Environmental Citizenship as Reasonable Citizenship

Paper for Citizenship and the Environment workshop
ECPR Uppsala 2004

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I

In this article I discuss the notion of environmental citizenship as considered in the light of a green political theory that incorporates the ‘otherness view’ of nature’s value within the conception of the political offered by political liberalism. In attempting to make some progress in clarifying what environmental citizenship means and involves in this context I hope also to be furthering a project I find philosophically interesting: that of seeing how far modern mainstream liberal philosophy can be compatible with a non-instrumental stance towards the natural world. The aim here is to go some way towards understanding how this can be achieved in the area of environmental citizenship without undermining political liberalism’s self-image as reasonable and liberal.

II

Firstly then, clarifying the meaning of ‘environmental citizenship’ for me is a matter of seeing ‘respect for nature’s otherness’ (which I will explain shortly) as continuous with the exercise of virtuous citizenship in accordance with the ‘spirit of reasonableness’ animating political liberalism. The distinctive motivation for this variety of liberalism is an attempt to articulate a liberal view of politics that may command widespread allegiance despite a plurality of comprehensive doctrines of the good life. It is assumed that, in the absence of coercion, human reason does not converge upon a single particular conception of the good life. In accepting ‘fair terms of cooperation’ which take that into account, citizens respect what Rawls calls the ‘fact of reasonable pluralism’. Doing this is essential to being a reasonable

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1 This paper is an early draft. Please do not quote without permission.
2 This theory is the main subject of Hailwood 2004.
3 I take this to supplement rather than rival theories that emphasise the instrumental importance of nature as a liberal citizen commitment (Dobson, ch.4, Wissenburg), and the possibility of pursuing non-instrumental doctrines within the liberal framework, rather than at the level of the framework itself.
citizen, and implies a certain kind of self-restraint towards the state (at least in its fundamental aspects). The reasonable citizen does not identify the state with her own conception of the good life; she rejects any suggestion that the former should simply be an expression of the latter, and does not expect the state to enshrine or enforce her own comprehensive commitments, anymore than it should anyone else’s. This is to say she accepts a significantly neutralist and anti-expressivist conception of the political. She also has what Rawls calls the ‘very great virtues… [of] political cooperation that make a constitutional regime possible’. For example, she is prepared to tolerate (diverse) others; is unwilling to try to force those committed to maybe bizarre and alien-seeming doctrines and ways of life into adopting her own way, either through personal coercion or the use of state power.

Will Kymlicka characterizes what (following William Galston) he calls the ‘complicated virtue’ of public reasonableness like this:

‘Liberal citizens must give reasons for their political demands, not just state preferences or make threats. Moreover, these reasons must be “public” reasons, in the sense that they are capable of being understood and accepted by people of different faiths and cultures. Hence it is not enough to quote scripture or tradition. Liberal citizens must justify their political demands in terms that fellow citizens can understand and accept as consistent with their status as free and equal citizens.’

It is often supposed that something like this is amongst the virtues that are ‘distinctive to modern pluralistic liberal democracies, relating to the basic principles of a liberal regime, and to the political role citizens occupy within it’. If this is right then reasonableness is not merely an important component of Rawlsian political liberalism, influential though Rawls is a theorist of modern liberalism; it has a much

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4 I am referring mainly to ‘the state’ more at the level of basic ideas and fundamental principles (the ‘constitutional essentials’ that determine the type of state it is, its fundamental – political – orientation) than the state at the level of laws and policies arrived at through democratic processes. ‘Background conception of the political’ might be better than ‘state’ to convey what I mean, but it is a very cumbersome form of words, so I will tend to use the latter.

5 ‘Neutrality’ here means justificatory neutrality or neutrality of reasons. Following Charles Larmore, ‘anti-expressivism’ means the denial of the strongly holist view that there should be as smooth a continuity as possible between personal and political commitments. Larmore, p.73f.

6 For example, Rawls, 1996, p.157.

7 Kymlicka, p.289.

8 Kymlicka, ibid.
wider presence. Still it is convenient to take Rawls as the paradigm liberal theorist here because the salient elements of liberal political philosophy (including neutrality, anti-expressivism and a sharp public/non-public distinction) are particularly visible (and well known) in his political liberalism.

I am taking it that ‘being reasonable’ in this kind of way involves accepting a certain normative stance as informing the articulation of political principles, the design of institutions within which to formulate policy and so on. And I take the incorporation of the otherness view of nature’s value here to be a matter of extending this normative background to the consideration of non-human nature. In effect I think it is ‘reasonableness’ as applied to our perspective on an acknowledged non-human nature. So in addition to the standard assumptions involved in the construction of ideal political theory in accordance with reasonableness (assumptions which according to Rawls should include that citizens are taken to be free and equal, to have their two moral powers, a sense of justice and so on) a further fundamental assumption is taken to be this: citizens recognize the existence of a non-human nature, independent of the existence, needs, interests and goals of human beings. Having noticed its existence they are assumed also to adopt a non-instrumental view of independent nature, in addition to realizing that it has a multiplicity of instrumental significances for humanity. This is because in recognizing the independent existence of nature they accept the otherness view.

This is not the place to do more than briefly sketch the salient elements of this account of nature’s value. Very crudely, ‘respect for nature’s otherness’ involves a kind of self-restrained attitude towards nature: it means not identifying the wider, independent natural world with the interests and purposes of one’s own culture (or of oneself). This includes not identifying natural items entirely with their place in our scheme of use values (this is our industrial raw material; that is a pest – end of story), and also not viewing nature as a source of moral/political blueprints indicating the special ‘natural authenticity’ of a particular way of life. The required distinction between humanity and wider nature here is mediated by the concept of ‘landscape’, where, following Holmes Rolston, a ‘landscape’ is a nature/culture hybrid: the shape

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9 For example, maybe deliberative democracy itself, as opposed to democracy as a matter of merely aggregating private, self-interested preferences, presupposes that the virtue of public reasonableness is fairly widespread. (Compare Kymlicka, p.293.)

10 I explain them in Hailwood 2000 and, at greater length in Hailwood 2004, chs. 2 & 3.
of local nature as modified by culture\textsuperscript{11}. Given this notion of landscapes as nature/culture hybrids, then respecting nature’s otherness for its own sake requires remembering that independent nature (i.e., nature as other) is not identical with, or a mere extension of, the humanly constructed landscape. Again, nature as other, independently of the significances and purposes internal to human landscapes, in and of itself provides no determinate ‘blueprint’ for human life, and is not an expression of the purposes and significances internal to cultural landscapes (for example it is not ‘just there for us’ as a physical resource). Recognizing this constitutes a non-instrumental reason for sensitivity to local nature when constructing and maintaining landscapes.

Given that reasonable persons accept the otherness view\textsuperscript{12}, then the normative background they bring to basic political questions now also involves ‘environmental reasonableness’, and can be taken to include something like ‘an all-round rejection of an economy of exploitation and the uncontrolled pillage of natural resources and raw materials’, and a disposition to refrain from excessively ‘destructive intervention in the circuits of the natural ecosystem’\textsuperscript{13}. In Rawlsian terms, as is the case with basic principles of justice this attitude to nature should apply directly to the ‘basic structure’ of society (including the specifically political institutions, the economy and the legally recognised forms of property); and indirectly to non-public associations. This has significance for both production and consumption. Compare the fact that although the internal structures or ‘constitutions’ of such associations are not based on a political conception of justice, yet they shouldn’t be such as to prevent members, as reasonable citizens, accepting and adhering to principles of justice as political commitments. Economic and business organizations and companies are not founded for the sake of justice, as opposed to profitable production and trade. But their ‘legal constitution’, including the relevant property rights and employment practices, are to

\textsuperscript{11} Rolston, p.379.

\textsuperscript{12} Not necessarily under that description of course. The phrase ‘respect for nature’s otherness’ is a bit of a mouthful, and there is a whiff of the metaphysical laboratory about it. Simply ‘respect for nature’ might normally suffice, but in theoretical contexts it is necessary to indicate clearly (1) that ‘nature’ means non-human nature, as opposed to the all-encompassing sense of whatever falls under the laws of nature (compare Mill, p.32); and (2) that ‘respecting’ it here is being understood largely in terms of not identifying it with human purposes, interests and plans, hence nature as other.

\textsuperscript{13} Statements from Die Grunen Election Manifesto, Sec I, p.7, quoted by Goodin, p.186. My point is that some such statements should be constitutional commitments of the politically liberal state, alongside freedom and equality.
be regulated by principles of justice. Members and employees do not relate to each other solely in terms of equality of opportunity, yet their activities are to be consistent with the (fair) equality of opportunity they are committed to as citizens. Families and churches also are not entered into for the sake of political justice, but should not function in ways that prevent their members from upholding the reasonable values of a constitutional regime. Similarly, respect for nature (as other) is to figure as an external political requirement rather than an internal commitment for such associations. But it will be hard to reconcile such a requirement with some views of the good life. Consider the (not all that extreme) example of what might be called a ‘comprehensive libertarian motoring’ view. This sees the world as significant only as something to drive around on in pursuit of an ideal equating human excellence, or true freedom, with maximal car-use: everything else is a means to that end, and any restriction of it an unbearable infringement of liberty, an assault on the very meaningfulness of one’s life. Citizens of the liberal order whose reasonableness encompasses respect for nature’s otherness would not hold to such a way of life, nor support laws or policies that allowed it to prosper without legal sanction. They would reject them on non-instrumental grounds, for nature’s sake. Nor would they support policies allowing an industrial or commercial analogue of comprehensive libertarian motoring: the world is significant only as something to exploit and transform on as large a scale as is profitable.

III

Consequently, modifying political reasonableness to encompass the environmental in this way makes it less neutral: the field of reasonable ways of life and forms of activity is narrowed. Despite this I think that incorporating the otherness view within the reasonable political conception does not undermine its neutrality, or mean the end of reasonableness. The conjunction of political reasonableness with an explicit acknowledgement of independent nature’s existence is not itself incoherent; and once the latter is in place then respect for nature (as other) seems more like the further application of reasonableness rather than something undermining or preventing it. This is because the assumptions constitutive of the otherness view (which, it is important to note, is not in itself a comprehensive doctrine or the name of a substantive way of life – I return to this issue below), are continuous with those constitutive of political reasonableness; i.e., those that motivate political neutralism
and anti-expressivism in the first place. The key extra driving assumption is simply the recognition of an existing independent natural world. ‘Environmentally reasonable’ citizens are assumed not to be detached from ‘material reality’, in that sense.

I have argued at length elsewhere that the more neutrality, and anti-expressivism, are invoked to exclude the otherness view from ‘the domain of the political’, the more arbitrary such exclusion seems\(^\text{14}\), precisely because significant neutrality and anti-expressivism are at the heart of both political liberalism and the otherness view of nature\(^\text{15}\). Notice also that both political reasonableness and the otherness view involve a kind of moral double vision. The attitudes of political reasonableness and respect for nature’s otherness are to coexist with, constrain but not obliterate, more ‘subjective’ commitments to goals, plans and ways of life. Consider the difficulty of remembering nature’s otherness in the cultural process of making a home and a living in a landscape, and the difficulty of remaining ‘politically reasonable’ in the context of the rational pursuit of one’s interest as interpreted through the lens of a comprehensive doctrine. Given that independent nature is not to be ignored, then these difficulties seem to have sufficient affinity to be tackled together within the same theoretical package of political plus environmental reasonableness\(^\text{16}\).

\(^{14}\) Hailwood, 2004, ch.4.

\(^{15}\) For example: reasons for action that presuppose nature itself ‘requires’ particular forms of cultural landscape (including purely instrumental forms), or that nature is really no more than the landscape or an extension of culture (for example, this natural item is \textit{just} an industrial resource), are inconsistent with respect for nature’s otherness. Similarly, reasons for action entailing that the state should ‘require’ all citizens to adopt a particular comprehensive doctrine, or that the state should be thought of as the political wing of a particular conception of the good life, are inconsistent with accepting political neutrality (and anti-expressivism).

\(^{16}\) A related point is that both also seem amenable to understanding via the same conception of objectivity – that of Thomas Nagel where objectivity is a matter of degree and perspective (see for example the introduction to Nagel’s \textit{The View From Nowhere}). In terms of the otherness view, if we are to limit our actions in light of that we must do so without completely losing sight of other human concerns, interests and projects. It is a question of looking out from, and stepping back from, our perspectives as constituted by those commitments, so as to recognise the wider world. The original, intra-human perspective perspectives will be modified, perhaps transformed, in the process, but never obliterated as the place from which we are looking. In this sense the otherness view remains human centred. (Compare Hayward, pp45-6.) One of the human concerns that must obviously remain central is justice. It is not as if human-human moral and political relations are all in order and the only problem is the relationship humanity as such has to the natural world (see for example, Hayward, pp.52-4). Nagel’s conception of objectivity allows realistically for the tension between relatively objective and subjective viewpoints without giving automatic total victory to the
In my view then there is a deep affinity between liberal reasonableness and respect for nature (as other). At least there should be for liberals who have acknowledged the independent existence of nature. Such affinity does not amount to strict logical entailment of course, but on the other hand notice also that the idea of independent nature is not strictly equivalent to the idea of nature as pure resource. The latter is the idea of nature only as it might be used by/within this or that cultural landscape (including future ones). The idea of nature as other includes the idea of nature independent of such use value – the idea of nature existing ‘in its own right’ as it were. This does seem equivalent to the idea of independent nature as non-instrumentally valuable (it is instrumentally valuable as well of course). Still, taking all this on board is not a logical entailment of political liberal reasonableness, because the latter does not entail that nature as it is independently of landscaping should be acknowledged at all. But then it seems to me to be unsatisfactory to argue, against environmental reasonableness, that because the issue is controversial, the question of whether or not nature should be viewed purely instrumentally must be ignored by ‘public reason’. Nature cannot be ignored in that way without, at least implicitly, making pure instrumentalism a de facto public commitment. The implied argument will be that though we all agree (a) we must ‘use’ nature, even if we don’t mention this explicitly, we don’t all agree (b) it should also be viewed non-instrumentally, so (b) must be excluded from the list of public commitments. This leaves (a) as the default public commitment re nature, which means in effect that a purely instrumental view of nature has public status, even though that view of nature is controversial given there are citizens holding (b). This goes unnoticed apparently only because nature is generally not mentioned at all in characterizations of public commitments, and so the de facto commitment to a purely instrumental view of nature goes through only implicitly.

IV

But what about citizenship? It might be argued that there are special considerations based on the concept of citizenship itself that rule out such environmental reasonableness; that, as citizens, we cannot have anything like direct obligations to

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17 For example the notion of a ‘mere thing to be used’ is not something read off from nature itself, but an interpretation bestowed by, or for, landscape usage.

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nature. Thus it might be argued that ‘citizenship’ serves to delineate an exclusive sphere of (citizenly) obligations in the sense of a determinate range of subjects – i.e., fellow citizens - to whom one, as a citizen, owes obligations. Nature is not a fellow citizen, therefore I, as a citizen, can have no obligations to it. Now, it is true that the political/citizen sphere of duties and rights is only a subset of morality generally. Not every moral claim is a claim of citizenship; and not every moral ‘patient’ is a fellow citizen. I also think it important here to be circumspect in the invocation of ‘community’, including ‘political community’. Despite the popularity of claims about ‘expanding the moral community to include the non-human’, communities cannot properly be expanded simply by decree, whether to include the whole of humanity (‘global community’) or the realm of non-human animals; certainly not ecosystems, mountain ranges, weather patterns. We are members of ‘ecological communities’, complex and often delicately balanced systems of causally interrelated parts. But ecological community is not in and of itself moral community. It is certainly not true that everything I, or we, have an effect on should, for that reason, be thought as part of my, or our, newly enlarged ‘moral community’. Otherwise, if we were to take the thought strictly and literally, we should have to take ‘our community’ to be very large indeed, and expanding out into space at the speed of light along with our high frequency TV transmissions.

On the other hand, not everyone or everything we consider to be a moral patient needs to be thought of as a member of our community. In particular, it is consistent with the points just made that some ‘patients’ of citizen duties are not fellow citizens, fellow members of our political community. Say that citizenship is understood within the confines of the nation state, and relativistically so, such that the way citizenship is understood and exercised is taken to rest on features unique to a particular (range of) nation states, as is sometimes claimed with political liberalism. It remains possible for citizens of one such state to (correctly) recognise obligations

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18 The case of domesticated animals and pets might be different given the extent to which their lives and bred natures are embedded within human landscapes and entwined with the interests of humans in whose communities they are physically present.

19 I think this is a fundamental problem for the idea of a ‘Leopoldian declaration’ that the moral community should be enlarged to encompass ‘The Land’, as opposed to the landscape.

20 Given that the first sufficiently powerful transmissions were TV broadcasts of the 1936 Olympics, then they already constitute an expanding (although progressively fainter) ‘sphere of human influence’ some 136 or so light years in diameter. To call this the expanding human moral community seems to me to smack of cosmic imperialism.
as citizens of their own state to citizens of a different state, even though the latter are not fellow citizens. The crucial point is that the nature of the considerations feeding into their own idea of citizenship, and informing the terms in which they understand it, might also inform their view of their relationship to any non-fellow-citizens whose existence they recognise. For example, ‘reasonable citizenship’ presupposes respecting the fact of reasonable disagreement and pluralism and so on, and therefore, as has been emphasised already above, involves a significantly neutralist and anti-expressivist take on the political: reasonable citizens do not fully identify their conception of the good life with the state/political. But it would be odd for them to have an opposite view with respect to foreign states: to think that whereas reasonableness requires them to accept neutrality of justification and so on at home, this does not apply abroad, where it would be acceptable to coerce citizens of different states into accepting one’s own comprehensive doctrine and living one’s own way of life. In this way, ‘comprehensive’ or ‘thick’ imperialism seems inconsistent with the notion of reasonableness informing the form of citizenship operating within the politically liberal state. But such avoidance of imperialism as a duty of citizenship within a particular state would not paradoxically transform all (non-fellow-) citizens within other states into fellow citizens (of a putative world state or global political community).

My point with respect to independent nature is that, similarly, once its existence is acknowledged, it is inconsistent with the notion of environmentally modified reasonableness informing political liberal citizenship to ‘extend the community’ out to encompass the natural world. That is, it is ‘unreasonable’ to identify nature altogether with the human landscape, whether to consider it as ‘just something to be used’, or even in a spirit of extending the moral community for benign, inclusive, purposes. In this way the considerations informing citizenship may also inform relations to something else that is not a collection of fellow citizens: the natural world.

Understanding the implications of this for citizenship involves seeing respect for nature’s otherness as a ‘public’ commitment, as opposed to a comprehensive doctrine of the good life. I have suggested that this applies to the spheres of both production and consumption. But what I particularly want to emphasise here is that it is a public virtue, an aspect of the reasonable person’s public identity qua citizen. The exercise of political virtues, including respect for nature’s otherness, once that is
counted amongst them, does not in itself constitute commitment to a particular conception of the good life. For example, it does not in itself constitute ‘civic humanism’, or any such Aristotelian view that the fulfilment of our essential human nature as ‘political animals’ demands active participation in political life. As a comprehensive doctrine this is excluded from the reasonable political liberal conception along with other such doctrines. As Rawls points out, this is not to deny that political liberalism is consistent with what he calls the ‘classical republican’ view that ‘the safety of democratic liberties …requires the active participation of citizens who have the political virtues needed to sustain a constitutional regime’\(^{21}\). Similarly, respect for nature (as other) does not amount to ‘comprehensive green activism’, if this means a way of life thought necessary for realizing the complete human good, or achieving an ‘authentic’ harmony with nature. But nor does it exclude the claim that sustaining effective protection of independent nature requires the active participation of citizens who have the virtue of respect for nature’s otherness, in addition to the virtues needed to sustain a constitutional regime.

This is not to claim that all other ways of viewing nature, including ‘comprehensive green’ ones, make it impossible for their adherents to accept respect for nature’s otherness as a political commitment, and so should be condemned or outlawed. The assumption (or hope) is rather that respect for nature’s otherness is something ‘comprehensive greens’, with ‘hard environmentalist’\(^{22}\) inclinations, can endorse politically, even though their comprehensive account concerning the optimum relation to nature for producing the good life is excluded from the environmentally reasonable political conception used to determine basic political principles and constitutional essentials. The same is true for views of nature as owed respect qua sacred, in line with religious comprehensive doctrines. For example, Peter Reed discusses encountering the ‘thou’ of nature in terms borrowed from the theologians Martin Buber and Rudolf Otto, that is in terms of particular kinds of deeply personal existential-cum-religious revelatory experiences. In the course of his discussion Reed claims it is ‘absolutely essential’ that ‘ecosophistry should mesh with the intuitions of environmentalists’, and he asks, ‘in the face of power struggles and inert

\(^{21}\) Rawls, 2001, pp142-144.

\(^{22}\) ‘Hard environmentalism’ is Avner de-Shalit’s term for comprehensive views in which environmental concern enters as the means to a human society free from the kind of ‘moral malaise’ caused by alienation and materialism. (de-Shalit, pp.179-85.)
political institutions, how do we implement an ethic based on awe for nature?'^23. My point is that respect for nature’s otherness, including the fact that it is not ‘just ours’ – it has an origin and capacity for continued existence independent of human purposes – does mesh sufficiently with environmentalist intuitions without the religious overtones, and that in order to mesh with the reasonable political liberal conception it cannot rely on religious overtones, because not all reasonable citizens are religious. Indeed, the political implementation of an ‘ethic based on awe for nature’ might be approached reasonably through stressing ways that ‘humility’ in the face of nature’s otherness (nature should not be thought of as nothing more than the local ‘landscape’), might mesh with ‘political humility’ in the sense of ‘political reasonableness’^24. To play its part in this, the otherness view may up to a point endorse Reed’s own endorsement of Buber: ‘Buber’s work is a call back to a common-sense idea that there is something that is not just part of us, a solid something we can kick in refutation of Berkeley’s esse es percipi. It is a reminder of the power and being that exists independently of the human mind’. But the trick is to endorse this without the religiosity. The latter must be left as a ‘non-public’ option, which citizens may or may not adopt, for the ‘political meshing’ of environmental reasonableness.

V
I am claiming that the ‘great political virtues’ that Rawls says make possible a constitutional democratic regime, and the virtue of respect for nature (as other), can be seen as continuous with each other. Partly this means that one might view external nature as a negative end^26, a general constraint on permissible activity, yet sometimes also see this as an inconvenience, precisely because of the constraints it puts on one’s permissible options. In this context it does not seem inappropriate to talk of tolerating nature as other; of a preparedness not to stamp out its every

^23 Reed, p.69.
^24 I mentioned above that political reasonableness involves a kind of self-restraint; ‘humility’ might seem a little too strong to describe such an attitude within the political context, especially as virtuous liberal citizenship includes a preparedness to question authority. But it is better than ‘awe’.
^25 Reed, p.56.
^26 A negative end in the sense of something to be left alone for its own sake, not interfered with in some way, and to some extent, as opposed to a positive end in the sense of something to be pursued for its own sake, a goal.
inconvenient encroachment, or obliterate every annoying and awkward natural obstacle. A political liberal regime should promote what is effectively respect for (involving toleration of) other people, and the state (or background conception of the political), so that citizens do not view it and each other as just there to be used for the purposes of particular individuals and groups, identified simply as ‘mine’ or ‘ours’, even though this might often seem easier, or instrumentally rational. My suggestion is that given it promotes such citizenly attitudes, and it recognizes the existence of nature, it might also promote respect for the otherness of nature as a virtue of the reasonable citizen. Remember though that this is a question of supplementing virtues exercised in the political realm, and dispositions to meet obligations to strangers – fellow citizens - and the state. It is about supplementing citizenship virtues as virtues directly concerning only inter-human relations, not replacing them. Notice also then that the spirit of reasonableness constituting the normative background used here to inform the requirements of citizenship does not consist only of seeking certain rights and entitlements. It is a mistake to equate liberal citizenship as such only with the claiming of rights and entitlements, rather than the recognition of obligations. Thus it is a mistake to think that the idea of liberal citizenship as such must be abandoned in the construction of a notion of citizenship involving ‘environmental obligations’.

Now, Rawls takes the ‘very great virtues’ to be part of society’s ‘political capital’, and he complains that politics often ‘betrays the marks of warfare’, and apparently ‘consists in rallying the troops and intimidating the other side, which must now increase its efforts or back down’. So political activity often suggests the view ‘that to have character is to have firm convictions and be ready to proclaim them to others. To be is to confront.’ But that is to ignore ‘the great values achieved by a society that realizes in its public life the cooperative virtues of reasonableness and a sense of fairness, of a spirit of compromise and the will to honor the duty of public civility. When these virtues are widespread in society and sustain its political conception of justice, they constitute a great public good. They belong to society’s political capital.’

27 Consequently it is a matter of adding to environmental concerns based on recognition of obligations to other (including future) citizens, rather than denying them.

28 Rawls, 2001, p.118. Notice that although they are mostly associated with the ‘private domain’, certain virtues, patience and politeness for example, might be part of society’s
nature, one that seeks only to bend it to the human will (‘to be is to exploit’), also seems out of place within this spirit of political reasonableness.

It is worth pointing out here that the notion of environmental citizenship as reasonable citizenship cuts across the distinction between environmental/ecological citizenship drawn by Andrew Dobson. He characterises ‘environmental citizenship’ as an extension of ‘liberal citizenship’; an exclusively ‘public’ notion confined to contractual relations within the nation-state, that basically stretches standard rights discourse to environmental issues (for example the right to a sustainably clean and safe environment). ‘Ecological citizenship’, as a form of ‘post-cosmopolitan’ citizenship, is not confined to the nation-state, embraces non-contractual responsibilities and may be exercised in both private and public spheres. The reasonable environmental citizenship I am discussing is an extension of political liberal citizenship and, as such, is a matter of public commitments, although the virtues involved have implications for ‘private’ life. It is not a matter of extending (citizen) rights discourse but direct, non-contractual obligations to nature (as other). Certainly the requirements of reasonableness tend to be wrapped up with contractualism, but they also feed into ‘pre-contractual’ considerations that determine the proper nature and basis of contract. As outlined above, neutrality of reasons and a general anti-expressivism are particularly important ones for my argument. Moreover, although reasonableness involves reciprocity in the central cases of agreements between fellow citizens (I will stick to my agreements if you do – indeed, I will be reasonable if you will), it has implications that don’t appear to be reciprocal. As already mentioned, reasonableness seems to exclude ‘comprehensive imperialism’, but presumably this is not contingent on foreign nationals themselves refraining from such imperialism. Consider also that accepting direct obligations to nature need not, in itself, transform a person from good (reasonable) citizen to Good Samaritan. Dobson rightly emphasises the need to steer the notion of citizenship on a course between requiring reciprocity conditions (too strong) and simply equating citizen relations and moral relations (too loose). The Good Samaritan is not responsible for

‘political capital’ in this sense as instrumental to developing and exercising the strictly political virtue of reasonableness. On the other hand it needs to be borne in mind that the requirements of public virtue place certain constraints on the development of such ‘private’ virtue. For example ‘politeness’ should not amount to an unwillingness to speak up for justice, for oneself or others.

29 Dobson, for example, pp.88-9, p.143.
the plight of the other, yet feels obliged to act. The contrast with ecological
citizenship Dobson draws is that the latter’s extra-contractual obligations arise with
actual causal responsibility for the plight of the other. My point is that
environmentally reasonable citizens, as I am understanding them, acknowledge their
material, causal responsibility for the extent to which their cultural landscape is
destructive of the independent natural world. They are concerned about the size of
their ‘ecological footprints’, but for natures own sake as it were (i.e., non-
instrumentally) as well as for the impact it has on other persons.

VI
If we take it that such concern is part of society’s political capital then it is clear that
something needs to be said about how it can be maintained and replenished. In this
final section of the paper I will make some remarks that gesture towards an
appropriate ‘environmental education’. In the process I will say a little bit more about
‘respect for nature’s otherness’.

Notice to begin with that the focus on ‘landscapes’, the development of which
can be more or less sustainable, and more or less destructive and transformative of
nature (as other), has a resonance with the ‘bioregionalist’ perspective. Consider
Kirkpatrick Sale’s statement of the ‘bioregional vision’: ‘To know in detail where and
how one lives is nothing less than the bioregional

He talks of generally
getting to know the natural characteristics of one’s bioregion, including ‘where it is
healthy and where it is strained’. This seems highly appropriate in the context of the
otherness view, which requires awareness of nature as a reality independently of
human use value and cultural significances. Maintaining and replenishing the
political capital of environmentally reasonable society presumably requires that
citizens ‘get to know their bioregion’. This should include becoming acquainted with
the natural history and ecology of local nature, as well as the history of local
landscapes, the different modifications and interpretations of local nature by
successive human cultures. This would allow sustainability and respect for nature to
make an appearance in various parts of the curriculum (not just explicitly ‘citizenship’

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30 Sale, p.144. Some elements of bioregionalism – its association with anarchism, and, at
least in Sale’s version, a tendency to invoke ideas of authentic harmony with nature – are not
appropriate in the context or environmentally reasonable citizenship.
31 Sale, pp.165-166.
classes), perhaps especially the life sciences, history and economics. Thus it would be a case of what has been called ‘education for the environment’, through the curriculum\textsuperscript{32}. But the local focus of bioregionalism would need to be supplemented.

Remember that respecting nature’s otherness involves a kind of double vision: a preparedness to ‘step back’ from a perspective constituted entirely by significances internal to the landscape, to ‘see’ the independent natural world as such. This relatively ‘objective’ perspective will reveal that nature (as other) does not exist merely locally. Consequently, respect for nature (as other), and the resulting concern about environmental impacts, cannot reasonably be restricted to local matters. Moreover, insofar as unequal political and economic power relations are serious causes of ‘environmental’ problems, they surely operate between as well as within landscapes. Obviously landscapes are interrelated in various ways, including economically, culturally, politically and militarily. It is also obvious that such relations can have deleterious ecological effects\textsuperscript{33}. Thus it is most implausible to view localism as the be-all and end-all of ‘ecological efficiency’. The ‘bioregional vision’ needs supplementing with a preparedness to consider nature beyond the local and small scale and mechanisms to protect it, including political mechanisms that go beyond the local or bioregional.

The required ‘global’ perspective has two main aspects:

(i) The consequences of local human activity for nature are not confined to local nature; they can be seen more widely (e.g., climate change).

(ii) Landscapes are not isolated – they are interrelated in a variety of economic, political, cultural etc ways. The impact of this is clearly a proper focus of concern for those caring about nature.

Both i) and ii) imply a wider and deeper impact on an educational curriculum designed partly to promote environmentally reasonable citizenship. Finally, (ii) also reinforces a couple of points that it is important to bear in mind here:

Firstly, the environmental education envisaged does not amount to teaching citizens to be ‘ecocentric’, where ‘ecocentrism’ is a matter of being ‘non-

\textsuperscript{32} See Dobson, ch.5.
\textsuperscript{33} See Plumwood’s discussion of the effects that ‘globalising’ the pilchard market has had on the fairy penguin population of Bass Strait (Plumwood, pp13-16). The otherness view is sensitive to this because although it emphasises the relationship between landscapes and the local nature, it does not confine itself to local nature: nature’s otherness as it is in South Australia is still other with respect to people buying canned fish in supermarkets in Europe.
anthropocentric’, or opposing or overcoming ‘anthropocentrism’. Anthropocentric – human-centred – concerns of various sorts clearly remain important. There are some senses in which ‘anthropocentrism’ is ineliminable and benign. So to equate environmental reasonableness with ecocentrism/’non-anthropocentrism’ is to invite confusion, and possibly create the impression, extremely unfortunate in the context of citizenship education, that human beings themselves are not all that valuable, or are all equally responsible for the production of environmental ills. What is excluded by environmental reasonableness, as it is understood here, is ‘human centredness’ in the sense of ignoring the existence of the independent natural world, or seeing its value only in terms of human interests.

Secondly, respecting nature’s otherness should not be understood only in terms of preserving pristine wilderness. Although ‘wilderness’ and ‘nature as other’ look like very similar notions, given that the former means something like ‘an area untouched by human hands’, it is important not to confuse them. Nature (as other) can be present within the most artificial of environments without transforming them into wilderness. Limiting the destructiveness of human activity, and the extent to which natural otherness is qualified, within landscapes can express the recognition that nature is not just there, ‘given’, for human purposes. Consider, for example, Robert Goodin’s comparison of the English countryside and the Los Angeles megapolis. Although both are human landscapes (the English countryside being the result of millennia of interpretation and re-interpretation, modification, and re-modification, of what is ‘naturally there anyway’), they represent the ways different landscapes may ride more or less roughshod over independent nature. And, again, the consequences of human economics and international patterns of inequalities in wealth, power and development, might often be a more appropriate practical focus than wilderness preservation for those seeking to respect nature’s otherness. As

34 For example, see again note 16 above. Moreover, if the otherness view is taken to constitute environmental reasonableness in a way continuous with political reasonableness, then it is ‘anthropocentric’ in another benign, if not inescapable, sense: claims that nature is valuable should be intelligibly connected to commitments already accepted (compare Hayward, p.50). Consider also that the notion of ‘naturalness’, as having non-human origin, or as contrasted with the artificial/intentional, is often taken as a ground of value in the environmental ethics literature and, to some extent, in ordinary life (compare the plastic trees issue). So although the otherness view is not quite to be identified with such views, nor is it wholly unfamiliar or a radical departure from valuations of nature that are already fairly widespread.

35 As Peter Reed seems to in his ‘man apart’ account of nature as other (Reed, 1989).

36 Goodin, pp50-52.
Ramachandra Guha has put it, ‘[p]ointing to intimate links between industrialisation, militarisation, and conquest, the Greens argue that economic growth in the West has historically rested on the economic and ecological exploitation of the Third World’. Environmental reasonableness, encompassing respect for nature’s otherness, would not be focused on wilderness preservation to the extent of neglecting such issues. Consequently, educating people to be environmentally reasonable citizens would not simply be a matter of getting them to love wilderness. Nor would it involve indoctrinating them into a comprehensive ‘back to nature’ or ‘survivalist’ doctrine of the good life.

References


37 Guha p.70.


