

ACTIVISM & ADVOCACY

Ethics: The Environment

Summer 2012, Laura Guidry-Grimes

FINAL PROJECTS!

What are you researching?

How can we help you?

THE DILEMMA



- ▣ Advocate for environment using
 - Language of economics, anthropocentrism, conservation (wise use)
 - ▣ Take as many sand dollars as possible up to sustainable yield of population
 - Language of moralism, biocentrism, preservation (letting nature be)
 - ▣ Leave all the sand dollars

WORLDVIEWS, JUSTIFICATIONS, & VALUES



- ▣ What does it mean to *respect* nature?
- ▣ External challenges: need to reform markets and fight against traditional cost-benefit analyses
- ▣ Internal challenges: theoretical crisis
- ▣ **Worldview:** “constellation of concepts, values, and axioms that shape the world its proponents encounter”
(498)

NORTON'S WAY OUT OF THE DILEMMA

- ▣ Similar objectives, different values
- ▣ “Providing environmentalists can usually agree on what to do, a diversity of value concerns need not debilitate the movement” (500)
- ▣ Allow pluralism of values
 - ▣ Variety of explanations and justifications to achieve the same goal

PROJECT OF ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS (CALLICOTT)

“articulate a new worldview and a new conception of what it means to be a human being, distilled from the theory of evolution, the new physics, ecology, and other natural sciences” (548)

AGAINST NORTON'S CONVERGENCE THESIS



- ▣ Whether you value nature intrinsically or instrumentally makes a significant difference in how you treat nature and permit others to treat it.
 - E.g., timber extraction, mining

- ▣ How you assign values makes a difference in default positions and onus of justification
 - “If, however, the nonhuman world is considered to be intrinsically valuable then the onus shifts to the person who wants to interfere with it to justify why” (Fox, qtd. on 548)

AGAINST MORAL PLURALISM IN ENVIRONMENTALISM

- ▣ Environmentalists cannot “stop exploring the real reasons why we ought to value other forms of life, ecosystems, and the biosphere as a whole” (549)
 - Even if they have to appeal to people’s current values to accomplish objectives in the here and now

- ▣ Overhauling prevailing anthropocentric value system will drastically change our practices
 - Similar to acknowledging all humans have intrinsic value

CALLICOTT'S CONCLUSIONS

- ▣ Have to criticize old belief system and find a new worldview that reflects those values and contemporary science
 - Critical for environmental movement up to now and moving forward
- ▣ “since all human actions are carried out and find their meaning and significance in a cultural ambience of ideas, we speculative environmental philosophers are inescapably environmental activists” (555)



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ▣ Do you think it's unacceptable for an activist to “settle” for a more moderate campaign in order to appeal to more people?

- ▣ Are you more persuaded by Norton or Callicott on how environmentalists should prioritize and proceed?
 - ▣ Do you think that those who intrinsically value nature and those who instrumentally value nature will inevitably come into conflict on certain issues?

QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?