

IMAGES OF NATURE—PHILOSOPHICAL INTRODUCTION TO AN ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS—COURSE OUTLINE Evening School, Semester 1, 2008

Convened by Cameron Shingleton

PART 1: A NEW GENEALOGY OF MORALS

Week 1

- Images of Nature - An Introduction
- Asceticism and its Meanings. Nietzsche and Morality

Week 2

- Redner, An Introduction
- The Past and Present of Ethical Cultures. *Ethos/Ethics*

Week 3

- Redner's "Morality"
- "Buddhist Nature"

Week 4

- Civic Ethics
- Ethics of Honour

Week 5

- Ethics of Duty
- The Stoic Image of Nature

Week 6

- Comparisons 1 (death, sex, commerce)
- Comparisons 21 (nature)

Week 7

- Purism and Puritanism – The Ethic of Ascetic Protestantism
- The Spirit of Capital and the Transformation of Nature

Week 8

- The Spheres Disjointed – Secularisation, Rationalisation
- Philosophical Tangent - Introduction to Spinoza

Week 9

- Spinoza's Pantheism: Nature or God, or Reason
- Modernity Hits Its Straps. Demoralisation, Disenchantment

PART 2: PARADOXES OF ETHICS AND ENVIRONMENT

Week 10

- The Spirit of the Laws – Ethics and The State
- Environment/State/Bureaucracy

Week 11

- Ethics and Civil Society
- Mass Consumer Individualism, or - The Individual as Anti-Nature

Week 12

- The Apotheosis of Technique
- Globalisation, Culture, Environment
- Conclusion

TEXTS

The main text for the course will be: H. Redner, *Ethical Life: The History and Present of Ethical Cultures* - significant selections from which will be included in the course reader. Redner's text begins with the argument that the history of ethics can be understood from the point of view of 4 historical/ethical ideal-types, dubbed by the author morality, civic ethics, the ethics of honour and the ethics of duty. It then goes on to deal with the historical development of each and their unique unravelling in the modern era. Some acquaintance with any or all four "ethical traditions" would be an advantage for course-goers, though

the course itself will attempt to provide systematic and vivid introductions to each, with special emphasis on the images/concepts of nature that each makes possible.

In descending order of importance, other useful texts for advance reading would be:

G. Monbiot, "A Faustian Pact" and "Love Miles" from *Heat: How to stop the planet burning*

F. Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals* Essay no.3

M. Weber, "Ancient Buddhism" from *Indian Religion*

M. Weber, *The Protestant Work Ethic and The Spirit of Capitalism*

H. Redner, *Conserving cultures: technology, globalisation, and the future of local cultures*

Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*

P. Hadot, "Marcus Aurelius" from *Philosophy as a way of life*

M. Arnold, "Spinoza and The Bible"

Spinoza, *Ethics*

H. Jonas, *The imperative of responsibility: in search of an ethics for the technological age* ∞