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VIII. Faking Art and Faking Nature: The Art Analogy and Restoration Ecology.

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Robert Elliot's 1982 "Faking Nature," represents one of the strongest philosophical rejections of the ground of restoration ecology ever offered.[1] Here, and in a succession of papers defending the original essay, Elliot argued that ecological restoration, the practice of restoring damaged ecosystems, was akin to art forgery. Just as a copied art work could not reproduce the value of the original restored nature could not reproduce the value of original nature conceived as a form of nonanthropocentric and intrinsic, as opposed to merely instrumental, value.[2] Eric Katz's 1992 "The Big Lie: Human Restoration of Nature," extended this claim by further arguing that whatever was produced in a restored landscape it certainly could not count as having the original value of nature, particularly wild nature, and necessarily represented a form of disvalue and domination of nature.[3] Elliot continued to press his argument forward after the original publication of "Faking Nature," augmenting, and some would say softening his critique of restoration, in a book also called *Faking Nature*.[4] Perhaps because both Elliot and Katz rest their claims on the defense of a strong distinction between nature and culture the two arguments are often lumped together as the Elliot-Katz rejection of the value of ecological restoration. Nonetheless, Elliot has made it clear in his recent book that his view is distinct from and even at odds with Katz's views.

In previous papers I have criticized Elliot and Katz's work as an unhelpful philosophical contribution to the literature on restoration ecology. To my mind, restorationists are ultimately up to more good than harm, and whatever the value of the objects they are producing (*vis-à-vis* some description of the intrinsic value of nature) they are making a positive contribution to the overall natural environment that needs to be encouraged. According to the strain of environmental philosophy I endorse restorations should not be challenged along the lines offered by Elliot and Katz, and, in fact, there is some reason to believe that the contributions they have offered to the literature on restoration has been unhelpful to the way the restoration community views the philosophical import of its own projects.[5] In other work I have looked at what I think are the more important issues involving

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[1] Robert Elliot, "Faking Nature," *Inquiry* 25, 1982, pp. 81-93. All citations of this paper in this essay are from the reprint of "Faking Nature," in *Environmental Ethics*, ed. Robert Elliot (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 76-88. Parenthetical page references to Elliot will be to this work.

[2] For those unfamiliar with these distinctions in ethics, intrinsic is taken to mean the worth objects have in their own right, independent of their value to any other end, and instrumental value is, broadly speaking, the worth objects have in fulfilling other ends. For many environmental ethicists the principle goal of an environmental ethics is to describe the intrinsic (or inherent) value of nature as opposed to its merely instrumental value for human use and consumption. Once an account of the intrinsic value of nature is found then it is assumed that a range of moral obligations can be derived for things having that value. Many environmental ethicists see valuing nature as only instrumental to human ends as part of the cause of human disregard for the environment and hence today's environmental problems. Many environmental philosophers assume that a nonanthropocentric account of natural value is needed to reject instrumental valuing of nature and so any environmental ethic must endorse some kind of intrinsic value account of the value of nature (or at least a non-instrumental account). In turn, it is thought that anthropocentrists can only value nature in instrumental terms. See for example much of the work of Holmes Rolston, III and J. Baird Callicott on this point. I disagree with most if not all of these views but will not pursue those disagreements here.

[3] Eric Katz, "The Big Lie: Human Restoration of Nature," *Research in Philosophy and Technology* 12, 1992, pp. 231-241.

[4] Robert Elliot, *Faking Nature* (London: Routledge Press, 1997).

[5] I originally make this argument in "Compatibilism in Political Ecology," in *Environmental Pragmatism*, eds. Andrew Light and Eric Katz, (London: Routledge Press, 1996), pp. 161-184.

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restoration ecology, namely, the participatory elements of restoration as an environmental practice.[6]

In this paper however I wish to examine these debates from another perspective. While I do not find Elliot and Katz very helpful in the broader context of the practice of ecological restoration it cannot be denied that they have offered some powerful philosophical arguments on this issue. These argument deserve a direct response on their own ground. Rather than taking on their strong metaphysicial distinction between nature and culture, as some critics do, I will assume it is true and then argue that it does not sufficiently justify the critique of restoration that follows from it. This is an approach that I have used elsewhere to critique other aspects of their work.[7]

My specific focus here will be an examination of Elliot's claim that ecological restorations should be evaluated through an analogy with art forgery. To be sure Elliot's new work provides a more nuanced analysis of the kinds of value produced in different kinds of restorations than he previously admitted. I will save for another time a detailed response to his more recent work. Here I will take on the core underlying assumption common to his early and later view that human intervention cannot improve nature and that restored nature, of any variety, is different in kind from original nature. My central claim will be that Elliot's original formulation of this problem admits to a distinction between at least two different forms of restoration one of which is much less ethically troubling than the other. A further elaboration of these two different kinds of restoration will require an investigation of Mark Sagoff's arguments concerning the normative status of art restorations. With this distinction in mind we may well be able to begin to reconstruct a more robust assessment of the value of ecological restoration than is provided by Elliot as well as breathe new life into the possible utility of Elliot's evocative analogy between restorations of nature and reproductions of works of art.

Malicious vs. Benevolent Restoration

Elliot's original "Faking Nature," as well as the central chapter in the more recent book of the same name, begins with an identification of a particular kind of pernicious restoration – restoration that is used as a rationalization for the destruction of nature. According to defenders of this type of restoration, any harm done to nature by humans is ultimately repairable through restoration and therefore should be discounted. Elliot calls this view, the "restoration thesis." In his more recent book the restoration thesis becomes the "replacement thesis" with an accompanying restoration proposal. Consistently, however, Elliot rejects the restoration-replication thesis through an analogy between the relationship between original and replicated works of art and nature. Just as we would not value a replication of a work of art as much as we would value the original we wouldn't value a

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[6] Andrew Light, "Restoration, the Value of Participation, and the Risks of Professionalization," in *Restoring Nature: Perspectives from the Social Sciences and Humanities*, eds. Paul Gobster and Bruce Hull (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2000), pp. 163-181, and "Restoring Ecological Citizenship" in *Democracy and the Claims of Nature*, eds. Ben Minteer and Bob Pepparman Taylor (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), pp. 153-172.

[7] For my critique of Katz see see Andrew Light, "Ecological Restoration and the Culture of Nature: A Pragmatic Perspective," in *Restoring Nature: Perspectives from the Social Sciences and Humanities*, op cit., pp. 49-70. For my positive view see Andrew Light, "Ecological Restoration: From Functional Descriptions to Normative Prescriptions," finished and forthcoming in *Functions in Biological and Artificial Worlds: Comparative Philosophical Perspectives*, ed. P. Kroes and U. Krohs (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2008).

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replicated bit of nature as much as we would the original thing, such as, some bit of wilderness. Elliot's case is persuasive that the two sorts of value choices are similar.

The force of the analogy is provided by an argument that with art, as with nature, we rely on an understanding of their origins (or genesis as Elliot puts it in his later book) in order to determine their value. For example, Elliot asks us to imagine a case where developers, needing to run underground pipes through our backyard, ask to remove a valuable piece of sculpture from the yard. But because the sculpture is so fragile it cannot be moved without causing it damage. The developer tells us not to worry because he will replace the sculpture with an exact replica after he finishes his work. Of course, we will reject the fake in exchange for the original because we "value the original as an aesthetic object, as an object with a specific genesis and history" (80, all pagination in the text from Elliot refers to his original article). In the same way Elliot suggests we value nature as an object with a "special kind of continuity with the past," or with a natural genesis, understood as a "value-multiplying or intensifying" property though not a value in and of itself.[8] Restoration as an attempt to reproduce nature, particularly as motivated by the restoration thesis, fakes original nature as reproduction of a work of art fakes the original piece. Particularly in the case of the malevolent restoration at the heart of the restoration-replication thesis this analogy seems entirely appropriate.

But after clarifying this initial claim in the original article (and in the book) Elliot suggests that perhaps all restorations, including natural regenerations, not just those embodied in the restoration thesis, are at most worrisome and at least always less valuable than original nature through a series of examples designed to push the argument that nature has a distinct, originary or genesis value.[9] In the first two examples lovers of wilderness (in the article it is "John," later renamed "Jill" in the book), are deliberately fooled into believing that they are experiencing wilderness, first, by a mad scientist who hooks them up to an experience machine which makes them think they are experiencing wilderness when they are actually sitting in a laboratory, and, second, by a group of environmental engineers who have created a perfect plastic wilderness that John and Jill think is the real thing. In both cases it is clear that whatever value we wish to ascribe to nature it is not to be found in such ruses. Similar to the example of art forgery faked nature is not the real thing. But in case three our victims are taken to a place that was once a devastated strip mine. After the forest was destroyed, the earth torn up, and animals either killed or driven away, the landscape was restored: "Trees of the species which grew there once before the devastation grow there again, and the animal species have returned" (84).[10] But as in the other two cases Elliot maintains that our lovers of wilderness have been "short changed," presented with less than what they value most, clearly indicating Elliot's belief in the inherent superiority of original nature to restored nature.

This last claim is a bit confusing since Elliot briefly reassures us in the original paper, and more expansively in the book, that some kinds of restoration are beneficial or benevolent.

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[8] *Faking Nature*, op. cit., p. 81.

[9] As I will suggest below Elliot's views on the value of restoration are confusing. He does admit at a couple points in *Faking Nature* that restored nature can surpass the value of the thing that was restored: "a restored natural environment, provided it accords with natural designs and is constituted by natural objects, may possess considerable intrinsic value and certainly much more than the degraded environment which was the object of restoration (108)." At the same time he is adamant that this talk of improving value cannot be thought "to imply that nature can be improved by human intervention" (105). In some sense what Elliot is arguing is that natural value is never really restored but only that restorations create spaces where natural value can once again flourish, albeit a different form of natural value than was lost. This is clarified a bit in Elliot's claim that over a sufficiently long period of time restorations can restore value though they "cannot compensate for the value lost during the intervening period of decreasingly diminished value." Of course one wonders who is not being compensated in this formulation.

[10] These first three cases are presented in *Faking Nature* on pages 86-88.

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Says even the earlier Elliot: "Artificially transforming an utterly barren, ecologically bankrupt landscape into something richer and more subtle may be a good thing. That is a view quite compatible with the belief that replacing a rich natural environment with a rich artificial one is a bad thing" (82). It becomes increasingly clear in the progression of Elliot's views that the principle determination of the status of a restoration as either a "good thing" or a "bad thing" is the judgment of the intentions of the restorers. In fact, so pronounced is the original description of the malicious kind of restoration at work in the restoration thesis, we can derive a distinction between two different kinds of restoration in Elliot's work: (1) malicious restorations, such as the kind described in the restoration thesis, and (2) benevolent restorations, or, those orchestrated in order to remedy a past harm done to nature though not offered as a justification for harming nature. Benevolent restorations, unlike malicious restorations, cannot serve as justifications for the conditions which would warrant their engagement. If this distinction holds then we can claim that Elliot's original target was not all of restoration but only a particular kind of restoration. Elliot's more recent work confirms this suggestion. Perhaps then it is the case that benevolent restorations are not diminished in value by Elliot's art analogy, and, in fact, might aptly be more akin to art restoration than art forgery or replacement. Again, this is a view Elliot would endorse today. Art forgery examples can therefore only be applied against a kind of malicious restoration that we may easily agree ought to be rejected. Benevolent forms of restoration then ought to be philosophically defensible as preservations of natural value just as art restorations are preservations of artistic value.

But what Elliot would not accept is the claim that humans can improve nature through restoration practices. As we have seen Elliot's wilderness examples belie a skepticism about the value of any kind of restoration for not being able to produce original nature. Human intervention is always "value-detracting" or "value-retarding" for Elliot; only the resurgence of nature over time can bring back natural value to an area even though it can never replace value that has been lost.[11] Elliot even goes so far as to claim that a naturally regenerated forest has less value than the original forest which preceded it thus damning with faint praise the value of nature's own self-restorations.[12]

This skepticism is more better illustrated in Elliot's early reflections on the importance of a cognitive understanding of nature to determine its value. Elliot offers the following anecdote:

> There is a particular stand of mountain ash that I had long admired. The trees were straight and tall, of uniform stature, neither densely packed nor too open-spaced. I then discovered what would have been obvious to a more expert eye, namely that the stand of mountain ash had been planted to replace original forest which had been burnt out. This explained the uniformity in the size, the density and so on: it also changed my attitude to that piece of landscape. (. . .) Knowing that the forest is not a naturally evolved forest causes me to feel differently about it: it causes me to perceive the forest differently and to assign it less value than naturally evolved forests (87-88).

If the restoration of an area destroyed by a natural environmental change is not as valuable as the original nature on Elliot's view then certainly all restorations made necessary by anthropogenic causes cannot hold the same value as original nature either. On Elliot's account then the distinction I find embedded in his paper between malicious and benevolent restorations could be a distinction without much of a difference. This suggestion is confirmed by Elliot's repeated worries in his more recent work that even the good forms of restoration he admires can involve acts of implicit deception. Do resources exist to preserve the

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[11] *Faking Nature*, op. cit., p. 93.
[12] Ibid., p. 88.

malicious-benevolent restoration distinction on the theoretical ground developed in both versions of "Faking Nature"? Yes, but this argument needs to be carefully developed.

Ecological Restoration as Art Restoration

We can begin with the intuition that surely this distinction between restored and original nature at work in the ash forest example is far too crude to be useful. On Elliot's view, for example, what reasons could be offered not to tear down the restored ash forest and rebuild it again later if it has no originary value at this stage? Elliot's only answer is that elapsed time of a restoration can increase value though he equivocates as to whether he means that the time we should pay attention to in assessing lapsed value is the time since the damage to nature has occurred or the time since the restoration was undertaken. This is however an overly simplified answer. As I will suggest below, we need to think about how restoration can augment existing natural value as the best foundation for determining the value of restorations. Additionally, if the restored ash forest doesn't have the same value as the original, and by analogy it is then something like an art forgery, then what would stop us from replacing it with another fake? What would discriminate the value of the restoration from the value of the restoration of the restoration?

Imagine a case where an original restoration was benevolently performed in such a way that it became integral to the health of the surrounding original nature. If we thought we could improve upon that patch of nature would this new restoration be permissible in a way that altering the original nature around the old restored patch would not be permissible? In other words, if, on Elliot's view, we can discriminate between the value of the original ("natural") nature and the value of the older bit of restored nature does this mean that we must consider all restored nature, no matter what its age or function, to have the same kind of value? Surely not, and Elliot would agree. But in the end it is difficult to discern the ethical criteria available to us with respect to the value of nature which would help us decide whether or not to replace a restoration.

Again, there are two conflicting sources for answers to this question in Elliot's work: on the one hand we have his claim up front that his arguments against the restoration thesis are directed against what I call malicious claims that it is permissible to destroy nature because we can always reproduce its value by restoring it later. This argument relies on an assumption that there must be some kind of difference in the value of a restoration intended as a replacement for nature and the value of a restored site which was not intended as a replacement, that is, a benevolent restoration. On the other hand Elliot's ash forest example and his claims that human intervention is value-retarding indicates that once we know that any site is the result of a restoration then it is of very different, specifically lesser, value than original nature. On the former suggestion we have in principle the tools to differentiate between different kinds of restorations as Elliot tries to do in his later work. On the later suggestion, all restorations fall into some category that marks them as lesser in value thus clouding the issue of how to compare different humanely produced landscapes. Without any apparent method of discriminating between the different kinds of lesser value implied in the ash example, depending on whether the restored forest was the result of a malicious or benevolent act, then there is a tension between these two accounts.

The only way of resolving these two different accounts seems to be to take the first claim as not actually arguing that there is any difference in the products of restoration depending on the intentions of restorers but only that such a distinction can be made with respect to the process of restoration. Even though one kind of restoration is motivated by better reasons than the other both the malicious and benevolent restorationists still produce something that has less value. This solution to the puzzle is confirmed by Elliot's continual

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worries about the possibility of unintentional deceptions in what he calls intrinsic token-restorations. But while Elliot has an implicit process-product distinction in his argument he does not develop it. All restorations, at the end of the day, no matter what their benefits appear to be judged by Elliot by the value of the thing that is produced (in comparison with original nature) and not by the process that went into producing them. Perhaps more accurately, no matter what differences we can highlight about the different ways of carrying out the process of restoration, for Elliot, these differences are inconsequential for an evaluation of the product where one is interested in claiming a parity between original and restored nature. This means that Elliot's work contains few resources for differentiating the value between, for example, a restoration and a restoration of a restoration. But does that make sense to our intuitions about the different values of different kinds of restorations?

Perhaps one way of differentiating between a more integrated, older restoration, and a less integrated replacement of that restoration would be to come up with some criteria by which to judge the value of different kinds of artifacts. After all, if a restoration cannot produce "nature," per se, because humans cannot create or duplicate the originary value of nature then the product of a restoration, as Eric Katz argues, is only an artifact. But the evaluation of the value of artifacts is an issue that goes beyond the scope of Elliot's work. If an assessment of restorations as artifacts is the only way to differentiate between two kinds of restorations then the natural processes at work in either restoration would be inconsequential to the determination of their value.[13] Though I will not fully defend this claim here such a basis for evaluating the value of the two restorations would be counter-intuitive, seeming to miss something about the role of nature in these two artifacts (at least as they would be described by Elliot). In the example I offered before imagine that the older integrated restoration plays a crucial role in the maintenance of the natural systems adjoining it – perhaps it has become a crucial corridor for endangered wildlife between two protected wilderness areas. Even though that role would be evidence of the restoration's instrumental value to the health and preservation of the intrinsic value of the nature adjoining the restoration this would not mean that an explanation of the rationale for not altering the older restored area, or replacing it with another replacement, could only be made in terms of the instrumental value the older restoration served for those other areas. Beyond this we would say that the restored bit of nature was an integral restorative component of a larger ecosystem. In that sense then it would have to have some form of natural value in itself beyond its instrumental value insofar as the intrinsic value of the surrounding original nature would necessarily be diminished or abrogated by the loss of the integrated restored area. And I think that value – which here represents the value of the original benevolent restoration – is more like art restoration than art forgery. Its appreciation is inextricably tied to the presumed intrinsic value of the surrounding nature.

To further illustrate this intuition that ecological restorations are more like art restorations than art forgeries imagine by comparison that we have a great painting which consists of three separate panels. Because of the size of the work transporting this painting requires disconnecting the panels from each other and then reassembling them at the next exhibition site. In the last move of this painting the middle panel was put in a separate truck for transport to the next location perhaps because the movers ran out of room in the van into which they had already placed the two outside panels. On the way to the exhibit the second truck containing the middle panel has an accident and the middle panel is damaged.

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[13] It may seem odd to be drawing such a severe distinction between the evaluation of nature and artifacts, but, again, I am trying to work here as close as possible to the terms of Elliot's analysis. Accordingly, because Elliot draws a sharp ontological distinction between nature and culture, we must respect this divide when evaluating a restoration as an artifact.

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Fortunately the next museum contains a skilled art restorationist who is able to carefully repair the damaged panel so that once the work is put back together the entire painting appears in tact.

Now, certainly, the middle panel has been altered and no longer has the same genesis value at least in the terms that Elliot would put it when he discusses the originary value of art. It is no longer the same painting "executed by a man with certain intentions, at a certain stage of his artistic development, living in a certain artistic *milieu*" (83). But, in a sense, it is the same painting just one that has been benevolently restored in order to preserve the cohesiveness of the entire three panel painting. What is the value of the middle panel? In a certain sense its restored value is partly parasitic on its role in the larger painting – it provides continuity for the work by connecting the two exterior panels.

If one argues that this value must be described as merely an instrumental value for the original exterior panels then I would reply that this is an instrumental value that the middle panel had all along. The middle panel always provided this connection between the two exterior panels and nothing about the restoration of the damage actually changes the function that the middle panel served at all. But is the intrinsic value of the middle panel diminished by its restoration? I do not think so. First, it does not seem to make sense that the restoration destroys the original value of the work in any way similar to the explanation for why a faked copy of the same work cannot reproduce the value of the original. Depending on one's position on the value of art restorations (and, as we will see, depending on the kind of art restoration undertaken) it is plausibly the case that in some sense the restored panel diminished in degree of value but certainly not in kind. The same object is before us only one that has gone through a process of damage and eventual restoration. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the value of the overall work must be ascribed to the entire painting not its individual panels. If we could segregate out the value of the middle panel as no longer having the originary value of the other two panels, and hence possessing a different kind of value, then the question is of course begged why we do not separate out the value of individual parts of the work by some more finer grained division. Imagine that each panel has sixteen identifiable squares. Do we then say that each square has a determinate value separable from the larger work ? If so, then why not individual parts of each square ? Why not indeed individual brush strokes and individual pieces of the canvas that contain no paint at all ? At this point the ascription of value would become an absurd task requiring incredibly difficult to maintain distinctions concerning how we decide at what scale of a work we should begin ascribing value to the work.

Instead, we take the whole work to be of value. Indeed, this is consistent with the larger criteria that we use to identify the originary value of an art work as Elliot identifies it: the identity of the person who painted the piece, the fact that they are at a certain stage in their career, and that they are working in an even larger *milieu*. But then if we must take the work as a whole in assessing its value what is the value of the three paneled work once the middle panel has been repaired? Though there may be some criteria on which we could assess its market value as being different I do not think that its originary value, as Elliot puts it, is different at all. If somehow the contingent fact of the restoration changes the originary, or intrinsic value, then other contingent facts involving the overall quality of the painting must be taken into account as well. What if the painting was stored for many years in two different places with the outer panels kept in better conditions than the middle panel. Mold has grown on the middle panel because it was stored in a humid space and so its quality compared to the other panels has diminished. But when put back together with its companion panels which were stored in a cool, dry, place, the originary value remains the same even if the aesthetic quality on some measure has been diminished. Here the value is the same by, in a loose sense, an act of omission of treatment of the middle panel rather than an act of commission.

If this act of omission were to effect the originary value of the work then counterfactually the minutest possible differences in the treatment of every work would have an effect on the originary value of the work. Again, differentiating between the different treatments of the work in order to avoid this reductio would present an extraordinary philosophical hurdle.

Back to restoration. If we were to say that benevolent restorations are like art restorations, like the repair of the middle panel in the previous example, and malicious restorations were more akin to art forgeries, then we would have a reason for arguing that at least benevolent restorations do not decrease the originary value of a bit of nature especially when viewed on a larger scale of the surrounding nature that either is or is not original. If it is the case that the restored nature helps to maintain the originary value of the larger original ecosystem then the benevolent restoration is even more valuable. I take it that this is consistent with Elliot's conception of the value of nature. Perhaps Elliot would agree as he claims later that when it comes to normative assessments of mixed nature and culture areas, then, the wilder the better. Also, our judgment concerning the positive value of such a restoration, as a part of a larger whole, preserves something of Elliot's valid intuition that the origins of nature are important to a determination of its value. But as in the case of art restoration benevolent ecological restorations do not diminish the value of nature and may well add certain forms of value to certain kinds of nature.[14]

Integral vs. Purist Art Restorations

But there are problems with this equation of benevolent restoration with art restoration. Almost thirty years ago Mark Sagoff published a persuasive article in *The Journal of Philosophy* on the aesthetic value of art restorations.[15] There, Sagoff argued, primarily using the example of the Vatican restoration of Michelangelo's *Pietà*, that not just any art restoration counted as a legitimate restoration of a work. Sagoff distinguished between integral restorations – a restoration that "puts new pieces in the place of original fragments which have been lost" – and purist restorations – a restoration which "limits itself to clearing works of art and to reattaching original pieces that may have fallen" (p. 457, all pagination in the text from Sagoff refers to this article). Following the 1972 attack on the *Pietà*, when a lunatic had struck the statue fifteen times with a nine-pound hammer, breaking the arm of the Madonna, knocking off her nose and chipping her veil and an eye, the Director of the Vatican Museum, Professor Roedig de Campos, took charge of an effort to painstakingly replace as much of the statue as possible with the broken parts and to integrally restore what remained from a plaster cast which had previously been made of the work before it was damaged. Though I will not reproduce the entirety of Sagoff's argument here I am persuaded that he is correct in concluding that the originary value of the *Pietà* was lost as a work of art once the integral restoration was begun (or perhaps, once the damage occurred – Sagoff is ambivalent on this point). If the restoration which I hypothesized with my three paneled painting was a purist restoration then it could be distinguished from an integral restoration successfully without begging the counterfactual questions concerning the acts of omission involved in the preservation of any work of art. Integral restorations on the other hand do not preserve originary value, and on Sagoff's account, can diminish, and even destroy that value. The

[14] Alastair Gunn attempts to make a similar analogy between ecological and art restoration in a reply to Elliot but he mistakenly thinks the analogy is sufficient in itself to rebut the entirety of Elliot's claims. See Gunn, "The Restoration of Species and Natural Environments," *Environmental Ethics* 13:4, Winter 1991, pp. 291-310.

[15] Mark Sagoff, "On Restoring and Reproducing Art," *The Journal of Philosophy* LXXV: 9, September 1978, pp. 453-470. Parenthetical page references to Sagoff will be to this work.

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integrally restored *Pietá* with its new plaster components, is no longer Michelangelo's *Pietá*, or at least no longer has the same originary value.

But where does this leave us with respect to nature where most ecological restorations seem to represent integral restorations? Ironically, I think it clarifies a means for distinguishing different kinds of restoration while perhaps leading to the unhappy conclusion that some kinds of benevolent restoration cannot help but being of a different form of value than the original nature that preceded it even though they can still be distinguished from other restorations. Both Sagoff and Elliot reject the once dominant stream in aesthetics that knowledge of the process of production of a work of art is unimportant in either the appreciation or value of the work. Sagoff summarizes his objection to the view in this way: "we value one object way above another because it is the product of a different process" (456). Earlier I argued that Elliot had a process-product distinction at work in both versions of "Faking Nature" which he did not actively employ. But seen through Sagoff's analysis of the value of art it is clear that the reason why Elliot does not like ecological restoration is because the product is the result of the wrong kind of process. It is not just, as I said earlier, that Elliot is assessing the value of the thing produced but in essence that the value is determined by one characteristic of the process that produced it, namely, that humans produced it. Because of this one characteristic the value of the product is predetermined in one important respect: it cannot have the value of originary nature and may always represent an instance of disvalue.[16] Restorations are the result of a non-natural process, specifically, a human process.

Though not blatantly contradictory this position is at odds with Elliot's embrace of the importance of the details of the process involved in identifying the originary value of art. While, on the one hand, it appears now that Elliot really does rely on an account of process to reject the value of restoration, on the other hand, he uses an account of process to identify the positive originary value of art. But why is one set of processes normatively significant and the other normatively insignificant? Specifically, why is the fact that a human produced a restoration normatively significant and the manner the human produced the restoration insignificant while details of the milieu, etc., of the production of an art work is significant? The only account that could make sense of this distinction would be a strong claim that only one narrow ontological criteria was important for evaluating the entire multi-faceted practice of ecological restoration while the value of art is more nuanced. But such an account would seem dubious at best.

So, if Elliot is going to stick to his process account of art there is no *apriori* reason that he can employ to restrict what facets of the process of ecological restoration we pay attention to in assessing its value as a practice akin to art restoration. Surely the details of the process and product are always distinguishable but also always bound in a normative assessment of any thing produced by any process. So, if Elliot cannot so easily dismiss an evaluation of the entire process of restoration in assessing its product then even if ecological restorations are integral restorations the different processes which produce them may be normatively significant. Sagoff admits that some integral restorations are worse than others depending on the process that produces them. Sagoff claims that there would be something worse about the Vatican restoration of the *Pietà* if the curator of the museum tried to hide

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[16] Here there is some division between Elliot and Katz. Elliot is now willing to say there can be some kinds of positive value to restorations (see *Faking Nature*, pp. 111-115) while Katz still decries all restorations as instances of human domination and hubris. Katz says, for example, that "the practice of ecological restoration *can only* represent a misguided faith in the hegemony and infallibility of the human power to control the natural world" (Eric Katz, "The Problem of Ecological Restoration," *Environmental Ethics* 18:2, Summer 1996, p. 222, my emphasis). Also see Katz's review of Elliot's *Faking Nature* in *Ethics and the Environment* 3:2, 1998, pp. 201-205.

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from the public the fact that the sculpture had been restored. To use a restoration to fool people is morally suspect and so there must on this process account be a way of differentiating various kinds of restorations.

We can push the art analogy further by considering the case of the mad curator. What if the Vatican curator had made the mold of the *Pietà* only in order to make it possible to destroy the work so that it would be easier to move the sculpture to another part of the museum. This mad curator had decided to move the piece to the next room and found that, due to settling in the building, the sculpture no longer fit through the door frame – maybe it was just one nose length too long. The curator then made a plaster cast of the entire sculpture in order to be able to knock the nose off the Madonna so it would be easier to move the sculpture through the door frame assuming that the cast could be used later to integrally restore the nose to the Madonna. The Pope, horrified upon hearing the curator's plans, put a stop to the whole process. Finding his scheme frustrated the mad curator had to secretly hire someone to knock the Madonna's nose off in order to rearrange the museum as he wanted. The hit man, wanting the attack to look unplanned, took things a bit further. In this case a thorough normative assessment of the process of making the cast of the *Pietà* would have to be understood in the context of this evil scheme. Like the malicious restorationist the mad curator was providing the means for an integral restoration in a way that not only decreased the value of the restored product but makes the outcome downright objectionable. Clearly the difference in process between the mad curator and the actual curator gives us a reason for differentiating their two products.

Unfortunately though the benevolent integral restoration still does not have the value of the original work. Why ? Because the new work, in the case of the *Pietà*, is now no longer a Michelangelo but some kind of combined work with the curator. Similarly, those interested in maintaining that there is no normative difference between original and restored nature will not find satisfaction in this description of ecological restoration as a form of integral restoration. Any integral restoration of nature, even if it is benevolent, cannot have the same value as original nature. Still, there are clearly reasons to distinguish between different kinds of restoration processes as better or worse and so, perhaps, different kinds of ecologically integral products as better or worse. To go back to my original example, we have a reason now, within the framework of Elliot's original article, to prefer an older, more integrated restoration over a newer one. The older restoration could have been produced through a better process, for a better purpose, and aimed toward a more integrated relationship with the nature around it. Now that we can look at process in assessing the value of restorations, we can pay attention to these differences in order to defend the preservation of older restored areas.

Conclusions

The foregoing argument does not imply that there are not ecological restorations that could be like a purist art restoration, and, therefore, would supplement rather than detract from the originary value of nature. For one thing there are acts of restoration that are very much like purist art restorations: clean-ups are the most obvious cases but more interesting ones involve the bioactivation of existing micro-organisms in soils to allow the land to essentially clean itself up. Here we have human meddling in nature for the same purposes as the purist restoration of art. No new "work" is produced but suppressed elements of nature are allowed to once again perform their functions. Perhaps more common would be a sub-class of purist restoration which we might call "rehabilitative" restoration. When restorationists go through an area cleaning out exotic plants which were introduced at some time into a site, allowing the native plants to reestablish themselves, then they are acting as purist art restorationists would in correcting the work of an integrative restorationist who had

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come before them. If a restorationist, for example, were to remove an 18th century integrative addition to a 16th century painting, then we would assume that this rehabilitative act was consistent with a purist restoration. Now, to give the analogy more force just imagine that the paint used in the 16th century work was a kind of alien paint, evidently used in this and only this particular painting, and the properties of this paint were such that once the 18th century integrative addition had been removed the old paint then reformed itself on the canvas in conformity with the artists original scheme of the work. In this case the purist restoration would only be made that much easier by the qualities of the paint. The fact that nature actually does have such properties should make the rehabilitative form of ecological restoration that much more predominant and acceptable as a form of purist restoration.[17]

Of course, in practice, restorations are never clearly one kind of restoration – integral, purist, rehabilitative – and any particular restoration site will contain multiple and overlapping strategies of at least these three types of activity. How then do we value restorations? At this point in my thinking on this issue I am at two conclusions. First, we have to go back to the point of the scale at which we value something. Clearly scale does matter and the object of natural value, at least from a holist perspective, must be at the level of the ecosystem (as opposed to valuing individuals in ecosystems separately). Because an ecosystem is something that is not easily demarcated – unlike the Madonna's fake nose on her original face – then restorations are at least more likely to serve as conduits for natural value than to be discounted as fakes or forgeries. Second, to the extent that we do not need a strict nature-culture distinction to criticize Elliot's restoration thesis then the ground by which we are to determine natural value based on a restored-original distinction is very unclear. Works of art are human creations as are ecological restorations. If what determines the value of restoration as an object is not its status as a humanly created object, but instead its role in larger natural systems, then we can easily value restorations at a much higher level than certainly Katz and possibly Elliot are willing to admit. But even if we import some kind of distinction between human vs. non-human value into our account of the value of restorations (because restorations are human creations) those restorations that are benevolent, and ultimately self-sustaining, at least, must have something closer to an originary value than even purist art restoration. In that respect the art-nature analogy may ultimately break down. The reason lies again behind this idea of Sagoff's that "the product must be appreciated in relation to the process" (470). If the motivation for the process is part of the process proper, in Sagoff's sense, and assuming there is no master craftsman to whom we may attribute the authorship of nature, then the human restoration of nature must be of value in some very strong sense in comparison to the value of original nature. Purist and rehabilitative restorationists would seek to set in motion the continuance of a process which was interrupted in nature and only try to release natural processes which had been artificially held back. The products of these processes are not just human but they are natural too on some description. The value of the restored parts may only be different in degree from original nature and not in kind. As such, benevolent ecological restorations, like purist art restorations, do not represent fakes, forgeries, or big lies.

[17] Of course, this conclusion may mean that we have to revisit the "exotics" question in the restoration literature, e.g., is the goal of restoration to weed out exotic plants from "native" ecosystems? I do not relish the idea of getting bogged down in this issue and I would only emphasize here that this is a problem only for those who are worried about the question of whether restoration can restore the intrinsic value of nature however that value is conceived.