



Living with Integrity

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Environmental Values was founded by Alan Holland and first published in 1992. Clive Spash joined the journal's editorial team in 1996 as the review editor. After Alan stepped down as founding editor in 2005, following a short interim period, Clive took over as chief editor of the journal in 2006. When Alan left as editor there was a special issue (Volume 17 no.2) dedicated to his work – much like this one for Clive. In the editorial for that issue, Clive offered a defence of academic values that are increasingly under threat from commercial and political power. The title of the piece, 'A worthwhile academic life', is one that captures the central question it addressed. How can one lead a worthwhile academic life in a world in which academic life itself is increasingly under threat from commerce and political power? Clive focused on the ways in which the marketisation of education corrupts its central values and changes the nature of relationships within education. The editorial opened with the following passage:

The good academic life is a hard one to follow and has become no easier in the past 50 years. Each academic is now to be treated as if a small business enterprise. Expectations are that accounts will be kept of all activities which are to be listed and weighed-up for net worth and value added. Inputs will be judged as wasted if outputs are insufficient or not of the 'right sort', e.g., articles in appropriate journals. Of course what is right becomes what is measurable, e.g., citations. Measures become goals and regulatory devices; so soon there is no academic freedom at all, just inputs, outputs and targets. There is no higher education, just providers and consumers. Don't be foolish and try to educate your students, just keep the customer satisfied (make sure they have the exam answers and all pass) and get good teaching assessments for yourself.

In such a world Aristotle's ideal of achieving wisdom, virtue and happiness through contemplation is increasingly difficult to sustain. Academics who aspire to such goals and see themselves as contributing amongst friends to a wider community for the general good are becoming an endangered species. So people like Alan Holland, who managed to maintain some semblance of the academic ideal, and instil that in others, are to be valued (Spash, 2008, p.121)

Under the editorship of Clive Spash, the journal continued to act in accordance with the values he set out here – as a space in which colleagues could engage in serious deliberation that contributes to a wider community for the general good. The journal from its outset has acted as a forum in which a plurality of different conflicting views could engage in rigorous argument with each other. A point to note about those two features, plurality of different views and rigour of argument, is that together they do not aim at

some vacuous relativism where views sit side by side in happy contradiction with each other (cf. Spash, 2012, pp.40–47). If you take arguments seriously, then this is to acknowledge that the views defended – including your own – can be mistaken. Serious engagement in debate is to take a risk, to put your argument to the jury of public deliberation and to allow that the argument might be shown to be flawed.

To act as a forum for such serious engagement requires that integrity of processes be central to the journal. It requires robust blind peer review procedures, such that the strongest versions of arguments are published to enter into debate and deliberation. It requires independence from the influence of commercial pressures and political power. Clive sustained those core scholarly values throughout his time as editor. The journal continued as a place that encouraged critical voices that are absent in many more narrowly constrained disciplinary journals. A feature of the journal is that it acts as a forum in which different disciplines can come together for conversation about environmental problems. As the aims of the journal state, it exists as ‘an international peer-reviewed journal that brings together contributions from philosophy, economics, politics, sociology, geography, anthropology, ecology and other disciplines, which relate to the present and future environment of human beings and other species.’ Clive developed the disciplinary range of the journal, both in the papers it published and in the make-up of the editorial board and range of reviewers. Under his editorship, the journal has continued to embody the academic values that Clive outlined in his editorial following Alan’s departure.

The importance of living a worthwhile academic life – and the need to sustain those values with integrity within journals – was one that Clive experienced directly in 2009 and 2010. I refer to an episode that I unwittingly began which led to Clive having to sacrifice his job in order to sustain those values. After serving as an associate editor on *Environmental Values*, on leaving the editorial board of the journal, I subsequently took up a similar role in another journal *New Political Economy* (NPE). In that new role I put together a special issue on the political economy of climate change. One central question that needed to be asked concerned emissions trading in greenhouse gases: can emissions trading be an effective and ethically defensible way of responding to the problem of climate change? As editor I wanted positions that represented different sides of the debate on emissions trading. I contacted Simon Caney who I knew would offer a defence of climate markets. And I contacted Clive Spash who I knew would offer criticisms. I chose both as two of the strongest proponents of the different views. Unfortunately, Clive’s employers, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) in Australia, wanted no such debate. They did not want independence for their scientists to pursue arguments in a public forum, but simply defences of their official position. On 22 July 2009 the NPE editorial board received a letter from CSIRO blocking the publication of Clive Spash’s paper as inconsistent with Australian government policy. Clive sustained his integrity in this difficult situation. He blew the whistle on the attempt to silence him. As editor, I was shocked at such political interference and objected strongly. In response, we were told that the paper was the subject of internal discussions. Subsequently, in a report in *Nature*, November 13, a spokesperson for the Chief Executive of the CSIRO, Megan Clark, stated that there had been agreement to endorse publication subject to ‘minor but important changes’ (Pincock, 2009). At the time I was giving a paper in a philosophy department in Scotland and in the pub afterwards, I gave an account of the conflict. A logician observed: ‘Minor changes – I know what that

will mean: just put a little negation sign in front of each sentence'. It turned that the minor changes were indeed not minor at all. The CEO of the CSIRO wanted the conclusions changed to fit the official policy. Clive's original paper argued that emissions trading as such could not solve and potentially could exacerbate the problem of human-induced climate change. The version re-written by the CEO of the CSIRO and her staff wanted him to argue for a weaker position, that any problems with emissions trading are a matter of design, suggesting that a well-designed emission trading scheme would be an adequate policy response. In changing the conclusion, the arguments had to change. References to the way that corporate power was instrumental in the design and operation of emission trading schemes were removed.

In response, I wrote a letter to the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, Kim Carr, to whom the CSIRO and its CEO were responsible. The letter was sent on behalf of the editorial board of NPE on 24.11.2009. The letter pointed out that the response of the CEO was incompatible with basic academic standards and with the integrity of the peer review processes of the journal:

The CSIRO is asking not for minor but for major changes in the central arguments of the paper. This is clearly unacceptable to the author. I should add that it is also unacceptable to me as the editor of the special issue. It involves interference in our own peer-review procedures that would be incompatible with the academic integrity of the journal.

The letter pointed out that the changes were incompatible with Carr's own endorsement of peer review and academic independence made in a press release of 16 January 2008: 'The value of scientific endeavour and importance of vigorous and transparent public debate, unfettered by political interference but subject to peer review, is something I have advocated for my entire public life.' I noted that if the CEO of the CSIRO wanted to argue for a different position to that defended by Clive, it was open to her to write a reply and submit the paper to the journal for consideration subject to the usual peer review processes:

The difference between those who think the problems with ETS are just problems of design and those who think they are more fundamentally flawed are matters of reasonable academic disagreement. When I put the special issue together I approached people I knew had different views of the question of the ethics and effectiveness of emissions trading. At present the special issue has another paper presenting the view that problems in emissions trading can be resolved by better design. Dr Clive Spash's original paper takes a more critical view. When I approached potential authors I did so in part to provide a platform for debate between these different perspectives. This is how proper academic and indeed wider public debate on these important issues should be conducted.

If the CEO of the CSIRO wants to argue for a different position to that of Dr Clive Spash she can do so by publicly replying to the paper and present the arguments for the contrary position. The journal would consider any such submission for publication, subject to the normal procedures of blind peer review. What is clearly improper is for her to use her position to insist on changes to the paper which alter its conclusions prior to publication. No international journal would accept a paper under those circumstances. Neither would or should any academic scientist be expected to agree to such alteration to his or her work.

The letter concluded by asking the minister to contact the CEO of CSIRO with the request that she agree to the publication of the paper in the original form in which it was accepted for publication after peer review. Needless to say, the request was not heeded. Instead, the minister supported the CEO in her demands for changes. The subsequent fall-out from the affair is outlined fully by Clive himself in his paper 'The politics of researching carbon trading in Australia' (Spash, 2014). In the end, after a debate in the Australian Senate, the original paper was able to appear unchanged (Spash, 2010). It has been widely discussed and cited since - such is the quality of the paper. However, for Clive, the publication meant the loss of his job. As he had noted in the editorial on Alan's work, living a worthwhile academic life has become increasingly difficult and hard to follow.

What the episode revealed is Clive's integrity. It has been a mark of his work. As Bernard Williams notes, the concept of integrity is closely related to the Socratic concept of courage, of having a clear idea of what is important and staying firm in its pursuit (Williams, 1973: 117). Where others might have been silenced, Clive had the courage to speak. Values are not simply to be talked about, but to be lived. This integrity is visible in his academic work and in his life. In his papers and talks he writes and speaks with clarity and commitment, with a clear eye to what is important. In his life, he lives his values. If one believes that a reduction in greenhouse emissions requires changes in the way we live, then those making the claim need to make the changes and show that a good life can be lived within limits. If that requires academics giving up flying to conferences around the world, then so be it, that is what one should do - and it is what Clive has done. Words are empty if they are not lived.

The need to live and not simply speak one's values is a theme that Clive explicitly took up in his paper, 'New foundations for ecological economics': 'Ecological economists should act personally in ways consistent with their environmental and social values' (Spash, 2012: 45). This dimension of Clive's work is taken up in the paper by Iana Nesterova (Nesterova, 2023). In the paper, she describes her own attempts to respond to Clive's call to live a life consistent with ethical and political commitments. As she notes in developing her argument, such personal changes are not a substitute for structural change, but rather make sense only as part of a struggle for wider social, economic and political transformations.

Clive Spash's work has been centrally concerned with providing the grounds for such structural changes and showing the problems with mainstream economic approaches that do not question, but rather sustain, existing structures responsible for environmental problems. The other papers in this collection take up in different ways the challenge Clive has offered to mainstream economics. Three of the papers build on his work critical of monetary valuation and the economic theory that underpins it. The paper 'Building on Spash's critiques of monetary valuation to suggest ways forward for relational values research' is co-authored by a number of the scholars who have been developing the concept of relational values (Gould et al. 2024). The concept has become central to the work of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. After noting only a brief discussion of the concept of relational values in Clive's work, the paper suggests that the focus on relational values will allow the deepening of his criticism of monetary valuation. The authors argue that it reveals a wider plurality of values that cannot be captured by monetary valuations and suggests further blocks

on the substitutability of different goods. The paper concludes by considering the ways in which relational values might inform the extension of deliberative institutions that offer alternatives to the standard preference aggregation accounts of decision-making defended through standard economic models. The paper by Lina Issacs brings empirical survey work to bear on the problems of monetary valuation, through follow-up interviews with respondents to a willingness to pay survey (Issacs, 2024). She argues that interviews show how the respondents' understanding of the value of the environment was not captured in the willingness to pay for responses they offered. Once the role of willingness to pay in cost-benefit analysis was explained, respondents retracted their willingness to pay responses. They objected to the valuation process and claimed that willingness to pay is incomplete as a measure of value. The paper by Jacob Ainscough, Jasper Kenter, Elaine Azzopardi and Meriwether Wilson (Ainscough et al., 2024) engages with Clive Spash's work on deliberative monetary valuation (DVM). It contrasts two conceptions of DVM, deliberated preferences (DP) and deliberative democratic monetary valuation (DDMV). DP attempts to integrate deliberation into existing neo-classical approaches and stated preference techniques, eliciting individual willingness to pay responses which are then aggregated into a cost-benefit analysis. DDMV, in contrast, is claimed to involve a larger departure from neo-classical approaches, aiming at eliciting social values, either through the social willingness to pay expressing what society should spend on an environmental good as against other social goods, or through 'fair prices' that different individuals might be appropriately expected to pay for the good. The different approaches are compared in the context of an evaluation of a draft marine plan for the Clyde estuary in Scotland. The paper argues that DDMV produced valuations that were perceived as having greater legitimacy by participants than DP.

Claudia Carter's paper, 'Reconnecting with the social-political and ecological-economic reality', looks at the more general theoretical underpinnings of Clive Spash's criticisms of the structures of existing economic and political systems (Carter, 2024). The paper outlines the development of his work. In a wide-ranging discussion, it considers his criticisms of the neglect of ethical value in standard economic approaches, his search for new methods and fora for ethical and political deliberation to inform environmental decision-making, and his defence of a critical realist approach to developing social-ecological economics. In doing so, her paper also notes the large European projects that Clive put together on environmental valuation: the EU-funded Concerted Action, *Environmental Valuation in Europe* (1998–2000) and the European Science Foundation funded project, the *Social Psychology and Economics in Environmental Research* (1999–2000). These were interdisciplinary projects that brought together participants from economics, ecology, philosophy, politics, social psychology and sociology. As a participant, I can attest to the richness of the conversations in the meetings of the projects. These projects built on two prior projects. One was an ESRC project between 1993 and 1995 at the University of Lancaster, a series of seminars with economists, philosophers and sociologists that led to the book edited by John Foster *Valuing Nature?* (Foster, 1997). It was at the meetings for this project that I first met Clive. The second was an EU project coordinated by Martin O'Connor, *Valuation for Sustainable Environments* (1996–1998). These projects fostered a community of scholars and activists offering a different voice to the dominant market-based perspectives on environmental policy that were fostered in mainstream environmental economics. One of Clive's achievements was to continue and sustain that community.

Clive has stepped down as the editor of *Environmental Values*. Fortunately, however, he is not stepping down from active contributions to social and economic debate. The debate continues with his response to the papers in this volume. I will read the response with interest. His new book *Foundations of Social Ecological Economics: The Fight for Revolutionary Change in Economic Thought* is published in 2024 (Spash, 2024). The conversations will continue. I look forward to them. This journal will continue to be an important forum for those conversations. I would like to finish by thanking the current editorial board for the invitation to write this guest editorial for this special issue that they have put together on the work of Clive Spash. It was a privilege to be asked to do so. I wish them the best in continuing to carry on developing the journal in ways that embody the values and integrity that Alan Holland and Clive Spash brought to it as editors. In our current environmental crisis, those values have never been more important.

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