

Philosophical Approaches to the Environment



ETHICS: THE ENVIRONMENT
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Ecofeminism



- Deep connections between oppression of women and environmental degradation and elimination of non-human animals
 - Population growth and lack of reproductive choice
 - Water pollution and increased burdens on women
 - Lack of environmental stability and domestic violence
 - Lack of resources, militarism, and homelessness
 - Ozone destruction and hunger



- “it is women and children who are the first to suffer the consequences of injustice and environmental destruction” (Gaard & Gruen 280)

Ecofeminism



- Numerous (compatible) causes of these connections:
 - Machine metaphor
 - Great chain of being
 - Certain religious traditions
 - Man the Hunter Hypothesis
 - Dualisms and metaphors in language
 - Psychological internalization of roles
 - Alienation and commodification of nature and persons
- Complex systems of oppression → complex solutions



Ecofeminism



- Central claim: environmental “problems stem from the mutually reinforcing oppression of humans and of the natural world. It is no longer possible to discuss environmental change without addressing social change” (Gaard & Gruen 277)
- “if we can establish that a proposed activity or practice contributes to the subordination of women, then by necessity it becomes a feminist concern” (279)

Ecofeminism



- What ecofeminist theories can offer:
 - Community-based knowing and valuing
 - Importance of inclusivity
 - Focus on context and diversity, recognition of difference without always imposing superior/inferior distinctions
 - Identification of overlapping forms of oppression
 - Taking on the perspective of the weak, vulnerable, and marginalized *and* prioritizing their needs

Pragmatism



- *Subjectivist* in that valuing is activity of subjects, but values are not necessarily arbitrary or anthropocentric
- *Irreducibly* pluralistic value system
- Intrinsic value framework as philosophically problematic *and* ultimately unhelpful
 - Values *should not* be self-sufficient (isolatable)!
 - Non-anthropocentric valuing might be impossible when trying to ground intrinsic value!
 - Justification does not need to be a project in *grounding* value!

Pragmatism



- Rejects:

**Value w
because of
value x**



**Value x
because of
value y**



**Value y
because of
value z**

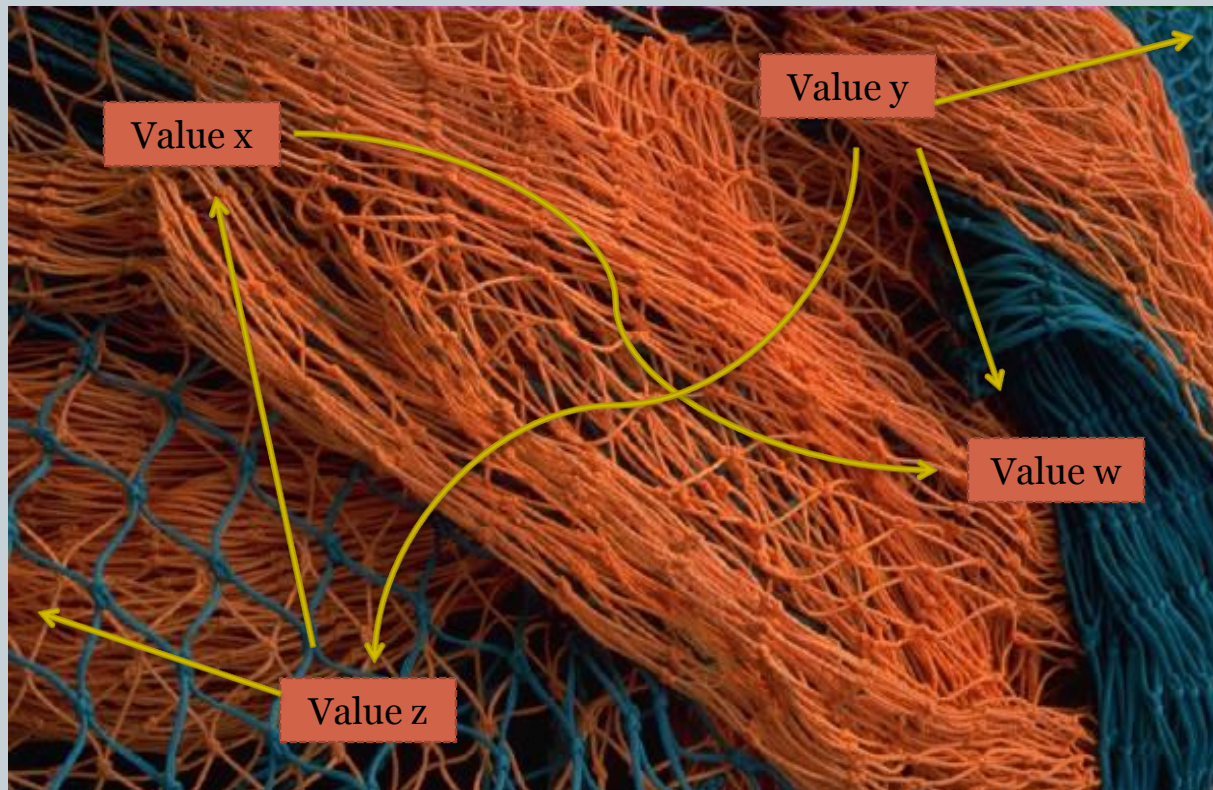


**Z as
final
end?**

Pragmatism



- Adopts:



Debate!



MOUNTAINTOP REMOVAL: REASONS FOR AND AGAINST

Questions? Comments?

