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ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS AND THE
SEARCH FOR AN ECOLOGICAL ETHIC

by

Pamela Courtenay Hall

A thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
through the Department of Philosophy
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts
at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

September, 1984

Revised: July, 1986

ABSTRACT

ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS AND
THE SEARCH FOR AN ECOLOGICAL ETHIC

by

Pamela Courtenay Hall

There seem to be three basic approaches to environmental ethics in the western tradition: 1) the anthropocentric approach, which applies traditional ethical principles to environmental matters and which operates either on the conviction that human concerns are the sole proper object of morality, or on the Biblical concept of stewardship of the earth; 2) the extended-individualistic approach, which extends traditional ethical principles by expanding the range of moral concern beyond the class of human beings on the basis of some allegedly morally relevant criterion such as the capacity to feel pain or the capacity to flourish; and, 3) the ecological approach, which attempts to locate ethical principles in an ecological understanding of life, or in some other way to bring ecology to bear upon ethics.

In this thesis, I briefly scan (1), briefly discuss (2), and more fully explore (3), focusing on the

writings of Aldo Leopold, John Rodman, and Kenneth E. Goodpaster, from whose work I try to make a connection to the moral philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre. My purpose in these explorations is to show that although there are problems with all three basic approaches listed above, Goodpaster's approach seems to hold much promise. This promise, however, may be more the promise of continued moral growth if we carry on the attempt to develop an ecological ethic, rather than the promise that a systematic and rationally persuasive such ethic lies just over the horizon. I conclude that the best we have to guide us at present is a collection of simple and solidly established principles from the tradition of ethical reflection, principles which implicitly guide the search for an ecological ethic, and come into clearer focus as a result.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Wheatley Provincial Park with my sisters. The fact of his patience and persistence with four often-complaining little girls bespeaks a love of nature determined to reproduce itself. It did. I thank my father for this beautiful part of my childhood, for teaching me to be sensitive to what is there to be seen and felt and heard, and for the inspiration that his own writings gave me. I thank my mother, too, whose expectations, always backed up with love and effort and amazing dedication, made trying to learn things well my early habit and later love. Finally, I would like to thank my husband, Brian, for his encouragement and patience and understanding; his love and steadfastness helped me pass from teenage restlessness to the comparatively sustained effort that it takes to get such things as M.A. theses completed.

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Chapter I. Introduction

Environmental ethics is the branch of applied moral philosophy dealing with how we should judge and guide our dealings with the natural environment. Animal ethics is to some extent subsumed under the category of environmental ethics, because we share the natural environment with animals, and because the natural environment is a complex system whose healthy functioning depends upon more than soil and water and more than plants and insects. Moreover, as will be demonstrated in this thesis, the criteria often used to justify ethical concern for animals occur mid-range in a spectrum of morally relevant criteria employed in justifying ethical theories, ranging from an intensely anthropocentric humanism at one end to a radical environmentalism at the other. Thus, the issue of "animal rights" enters into environmental ethics, and will make an appearance in this thesis.

There seem to be three basic approaches to environmental ethics in the western tradition: 1. the

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anthropocentric approach, which applies traditional
ethical principles to environmental matters and which
operates either on the conviction that human concerns are
the sole proper object of morality, or on the Biblical
concept of stewardship of the earth; 2. the extended-
individualistic approach, which extends traditional
ethical principles by expanding the range of moral concern
beyond the class of human beings on the basis of some
allegedly morally relevant criterion such as the capacity
to feel pain or the capacity to flourish; and, 3. the
ecological approach, which attempts to locate ethical
principles in an ecological understanding of life, or in
some other way to bring ecology to bear upon ethics.

This thesis is inspired by the question, "Is
there, in any of these approaches, an ethic by which we
can adequately and wisely guide our dealings with the
natural environment?" --adequately, in that it would meet
the concerns commonly expressed by environmentalists[1],
and wisely, in that it would not threaten the ethical
traditions which we would want to preserve. I attempt to
outline the features and the problems involved in all
three approaches, but it has not been possible to make a
full exploration of each, and so I focus on the approach

which seems to be not only the most challenging but also the most promising--the ecological approach.

In Chapter II, "Background," I briefly scan the traditional anthropocentric approach and problems with it. I then trace out the line of critical reflection which leads from the anthropocentric approach to the extended-individualistic approach to the ecological approach. I do not at all mean to suggest that environmental ethics has "evolved" from the first to the second to the third approach as listed here, or that any such development in the thinking of environmental ethicists is widespread. But among recent writers who advocate an ecological approach, several of those who come from the tradition of philosophical reflection come to terms with the influence of ecology by critically examining the limitations of the anthropocentric and extended-individualistic approaches, and as this is the development which my own thinking in environmental ethics followed--influenced to a great extent by Kenneth E. Goodpaster[2]--this is the line of development which I shall pursue in greatest detail in this thesis.

In Chapter III, "Extended Individualistic Ethics," I look at various ethics which are based on an

extension of traditional ethical principles beyond the class of human beings. First, I present the ethic which is based on the criterion of sentience, and discuss problems with it. These problems lead to the consideration of a biocentric ethic, an ethic based on the criterion of being alive. Problems with a biocentric ethic and with the individualistic model which both the traditional and extended approaches are based on lead to Chapter IV, "In Search of an Ecological Ethic." Beginning with the pioneering work of Aldo Leopold, the conservationist and writer who wanted to get us beyond a merely economic appreciation of the land to a "land ethic," I move to the more recent work of John Rodman[3] and Kenneth E. Goodpaster, who try to put the kinds of criticisms and concerns introduced by Leopold onto a surer philosophical footing.

Problems with the ecological approach involve how to go about formulating an ethic which takes a holistic or systemic approach rather than an individualistic one, without falling under pressure from the alleged logical problem of deducing value from fact (the "is/ought" fallacy), without falling into mysticism, and without eroding any part of the individualistic tradition which we might

want to preserve. Goodpaster seems especially sensitive
to this latter problem, and in an effort to see if his
approach can meet this problem, I try to make a connection
to the moral philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre[4], whose
"virtues" approach seems congruent with Goodpaster's
ecological approach, at least insofar as they both look to
larger contexts to inform values--Goodpaster, to the
biosphere, MacIntyre, to the social and historical context.

Acknowledging the difficulty of formulating an
appropriate ecological ethic, Chapter V addresses the
question, "What do we do in the meantime?" by seeing what
humble alternative our familiar traditions might offer us
as we continue to search for an ecological ethic.

Finally, a note about terminology. In environ-
mental ethics, even among writers who share the same
approach, the terminology to be used is not generally
agreed upon: "environmental ethic" and "ecological ethic"
are used differently by different writers; "moral
considerability," "moral relevance," "moral worth," "moral
value," and "moral significance" are among the different
expressions used by different writers to express roughly
the same notion (although, e.g., Goodpaster differentiates

moral considerability from moral significance, as we shall see); no unanimous choice has been effected between "anthropocentric," "homocentric," and "man-centered"; "intrinsic value" and "inherent value" seem to get their share of non-inter-distinguished use; and so on. My use of these various terms will either follow that of the writers I focus on, or follow my own preferences, and will be made clear as the terms arise.

Chapter II. Background

In the past two decades, the several streams of
literature on environmental ethics have emerged from the
philosophical backwoods and flowed into a region of
philosophic study all their own, complete with journals,
anthologies, monographs, text-books, university courses
and specialists. As would be expected and as the litera-
ture attests, this development has been fuelled both by
the seriousness of the environmental problems upon us, and
by the concern that a failure of ethics in the western
tradition is significantly to blame.

General awareness of how serious our environmen-
tal problems are took one of its first giant steps with
the 1962 publication of Silent Spring by biologist Rachel
Carson. The award-winning, bestselling and controversial
book brought the bitter facts and the horrific possible
consequences of the 1950's, 1960's "crusade to create a
chemically sterile, insect-free world"[1] out of the pages
of wildlife society reports and into national atten-
tion.[2] Like the few who came before and the many who
would follow, Carson criticized the attitude of the

would-be chemical controllers of nature for their lack of

awareness that

> we are dealing with life--with living populations
> and all their pressures and counterpressures,
> their surges and recessions.
> . . . As crude a weapon as the cave man's
> club, the chemical barrage has been hurled
> against the fabric of life--a fabric on the one
> hand delicate and destructible, on the other
> miraculously tough and resilient, and capable of
> striking back in unexpected ways. These
> extraordinary capacities of life have been
> ignored by the practitioners of chemical control
> who have brought . . . no humility before the
> vast forces with which they tamper.[3]

And she ends _Silent Spring_ with a glance at the roots of

this attitude:

> The "control of nature" is a phrase conceived in
> arrogance, born of the Neanderthal age of biology
> and philosophy, when it was supposed that nature
> exists for the convenience of man.[4]

But the concern of Carson's book is to alert an ecologi-

cally unaware public to the dangers of incautious chemical

interference with nature. Digging into the ethical

questions that this and other environmental problems raise

is done by other pens.

The ethical questions flow from the central

question of whether we have simply failed to live up to

our ethical traditions in our dealings with nature, or

whether the traditions themselves are inadequate to guide

us in our dealings with nature. The first view would

suggest that such problems as habitat destruction, species
extinction, resource exploitation, and air, water and soil
pollution are all explicable on the basis of a failure to
respect traditional ethical principles. Proponents of
this view would argue that a utilitarian, or a deonto-
logical, or some other system of ethics is adequate to
meet these problems, if only we would live up to it. But
a potent challenge to this view was initiated by noted
historian Lynn White, Jr. in a short 1967 essay entitled,
"The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis." White
locates "the historical roots" in what he sees as the'
Judeo-Christian tradition of devaluing the material world
and thinking of man as the centre of God's creation:

> Our science and technology have grown out of
> Christian attitudes toward man's relation to
> nature which are almost universally held not only
> by Christians and neo-Christians but also by
> those who fondly regard themselves as post-
> Christians. Despite Copernicus, all the cosmos
> rotates around our little globe. Despite Darwin,
> we are not, in our hearts, part of the natural
> process. We are superior to nature, contemptuous
> of it, willing to use it for our slightest
> whim.[5]

It has become a commonplace in the literature of environ-
mental ethics today to point to the narrowness of White's
analysis,[6] to cite Biblical support for a "stewardship"
as opposed to a "dominion" ethic for man's relationship

with nature,[7] and to identify a whole tangle of "roots
of our crisis." But it appears (by virtue of the number
of references to White which appear in the literature)[8]
that his article lit a fire beneath the seats of environ-
mentally aware philosophers, and initiated the quest to
understand how much our religious and philosophical
traditions might be to blame for our environmental
problems as a major project in environmental ethics
literature. The Judeo-Christian tradition has been
exonerated to some extent, though not totally, and not
unanimously. In any case, also implicated as "historical
roots" of the crisis are: (1) the influence of Descartes'
and Newton's mechanistic model of the universe; and, at
its basis, (2) the scientific commitment to reductionism
and the resultant focus on chemical and physical analysis,
rather than an ecological (holistic) approach to the study
of environmental phenomena; and, (3) the commitment of
Western moral philosophy to individualism.

Although it still occupies part or all of some
recent articles[9], the quest to fix blame or identify
causes seems to a large extent to have given way in the
philosophical literature to the quest to come up with a
better, a new or restructured ethical system for guiding

our dealings with nature. It is generally agreed in the literature that accepted values and familiar western ethical theories give us an adequate basis for dealing with environmental problems when the welfare of human beings is directly or indirectly threatened--for example, in many cases of air pollution, water pollution, soil contamination, and resource depletion.[10] However, for situations whose continuation does not seem to pose any obvious threat to human well-being--situations such as the suffering of animals raised for food production, the killing of animals for meat or sport, and many instances of species extinction, ecosystemic disruption, and wilderness destruction--for these issues, many writers in environmental ethics find our traditional anthropo-centric ethical theories inadequate, and seek to expand or rebase our ethical understanding beyond its alleged exclusive concern with human beings. Those responding to environmental problems this way claim to see values not generally recognized which they believe should be recognized--usually, the "intrinsic value" or "moral worth" of living things or of ecosystems--and they try to come up with an appropriate ethical basis to justify this extended recognition of value or worth.

Some environmental ethicists begin with a critical look at the _consistency_ rather than the _range_ of a particular ethical theory, and the logical implications they draw from the theory lead them to conclude that accepted values are not fully supported by it. For example, if moral rights are based on a criterion such as the ability to reason, which is thought to exclude animals, then, contrary to our accepted values, moral rights logically do not extend to infants, or to the senile or the severely mentally handicapped either. But rather than narrow the range of moral recognition, most environmental ethicists pursuing this line recommend that we expand the _basis_ of the ethical system involved and accept the consequent expansion of the _range_ beyond our customary values--in other words, that we extend rights to animals. Thus inspired more by philosophical considerations than by environmental crisis, this approach has a tradition behind it which reaches back far before our troubled-earth times, a tradition which in one line (will to life) includes Schweitzer and Schopenhauer, and in another (capacity to suffer), reaches back through Henry S. Salt (1851-1939) and Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) to Plutarch (c. 46-120), and likely beyond.[11]

The line of approach which begins instead with particular environmental concerns and focuses on the _range_

of moral concern justified by current theories has no
comparable tradition behind it, but often these two
approaches lead into one another or to a similar ethical
position. Thus, it is not easy to separate environmental
ethicists who are led by normative judgements (forced on
them by environmental problems) to seek a new or expanded
basis for ethics, from environmental ethicists who are led
by metaethical concerns such as consistency to recommend
an expanded range; and many are led by both concerns.
Furthermore, much of the writing in environmental ethics
over the last two decades is partly or wholly inspired by
findings in ethology which question the traditional
separation of man from nature. Where environmental
philosophers divide most clearly, then, is not in their
inspiration (whether environmental or metaethical), but in
the range of the values recognized in the ethics which
they advance. There seem to be three basic alternatives
in the literature to date[12]:

> 1) an anthropocentric ethic, which is usually
>   some form of utilitarianism or egalitari-
>   anism buttressed by the controversial
>   concept of the rights of (or our obligations
>   to) future generations. Some of those who
>   support this kind of ethic usually argue
>   that the roots of our environmental problems
>   lie not in the focus or structure of our
>   traditional ethical systems but in our
>   failure to follow them. Some of those who
>   find this kind of ethic inadequate to meet
>   environmental needs or incomplete or

inconsistent in its recognition of value distinguish it from "environmental" ethics by calling it "an ethic for the use of the environment,"[13] but I will not follow this distinction, preferring instead to use "environmental ethic" to refer to <u>any</u> ethic offered as being adequate to deal with environmental matters.

2)   <u>an extended-individualistic ethic</u>, which seeks to extend moral rights or moral standing beyond human beings on the basis of a commonly held and morally relevant characteristic, such as capacity to suffer, capacity to have an interest, capacity to take an interest, capacity for self-awareness, capacity to grow, etc.

3)   <u>an ecological ethic</u> based somehow on a holistic understanding of life.

This third position, which is to be the main focus of this thesis, will be best introduced by briefly investigating the shortcomings of (2). For a full sweep of the scenery, I shall begin by running through a classical expression of (1).

It is not within the scope of this paper to present and discuss the various versions of an anthropocentric ethic, which include Christian and secular, utilitarian and deontological, etc., and so I shall offer just a very brief and general discussion. The basic idea behind anthropocentric environmentalism is that the interests of animals and of the earth are adequately covered by consideration of their instrumental value to

human beings, including their instrumental value to future human beings and their instrumental value as objects of aesthetic interest. There are at least four basic problems with this position.

First, human preferences are so malleable that future people may, for all we know, turn out to prefer, for example, plastic trees over natural ones. Since the interests of future people cannot be forecast with much confidence, they provide a very poor guide for environmental policy decision. For discussion on this point, see articles by Kreiger, Sagoff, Regan, Katz, and Pluhar.[14]

Second, which "potential people" will actually come to exist (actually become "future people") depends upon the policies we choose today. Thus, a policy of high resource consumption may not be unfair in any sense to future individuals because given the different chain of events that would unfold with a policy of low consumption, these particular "future individuals" would not even have been born. This consideration has become known as "Parfit's Paradox." It is thought by some to be indicative of serious problems with basing an invironmental ethic on future rights or interests (i.e., on the individualistic model extended to future generations), but

I suspect that these problems dissolve to some extent when
the ethic is complemented by, rather than based on, future
considerations. For discussion, see essays by Parfit,
Norton, Feinberg, and Govier.[15]

Third, when consideration of the instrumental
value of nature (including animals) is extended (by
enlightened anthropocentrics) to include its aesthetic
value to humans and its value as a source of spiritual or
moral growth for humans, it seems that what underlies this
way of thinking is the belief that nature really does have
value--that we should value nature for its own sake. And
this is to go beyond anthropocentrism. This idea is
explored further on pages 31-47 and 66-73 below.

A related point is that the belief that animals
have non-instrumental value seems to be pretty universal
in the sentiment of pity: when an animal is in pain, we
feel sorry not for its owner (only) (if it has one) but
for the animal itself.

Fourth, it is claimed that no criterion exists
which both restricts moral consideration to the class of
all human beings and is morally relevant. This is the
major problem which moves us to an extended-individualistic

ethic, and it will be briefly explored in the pages to come.

I should perhaps emphasize that both considera-
tion of future generations and consideration of "aesthetic-
instrumental" and "spiritual-instrumental" values are
attempts to solve the problem of inadequacy, the problem
that an anthropocentric ethic may not go as far as
environmentalists generally (minimally) agree that an
ethic should go--to protect wilderness areas, wild
animals, species apparently useless to humans, etc. But
as can be seen, suggested solutions to this problem of
adequacy often introduce a problem of a different
sort--the problem of consistency or coherence, as (i) to
(iii) above indicate.

Now for that look at a classical expression of an
anthropocentric ethic. Consideration of the treatment of
animals and the environment is anything but a big item in
the traditional literature of Western moral philosophy,
with only few notable exceptions, among them the works of
St. Francis of Assisi (as White points out in his 1967
essay) and the works of the philosophers mentioned
above--Plutarch, Bentham, Salt, Schopenhauer, and

Schweitzer. From Aristotle to Aquinas to Descartes to Kant, many philosophers of the past excluded animals from serious moral consideration because of their belief that the capacity to reason is (a) a/the capacity which separates man from the animals, and (b) the capacity which is the proper determinant of moral standing. Because animals lack reason, these philosophers argue, they do not have moral standing. Nevertheless we should not harm them needlessly, some add, because that could predispose us to be cruel to humans, to whom we _do_ have duties (Aquinas), or because "Tender feelings toward dumb animals develop human feelings toward mankind," whom we _are_ obligated to treat as ends only, and never merely as means (Kant).[16]

Does this position pass scrutiny? As Tom Regan argues in <u>Animal Rights and Human Obligations</u>, the claim that our treatment of animals can influence our treatment of human beings is in need of empirical support,[17] and it is in any case beside the point, because the argument against moral standing for animals can stand or fall independently of this claim.[18] One might challenge the argument by questioning its first premise (that the capacity to reason separates humans from animals), and indeed the questioning of this notion has been a central

focus in ethology ever since Darwin first brought the idea
of "difference in degree" to popularity. Even before
Darwin, it was questioned by Voltaire, who directed his
attacks against the medieval formulation of the
distinction, possessing vs. lacking an immortal soul; by
Hume, who tried to show that our supposed "superior"
reason amounts to no more than instinct distilled from
habit, which animals possess too; and by Schopenhauer, who
thought the difference to be a secondary difference, the
primary thing being the same in the animal and in man--
namely, the possession of will. Schopenhauer thus argues
that the difference between animals and humans is a
difference "traceable only to a greater cerebral
development, and hence to the somatic difference of a
single part, the brain, and in particular, its quantity."
(This, before Darwin had even published The Origin of
Species!)[19]

But for the purposes of disbanding the classical
argument against moral standing for animals, the more
easily challenged premise is the second one, the asser-
tion that the capacity to reason is relevant to moral
standing. The capacity to reason was thought to be a
necessary condition for moral agency; the traditional view
uncritically identified the domain of moral patients

(those deserving moral concern) with the domain of moral
agents[20] (those capable of choosing, on moral grounds,
how they will act). Not surprisingly, this identification
of "patienthood" with agency came to be questioned in the
18th century, with the rise of hedonistic utilitarianism--
a moral philosophy that saw the increase of pleasure and
decrease of pain as the end of all moral action. Much
more fruitful than the current efforts of ethologists to
show that monkeys[21] or wolves[22] qualify as moral
agents by virtue of their intelligence and thereby qualify
as moral "patients," this approach tries to show that what
is necessary for moral agency (reason, self-consciousness,
etc.) is not at all necessary for moral patienthood. In
an oft-quoted passage in The Principles of Morals and
Legislation (1789), Jeremy Bentham, the father of
utilitarianism, observes that human beings and animals are
the (only) two sorts of beings who are both affected by
man and "susceptible of happiness," and he writes
hopefully:

> The French have already discovered that the
> blackness of the skin is no reason why a human
> being should be abandoned without redress to the
> caprice of a tormentor. It may come one day to
> be recognized, that the number of the legs, the
> villosity of the skin, or the termination of the
> os sacrum, are reasons equally insufficient for
> abandoning a sensitive being to the same fate.
> What else is it that should trace the insuperable
> line? Is it the faculty of reason, or perhaps,

> the faculty of discourse? But a full-grown horse
> or dog is beyond comparison a more rational, as
> well as a more conversable animal, than an infant
> of a day, or a week, or even a month, old. But
> suppose the case were otherwise, what would it
> avail? The question is not, Can they _reason_?
> nor, Can they the _talk_? but, Can they _suffer_?23

With a style that almost any politician would do well to imitate, Bentham here inaugurates a line of thought which is later developed by G.J. Warnock, by "animal liberationist" Peter Singer, and by William K. Frankena. The important points in this line of thought are plotted by the familiar technique of criticizing an ethic by showing that it does not actually support the values it is customarily believed to support, and that the values it actually recommends to us are unacceptable. The criticism is that the concept of moral considerability as tied to the capacity to reason provides no justification for including infants within the realm of morally considerable beings because infants are even less intellectually capable than horses and dogs. Going beyond Bentham's statement, we should recognize that the same consideration applies to those who are extremely mentally feeble or handicapped.

The modification of the criterion to "capable of reason or potentially capable of reason" fails to handle

these additional cases, which perhaps would not have posed

a problem in Kant's time or even in Bentham's (as people's

sensitivities did not generally extend to "imbeciles" and

"idiots" in those times), but it certainly poses one in

ours. These considerations suggest that those who deny

moral status to animals do not have any consistently

applied criterion guiding their judgements of moral worth

other than the criterion of membership in the human race.

But being human (so the criticism goes) is not in itself a

morally relevant characteristic (as even Kant et al.

implicitly agree, since they seek to ground moral

considerability in the capacity to reason and/or other

features). Thus, it appears that the criterion used to

exclude animals from moral consideration is merely

prejudicially waived to include those humans who cannot

meet it.

Many attempts have been made to identify a

criterion which is morally relevant and which would

justify both admitting all humans and excluding all

nonhumans, but none so far has passed all three require-

ments (moral relevance, inclusion of all human beings,

exclusion of all nonhumans). Attempts include the

characteristics of being able to love, being able to

communicate through language, being morally responsible
for one's actions, enjoying freedom of action, being able
to vary one's behaviour outside a narrow range of
instinctual behaviour, having a conscience or sense of
shame, having self-awareness, and having interests.[24]
The proffering of these various characteristics as
criteria for moral considerability has resulted in a
heyday for philosophers interested in ethological
similarities between humans and "other animals," but many
of these criteria fall down on more than just the
excluding-animals requirement. In any event, the
seemingly unjustifiable restriction of moral concern to
the class of human beings has led to the charge of
"speciesism"[25]--species chauvinism--against those who
subscribe to it. More importantly, it has also led to the
attempt to find out just how far beyond the class of human
beings we should extend the sphere of moral considerabil-
ity. As we shall see in the next chapter, the arguments
for including higher animals do not all stop at the same
point, and the strongest of them seems to take in every-
thing that Noah brought with him into the ark and much
else besides! Having surveyed the limitations of
anthropocentric ethics, let's find out what happens when
we try to expand the sphere.

Chapter III. Extended-Individualistic Ethics

In this chapter, I explore the approach which
seeks to accommodate environmental and meta-ethical .
concerns by extending moral considerability beyond the
class of human beings on the basis of some allegedly
morally relevant criterion. The first extension (section
i) comes with the criterion of sentience--the capacity to
feel pain or pleasure. In section ii, I discuss attempts
to go beyond sentience to a "biocentric ethic"--an ethic
based on respect for life. Problems here will lead to a
questioning of the individualist basis which seems to
underlie all of these approaches.

i. The sentience criterion and problems with it.

The early environmental ethics literature (1960's
to the early 1970's) dealing with the problem of the place
of animals in morality generally treated it in terms of
moral rights--rights for humans (only) vs. rights for
animals (too). Thus cast in terms of 'rights,' the issue
might seem much more challengeable to us than the moral-
concern version, coming as we do from a culture where

moral concern for animals is already a prevalent attitude.
But many of those who once urged "equal rights" for
animals have since qualified their positions, saying that
they do not mean that animals deserve equal treatment with
humans, only that they deserve equal consideration, which
is to say that although the interests of animals may be
overridden in any environmental decision, they should not
be overlooked in the listing of factors to be considered
and side-effects to be remedied. There are serious
problems inherent in rights talk--problems such as whether
the requirements for having rights (in the moral sense)
are more demanding than the requirements for deserving
moral consideration, and indeed whether the concept of
moral rights is intelligible at all,[1] and many
philosophers in environmental ethics avoid these problems
by using the term "moral considerability" or "relevance"
or "worth," etc., rather than the term "rights." I shall
follow this practice.

Bentham casts the issue (which at his time was an
issue in any terms) in terms of who has interests which
deserve to be included in the calculation of utility, and
as we saw, he judges that the capacity to suffer is a
sufficient reason for deserving consideration in the moral
calculus. Using slightly different terminology, both

Warnock and Frankena echo Bentham's judgement. From

Warnock:

> . . . the condition of being a proper "bene-
> ficiary" of moral action is the capability of
> suffering the ills of the predicament--and for
> that reason is not confined to rational beings,
> nor even to potential members of that class.[2]

And from Frankena:

> I agree . . . that humanism and moralism are not
> morally adequate. Like Warnock, I believe that
> there are right and wrong ways to treat infants,
> animals, imbeciles, and idiots even if or even
> though (as the case may be) they are not persons
> or human beings--just because they are capable of
> pleasure and suffering, and not just because
> their lives happen to have some value to or for
> those who clearly are persons or human beings.[3]

Thus it is urged that if a thing is sentient--if it is

capable of pleasure or suffering--then it deserves moral

concern. Hence, with this "sentience" criterion for moral

considerability, we move from an anthropocentric ethic to

an extended-individualistic ethic.

Many writers in environmental ethics, and many of

their forebears,[4] approach the issue of moral consider-

ability with a keen awareness of how the boundaries of

moral concern have been questioned and extended throughout

history. Their vision is compelling: "[C]onsider how

slowly the circle has been enlarged fully to include

aliens, strangers, infants, children, Negroes, Jews, slaves, women, Indians, prisoners, the elderly, the insane, the deformed, and even now we ponder the status of fetuses."[5] In this same context, Australian philosopher Peter Singer urges us to reconsider our attitude toward animals, cautioning:

> We are familiar with Black Liberation, Gay Liberation, and a variety of other movements. With Women's Liberation some thought we had come to the end of the road. Discrimination on the basis of sex, it has been said, is the last form of discrimination that is universally accepted and practised without pretense, even in those liberal circles which have long prided themselves on their freedom from racial discrimination. But one should always be wary of talking of "the last remaining form of discrimination." If we have learned anything from the liberation movements, we should have learned how difficult it is to be aware of the ways in which we discriminate until they are forcefully pointed out to us.[6]

It is not a sobering but a _jarring_ thought to consider that for all our concerns about treating others fairly, we ourselves may be like the silent oppressive majorities of the past--in our case, when it comes to animals; that we ourselves may be holding back "the checkered advance of the ethical frontier"[7] without even realizing that there is any questioning to be done. It is a thought so jarring that in collaboration with the questioning of our criteria for moral considerability and some facts about factory

farming, it can turn a person vegetarian overnight--not
because it is clearly wrong to eat animals (this would be
difficult to establish), not because we lack any good
nutritional reason for preferring meat to alternative food
sources (although we very well may[8]), and not because
abstaining from meat will accomplish great things in the
world (the consequences of mass vegetarianism would be
problematic in many ways[9]), but because, given the
circumstances of our meat-eating, it may seem to be a
fitting symbolic gesture--a little sacrifice of pleasure
and convenience in daily remembrance of those who do not
have even grain or rice to eat, as well as a remembrance
of how easily we can acquiesce in practices whose morality
may seem questionable to us yet whose rewards are
instantly gratifying to us. Indeed, killing is a part of
life, but some factory-farming practices butcher the
dignity of life long before the animal is sent to the
slaughterhouse,[10] and to buy and eat without concern for
this is to share in that butchering. Our abstinence will
not end those practices and may not even lead to the
improvement of them, yet it can keep us mindful of how
blessed we are in this part of the world, of how easy it
is to abuse our blessing, and of how far we can go to
temper what may seem to less searching eyes to be
inescapable conditions of life.

There are many ongoing disputes which bear upon
the question, "Is it wrong to kill animals for the sake of
eating meat?" including the significance of the degree of
suffering involved in the slaughter. Bentham, for
example, is concerned exclusively with the degree of
suffering involved:

> If the being eaten were all, there is very good
> reason why we should be suffered to eat such of
> the animals as we like to eat: we are the better
> for it, and they are never the worse. They have
> none of those long-protracted anticipations of
> future misery which we have. The death they
> suffer in our hands commonly is, and always may
> be, a speedier, and by that means a less painful
> one, than that which would await them in the
> inevitable course of nature.[11]

While some ethologists today might argue with Bentham on
the facts of animal sensibilities, some animal rights
advocates judge that the real problem lies in the
implications of his reasoning: according to the criterion
of sentience, there is nothing to prevent human beings
from being subject to the same judgement, and so with the
moral sanction of the sentience criterion, euthanasia and
painless suicide might become popularly approved remedies
for misery even outside the hospital and the death bed
--for the mentally and physically handicapped child who
wouldn't be aware of what was happening; for the severely
depressed retiree who dreads the prospect of becoming

feeble or senile. But this application of the sentience criterion to human beings is questionable, because it assumes that sentience would operate as the sole consideration rather than as the lower limit for moral considerability, and because it would be impossible to operate. Even in an animal's life, where pain does not include such things as knowing that your child will soon die of leukemia, and pleasure does not include such things as seeing your dreams come true or your grandchildren grow--even in an animal's life, it is difficult to evaluate the balance of pleasure and pain. For example, for a dog in arthritic old age, where does the balance lie between the pain of its arthritis and the pleasure of eating high-quality dog food and getting petted and hugged by humans? How would we go about answering this question? And in a human life, where 'pain' and 'pleasure' are interpretable over such a broader range of meaning, we must deal also with the complication that one man's pleasure (e.g., cigarette smoke, muscle fatigue, little chores to be done, no kids around the house) is another man's pain, and one day's tragedy, another day's smiling remembrance of growing pains. Indeed, judging the balance of pleasure and pain in someone's life in any non-arbitrary way seems an impossible task.

But this questionable application of the sentience criterion to humans is not even needed to call the sentience criterion to task, because it comes up critically short on the following important points: (1) It provides no structure for adjudicating conflicts between various sentient creatures (although against this criticism, some environmental ethicists have offered hierarchical criteria[12]). (2) It is difficult to apply in any case: not only do we not know whether or not certain animals _can_ feel pain or pleasure; also, we have very little knowledge of how to gauge such feelings (without anthropomorphizing). As John Rodman says,

> The location of value in the subjective experience of sentient entities allows for no small amount of subjectivity in our moral appraisals, since our judgements about the inner experience of others is either inferential, utilizing our criteria of evidence (the presence of a nervous system, the exhibition of what we recognize as pain behaviour, etc.) or sympathetic, depending upon our imaginative/emotional capacity to identify with others' sufferings . . . ."[13]

Finally, (3) it doesn't go far enough, even supplemented by its conferral of "habitat" (instrumental) value upon natural environments. Protecting the environment on the basis of its instrumental value to sentient creatures won't provide justification for

preserving natural environments where no sentient
creatures reside (e.g., a mountain top above the tree
line, where no eagles or other creatures happen to be
nesting[14]), or for preserving environments if all of
their sentient residents can be relocated without pain.
Yet support for the preservation of natural environments
is a fairly basic requirement for an adequate
environmental ethic.

Perhaps the most serious criticism of the
sentience criterion is not that it is difficult to apply,
and not quite that its results fall short of the results
desired by environmentalists, but that the _basis_ for
judging right and wrong which it offers seems to fall
short of the reasons (or the sensitivities) which _actually_
inspire our judgements of animal and environmental right
and wrong. This criticism flows out of consideration of
the question which Bentham raises (and presumes to answer)
for us, the question of whether or not the painless
killing of sentient creatures should involve moral
deliberation. Now, when a boy of eight or nine comes to
grips with what "eating pork" really means by hearing that
they're having a pig roast at the festival tonight--"Sure,

on a big rotisserie. Yup, the whole pig."--this dismay is
not adequately explained by any concern that he might have
felt for the suffering the pig might have undergone at the
time of its slaughter. What is upsetting goes much deeper
than that. The boy is coming to grips with the fact that
his living involves (and necessarily involves, as far as
plant life goes) the killing of other living things. A
pork chop on a plate is as little effective at making us
face this reality as is a leaf torn off a head of
lettuce. But the image of a skewered pig turning over
flaming coals certainly does the job (and is perhaps even
more graphic than we need).

This line of thought suggests that as well as
with animal suffering, we would want our ethic to be
concerned with the destruction of life too. But for
sentient creatures only? John Rodman and Kenneth E.
Goodpaster, among others, think not. Here is an
introductory thought from Rodman which seems somewhat
analogous to the roast pig experience described above. It
is taken from "The Liberation of Nature?" Rodman's
profound and as yet little recognized "review discussion"
of animal vs. environmental ethics:[15]

> At the risk of seeming to deal with Singer's
> position somewhat as Dr. Johnson dealt with

> Bishop Berkeley's philosophy, I confess that I
> need only to stand in the midst of a clear-cut
> forest, a strip-mined hillside, a defoliated
> jungle, or a dammed canyon to feel uneasy with
> assumptions that could yield the conclusion that
> no human action can make any difference to the
> welfare of anything but sentient animals.[16]

Rodman is here speaking against Singer's assumption that

beyond sentience, we have nothing morally to take into

account. Goodpaster, addressing the writings of Warnock

and Frankena as well as of Singer, expresses the same

dissatisfaction:

> . . . [A]lthough I acknowledge and even applaud
> the conviction expressed by these philosophers
> that the capacity to suffer (or perhaps better,
> sentience) is sufficient for moral consider-
> ability, I fail to understand their reasons for
> thinking such a criterion necessary.[17]

What Rodman and Goodpaster are both attacking is the claim

to necessity which advocates of the sentience criterion

seem to attach to it. The problem is that there does not

seem to be good reason for stopping at the criterion of

sentience. Goodpaster considers the "hints at reasons"

given by Warnock and Frankena and Singer--hints that

non-sentient creatures could not be proper "beneficiaries"

of moral action, etc.--but finds that the hints "fall

short of good reasons." Rodman's criticism is

considerably harsher:

> In the end, Singer achieves 'an expansion of our
> moral horizons' just far enough to include most
> animals . . . The rest of nature is left in a
> state of thinghood, having no intrinsic worth,
> acquiring instrumental value only as resources
> for the well-being of an elite of sentient
> beings. Homocentrist rationalism has widened out
> into a kind of zoocentrist sentientism. Singer's
> characterization of the Brambell Report seems apt
> for his own book: 'an enlightened and humane
> form of speciesism, but . . . still speciesism
> nevertheless.' We have here not a revolution in
> ethics but something analogous to the Reform Bill
> of 1832, when the British aristocracy extended
> selected rights to the upper middle class. The
> problem of the cosmic observer persists. If it
> would seem arbitrary to a visitor from Mars to
> find one species claiming a monopoly of intrinsic
> value by virtue of its allegedly exclusive
> possession of reason, free will, soul, or some
> other occult quality, would it not seem almost as
> arbitrary to find that same species claiming a
> monopoly of intrinsic value for itself and those
> species most resembling it (e.g. in type of
> nervous system and behaviour) by virtue of their
> common and allegedly exclusive possession of
> sentience?[18]

Rodman supports his charge of arbitrariness against the

sentience criterion by investigating its connection both

to the 18th and 19th century humane and utilitarian

movements and to our understanding of ourselves. I will

return to this later (in Chapter IV). Right now, I want

to review Goodpaster's more rigourous account of why the

sentience criterion might be unduly restrictive.

Goodpaster suggests that the restriction of moral

considerability to sentient creatures flows quite naturally

out of a hedonistic conception of the good:

> If pleasure or satisfaction is the only ultimate
> gift we have to give, morally, then it is to be
> expected that only those equipped to receive such
> a gift will enter into our moral deliberation.
> And if pain or dissatisfaction is the only
> ultimate harm we can cause, then it is to be
> expected that only those equipped for it will
> deserve our consideration. There seems, there-
> fore, to be a noncontingent connection between a
> hedonistic or quasi-hedonistic theory of value
> and a response to the moral-considerability
> question which favors sentience . . . .[19]

Indeed, a hedonistic-utilitarian philosophy of morality

reflects its tie to a sentience criterion in its very

conception of morality: morality has as its goal the increase

of pleasure and/or the minimization of pain in the world. But

if one's understanding of life extends beyond the hedonistic

and locates pleasure and pain not as central features of life

but as consequences or indices[20] of something even more

important, then our conception of morality will have a

different anchor, and sentience will appear to be as mistaken a

stopping point as rationality, as Rodman so effectively paints

it.

Goodpaster proceeds in his exploration by

investigating "the clearest line of argument in favor of

something like sentience" which he can find, and he finds

it in Joel Feinberg's "The Rights of Animals and Unborn

Generations."[21] In Feinberg, Goodpaster is able to find

the missing arguments which seem to be "at work between

the lines in Warnock, Frankena, and Singer," though he
adds, "of course, one can never be sure."[22] These
suspected hidden arguments involve Feinberg's concept of
"having interests" as a concept which underlies the
necessity claimed for sentience as a criterion of moral
considerability. In abbreviated form, the basic argument
is this:

> To deserve moral consideration, a being must be
> capable of being represented and capable of being
> a beneficiary. But to be capable of being
> represented and capable of being a beneficiary, a
> being must have (or be capable of having)
> interests. Therefore, to deserve moral consider-
> ation, a being must have (or be capable of
> having) interests.

The trouble with this argument is the vagueness of its key
term, "having interests." (Since Goodpaster is primarily
interested in whether the capacity to have an interest
requirs sentience or something less sophisticated than
sentience, he focuses only on these two possible
interpretations, and so identifies the problem as
equivocation). Goodpaster agrees with Feinberg that
deserving moral consideration (in Feinberg's terms "having
rights"[23]) can be said to depend upon representation and

beneficiary status requirements ("with some reserva-
tions"), but he interprets the key term, "having

interests," differently than Feinberg, who, it turns out,

has something close to sentience in mind.

Were the advocates of the sentience criterion to

deal with the argument from Feinberg explicitly, they

would likely claim that only beings who can experience

pleasure and/or pain can be said to "have interests."

Feinberg's interpretation of this term seems to go a

little further than sentience, but it still retains a

close connection to consciousness: Feinberg claims that

"'interests' logically presuppose desires or wants or

aims," Goodpaster tells us,[24] so that "having interests"....

requires that a being have some degree of "conative

life." But Goodpaster questions Feinberg's claim that

some degree of consciousness is necessary to qualify a

being as "having interests." He argues that "the needs of

a tree for sun and water" are interests for which the tree

can be represented (to a neighbour or developer disregard-

ing them, for example), and needs the fulfillment of which

certainly does benefit the tree. Feinberg tries to locate

these interests as being implicitly ours rather than the

tree's ("Plants may need things in order to discharge

their functions, but their functions are assigned by human

interests, not their own."[25]) to which Goodpaster
forcefully replies: "As if it were human interests that
assigned to trees the tasks of growth or maintenance!"

Goodpaster's basic criticism is that "psychologi-
cal or hedonic capacities seem unnecessarily sophisticated
when it comes to locating the minimal conditions for
something's deserving to be valued for its own sake,"[26]
and we get a good idea of the "life" criterion which
Goodpaster himself advocates in his statement, "In the
face of their obvious tendencies to maintain and heal
themselves, it is very difficult to reject the idea of
interests on the part of trees (and plants generally) in
remaining alive."[27,28]

I would agree with Goodpaster that plants fulfill
Feinberg's requirements for deserving moral consideration
(the attribution of rights in the broad sense)--that they
are capable of being represented and are capable of being
beneficiaries. Of course, the Supreme Court in the
Mineral King Valley appeal was not so easily con-
vinced.[29] Yet think about it. Telling a youngster in
Algonquin Park that he should not peel the bark off a
white birch is an example of what I have in mind.
Regarding capacity to be represented, one might insist

that it is myself (my own aesthetic interest) or birch tree lovers generally that I am representing, and not the tree. However, when I discuss with an unaware youngster what is good and what is bad for a tree, the fact that I can identify what is and what is not in its welfare--what should and what should not be done to it--seems to indicate that the tree can be represented, that a person can speak and act for and on behalf of the tree, no matter what other interests are being represented at the same time.[30] And that the tree is at least a beneficiary of my action (if it is successful) seems beyond question, since its continued growth would be saved from the threat of lower-trunk barklessness.[31]

Where I disagree with Goodpaster is in his statement that, "In the face of their obvious tendencies to maintain and heal themselves, it is very difficult to reject the idea of interests on the part of trees . . . in remaining alive." It seems to me that it is not particularly difficult to reject the idea of "interests on the part os trees . . . in remaining alive," because we may want to reject any possible suggestion to the effect that trees can have interests in any active way. It is very difficult, though, to reject the idea that trees have a welfare which should be taken into consideration," rather

than trees "having an interest" in remaining alive.
Indeed, it is Feinberg who seems to have ordinary use on
his side when he fixes a conative element in "having an
interest."[32] I suspect that the real misstep in
Feinberg's argument occurs when he claims that to be
capable of being represented and benefited, a being must
have (or be capable of having) interests. Some
environmental ethicists correct this step by different-
iating between "taking an interest" and "having an
interest," where "taking an interest" (Feinberg's "having
an interest") requires conation, and "having an interest"
(having a welfare) does not.[33] But not liking to
confuse ordinary usage, I think this distinction is best
made by preserving it in its most straightforward state:
having an interest vs. having a welfare. Accordingly, my
view is that to be capable of being represented and
benefited, a being need only have a welfare. This
criterion would include plants as well as insects[34] and
a lot more besides, as we shall see. One last point on
Feinberg. The essay to which Goodpaster refers focuses
not on minimum conditions for moral considerability per
se, but rather on the criteria involved in making rights-
attributions. Since Feinberg makes it clear that he is
dealing with rights in the broad sense of the term[35],

Goodpaster feels justified in employing Feinberg's work in his own explorations of moral considerability, but he does so "with due notice to the possible need for scare-quotes around Feinberg's name." The difficulty between "interests" and "welfare" which we have seen here may indicate that Feinberg's allegedly broad interpretation of "rights" is nevertheless significantly narrower than Goodpaster's notion of minimum moral considerability, and this would indicate that Goodpaster's notice about scare-quotes was well-served.

ii. <u>The "life" criterion and problems with it</u>.

As we have seen, Goodpaster and others judge the experiencing of pleasure and pain to be an ancillary phenomenon to some underlying feature which is itself of intrinsic worth, a feature fundamental even to self-consciousness and to the ability to have interests (conatively speaking), and a feature which deserves moral consideration even where conative abilities are neither present nor potentially present. This feature is, <u>life</u>, the state of <u>being a living organism</u>. Now, respect for life has been in different philosophical forms throughout history, but it is on <u>ethical</u> repect for all living

things, not _aesthetic_ respect, that a biocentric
environmental ethic is focused, and this distinction
separates out for us many expressions that might have been
mistaken for "historical roots" of a biocentric ethic.
The difference is that ethical respect for life judges all
living things to be intrinsically valuable, that is,
valuable for their own sakes because of what they are,
whereas aesthetic respect for life may only judge living
things to be instrumentally valuable, valuable because if
we are attuned to the wonder of the world we live in, then
we can find pleasure or spiritual upliftment in every
living thing we come in contact with.[36]

The question which we must deal with here is,
"Why is it that _life_ should be the criterion for moral
consideration?" At one end, this question reads, "Why
should we go so far beyond sentience?" At the other end
it reads, "Why should we _stop_ at the condition of being
alive?"

Let us deal with the question at the front end
first. Under "sentience," we took care of the bears and
the birds (assuming birds can fell pain), and under the
criterion of having conative life (Feinberg's "having
interests"), we took care of the bees too, and anything

that could show an interest in its own welfare. But to include everything that has a welfare of its own, it seems that our criterion would have to be the state of being alive, and this would include not only the flowers and trees, but also moulds, slime, and simpler cellular structures as deserving moral consideration. The problems which come up at this end ("Why go so far beyond sentience?") are fourfold:

1. To require that we think of such things as moulds and slime as being morally considerable is to put quite a strain on the altruism of the environmentally thoughtful person (and to supply a seemingly ready-made reductio to opponents). Certainly moulds and slime are amazing life structures even to the naked eye, and certainly they play a vital role in life on earth, but can we really think of a mould as being valuable (morally considerable) for its own sake, because it is a living thing, irrespective of both its interestingness and the role it plays? I don't know exactly where my altruism hits its limit, but it seems to be somewhere around here.

The problem of straining moral sensitivity was worse in the writings of five and ten years ago. In the mid-1970's, "rights" (for nonhumans) talk was still

prevalent in the literature, and the toning down from

"equal rights" to "equal right to be considered" was only

beginning.   It was in this atmosphere that Kenneth

Goodpaster wrote (concerning the extended-rights model):

> . . . [M]y point is that when this is the only
> model available, its implausibilities will keep
> us from dealing ethically with environmental
> obligations and ideals altogether. Such a "deep"
> or "generalized" version of environmentalism
> strains our moral sensitivities to the breaking
> point, inviting talk of the "rights of animals"
> from dolphins to mosquitoes; "rights," . . ., of
> natural objects like trees and rivers;
> "chauvinism"; . . .[37]

As we shall see, Goodpaster has an explanation of our

difficulties--of why we have such a hard time getting our

ethical theorizing to square with our ethical

sensitivities--and he has what seem to be the beginnings

of a solution. But first, we must scout out the rest of

the problems involved in biocentric individualism.

2.   There is the same problem with lack of

structure here that we noticed with the sentience

criterion (page 16 above, point 1); that is, How are we to

adjudicate conflicts between so many and such different

morally considerable beings? Hierarchical criteria might

solve this problem.[38] Also, we might look to the

science of ecology to guide us, but as we shall see in the

next chapter, this will take us beyond extended-

individualism.

3.   Another forward-looking criticism of individualistic versions of the "life" criterion, and one that plumbs a little deeper than the "lack of structure" criticism above, is the criticism that the extended-individualistic model is inappropriate, not suitable for embracing the value of animals and the environment.   In the words of John Rodman:

> I have suggested that the process of 'extending' rights to nonhumans conveys a double message. On the one hand, nonhumans are elevated to the human level by virtue of the characteristics which they are deemed to share with humans; they now have (some) rights. On the other hand, nonhumans are by the same process degraded to the status of inferior human beings, species-anomalies: . . . moral half-breeds having rights without obligations (Singer), 'legal incompetents' needing humans to interpret and represent their interests . . . (Stone).
>   Is this then, the new enlightenment--to see nonhuman animals as imbeciles, wilderness as a human vegetable? As a general characterization of nonhuman nature it seems patronizing and perverse. It is not so much that natural entities are degraded by being represented in human legal actions, or by not having us attribute to them moral obligations. They are degraded rather by our failure to respect them for having their own existence, their own character and potentialities, their own forms of excellence, their own integrity, their own grandeur--and by our tendency to relate to them either by reducing them to the status of instruments for our own ends or by 'giving' them rights by assimilating them to the status of inferior human beings.[39]

We will explore this potent criticism further in Chapter IV (pages 66-71 below).

4. As with the sentience criterion, there is, with a "life" criterion, the problem that we don't know exactly where life ends and non-life begins, both in the context of life and death for an individual, and in the context of animate and inanimate things. An example of the latter is viruses, which are lifeless crystals in isolation, but growing, trophic beings in other conditions.

However, it turns out that this lack of demarcation is really a non-problem, because, as Goodpaster replies in anticipation of such an objection:

> I fail to see why a criterion of moral consider-
> ability must be strictly decidable in order to be
> tenable. Surely rationality, potential rational-
> ity, sentience, and the capacity for or posses-
> sion of interests fare no better here.[40]

This indeterminability criticism leads into the criticism at the other end, namely, "Why stop at life?" Why not go all the way and include everything that exists? An objection is made along these lines by W. Murray Hunt, who argues that the continuity of existence[41] shows that a strong justification is needed if we are going to attempt to place an "ethical demarcation line between the living and the nonliving"[42]. But in reply to this objection, Goodpaster writes:

> . . . [S]o far as I can see, whether there is
> continuity or discontinuity between the living
> and the nonliving is irrelevant. Continuity
> would at best show that moral considerability
> trails off into the nonliving hand in hand with
> the criterion of life, not that the two are
> independent.43

And:

> There seems to be a suggestion here that the need
> for justification is somehow increased by the
> phenomenon of continuity--as if sharp lines and
> strong justifications went together. But this
> isn't right. The sharpness and justification of
> the criterion (life) does [sic.] not require nor
> is it [sic.] required by the fact that in nature
> there is no fine line.44

Much as it seems that a biocentric ethic goes too
far in extending rights or moral considerability to all
living things, including mould and bacteria, some would
complain that it doesn't go far enough--that rocks,
rivers, the atmosphere, etc., deserve moral consideration
for more than their instrumental value to life forms. The
reasoning that leads to the "life" criterion is that
anything living has a welfare, and anything that has a
welfare deserves moral consideration. The reasoning which
leads beyond the "life" criterion either questions the
assertion that only living things have a welfare (e.g.,
can't rivers be harmed?)45 or grants that assertion but
questions the restriction of moral considerability to
things which can be said to have a welfare, claiming that

the preservation of things which are merely "in existence"
also deserves consideration in moral deliberations. To
such claims, Goodpaster can only respond the way his
opponents allied with the sentience camp respond to
biocentric claims:

> I would have to side with the philosophers I was
> criticizing in my article (Frankena, Singer,
> Warnock, and Feinberg) and insist that I find the
> thought of considering the interests of inanimate
> objects simply incoherent. . . . [E]xtending the
> class of morally considerable beings to include
> everything is not, pardon the pun, a live
> option.[46]

While on the whole, these criticisms raised
against a "life" criterion ethic seem significant, two of
the more substantial of them (#1 - its strain on moral
sensitivity; #2 - its structural inadequacy) seem
answerable by means of hierarchical criteria, the best
overview of which seems to be provided by Richard and Val
Routley:

> . . . . [T]here are moral obligations of a type
> that can only hold between free and responsible
> agents and others which only apply within a
> social and political context. Yet other types of
> obligation, such as the obligation not to cause
> suffering, can arise only with respect to
> sentient or preference-having creatures--who are
> not necessarily morally responsible--and could
> not significantly arise with respect to a
> nonsentient such as a tree or a rock. What
> emerges is a picture of types of moral obligation
> as associated with a nest of rings or annular

> boundary classes, with the innermost class,
> consisting of highly intelligent, social sentient
> creatures, having the full range of moral
> obligations applicable to them, and outer classes
> of such nonsentient items as trees and rocks
> having only a much more restricted range of moral
> obligations significantly applicable to them. In
> some cases there is no sharp division between the
> rings. . . .[47]

Although the Routleys fail to distinguish, in the

outermost annular ring, the trees from the rocks--i.e.,

the inner part occupied by trophic beings from the outer

part occupied by nonliving things--it is clear that their

model can make room for this distinction. Their descrip-

tion shows not only how an extended-individualistic ethic

can support different degrees of moral considerability

while extending concern to nonhumans, thus avoiding any

straining of our altruistic capacities, but also how it

can provide at least some measure of structure, via its

hierarchical set-up, for adjudicating inter-species

conflict.

Why, then, are some philosopher-environmentalists

dissatisfied with the biocentric-individualistic ethic?

Let me list some of the reasons involved. First, this

task of providing and justifying hierarchical criteria

seems to be extremely difficult.[48] The difficulties we

meet with in trying to rationally justify a biocentric-

individualistic ethic resist solution in much the same way
that recent historical attempts to justify a humanistic-
individualistic ethic meet resistance.[49] The recent
move in moral philosophy to ground morality in the social
context within which it is located[50] seems to invite an
analogous move in environmental ethics: to view
environmental right and wrong not in terms of the isolated
individual existent, but in terms of the ecological
context within which the individual is located. Second,
the environmental problems we face have forced upon us a
recognition of the importance of studying not just
individual behaviour but also the behaviour of systems
--ecosystems--and it seems to be high time for philoso-
phers to acknowledge this focal shift in science by making
a similar shift in moral philosophy relating to the
environment. Third, the questioning begun by the
historical observation of the expanding moral sphere does
not seem to have reached its terminus in this extended-
individualistic ethic. As Rodman argues (see the passage
quoted on pages 47-48 above), extending rights or even
moral considerability to "nonhumans" on the basis of their
(meagre) similarities to human beings seems to emphasize
their inferiority to humans rather than to respect their
"otherness." We are thus led to protect them in inverse

proportion to their "inferiority" to ourselves, rather
than to value them for what they are in themselves and to
respect the ways in which they differ from us. This not
only cuts us off from a unique opportunity to appreciate
otherness (hence, from the moral growth and happiness
which comes with it); it also denies us the perspective
which most guarantees that we will come to learn enough
about these "others" to know what showing moral concern
for them really consists in. This brings to mind the
Aristotelian doctrine that phronesis is necessary if a man
is to be morally virtuous.[51] However, in environmental
ethics, phronesis is practical understanding not only of
the ways of men and of how things affect men; it is
practical understanding of the ways of nature too, of the
interactions between man and the natural environment, and
of the limits of our knowledge in these matters.

My fourth and final criticism of biocentric
individualism is that man's relationship to nature has
gone through a fundamental change in the last half century
or more, and the individualistic model seems unable to
accommodate this change. Hans Jonas explains how
fundamental this change is in a 1973 article entitled
"Technology and Responsibility: Reflections on the New
Tasks of Ethics." Jonas contrasts the intra-human frame

of traditional ethics with the modern situation in which

man's actions affect all of nature, and he wonders how

much the growth of techne might have outstripped the

traditional ethical understanding. He writes that in the

pre-industrial age, "the whole and sole domain of man's

responsible action" was in the community:

> . . . Nature was not an object of human respon-
> sibility--she taking care of herself and, with
> some coaxing and worrying, also of man: not
> ethics, only cleverness applied to her. But in
> the city, where men deal with men, cleverness
> must be wedded to morality, for this is the soul
> of its being.[52]

However, today:

> All this has decisively changed. Modern
> technology has introduced actions of such novel
> scale, objects, and consequences that the
> framework of former ethics can no longer contain
> them. . . . To be sure, the old prescriptions of
> the "neighbour" ethics--of justice, charity,
> honesty, and so on--still hold in their intimate
> immediacy for the nearest, day by day sphere of
> human interaction. But this sphere is
> overshadowed by a growing realm of collective
> action where doer, deed, and effect are no longer
> the same as they were in the proximate sphere,
> and which by the enormity of its powers forces
> upon ethics a new dimension of responsibility
> never dreamt of before.

Jonas suggests that the first major change in the

ethical relationship between human beings and the natural

environment came with "the critical vulnerability of

nature to man's technological intervention--unsuspected

before it began to show itself in damage already done."

This discovery, whose shock led to the
concept and nascent science of ecology, alters
the very concept of ourselves as a causal agency
in the larger scheme of things. It brings to
light, through the effects, that the nature of
human action has de facto changed, and that an
object of an entirely new order--no less than the
whole biosphere of the planet--has been added to
what we must be responsible for because of our
power over it. And of what surpassing importance
an object, dwarfing all previous objects of
active man! Nature as a human responsibility is
surely a novum to be pondered in ethical theory.
What kind of obligation is operative in it?
     . . . No previous ethics had to consider the
global condition of human life and the far-off
future, even existence, of the race. Their now
being an issue demands, in brief, a new
conception of duties and rights, for which
previous ethics and metaphysics provide not even
the principles, let alone a ready doctrine.

And Jonas wonders:

     . . . [W]hat if the new kind of human action
would mean that more than the interest of man
alone is to be considered--that our duty extends
farther and the anthropocentric confinement of
former ethics no longer holds? It is at least
not senseless anymore to ask whether the
condition of extra-human nature, the biosphere as
a whole and in its parts, now subject to our
power, has become a human trust and has something
of a moral claim on us not only for our ulterior
sake but for its own and in its own right. If
this were the case it would require quite some
rethinking in basic principles of ethics.[53]

Jonas goes on to comment that this rethinking could well

go "beyond the doctrine of action, i.e., ethics, into the

doctrine of being, i.e., metaphysics, in which all ethics

must ultimately be grounded." But he adds, "On this

speculative subject I will here say no more than that we

should keep ourselves open to the thought that natural

science may not tell the whole story about Nature." This possibility would seem to be one which we could not wisely deny.

Why might the individualistic model be unable to accommodate the radical change that has taken place in our relationship to nature? Because technology and population pressure have extended the range of impact of our activities beyond individual living things to the point where many of our practices affect or threaten whole species, large ecosystems, even the entire planet itself. To be able to understand such impact only in terms of sums of individual organisms being affected would be to miss the forest for the trees. Just as our scientific understanding of nature has grown by focusing on ecosystems rather than just upon individual organisms, so, it is argued, must our ethical appreciation of nature grow. Is the operative principle here that if a thing is threatened by human activities, then that thing deserves moral consideration--rocks and junked cars included? No. We arrived at this point by way of the "life" criterion, and so the focus it urges is upon systems of living things--in which rocks and junked cars may very well play a role. In the next chapter, I will explore some of the attempts that have been made to articulate such a holistic ethic.

The ecological approach seeks to ground ethical principles in an ecological understanding of life. Moral concern is focused on ecosystems, that is, on self-sustaining and self-regulating systems formed by the interactions of a community of organisms with one another and with their environment, and individuals are valued according to the role(s) which they play in ecosystems. One of the first of recent writers to consider an ecological approach to ethics was Aldo Leopold, who is commonly regarded as the father of the current ecological ethics movement. Although it is doubtful that Leopold embraced an entirely non-anthropocentric ethic, his poignant questioning of anthropocentrism and of the individualist bias that underlies it make his work a valuable starting point in our study of the search for an ecological ethic.

i. Leopold's "Land Ethic"

Aldo Leopold was an American forester, conserva--tionist, hunter, professor and writer who was alert to ecological damage long before the pesticide problem erupted and who questioned the dogma of progress long

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before the need for such questioning was generally
apparent. He died in Wisconsin in 1948 while fighting a
grass fire on a neighbour's farm, but he left behind a
collection of essays (<u>A Sand County Almanac and Sketches
Here and There</u>, published posthumously) which has become
the familiar starting point of many inquiries into
environmental ethics.[1]

Like Jonas, Leopold sees the moral consideration
of nature as a move which the environmental impact of our
technology forces us to confront; in fact, Leopold goes
further—he sees the move as a logical step in an ethical
sequence characterized by expansion of the sphere of
beings who are acknowledged to deserve moral considera-
tion. Leopold reads the extension of moral concern to
"the land" (the land and everything growing on it, and
streams, rocks, etc.) as "an evolutionary possibility and
an ecological necessity."[2] While it may be that Leopold
overplays the evolution theme[3], his acknowledgment of
the dependence of our ethical outlook upon both our way of
life and our understanding of other life forms is salutary:

> Like winds and sunsets, wild things were taken
> for granted until progress began to do away with
> them. Now we face the question whether a still
> higher 'standard of living' is worth its cost in
> things natural, wild, and free. . . .

> These wild things, I admit, had little human
> value until mechanization assured us of a good
> breakfast, and until science disclosed the drama
> of where they come from and how they live. . . .[4]

The extension of ethics which Leopold urges upon us is summarized in these two oft-quoted passages. The first passage is "The Land Ethic" in capsule form:

> A thing is right when it tends to preserve the
> integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic
> community. It is wrong when it tends other-
> wise.[5]

The second passage outlines the concept of community on which the land ethic is based:

> The land ethic simply enlarges the boundar-
> ies of the ethical community to include soils,
> waters, plants, and animals, or collectively:
> the land.
> . . .
> In short, a land ethic changes the role of
> Homo sapiens from conqueror of the land-community
> to plain member and citizen of it. It implies
> respect for his fellow-members, and also respect
> for the community as such.[6]

An avid hunter and fisher, Leopold makes it clear in his writings that rather than individual flourishing or individual suffering, it is the health of the land com-munity itself which should serve as the reference point for our determinations of environmental right and wrong. The difficulty of measuring this health--of measuring

integrity, stability, and beauty--is something which
Leopold acknowledges[7] and which others have investi-
gated.[8]

As mentioned above, Leopold argues for moral
standing for the land on the basis of "evolutionary
possibility and ecological necessity"--that we could
embrace the land ethic by understanding it as a continua-
tion of the ethical development of the last century, and
that we should embrace it if we are to preserve the land's
habitability for us.[9] But his discussion of "how we
could" embrace the land ethic--his picture of it as
extending the ethical frontier one step further to include
"the land"--depends less upon the historical speculations
he presents it with[10] than upon the explanation of
ecology and the description of wildlife and wild flowers
which share his pages. However, Leopold does not make
this connection between the land ethic and his extensive
description of experiences in nature explicit, I expect
because he wants us to make the connections ourselves, or
perhaps because he believes that we must make them
ourselves--that the connections can only be made when the
ecological experience is first-hand. Indeed, the first
two-thirds of the book serves to encourage the reader to
see and learn about the land--his own land, whatever it

consists of, whether meadow or woodland, lakefront or desert--to see and learn about the land for himself.

To get a clearer picture, if we can, of this connection between environmental awareness and an ecological ethic, and to get a clearer picture of the ecological approach to ethics generally, we will have to turn to the works of some of the philosophers who have followed Leopold's lead.

First, a final note on Leopold to lead us into consideration of the instrumental vs. intrinsic value question. The land ethic advocated by Leopold is considered by many to be the forerunner of what I have here chosen to call an ecological ethic, because, as the passages quoted above suggest, Leopold's land ethic seems to focus moral concern upon ecosystems rather than upon individuals. However, it appears that Leopold's focus on ecosystems is itself underwritten by concern for human good, so that his attitude to nature, enlightened as it is, may be fundamentally instrumentalist.[11] Witness these words from his "Forward":

> We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect. There is no other way for land

> to survive the impact of mechanized man, nor for
> us to reap from it the esthetic harvest it is
> capable, under science, of contributing to
> culture.[12]

Leopold seems to be saying here that an ethical attitude

toward the land is necessary both for its (and our)

survival and for cultural enhancement. He repeats this

thought near the end of the book, making clear that his

concern is that anything short of ethical commitment will

not secure the conservation efforts needed:

> To sum up: a system of conservation based
> solely on economic self-interest is hopelessly
> lopsided. It tends to ignore, and thus eventual-
> ly to eliminate, many elements in the land
> community that lack commercial value, but that
> are (as far as we know) essential to its healthy
> functioning. It assumes, falsely, I think, that
> the economic parts of the biotic clock will
> function without the uneconomic parts. It tends
> to relegate to government many functions
> eventually too large, too complex, or too widely
> dispersed to be performed by government.
> An ethical obligation on the part of the
> private owner is the only visible remedy for
> these situations.[13]

The argument is that economic self-interest cannot

preserve the health of the land because the actions

necessary to preserve its health do not generally

translate into soon-reapable economic gains for the

individual, and they cannot be effectively undertaken by

government agencies; therefore, only a felt ethical

obligation on the part of individuals will do the job.
Leopold's reasoning seems to involve the premise that the
only alternatives are: 1) individual effort motivated by
economic self-interest; 2) individual effort motivated by
an ethical attitude; and, 3) conservation by government
agencies. Since he judges both economic self-interest and
government efficacy to fall short, he claims that ethical
obligation is the only solution. Twenty years of pol-
lution and mismanagement later, Garrett Hardin will opt
for individual effort reinforced by government control
("mutual coercion, mutually agreed upon," his solution to
"the tragedy of the commons"[14]), but the situation was
not as severe in 1948, and Leopold's faith in people is
not as small as Hardin's. However, the ethical commitment
Leopold calls for is radical:

> . . . Obligations have no meaning without con-
> science, and the problem we face is the extension
> of the social conscience from people to land.
> No important change in ethics was ever
> accomplished without an internal change in our
> intellectual emphasis, loyalties, affections, and
> convictions. The proof that conservation has not
> yet touched these foundations of conduct lies in
> the fact that philosophy and religion have not
> yet heard of it. In our attempt to make
> conservation easy, we have made it trivial.[15]

The internal change Leopold seeks is the broadening of our
ethical vision to include the land. It would appear that,

like others after him, including Holmes Rolston III,
Ernest Partridge, J. Baird Callicott, and Don E. Marietta,
Jr., Leopold believes the mechanism for this change to be
education in ecology:

> An ethic to supplement and guide the
> economic relation to land presupposes the
> existence of some mental image of land as a
> biotic mechanism. We can be ethical only in
> relation to something we can see, feel, under-
> stand, love, or otherwise have faith in.[16]

How education in ecology might achieve this
internal change is made a little more explicit by later
writers; e.g., by Don E. Marietta, Jr., in "The Inter-
relationship of Ecological Science and Environmental
Ethics."[17] In this article, Marietta argues that the
"is/ought" impasse is bypassed when we understand facts
and values in connection with world-views, and in the
course of his argument, he elucidates the connection
between ecological education and an ecological ethic in
this way:

> An ethic founded upon ecology . . . is not
> derived abstractly from entailment relations
> between statements, [and therefore it] does not
> deduce ought from is. It is rather a matter of
> recognizing the values embedded in our observa-
> tions of the world, observations in which factual
> cognition and value cognition are fused, only to
> be separated by reflection. Rolston notices that
> in a primary ecological ethic "an 'ought' is not

so much _derived_ from an 'is' as discovered
simultaneously with it," that the facts are not
logically or chronologically prior to the value,
but rather "the values seem to be there as soon
as the facts are fully in." The later reflective
separation of fact and value is not immediate in
our seeing of the world, but is a second level
interpretation of our seeing. Of course, these
interpretations influence the way we will
subsequently see the world, but seldom to the
extent that we observe purely in terms of fact or
purely in terms of value.

We may experience the fusion of fact and
value when we consider such things as the
interdependence of living organisms and their
environment in an estuary. The more one realizes
how many animal and vegetable life forms there
are in the estuary and sees how this special
environment enables this community to exist, the
more one values it and finds it interesting,
beautiful, healthy, good, and something-which-
ought-to-be." I find this joined development of
factual knowledge and value when people who have
recently moved to Florida react to the Ever-
glades. They are often disappointed at first,
but as they learn more about this unique
ecosystem, their appreciation of it grows with
their knowledge. They do not infer from the
facts which they learn that the Everglades is an
exciting, beautiful, and valuable place. The
realizaton of value _comes with_ the facts.[18]

However, unlike later writers, Leopold is either

unaware of or unconcerned with the _is/ought_ and related

philosophical problems, and he simply walks past the

footpath to the instrumental vs. intrinsic value debate.

His concern, as is clear in the passage quoted above (page

6λ) and as he frequently states it elsewhere[19], is one

that cannot wait for the philosophical analysis that was

to come twenty years later, and one that is prior to and independent of the instrumental/intrinsic value debate: his concern is to get us beyond a solely economic appraisal of our dealings with the land and to make us come to feel personally responsible for the health of the land--because we can, and because we must.

Leopold writes that an ethical relation to land requires a high regard for its value, and, "By value, I of course mean something far broader than mere economic value; I mean value in the philosophical sense."[20] What Leopold seems not to have realized is that "value in the philosophical sense" is a complex concept in 20th-century philosophy. For example, in his introductory text, Ethics, William K. Frankena distinguishes no fewer than seven types of value[21]. Thus, to say "value in the philosophical sense," is to make only a vague beginning, and it is not clear in the rest of A Sand County Almanac whether Leopold would have argued for intrinsic value as opposed to instrumental value for the land, because woven into his descriptive eulogies of nature is his recurrent pronouncement of the usefulness of natural things to human existence.

Further complicating the story here is the fact that at many points, Leopold speaks of the land as a source of spiritual growth for us. He seems almost to approach a statement of the environmental version of the so-called "moral paradox," the "paradox" that when we get beyond self-seeking and guide our actions by concern for others, our lives are enriched immeasurably. The paradox, as it is claimed, is that in denying our own interests, we end up best serving them.[22]

I hesitate to call this a paradox, though, because it seems to me that the label of "paradox" can stop us from trying to understand what is really involved, which has to do with the fact that the self-seeker has a faulty picture of the world. He sees life as a mutually antagonistic struggle of more-or-less independent beings, and conceives his own good to be divorced from, and even opposed to, the good of others.[23] Locating his good in a separate, and but for a select few, unsharable realm, the self-seeker insulates himself from realizing his true good. He cannot gain it by holding his breath and making a reluctant dive out of his realm and into moral living (except insofar as he might feign concern for others in order to reap whatever outer rewards it can bring),

because the goods of moral living--sensing oneself to be a

helpful part of the community; seeing others do well;

seeing communities and traditions help and be helped by

individuals; knowing that doing what is right is worth the

opportunities it might cost--these are not yet goods to

him. The "paradox" never materializes, because before

concern for others emerges as a genuine driving force in

our self-seeker's life, his understanding of what his good

is begins to change. He begins to realize that he is a

part of something bigger than himself, that he has made it

to where he is by the love and concern that others have

had for him, that the whole which he belongs to, however

tattered and imperfect, is a good thing, that he can

contribute to this whole, celebrate his part in it, by

caring for others--by returning love to those who have

loved him, and as he grows, by giving love to those who

need it, perhaps even someday to those who might seem to

spite him.

Thus, rather than a paradox, what we have here is

a cripple becoming cured, which is surely a blessing,

perhaps a miracle, but not a paradox. It is not even true

that one's interests are best served by disregarding them,

except where we equivocate on "interests," and mean in the

first instance short-term, superficial interests, and in
the second, long-term interests, the interests we might
best recognize when, as our lives begin to draw to a
close, we wonder if we have lived them well. (In the
foregoing, I do not mean to claim that a particular
understanding of life precedes concern for others, or
vice-versa, only that they are interwoven; and I do not by
any means claim to understand how the weaving proceeds.
In addition, I have written as if moral growth were a
process of transition from one extreme type (the
self-seeker) to another (the other-seeker), and I
recognize the ineptness of this characterization: we are
never fully one or the other, and moral growth is not a
process of reversing polarities. However, if I have
succeeded in showing that the alleged "moral paradox" is
not really a paradox, then this oversimplification was
worth making.)

The environmental version of this "paradox" is
that when we care about nature not just insofar as it
fulfills our material needs and even our aesthetic wants,
but above all, for its own sake, out of love for it, then
.our lives are enriched immeasurably. This is a favourite
theme of Ernest Partridge, who, in an article entitled
"Nature as a Moral Resource," writes:

> Happiness is found by reaching out, in admira-
> tion, reverence, and love, rather than through
> self-serving calculation. This is the _paradox of_
> _morality_. The paradox is expressed in religious
> literature, as when Jesus says: "Whosoever will
> save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall
> lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew
> 16:25). The paradox is also set forth by moral
> philosophers from Aristotle, through Hobbes and
> Butler, and on to Kurt Baier, Michael Scriven,
> John Rawls, Joel Feinberg, and many others in our
> own time.
>
> . . . [I]t may be the case that, para-
> doxically, wild species are valuable "to us"
> precisely to the degree that they are valued and
> admired not for _our_ sake and gratification but
> for _themselves_--for _what_ they are.24
>
> . . . [F]or our personal fulfillment we need to
> have things which "matter" to us that are not
> ourselves; indeed, we need things that are valued
> for their very independence and externality from
> us. Thus, our personal and moral life is
> enriched to the degree that it is "extended out"
> in self-transcending enjoyment, cherishing and
> contemplating things, places, and ideals that are
> remote in space and time--even, in a sense,
> _timeless_. As we assume the ecosystemic point of
> view, . . . our lives are enriched with a sense
> of exuberance, variety, wonder, and reverence.
> . . . .
>
> There is thus a paradox in ecological
> morality as there is in social morality, for I am
> suggesting, in effect, that for mankind's sake it
> is wiser to love nature for nature's sake.
> Mankind, that is to say, is better served if
> mankind honors, protects, reveres, _loves_ its
> biotic inheritance and its natural community.25

I would refrain from calling this a paradox, and would

again argue that it is really a matter of redefining where

our interests lie (and that ultimately, they lie in respecting

ourselves and all living things as the particular beings that

we are or have it in ourselves to become, and in respecting

systems--natural and human--as the complex organisms that they are). John Rodman too speaks of the importance for moral/spiritual growth of recognizing otherness, and suggests that nature provides us with the greatest opportunity for doing this because appreciating the "others" we find in <u>nature</u> requires so much more "going outside of ourselves" than does appreciating "otherness" in our own kind.

With this recognition of the "usefulness" of nature to our moral and spiritual growth, it becomes difficult to isolate arguments for finding intrinsic value in nature from arguments for recognizing instrumental value. Indeed, the two seem to fuse together in Leopold's writings, where it is difficult to see whether his argument is that the land has value because we need it to survive (instrumental value), or because it enriches our lives (inherent or aesthetic value), or "in itself," because of certain qualities it possesses and irrespective of our relationship to it (intrinsic value), <u>or</u> for some combination of the above reasons. The conclusion seems inescapable that the instrumental/intrinsic value distinction, useful though it may be in other fields, is not clearly useful in environmental ethics, and may not

even be tenable.[26]. Perhaps Leopold's "vague beginning" with "value in the philosophical sense" (criticized above, page 66) was actually quite suitably vague.

As we have seen, Hans Jonas argues that because our _techne_ has grown to the point where the entire biosphere is vulnerable to human activities, responsibility for the biosphere must now enter into our ethics, which, prior to the industrial/technological revolution, were concerned only with inter-human affairs. What is operating in Jonas's work is a conception of ethics in which the central feature is reference to the _good_ and _harm_ done to others by a moral agent.[27] But the good and harm done to _nonhuman members_ of the biosphere gets no mention in Jonas's "Technology and Responsibility: Reflections on the New Tasks of Ethics," and as we have seen, these concerns do get at least minor treatment in traditional ethics and are getting major treatment in the extended-individualistic ethics being worked on today. In Leopold, we get intimations of an ethic which balances both individual concerns with biospheric concerns: respect for every living thing together with the understanding that life requires the taking of life. These two themes are woven together into the tapestry of

reclaimed-wilderness adventures which spans the first
two-thirds of A Sand County Almanac and which leads us
into the land ethic. In retrospect, Leopold's work seems
to be both a thanksgiving for a world where this respect
and this understanding can be woven together, and a
warning of how extinguishable this often unappreciated
world is. But what seems to be implicit in Leopold's
pages gets explicit treatment in the environmental-ethical
writing of the last decade, and so we will move on to some
more recent explorations, beginning with the work of
Kenneth E. Goodpaster.

ii. Goodpaster

In "From Egoism to Environmentalism,"[28] Kenneth
E. Goodpaster argues that the individualistic model of
modern moral philosophy cannot serve the development of an
intelligible and morally persuasive environmental ethic
because of the implausibilities, lack of structure, and
possible sensitivity-constraint involved in merely
enlarging its base, the class of morally considerable
beings. Goodpaster begins his essay by bringing to our
attention two characteristic 20th-century phenomena: one,

the almost exclusive concern of contemporary moral
philosophy with foundational questions; and two, the
emergence of serious environmental problems and our
apparent inability to work out a consistent ethical
understanding of those problems.   He writes:

> . . . with a certain amount of fear and
> trembling, I . . . want to venture the hypothesis
> that ethical theory has, in its concentration on
> foundational issues, left itself vulnerable and
> relatively uncritical on certain other fronts.
> And this vulnerability may well be manifesting
> itself currently in an incapacity to deal with
> the needs being expressed for an "environmental
> ethic" and for a relevance of moral philosophy to
> public affairs in the environmental context. In
> other words, though philosophical preoccupations
> are probably not the cause of certain social
> problems, they may well be part of an explanation
> for our current conceptual weakness in providing
> ethically enlightening solutions to these
> problems. And as the saying goes, one who is not
> a part of the solution . . . is part of the
> problem.[29]

Goodpaster isolates the individualistic model of
modern ethical thought, which he suggests is the source of
our conceptual difficulty in environmental ethics, by
investigating the two "families of views" which represent
its dominant foundational preoccupations. These "famil-
ies" are "the H-family" and "the K-Family," which "are
pitted against one another and together against moral
skepticism." The H-family (Hume, of course, but "H" to

avoid "exegetical" problems[30]) is the family of views
which share an empiricist approach to morality and explain
moral predicates in terms of factual criteria based on
interest and sentiment. The K-family (yes, Kant (plus
disclaimer) intended here) is the family of views which
construes morality as a set of categorical imperatives
derived from reason. Goodpaster's sketch of these two
families[31] outlines the extreme foundational differences
between them, but he points out that even beyond their
opposition to skepticism, they also share a calling to
vindicate "benevolence" and "justice" over egoism. The
H-family tries to achieve this vindication by means of "an
impartialist analysis of the moral sentiment or point of
view and . . . the rejection of psychological egoism as
either logically confused or empirically simplistic". The
K-family tries to champion benevolence and justice over
egoism by means of "the universalization or generalization
test for moral maxims and . . . the rejection of
self-referentiality in our understanding of reasons for
action,"[32] this, because within the K-family, the
assumption is that "the road to altruism is the important
moral road and . . . it is to be reached by a discipline
of 'objectifying' subjective or egoistic reasons for
action."[33]

Quoting Hume in the _Enquiry_, Mill in _Utilitarian-_
ism, and a contemporary philosopher, Gilbert Harman in _The_
Nature of Morality, Goodpaster shows that within the
H-family,

> [t]he suggestion . . . is that the only way to
> conceptualize and psychologically explain the
> moral sentiment is in terms of extending
> self-interest to include other bearers of that
> sentiment. . . .
>   I am not, of course, suggesting that the
> moral sentiment in the H-family is at bottom
> reducible to self-interest as its ground--quite
> the contrary. _Ex hypothesi_, self-love is not its
> ground. What I am suggesting is that self-love
> is its guiding model . . . Value is tied to the
> interests of persons and is moralized by being
> tied to the interests of all or most persons.[34]

Within the K-family, Goodpaster tells us,
"despite expectations and initial appearances, things are
not much different." Acknowledging that Kant's first
formulation of the categorical imperative may be exempt
from these criticisms, Goodpaster points out that it is
the second formulation which "comes closest in Kant's
account to providing something like substantive action-
guidance in a theory otherwise charged with being too
formal to be practically helpful."[35] And the second
formulation, bringing into focus as it does the idea of
respect for persons, "is hostage to the same sort of model
of morality attributed to the H-family,"[36] namely, an

egoistic model "moralized" by being extended to include others. Here, value is tied to the concept of the end-in-itself and "moralized" by the recognition of all or most persons as ends-in-themselves.[37] Goodpaster cites Thomas Nagel (The Possibility of Altruism(Oxford, 1970)) to give a contemporary example of how the K-family sees moral reasons as "essentially related to a class of 'persons' in the same sort of way that the H-family related them to a class of 'interests'."[38]

The upshot of Goodpaster's analysis is that an individualistic model is seen to underlie the contemporary Western approach to morality, whether we seek justification in the way things are (sentiment or interest) or in the way reason dictates. Likewise, it underlies the maxim, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," the "Golden Rule" which has cast its glow upon almost every work of Western moral philosophy that I have read. Goodpaster describes this individualistic model as "a fixation on egoism and a consequent loyalty to a model of moral sentiment or reason which in essence generalizes or universalizes that very egoism,"[39] and he calls this extended egoistic model "humanism" ("broadly speak-.
ing").[40] Goodpaster's thesis is that it is this model underlying contemporary moral philosophy

that makes it particularly inhospitable to our
recent felt need for an environmental ethic--an
ethic which, in the words of Leopold, takes the
integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic
community as its central touchstone. For such an
ethic does not readily admit of being reduced to
"humanism"--nor does it sit well with any class
or generalization model of moral concern.[41]

Goodpaster acknowledges that he is going against

the current of much recent literature in environmental

ethics which differentiates between "shallow" (anthropo-

centric) and "deep" (biocentric, nature-centered)

environmentalism, and which locates the failure of modern

ethics in its human-centredness--in "a problem with the

degree of its impartiality," not in "a problem with the

structure of its thought."[42] He thus challenges the

position of Richard and Val Routley in their attack on

"human chauvinism," the position of William Frankena in

extending moral relevance to all consciously sentient

beings, the position of Tom Regan and Peter Singer in

Animal Rights and Human Obligations, the position of

Christopher Stone in Should Trees Have Standing?

Goodpaster thinks that their diagnosis of homocentric

impartiality is misguided:

> In fact, it is the structural tie to the
> generalization model in these thinkers which
> seems to me to be the right explanation for the
> (often) counterintuitive implications of their

views. What I want to suggest is that the last
thing we need is simply another "liberation
movement"--for animals, trees, flora, fauna, or
rivers. More importantly, the last thing we need
is to cling to a model of moral judgement and
justification which makes such liberation
movements (with their attendant concentric
reasoning) the chief or only way to deal with
moral growth and social change.
     What I am maintaining is not that the
"individualistic" model cannot be pressed into
service, epicycle after epicycle, to deal with
our obligations in matters environmental. Rather
my point is that when this is the only model
available, its implausibilities will keep us from
dealing ethically with environmental obligations
and ideals altogether. Such a "deep" or
"generalized" version of environmentalism strains
our moral sensitivities and intuitions to the
breaking point, inviting talk of the "rights of
animals" from dolphins to mosquitoes; "rights,"
. . ., of natural objects like trees and rivers;
"chauvinism"; and court suits brought in the
names of personified species or even historical
landmarks.[43]

Goodpaster is quick both to affirm that we do

have moral obligations where animals are concerned, and to

acknowledge the clarification which animal and environment

rightists have achieved with the concepts of moral right

and moral considerability. But in addition to the problem

of implausibility described above, he argues that

extending moral considerability to nonhumans leaves us

with serious application problems:

     Once the class of morally considerable beings is
     enlarged, no hint of a method for assessing or
     commensurating the newly recognized claims is

provided. Nor does it seem likely that it _could_ be provided in a nonarbitrary way, given the lack of structure in the model.[44]

However, Goodpaster does not seem to give enough consideration to the degree to which structure _can be_ non-epicyclically incorporated into an extended-individualistic ethic, as we saw in Chapter III, nor to the degree to which mosquitoes' rights-type implausibilities _can be avoided_. However, he was writing at a time when animal rights-talk hadn't yet fully geared down from the "equal right to life" and "equal right not to suffer" level, and so his criticisms are certainly not aimed at straw men. But before we try to refine Goodpaster's criticisms (with help from Hans Jonas and John Rodman), let us continue with his analysis.

With what seems much like Nietzschean psychological acumen and before-its-time anticipation of conceptual structure, Goodpaster writes:

> It is the inability to understand the range of the moral sentiment (or practical reason) in any but an abstract extensional mode that seems to be the problem: the single-minded mapping of morality onto "beneficiaries" and "communities of ends" whose relation to _their_ environment is still left outside except instrumentally. I am suggesting that our normative ethical theorizing, when it becomes substantive, is hostage to the complex question: If not one's own interests, or dignity, then whose?[45]

Although he reports that he is "somewhat at a loss as to how to go on," Goodpaster suggests two conditions which must be fulfilled if our environmental ethic is to overstep the individualistic model: its criteria for judging our dealings with nature must be

> A. either nonrelational in character, or if relational, then not relational to an extended class but to something else; and
>
> B. not practically empty."46

What he means by "relational" is likely connected with his discussion of "single-minded mapping" in the preceding quotation: given the broader context, I would guess that "nonrelational criteria" would be criteria which are not based upon individual interests or dignity--not "related to" individual interests or dignity--and not based upon any means-ends relationships with individuals as their focal point, but rather, criteria which are set by the way systems operate (ecosystems, and human social/moral systems too, as we will see). Admitting that it may be difficult even to "make sense of, let alone render plausible, a normative ethical posture satisfying these conditions," Goodpaster considers some positions held by past and contemporary philosophers which might help us get a toehold.

The first two positions he considers are those of Kant and Sidgwick. Goodpaster quotes the following as evidence that Kant might be interpreted as having been hinting at something beyond the individualistic model:

> For since each one pursues actions on the great stage according to his dominating inclinations, he is moved at the same time by a secret impulse to take a standpoint outside himself in thought, in order to judge the outward propriety of his behaviour as it seems in the eyes of the onlooker. Thus the different groups unite into a picture of splendid expression, where amidst great multiplicity unity shines forth, and the whole of moral nature exhibits beauty and dignity.[47]

The hint which Goodpaster detects here may be in Kant's idea of "the whole of moral nature" exhibiting "beauty and dignity," with the focus seeming to be on the system, on how things work together, rather than on individuals. Kant's suggestion seems to be that concern for "the outward propriety" of one's own behaviour effectively translates into concern for the moral system as a whole. Equally of interest here might be Kant's instruction to us in the categorical imperative to consider our maxims as if they might become universal laws of nature, but Goodpaster foregoes exploring this possibility (and I will too).

Goodpaster detects a similar "hint" in Sidgwick's talk of grounding moral obligation "not only from an agent's (own) relational point of view but [also] 'from the point of view of the universe'." But Goodpaster has reservations about whether either philosopher's work could satisfy condition B above, and so he turns his attention to contemporary literature after pausing to wonder whether the account of Kant or of Sidgwick "would have differed had they had available to them the emerging science of ecology."[48]

He finds his most fruitful example of movement towards a non-individualistic ethic in the writing of environmental ethicist Holmes Rolston III, but, as Goodpaster points out, Rolston's commitment to a non-individualistic model seems to be only part-time. At one point, Rolston writes:

> . . .[C]onsider how slowly the circle has been enlarged fully to include aliens, strangers, infants, children, Negroes, Jews, slaves, women, Indians, prisoners, the elderly, the insane, the deformed, and even now we ponder the status of fetuses. Ecological ethics queries whether we ought again to universalize, recognizing the intrinsic value of every ecobiotic component.[49]

However, later in the same article he writes:

> The focus does not only enlarge from man to other
> ecosystemic members, but from individuals of
> whatever kind to the system.[50]

Goodpaster draws attention to Rolston's ambivalence here,

an ambivalence which Leopold shares, between the individ-

ualistic model and one which goes beyond it, to demon-

strate that critical attention is needed at this level.

It is ironical that a paper which begins with a criticism

of 20th-century foundational preoccupations ends with a

particular foundational preoccupation of its own (namely,

a preoccupation with going beyond individualism), but I

think that Goodpaster's recommendation for structural

change may be fruitful for environmental ethics and that

it may be an anticipation of what is to come. I will

quote at length from the remainder of Goodpaster's paper

because he describes, much better than I could paraphrase,

the importance of the implicit model we operate with:

> If we approach the question as to the proper
> object(s) of moral respect solely in terms of
> extending or augmenting the class of already
> acknowledged moral persons, we run the risk of
> constraining our moral sensitivity to the size of
> our self-wrought paradigms. Human persons may
> well be paradigms, of course, but paradigms
> provide clues and starting points--not stopping
> points. They may be exemplary but they need not
> be the most embracing integral units in our moral
> universe. Indeed our moral universe might
> contain structures inclusive of persons respect
> for which is just as incumbent upon us morally.
> Such, I would want to argue, is the biosystem as

a whole: not as a mere collection of biotic
particles, but as an integrated, self-sustaining
unity which puts solar energy to work in the
service of growth and maintenance. The history
of evolution is the drama of the biosystem's
successful self-protection. Recent industrial
history may well be an episode in that drama
which will lead to a destruction of the system by
some of its own participants, a kind of biotic
hemorrhage.
   I have no wish to sound either metaphorical
or apocalyptic. Much less do I wish to suggest
for a moment that biosystemic respect should
dilute human concerns for happiness and justice.
I do, however, suggest that if an "environmental
ethic" is to be made both genuinely intelligible
and morally persuasive, it must abandon a
class-membership model of what can count as an
"end-in-itself" or deserve respect. We must, I
think, take literally and seriously the possibil-
ity that to be worthy of (moral) respect, a
unified system need not be composed of cells and
body tissue . . .51

Goodpaster here goes beyond the egoistic-

individualistic model by arguing that self-sustaining

natural systems deserve moral respect, yet he also retains

the justification-approach of the individualistic system,

which is to set out morally relevant criteria which

anything thought to merit moral respect must be shown to

possess. The criterion which Goodpaster sets out, as we

saw in Chapter III, is the life principle, the idea that

"the core of moral concern lies in respect for

self-sustaining organization and integration in the face

of pressures toward high entropy." But this principle

which Goodpaster sets out as the criterion for his non-individualistic ethic is also the foundation of a biocentric-_individualistic_ ethic! At this point, one might think that Goodpaster is being inconsistent. Or one might think, as Eric Katz does,[52] that Goodpaster reconsidered his position between writing "On Being Morally Considerable" (1978) and writing "From Egoism to Environmentalism" (1979). But it seems to me that, perhaps without even noticing it himself, Goodpaster has actually managed to forge a link between the individualism of traditional ethics and the systems-focus of the developing science of ecology by setting out life as the criterion for moral considerability in such a way that it includes the biosphere and ecosystems generally, as well as the individuals who inhabit them. This development within environmental ethics seems to bring moral philosophy into step with ecology without abandoning concern for individuals. How important an achievement is this?

Noted environmental ethicist Holmes Rolston III remarks on both the importance and the difficulty of assessing the significance of ecology for philosophy:

> The perils of transposing from a new science to a
> world view, patent in the history of scientific
> thought, are surpassed only by the perils of
> omitting to do so.[53]

Rolston notes that although we do not have a clear idea of
how our values come to be,[54] it seems undeniable that
they are shaped

> . . . in significant measure in accord with our
> notion of the kind of universe that we live in.
> Science has in centuries before us upset those
> values by reappraising the character of the
> universe. . . . [W]e have lately lived in the
> shadow of Darwin. The ecological revolution may
> be of a similar order; it is undeniably at work
> reilluminating the world.

Yet Goodpaster's work seems to be unique in environmental
ethics because it can be seen to promise us a way of
keeping in touch with our traditional approach even as it
beckons us to a new, ecologically informed understanding
of morality. The problem now is how to formulate this
awakening understanding.

Goodpaster's recommendation is that environmental
ethicists abandon the individualistic model in order to
avoid the implausibilities of extending it, in order to
develop a model which is structured enough to give us some
nonarbitrary guidance in adjudicating conflicts, and (to
fill out the latter point), in order to avoid constraining

our recognition of moral value "to the size of our self-wrought paradigms." I have already indicated that the first two criticisms may no longer have much force. It is the third point above, the call to escape restriction of our moral vision, that I wish to discuss here.

In his recommendation that the environmental ethicist break free of the individualistic model, Goodpaster repeats Rolston's invitation "to get in gear with the way the universe is operating."[55] The suggestion seems to be that our understanding of value should be directly connected to our understanding of ecology, so that our determinations of value are not fixed ("constrained"), but rather are able to grow with our ecological knowledge, and with changing conditions in the biosphere. I will consider the problems with this position shortly, but first I want to speculate about a possible part of its history.

In the 1920's, John Dewey carried the pragmatic tradition to fruition in moral philosophy by bringing values under the jurisdiction of the experimental method. Since the time of Plato and before, many philosophers had sought the certainty of mathematics for all forms of

knowledge, and moral philosophy was not excluded from this quest.[56]   Dewey writes:

> With the expansion of Christianity, ethico-
> religious traits came to dominate the purely
> rational ones. The ultimate authoritative
> standards for regulation of the dispositions and
> purposes of the human will were fused with those
> which satisfied the demands for necessary and
> universal truth. The authority of ultimate Being
> was, moreover, represented on earth by the
> Church; that which in its nature transcended
> intellect was made known by a revelation of which
> the Church was the interpreter and guardian. The
> system endured for centuries.[57]

But with the development of modern science, when beliefs
about the world came to be seen as subject to testing and
revision to a degree never before imagined, beliefs about
value remained "pretty much in the position in which
beliefs about nature were before the scientific
revolution." Dewey describes the situation as follows:
there was

> either a basic distrust of the capacity of
> experience to develop its own regulative
> standards, and an appeal to what philosophers
> call eternal values, in order to ensure
> regulation of belief and action; or . . .
> acceptance of enjoyments as actually experienced
> irrespective of the method or operation by which
> they are brought into existence.[58]

Dewey saw "the problem of restoring integration and
cooperation between man's beliefs about the world in which

he lives and his beliefs about the values and purposes

that should direct his conduct" as "the deepest problem of

modern life,"[59] and his solution lay in the following

understanding of valuing:

> If intelligent method is lacking in framing ideas
> and beliefs about value, prejudice, the pressure
> of immediate circumstance, self-interest and
> class interest, traditional customs, institutions
> of accidental historic origin, are not lacking,
> and they tend to take the place of intelligence.
> Thus we are led to our main proposition:
> Judgments about values are judgments about the
> conditions and the results of experienced
> objects; judgments about that which should
> regulate the formation of our desires, affections
> and enjoyments. For whatever decides their
> formation will determine the main course of our
> conduct, personal and social.[60]

Because beliefs about value are "judgments about the

conditions and the results of experienced objects," Dewey

urges that we regulate our beliefs about value the same

way that we would intelligently regulate our beliefs about

other experienced objects, namely, by testing them and

revising them in the face of recalcitrant experience. By

thus replacing both absolutism and unreflective empiricism

in valuing with the method of experimental science,

Dewey's philosophy was able to eliminate one of the major

differences that separated values from facts; namely, the

difference of how we come to have/know them.

But in the emotivist tradition which seems to be our more direct legacy,[61] value and fact are again separated in terms of how we reach them: facts, as before, are the input and output of observation, experiment, and rational discussion, but values are conceived of as "our attitudes to the facts,"[62] amenable not to testing or argument but to persuasion only--beyond the call of reason, influenced only by emotion.

The environmental ethic conceived by Goodpaster would usher us to a return to a close connection between facts and values in a way doubly reminiscent of Dewey: 1) It would subject beliefs about value to the same kind of testing procedures to which we subject our beliefs about the (natural) world; indeed, it seems it would regulate them simultaneously: just as we would scientifically revise our understanding of how some life forms or systems interact with others, so we would revise our appreciation of their value; 2) It emphasizes man (and other beings) not as an independent entity, but as an organism as much influenced by and dependent upon his environment as he is by and upon his component organs.[63] It would appear that in both these ways, the movement heralded by Goodpaster in environmental ethics is

a continuation of the "integration" work of John Dewey.

But the problem of grasping, enunciating, and filling out this post-individualistic ethic remains. Goodpaster urges us to recognize that to be worthy of moral respect, "a unified system need not be composed of cells and body tissue." His idea is that moral respect is deserved by systems of individuals too--in the present context, ecosystems. Does he thus intend that moral value should be extended to ecosystems conceived as entities in their own right on the familiar individualistic basis, with not only snakes and cacti recognized as being morally considerable but entire desert ecosystems getting into the picture as well? Some environmental ethicists advocate such an extension of moral considerability,[64] but this seems to be at odds with Goodpaster's criticism of extended-individualistic ethics as being epicyclic. Against this criticism, some might argue that such complexity is an appropriate reflection of the complexity of fact and value involved in nature.

In any case, we get a better idea of what Goodpaster intends from the following explanations:

(1)　　. . . . [O]ur moral universe might contain
structures <u>inclusive</u> of persons respect for which
is just as incumbent upon us morally. Such, I
would want to argue, is the biosystem as a
whole: not as a mere collection of biotic
particles, but as an integrated, self-sustaining
unity which puts solar energy to work in the
service of growth and maintenance.[65]

(2)　　　The oft-repeated plea by some ecologists and
environmentalists that our thinking needs to be
less atomistic and more 'holistic' translates in
the present context into a plea for a more
embracing object of moral consideration. In a
sense, it represents a plea to return to the
richer Greek conception of a man by nature social
and not intelligibly removable from his social
and political context--though it goes beyond the
Greek conception in emphasizing that societies
too need to be understood in a context, an
ecological context, and that it is this larger
whole which is the 'bearer of value.'[66]

In the first quotation above (which appears

reproduced in full on pages 83-84 above), Goodpaster

suggests that moral respect is due the earth itself

considered as a biosystem. It seems that this would mean

that the rightness or wrongness of our dealings with

nature should be measured (in full?) in terms of how they

affect the biosystem overall--perhaps in particular, how

they affect its "integration," its capacity for "growth,"

and its ability for "self-maintenance." These criteria,

lifted from Goodpaster's statement, might remind one of

Aldo Leopold's criteria in his oft-quoted land ethic:

> A thing is right when it tends to preserve the
> integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic
> community. It is wrong when it tends other-
> wise.[67]

But the interpretation problem for each set is the same:
it is not clear enough what is meant by "integration,"
"growth," etc., and how they would be applied as moral
criteria. As with Leopold's isolated statement, the
greatest problem with Goodpaster's recommendation is that
it is so very difficult for us to measure the effects of
actions even on local ecosystems, let alone on the
planetary biosystem. Recognition of the limitedness of
our ecological understanding needs to be built into the
framework of any environmental ethic, and it does not seem
to have made an entry into Goodpaster's considerations in
this article.[68]

A compelling feature of the ethic which might be
sketched from Goodpaster's suggestions is that it avoids
the haggles and incoherencies of anthropocentric vs.
biocentric positions, because it is neither. Goodpaster's
prototype for an ecological ethic seems to be inspired by
a biocentric attitude to nature, and yet it contains none
of the claims which render many biocentric positions
questionable (e.g., the claim that humans should be viewed

as equals with other creatures in nature, and the claim
that we must go beyond human concerns, think beyond human
interests, for the sake of the natural world);[69] nor
does it contain the anthropocentric claim, so objection-
able to many environmentalist writers, that the moral
value of nonhuman life-forms depends upon their particular
usefulness to us, or in some other way upon the value
which we choose to give them. For Goodpaster, moral value
is somehow tied up with the way things are in the
biosphere (which we learn about and interpret), and this
path seems to keep us safely between Scylla and
Charybdis. However, it may just be that we are
not even in the strait yet. Whether a more clearly
sketched ecological ethic would make it between the
rocks--and whether one can be clearly sketched!--remains
to be seen. Yet, even if it did pass the strait, it might
seem doomed for a fatal collision with the alleged logical
problem of deriving normative ("ought") statements from
factual ("is") ones if the phenomenological/pragmatic
argument about fact-value fusion[70] is not convincing.
Before we turn to these problems, however, I would like to
return to the second Goodpaster quotation (page 92 above),
to see if we can get any firmer idea of what Goodpaster
has in mind.

We have already observed (page 91 above) that it seems questionable whether Goodpaster would have in mind an ethic which embraces an ecological attitude by simply extending moral considerability to ecosystems of various levels; i.e., by retaining an individualistic model extended outwards to include ecosystems too. But the passage we have just considered (page 92 above) seems to suggest that what we should do is recognize moral value in the biosphere as a whole as well as recognizing it in people. What could Goodpaster have in mind if not the simple inclusion of the biosphere and component ecosystems in the realm of morally considerable things? Yet this would leave us stuck at the individualistic model.

That Goodpaster has something different than this in mind is evident from the second quotation from page 92 above:

(2)   The oft-repeated plea by some ecologists and environmentalists that our thinking needs to be less atomistic and more 'holistic' translates in the present context into a plea for a more embracing object of moral consideration. In a sense, it represents a plea to return to the richer Greek conception of a man by nature social and not intelligibly removable from his social and political context--though it goes beyond the Greek conception in emphasizing that societies too need to be understood in a context, an ecological context, and that it is this larger whole which is the 'bearer of value.'

Here, Goodpaster tells us that the direction in which
ecology and environmentalism seem to point ethics is
toward "a more embracing object of moral consideration"
—more embracing than individual human beings, individual
animals, etc. It would be in this more embracing scheme
of value that man would locate his value. This is similar
to "the richer Greek conception of a man by nature social
and not intelligibly removable from his social and
political context"—similar, except that the contextualism
of an ecological ethic "goes beyond the Greek conception,"
and this, according to Goodpaster, in two ways: 1) the
society within which we locate a man is itself in a
context which we should not overlook—an "ecological
context"; and, 2) "it is this larger whole which is the
'bearer of value.'" To explain what I take Goodpaster to
mean by these two points, I will first try to explain the
notion central to moral contextualism, the notion of "not
intelligibly removable . . . ," by taking a side-trip into
Alasdair MacIntyre's recent work, After Virtue: A Study
in Moral Theory. My aim will be to apply some of
MacIntyre's insights to illuminate Goodpaster's reference
to "the richer Greek conception of a man by nature social
and not intelligibly removable from his social and
political context." I shall then attempt to do a

composite sketch, so to speak, of the ethic which Goodpaster hints at. (Note, I will use the term "contextualism" to refer to any philosophical approach which urges us to look for the meaning of a term or the value of a thing by studying it in its actual historical (or in the present case, ecological) context.)

iii. Help from MacIntyre?

In this section, we seek an understanding of Goodpaster's reference to the Greek conception of man "not intelligibly removable from his social and political context," this, in order to get a better grasp of the contextual environmental ethic tentatively sketched in "From Egoism to Environmentalism." Looking into MacIntyre's recent work, After Virtue, can help in this quest because it proposes a return to just such a conception of man. In order to make use of the relevant discussions in After Virtue, I will need to present them against the background of MacIntyre's general argument. This will require a substantial digression, after which we will return, better equipped, to the task of trying to understand Goodpaster's proposal.

In _After Virtue_, MacIntyre explores the develop-
ment of moral philosophy from Greek ethics to the
emotivism/noncognitivism of the 20th century, which treats
appeals to morality as the mere device of individual will
and desire. MacIntyre diagnoses this dethronement of
moral precepts as an inevitable consequence (anticipated
by Nietzsche) of the Enlightenment project of finding a
rational basis for morality. This project failed and "had
to fail," MacIntyre argues, because the moral vocabulary
had been severed from the contexts which originally gave
it meaning and criteria for application, and because
Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment philosophers, working
with the decontextualized concept of man as "individual,"
failed to see and to remedy this. But a remedy exists,
MacIntyre suggests, in a revised version of Aristotelian
ethics--in a return to the tradition of the virtues. What
MacIntyre envisages is a morality which can be vindicated
by reference to the social and political context in which
it is located--a virtues-based morality which is grounded
in, held together by, a teleological understanding of a
human life as a "narrative quest" for the good, a quest
which must include dealing with the traditions which
colour one's life.[73] With such an understanding, the
virtues would be those dispositions which:

1)   sustain practices and enable us to achieve the goods internal to practices (p.204):

2)   a)   sustain the kind of households and the kind of political communities in which men and women can seek for the good life together (p.204);

         b)   enable us to inquire philosophically about the character of the good (p.204); and,

3)   sustain those traditions which provide both practices and individual lives with their necessary historical context (p.207).

MacIntyre proposes this understanding of morality to heal the fragmentedness of contemporary moral discourse, and in fact he considers this fragmentedness to have its origin in a turning away from such an understanding. Within the framework of Aristotelian ethics and, in a more complicated way, within the framework of Christian (or other theistic) beliefs, MacIntyre perceives a moral scheme with a tri-partite structure: "untutored human nature, man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realized-his-_telos_, and the moral precepts which enable him to pass from [the] one state to the other" (pp. 50-52). Part of MacIntyre's thesis is that with the secular rejection of Christian theology and the scientific and philosophical rejection of Aristotelianism, the concept of man-as-he-is-naturally and the list of moral

precepts came to be inherited by moral philosophers in the
Enlightenment period <u>without the teleological element</u>, the
concept of man-as-he-could-be, which is what related the
other two. Thus, the abandonment of this teleological
element

> leaves behind a moral scheme composed of two
> remaining elements whose relationship becomes
> quite unclear. There is on the one hand a
> certain content for morality: a set of injunc-
> tions deprived of their teleological context.
> There is on the other hand a certain view of
> untutored-human-nature-as-it-is. Since the moral
> injunctions were originally at home in a scheme
> in which their purpose was to correct, improve
> and educate that human nature, they are clearly
> not going to be such that they could be deduced
> from true statements about human nature or
> justified in some other way by appealing to its
> characteristics. The injunctions of morality,
> thus understood, are likely to be ones that human
> nature, thus understood, has strong tendencies to
> disobey. Hence the eighteenth-century moral
> philosophers engaged in what was an inevitably
> unsuccessful project; for they did indeed attempt
> to find a rational basis for their moral beliefs
> in a particular understanding of human nature,
> while inheriting a set of moral injunctions on
> the one hand and a conception of human nature on
> the other which had been expressly designed to be
> discrepant with each other. . . . They inherited
> incoherent fragments of a once coherent scheme of
> thought and action and, since they did not
> recognize their own peculiar historical and
> cultural situation, they could not recognize the
> impossible and quixotic character of their
> self-appointed task (pp. 52-53).

While MacIntyre qualifies this last statement
with the acknowledgment that some 18th-century philo-

sophers seem to have been close to such a recognition,[74]
his verdict is that the Enlightenment project failed to
vindicate morality along any of the three lines it
followed, which were:

i) by basing it on empirical facts about human
nature--i.e., on "natural sentiment" (Hume
et al.);

ii) by devising a new teleology to justify it
(utilitarianism--Bentham and Mill, et al.);

iii) by founding its precepts on reason (Kant et
al.).

In MacIntyre's judgement, the Humean (empiricist) approach
fails because it invokes the philosophical fiction of an
"innate spring" of sympathy (p.47) and it mistakes "human
nature" in 18th century Britain for universal human nature
(p.215). The utilitarian approach fails because of the
incommensurability of different kinds of happiness and
pleasure (p.62). And the Kantian approach fails because
there is no logical inconsistency in deciding not to
follow moral precepts (p.45). Of course MacIntyre's
reasoning (notably, his interpretation of the history of
ethics) is open to challenge, but let us grant MacIntrye
the claim that appeal to rules of morality could not be
successfully vindicated (at the very least, because the
projects are all still going on). From this failure

MacIntyre concludes that it was inevitable that appeal to
the rules of morality came to appear to be "a mere
instrument of individual desire and will" (p. 60).
Subsequently, Nietzsche's claim that moral valuations are
only expressions of the will to power of the individual
came to be institutionalized in emotivism, noncognitivism,
and the proliferation of seemingly unresolvable moral
disputes in the contemporary world.[75] As the herald of
the Enlightenment project failure and the trumpeter of the
new freedom from the claims of the old morality, Nietzsche
becomes for MacIntyre the sign at the fork in the road for
moral philosophy--and a sign that points us only one way.
Because while Nietzsche was correct in his diagnosis that
there is no objective, no rational foundation for a
morality which claims to be universal, his criticisms do
not extend to an Aristotelian conception of morality--a
morality based on virtues and grounded in the teleology
provided by the social and historical context in which the
individual lives. Such a morality does have a standard
independent of the individual (though not of his time and
place), a standard woven into the social context and
consisting of the practices, relationships and community
within which the individual lives, and the traditions
within which they all have their being. This is the road

not seen by Nietzsche, and the road which MacIntyre urges us to take.

An interesting problem arises for both the Nietzschean individual and the MacIntyrean one, though, when we consider the problem of conflict at the level of our practices, of our relationships, or of our traditions. The Nietzschean individual may well be being moved unawares by the requirements of the practices he happens to engage in, or by his family, community, or certain traditions, and he may mistake peripheral influences upon him (e.g., from slick, exciting beer commercials on television) for soulful yearnings of his own. The Nietzschean philosopher may counter that no healthy individual, certainly no great one, would be so out of touch with himself. Or he may counter that to the extent that such influences reach the individual, they become fused into his will to power, part of what he is. But a more compelling portrait of how we should live our lives is presented by the MacIntyrean individual, who understands that his life and outlook are coloured by the practices he engages in, the family and community relationships he has, and the traditions that touch him. And yet the following question arises: When competing

practices call for our efforts, when different

relationships make conflicting demands upon us, when two

traditions seem to give contradictory indications of how

we should act, how does the individual who understands and

embraces his "social context" resolve the situation?[76]

When the dispute is at the level of practices, it would

seem that MacIntyre's answer would be that it can be

resolved in terms of what bodes best for the individual's

life understood as a narrative quest for the good; i.e.,

in terms of how each practice will affect the family and

community relationships within which the individual is

able to seek the good. For example, when the "practice"

of Olympic competition came into conflict with the

"practice" of living a Christian life (in particular,

observing the Sabbath) for 1924 Olympic runner Eric

Liddell, he opted for observing the Sabbath because of how

much more the practice of Christian living contributed to

the family and community relationships within which he

sought his good.[77,78] Similarly, a conflict at the

level of relationships (family or community) might be

resolved by appeal to the traditions which sustain them.

But what is to be done when traditions conflict, or when a

tradition comes to be inadequate and yet an individual

still calls upon it to justify his way of life? It seems

that some of Dewey's instrumentalism might favourably fill in MacIntyre's moral philosophy at this point: not only should we understand our lives and values in terms of the strands in our background which operate upon them; we should also look at these strands critically, intelligently, and reject those which are out of harmony with the rest.[79] But how do we do this? By listing them together and speculating about which strands in the list seem to be inconsistent? No--at least, I don't think so. I think the way to do this is to live with awareness of each strand (as best we can), and to be willing, when conflict comes, to do some pulling and sewing--unless it seems best and proves workable to live with the conflict, which is sometimes the case. In any case, the test of which strands we will keep in our tapestries, which we will try to remove and which we will succeed in introducing, must be the test of time, of actual experience, because (to use a well-worn metaphor) it is only after walking for a time in a new pair of shoes that we can intelligently decide if they fit.

But what criteria do we use as we subject our background-coloured values to the test of experience? What counts as passing, and what counts as failing?

Ironically, it seems to me that to adequately fill out
MacIntyre's moral philosophy we must turn at this point to
Nietzsche, because when the answer to the question, "What
should I do in my life?" cannot be found in the tradi-
tions which enclose it, in my soil, so to speak, then the
answer must be found in the testimony of growth. Growth
is already an important concept in MacIntyre's philosophy,
because it is the mechanism by which the moral precepts
connect human-nature-as-it-is to human-nature-as-it-
can-be. But when the precepts or the telos for human
life become uncertain on a particular point, then the
standard of growth is the only standard left for the
individual to appeal to--a standard operating behind the
scenes throughout, but one which for Nietzsche, never
leaves centre-stage. However, as quickly as I offer the
criterion of growth as an ultimate moral value, just so
quickly must I acknowledge that it too stands in need of
completion, because it cannot detach itself from the
question, "Growth of what? Toward what?" And ironically
again, this completion may best be supplied by a Kantian-
flavoured universalization: strive to grow in a way that
also maximizes the growth of others and the growth of the
community.[80] As well, instructed by the ecological
ethic advanced by Goodpaster, we should add to this list

that the growth (survival, or strengthening) of the
natural environment be maximized too. The idea here is
that whenever the precepts or _telos_ for human life seem
uncertain on a particular point, the only place we _can_
look to for guidance is to the broader context. But again
this leaves a vast array of options unspecified, since
growth, whether in an individual, a community, a
tradition, or an ecosystem, can proceed in so many
different directions. This question of how to proceed
when our traditions fail to show us the way may well be
unanswerable in any general way. Having at least
recognized that it does not go away merely by adopting a
contextual understanding of moral life,[81] let us leave
it at this point, and return to the task of illuminating
Goodpaster's remarks with light from _After Virtue_.

We have seen that MacIntyre's concept of a
narrative understanding of human life involves the idea
that if we are seeking to understand the moral evaluations
of a given individual, we can do so only by considering
the practices, relationships, and traditions which colour
the narrative of his life, and if we are seeking to ground
our own moral evaluations, we must turn to our own
particular social context to do so. Otherwise, our

efforts to understand or to justify will be troubled by
inconsistency and/or a contextualism we do not detect,
which is to say, parochialism. Returning, then, to the
Goodpaster quotation on page 95 above, we should observe
that the "richer Greek conception of man . . . not
intelligibly removable . . . ," referring as it does to the
Aristotelian conception, differs from MacIntyre's
primarily in its scope: where MacIntyre sees changing
historical conditions explaining different conceptions of
morality, Aristotle views only the morality of his own
time and place and speaks of it as if it were universal
for all mankind, while grounding it in the conditions and
traditions of ancient Athens.

MacIntyre's purpose is to find a way of grounding
morality in something more objective than personal desire
yet less presumptuous than universal dictates of reason,
and this purpose is congruent in many ways with
Goodpaster's, which is to find a model capable of
underpinning a plausible and operationally adequate
environmental ("ecological") ethic. It is congruent
because both philosophers are seeking to lay out a theory
which connects a certain set of moral intuitions in a
coherent and somewhat systematic way, but without over-

extending them and without falling short of them.
MacIntyre's concern is with the moral intuitions of any
group of people in a given society in a given historical
period, while Goodpaster's focus is on the moral intui-
tions of environmentally sensitive people in western
societies today. MacIntyre moves to "contextualism"
because he sees it as the only plausible and adequate way
to vindicate morality; Goodpaster moves to "contextualism"
for the same reason, except that his specific concern is
limited (in the essay under consideration) to "environ-
mental" morality, and he is led to contextualism not only
by the example of "the richer Greek conception of man,"
but also by the influence of ecology, the science which
focuses on "context."

We should now be ready to make an attempt to
articulate what Goodpaster might mean when he says that an
ecological ethic brings us beyond the Greek conception,
that it locates the society too "in a context, an
ecological context" (see (1) on page 92 above), and that
"it is this larger whole which is the 'bearer of value'"
(see (2) on page 92 above). Presumably, the "ecological
context" would be the ecosystems which are affected by
and/or which sustain the society, and ultimately, the

entire biosphere.[82] And presumably it is "this larger whole" which is the bearer of value because it is the "integrated, self-sustaining unity" within which life is possible for its resident organisms, including humans. One might suggest the solar system as a better candidate for "the bearer of value" since it is larger and may have a longer future of self-sustenance ahead of it, but: 1) I am not sure that self-sustenance makes sense here, and "growth" poses even tougher interpretation problems; 2) in actions affecting the solar system, it would be appropriate to treat it as the bearer of value, but we would gain no insight to our planetary pollution and conservation problems by looking to this larger context.

What, then, might be a guiding principle for the ecological ethic which Goodpaster aims us at? The following might seem appropriate:

> What virtue is and what vice is for an individual is initially set by his particular social and political context, but these are subject to a higher consideration, because the practices of a society are themselves subject to judgement according to whether they sustain or disrupt the ecological context within which the society is located, which is ultimately the entire biosphere.

However, there are several problems with this formulation of the guiding principle for an ecological ethic. One is

that it fails to emphasize that individuals too are subject to judgement according to the way in which they affect ecosystems. A second is that it fails to set out any criteria or procedures for determining non-ecological virtue and vice for the individual, as well as for societies, thus leaving open the possibility of an extreme relativism in all matters not affecting environmental well-being. A third problem is that many situations force an individual or a society to choose (choose, or not survive) between several courses of action each of which would cause a particular type of environmental degradation, and the formulation above gives us no way of judging the relative undesirability of each beyond the ultimate calculation of what is better or worse "for the entire biosphere," a calculation which may often be impossible to make. A fourth problem is that the formulation above offers no way to adjudicate between interpersonal wrong of large proportions and environmental wrong of small proportions. This ignores Goodpaster's sage concern that we not "suggest for a moment that biosystemic respect should dilute human concerns for happiness and justice."[83]

We might improve upon this first formulation by importing some of MacIntyre's insights and by focusing

upon what it means for the ecological context to be "the
bearer of value." Just as a person can be virtuous or
otherwise in terms of how he treats himself--whether he is
honest or dishonest with himself, attentive or abusive to
his bodily needs, etc.--so a society can be faithful or
unfaithful to its traditions, responsible or irresponsible
to individual citizens, etc. But these aspects of societal
vice and virtue do not seem to be connected in any necess-
ary way with a society's ecological context. Thus, that
the ecological context is "the bearer of value" cannot
mean anything like that it is the grid where all value is
determined. So what _does_ it mean for the ecological
context to be "the bearer of value"? And how might we
modify our first formulation above to include the
consideration of non-ecological virtue and vice for a
society? First let us turn to MacIntyre to see if we can
get some help in making sense of the ecological context as
"bearer of value." MacIntyre sketches out what is
virtuous and what is vicious in terms of dispositions
which sustain or disrupt practices, relationships,
communities and traditions. His sketch effectively
locates societies within the context of traditions. But
the biosphere colours and conditions our lives in a most
fundamental way, and so the most embracing and important

context for a society might be the biosphere, as
Goodpaster seems to suggest. Perhaps we could unite these
two contextualist approaches by identifying the "tradi-
tion" of "putting solar energy to work in the service of
growth and maintenance" as a or the most morally consider-
able "tradition" in which any society is located, i.e.,
the tradition whose preservation deserves priority in our
moral deliberations. Dispositions which tend to impair or
disrupt this "tradition" would be (among) the worst vices
of all, whether they are the dispositions of an individual
or the dispositions of a society. Wedding MacIntyre's
insights to Goodpaster's, then, we might consider this
formulation of the guiding principle for an ecological
ethic:

> What virtue is and what vice is for an individual
> is determined (though not necessarily in any
> simple way) by what sustains or disrupts the
> practices, relationships, and traditions within
> which the individual and others in his society
> (and in the world) are able to intelligently seek
> for the good life, and by what sustains or
> disrupts the ecosystems with which the individual
> comes into contact, this latter criterion apply-
> ing as well to the morality of the practices,
> relationships, and traditions in which the
> individual engages.
> What is right or wrong for a society is
> determined in part by what supports or hinders
> its members in their quest for the good life, and
> ultimately, by what sustains or disrupts the
> ecological context within which it is located.

However, problems arise for this formulation too, notably the problem of failing to specify how concerns for human happiness and justice are to be balanced against eco-systemic concerns, although this formulation at least has the merit of recognizing both concerns and relating them together. Another inadequacy is that this formulation fails to capture the structure implicit in Goodpaster's suggestions. It consists of little more than a combination of traditional ethics, construed along MacIntyrean lines, together with ecosystemic concerns. Yet Goodpaster urges us to respect ecosystems not as collections of biotic particles, but as integrated, self-sustaining entities, such as are the biosphere itself, a human being, a blade of grass, a one-celled organism. Relationships seem to be implicit here which an ethic laid out to follow Goodpaster's hints should capture. He speaks as well of respecting "structures inclusive of persons," which clearly suggests as well communities, relationships, perhaps even practices and traditions. The formulation above just barely captures the force of these suggestions, it if captures it at all.

Another problem with this formulation is that it is silent on the question of inter-societal right and

wrong outside the sphere of ecological impact. It may
seem excessively demanding to ask that an ecological ethic
incorporate the concerns of inter-personal and inter-
societal ethics, but in fact this is a necessary condition
if the ethic is to practical at all in the real world,
where protecting an ecosystem is rarely possible without
inhibiting what some group or groups of people consider to
be their right and path to happiness, and where seeking
for the good life is rarely possible without extracting
some price from the environment which supports us.

The importance of Goodpaster's approach is that
it affords us a way of enlightening our moral philosophy
with an ecological holism without losing sight of
individual moral worth. But the promise of Goodpaster's
approach seems equalled by the difficulty of articulating
the ethic it aims at. It may well be that the incor-
poration of Goodpaster's ecological model and MacIntyre's
contextualist moral philosophy can be clearly and
profitably worked out, but myself, I am at a loss as to
how to continue (and here, I echo the words of Goodpaster,
words which come soon after he introduces the ecological
model). I will thus turn from this unfinished attempt at
understanding how Goodpaster's model might be filled out

to an attempt to see what humble alternative our familiar
traditions might content us with as we wait for the
dawning of the age of the ecological ethic.

Chapter V. What Do We Do in the Meantime?

I cannot speak for my reader, but having signed off on the task of trying to fill out the ethic tentatively sketched by Goodpaster, I am still left with a good deal of puzzlement concerning the possibility of an ecological ethic. I can't quite grasp how value is to be read off from an understanding of nature, or how eco-systemic relationships will give us a non-instrumental determination of value. Holmes Rolston III has summed up the difficulty of formulating an ecologically informed ethic with the same words which Wittgenstein used to express the ineffableness of ethics generally:

> The logic by which goodness is discovered or appreciated is notoriously evasive, and we can only reach it suggestively. "Ethics cannot be put into words," said Wittgenstein, such things "make themselves manifest."[1]

It cannot be put into words, and yet, Wittgenstein says, trying to do so is a universal tendency in men, and one

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which he "personally cannot help respecting deeply."[2]

Fifty-one years after the 1922 publication of the
Tractatus, Hans Jonas discusses this same elusiveness of
"putting ethics into words," but with more than respect
for the tendency. According to Jonas, the urgency of
problems caused by technology and the effective absence of
the reinforcement once provided by religion have together
made the task of formulating and justifying an ethic which
is adequate for the technological age not merely worthy of
respect, but urgent.

Of course, formulating an ethic is not so
impossible a task that nothing results from our efforts:
at the very least, we become more sensitive to the
considerations involved in environmental issues, and to
their complexity. The important thing is to search for
the best ethic that can be formulated to guide our action,
however short it may fall of any theoretical ideal of
rational compulsion which we might entertain. Perhaps we
should bear in mind that the ultimate value our ethic is
based on may be neither directly teachable nor

systematically justifiable. Indeed, it would seem that

ultimate values come to be in place indirectly, through

our being trained into how to act and how not to act,

through exposure to particular judgements of right and

wrong, through learning from the example of those we

respect. Such things as ultimate values may indeed be

beyond articulation; they may at best "make themselves

manifest." But however they are formed and however they

show themselves, our values become quite deeply rooted in

our understanding. Wittgenstein used the metaphor of a

riverbed to express this: our values become sedimented

into the bedrock of our beliefs, to be shifted or

excavated only by profound disturbances of the practices

they inform.[3] It is the almost universal contention of

environmental ethicists that such disturbances have

happened in our time, and the values they are shaking up

are the values we place on nature.

Let us look at Jonas' explanation of the urgency

of "the new tasks of ethics." He writes that the moral

feeling ("the feeling for norms") has always had

> a difficult enough time against the loud clamors
> of greed and fear. Now it must in addition blush
> before the frown of superior knowledge, as

unfounded and incapable of foundation. First,
Nature had been "neutralized" with respect to
value, then man himself. Now we shiver in the
nakedness of a nihilism in which near-omnipotence
is paired with near-emptiness, greatest capacity
with knowing least what for. With the apocalyp-
tic pregnancy of our actions, that very knowledge
which we lack has become more urgently needed
than at any other stage in the adventure of
mankind. Alas, urgency is no promise of
success. On the contrary, it must be avowed that
to seek for wisdom today requires a good measure
of unwisdom. The very nature of the age which
cries out for an ethical theory makes it
suspiciously look like a fool's errand. Yet we
have no choice in the matter but to try.[4]

We have no choice in the matter but to try

because fear and self-interest are inadequate to guide us

"towards the more distant prospects" of our immediate

policy decisions, "which here matter the most, especially

as the beginnings seem mostly innocent in their small-

ness."[5] We have no choice in the matter but to try

because:

> Only awe of the sacred with its unqualified veto
> is independent of the computations of mundane ,
> fear and the solace of uncertainty about distant
> consequences. But religion as a soul-determining
> force is no longer there to be summoned to the
> aid of ethics. The latter must stand on its
> worldly feet . . .

And _stand_ it must, because

> men act, and ethics is for the ordering of
> actions and for regulating the power to act. It

must be there all the more, then, the greater the powers of acting that are to be regulated . . . .[6]

So, much as our search for an environmental ethic may bring us up against "the limits of our language,"[7] it is an important task, a task which cannot be deferred until some unlikely time when we are better equipped for it, because in all likelihood, that would be too late.

In the search for a new ethic which we have here undertaken, I suggested that there is much promise in Goodpaster's ecological approach, especially if connected (somehow) to a MacIntyrean understanding of morality.[8] But my hopefulness in following Goodpaster's lead only goes halfway; first, because looking to practices, traditions, and self-sustaining life systems to ground our moral evaluations is not as much _rational justification_ as it is embracing the conditions that characterize our lives, and subjecting these conditions to the limited degree of rational scrutiny that is possible for human beings _in medias res_; second, because I believe that what is most important _in our lives_ and most promising for the continuation of life on this planet is not the development of a non-problematic formulation of an environmental

ethic, but rather the practical insight and the moral growth that such philosophical struggle makes possible.

The practical insight which environmental ethics makes possible is one that flows out of the literature at every imaginable point. It is the insight that what we know for sure in environmental ethics is as limited as what we understand completely in ecology. If we are looking to heal the wounds of an injured planet by changing the minds of men, the way to do it does not lie in developing a rationally justifiable ethic to confront them with. The way to do it lies in making it possible for us all to appreciate <u>the limitedness of human knowledge</u>, not only in understanding the effects of our actions on ecosystems, but also in understanding what it is in the natural world that might be valuable to the ecosystems that sustain us, and what it is that might be valuable in itself. This acceptance of ignorance will lead us to treat the earth with more caution and respect no matter whether we consider our morals to be grounded in reason, in human nature, in choice, or in faith.

As we moved along in our search for an environmental ethic, we subjected suggested formulations of an

ethic to several "tests" to see if they were acceptable, among them, (a) the test of <u>relevancy</u> (If the ethic is based oñ "criteria," are they morally relevant?)[9], (b) the test of <u>consistency</u> (Is the ethic consistently applied to·all and only those who meet its terms? Alternatively, is the ethic consistently applied in all and only those issues which meet its terms?), and (c) the test of <u>adequacy</u> (Does the ethic meet the concerns commonly or minimally agreed upon by environmentalists? And does it meet our moral sensitivities?) It is this condition of "adequacy" that I would like to explore at this point because of two problems connected with it. The first problem is that few of the environmental ethicists I have studied undertake an investigation to find out what the minimal or common concerns of environmentalists are, and few undertake to suggest who would be considered to be an "environmentalist" in this connection, although the choice could bear considerably on the stringency of the "adequacy test."[10] However, as Frankena points out, there are some areas of agreement among the environmentally concerned that are so general as to be nonproblematic.[11] Nevertheless, a second problem, related to this first one, is that after we begin with a loose gathering

of concerns which any formulation must meet, the ethical principles we come up with in our efforts to find the proper formulation often _influence_ our conception of which concerns merit support. (This has been my own experience throughout my research for this thesis.) It is as if, like youngsters trying to build a platform for a tree-house, we are inspired, by the materials and designs we come up with for the platform, _to change our expectations_ of what the rest of the house should be like.

Yet throughout our readjustments, and perhaps because of them, it becomes apparent that some principles remain in pretty steady focus as we search and strain for how to build our ethic. One such principle is the insight mentioned above that we should acknowledge our ignorance, acknowledge the limitations of our knowledge both about what has value and about what consequences our actions might have.[12] .For example, in an article exploring the many different types of value we can find in wilderness, Rolston lists ten, and argues for the preservation of wilderness on the basis of these values.[13] But the understanding which informs many of these value claims, and which gives them the status of morally relevant

reasons for preserving wilderness, is the understanding
that we should acknowledge our ignorance, and the related
principle that we should always act with a degree of
restraint proportionate to the extent of our ignorance and
the degree of seriousness of the possible consequences of
our action.[14] Other principles which seem to guide our
environmental ethical thinking, much like a practical
understanding of gravity and statics guides the thinking
of our tree-house builders, are:

-- Don't destroy or mishandle what has been created
   by another.

-- Take care of what is irreplaceable.

-- Respect life.

-- Above all, respect other people as unique
   individuals whose ways and needs have developed
   according to the conditions of their own past
   growth.

I believe that these principles are ideas which
are in the head of any morally sensitive person (brought
up in the Western tradition), and I present them together
as ideas which are everywhere in operation in the liter-
ature, but uncollected, the strands separated--one missing
here, two missing there--uncollected because never until
our time has there been such a need to see the strands

together, and the recently discovered unravelled state has
set everyone off searching for new strands, or a new ethic
altogether. This collection is not as far-reaching as an
ecological ethic, and it has strong ties to a model which
Goodpaster has shown predisposes us to limited vision in
our evaluations. But this predisposition can be, and for
many, has been, overcome by ecological enlightenment, and
if we keep our gaze on the horizon of the science of
ecology, I believe this "ethic" can serve us and the earth
today, and with luck, bring us both safely to the day when
an ecological ethic may dawn.

This collection is not rationally persuasive in
the way that a systematic ethic would be, but rational
persuasion is less a part of moral life at this
fundamental level than is education. Rational persuasive
force is appropriately required of the ecological ethic we
have been trying to sketch in Chapter IV, an ethic which
would incorporate the maxims listed above and guide our
application of them. But until we come up with a
structured ethic which is acceptable, we had better hold
onto whatever little wisdoms we can. These principles are
part of our bedrock, only, unlike the propositions which

are the focus of Wittgenstein's On Certainty, they are
usually learned explicitly as well as by cultural osmosis,
through training and education, and they come into view
most clearly in the searching which the philosophical
struggle inspires. As ever, society must depend upon
and hope for good parenting and education to have helped
us grow, and to help our children grow, to do what is
right, and to be able somehow to figure out what that is.
Open-ended, as is life.

It may be glorifying such a gleaning of little
wisdoms to call it an ethic and I don't know that I would
want to call it that, but I believe it would be a worse
mistake, a sad misunderstanding of moral life, to think
that the values we live by are arbitrary unless we can
justify them by means of a well worked-out system. The
values we should live by are better understood as a
collection of hard-sought and sometimes incredibly lucky
finds, unified perhaps only by the organic history of the
moral growth of the person who holds them in his heart, a
growth that is nevertheless not private or inscrutable
because it happens on public ground. To explore this
public ground has been the recent undertaking of Alasdair

MacIntyre.   To show how ecology might be included in it
has been the work of ecological ethicists such as Kenneth
Goodpaster.   To show why "public" now includes more than
just people has been the achievement of Aldo Leopold and
Hans Jonas outstandingly, and a long line of people both
in philosophy and in the environmental movement.   To bring
these perspectives and explorations together and to
suggest that some hope for an ecological ethic lies in
them has been the work of this thesis.   .

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1. For example, providing strong justification for preserving wilderness, preserving rare species, conserving resources, and controlling pollution beyond the present minimal levels. Almost every writer I have studied in environmental ethics gives mention to this condition; as one example, William K. Frankena ("Ethics and the Environment" in K.E. Goodpaster and K.M. Sayre, eds., Ethics and Problems of the 21st Century (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979) seems to acknowledge that it is a point in favour of an environmental ethic if it can justify "all of the measures and practices desiderated by environmentalists" (p.10), and that an environmental ethic should provide "an adequate basis for justifying and directing the concerns of environmentalists" (p.19). However, this condition by which we test our efforts at an environmental ethic does not seem to have received much critical attention. I make an attempt to do this in Chapter V.

2. Goodpaster, "On Being Morally Considerable," The Journal of Philosophy 75 (1978): 308-25, and "From Egoism to Environmentalism," in Goodpaster and Sayre. I have not been able to find any articles on environmental ethics written by Goodpaster since these two.

3. Rodman, "The Liberation of Nature," Inquiry 20 (1977): 83-131.

4. As presented in MacIntyre, After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981).

NOTES TO CHAPTER II: BACKGROUND

1. Carson, <u>Silent Spring</u> (New York: Fawcett
    Publications Inc. (Crest Books), 1962), p.22.

2. The controversy surrounding the publication of <u>Silent</u>
    <u>Spring</u> is chronicled in detail in Frank Graham, Jr.,
    <u>Since Silent Spring</u>, Consumers Union Edition
    (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1970), pp.55<u>ff</u>.

3. Carson, <u>Silent Spring</u>, p.261.

4. Ibid., p.261.

5. White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological
    Crisis," <u>Science</u> 155 (1967): 1203-1207; reprinted in
    Ian G. Barbour, ed. <u>Western Man and Environmental</u>
    <u>Ethics: Attitudes Toward Nature and Technology</u> (Don
    Mills, Ontario: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company,
    1973), pp.27-28.

6. See, for example, in Barbour: Lewis W. Moncrief,
    "The Cultural Basis of Our Environmental Crises:,
    pp.32-33; Rene Dubos, "A Theology of Earth,"
    pp.46-47; and Gabriel Fackre, "Ecology and Theology,"
    pp.116-17, 120-25. Also, see Ernest Partridge,
    "Environmental Ethics: Obstacles and Opportunities,"
    in Robert C. Schultz and J. Donald Hughes, eds.,
    <u>Ecological Consciousness: Essays from the Earthday X</u>
    <u>Colloquiom</u> (Washington, D.C.: University Press of
    America, 1981), pp.325-26; Mark Sagoff, "Do We Need a
    Land Use Ethic?" <u>Environmental Ethics</u> 3 (Winter,
    1981): 299; K.S. Schrader-Frechette, "Environmental
    Responsibility and Classical Ethical Theories," in
    Shrader-Frechette, ed., <u>Environmental Ethics</u> (Pacific
    Grove, CA: The Boxwood Press, 1981), pp.19-20; and
    G. Tyler Miller, Jr., <u>Living in the Environment</u>, 3rd
    ed., (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company,
    1982), p.489.

7. For example, G. Tyler Miller, <u>Living in the</u>
    <u>Environment</u> (p.489n), cites the following passages as
    support for "responsibility, respect, and stewardship
    for nature" as a Biblical theme: Gen. 2:15; Lev.
    25:2-5; Deut. 8:17, 20:19-20, 22:6; Job 38; Pss. 3,
    24:1-6, 29, 65:11-13, 67:6-7, 84:3, 104, 147, 148;
    Isa. 24:4-6, 35:1-2, 6-7, 55:9-13; Jer. 4:23-26; Hos.
    4:1-3; Mal. 3:11-12; Matt. 6:12, 22-39; Luke
    12:16-21, 16:1-2; Rev. 8:7-13.   Among these, I am
    able to recognize support for the stewardship

NOTES TO CH. II (Cont'd.)

concept only in: Gen. 2:15; Lev. 25:2-5; Job
38(-42:6); Pss. 8:4, 24:1-6, 65:(9)-13, 104, 148;
Isa. 24:4-6; and Matt. 6: 25-(34). Also relevant
seem to be God's affirmations of the goodness of the
things He has created (in Gen. 1:12, 18, 23, 25, 31).

8.   For a small sampling, see note 6 above.

9.   An especially broad-ranging such article is
     Partridge, "Environmental Ethics: Obstacles and
     Opportunities," which, along with Goodpaster, "From
     Egoism to Environmentalism," was a principal
     background source for my listing of other "historical
     roots" on page 10 above. However, by way of caution,
     I should add that Partridge's article has been
     criticized by Australian philosopher William
     Godfrey-Smith for its "truncated and unsatisfactory
     history of ethical frameworks," although, Godfrey-
     Smith adds, Partridge follows this "with an
     interesting discussion of cognitivist ethical
     theories." (Review of Schultz and Hughes, eds.,
     Ecological Consciousness, in Environmental Ethics 5
     (Winter, 1983): 358.)

10. See, for example, K.S. Shrader-Frechette,
     "Environmental Responsibility and Classical Ethical
     Theories," pp.17-18.

11. I owe this perspective to the collection of recent
     and historical essays on "animal ethics" contained in
     Tom Regan and Peter Singer, eds., Animal Rights and
     Human Obligations (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.:
     Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1976).

12. In the early literature, the more common distinction
     between approaches to environmental ethics seems to
     have been between an anthropocentric, an "animal
     liberationist" ("zoöcentric," as John Rodman puts it
     (p.91)), and a biocentric approach. This seems to be
     the background perspective of Tom Regan in "The
     Nature and Possibility of an Environmental Ethic,"
     Environmental Ethics 3 (Spring, 1981): 19-34, and of
     Evelyn B. Pluhar in an article contrasting Regan's
     biocentric approach with William K. Frankena's
     zoöcentric (sentience-criterion) approach, "The
     Justification of an Environmental Ethic,"
     Environmental Ethics 5 (Spring, 1983): 47-61. This

distinction continued to set the stage for discussion
in Environmental Ethics as late as Fall, 1983 (Volume
5), with articles by Paul W. Taylor ("In Defense of
Biocentrism," pp.237-43) and Richard A. Watson ("A
Critique of Anti-Anthropocentric Biocentrism,"
pp.245-56).

However, it seems that with the 1977 and 1979
publication of articles by Rodman and Goodpaster
critiquing "liberationism" and individualism
respectively (Rodman, "The Liberation of Nature?";
Goodpaster, "From Egoism to Environmentalism"), it
came to be seen that the method of "extending" rights
or moral considerability on the humanistic/
individualistic model underlies all three of the
above approaches and can itself be questioned. Thus,
it came to be seen that a more fundamental opposition
exists in environmental ethics which operates between
an individualistic approach to environmental ethics
and a holistic or systems-oriented approach. (This
is explained more fully in Chapters III and IV.)
Accordingly, I distinguish between the
anthropocentric, the extended-individualistic, and
the ecological approach.

Among those who operate with this or a similar
distinction:

1) J. Baird Callicott ("Animal Liberation: A
    Triangular Affair," Environmental Ethics 2
    (Winter, 1980): 311-38) frames it in terms of
    ethical humanism, humane moralism (or animal
    liberationism), and land ethics (environmental
    ethics holistically construed). Callicott's
    concern in this article is to show that animal
    liberationism stands in opposition not only to
    ethical humanism but also to the ecological ethic
    advocated by Aldo Leopold (hence, the "triangular
    affair" claim). Thus, the notion of a biocentric
    individualistic ethic, which I would include with
    "humane moralism" in the category of "extended
    individualism," receives only minor mention in
    this article.

2) Evelyn B. Pluhar, in a presumably later-1983
    article ("Two Conceptions of an Environmental
    Ethic and Their Implications," Ethics and Animals
    IV/4 (1983): 110-127) casts it in terms of
    homocentrism, environmental individualism, and
    environmental holism.

13. This distinction was introduced by Tom Regan, who reserves the term "environmental ethic" for ethics which extend moral standing both beyond the class of human beings and beyond the class of conscious beings (in "The Nature and Possibility ...," pp.19-20). In both articles cited above in note 12, Pluhar elects to follow this usage. Callicott, however, chooses to use "environmental ethic" even more restrictively, to refer to an ethic which follows the apparently holistic model of Leopold's "Land Ethic" (". . . Triangular Affair," pp.311 and 337).
  However, since "environmental ethics" seems to be the name of the general subject under discussion, it seems to me to be inviting conceptual chaos to stipulate different interpretations of the term depending upon the approach one favours. Thus, my suggestion is that "environmental ethic" be applicable to any ethic which is offered as being capable of adjudicating environmental issues to any extent, whether we like the ethic or not.

14. This usage seems dictated by the close connection which this approach has to the science of ecology. Among those who share this usage are Holmes Rolston III ("Is There an Ecological Ethic?" Ethics 85 (1975): 93-109), Don E. Marietta, Jr. ("The Interrelationship of Ecological Science and Environmental Ethics," Environmental Ethics 1 (Fall, 1979): 195-207), and Ernest Partridge ("Environmental Ethics: Obstacles and Opportunities").

15. Martin Krieger, "What's Wrong with Plastic Trees?" Science 179 (1973): 446-55; Mark Sagoff, "On Preserving the Natural Environment," Yale Law Journal 84 (1974): 205-67; Eric Katz, "Utilitarianism and Preservation," Environmental Ethics 1 (1979): 357-64; Pluhar, "The Justification of an Environmental Ethic," pp.49-53, and "Two Conceptions of an Environmental Ethic and Their Implications," pp.112-13.

16. Derek Parfit, "Energy Policy and the Further Future," to appear in Douglas MacLean and Peter G. Brown, eds., Energy and the Future, forthcoming (as cited by Bryan G. Norton, "Environmental Ethics and the Rights of Future Generations," (Environmental Ethics 4 (Winter, 1982): 319-338), pp.322-329; Also see Joel Feinberg, "The Rights of Animals and Unborn

Generations," (esp. pp. 64-68) in William T.
Blackstone, ed., Philosophy and Environmental Crisis
(University of Georgia, 1974), Trudy Govier, "What
Should We Do About Future People?" American
Philosophical Quarterly 16 (1979): 105-113.

17. See the selections from Saint Thomas Aquinas ("On
Killing Living Things and the Duty to Love Irrational
Creatures," taken from Summa Theologica II, 64,1, and
65,3) and from Kant ("Duties to Animals," taken from
Lectures on Ethics) in Regan and Singer, eds., Animal
Rights and Human Obligations, pp.118-21, 122-23,
respectively.

18. Regan, "Introduction," in Regan and Singer, p.9.

19. (Except that were it to stand, we would be left with
a pretty-well universal moral sentiment ([viz.,
'we--animals'] shouldn't be cruel to animals) with no
justification for it coming from our (anthropocen-
tric) ethical system if we did not have this "tender
feelings" connection. But this moral sentiment might
also be grounded in a virtues approach--we might
append kindness to animals as a duty to oneself, a
virtue to be aimed at in cases where human concerns
don't intervene.)

20. See relevant selections in Regan and Singer:
Voltaire, "A Reply to Descartes," pp.67-68 (taken
from Philosophical Dictionary); Hume, "Of the Reason
of Animals," pp.67-71 (taken from A Treatise of Human
Nature); and Schopenhauer, "A Critique of Kant,"
pp.124-28 (taken from On the Basis of Morality).

21. See discussion in Christina Hoff, "Kant's Invidious
Humanism," Environmental Ethics 5 (Spring, 1983):
68-69.

22. See the experiment results cited by philosopher James
Rachels in "Do Animals Have a Right to Liberty?" in
Regan and Singer, pp.214-19.

23. See Mary Midgley's discussion of wolf behaviour in
"The Concept of Beastliness," in Regan and Singer,
pp.95-97. I should emphasize that Midgley is not
arguing for the recognition of rights for animals,
but rather for a revision of our concept of "man" and
of "beast."

24. Bentham, "A Utilitarian View," in Regan and Singer, p.130.

25. See, for example, the passage from Henry S. Salt's
    The Creed of Kinship quoted in James Rachels, "Do
    Animals Have a Right to Liberty?" in Regan and
    Singer, p.213.

26. These are among the characteristics listed and given
    unsupported criticism (for the sake of brevity, I
    presume) by Richard and Val Routley ("Against the
    Inevitability of Human Chauvinism," in Goodpaster and
    Sayre, pp.39-42). I regret that I cannot fill out
    and evaluate their criticisms of these proffered
    "criteria," but we will return to some of them in
    Chapter III.

27. The coinage of this term has been variously
    attributed to Richard and Val Routley and to Richard
    Ryder (the latter by Hoff, "Kant's Invidious
    Humanism," p.69, and by Singer, "All Animals are
    Equal," in Regan and Singer, p.154n).

NOTES TO CHAPTER III: EXTENDED-INDIVIDUALISTIC ETHICS

1. See, for example, Alasdair MacIntyre's analysis of
    the concept of natural or human rights (After Virtue,
    pp.66-68). MacIntyre argues that such rights are
    fictions (albeit useful ones). For a direct and
    thorough discussion of the issue of rights in the
    sphere of environmental ethics, see Feinburg, "The
    Rights of Animals and Unborn Generations." For a
    well-reasoned discussion of "animal rights," see L.
    Duane Willard, "About Animals 'Having' Rights,"
    Journal of Value Inquiry 16 (1982): 177-87.

2. As quoted from The Object of Morality (New York:
    Methuen, 1971) in Goodpaster, "On Being Morally
    Considerable," p.314.

3. Frankena, "Ethics and the Environment," p.10.

4. (This includes Bentham, as can be seen in the first
    two lines of the quotation above on page 19.)

5. Holmes Rolston III, "Is There an Ecological Ethic?"
    Ethics 85 (1975): p.101.

6. Singer, "Animal Liberation," a review of Godlovitch,
    Godlovitch and Harris, eds., Animals, Men and Morals
    (New York Review of Books, 1973), p.1 of a reprint by
    the Society for Animal Rights, Inc.

7. Rolston, "Is There an Ecological Ethic?" p.101.

8. See Regan and Singer, Preface to Animal Rights and
    Human Obligations, p.iii; and Regan, "Do Animals Have
    a Right to Life?" in Regan and Singer, pp.203-4.

9. See discussion by Rodman, "The Liberation of Nature?"
    pp.98-101; by Callicott, "Animal Liberation: A
    Triangular Affair," pp.330-36; by Eric Katz, "Is
    There a Place for Animals in the Moral Consideration
    of Nature?" Ethics and Animals IV/3 (1983): 84-5;
    and by Pluhar, "Two Conceptions of an Environmental
    Ethic ...," pp.121-22.

10. See, for example, Peter Singer's description in "Down
    on the Factory Farm," in Regan and Singer, pp.14-23.

11. Bentham, "A Utilitarian View," in Regan and Singer,
    p.129.

12. See, for example, Peter Miller, "Do Animals Have Interests Worthy of Our Moral Interest?" _Environmental Ethics_ 5 (Winter, 1983): 319-33; Meredith Williams, "Rights, Interests, and Moral Equality," _Environmental Ethics_ 2 (Summer, 1980): 149-61. (Williams' essay focuses on human-animal differences for the purpose of arguing against the equalitarian thesis of Peter Singer, but these differences could be seen as hierarchical criteria.)

13. Rodman, "The Liberation of Nature?" p.90.

14. This example was motivated by a similar example suggested by Evelyn B. Pluhar in "The Justification of an Environmental Ethic," _Environmental Ethics_ 5 (Spring, 1983): 53.

15. (Rodman's essay focuses on two recognized classics--Peter Singer's _Animal Liberation: A New Ethics for Our Treatment of Animals_ (1975) and Christopher Stone's _Should Trees Have Standing? Toward Legal Rights for Natural Objects_ (1975)--but it is more than a book review. Rodman's article seems to receive even less mention in the literature I have studied than does Goodpaster's "From Egoism to Environmentalism," which seems strange because both their criticisms are powerful and fundamental. (A notable exception is Callicott's "Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair.")

16. Rodman, "The Liberation of Nature?" (All further references to Rodman will be to this work.)

17. Goodpaster, "On Being Morally Considerable," p.316.

18. Rodman, p.91.

19. Goodpaster, "On Being Morally Considerable," p.321.

20. Nietzsche: they are mere epiphenomena. See Friedrich Nietzsche, _The Will to Power_, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Random House, Inc.: 1968), #147.

21. "The Rights of Animals and Unborn Generations," cited in Goodpaster, "On Being Morally Considerable," p.312n6.

NOTES TO CH. III (Cont'd.)

22. Goodpaster, "On Being Morally Considerable," p.318.

23. Goodpaster interprets Feinberg's use of 'having rights' as being very broad, and so judges it to be close enough in meaning to moral considerability to warrant treating Feinberg's analysis of necessary conditions for 'having rights' as an analysis of necessary conditions for 'deserving moral consideration.'

24. Ibid., p.319.

25. As quoted in Ibid., p.319.

26. Ibid., p.320.

27. Ibid., p.319.

28. While I agree with Goodpaster's criticism and with the "life" criterion he advocates, I wonder if he arrives at these by the straightest path. The problem is that "having interests" gets stretched out of shape when we say that plants have interests. We might say, "It is in the interests of the tree to get enough sunlight," but even here, our meaning would really be that it is in the interests of the tree's growth--not that the tree itself can be said to have an interest. I don't think we would say, "The tree has an interest in getting enough sunlight," at least, not those of us who have not yet been influenced at the level of our ways of speaking by Christopher Stone (Should Trees Have Standing? Toward Legal Rights for Natural Objects) and fellow biocentrists. But of course, the whole point of Stone's and other works, including Goodpaster's, is that rights or moral concerns should be recognized which currently are not, and so to appeal to ordinary language considerations is irrelevant to the issue: of course ordinary language investigations will not yield any distinctions to support these as yet unrecognized rights. These distinctions are not in our language because the values haven't made it into our world-picture yet. Their advocates are calling for us to change our ways of thinking and speaking to give a place to these values. (See, for example, Christopher D. Stone, Should Trees Have Standing?

Toward Legal Rights for Natural Objects (Los Altos,
Cal.: William Kaufmann, Inc., 1974), pp.40-42.) In
the language of a pantheistic culture, on the other
hand, we would likely find all the support one could
hope for and more.

But this reply raises two perplexing questions:
one, the chicken-or-the-egg question, Does a change
in our ways of speaking occur because of (and after)
a change in our world picture? Or does a change in
our world picture occur because (and after) we become
able to make distinctions which our language didn't
contain before? And how can you have a change in one
without first having a change in the other? And what
is a world picture--or more narrowly, What is a set
of values (more narrowly still, What is a set of
rights-attributions)--if not a set of distinctions
embodied in, and having its life solely in, our
language, our thoughts, our dreams . . . our
language?) The other very much related question is,
What's going on here? Where would this change being
urged upon us--this change which cannot be located in
our ordinary language--where would it be coming from,
and how is it being expressed, if not in ordinary
language, in the language we understand? Is it a
matter of using words, connecting words together,
differently? Have we learned things in science
(ecology, in the case before us) which we have yet to
incorporate into our ordinary understanding and ways
of speaking? Is the struggle we're going through
here explainable as a struggle to make ordinary
language grow to accommodate and reflect the leaps
and bounds that have been made in the language of the
ecologist? All these questions, and my point with
the criticism I began above is only the little one
that the stretching of "having interests" can be
avoided!

29.   This is a reference to the suit brought against the
       Secretary of the Interior by the Sierra Club, a
       long-standing naturalist/preservationist
       organization, to restrain federal officials from
       approving the construction of an extensive skiing
       development in the Mineral King Valley, a wilderness
       area in California's Sierra Nevada Mountains and part
       of the Sequoia National Forest since 1926. The

Supreme Court's decision (that the petitioner lacked
standing in the case because the Sierra Club had
merely an "interest" in the problem: it had not
shown itself likely to be adversely affected by the
development, and so its petition, in Mr. Justice
Stewart's judgement, had no more legitimacy than that
of "organization or individuals who seek to . . .
syndicate their own value preferences through the
judicial proxess" (pp. 70-71) is reproduced in
Stone, pp.57-94. See also pp.xii-xvi.

30. The greatest problem involved with such
representation is ascertaining that the would-be
representative is sufficiently knowledgeable and
without ulterior interest. For a discussion of
practical (legal) problems involved, see
Shrader-Frechette, pp.95-97, and, of course, Stone,
pp.10-40.

31. Bark is important for protecting a tree from injury,
insects, disease and loss of water. (See, e.g.,
World Book Encyclopedia (1981) Volume 2, p.78.)

32. However, see note 18 above for reservations
concerning the significance of ordinary language
considerations in this issue.

33. See, for example, Williams, "Rights, Interests, and
Moral Equality," and Steve F. Sapontzis, "The Moral
Significance of Interests," Environmental Ethics 4
(Winter, 1982): 345-58.

34. Remember, we're not talking equality here, only the
minimal conditions for moral considerability.

35. Goodpaster "On Being Morally Considerable," p.317.
Cf. Feinberg, pp. 43-44.

36. I have some serious doubts about this distinction,
not only because the aesthetic seems to merge so
imperceptibly into the ethical (in environmental
ethics), but also because accounts I have read of the
difference seem to depend heavily upon some version
of a "last person on earth" hypothetical
consideration, which seems a pretty feeble basis to
build upon. These doubts come down to a doubt about

the viability (for environmental ethics) of the intrinsic/instrumental value distinction. I try to explore this doubt further in Chapter IV. (See pages 61-71 above.) The problems involved with ascriptions of intrinsic value (naturalistic fallacy, etc.) will also be considered in Chapter IV. Finally, a different problem here is that moral value and intrinsic value seem to be used equivalently, whereas Frankena, for example, separates them. (William Frankena, Ethics, 2nd edition (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973), p.82.)

37. Goodpaster, "From Egoism to Environmentalism," p.29.

38. See, for example, Peter Miller, "Value as Richness: Toward a Value Theory for the Expanded Naturalism in Environmental Ethics," Environmental Ethics 4 (Summer, 1982): 101-14; Donald Scherer, "Anthropocentrism, Atomism, and Environmental Ethics," Environmental Ethics 4 (Summer, 1982): 115-23. Also, see note 11 above.

39. Rodman, p.94.

40. Goodpaster, "On Being Morally Considerable," p.323.

41. At this point, Hunt quotes Whitehead's description of existence at all levels--human to infra-molecular--as being characterized by similar modes of organization. See Hunt, "Are Mere Things Morally Considerable?" Environmental Ethics 2 (Spring, 1980): 64-65.

42. Ibid.

43. Goodpaster, "On Stopping at Everything: A Reply to W. M. Hunt," Environmental Ethics 2 (Fall, 1980): 284.

44. Ibid., p.284n6.

45. To this I would reply, Perhaps, but can they be harmed or benefited beyond in ways harmful or instrumental to the living things which depend on them?

46. Ibid., p.282.

47. R. and V. Routley, "Against the Inevitability of Human Chauvinism," in Goodpaster and Sayre, p.55..

48. In addition to justification problems such as showing that the proposed criteria are morally relevant, there are serious application problems for this approach: e.g., determining the degree to which a particular creature or object possesses any of the proposed criteria.

49. These difficulties concern the logical problem involved in deducing "ought" from "is," a problem which seems to have been first noticed by David Hume (in A Treatise of Human Nature, Bk. III, Part I, Section I)—although there is some debate over whether Hume intends this "is-ought" problem as an insoluble problem for ethics (the standard interpretation) or as an interesting problem which he subsequently attempts to solve. (See Part I of W.D. Hudson, ed., The Is-Ought Question (Toronto: the Macmillan Co., 1969).) Some environmental ethicists try to overcome this problem by conceptualizing the movement from "is" to "ought" as being something other than deduction; see pages 63-65 above. Similar difficulties arise in connection with the related problem known since the work of G.E. Moore as "the naturalistic fallacy," the problem that our attempts to define 'the good' (or to define 'moral considerability') in terms of natural properties are always victim to "the open question," the question, "But is that property (e.g., possessing life) good? (Our focus, of course, is not on the concept "good" but on the concept "morally considerable.")

    A good measure of the force of Moore's "open question" criticism is taken away when we realize that its apparent applicability is sufficiently explained by the multi-facetedness of the meaning of "good" and similar moral predicates; their meaning cannot be captured without residue in a definition because of the multiplicity of their uses. (See Frankena, Ethics, p.99, and MacIntyre, A Short History of Ethics, pp.249-253.) So when we notice that the open question seems to make sense against our criteria for moral considerability, we need not send up the white flag; we should instead make sure that the open questioner heeds the limited scope of the particular sense of "moral considerability" (or

"moral worth") which we are trying to explain. Thus, when the open question is raised against the life criterion (which we have seen, depends upon "having a welfare of its own")--e.g., "Yes, but does being alive or having a welfare merit moral consideration?" --we should reply, with Goodpaster, that the sense of deserving moral consideration which we are trying to capture is the sense connected with "beneficence and nonmaleficence" understood as central features of "our shared conception of moral (vs. nonmoral) obligation" (Goodpaster, "A Reply to W.M. Hunt," p.282).

50. I am thinking here of the philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre in After Virtue, but in this same connection, Ernest Partridge mentions Kurt Baier, Michael Scriven, John Rawls, and Garrett Hardin (Partridge, "Nature as a Moral Resource," Environmental Ethics 6 (Summer, 1984): 114n24).

51. See Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, in The Basic Works of Aristotle, trans. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941), Bk. VI, Ch. 12, 1144a6-9, 1144b30-32.

52. Jonas, "Technology and Responsibility: Reflections on the New Tasks of Ethics," Social Research 40 (Spring, 1973): 34.

53. Ibid., pp.38-40.

1. For example, it is quoted or discussed in all of the following: (1) Frankena, "Ethics and the Environment," p.12; 2) Goodpaster, "On Being Morally Considerable," p.308; "From Egoism to Environmentalism," pp.21, 25, 28, 30-31; 3) Rodman, "The Liberation of Nature?" pp.110-111; 4) Partridge, "Are We Ready for an Ecological Morality?" Environmental Ethics 4 (Summer, 1982): 175-78, 181n13, 187-90, and "Nature as a Moral Resource," p.107; 5) Callicott, "Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair," pp.311-15, 322, 327-38 passim; 6) Frederick Elder, Crisis in Eden: A Religious Study of Man and Environment (New York: Abingdon Press, 1970), pp.14, 91-94, 139, 153.

2. Leopold, A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1968), p.203.

3. See the brief comments on this by Ernest Partridge in "Are We Ready for an Ecological Morality?," p.178, and "Environmental Ethics: Obstacles and Opportunities," p.349n7.

4. Leopold, Almanac, p.vii.

5. Ibid., pp.224-25.

6. Ibid., p.204.

7. Ibid., pp.200-1, 204, 220.

8. See James D. Heffernan, "The Land Ethic: A Critical Appraisal," Environmental Ethics 4 (Fall, 1982): 236-39; Colleen D. Clements, "Stasis: The Unnatural Value," Ethics 86 (1976): 136-44.

9. Leopold, Almanac, pp.202-3.

10. See Rodman, pp.96-97, for a discussion of the possible ahistoricity of accounts similar to the one Leopold gives on pages 202-3 of the Almanac.

11. The idea that Leopold cannot be placed totally outside the anthropocentric approach was first suggested to me by Professor Johnson after a conversation he had with Charles R. Magel.

NOTES TO CH. IV (Cont'd.)

12. Leopold, Almanac, p.viii.

13. Ibid., p.214.

14. Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons," Science 162 (Dec., 1968); reprinted in Shrader-Frechette, pp.249-251.

15. Leopold, Almanac, pp.209-10. (While it is of course not true that philosophy and religion today have not heard of conservation, I would wager that Leopold's claim about philosophy and religion in his own time is, on the whole, no exaggeration.)

16. Ibid., p.214.

17. Don E. Marietta, Jr., "The Interrelationship of Ecological Science and Environmental Ethics."

18. Ibid., pp.200-1.

19. Leopold, Almanac, p.viii, pp.209-13 passim, pp.221-26 passim.

20. Ibid., p.223.

21. Frankena, Ethics, p.82.

22. See, for example, Partridge, "Nature as a Moral Resource," pp.121-22.

23. This picture was inspired by MacIntyre's criticism of the Nietzschean individual (After Virtue, p.240).

24. Partridge, "Nature as a Moral Resource," p.121.

25. Ibid., pp.126-27.

26. This idea was suggested to me by Professor Johnson.

27. This line of thought was prompted by Goodpaster's remarks on moral criteria and conceptions of morality ("On Being Morally Considerable," pp.321-22; "A Reply to W.M. Hunt," p.282).

28. See note 2 of Chapter I.

29. Goodpaster, "From Egoism to Environmentalism," p.22.

30. Ibid., p.33n2.

31. Ibid., pp.22-28.

32. Ibid., p.24.

33. Ibid., p.27.

34. Ibid., p.25.

35. Ibid., p.26.

36. Ibid., p.27.

37. I would guess that Goodpaster uses the qualifying expression "all or most persons" because of the possible mismatch between the class of "persons" and the class of "rational beings." Whether or not the classes would map identically onto one another would depend upon how one defined "person" and "rational." (The familiar problem cases would be infants and the mentally handicapped and feeble.) It may even be that Kant made use of qualifying expressions in this regard; this would have to be determined by reference to the texts.

38. Ibid., p.28.

39. Ibid., p.28.

40. Ibid., p.24.

41. Ibid., p.28.

42. Ibid., pp.28-29.

43. Ibid., p.29.

44. Ibid., p.29.

45. Ibid., p.30.

46. Ibid., p.30.

47. As quoted, Ibid., pp.30-31.

48. Ibid., p.31.

49. Rolston, "Is There an Ecological Ethic?" as quoted in Ibid., pp.31-32.

50. Ibid.

51. Goodpaster, "From Egoism to Environmentalism," pp.32-33.

52. Katz, "Is There a Place for Animals in the Moral Consideration of Nature?" p.80.

53. Rolston, "Is There an Ecological Ethic?" p.108.

54. Actually, Rolston writes in terms of "the logic by which we get our values," a clear account of which we do not have "yet," and he suggests that "we shape" our values rather than that our values come into place without such direct control from us. I am skeptical of the suggestion that we "get" our values by means of a logic which we may someday finally grasp, as well as of the suggestion that we shape them in any quite direct way. See my general discussion of these issues on pages 114-124 above. Note as well that a passage from Rolston appearing on page 114 suggests that his wording criticized above may not reflect his real position on these issues.

55. Rolston, as quoted in Goodpaster, "From Egoism to Environmentalism," p.33.

56. At the same time, I should acknowledge that many philosophers before the rise of modern science recognized that there are fields of inquiry in which certainty cannot be obtained. Notable among them is Aristotle; see, e.g., the Topics. However, I think it is also true that Aristotle's inquiry into the good for man in the Nicomachean Ethics is not pursued as if certainty were beyond its reach. If this is correct, then Aristotle does not constitute an exception to the tradition of seeking certainty in moral philosophy.

57. John Dewey, "The Construction of Good" (from The Quest for Certainty), in H.S. Thayer, ed., Pragmatism: The Classic Writings (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1982), pp.190-91.

58. Ibid., pp.291-92.

59. Ibid., p.291.

60. Ibid., p.299.

61. Witness the prevalence of "That's just the way I feel"-talk; more substantially, see Chapter 2 of Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue*.

62. See, e.g., C.L. Stevenson, "The Nature of Ethical Disagreement," in *Facts and Values* (Yale University Press, 1963).

63. See Dewey, selection from *Art as Experience* in James Gouinlock, ed., *The Moral Writings of John Dewey* (New York: Hafner Press, 1976), p.90. See also Gouinlock's Introduction, p.xxvi.

64. See, for example, Pluhar, "The Justification of an Environmental Ethic," p.53.

65. Goodpaster, "From Egoism to Environmentalism," p.32.

66. Ibid., p.30.

67. See note 5 above.

68. I would expect that this is an oversight in this particular essay, and not at all anything missing in Goodpaster's fuller reflections. In contrast to this oversight, awareness of the limitations of our understanding of nature is a major theme in Leopold's *Sand County Alamanac and Sketches Here and There*. See pp.11, 20, 200, 204-5, 220.

69. Regarding equality, see Singer, "All Animals are Equal," in Regan and Singer, p.149. Regarding "going beyond human interests," see: Pluhar, "The Justification of an Environmental Ethic," p.51; Gene Spitler, "Justifying a Respect for Nature," *Environmental Ethics* 4 (Fall, 1982): 260. But see also the reply by Paul W. Taylor, "In Defense of Biocentrism," *Environmental Ethics* 5 (Fall, 1983): 129-41.

70. See pages 63-65 above (Marietta) and pages 87-91 above (Dewey).

71. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 241.

72. I am very grateful to Professor Blair for helping me with the organization of this section in particular.

73. See MacIntyre, <u>After Virtue</u> (1st Edition), pp.189-90. Subsequently, all page references appearing in the body of Chapter IV, Section iii will be to this work.

74. One notable such exception, MacIntyre tells us, is Kant, who acknowledges in the second book of the second <u>Critique</u> that "without a teleological framework the whole project of morality becomes unintelligible," and thereby presents a theological framework "as a 'presupposition of pure practical reason.'" (MacIntyre, (p.53)).

75. Jerome B. Schneewind criticizes MacIntyre's focus on the prevalence of moral disputes today, arguing that debate on moral issues is a feature of any civilization, and may well be a sign of health. I will refrain from entering into this particular debate, but the interested reader can see Schneewind's "Virtue, Narrative, and Community," <u>Journal of Philosophy</u> 79 (1982): 653-663, and "Moral Crisis and the History of Ethics," <u>Midwest Studies in Philosophy</u> 8 (1983): 525-542.

76. In fact, MacIntyre acknowledges, indeed emphasizes, that there are always many ways in which an individual can intelligibly continue the narrative of his life, and many ways in which a tradition can be developed. See <u>After Virtue</u>, pp.206-209.

77. There seems to be a conflict also here at the level of traditions, but this would go beyond my point, which was to supply an example which we could connect with.

78. See Sally Magnusson, <u>The Flying Scotsman</u> (New York: Quartet Books Inc., 1981).

79. See pages 88-89 above.

80. Onora O'Neill argues the interesting thesis that MacIntyre's refurbishing of Aristotelian ethics stands in need of a Kantian completion in "Kant after Virtue," <u>Inquiry</u> 26: No. 4 (1983): 387-406.

81. MacIntyre is well aware of this point. See note 76
    above.

82. In "On Being Morally Considerable," Goodpaster
    suggests that the biosystem as a whole might qualify
    as a "living system" and hence be deserving of moral
    consideration (p.323), and in "From Egoism to
    Environmentalism," he suggests the possibility more
    firmly ("I would want to argue . . .," etc.,
    (pp.32-33)).

83. Goodpaster, "From Egoism to Environmentalism," p.32.

NOTES TO CHAPTER V: WHAT DO WE DO IN THE MEANTIME?

1. Ludwig Wittgenstein, _Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus_
   (6:421, 522) as quoted in Ibid., p.101.

2. Wittgenstein, "Wittgenstein's Lecture on Ethics," in
   Jerry H. Gill, ed., _Philosophy Today No. 1_ (New
   York: The MacMillan Company, 1968), p.14.

3. Wittgenstein, _On Certainty_, ed. G.E.M. Anscombe and
   G.H. von Wright (New York: Harper and Row, 1972),
   #96-#99.

4. Jonas, "Technology and Responsibility," p.52.

5. Ibid., p.53.

6. Ibid.

7. Wittgenstein, "Lecture on Ethics," p.13.

8. There seems to be promise as well in a qualified
   anthropocentric approach (See, e.g., Bryan G. Norton,
   "Environmental Ethics and Weak Anthropocentrism,"
   Environmental Ethics 6 (Summer, 1984), and in a
   hierarchical extended-individualistic approach, but I
   must leave these unexplored at present.

9. It is not clear to me whether or not this "test" of
   relevancy has any application to phenomenological,
   "world-view" approaches such as Don Marietta's. (See
   Marietta, "Knowledge and Obligation in Environmental
   Ethics: A Phenomenological Approach," _Environmental
   Ethics_ 4 (Summer, 1982): 153-52. See also Tom
   Regan's criticism of an earlier statement of this
   approach in Regan, "On the Connection Between
   Environmental Science and Environmental Ethics,"
   Environmental Ethics 2 (Winter, 1980): 363-67; and
   Marietta's reply, "World Views and Moral Decisions:
   A Reply to Tom Regan," _Environmental Ethics_ 2
   (Winter, 1980): 369-71.)

10. For examples of the implicit or explicit appeal to a
    norm of environmentalist concern, see: Frankena,
    "Ethics and the Environment," pp.10, 19; Norton,
    "Environmental Ethics and the Rights of Future
    Generations," pp.319-20; Katz, "Is There a Place for
    Animals in the Moral Consideration of Nature?" p.74.

11. Norton discusses this briefly in "Environmental
    Ethics and Weak Anthropocentrism," p.132.

NOTES TO CH. V (Cont'd.)

12. I owe my awareness of this "principle" to Prof. H.A.
     Nielsen's lectures in "Technology and Human Values"
     and "Problems in the Philosophy of Science:
     Darwinism," two of the courses he taught at the
     University of Windsor in 1983-84.

13. Holmes Rolston III, "Values in Nature," Environmental
     Ethics 3 (Summer, 1981): 113-28.

14. Hans Jonas discusses the imperativeness of
     acknowledging our ignorance and acting with restraint
     in "Technology and Responsibility," pp.36-37, 51.

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