

# Geographies of/for a More Than Human World:

## towards a relational ethics

Through exclusively social contracts, we have abandoned the bond that connects us to the world. . . . What language do the things of the world speak that we might come to an understanding of them contractually? . . . In fact, the Earth speaks to us in terms of forces, bonds and interactions . . . each of the partners in symbiosis thus owes . . . life to the other, on pain of death. (Michel Serres, 1995: 39)

### the place of ethics

The modernist ideals of universal democracy and justice realized through legislative regimes centred on individual rights have been the subject of sustained feminist and environmentalist critiques, reinvigorating political and philosophical interest in the question of ethics. Feminist writing has focused on deconstructing the discourse of rights, highlighting the gendered (and racialized) character of the autonomous self configured as a rights-bearing citizen of a sovereign state (see, for example, Cornell, 1985). By contrast, environmentalist work has centred on extending the political and discursive economy of rights to non-human beings, challenging established concepts of personhood and subject-status (see, for example, Callicott, 1979). These efforts share parallel concerns to establish relational, as opposed to individual, understandings of ethical agency and to recognize the significance of embodied, as against abstract capacities, in shaping ethical competence and considerability. Such concerns highlight the power of the geographical imaginaries of traditional ethical discourses and the difficulties of disrupting the entrenched cartographies of the nation, the neighbourhood and the individual in fashioning new possibilities for conviviality.

Earlier chapters in this book have already attended to particular issues arising from these concerns, for example the ethical status of creatures like leopards, crocodiles and elephants as they were mobilized in the Roman arena and by conservation science today (chapters 2 and 3) and peoples rendered 'primitive' and incomplete 'persons' by the political orderings of European colonialism and their legacies for the constitution of universal human rights and institutions of global citizenship at the end of the twentieth century (chapters 4 and 5). This final chapter picks up these themes to explore what I take to be creative tensions between feminist and environmentalist efforts to empower those eclipsed in conventional ethical discourse and the company of ethical subjects which it (re)iterates. I trace some of the ways in which the conceptual and institutional parameters of the civic constitution of the self as citizen, central to feminist concerns, intersect with the humanist constitution of the subject as person at the heart of environmentalist concerns. In both cases, although for different reasons, I argue that dilemmas encountered by these attempts to construct alternative ethical orderings are intimately bound up with their observance, even in critique, of categorical distinctions between the cultural and the natural, the social and the material, the human and the non-human parodied in Michel Serres' evocation of the world estranged by the terms of Rousseau's 'social contract' (see Assad, 1999: 158). In this, they remain complicit in the humanist presumptions that characterize the discursive economy of ethics struggling, like so many other forlorn sorties across these impossible borders, to smuggle some semblance of the messy heterogeneity of being-in-the-world back into their accounts of it. I go on to suggest a number of consequences for instituting a relational understanding of ethical considerability and affect, using the mundane example of eating to shift from a discursive to a performative register which emphasizes the importance of corporeality and hybridity as modes of conduct for (re)assembling the spatial praxis of ethics in more than human terms.

### *homo ethicus*

Ethical discourse has conventionally been framed in terms of an opposition between natural law and social contract traditions, centred on competing accounts of the primacy of 'human nature' as against civic order as the foundational claim to ethical competence and considerability (Poole, 1991). Commonly misunderstood as some kind of unchanging normative code inscribed in the heavens or the genes, natural law theories evoke the capacity for reason as the definitive basis of a distinctively human ethical standing. Early modern reinterpretations of a classical legacy, notably in the work of Locke, shifted accounts of this distinctively human capacity from the evocation of a 'common good' – the cluster of obligations

generated by the patterns of interdependence in human social life – to that of an ‘individual good’ – the result of voluntary transactions between independent social agents.<sup>1</sup> The most important implication of this shift was to elevate the ‘moral significance of the separateness of persons’ (Buckle, 1991: 168). The emergence of the individual as the axiom of modern society is inscribed in legal, political and religious institutions and discourses. Since Kant, this founding figure of the autonomous self has been most strongly associated with the social contract tradition of ethics (Kymlicka, 1991). However, it is worth emphasizing that it is less the significance accorded to this figure that marks out the social contract tradition than the resolution it reaches for the social regulation of such individuals. Natural law resolutions rely on some underlying uniformities (of reasonableness) that can sustain the idea of universal (natural) human goods and values. Social contract resolutions rest on particular social institutions of contract (market) and rights (law) as the basis for establishing universal (impartial) ‘laws of reason’ as the pre-condition of ethical agency.

Contemporary elaborations of these debates can be seen in the philosophical and legal dilemmas of squaring claims to human rights with those to civil rights. The one represents a species claim to the possession of reasoning faculties as the basis for the universal ethical considerability of individuals by virtue of their constitution as human beings; the other, a political appeal to these reasoning faculties as the basis for the ethical considerability of individuals by virtue of their constitution as civic persons (McHugh, 1992). Historical changes in the legal encoding of such claims underline the unstable and disputed social meaning of both ‘human’ and ‘person’ as ethical subjects, for example in the treatment of women and non-European peoples, instabilities which persist in the treatment of children and those deemed mentally ‘unfit’. Despite these dilemmas, the figure of the Cartesian individual as a pre-social vessel of abstract reason and will, memorably captured in Latour’s image of the ‘mind-in-a-vat’ (1999a: 4), continues to dominate the terms of ethical debate.<sup>2</sup> Ethical agency is reduced to the impartial and universal enactment of instrumental reason, or ‘enlightened self-interest’, institutionalized as a contractual polity of equivalent self-present individuals divested of difference, context or circumstance.<sup>3</sup> Such accounts of ethical agency rely upon spatially and temporally stable conceptions of individual and collective social life – the sovereignty of self and state – etched in the cartographies of the citizen and the nation. Ironically, as Ross Poole suggests, in so far as ‘the modern world revolves around the autonomous self and the sovereign state it has also destroyed the conditions of their reproduction, reducing community to an infinitely expanded network of market interactions’ (1991: 141).

The commoditization of socio-material relations has disrupted this configuration of political and ethical community on two fronts. First, by

eroding the territorialized authority of the nation state to govern increasingly global networks and mobilities of people and goods. Ethical communities bounded by national borders have become unsustainable because 'the nation state is no longer able to resolve the contradictions between citizenship and humanity through claims to absolute authority' (Walker, 1991: 256). Secondly, the expansion of market relations has also undermined the personalized jurisdiction of the individual citizen over a coherent domain of the self (Giddens, 1991). As Haraway has observed,

the proper state for a western person is to have ownership of the self, to have and hold a core identity, as if it were a possession. . . . Not to have property of the self is not to be a subject and so not to have agency. (1991a: 135)

However, this private domain of the rights-bearing citizen has long been exposed as a masculine conceit. This has translated in different space-times into the dispossession of women, poor people and black people of political and ethical agency in their own right through, for example, their 'contractual' guises as wives, servants and slaves (Pateman, 1989).<sup>4</sup> Moreover, this extended domain of the patriarchal self underpinning liberal citizenship, the domain of the family and household, has itself become increasingly friable (Gobetti, 1992). In short, the reliability of this political and ethical constitution has become increasingly unconvincing as its spatial encoding in the separate realms of public and private (civic and domestic) competence has been progressively undermined by the disciplines of the market and the state.

Recent work in the field of political philosophy is dominated by two divergent responses to the limitations of the liberal conception of political and ethical community sketched above.<sup>5</sup> The first echoes a longstanding communitarian tradition which predicates the capacity to participate as ethically and politically competent subjects on the material satisfaction of 'basic human needs'. As Porter puts it:

A concern for persons in their own right is not possible where the primacy of rights relies on an atomist conception of the self-sufficient individual. This notion maintains that human capacities need no particular social context in which to develop and hence is not attached to other normative principles concerning what is good for humans or conducive to their development. (1991: 127)

The more sophisticated communitarian accounts elaborated by writers like Sandel and Macintyre, appeal to an inter-subjective conception of the self as the basis of ethical agency. This conception seeks to qualify the absolute distinction between self and other associated with the figure of the sovereign individual 'by allowing that, in certain moral circumstances,

the relevant description of the self may embrace more than a single empirically-individuated human being' (Sandel, 1982: 79–80). This set of responses has become politically influential with so-called 'new communitarianism' colouring the rhetoric of conventional political opponents of free market liberalism, like Blair's 'New Labour' Party in Britain and its disavowal of the infamous Thatcherite dictum that 'there is no such thing as society'. In its concern with the material pre-conditions of human life, this perspective re-engages with natural law arguments that ethical considerability precedes formal rights, requiring answers to the question 'rights for what?' At the same time it re-admits, in a limited way, non-human figures into the landscape of ethical community as necessary material 'resources' to service human needs. The environmental implications of this perspective were rehearsed in former US Vice-President Al Gore's populist manifesto *Earth in balance*, in which he argues that

we have tilted so far toward individual rights and so far away from any sense of obligation that it is now difficult to muster an adequate defence of any rights vested in the community at large or in the nation – much less rights properly vested in all humankind. (1992: 278)

A second response to contemporary dilemmas in the conception and practice of ethical community is that associated with a broader critique of the foundational coordinates of modern society identified with post-modernism (Squires, 1993). Such critiques engage in a radical deconstruction of the twin sovereignties of self and state. Here 'the individual' is transformed into a site of multiple and fluid social identities, a repertoire which can be creatively mobilized to 'liberate' oneself from a singular or given subject-position. Among the more sustained expositions of this post-modernist interpretation of political and ethical agency is Laclau and Mouffe's project of 'radical democracy' characterized as 'a polyphony of voices, each of which constructs its own irreducible discursive identity' (1985: 191). Far from challenging the primacy of the individual as the ethical subject, this approach seems to me to reinscribe the Cartesian subject, merely replacing abstract reason with abstract desire or will. It shifts the ground of ethical and political community from conventional practices of contract between universally equivalent agents, to communicative practices of dialogue between radically different (but still exclusively human) agents.<sup>6</sup> While the bio-graphing individual evoked in this post-modern vision liberates the possibilities of ethical community from the involuntary associations of birth or propinquity, it does so by dislocating the promise of dialogic engagement from any vestige of the fleshy business of living.

The tensions between contractarian and natural law theories of ethical competence and considerability mark ongoing dilemmas over the relationship between social rationality and human mortality. The reified figure of

the autonomous individual represents a cipher of abstract reason/will which inscribes the binaries of mind/body, self/other, subject/object on to the very possibility of ethical agency in modern society. Recent critiques from communitarian and post-modernist positions envision new possibilities but without interrogating or departing from the humanist presuppositions of the ethical discourses with which they are engaged. Communitarian approaches re-assert the situatedness of the individual and point to the inter-subjective constitution of ethical agency. However, they tend to do so by invoking normative configurations of community, like the family, the neighbourhood and the nation, without examining the power relations they enact. Moreover, this 'situatedness' is defined in terms of relations between people. Where they are addressed at all, relations with the rest of the world are treated as passive contextual extensions of human well-being. By contrast, a post-modern insistence on the radical instability of the individual tends to evoke highly disembodied, as well as dis-embedded, social agents (O'Neill, 1985; Pile and Thrift, 1995). In a world populated by such amorphous figures, constituted from cognitive and linguistic possibilities unshackled by the corporeal baggage of living, 'the question of what human be-ing is' (Porter, 1991: 16) becomes vacuous.

Emerging at the confluence of these various encounters with the intellectual and practical dilemmas of ethical agency is a re-cognition of formal justice as a derivative of more substantive moral propositions and ethical claims. Increasingly, this has been accompanied by a creative re-engagement with ideas of human nature not in terms of some ineluctable essence of humanity, but in terms of the predicament of finitude, the inherent decay and mortality of all living beings. As Cornell has put it, only 'by coming to terms with finitude can we gain the humility necessary to overcome the hubris of individualism' (1985: 338). Bauman's exploration of the ethical implications of mortality (1992), Giddens notion of 'life politics' (1991) and Beck's account of 'risk society' (1989) all exemplify an unprecedented interest in corporeality for understanding ethical considerability and conduct. Exploring issues such as the legal determination of the status and rights of the foetus and the medical certification of the condition of death, these writers suggest that the more reflexively we 'make ourselves' as persons the more significant bodily awareness becomes to the performance of the social, heightening the sense of shared existential vulnerability and finitude as a modality of political association and ethical recognition.

Such efforts echo everyday sensibilities and struggles to register connectivities between, for example, environmental degradation, animal welfare, and human health and well-being, often in the face of the pinched rationalities of public policy-making and the authority of scientific expertise (Hampson and Reppy, 1996). As we saw in the previous chapter, 'food scares' have become one of the most potent touchstones of such apprehensions about the uncertainties of human being, rendering them in the flesh

through events like the trans-species carnage of so-called ‘mad cow disease’ and the clandestine arrival of genetically modified foods. These themes have been taken up most persistently and powerfully by those seeking to challenge the masculinist/humanist fantasy of an abstracted world of equivalent moral agents, most notably in feminist and environmentalist movements and critiques. These challenges centre respectively on concerns with the embodiment of difference and rationality and with the ethical significance of ‘non-human’ life forms and processes. In the following sections, I draw out what I see as key issues, tensions and shortcomings in these alternative accounts for the elaboration of a more relational understanding of ethical considerability and conduct.

### **feminist ethics: the embodiment of care?**

When identities become pure, exclusive, innocent, the potential for diverse and democratic collectivities is threatened. We are all others of invention, otherness should not be reified but used as one fertile resource of feminist solidarity. (Caraway, 1991: 1)

The celebration of difference in post-modern theories has been both highly influential and disputatious in feminist political thinking. A number of writers (see, for example, Ebert, 1991; Hennessy, 1993) distinguish between two different clusters of feminist engagements with this issue. The first, identified as ‘ludic post-modernism’, seeks to disrupt naturalized conceptions of identity as a model for political practice and locates the politics of difference in the discursive play of imagined possibilities in a theatre of volatile subject-positions (exemplified by the work of Mouffe, Young and Flax). The second, identified as ‘resistance post-modernism’, locates the politics of difference not as the effect of rhetorical strategies but of social struggles which ground the meanings contested in such strategies in the materialities of everyday living (exemplified by the work of Benhabib, Cornell and Grosz). While the distinction between these feminist accounts of a politics of difference is overdrawn and even somewhat caricatured, it points up an important area of dispute about how difference and its political (and ethical) import is constituted and understood. Echoing tensions in Nietzsche’s writing, Diprose outlines the parameters of this dispute in terms of whether we are more likely to ‘find our-selves’ by looking inwards in an autonomous project of creative self-fabrication, or by looking outwards to our effects and relations with others as they configure our place in the world (1994: 87).

The first of these approaches employs individualist theories of difference, or what Kruks has called ‘an epistemology of provenance’ (1995: 4), to fashion self-exploration as a political process in itself while relying on an unspoken normative claim to the ethical equivalence of all ‘subject-

positions' in this privatized polity. Collective claims to political agency and ethical considerability tend to be looked upon askance, as intrinsically 'anti-difference' (for example, see Young, 1989). This leaves feminism as a political project precariously positioned by what Anderson (1992) calls the 'double gesture' of simultaneously asserting the theoretical universalism of decentred subjectivity while resorting to the practical lie of strategic essentialism to secure a space for women to identify common cause at all. Ironically, as she points out:

the idea of subject-positions . . . precludes the possibility of an inter-subjective perspective that would define the human subject not as purely autonomous and self-present, nor as a mere place on intersecting grids, but as constituted through its ongoing relations to others . . . (Anderson, 1992: 78)

It is the second of the feminist encounters with post-modern theories which is the more suggestive to me as a means of negotiating the impasse of individualism in reconstructions of ethical community. It centres on a notion of difference-in-relation, as inter-subjectively constituted in the context of practical or lived configurations of self and community. In place of abstract or cognitive criteria, these always/already existing configurations of self and community are 'defined by contingent and particular social attachments whose moral force consists partly in the fact that living by them is inseparable from understanding ourselves as the particular persons we are' (Friedman, 1989: 278). This approach shares post-structuralist suspicions of the liberal ambition of value homogeneity, but remains committed to a practice of participatory communalism enacted through particular economic, political, scientific and civic orderings which condition individual capacities and arenas for action. As a feminist enterprise, it represents an attempt to understand the discursive construction of 'woman' across multiple modalities of difference by adopting a problematic which can trace the connections between discursive practices and the exploitative social orderings of meaning, being and struggle which permit and encode them (hooks, 1990).

The ethical dimensions of this approach are best captured in Benhabib's distinction between generalized and concrete others (1987). The generalized other stands for a universal principle of equal considerability in the right to be heard, to participate, to make a difference. The concrete other stands for more immediately realized ethical principles – of care, friendship, intimacy, solidarity and empathy which involve practical and often asymmetrical enactments of responsibility. However, Benhabib's elaboration of this inter-subjective conception of ethical agency reproduces the Habermasian error of according a privileged status to the abstract qualities of rationality and language in the theory of 'communicative action'. In an

important step towards a more situated and practical approach to understanding ethical inter-subjectivity, Kruks argues that we should ‘begin from the situation of an embodied and practically engaged self; . . . from what human beings do in the world . . . so as to rediscover the totality of [her/his] practical bonds with others’ (1995: 11–12). While this conception of a materially-situated self has wider significance for the reconfiguration of ethical community, to which I shall return later in my consideration of environmental ethics, here I want to pursue two persistent themes in feminist ethical thinking with which it resonates most suggestively. These are the interconnected issues of corporeality (by which I mean both the embodiment and mortality of living being) and the praxis of care.

Feminist concerns with the material situatedness of social identity and of the particularity of sexed being have impelled a sustained consideration of the politics of corporeality. These concerns have centred on the specificities of women’s experiences as (potential) child-bearers, the objectification of women’s bodies, and the signification of ‘woman’ as nature incarnate (Plumwood, 1993). This is difficult terrain for feminists, with the spectre of essentialism menacing any consideration of embodiment in relation to gender and sexual identity (Fuss, 1989). But its avoidance became increasingly problematic, giving rise to a growing realization that ‘to separate the feminine from female morphology is misguided theoretically and politically even in strategic contexts’ (Gross, 1986: 136). The concept of difference-in-relation requires a ‘theory of the flesh’ (Moraga and Anzaldúa, 1981: 23) to elaborate an understanding of individual and collective becoming situated in webs of connection that are practical as well as discursive; corporeal as well as cognitive. Elizabeth Grosz’s elaboration of a ‘corporeal feminism’ (1989, 1994) provides perhaps the most sustained attempt to articulate just such a theory.<sup>7</sup> She builds on Irigaray’s understanding of difference as always inscribed in/through the lived experiences of sexed bodies.

I want to go back to the natural material which makes up our bodies, in which our lives and environment are grounded . . . a latent materiality which our so-called human theories . . . move away from [and] progress through . . . with a language which forgets the matter it designates and through which it speaks. (Irigaray, 1986, *Divine women*, quoted in Grosz, 1989: 172)

Here, the body is considered not as the passive container of logocentric social being but as a living assemblage of corporeal dispositions and relations which both register and orient our senses of the world. While always configured through particular social orderings of meaning, technology and practice, these corporeal properties are no less conditional of the very capacities of cognition and communication that mark the abstracted ideals of individual autonomy and human distinctiveness. As Gail Weiss (1999) goes on to suggest in more recent work, such a ‘thinking through

the body' undermines the political myth of self-authorship and the privileged ethical status of humans as uniquely rational subjects, attending instead to the *inter-corporeality* of social conduct.

A second theme in feminist ethics that is particularly pertinent to the elaboration of an inter-subjective conception of the situated self is the praxis of care. This builds on the contention that feminisms can only move beyond 'the impasse of (in)difference' (Probyn, 1993) by simultaneously articulating questions of who am I with those of who is she? This ethical incarnation of difference-in-relation derives from a number of impulses in feminist work other than philosophy, particularly from psychoanalytic feminism (Meyers, 1994). A major stimulus to such work has been the empirically derived contention of psychologist Carol Gilligan (1982) that women tend to articulate more relational senses of self and stronger senses of responsibility for connected others than men – what she called a 'different ethical voice' to that institutionalized in conventional justice. The recognition and enacting of these relational senses of self and responsibility constitute what has become known as the 'feminine care ethic'. While the subject of dispute, this notion is concerned with ethical praxis and the corporeal register of connectivities which secure the well-being of those least mobile and most vulnerable, not as discursive subject-positions but as kindred mortals, such as the hungry, the sick and the abused (Lovibond, 1994). This understanding of ethical agency and community recognizes a bodily intentionality to human existence and social life that knits together multiple and apparently fragmentary collective identities, each of which is itself the outcome of a multiplicity of prior and present praxes (Kruks, 1995: 15).<sup>8</sup> Such an understanding certainly helps to substantiate an appreciation of inter-subjectivity in corporeal terms, but this has tended to be restricted in feminist accounts to relations between exclusively human subjects. As Vicki Kirkby suggests,

it is so obvious that 'the subject' means, in fact, 'the human subject' that it goes without saying. . . . Even theoretically ambitious feminisms unwittingly tend to repair the sovereign subject through a politics of inclusion that would restore humanity its full identity. (1997: 151)

It is here, in expanding the corpus of 'beings that count', that environmental ethics promises to make an important contribution.

### **environmental ethics: enlarging the subject**

The multiplicity of living organisms retain, ultimately, their peculiar if ephemeral characters and identities but they are . . . mutually defining. (Callicott, 1989: 111)

In contrast to much feminist work, environmentalists have invested considerable energies in trying to extend the ethical domain of the autonomous self as a bearer of social rights beyond what Simon Glendinning calls 'the self-presence of human being' (1998: 9).<sup>9</sup> This has taken shape through the often disputatious ethical currencies of animal liberation and environmentalism (Luke, 1997). The first of these, which might be termed moral extensionism and is associated with longstanding concerns with animal rights, transports the liberal figure of the individual rights-bearing 'person' wholesale to a range of non-human creatures (see, for example, Cavalieri and Singer, 1993; Wise, 2000). These extensions are made either on the cognitive criteria of reasoning and linguistic capacities, which are usually restricted to primates and cetaceous mammals, or of sentience, a more inclusive criterion centred on the capacity to suffer or experience pain and covering all mammals with a central nervous system. Informed by new perspectives in animal biology and psychology, particularly primate cognition, this approach culminates in the proposal of a 'subject-of-life' criterion for extending ethical standing to all animate beings (Regan and Singer, 1989). Such approaches build on mainstream utilitarian or Kantian arguments and are open to the critiques of liberal individualism rehearsed above (see Benton, 1993), as well as the more far-reaching problems of trying to gauge the alterity of other animals by extending the humanist register of ethical considerability across the Cartesian divide.

The second approach, broadly aligned with deep ecological perspectives and sometimes informed by Gaian organicism, has involved the elaboration of various notions of expanded human consciousness to encompass a recognition of our embeddedness in constitutive relations with the non-human world (for example, Macauley, 1996; Gottlieb, 1997). These efforts do not restrict the extension of ethical standing to non-human animals but include vegetal organisms, inanimate elements and even the planet itself under the collective term of 'earth others' (Bigwood, 1993). This enlarged ethical community frequently relies upon the invocation of a metaphysical dimension to being-in-the-world that sits uneasily with the triumph of reason associated with the humanist ideals of western political philosophy (see, for example, the critique of Ferry, 1992). Such efforts share the conviction that the human should not be the measure of ethical considerability and, just as importantly, that we cannot 'expect to have justice within the human community if we do not consider what this concept might mean in terms of our relations with nonhumans' (Gottlieb, 1997: xiv). The ironic conundrum of many such efforts, such as Mathews' concept of the 'ecological self' (1991), Naess's notion of 'self actualisation' (1989) and Fox's idea of the 'transpersonal self' (1990), is how to square their insistence on the ethical standing of non-human nature in 'its own terms' with the ineluctable humanism of their non-anthropocentric enterprise. In a sustained critique of these approaches, Plumwood has identified

them with what she calls the ‘imperialism of the self’ (1993), in which the ethical considerability of the non-human world is subsumed into the compass of human being, even as they strive to construct an inter-subjective conception of ethical agency. This highlights a key dilemma for environmental ethics. Feminist difficulties with the masterful standard of cognitive and linguistic competences, from which the ethical subject is fashioned, are amplified for environmentalists whose constituency of would-be subjects is more thoroughly excluded from this self-evident company than any human (Dryzek, 1990).

This dilemma has stimulated an important development in recent work on environmental ethics. Picking up Kruk’s insistence on a materially situated, practically engaged, self as the embodiment of an inter-subjective understanding of ethical agency, this work has begun (re)exploring an understanding of relations between the self and the world centred on the corporeal immersion of humankind in the biosphere. This conceptualization of inter-subjectivity recognizes humans as ‘beings thoroughly entwined with an extralinguistic world . . . [and that] to deny this entwinement is to bind ourselves to a quest for an abstract and empty sovereignty that destroys the world and is self-defeating’ (Coles, 1993: 231). Like feminist evocations of a ‘theory of the flesh’, some of these explorations draw inspiration from traditions of dialectical reasoning, like that of Adorno (Coles, 1993), or phenomenology, such as the work of Merleau-Ponty (Abram, 1988; Langer, 1990). One of the most suggestive such parallels is that between Luce Irigaray’s reworking of Heideggerian concerns with the neglected materiality of (human) being in *The forgetting of air* (1999) and David Abram’s *The spell of the sensuous* (1997) in which he articulates the relationality of a living world through the same vital medium to conjure a

. . . breathing landscape [that] is no longer just a passive backdrop against which human history unfolds, but a potentized field of intelligence in which our actions participate. As we awaken to the air, and to the multiplicitous others that are implicated, with us, in its generative depths, the shapes around us seem to . . . come alive. . . . (Abram, 1997: 260)

The emphasis in both these accounts is simultaneously on the corporeal embeddness of cognitive processes in the visceral dynamics of brain, eye and skin, etc., and the con-figuration of human well-being with and through that of other living beings (Matuarana and Varela, 1992). Arguably it has been at this intersection between feminist and environmentalist work that most has been achieved in terms of transforming these ideas into an ethical praxis (e.g. Curtin, 1991; Donovan, 1993).<sup>10</sup> Donna Haraway, for example, credits environmental feminisms with having been ‘the most insistent on some version of the world as active subject, not as a resource to be mapped and appropriated by bourgeois, marxist or masculinist projects’

(1991a: 199). Variously translating the webs of connectivity between the life practices and well-being of different and particularly situated kinds, these practical configurations of an ecological care ethic begin by acknowledging that

to be embodied is to be capable of being affected by the bodies of others and . . . is both a necessary and a sufficient condition for the generation of a bodily imperative [that] attend[s] morally to the needs of bodies who are unable to articulate those needs for themselves, the young, infirm, dehumanized and includes bodies that are not human. (Weiss, 1999: 162–3)

The feminist and environmentalist approaches to the subject of ethical considerability and community sketched in this section are ongoing and contested discourses which inform a wide variety of political practices, including on occasion each other, in ways that exceed the partiality of my rendition. The main contributions that I would attribute to the particular threads which I have traced are their various journeys towards a corporeal conception of ethical considerability and conduct that starts to engage the extra-linguistic ‘forces, bonds and interactions’ which Michel Serres urges on our attention in the passage which opens this chapter. Moreover, they are suggestive of the importance of spatial imaginaries and practices to challenging the myopic parameters of ethical connectivity in ways which complicate the geographies of intimacy and affect that configure conventional understandings of the proper extent of ‘our’ worldly responsibilities.

Equally, however, these approaches share shortcomings which are important in terms of my broader argument. Even amidst the talk of inter-subjectivity, embodiment and embeddedness, these accounts tend to treat the ‘human’ and ‘non-human’ in terms of ‘social interactions between already constituted objects’ (Rajchman, 2000: 12), thereby reiterating an a priori distinction between separate worlds in need of some kind of remedial re-connection. As a consequence, the remedies suggested by these feminist and environmentalist accounts, however inadvertently, retain a residual humanism that restricts the reconfiguration of ethical practice to terms in which the ‘best the non-human can get out of [it] is to be permanently represented [by ‘us’] as lesser humans’ (Haraway, 1992: 86) while the subject of human-ness itself remains largely uninterrogated. Moreover, although the distinction between general and concrete others is a heuristic device which has no necessary spatial predisposition, feminist and environmentalist care ethics have tended in practice to map it simplistically on to the geographical binaries of distance/proximity, global/local, outside/inside, for example in the praxis of a maternalist model of care (Ruddick, 1989) or a localist model of ecology like ‘bioregionalism’ (Cheney, 1989). I now turn to consider the implications of taking hybridity seriously as a means of

disrupting the residual hold of this purification of (human) society and (non-human) nature, and of the autonomous individual as the locus of ethical subjectivity, to begin to explore some alternative cartographies of/for living in a more than human world that apprehend the fleshy currency, or what Gail Weiss (1999) calls the 'bodily imperative', of being-in-relation with and through heterogeneous others.

### hybrid cartographies for a relational ethics

What is inter-subjectivity between radically different kinds of subjects? How do we designate radical otherness at the heart of ethical relating? (Haraway, 1992: 89)

Bringing ideas of difference-in-relation to bear on the question of political and ethical community has been most extensively explored in the work of Haraway and Latour in their elaboration of concepts of hybridity. Haraway's argument is that we 'cannot not want' something called humanity because nobody is self-made, least of all humans (1992: 64). But in order to recuperate a progressive commitment to humanity as a moral community the dualisms associated with humanism have to be jettisoned. This line of argument informs several so-called 'post-human' efforts to reconfigure ethical competence and conduct by disturbing the consolidation of difference at the borders between the 'human'/'non-human'. As Judith Halberstam and Ira Livingston suggest,

the human functions to domesticate and hierarchize difference within the human (whether according to race, class, gender) and to absolutize difference between the human and the nonhuman. The posthuman does not reduce difference-from-others to difference-from-self, but rather emerges in the pattern of resonance and interference between the two. (1995: 10)

Haraway's cyborg figure (1985), for example, articulates a political vision which appreciates the unstable and porous borders between human, animal and machine and the multiple modalities of subjugation that such an appreciation brings into view. Here, the possibilities of social agency are constituted through 'webs of connection' between radically different and particularly embodied subjects, connectivities that are fashioned through what she calls 'shared conversations' and 'semiotic-material technologies' (1991a: 192). Ethical praxis likewise emerges in the performance of multiple lived worlds, weaving threads of meaning and matter through the assemblage of mutually constituting subjects and patterns of association that compromise the distinction between the 'human' and the 'non-human'.

As with so many of Haraway's provocative ideas, what she means by 'semiotic-material technologies' is hard to fix. Her favourite examples are the body-technologies of prosthetics, genetics and organ transplants in which particular codified knowledges become stabilized as technological artefacts which, in turn, are grafted into and mobilized by living beings. These examples tend to site the dilemmas of hybrid subjectivity, and the cyborg figure used to signify them, within an individuated body-subject – 'a hybrid creature composed of organism and machine' (1991b: 1). There is a tension then in Haraway's account of the status and configuration of her hybrid subject – the cyborg. It is not clear whether, as Kruks asks, these hybrid subjects stitch their own parts together, in which case they become more cohesive than Haraway wants to admit, or whether this 'stitching together' is better understood as an operation taking place from without (1995: 9). If the first, then Haraway's hybrid subject falls back on an account of political and ethical agency which privileges cognitive and discursive faculties in the constitution of 'knowing selves' (however partial or unfinished the project of self-fabrication). If the second, then it is not clear from Haraway's account just what it is that connects these diverse knowing selves together other than the capacity for 'shared conversations'. As Vicki Kirkby observes

Haraway's 'disassembled and reassembled recipe' for cyborg graftings is utterly dependent upon the calculus of one plus one, the logic wherein pre-existent identities are *then* conjoined and melded. The cyborg's chimerical complications are therefore never so promiscuous that its parts cannot be separated, even if only retrospectively. Put simply, for Haraway, there once was not a cyborg. (1997: 147, original emphasis)

I am not so sure that it is (ever) *that* simple for Haraway. But, while her account of hybridity successfully disrupts the purification of nature and society and the relegation of 'non-humans' to a world of objects, I agree that it is less help in trying to 'flesh out' the fabric of connectivity that transacts difference and, therein, the promise of a more than human ethical praxis. Such an exercise requires closer scrutiny of the inter-corporeal complications of heterogeneous life practices, or what Deleuze and Guattari characterize as the 'overlapping territories of affectivity and becoming' (1988: 267), than Haraway's cyborg figuration of hybridity seems to conjure.

In this context, I find Latour's account of hybridity, figured in terms of a 'net-working' effect, more suggestive for elaborating a relational understanding of ethical considerability and conduct. This networking ontology, like the rhizomatics of Deleuze and Guattari, emphasizes the affective relationships between heterogeneous actants, distributing their morphological particularity and mutability through all manner of energetic exchanges within and between them.<sup>11</sup> Cast in these terms, hybridity,

signals not just the inter-connectedness of pre-given entities but the condition of immanent potentiality that harbours the very possibility of their coming into being. Moreover, Latour spells out the difference that this interpretation of hybridity makes for the re-ordering of ethical community beyond the 'human'. Hybrid networks he argues force us to 'take into account the objects that are no more the arbitrary stakes of [human] desire alone than they are the simple receptacle of our mental categories' (1993: 117). Articulated through the cartography of networks (or rhizomes), hybridity disturbs the habits that reiterate the cumulative fault-lines between human/subjects and non-human/objects prescribed by an ethical reasoning abstracted from the particularity of embodiment and territorialized as the exclusive preserve of a 'Society' from which everything but the universal human subject has been expunged. Instead a multitude of affective actants-in-relation take and hold their shape performatively, as precarious achievements whose durability and reach is spun between the potencies and frailties of more than human kinds. It is in assemblages such as these that the 'forces, bonds and interactions' of Serres' cryptic 'natural contract' can make their presence felt in the vital topology of ethical relations; lived relations which are neither rooted to the spot nor the culmination of some singular chronology, but which stretch and fold multiple space-times through provisional alignments of polyvalent rhythms and passages of bodies and elements, energies and devices, memories and skills.

Latour's account of hybrid networking involves an important shift in tense from relational 'being' to relational 'becoming' and a more fluid sense of the spatiality and temporality of hybridity than Haraway's cyborg figure. These are important steps for my attempts to chart a topology of ethical relating. Latour's own gestures towards the ethical and political import of his account of hybridity bring us to his image of a 'parliament of things' (1993) or, as he has put it more recently, 'to the point that, today, the whole planet is engaged in the making of politics, law and, soon I suspect, morality' (1999a: 214). But this is the point at which I find Latour's extraordinary work most problematic because of its apparent indifference to the witness of those living (and dying) at the sharp end of technoscientific re-orderings (see Star, 1991a). There is, as I suggested in chapter 3, an important divergence in analytical stance between ANT's emphasis on the effectivity of (quasi)objects and that of feminist science studies on the affectivity of (body)subjects. But there is something more than this. As Mark Elam has noted, there is something scriptural in the demeanour of Latour's writing that 'assumes a position outside of action, only to reappear as science-in-action personified . . . [it is as though he] cannot help re-enacting the imperial ambitions that infuse the networks he charts' (1999: 21). In contrast, say, to Haraway's sustained commitment to 'taking

sides' or even the 'cosmopolitics' of Isabelle Stengers which he so admires, Latour is too chary of situating his own knowledge practices or risking his intellectual acumen by association beyond the academy to nourish the kinds of connection between analytical adventure and everyday apprehension that are the measure of the 'passionate' mode of enquiry that I am after here.<sup>12</sup>

My argument throughout this book has been that it is both more interesting and more pressing to engage in a politics of hybridity that is not defined as/by academic disputes like the so-called 'science wars', important though these are, but in which the stakes are thoroughly and promiscuously distributed through the messy attachments, skills and intensities of differently embodied lives whose everyday conduct exceeds and perverts the designs of parliaments, corporations and laboratories. For those of us trained to earn our living in such centres of calculation, the epistemological imperative to acknowledge the situatedness (and affectiveness) of our own knowledge practices is at least well rehearsed, particularly in feminist science studies. Of more concern to me in this section of the book is how little onus science and technology studies seem to place on according such close and respectful analytical attention to the practical knowledges and vernaculars of everyday sense-making (Shotter, 1993). But this is no less vital if, as Haraway insists,

taking responsibility for the social relations of science and technology means refusing an anti-science metaphysics, a demonology of technology, *and so* means embracing the skillful task of reconstructing the boundaries of daily life, in partial connection with others, in communication with all our parts. (1985: 100, my emphasis)

So, let me return to that most mundane of worldly transactions, eating, to illustrate the steps I have taken here towards a relational ethics that places corporeality and hybridity at its heart. As I noted in the introduction to this section, food is one of the most potent vectors of the 'bodily imperatives' that enmesh us in the material fabric and diverse company of 'livingness'. The skills and (dis)comforts of growing, provisioning, cooking and eating have long accommodated and intensified the proliferation of hybrids – through the cultivation of plants and animals; the wayward energies of wastes and additives circulating in water, soils and in the flesh; and the bacterial mutations and viral infections that traffic between life and death (Cone and Martin, 1997). The rhythms and motions of these inter-corporeal practices configure spaces of connectivity between more-than-human life worlds; topologies of intimacy and affectivity that confound conventional cartographies of distance and proximity, and local and global scales. These are the kinds of performative and immanent

geographies of/for relational ethics that I have been working towards in this chapter; ‘projects of making’ more livable worlds made possible by the ‘ongoing interweaving of our lives’ with manifold others (Ingold, 2000b: 69).<sup>13</sup>

As I suggested in the previous chapter, food scares are events that condense the metabolic intimacies habitual to eating, mapping gut apprehensions into cogitable rationalities that are discordant with those of industrial food production. Perhaps the most archetypal such event in recent times is that known popularly as Mad Cow Disease. An ‘unintended consequence’ of the intensive feeding regime of the industrial cow, this disease took passage through protein meal supplements derived from rendered animal carcasses (including those of cows) and routinely fed to cattle (and other animals) to speed growth and increase bodily productivity. Its manifestation in an epidemic of the degenerative brain disease BSE (Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy) in Britain’s cattle population in the 1980s and 1990s turned out, against scientific and Government assurances at the time, not to stop there. Humans too began to exhibit pathologically similar and equally fatal symptoms of infectivity in cases numerous and distinctive enough to be categorized as a new variant of CJD (Creutzfeldt Jakob Disease) (see Ratzan, 1998).<sup>14</sup>

The ethical (and political) import of the BSE–vCJD epidemic in Britain begins by acknowledging the corporeal specificities of cows as herbivorous ruminants, and following the incongruous ‘rationale’ of a feeding regime indifferent to them through to the eating habits and food choices of consumers. The practice provoked revulsion and disbelief in equal measure among an unsuspecting public. What kind of rationality was it that could make sense of such routine cannibalism? The rationalities both exposed and overshadowed by the spectre of the disease were those of cost-cutting and profit-margins in a corporate animal feed industry careless of the offensive detail of how their products were derived, and of balance sheets and productivity gains for farmers accustomed to gauging their husbandry in terms of the metabolic conversion of inputs into outputs. At once ‘man-made’ and ‘pathogenous’, the hybrid potency of the disease resonated with gut apprehensions of the corporeal kinship and fleshy currency between cows and people. Mad Cow Disease became an uncanny familiar in homes and workplaces, conversations and mass media, extending its presence through all manner of intermediaries: the sombre figures and graphs plotting the rising incidence of disease and declining sales of meat (particularly beef); hidden camera journeys into the once alien worlds of abattoirs and rendering plants; and the sickening image that still endures of a cow staggering, collapsing and trembling on a concrete farmyard floor. Scientists, government ministers and industry spokespeople were disconcerted to find their authoritative pronouncements and scripted assurances enmeshed

as more or less compelling storylines in this intricate national drama (Miller, 1999).

The symptoms being so widely witnessed only became officially consolidated around the acronym BSE in 1987. Early government policy towards the disease was informed by the report of the Southwood Report (1989) which broadly accepted the then preferred theory that scrapie, a disease endemic in the sheep population, was the most likely infective agent being transmitted through animal feed to cattle. The Southwood Report concluded that 'from the present evidence it is most unlikely that BSE will have any implications for human health' (ibid: conclusions para. 9.2). Seven years later in 1996, the British Government finally admitted that the disease could, and had, spread to humans. This about-face followed the unwelcome advice of its Expert Panel on BSE in 1995. The Panel accepted evidential claims supporting another theory, that the infective agents in BSE (like scrapie and other transmissible spongiform encephalopathies – TSEs) were 'proteinaceous infectious particles', or 'prions' (see Ridley and Baker, 1998). They concluded that it was much more likely that the BSE epidemic had been caused by the recycling of BSE-infected cow carcasses in cattle feed, rather than those of scrapie-infected sheep, and that the disease was capable of transmission to humans through the ingestion of infected tissue and body fluids, blood transfusion and the like.<sup>15</sup>

As the sticky properties of prions gained scientific and policy adherents, so too did they become potent *spokethings* for the porosity of the corporeal borders between cows and people, effecting their indifference to species location and slow tempo replication in the spatial and temporal ordering of agri-food networks (see Hinchliffe, 2001). As such, they bore credible witness to the metabolic geographies bodying forth in the gut apprehensions of eating. Incarnating connectivities between the sites and practices of food production and consumption, animal and human well-being, these 'rogue' proteins proved unlikely allies in undermining the prevailing commercial, policy and scientific cartographies of affectivity and responsibility and making space for more relational ethical possibilities. The realignments of inter-corporeal sensibilities to collective modes of sense-making nourished by BSE have been honed through any number of subsequent food scares in Europe, galvanizing changes in shopping and eating habits, producing and retailing practices, and policy architectures and instruments. Red meat, particularly beef, consumption has never recovered. More and more people are choosing organic and/or animal welfare certificated foods. The rationale and practices of product traceability developed in these 'alternative' food networks, are increasingly becoming mainstream marketing and policy standards (see Murdoch *et al.*, 2000). Such polyvalent mappings into knowledge of the affectivity of embodied difference diagram new modes of connectivity that are the stuff of ethical relating.

## becoming other-wise

. . . in the cyborg context of . . . hybrids of nature/culture, the question is not who will get to be human, but what kinds of couplings across the humanist divide are possible – or unavoidable. (Wolfe, 1998: 84)

In an effort to articulate a relational understanding of ethical connectivity that does not presume or reinforce the cartographies of humanism, I have identified corporeality and hybridity as key modalities for reconfiguring the spaces and constituencies of ethical practice. Far from abandoning the collective moral claims of humanity, this enterprise is concerned with recuperating them from the grip of a universal ethical subject configured as the autonomous self, and recognizing that their efficacy depends on admitting more than human difference into the compass of considerability. As Katherine Hayles argues in her account of *How we became post-human*,

to think of the subject as an autonomous self . . . authorizes the fear that if the boundaries are breached at all, there will be nothing to stop the self's complete dissolution. . . . When the human is seen as part of a distributed system, the full expression of human capability can be seen precisely to *depend* on the splice rather than being imperiled by it. (1999: 290, original emphasis)

But, like the traces of one-plus-one logic that haunt Haraway's cyborg, the 'splice' here betrays Hayles's post-human as a cybernetic novelty; an epochal breach in the otherwise settled borders between the human and the non-human, and one expressive of 'our' capabilities. The splice merely stitches over the cut. The kind of relational ethics that I have been working towards here casts hybridity in a different tense, defined less by its departure from patterns of being that went before than with how it articulates the fluxes of becoming that complicate the spacings–timings of social life, and expressive of the creative impulse of more than human energies.<sup>16</sup> On this account, hybridity compels us to acknowledge that not only does 'humanity' always already 'dwell among badly analysed composites [like nature or the non-human] but that 'we' ourselves [the human-all-too-human] are badly analysed composites' (Ansell-Pearson, 1997: 7).

Taking feminist and environmentalist critiques of the individualist currency of mainstream ethical discourse as my starting points, I have argued that their various efforts to articulate more relational ethical praxes by either 'embodying' or 'enlarging' the company of ethical subjects are often thwarted by a residual humanism that condemns them to trafficking between (human)/society and (non-human)/nature as pre-constituted domains of categorically different kinds of being. The radical pluralism of

hybridity variously invited by science studies can only do its work by refusing the Cartesian terms of this settlement in which ‘human identity is wagered entirely on the use of “words”, while the animal body, with all its inarticulate sounds, is relegated to the mechanical universe of automatons and chiming clocks’ (Senior, 1997: 62). It is a settlement that both diminishes human conduct, reducing it to the dictates of a disembodied reason, and disqualifies everything else from the company of agential efficacy. In so far as they temper the lingering one-plus-one calculus of ‘couplings’, hybridity and corporeality redirect our attention to the affective relations between heterogeneous bodies in terms of their specific enunciative consistencies within a material–semiotic register of mutual prehensions and sensibilities that exceeds the signal monopoly of the word (Hansen, 2000a: 13). Learning (how) to map these affectivities into knowledge, like

learning to swim or learning a foreign language means composing the singular points of one’s own body or one’s own language with those of another shape or element which tears us apart but also propels us into a hitherto unknown . . . world of problems. (Deleuze, 1968: 164)

In the manner of ‘food scares’, hybridity and corporeality trip those habits of thought that hold ‘the body’ apart from other bodies and ‘the human’ apart from other mortals, motioning instead to the shifting fabric of differentiation produced through their lively enfolding and which, as de Landa puts it, ‘keeps the world from closing’ (1999, 36). In this they amplify the repertoire of skills and associations enjoined in the praxis of ethical relating and help to open up the ‘possibility and actuality of connections, arrangements, lineages, machines’ (Grosz, 1994: 197) in at least three ways. First, by dispersing ethical considerability beyond the unified (and always) human subject without resorting to its wholesale extension to other living kinds. It is no longer, as Wolfe puts it, a ‘question of who will get to be human’ but rather one of how the ‘we’ of ethical communities is to be renegotiated on account of its heterogeneous, intercorporeal composition. Secondly, by complicating this bodily redistribution of ethical subjectivity in terms of the profusion of intermediaries – instruments, signals, machines, elements – which insinuate their energies and inertias in the intimate assemblages of corporeal becoming. Hybridity and corporeality interfere, in other words, with ethical prescriptions that would disown such familiars, making it possible

instead of demonizing technologies [to] assess their promise and those of the new bodily configurations [afforded] by them in terms of the extent to which they promote and preserve the space of differentiation that makes our corporeal exchanges possible. (Weiss, 1999: 6)

And thirdly, by releasing the spatial imaginaries of ethical community from both the geo-metrics of universalism and the confines of propinquity and genealogy, they disturb the territorializations of self, kinship, neighbourhood and nation and invite other 'languages of attachment' (Ignatieff, 1984: 139).

- 38 One is reminded here of Rachel Carson's careful, passionate science and the way in which her opposition to the programmatic use of the pesticide DDT earned her personal and professional vilification by corporate and government scientists who questioned her scientific credentials as an 'unmarried woman' and 'probable communist' (Lear, 1997: 428–35).

## chapter 7

- 1 Notable reworkings of the natural law tradition include those of Aquinas and Grotius, but Locke's work best epitomizes early modern tensions between notions of 'common good' and 'individual good' (see Tuck, 1979; Tully, 1993).
- 2 Contemporary writers in this Kantian tradition have modified their reliance on the impartiality of justice by recognizing that competent moral agents are contracted on unequal terms; a theme pursued most influentially by John Rawls (1971) in his 'difference principle', and by Will Kymlicka (1991) in his notion of the 'pluralist contract'.
- 3 Persons in law can be non-individuals, for example states, corporations, unions etc. McHugh has argued that if the concept of the 'security of the individual' (central to human rights law) were extended from persons to human beings, this would contribute towards the realization of substantive equality (i.e. in terms of the material prerequisites for participating as equal members of a polity) (1992: 460).
- 4 It is no coincidence that the language of early women's struggles for political rights, notably in the writings of Mary Wollstonecraft, should borrow from those for the abolition of slavery in likening the status of wives to that of slaves (see Ferguson, 1992).
- 5 This is not to suggest that these are the only responses (for example, Habermasian critical theory is also notable) but rather that they have been the most influential in the sense of being translated into discourses beyond the academy.
- 6 Interestingly, Mouffe points to similar problems to those raised here with what she calls 'a certain type of extreme postmodern fragmentation of the social' (1995: 262) – but without identifying any alleged 'extremists'.
- 7 See also Diprose's notion of 'corporeal schema' which takes up Merleau-Ponty's idea of the body's directional activity or 'intentional arc' (1994: 106) and the special issue of *Hypatia* on 'feminism and the body' (fall, 1991).
- 8 See also, Leder (1990a, 1990b) and Levin (1990).
- 9 The ethical standing of animals has been a matter of longstanding dispute in moral philosophy, well in advance of contemporary environmentalism. Particularly influential contributions include the Thomist legacy of Thomas Aquinas in the natural law tradition and the utilitarian legacy of Jeremy Bentham in the social contract tradition (see Midgley, 1983). For an excellent fictional rendition of these philosophical arguments see Coetzee's *The lives of animals* (1999).
- 10 A good example is the global network DAWN (Development with Women working for a New Era) which since 1984 has sought to articulate material connectivities between environmental, livelihood and health issues and the centrality of 'third world' women in this nexus (Braidotti *et al.*, 1994).

- 11 Ansell-Pearson (1997) provides a useful account of Deleuze and Guattari's acknowledged debt to Bergson's philosophical account of creative evolution (1983/1907) and the biologist von Uexküll's contrapuntal conception of biological processes and forms (1992/1934) (see also Ingold, 1995a).
- 12 Obviously this is not to suggest that Latour is not passionate about his work. One has only to think of the title and style of his book about the unrealized blueprint for a rapid transport system in Paris – *Aramis or the love of technology* (1996), or his zealous efforts to ally science and science studies (1999a) against their caricatured enmity in the so-called 'science wars'. But rather that his work is not passionate in the sense taken in this book from Game and Metcalf's *Passionate sociology*, namely that he 'masterfully refuse[s] to place [himself] within the social life [he] studies' (1996: 5). In so far as he positions himself beyond the academy at all it is by dissociation. For example, his aversion to 'a conception of left-wing radicalism that has not yet been renewed as forcefully as science has been' (1997b: xvii); or his repudiation of the misguided terms on which 'green' parties and movements have sought to put 'nature' on the political agenda (1999c).
- 13 Ingold's 'weaving'/'making' variant of the Heideggerian distinction between 'dwelling' and 'building' purposefully rejects its insistence that human rationality and subjectivity mark an absolute break from the animal world (see also Glendinning, 1998: 73–4).
- 14 These transpecies infectivities were not limited to cattle and humans but have been recorded in increasing numbers in companion animals (notably cats) and zoo animals (notably deer), giving rise to the generic term TSEs (transpecies spongiform encephalopathies) (Ridley and Baker, 1998).
- 15 The most exhaustive account of the shifting sands of Government policy and scientific advice towards BSE–vCJD in the 1980s–1990s and assessment of the distribution of responsibility for its devastating failings is provided by the voluminous report of the Lord Phillips' enquiry into BSE (see BSE Inquiry, 1999 and associated website).
- 16 'Couplings', like 'cyborgs', betoken a version of hybridity in which difference is refigured in the alterity of already constituted kinds. By contrast, the emphasis in my account on the indeterminacy of difference draws on Bergson's bio-philosophy, particularly his notion of *differentiation* as an explosive 'internal' life force (1983/1907), subsequently taken up and reworked by Deleuze (1994/1968) (and with Guattari (1988/1980)). This distinction is important in understanding the contrast between, say, the approaches of Latour and Haraway to hybridity. For valuable discussion on these points, see Ansell-Pearson (1999: 33–69) and Hansen (2000b).