

Ethics: The Environment (Summer 2012, Laura Guidry-Grimes)

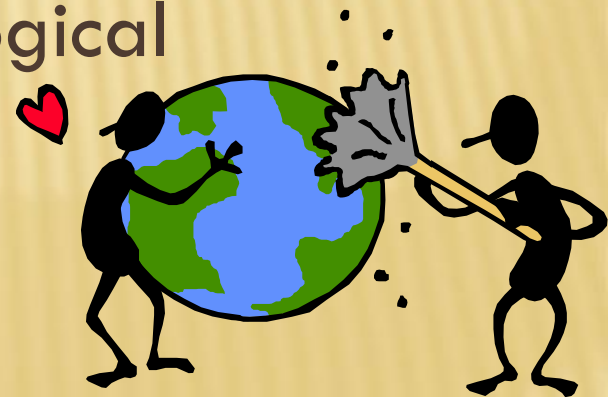
PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACHES TO THE ENVIRONMENT



GESTALT SHIFT

DEEP ECOLOGY

- ✗ Shift: humans as locus of value → humans as part of creation on-going; total-field conception of nature
 - + Reform environmental attitudes → revolutionize
- ✗ Goal of reinhabitation: learning how to dwell in and care for a place
- ✗ Central intuition: all entities are constituted by their relationships; no sharp ontological boundaries



DEEP ECOLOGY



- ✗ Value stance toward facts
 - + Facts themselves permit numerous stances
- ✗ Biospherical unity + biospherical egalitarianism



Equal intrinsic worth of all members of biotic community

- ✗ Deep ecology *in principle* vs. *in practice*
 - + Problem: resolving value conflicts/ethical dilemmas
 - + Fox's solution: "organisms are entitled to moral consideration commensurate with their degree of central organization (or capacity for richness of experience)" (258)

**BEAUTIFUL WORLD
(THAT NO ONE WILL EVER ENJOY)?**



vs.

**UGLY WORLD
(THAT NO ONE WILL EVER DISLIKE)?**



**IS IT RATIONAL TO CREATE ONE
WORLD AND NOT THE OTHER?**

**WORLD WITH ONLY
NON-CONSCIOUS LIFE?**



vs.

WORLD WITH NO LIFE (EVER)?



**IS IT RATIONAL TO CREATE ONE
WORLD AND NOT THE OTHER?**

GETTING CLEAR ON DEFINITIONS

✗ *Biocentric individualism*

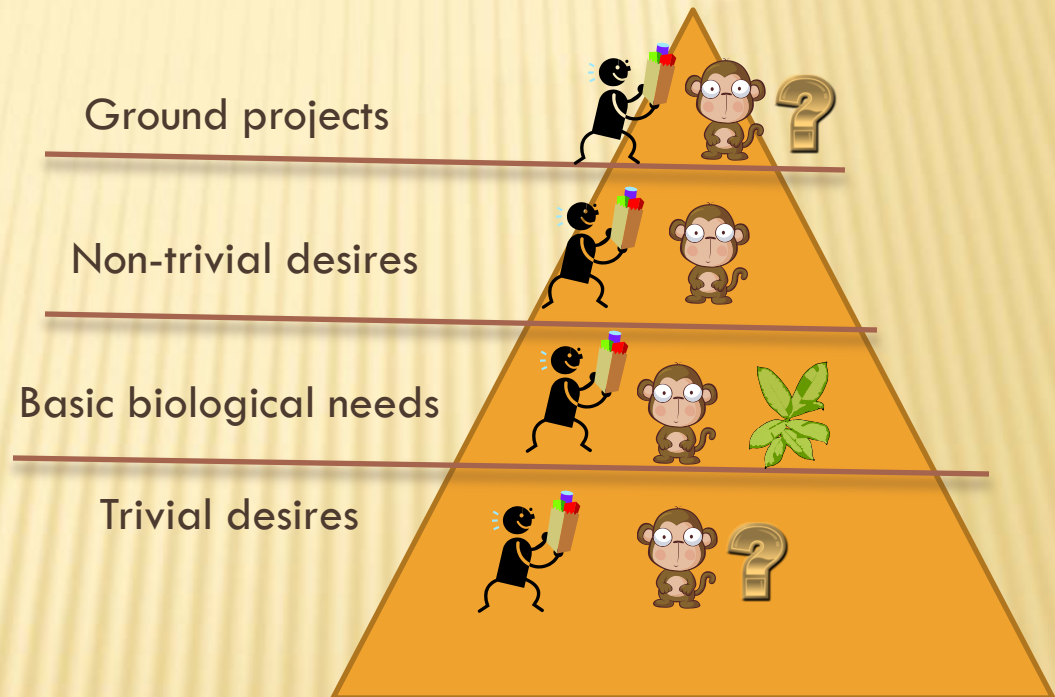
- + Varner: (all or some) living entities have intrinsic value
 - ✗ Anthropocentrism and sentientism can count as BI, though they are more specific on *which* entities have intrinsic value
- + Others BI theorists: all living entities have intrinsic value
 - ✗ Disagreement re: how much intrinsic value different entities have
 - ★ Contrast: Taylor/Schweitzer vs. Attfield/Varner
 - ★ Hierarchy of value does not entail that organisms with more intrinsic value are morally permitted to exploit/destroy/subdue those with less intrinsic value.

VARNER ON BIOCENTRIC INDIVIDUALISM

- ✗ Moral standing if and only if it has interests
 - ✗ Morally relevant: preference *and* biological interests
 - ✗ Do not need consciousness, desires, or mental states to have interests
- ✗ “mere existence of non-conscious life adds *something* to the goodness [i.e., intrinsic value] of the world” (114)
- ✗ Hierarchically structured interests: in order to satisfy/fulfill *x* (ground project), one needs to satisfy *y* (categorical or non-categorical desire)
 - + *X* is ordered above *y*, so satisfying *x* is more important than satisfying *y*

VARNER ON BIOCENTRIC INDIVIDUALISM

**Equal moral consideration
for layers of same kind --
regardless of the
organism**



ECOFEMINISM



- ✗ Patriarchy conceptually distinct from androcentrism (male-centered thinking)
 - + But power asymmetries lead to oppression and marginalization in moral, legal, and social (public and private) spheres
- ✗ Warren's Argument (C):
 1. Feminism is a movement to end sexism
 2. Sexism is conceptually linked with naturism.
 3. Thus, feminism is also a movement to end naturism.

Validity of argument
depends on what this link is.



QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?