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"Environmental Arts as First Philosophy: This too a NeoPresocratic Manifesto"

Greaves, Tom

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I offer a response and counter argument to J. Baird Callicott's "Provocations" piece in Environmental Humanities, volume 2. I argue that the historical narrative that Callicott derives from Aristotle regarding the development of philosophical thought from natural philosophy to social and moral concerns, is not the best way to conceive of the project of the Presocratics. Nor does this narrative offer us the best way to conceive of the distinctive tasks of the environmental arts (a term which I argue is to be preferred to the environmental humanities) and their relation to the sciences. I offer a different model, inspired by the Heraclitean notion of unity in opposition, which conceives the task of the arts as the common articulation of our myriad ways of being in the world and the task of the various sciences as the exploration of the world that is manifest in and through those ways of being. This model allows us to see how we might aim towards unity in opposition rather than a fusion of the two cultures. On this basis I make some proposals concerning the long-term and more immediate institutional and pedagogical consequences of this view and reflect upon the challenges facing my teaching on the UEA Master's in Environmental Sciences and Humanities. (Text from author's abstract)

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PDF:
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Further readings:

- Callicott, J. Baird. "A NeoPresocratic Manifesto." *Environmental Humanities* 2 (May 2013): 169–86.

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