cultures, depending on purpose (service). There are disparities between useful and less useful species to the utility of humans. By shaping ecosystems to fit our human conservation priorities<sup>30</sup>, in this case ecosystem services, we risk further homogenising complex interconnections and depauperating biodiversity.

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<sup>28</sup>Niederhauser, J. Interview. *Michael Sandel Says Money Could Destroy Our Notion of Love*. Vice Online. <[https://www.vice.com/en\\_uk/article/kwn44x/michael-sandel-interview](https://www.vice.com/en_uk/article/kwn44x/michael-sandel-interview)> (2013)

<sup>29</sup> Plumwood, V. *Nature in the Active Voice*. Australian Humanities Review. Issue 46, May (2009)

<sup>30</sup> Simberloff, D. Flagships, Umbrellas and Keystones: Is single species management passe in the landscape era? *Biological Conservation* Vol. 83, No. 3, pp. 247-257. <<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/00a6/82bcde4ffd653b18f2b5b7fadfe75badc411.pdf>> (1998)



Scientific reductionists who back natural capital valuation and payments for ecosystem services inevitably become valuable in themselves. Research funds are channelled<sup>31</sup> and a new industry is generated. And so the process might actually be construed as a self serving and exclusive exercise. Scientific calculations themselves may be commodified and there are questions on the ethics of the commodification of scientific research and of neutrality (Muchie, Li).

The focus on Natural Capital valuation is intensely acquisitional. And this kind of materialism as opposed to ecophilosophical new materialism (Mathews), is now jarring since we are at a point where the gap between rich and poor is now colossal and increasing<sup>32</sup>. On the surface, there is an obvious appeal. Nature becomes financially ‘visible’ to businesses and political institutions. It is accounted for in the ‘books’. Payments are made according to the production of ecosystem services emanating from the land. But there seems to be a tremendous gap between this point and the point at which nature is protected as ‘assets’ by these very same institutions. By pricing nature by the £ we lay nature more vulnerable to commodification putting it further in harm’s way. Nature as £ = Property owned (Locke).<sup>33</sup> When market values conflict with other values, say in planning applications for development, key property rights generally have to be either held, or consents granted or withheld, by the parties pushing to protect. Often, grassroots objections come from the general public who neither hold land nor specific power over consents. NGOs, however, in acquisitional policies and holding property rights, gain considerable power over decisions. Some might go a long way with this notion as an alternative to democracy, an extension of the professionalisation of conservation. But I don’t. There’s little democratic say and only serves to intensify exclusivity.

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<sup>31</sup> For example, *NERC invests £2 million in exploring low-carbon futures for the UK*. <<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/latest/news/nerc/low-carbon-future/>> (2015)

<sup>32</sup> Savio, R. *Billionaires Rising: The Economic Impact of a Global Concentration of Wealth*. Toward Freedom.com <<https://towardfreedom.com/archives/globalism/billionaires-rising-economic-impact-global-concentration-wealth/>> (2018)

<sup>33</sup> Tuckness, Alex, *Locke's Political Philosophy*, The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2016/entries/locke-political/>> (Spring 2016 Edition)

Rich ideas in sustainability can be found emanating from the US. From the communality of National Parks to the educationalist vision of ecoliteracy for all, from Bioneers to SteadyStaters, there's a plethora of North American ideas and research to match. But it is Gretchen Daily, a professor at Stanford Woods, California, which the Natural Capital approach owes much of its existence. She co-founded the Natural Capital Project, which has been globalised partly through the Nature Conservancy of which she is also a board member. Daily says herself, her goal is to 'align economic forces with conservation' and her latest book is entitled, 'The New Economy of Nature: The Quest to Make Conservation Profitable'. She makes no bones about it. The ideas have been seized upon, of course, by pro-growth environmental economists such as Oxford's Dieter Helm, (who also supports UK shale gas), on 'pragmatic' merits. But I argue, as does George Monbiot<sup>34</sup>, the system of which they are complicitly supporting, capitalism, is destructive and divisive. It's business-as-usual, except nature is now even more accepted as instrumental to economic growth. This is a huge mistake. We can't fix a problem by applying the same causal mentality.

Pricing nature is not integrally an educational or spirit-stirring move. There are other human non-monetary currencies to apply, of course, including reputation, authority, attention, intention, time, ideas, creativity, health, trust, loyalty, conviviality, sympathy, affection, admiration, companionship, devotion and aesthetics. Let's not forget life itself. To value all other life on Earth for its own sake, an intrinsic value<sup>35</sup>, beyond all human purpose, sees there is no argument between varying human values (in my view, the best metric to begin on axiology). Why has there been no real effort in developing metrics for any of these other values in order to protect nature for the good of all life? The 'capture of opportunities' in a capitalist system of private and corporate property ownership by the minority rich is hastening the widening of the gap with the poor. The rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. And nature, labelled resource, still bears the brunt of these destructive powers. But once the value conversion from, say, love to money is made, and nature commodified, it is the market which determines val-

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<sup>34</sup> Monbiot, G. The Pricing of Everything <<http://www.monbiot.com/2014/07/24/the-pricing-of-everything/>> (2014).

<sup>35</sup> Sandler, R. *Intrinsic Value, Ecology, and Conservation*. *Nature Education Knowledge*. <<https://www.nature.com/scitable/knowledge/library/intrinsic-value-ecology-and-conservation-25815400>> (2012)

ue and the extreme capitalist and neoliberal market is both volatile and self-serving in that volatility (Marx, Klein's *The Shock Doctrine*). In creating a new beast, the beast will have its own mind, and conservationists will have trouble in keeping it under control.

Markets might understand scarcity even more than conservation biologists. Rare things are generally of higher value but that does not equate to protection. The aim of conservation is to transform the rare into the common. Markets will respond. Common things are generally valued as cheap. Rarities are also exchangeable and will, of course, either be consumed by exploitation or cached out of the reach of the majority. Tracts of ecosystems and accompanying data sets become accumulated by only those who can afford it. Out of the window, once again, flies social justice and equity. Hedge fund managers will find the risks very attractive. And the Environment Bank<sup>36</sup> is keen to trade credits. And then there is tax, insurance and artful accounting. Private or public owned, nature as property is vulnerable to the will of the few.

“We abuse land because we see it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.” (Leopold, *SCA*).<sup>37</sup>

Community accumulation is more democratic. But this is not singularly what the NGOs<sup>38</sup> are calling for.

Most NGO's are not generally democratic entities in themselves, relying more upon endorsement by membership subscription for acquisitions and running costs rather than votes. Yet statements are being made, and support is expected to follow, rather than co-

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<sup>36</sup> *Environment Bank Website*. <<http://www.environmentbank.com>>

<sup>37</sup> Leopold, A. *A Sand County Almanac*. Oxford University Press: New York & Oxford. (1987) p vii 5

<sup>38</sup> The NGO proposed *Nature & Wellbeing Act* may be found here, please do read Chapter Four <[http://www.rspb.org.uk/Images/nature\\_and\\_wellbeing\\_act\\_green\\_full\\_tcm9-384572.pdf](http://www.rspb.org.uk/Images/nature_and_wellbeing_act_green_full_tcm9-384572.pdf)> I also attach a very interesting, recent blog by Herman Daly himself on the uses and abuses of the concept of Natural Capital <<http://steadystate.org/use-and-abuse-of-the-natural-capital-concept/comment-page-1/#comment-12678>> Daly was one of the earliest economists to explore the concept of Natural Capital shortly after the publication of E F Schumacher's 'Small is Beautiful', and is an executive board member of CASSE. I fully support their position statement and have signed the pledge.

operative democratic & creative decision making from the ground up. NGO's do not equate to the electorate, despite their influence in public consultations. Many board members might still not wish to listen to ideas on changing the economic paradigm, because their existence is, in many ways, reliant upon the current flow of money.

Nature is exploited by capitalism, yes; valuing nature in monetary terms serves to invite novel advantages taken by increasingly leviathan corporate economies, which already lean heavily against protective legislation. Much political pressure by pro-corporate lobbyists to unravel the gains made by the EU Habitats Directives remains, despite recent assurances by Michael Gove that the Conservative-DUP Government will adopt all post-Brexit. They see legislation as red tape to prevent debt repays or profit.

Unfathomable battles lie ahead, with novel expansions of market and entrepreneurial creativity requiring more and more expensive legislation required in order to protect what really is infinitely invaluable. Baselines and capital adequacies will be crystallised by financiers, and any future ecosystem imbalances will more easily be blamed upon that data. The financiers may walk away with no consequence, as we have already seen during the Crash of 2007, at huge social and environmental cost.

How far could we go? To value nature financially has a strong tendency to bring things down to one homogenous rule. For all the mysteries still to be discovered, the varieties and diversity of species and the colourful lives of all those individual beings, to value nature in financial currency only serves to promote nature as insipid, dull and singular.

What example does it set to young people, aspiring naturalists and enthusiasts? We could financially value the moon; its gravity causes tides and coastal biodiversity after all. What good would this truly achieve? Little, if any. This is not something I imagine most who love nature would do with grievous intent. Instead, I see conservation biologists, reductionists by nature, and somewhat panicky, simply taking up the Stanford materialist baton. Despite the disbanding of the Sustainable Development Commission by the Con-Lib Coalition government early upon taking office, I haven't given up hope on an up-swelling of people to scrutinise public decision-making on sustainability and a

pursuit of mainstream ecoliteracy for all. I see no fairer and successfully long-term way to move forward.

Paid conservation biologists and economists are not the only people with views on Nature and the way we humans ought to relate to it. Others must be allowed to contribute to a cross-disciplinary collective wisdom of our age and voice alternatives for mindful coexistence with nature.

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4.0 Natural Process as Love

4.1 Mycelium and the hyphae ~ wood wide web³⁹ (narrative scholarship)

Autumn, and the fungal fruits of the woodland floor appear to resonate more than at any other time of year. To begin to understand fungal bodies and their place within ecosystems, one needs to imagine part of the world beneath the humus and deadwood, where the ‘hyphae’ grow. These are the living thread-like filaments primed to branch out into multicellular fungus. The resulting mat of subterranean mycelium, interconnecting with various plant roots, is a living gauze, where symbiotic mycorrhizal relationships exist between many forest beings. Think of a mycelium as a layer of blood vessels, keeping shape due to hydrodynamic pressure, with a flow of water and soluble nutrients journeying across cell membranes and the forest floor. Mycelium are the wood-wide web of woodland community consciousness.

Hyphae grow from their very ‘finger’ tips, the softest exploration in finding a way to their next interconnection. In a lab, the direction of hyphal growth can be controlled by environmental stimuli, such as the application of an electric field⁴⁰. Hyphae can sense reproductive opportunities from some distance, and grow towards them. Hyphae can weave through a permeable surface to penetrate it.⁴¹

One may consider the human spirit of love a little like the hyphae, in sensing partners and finding ways to connect and exchange through layers. Love itself, of course, glows in many rainbow colours. Aristotle says love is composed of a single soul inhabiting two bodies. Mycelium may be the soul and unity of the forest, where not just two beings are united, but many, and for the love of the whole community.

³⁹ ‘Wood Wide Web’ coined by, in cooperation with Nature, Suzanne Simard.

⁴⁰Crombie T., Gow N.A.R., Gooday G. *Influence of applied electrical fields on yeast and hyphal growth of Candida albicans*. J Gen Microbiol. (1990)

⁴¹ Gooday, G. W. *The dynamics of hyphal growth*. British Mycological Society Presidential address published Res. 99 (4): 385-394 (1995) <<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/c90b/6bae7e4a2d295d-c3b4aac7fd1b7b462eba60.pdf>> (1993)

Consider our spiritual and mental growth, traveling from the outermost reaches of our minds to the tips of our fingers and beyond. From these outstretched fingers there may come others to warmly embrace and bring substance. Sometimes it takes courage simply to hold out one's hand, with uncertainty and rejection looming. But when, in the eventual joining of those hands with like-mindedness, there are the deepest existential threads of human happiness (and suffering) to be interwoven.

Rilke says, "to love is good, too: love being difficult".

My goodness, it can be difficult. And just a little bit scary.

Being in love often takes us beyond comfort, and into the fringes of the unknown. But if we risk nothing, we gain nothing. And the planet is in need of it. There is a contract, however. With love there is the risk of loss. In union there are perhaps expectations and subordinations. If we see love, instead, as being something other than union, like the mycelium, a passage of consciousness, love may be THE call to act, and a light shining upon not ourselves but those we love. A selflessness.

I was fortunate to have a brief discussion with philosopher A C Grayling at Hay Festival on the love of nature. I asked him, "can nature, or other living species, ever be our friends?" (I perceive much overlap between friendship and love). He appeared to revel in the question and agreed it is possible, with pets or wildlife. He then went further, to also include dead poets and musicians. Poems and music may have a kind of lingering metabolism of their own and culturally embody the essence of love.

Love has had a tough time. It's hounded out of politics as weak and sentimental. One could describe the rejection of love as an accumulation through time. It's a pity. Marxian rejection of love was based on it as subjugating, an opiate for women, an instrument of suppression. ⁴²

We see this in materialist scientific world too, often, in an over-emphatic obsession with reducing cognitive bias. But to deny love exists is to deny its potential. Look at the

⁴² Draper, H. *Marx and Engels on Women's Liberation*. International Socialism (1st series), No.44, July/August 1970, pp.20-29.

woodland floor next time you are there. Touch the leaf litter gently with your finger tips. The Mycelium. And the love.

4.2 Water, microbes, life, climate.

When water pulses through our blood vessels, and through all existence, it branches and converges with an array of forces. By hydrodynamics and changes of state, it braids sky with earth, underworld with ocean.

Seven billion human souls are dependent on water, yet we are a small measure of its flow. Beauty and complexity abounds, in the form of life, in and around it. Beings flourish in the smallest of mountain springs, among the echos of the karst underworld, in the greatest living rivers and down in the deep blue sea. When water falls as rain through a forest canopy, it soaks through the humus, and all awaiting lifeforms spring up, out and, importantly, together. A wave of nutrients flow outwards ⁴³, carried by water's own intrinsic nature, but also by the animals it nurtures. When water gathers to channels and wells, life bathes and there seems more certainty in the world.

Water gives life, and some say ⁴⁴life made some of the water. Earth is a shiny blue dot lit up by a star, a place in space where water has gathered uniquely from within rock and deep without ⁴⁵, pulled from a vast universe of dark matter and energy.

⁴³ Evans, M. CIFOR. *Forests, farming and food*. <<https://forestsnews.cifor.org/51201/forests-farming-and-food?fnl=en>>

⁴⁴ Wikipedia. *Van Niel, C*. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._B._van_Niel>

⁴⁵ Fishman, C. *Scientists discover oldest, largest body of water ~ in space*. <<https://www.fastcompany.com/1769468/scientists-discover-oldest-largest-body-water-existence-space>> (2011)

Zillions of microbes gathered at first in water to settle and then to colonise⁴⁶ Earth. All other life has evolved to encompass them. They do not simply live alongside, but on us and within us, directing moods⁴⁷ and determining the sex⁴⁸ of some species.

Water is flow. Microbes are flow.

Raindrops fall with gravitational force, impacting various structures of leaves⁴⁹ and soils in complex ways, dispersing microbes⁵⁰ and carrying them afar in the bioaerosols⁵¹ created. I observe that evaporating snow may work in similar ways. Water and microbes are interconnected.

Life IS climate, climate IS life. There is no separation.⁵² All is flow.

A mathematician would perceive inordinate complexity in a matrix of interconnectedness. There is no single rule, save there is no single rule. Bacteria, fungi, algae, protozoa and viruses all converse in chemisignals. The world is never, ever truly silent.⁵³ And we are never physically separate, but wholly interconnected.

⁴⁶ Wikipedia. *Stromatolites*. <<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stromatolite>>

⁴⁷ Temming, M. *How gut bacteria might affect anxiety*. <<https://www.sciencenews.org/article/how-gut-bacteria-may-affect-anxiety>> (2017)

⁴⁸ Kageyama, D. et al. *Insect Sex Determination Manipulated by Their Endosymbionts: Incidences, Mechanisms and Implications* <<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4553623/>> (2012)

⁴⁹ Massachusetts Institute of Technology. *Splash down: High-speed images capture patterns by which raindrops spread pathogens among plants*. <www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2015/02/150203204459.htm> (2015)

⁵⁰ Hall, S. *Why Rain Gives Off That Fresh, Earthy Smell*. <<https://www.livescience.com/49520-smell-of-rain-aerosols.html>> (2015)

⁵¹ Joung, Y. S. et al. *Bioaerosol generation by raindrops on soil*. <<https://www.nature.com/articles/ncomms14668>> (2017)

⁵² Fröhlich-Nowoisky, J. *Bioaerosols in the Earth system: Climate, health, and ecosystem interactions*. <www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0169809516301995> (2016)

⁵³ Slijepcevic, P. *The Conversation. Microbes Have Their Own Version of the Internet*. <<https://futurism.com/microbes-have-their-own-version-of-the-internet/>> (2017)

Microbes relay messages to the collective. They commune.⁵⁴ Microbes are mind,⁵⁵ and determined, a challenge to Darwinian thoughts of success derived from catalogues of failure. Success, it seems, is intent and attempt, rather than failure after failure. This new knowledge of microbial wisdom supports cooperative evolution. We, as humans, are an extension. We, and our genome, can determine⁵⁶ our future in order to fairly flourish. Suffering will always be part of the matrix, though we can choose to reduce it by our own actions. There is responsibility, not administered by authoritarianism but by generous, informed self-will. Flow, as dynamic and interconnected life, is a constant love, because that is the quintessential nature of the evolution of life.

Imagination is an evolved gift, we can imagine goals, articulate them in a collective consciousness, like the microbes. And with both rationale and affect,⁵⁷ set out to achieve them. There is fluministic love in ‘doing’ these things for the promotion of life’s interconnectedness. Those that imagine and act on this better world are Fluminists. This love is a doing word.

We also know that water and microbes can be a force majeure that overwhelms and destroys. Some have felt it. The destruction, loss of life and loved-ones, not just human, has been traumatising. Water and mudslides have ripped into community, clawing and scraping the toxins left recklessly about, draining them into the rivers and eventually to the sea. There will be more human disease⁵⁸ as the climate shifts and life migrates. There has always been, but we will see new forms and strengths in others, and across

⁵⁴ Bassler, B. TED. *How bacteria communicate*. <https://www.ted.com/talks/bonnie_bassler_on_how_bacteria_communicate> (2009)

⁵⁵ Slijepcevic, P. The Conversation. *Microbes Have Their Own Version of the Internet*. <<https://futurism.com/microbes-have-their-own-version-of-the-internet/>> (2017)

⁵⁶ Wheeling, K. Pacific Standard. *The Nature of Human Violence*. <<https://psmag.com/news/the-nature-of-human-violence>> (2016)

⁵⁷ Thagard, P. Psychology Today. *Ethical thinking should be rational and emotional*. <<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/hot-thought/201006/ethical-thinking-should-be-rational-and-emotional>> (2010)

⁵⁸ Powell, M. *What impact will climate change have on pathogens?* <<https://www.id-hub.com/2017/08/02/impact-will-climate-change-pathogens/>> (2017)

other species ~ animals ⁵⁹and plants. ⁶⁰The collective immunity will take time to adapt. The way we apply our own lives to the interconnected flow is shown frequently to be a dis-ease. We can change. It will take commitment and a collective mind, like the microbes. It will take Fluminism⁶¹ (Battson) and Soliphilia⁶² (Albrecht).

To not commodify, but to sanctify.

To aid and multiply life flow, not destroy it.

Human love begins as an emotional response to phenomena/thought, and functions to energise motivation within us all. Emotions and rationality are not opposed (Milton), but are symbiotic in forming ethical decisions:

“as William James argued, rationality is itself a feeling (1956 [1897]), it is emotionally constituted. It is the direction provided by emotion that makes thought rational. The opposition between emotion and rationality is a myth, in at least two senses of that term; in the popular sense that it is false, and in the anthropological sense that it is believed in and dogmatically asserted because it protects particular interests and ideologies... We see it whenever people’s attachments to non-market interests challenge the operation of the market.”⁶³

As we are an integral part of nature in our one biosphere, holobionts (Margulis/Sagan), encompassing dependent interconnections, the concept of environment as something separate to which we relate falls away, instead a complete sense of connectedness is, therefore, realised (Naess), and deliberate action transforms into unconscious being (Fox).

⁵⁹ Gallana, M. et al. *Climate change and infectious diseases of wildlife: Altered interactions between pathogens, vectors and hosts*. <<https://academic.oup.com/cz/article/59/3/427/1791133/Climate-change-and-infectious-diseases-of-wildlife>> (2013)

⁶⁰ E. Yigal & Pertot, I. *Climate Change Impacts on Plant Pathogens and Plant Diseases*. <www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15427528.2014.865412> (2014)

⁶¹ Battson, G. *Beavers are Fluminists*. <<http://zoomorphic.net/2017/10/beavers-are-fluminists/>> (2017)

⁶² Albrecht, G. *Soliphilia* <<http://www.psychoterratica.com/soliphilia.html>> (2013)

⁶³ Milton, K. *Loving Nature: Towards an ecology of emotion*. Routledge: London & New York. (2002) p150

In biological or teleological response, if we experience a strong positive emotion, we have the opportunity to become motivated to act in beneficial ways. Fluministic love, expressed and acted upon as a positive emotion, exists with the strongest potential to undo or heal critical planetary and environmental harms manifesting across the globe. There may never be a better moment for integrative love to be embraced as an ethical force.

All life, through known and yet to be fully understood ecological interconnections, exists via the strengths, depths and possibilities of fluministic love, individual to individual, individual/s to community, to the global whole and to the cosmos. Fluminism is to interconnected process, as biocentrism is to individual life or ecocentrism is to whole ecosystems. The boundaries of moral community, none-the-less extend beyond humanity and contributes to a continued critique of anthropocentrism. I hope Fluminism ignites interdisciplinary exploration of the relationship between love's history/memory and environmental ethics/ecology, whilst deepening a kinship ⁶⁴ between humans and all other life (Henry S Salt).

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<sup>64</sup> Salt, H. S. *The Creed of Kinship*. Constable & Co.: London. (1935)

## 5.0 Introducing Fluminism ~ flow and freedom.

Terra-UK is one of the most densely populated land areas in the world. The concept of wilderness seems overly ambitious here upon our heavily burdened soils. We are sold as such a well-groomed and culturally domesticated species, at least in public, and it's way too fashionable to tame our surroundings to a sparkling manicure. We even wash our soils down with pesticides to scrub away the wild. Every last square inch of land is property ~ accounted for and stewarded. Markets induce us to gaze upon all through neoliberal-tinted specs. Always questions of economic materialism... how does this land earn its keep? For how much will it eventually sell? How much can we pay each other for the servitude of non-human life in our stewardship? Earth is bounded and fenced, like our own mortal souls. In the UK, it is worth questioning whether there is any wilderness left at all.

In the UK, wild kin have learned to be afraid of me, and with good reason. As friendly as I try to be, my physical form represents danger and threat. The British countryside has not been sanctuary for non-human life. Huge declines in wildlife populations, extinctions and extirpations silently scream of the havoc we have caused, and significantly in the last few decades. We've halved the numbers of native vertebrates. Invertebrate biodiversity has plummeted. <sup>65</sup>Traumas are inherited, a genetic overspill of shock, from one generation to another. Human dominion has spawned multiple genetic threads of fear and distrust. It would take much to win back this trust, especially as it may never have entirely existed. There are a rare few who gain the confidence of our non-human kin, and in their kindnesses, they are blessed and ought to be celebrated.

There are remnants of wilderness, but at multiple scales. To a Violet Oil Beetle, the woodland glade is truly vast. To a Wandering Albatross, the Southern Ocean is just big enough. We have imaginations to envisage degrees of relativity. Wilderness is, therefore, more a mental state ~ to feel wild is to experience and imagine, a complex matrix of perceived belonging (or a perception of loss). No matter what scale it presents itself, wilderness is where I come home, not somewhere I glance a visit.

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<sup>65</sup> *State of Nature Report*, UK. 2016 <[http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/sites/default/files/state\\_of\\_nature\\_uk\\_report\\_pages\\_1\\_sept.pdf](http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/sites/default/files/state_of_nature_uk_report_pages_1_sept.pdf)>

“There has been no wilderness without some kind of human presence for several hundred thousand years. Nature is not a place to visit, it is home—and within that home territory there are more familiar and less familiar places.” (Snyder)<sup>66</sup>

Moreover, my moral community extends way beyond the human, so non-humans are my kin ~ storage-love at its most tender and powerful.

There are several false premises when it comes to word-fusing ‘wilderness.’ Some perceive it is a place inherently untouched by human hand. Yet science informs us that the Anthropocene touches all by a layer of our own techno-fossils and radionuclides. Go back. Wilderness is all about non-human life and we are outlanders? How can this be so, when we share the Earth with all biota. We are part of nature, not separate. Our presence in the wilderness ~ ourselves being wilder ~ means we can never truly be strangers. Worse still, if we prevent others (Cock, Fig). Go back.

Beasts who dwell in the wild are angry and hostile. If we dare to step deep into their realms, we become victims ~ so we mentally retaliate, sometimes before we even arrive. These thoughts manifest in all manner of ways, from the hunter’s gun to the conservator’s axe. Go in, but go prepared, SAS-style. In the Canadian Rockies or the oceans off South Africa, I realise I am more exposed to the brutalities of the food chains. But if I use all my senses, and move with a pace and frame befitting a respect for my kin, I can truly feel alive. It becomes a question of adopted endemism, a life’s process and no instant knowing, guided and mentored by skilful others one trusts and loves. There’s no war in an angry grizzly separated from her cubs, or a venomous snake simply protecting his life. Wild things are not our enemies. They are simply surviving. So we need to act with respect and care in this shared dwelling ~ the biosphere. They teach us natural boundaries, respect in all we do. Indigenous humans know this with intimacy and their culture is crafted in the skills of living (and dying). I guess they learned the hard way. All must do the same. Go back.

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<sup>66</sup>*Essays by Gary Snyder*. North Point Press San Francisco (1990) p7

Finally, the wilderness is depicted as an otherwise barren place, a neglected sphere of empty desolation. It's where we can all go, to test ourselves, to take our medicine, to seek mental victories, or fail and find our limits. Jesus went to fight temptation. But the wilderness is a dynamic and complex community first, billions of years in the making. Wild lives are interconnected, from the microbes and mycelium to the kauri trees and blue whales (Heackel). Belonging is vital (Naess, Fox, and where Passmore fails), and from which all flows. Learning to understand its languages, natural laws and song, Earth's opus, is perhaps integral to something bigger than the sum of all parts ~ the Ghedeist (Albrecht). Yes, there is danger, doom and even death. But there is also light, as in life. Individuals matter, fluminism between all a process worthy of fierce protection. Go to the wild and you are never alone. There you will find, implicit in existence, rapturous life, passionate love, and all kinds of ways to die. It is the totality of the dynamic function of the living community and a pure ecophony of home.

To me, our engineered constructions are largely alien to the majority of our kin. There are some survivors, adapters, and even they are persecuted for their success, as pests. Perhaps, if the wild things truly joined us, the cities would crack under the weight of all, and those processes lost to concrete and tar would surface again and all will be well. The anarchy of love may bubble up in the same way.

But to be truly free is the choice to set one's own limits. You can be wild and self-disciplined. I have experienced fractured moments of a feeling of freedom at certain points in life, basking on the rocks beside the River Wye in high Summer until I choose to leave, or feeling the lift from my paragliding canopy, pulling me high above the Black Mountains until I decide when and where to land. More importantly, I try to act with care, the consequences of my actions assessed for any future adjustments necessary. In real terms, my freedoms have been more of a fleeting emotion than of clear rationality. Mostly, I feel I am a good girl who should stick to the rules, but I do trespass in libertarian forays through wilder corners and canyons. To be wild these days requires a free heart and a very determined mind, but I do so wish there were fewer fences.

Back in Terra-UK, the greater our number, the greater pressure on remaining acreage to supply our needs, and the competition is fierce to possess. The greater our number, the heavier the weight of Law presses down. Our innate freedoms are contained by order, the concession we make for a quieter, less violent life. In law abiding adhesiveness, society is managed and said to progress. But The Law is just another human construct, socially and politically malleable, some might even say culturally arbitrary, and not always founded upon morality or natural justice.

There's a self governance to the wilderness which is laudable, and I think we need to participate. We can curtail our greed and limit our numbers. Above all, we may return to this mental state to find our kin and earn their trust. There is truth in our belonging ~ a beautiful Ghedeistual love (Albrecht). And, what's more, I dare to call the wilderness my home.

Imponderable numbers of interconnections exist between all matter and lifeforms. Like a child, I try to visualise them. I imagine a kind of three dimensional fabric made from glowing yarns, bristling through all, across space and time. The light dims a little when small threads break between phenomena, fading entirely if there are deeper tears and cuts. But the light is ablaze when the fabric is alive with interconnectedness, and all is well with existence. We may not even realise, but we need this incandescence like a new-born baby needs fresh air. The same it is with love.

Implicit within the ethic of Fluminism is a love for individual beings, love for all things and acts conducive to living sustainably in our one biosphere, and for peace and natural justice in ensuring egalitarian *care*. Not all life will be saved, as we are part of nature and dependant upon it. But we may take only what is needed rather than what is wanted.

Fluminism is both deontological and consequentialist, there can't be a separation of the two. As we are seeing, it is no longer a question of conserving one species over another, the usual triage of charity towards wild non-human life. We need to protect the interconnectedness of all, and each one of us, with all our varied interests and lines of work, can participate. We need Fluminists, *realised*, who love species and habitats, and under-



stand the dynamism of all the interconnections which constitute life. And we need them to mentor others. <sup>67</sup> The flow is sent in multiple directions, with abundance and biodiversity in tow.

By example, allowing primary and secondary succession<sup>68</sup>, along with the planting of indigenous vegetation, we can encourage life to flourish in individual yet interconnected self-willed <sup>69</sup>patterns. To actively prevent by soil-sealing<sup>70</sup> (e.g., concreting), is the opposite. We can assess empirically the abundance and biodiversity of our own practices, celebrate successes and learn from our mistakes.

So many have forgotten the beauty of observing and participating in such local, natural processes. Human contentment and happiness may spring from living an interconnected and more coexistent life. Vitaly, the cultivation of land for food will no longer be a threat, but an opportunity to nurture the dynamic flows of non-human life alongside what we do, like the *sacred centres* ~ the beavers. <sup>71</sup> From shop keeping to health care provision, from clothes production to local planning, everyone can take part, or stand in for those who simply cannot through no fault of their own. Fluminism is egalitarian.

Long-term or permanent breaks in the flow are anti-Fluministic, and the accumulation of many breaks, or stops, becomes detrimental to the existence of life in the form of tipping points. Examples are tragically many, generated largely within the sphere of unsustainable human development, anthropogenic climate change, pesticide use, socio-political and economic doctrines promoting unlimited growth and inequality. However, there may be pauses in flow that remain Fluministic, in that they may appear to prevent flow,

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<sup>67</sup> Battson, G. *Beavers are Fluminists*. Zoomorphic Magazine Issue 9 <<http://zoomorphic.net/2017/10/beavers-are-fluminists/>> (2017)

<sup>68</sup> *Introduction to Ecological Succession*. Video via The Khan Academy. <<https://www.khanacademy.org/science/biology/ecology/community-structure-and-diversity/v/ecological-succession>>

<sup>69</sup> Fisher, M. *Introduction to 'self-willed' in ecological terms* <<http://www.self-willed-land.org.uk>>

<sup>70</sup> *Introduction to Soil Sealing* via europa.eu <[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/sealing\\_guidelines.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/sealing_guidelines.htm)>

<sup>71</sup> Battson, G. *Beavers are Fluminists*. Zoomorphic. <<http://zoomorphic.net/2017/10/beavers-are-fluminists/>> (2017)

such as ‘natural disasters,’ but are only temporary or cyclical (e.g., volcanism), in time and space.

Fluministic love drives action from within to without and, no doubt, there are positive effects and affects that will return to the self. But it is the local communality where real strength is to be found, strengths expended in a multiplicity of ways across cultures, regions, terrestrial and oceanic biomes, in science and the humanities. Some may commune with a collective consciousness in all, a spiritual interconnection ~ Indra’s Net<sup>72</sup> in constant flux. And indigenous peoples with local, endemic knowledge and philosophy will bring much to collective understanding. (Pierotti, Neidjie).

Opportunities exist all over the world, in the critical formation of corridors and pathways that allow for continuous flow of species to survive, adapt and move, and in traditional and transformed practices such as permaculture, satoyama and satoumi. By placing Fluminism at the centre of decision-making, many new ways of sharing our biosphere viably with humans and non-humans may arise.

Men, more often than not, have influenced the form and patterns assumed of wilderness.

“The distorted perceptions and mechanisms of denial which arise from the master rationality are an important reason why the dominant culture which embodies this identity in relation to nature cannot respond adequately to the crisis of the biosphere and the growing degradation of the earth’s natural systems.” (Plumwood)<sup>73</sup>

UK nature, animal and conservation charities ~ some founded and inspired by courageous Victorian women such as Octavia Hill, Beatrix Potter, Anna Sewell, Alice Drakoules, Emily Williamson, Eliza Phillips ~ have been increasingly dominated by a patriarchal economy and scientific reductionism. Cast off as irrational, the domain of the in-

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<sup>72</sup> *Definition of Indra’s Net*, via Nichiren Buddhism Library <<https://www.nichirenlibrary.org/en/dic/Content/1/28>>

<sup>73</sup> Plumwood, V. *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*. Routledge: London and New York. (1993). p194

ferior female mind, weak, unreliable, emotions are far from it. As I have outlined, emotions are evolutionary drivers of change.

Further, Biocentrism, Ecocentrism and new Anthropocentrism are cited largely by men in this field (Taylor, Naess, Fox, Sessions, Attfield, Passmore, et al). My work contributes to the academic field of enviroethics, in that it is the interconnections that are of primary value, ultimately preserving both individuals AND the whole, co-operatively, as opposed to a competitive-based fabrication of choice.

Love, as a doing word, and an ‘ethic of care’(Gilligan)<sup>74</sup>, ensures continuance & proliferation of natural relationships, interactions and processes.

Everything merges, overlaps, blends, co-exists. Boundaries once thought impenetrable are now being found porous. Even taxonomists are finding this out. Life is complex; cosmological to quantum, and our values need to catch up with that reality.

## 5.1 Epistemology

The Greeks used many words to describe all the different types of love; agape, eros, philia, storge, ludus, pragma, philautia and even philos, meaning general love. Whichever type of love it is, in purest form, love is good. Some might say it is possible to commit evil crimes in the name of love. I disagree. There may be love involved, but it would not be love that caused the evil crime ~ anger, jealousy or avarice, but not *true* love.

Meanwhile, ecology, as the study of ecological systems, reveals the interconnections between all species and is foundational in our understanding of the living biosphere. Since we care for what we love most, loving ecological systems (the organisms, the inorganic matter they depend upon and the connections in between), stands as strongest motivation to protect our ailing biosphere from further anthropological harm. But in humans, it is love *as* nature that now requires cultivation, nurturing, mentoring and encouragement due to our psychological interconnectedness being broken, particularly

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<sup>74</sup> Gilligan, C. *Ethics of Care*. <<https://ethicsofcare.org/carol-gilligan/>> (2011)

since Colonialism, African Slavery Trade and the Industrial Revolution. Moreover, as far as human and non-human life is concerned, it is in the interconnections and processes where I suggest pure love is strongest. Evidence to justify lies in the scientific breakthroughs ongoing in living symbioses such as the microbiome, the mycelium and the human gut-brain.

## 5.2 Ethics

If thought is applied, love is very much a doing word. We may say we love our partner in life, but it needs to be expressed, demonstrative, and in a sense, public. In this way, it is acknowledged as love by all who matter and generally respected as a good thing. I can say I love my daughter but what does it mean if I never express or act upon it? Not much.

In other words, the purest love (once again), is in the deed. The purer the love, the more beautiful the deed. And beautiful deeds are always positive towards life not negative. Love may be cultivated as a motivation to act, but it is devotion to life and living, from deep within the self to all else, with no separation. Our *realisation* becomes *being*, and with all we relate. The interactions, or the relationships in the living world then perpetuate and proliferate life, in both abundance and diversity. It is love at its most supreme. What better principle to govern our relationships. Some may call this good, God, and others simply love. I call it Fluminism.

## 5.3 Sanguimund and Adopted Endemism (narrative scholarship).

“Have enough courage to trust love one more time and always one more time.” (Maya Angelou).

It has been difficult for me to find like-minded souls in my life. Family and close friends aside, and especially social media, I am largely an introvert in the company of other human beings. I have found great solace in my connection with other species in wilder places. In fact, I think I have always perceived myself as just another species alongside fox, cat, wren, dog, bee, sheep, butterfly, horse. A childhood spent with older

family, but mostly on my own, meant my animal companions and wilder kin were the ones I felt I understood and, more importantly I guess, the ones who truly understood me.

Place is such a loaded word, much noise made of the 'sense' of it. Place can be urban, suburban, rural. It doesn't even have to be on land. Attachments may be purely anthropocentric. Although my childhood home in North Herefordshire remained in the family for forty years (now sold), my life's oceanic currents have washed me around from place to place with an almost predictable frequency. My siblings' address books are black with lines drawn through my temporary addresses, international postcodes and landline numbers. Yes, I do feel rooted around the River Wye somehow, and miss it, but it is not 'place' that draws me. The Wye is some 134 miles long and even the most knowledgeable of river experts could not know every mile so intimately. But I do feel a strong sense of understanding those that live in and around it. I identify with them. Moreover, I love them.

Last year I moved to the outskirts of Cardiff. But this time I became worried about abandoning loved ones (non-human), for living so near to the City. I thought to myself, "there will be more people, more litter, more traffic, more intense recreational use of nearby areas normally in the realm of the non-human." My worries were all borne out, of course though, it must be said, rural pressures are equally pressing upon wildlife, just in different ways.

None-the-less, after a year of being here, if I am called away, I miss the wild community to which I have recently been so warmly welcomed. I admire the community here because it exists despite the human calamity. I miss all the individuals of the many species that I have spent time with, even if we've met only once. Dippers, brown trout, hedgehogs. I miss them because I now care deeply about them. It is love.

Having studied architecture in the scale of 'human', I am acutely aware of the homogeneity of ignoring 'place', and witnessing the melding of cultural nuance to the universal symbol as dull and colonial. A similar wrecking ball is that nature can be treated

with one scientific masterplan and conservation enacted to a single manual of value and technological application. Regionalism was my study area, and at the time it felt radical. At undergraduate level, I championed Kenneth Frampton's *Critical Regionalism*<sup>75</sup> as a critique of the post modern aesthetic and used the examples of Alvar Aalto and Carlo Scarpa as architects who both understood and valued the rootedness of place yet transformed those critical memories into something bold and new. But now 'regionalist' is wholly inadequate to describe my sense of being. Regionalism could be vast, especially to a bee or a wren. My sense of place is now almost microscopic. Wherever I am, I use all my senses to find the wilder beings. Sometimes, they find me in the nightly track of a bat, or the beat of an otter along the River Ely.

The fact is I am not constrained by place at all. My sense of place is hugely superseded by my sense of belonging to community, Sanguimund, and this community is largely non-human. In retrospect, I suppose I have felt this wherever I have lived and now I see it as a blessing. I am not tied. I can roam, yet still feel I belong. If I were to be washed up anywhere on the planet I will belong because I know to commune with life.

The courage to find new individuals, new species, new habitats is also the courage to trust love one more time and always one more time. I open my heart to all, despite the losses I may incur in future as I inevitably move on again. For this love is the union of myself and the Ghedeist (Albrecht), a Heraclatean Unity of Opposites in that it is both one and many. Along with my close terrestrial human loves, there cannot be anything more comforting.

“When one has once fully entered the realm of love, the world ~ no matter how imperfect ~ becomes rich and beautiful, it consists solely of opportunities for love.” (Kierkegaard).

Indigenous. The word is powerful, there is no doubt ~ a descriptive adjective that evokes strong concepts of ancestral roots, cultural and historic sensitivities as well as

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<sup>75</sup> Frampton, K. *Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six points to an architectural resistance*. Foster, H. (Ed). *Postmodern Culture*. Pluto Press. (1985) pp16-30

endemic ties to place, species and habitats. It represents ancient tribal peoples who, more often than not, have been usurped in the image of a European trail wagon, tallship, or CAT 60 Tractor. The problem continues. Juxtapose that intimacy of indigenous understanding over thousands of years with the volatile, rapidly changing, globalised capitalist markets, and we see huge social and environmental injustice. Even the oppressive settlers are now distressed by new waves of oppression.<sup>76</sup>

The people who constitute and defend these markets use false utilitarian arguments (supply for the greater good), in trying to justify fossil fuel extraction, deforestation, damming, and other planet-wrecking pursuits for profit. The reality is that they enlist proselytes to conjure most of these markets from thin air. Consumer-junkies keep the process alive in forms of novelty-addiction that seem hard to break, when all we really need, in terms of material things, are good organic food, pure water, recyclable clothes and shelter designed for locale from local materials.

Standing Rock Protests, one of the biggest gatherings of First Nation peoples in decades, united to stop brazen neoliberal arrogance manifesting in the form of the Dakota Access Pipeline, snaking its way across spirit-lands like a bad omen.

All over the world, we are seeing indigenous authenticity rising to fight for these sacred ties to land and seas, when, often, biodiversity rich areas selected for Western systems of conservation are only in a good ecological state because of eons of successful co-existence of indigenous peoples.

At least, a notional global postcolonial respect for the Rights of Indigenous exists more soundly in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) , but notably four major countries opposed ~ Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States. How sad it is that rights need to be enforced in the first instance. No one should need the “right” to flourish. All should be able to simply... flourish.

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<sup>76</sup>Albrecht, G. et al. *Solastalgia: the distress caused by environmental change*. Australas Psychiatry. <<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18027145>> (2007)

Those of us who revere the one biosphere we call home, and truly understand the stress it's now under, may thank these peoples for trying to stem the blood loss, the profound inequality and environmental destruction which flows from Western growth-greed. The growth mantra is the instrument of harm, and the gash in our collective psyche needs to heal, fast.

Now, what if you, like me, are of Western ancestral heritage and cannot be classed as indigenous under such a UN Declaration? Moreover, if you are not endemic, have no ancestral attachment to a particular region, is it still possible or even respectful, to suggest that one may engender a sense of indigenous belonging and, therefore, legitimacy in feeling *eutierria* with the immediate environment in which you have made your home? We need time to assimilate, some of us more than others. For when we feel that true belonging, we love, and what we love, we are motivated to protect.

Perhaps we need a new word, beyond indigenous, to articulate, at least, the potential for this kind of belonging, belonging that is colour/race-blind, discernable in whatever timeframe we each need as individuals. There is no intent here to devalue endemism, rather, to increase the value of adopted endemism via kinship between peoples.

The adopted endemism generates a fully human response to economic oppression materialized as growth-greed.

“Language is different,

Like skin.

Skin can be different,

but blood same.

Blood and bone,

all same.

Man can't split himself.” (Bill Neidjie).

#### **5.4 Praximund: Responsibility and the Sacred.**

There are problems with the theory of Rights taking precedence over Responsibilities. Many indigenous people understand this. Rights are merely human constructs, legisla-



tively fixed (when processes are not), but politically vulnerable and impressionable by further human culture/population dominion.

Natural processes and fluministic interconnections have evolved, are evolving. There exists intrinsic, self-willed, complex patterns across space and time. Free-willed, save for our excess. We participate, as part of nature, yes. But because of this excess of destructive behaviours, rivers, forests, mycelium and migration need more than 'Rights' afforded only by humans, and a minority of humans at that... for this too is dominion.

So I have a name for the responsibilities and an adherence expected. A unity of opposites ~ a natural law, but not a law. I call it Praximund (latin; process/Earth) the deepest possible respect for natural processes, and a fundamental requisite of fluministic action. Infringe only with negative consequences to oneself and all life, the biosphere, as we are all interconnected. There is honour and pride in celebration and ritual of it.

There's credence in declaring ecological interconnections sacred as a route to the protection of life, a full sanctity of life (Kumar<sup>77</sup>). Nurtured this way, perhaps, the sacred become inviolable. Constituent lives are liberated to evolve with a free-will, a flourish of nature's effervescent, green fuse. More, by cultivating a collective reverence for the presence of a community of living beings ~ through narratives, ritual and rules ~ we may look and 'see' life in new ways, a wave of sanguimund spreading though each one of us, the wonder of interconnected life. There have been many before us using sacred words with similar meanings now lost, and I hope many after, with words yet to be created. All I ask that we think about creating our own sacred in and with the natural world (Milton, Bateson<sup>78</sup>), building narratives and exercising rituals in what is of utmost meaning to ourselves and together. Then, defend from the profane. And that defense, in sanctity and in love, will need to be strong.

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<sup>77</sup> Kumar, S. *Development and Religion: Cultivating a sense of the sacred*. Development. Volume 46, Issue 4, (2003) pp 15–21

<sup>78</sup>Milton, K. *Loving Nature: Towards an ecology of emotion*. Routledge: London & New York. (2002) p104

Guarding the sacred is not limited to protection from human intrusion. Sometimes, the opposite is vital. Sometimes, the sacred is one's presence or consciousness and the tending of ecosystem in a loving, fluministic way. Fenced-off zones around Chernobyl have led to non-human life returning in abundance. There is a sanctity in the absolute devotion of ecological networks of that place. But the absence of humans is not a pre-requisite of the sacred. Churches may seem at their most holy when the bells toll loudly, when the stalls are heaving with parishioners singing hymns at the top of their voices. The sacred seems to exist somewhere in the union of the people in the nave, all facing east, a sense of reverence helped along by those clever architects placing windows in the clerestory to remind of God's presence in beams of moted dustlight. The land can hold us with a similar sense of direction, commitment and devotion. And God need not be involved, unless he is simply love.

But a private moment, no less, can be the touch of grace, with such strength that it can change one's perspective forever. I lean over my Grandmother's grave and remember her strength. Fused into my memory cells, she'd garden with such force as to create her own weather system. This memory seems sacred, but not her grave. I feel the difference in remembering I am her kin.

It may not be a surprise the reader that I feel the sacred most in perceiving those bristling interconnections in the living world, the living, quietly seen or unseen. A humble field maple will do it, with birds in the gnarly branches and fungi at the roots. Their Autumnal yellow glow takes my breath away and I am minded to sit for hours and just be present. It is a profound love, intense and moving. A mother fox licking her young, a tender petal opening to a bee, these are all things bright and beautiful. Light is important to me, I have been to the darkest of dark. That the direct or diffused sunlight gives succour to life seems profound. I love the light around waterfalls. So do the mosses and the liverworts. There are also also the green rays at sunset, or during eclipses, the last and first moments of light bent and scattered through our thin atmosphere like moments of magic.

The sacred can also be a memory, an event marked at a place only by the truth-myths passed down through generations. From the eastern sunrise, I once arrived at the spec-

tacular Hokianga Harbour, North Island, New Zealand, an area brimming with sacred Maori sites. Yellow dunes on the far side of the bay shone brightly sucked back into a baby-blue vacuum. An incoming tide from the Tasman sea swept the bay clean with crested wave upon wave, and variable oystercatchers flew low at blistering speed (I could just make out their uncanny calls). I followed a sign to a look-out point high above the harbour entrance and sat on a low wooden bench. I felt an immediate essence of something profound here. I was positioned somewhere on the edge of it all, and it felt like sanctuary. Later, I walked along nearby Omapere wharf and talked to a Maori man from the village who was fishing with a simple line and hook. I was just a tourist, yet he was so generous in conversation. He told me his Maori oral tradition, that legendary Polynesian explorer, Kupe, of the Matahourua canoe, made first Aotearoa landfall and lived here. <sup>79</sup>The story goes that he named it Te Puna i te ao marama ~ the spring of the world of light ~ until in his old age he decided to return to his island birthplace, Hawai-ki. The words he spoke as he left were, Hei konei ra i te puna i te ao marama, ka hoki nei ahau, e kore ano e hokianga-nui mai ~ this the spring of the world of light, I shall not come back here again ~ and so, granted Hokianga its name.

The vessel of the sacred contains a good measure of vulnerability. Maybe this is an essential tension that drives us to protect. Great sacrilege occurred at Hokianga, long after Kupe's departure, against the endemic and the Maori. The mighty kauri trees, like the blue whales of the world's forests, were wrenched from inland Waipoua and floated down the river for milling and global export, mainly by the hands of Pakeha (non-natives). Unlike the Maori, who would take chosen trees with a reverence, for canoe-building, the Pakeha took nearly all. And without the kauri, large parts of the forest died and many endemic species lost forever. What was left was turned over to dairy, and again those products exported globally from the Harbour. To destroy the interconnections between living things is to destroy the most sacred ~ life. Thankfully, another Pakeha, William Roy McGregor, professor of Zoology, successfully campaigned to end logging of the Waipoua Forest in 1952 and created the Waipoua Forest Sanctuary. The sanctuary is still weak from attack, with Kauri Die-back disease laying claim to regen-

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<sup>79</sup> The story also told here Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal, *First peoples in Māori tradition - Kupe*, Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <<http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/node/227189>> (accessed 30 January 2018)

erating forest, and climate change will be having its effect. Let's hope this small part of a once vast, ancient forest recovers to its truest dynamic state of being, given full protection and time.

Unlike the great Kupe, perhaps, I'll return to Hokianga again one day. Modern technology makes it easier for me, though I'll have to watch those emissions (always somekind of price to make such returns). The harbour and surrounds are a wealth of flora and fauna and, until then, it will be the distant sounds of the oystercatchers, torea-pango, that will remain in my memory as symbol of the sacredness of that place. If I am quiet enough, I can still hear the sacred, right now in my head.

### 5.5 Context

Key planetary boundaries are being exceeded by anthropogenic impacts, and at some pace 80 (Rockstrom, et al). Climate change and biodiversity decline, consequences of human/nature discordance, are impacting all aspects of human and non-human life and in all places on the planet. Human dominion has extended in the form of socio-political orientation towards the globalised, capitalist economy, and in particular to the 'tragedy' of limitless growth 81. In the UK, the principal approach to nature conservation from the scientific community is now hegemonic financialisation and Natural Capital accounting (Daily, et al 82), a glove to fit the neoliberal 'invisible hand' (Adam Smith). Depersonalisation and reductionism persists as non-human nature is simply deemed utility to humans ~ Natural Resources ~ when in fact nature is an ever dynamic and complex matrix of individual lives and supporting elements, forming interconnections, of which we are a part. A new love ethic may not subordinate the objects and subjects of love to the consumption patterns of a divisive and distorted socio-political and economic value system.

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80 Rockström, J. Steffen, W. et al. *Planetary Boundaries: Exploring the Safe Operating Space for Humanity Ecology and Society*. 14(2): 32. <<http://www.stockholmresilience.org/download/18.8615c78125078c8d3380002197/1459560331662/ES-2009-3180.pdf>> (2009)

81 MacLellan, M. *The Tragedy of Limitless Growth: Re-interpreting the Tragedy of the Commons for a Century of Climate Change*. Environmental Humanities, vol. 7 <<http://environmentalhumanities.org/arch/vol7/7.2.pdf>> (2015) pp. 41-58

82 Gretchen Daily, Stanford, co-founder of the internationally influential *Natural Capital Project* <<https://ccb.stanford.edu/gretchen-daily>>

Love is multi-faceted. But in terms of axiology, love is largely incommensurable with commodification and, therefore, I propose love serves to resist the debasing of nature by market force.

I have explored how a new love ethic might in future, shape, in practical terms, restorative or symbiotic ‘fairer sharing’ of an evolving and dynamic biosphere and argue it can do this despite changes already set in motion by human harms within the Anthropocene 83. The epoch of the Anthropocene is undergoing ratification by the International Commission on Stratigraphy, based on empirical evidence that anthropogenic activity is now profoundly altering geological conditions and processes. The biosphere has been, and is currently, the laboratory for our unwieldy planetary experiment at the expense and risk of living interconnections as we are experiencing. Now is the time to re-form human-Earth relations and restore sense. Fluminism (Sanguimund and Praximund) is my contribution towards that end.

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83 Battson, G. *Technofossils and Radionuclides; Welcome to the Anthropocene*. Earthlines: Issue 15, pp 54-57 (2016)

## **6.0 Language of Flow: Fluminism, Introducing Spring Theory.**

### **6.1 The Need for Neologisms.**

Two particular yet simple words, love and ecology, are my inspiration in the creation of my own neologisms ~ fluminism, and then sanguimund and praximund, the latter two as constituent parts of the former.

As to both words, love and ecology, as lexicons combined, they are complementary. One word is a positive emotion and the other a rational science. Like life itself, it is the combination of both affect and rationale which our brains assimilate as moral constructs and in the choices we make every day. The word fluminism brings them both together, and from it flows an ethic by which we may choose to live.

As part of my research into the meaning of these words, I have investigated the philosophy of language. What are words in relation to reality, experience, meaning or truth? How does a word (or two), become an action? Wittgenstein and Searle said human experience and language are structurally linked. Words are integrally part of experience. Searle once quoted early French philosopher, La Rochefoucauld, famed for his acidic aphorisms:

‘There are some people who would never have fallen in love, if they had not heard there was such a thing.’

I’m not so convinced. If one is blind and mute, does love never come? Culture does influence experience, there’s no doubt, and language is also a part of culture. Like all, love and meaning are both ‘nature and nurture’, with no separation.

I do not think language between any living species makes this world. Rather, all are a part of the same world and interconnected. As a form of life, neither is language something separate (Wittgenstein). I do not see language as transparent either, as Russell suggested. We are not transparent because of our ability to communicate in words, far

from it! There will always be hidden depths where unique identities and consciousness are concerned and there is beauty in this complexity.

In Wittgenstein's later work, then Austin and Searle, a distinction between meaning and intention via utterances began to emerge as a focus. Objectifying, naming, categorising, taxonomising; these are functional to us, how we humans interpret life, or as Searle put it, the systems of representation we bring to bear upon things. Words are neural concepts, but they do not singularly define language. Once formed, there is a kind of closure of an openness, as Hilary Lawson asserts in response to Rorty and Derrida's works on relativism, in that they crystallise into a headline, or as he describes... 'language closing the world into things.' Lawson's video art movement demonstrates the openness side, which I interpret (ironically), as a state of inquiry without resolution. Words may only attempt closure in collective meaning, by officiates of companies that publish dictionaries or taxonomists working on genetic data sets. Words, like species themselves, have a certain porosity about them, in nuance and imperfection of full meaning, again a beautiful thing in itself.

Yes, by grouping words together, we can be more or less certain about clarity of meaning, and all is related to intent and consequence, even the absurd. A poem may be deliberately open. But a key to a map must indicate, at least, some closure on what the words mean. They may also seem closed in our own unique minds and verbal expressions.

If I write or say the word, "table," and you read or hear me, you'll probably envision your own idea of what a table is. My idea of a table will be transformed by your own memories and experiences. It may create a feeling. I can't help but feel (feel, being key), that feelings and emotions have been set aside in the analytics of language. My grandmother's table had a certain smell, of bees wax and lino and the word table makes me think of toast for breakfast in her kitchen. Your idea of table might make you feel very different. The word, "dog" may mean pure, unconditional love to me. But to others, it may instill fear.

In psychology, particularly in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy<sup>84</sup>, this may be referred as cognitive fusion, where words come preloaded with meaning and effect behaviour. Sometimes these feelings are invalid in relevance to our states of being in the present. They can be distressing or deceiving. But by understanding the brain is plastic and neural connections can be either thickened or thinned, behavioural therapies, such as action and commitment or cognitive behaviour can help shift either the meaning of words or the feelings that arise from them.

Each person, therefore, holds language both uniquely and in common; a dialectic. The same word swapped into the mouths of others transforms. It is a kind of flow of underlying meanings and feelings. I cannot agree with Lawson, therefore, that words are closure. Words are, instead, like magnets, attracting, repelling, fusing and defusing emotions from each person and their life trajectory. There is evolution, and over time, the culture and meaning of a word can inherently change beyond recognition. Language is a living thing and connects us, like mycelium networks in the woodland floor, in multiple, dynamic patterns. It can also be something to which we devote for the good of the biosphere. We can approach language as fluminists.

Making the interconnections is what is most meaningful. Language is connectivity, relationship, whether it be verbal, body movement, chemical or electrical. When it is for good, not bad, then it may then be argued as a flow of love. In unison with my ethic, fluminism, I perceive language, like music, as flow. It is a living thing (the dead neither speak nor read).

Art and artistic expression, musical pauses, or the hidden meanings beneath the subsurface of poetry can keep to the idea of openness (Lawson) or mystery. But I think, with affect, all is never completely closed.

Together, the words love and ecology create something compelling, larger than the sum of each word. It goes to the root of what I understand. In creating neologisms, the potential is even greater. They are like linguistic finger posts, in that they convey hope in the

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<sup>84</sup> Hayes, SC et al. *Action and Commitment Therapy* 2nd Ed. Guilford Press, New York. (2012) p 20



focusing of minds to a new or previously overlooked idea. I create the word fluminism from my own deep understanding of love and ecology as interconnected life flow, but I pass it on to others and hope for boundless contributions to intent, meaning and consequences.

## 6.2 Introducing Spring Theory

Neologisms are not only ‘speech acts’ (Austin, Searle<sup>85</sup>), in declarations, but also loaded in potential, like compression springs. A word is formed, deliberated, received, whereupon as the ‘other’ is attracted and jumps on it, meaning springs forth in different directions each time, or by chance, the same. Different interpretations are ‘felt’ (affected), because each have lived different lives. Before long, we are realised (Weir) within our own understanding, and living as fluminists by simply ‘being,’ as in the existence of the universe. I would like to call this ‘*Spring Theory*’.

Heaven knows there are enough theories. But in physics, string theory is where point-like particles are replaced by one-dimensional objects called strings. It describes these strings propagating through space-time, interacting with each other. Flow. In fluministic Spring Theory, I wish to plant seeds of ideas, evoke imagination and hope.<sup>86</sup>

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⁸⁵ Searle, J. *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge. (1969)

⁸⁶ Snyder, C.R. *The Psychology of Hope: You can get here from there*. Simon and Schuster: New York. <<https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=dCWv9MYZ580C&dq=Hope+psychology+snyder&lr=>> (2010)

7.0 Conclusion.

I see direct correlations with the interconnectedness of all life in mutual benefits and symbiotic relations ⁸⁷. It is time for a change in the climate of human thought, for a supersession of the axiological-trinity of Cartesian rationalism, Locke's assertions on property rights and Adam Smith's laissez-faire economics. The word Biophilia ⁸⁸ was coined by Erich Fromm "the passionate love of life and of all that is alive" and was later adopted by American biologist E.O. Wilson in his work *Biophilia* (1984). He proposed a hypothesis that humans have an innate affiliation with nature and non-human life ⁸⁹ which is partly genetic. The work has been subject to critical review, none-the-less, it is influential in fields as wide ranging as architectural design and mental health. The problem is obvious, in that greenhouse gas emissions and biodiversity loss, et al, are still occurring, regardless of scientific consensus on human causality and any innate love of nature. Love may still be regarded with deep skepticism in terms of a general emotion beyond religious norms but love as an ethic, re-shaping values, binding rationality, emotion and action together, may resist globalisation inegalitarian divides and the circumscription of values. *Blockadia/Alternatiba* (Klein, Combes ⁹⁰) may already present as evidence of such love-motivated resistance.

Ernst Haeckel first used the word ecology to define human knowledge of inter-species relationships and processes. Early studies focused on non-human life/habitats for the purpose of refining our knowledge of nature rather than for discovering increased human/nature harmony in ecosystems. Ecology itself has evolved, of course, to encompass human interactions and impacts. Rightly so, as our large and growing global population was evidently changing many of the ecosystems studied. The language of 'ecology' has evolved again. Mark J Smith, in his book *Ecologism: Towards Ecological Citizenship* (1998) urges ecological thinking as an emancipating philosophy, an act of

⁸⁷ Battson, G. *Mycelium and the Forest Floor. And love*. Blog October <<https://seasonalight.wordpress.com/2015/10/12/mycelium-of-the-forest-floor-and-love/>> (2015)

⁸⁸ Fromm, E. *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* 1973 Open Road Media: Kindle Edition. (2013)

⁸⁹ Kahn, P.H. Jr. *Developmental Psychology and the Biophilia Hypothesis: Children's Affiliation with Nature*. *Developmental Review* Vol 17, Issue 1, March (1997). Pages 1-61

⁹⁰ Combes, M. *Blockadia and Alternatiba, the two pillars of climate justice*. Attac France, November <https://france.attac.org/IMG/pdf/Towards_Paris2015-climate%20justice.pdf> (2014)

rethinking our approach to ecosystems and our place within them, rethinking our value sets.

“There is no simple or neutral act of perception, for we see things as having value and a status. When we give things a label, we also give them a standing, a position in a pecking order, an estimate of moral worth.” (M J Smith)

Whilst love is frequently referred to by environmental humanities scholars, for example, Rose and Van Dooren’s *Unloved Others*⁹¹, Albrecht on Solastalgia, Mathews’ *For Love of Matter*, there is as yet no in-depth study of Love from an integrated ecophilosophical perspective. I also recognise that understandings and practices of love are culturally and historically diverse. Fluministic love, however, stands to contribute as an empowering ethic for nurturing local solutions and for securing some form of intergenerational justice at a time when all may seem lost.

Aldo Leopold, in his *Sand County Almanac*, expressed himself as a man deeply connected to nature, but he also communicated his dual desire to both berate and educate his fellow homo sapiens. In doing so, it’s a final act of honour, striving to convince others to protect what he loved deeply for the benefit of all. He rightly pointed out, as one of the first environmental ethicists, that the idea of anthropocentric focus is problematical. Put simply, we cannot isolate ourselves from all other life. We are part of a complex web, sharing one biosphere. Any notion that we homo sapiens prevail at all cost is a huge misnomer, and a dangerous one. It is legitimate to question anthropocentric behaviour and policies, even if purporting to support life. I argue that the process of valuing nature in monary units is a psychologically disconnecting behaviour and policy. In this sense, it is, ethically, the wrong thing to do.

After Muir and Thoreau, along with later great American writers and thinkers of the twentieth century on the human relationship with nature, such as Carson, Wilson, Erhlich, Snyder, Dillard, Carroll, Leopold’s “Land Ethic,” has a lasting modern cultural explorations of place and landscape, and is still influential with modern writers such as Robert MacFarlane and Rebecca Solnit.

⁹¹ Rose, D. & T. van Dooren. *Unloved Others: Death of the Disregarded in the Time of Extinctions*. Special issue of *Australian Humanities Review*, 50. (2011)

Not only does Leopold set out a vision in order for ecologically aware ‘dissenters’ to act on their dissent, he highlights the need for a higher accord or purpose of our communing with nature to enhance and enrich our perception and connection with nature at an intimate level, and a re-connection with ‘place.’ In this sense it is a call for understanding and an ecological conscience, more, a *realisation* (Naess).

I assert, however, *land* is living community, the interconnected lives of humans and non-humans, willing all to flourish. None-the-less, Leopold rightly asks the following of us. Are we simply owners of land as chattels, purveyors/traders of property, heading down a cul-de-sac of obsessing over a materialist, wealth accumulating economy, whilst the ability to produce is itself undercut by the very ethic of land as commodity? Or are we members of the community of interconnected life, with responsibilities in loving and, therefore, nurturing the land, and so benefitting our own sense of liberty in reaping a rich cultural harvest in doing so?

As Leopold says:

“Perhaps a shift of values can be achieved by re-appraising things unnatural, tame and confined in terms of things natural, wild, and free.”⁹²

The answer is surely the latter ~ after all, there is natural justice to it. I conclude that the ultimate re-appraisal is that the interconnectedness of all living beings in support of their individual and collective flourishing is of the highest moral worth in the succession of Planet Earth, and that the devotion to that good flow is love in the form of *Fluminism*.

My contributions here bring together my thoughts over a number of years. I offer an alternative to Biocentrism (Taylor), Ecocentrism (Naess) and, importantly, Anthropocentrism (Passmore, et al). To be a *Fluminist* is to recognise oneself viscerally as part

⁹² Leopold, A. A Sand County Almanac. Oxford University Press: New York and Oxford. 1987 p ix (Forward, 1948)

of the interconnectedness between all beings ~ *Sanguimund*. And in this realisation, to act with love, respect and responsibility in protecting these interconnections, minimising the breaking of their flows, to find fluministic ways to proliferate and send new flows ~ *Praximund*.

In this regard, love serves as an integrative force for good and as resistance to the commodification of nature and planetary harms. I pass these neologisms now to others, in the spirit of Spring Theory.



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