

Critics and Concerns

Ethics: The Environment
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Preservation & Conservation

- ▶ **Preservation:** nature should be left alone, free of human interference and use
- ▶ **Conservation:** nature should be used wisely, weighing costs and benefits to current and future human generations

Should we conserve or preserve?

► Preserve!

- Meaningful reverence of nature
- Epistemic humility
- Interference can have disastrous consequences (even for us)
- ...Why else?

► Conserve!

- Our causal interference is inevitable
- Should take responsibility for (and correct) how we inevitably harm nature
- We can do a better job than nature can at protecting (e.g.) biodiversity
- ...Why else?

Social Justice & Preservation

- ▶ If force wildlife protection onto unwilling and disadvantaged populations, (frequently) end up with...
 - Increased poverty and hunger
 - Disempowered communities
 - Damaged culture
 - Fewer species (self-defeating effects)
- ▶ “preservation ethics does not allow the local people to profit from wildlife, and not allowing people to profit from wildlife effectively pits people against wildlife, which is bad for wildlife as well as the local people” (Schmidt 10)

Social Justice & Preservation

- ▶ Responsible environmental programs must ask:
What could make it rational for villagers to promote wildlife?
 - Give range of choice options to local communities
 - Incentivize workers at every level
 - Make trade-offs worth it
 - ...other ideas?

Criticism and Response: The Land Ethic

▶ Zeide (criticisms)

- Ecosystem is not deeply connected superorganism.
- Leopold doesn't allow trade-offs, making his view unworkable.
- Extending rights to biotic members means losses to other members

Must intervene so as to make planet accommodate growing population

Zeide's proposal

▶ Callicott (responses)

- But strongly connected
- Leopold admits trade-offs are necessary.
- Rights are defeasible; extension of rights does not entail losses of rights

Need to evaluate population growth!

Callicott's response to Zeide's proposal

Global Justice & Biocentrism

- ▶ Ecological problems *not* due to anthropocentrism
 - Overconsumption + militarization
- ▶ Error: environmental protection = protection of wilderness
 - "roots of global ecological problems lie in the disproportionate share of resources consumed by the industrialized countries as a whole *and* the urban elite within the Third World" (Guha 5)
 - Need radical shift in economic and political structures, as well as cultural values

Global Justice & the Environment

- ▶ “environmental problems impinge far more directly on the lives of the poor” (Guha 3)
 - “protection per se is of least concern to most of these groups. Their main concern is about the use of the environment and who should benefit from it” (6)
- ▶ What should be the distinctive and central contribution of an *environmental* ethic?

Questions? Comments?

