ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS AND ANIMAL ETHICS: A TRIANGULAR AFFAIR?

Introduction

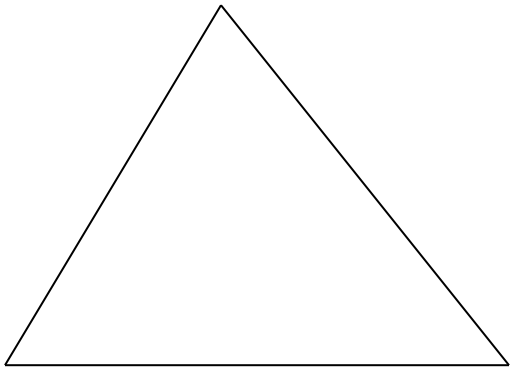
Ecological problems are best understood as social and moral problems, as well as scientific or technological problems. They are problems resulting from human interactions with the natural environment; problems that have negative impacts on humans, animals, and ecological systems without being beyond control at present. But which impacts are tolerable and which intolerable? Some who hold a 'shallow green' view (see lecture 2) would find the harms caused to the nonhuman world quite tolerable; while some 'deep green' views treat the harms affecting creatures as morally significant, and treat some of those harms as on a par with similar harms affecting human beings.

The permissibility of treating nature as one pleases is seldom defended. But the belief that only humans count (the anthropocentric view) is often defended (for example, by Bryan Norton, Mark Sagoff, and H.J. McCloskey). Is this an arrogant view? And can, say, cruelty to animals be bad only because of human interests? In lecture 2, we argued that animals have a good of their own and interests of their own, from which it follows that cruelty to animals is not bad only because of human interests. This view would be supported by biocentrists and, perhaps with some slight qualification, by sentientists too (for whom all and only *sentient* animals have a good of their own). Indeed biocentrism and sentientism are stances that are fundamentally different from anthropocentrism. But they are also different from ecocentrism in that they are concerned with individuals, whether individual suffering or the good of individuals more generally, whereas ecocentrists are concerned for species and ecosystems. Such considerations have led some to claim that these stances are fundamentally at odds with each other and are contradictory stances that have no common grounds. It is to such claims that we shall turn in this lecture.

Callicott's triangle of stances

Baird Callicott's influential paper 'Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair' (1980) presents animal-liberationism as being fundamentally at odds with environmentalism, and both of them at odds with traditional humanism (which, here, should be taken to mean anthropocentrism). In this article he claims that animal liberationism and environmental ethics are two distinct and inconsistent stances.

ETHICAL HUMANISM
(Anthropocentrism)
Opponents call it shallow. Adherents sometimes think it ‘green’.



HUMANE MORALISM
or
ANIMAL LIBERATIONISM
(Singer’ position, for example.)

LEOPOLD’S LAND ETHIC
(Ethical holism)

Three points of the triangle:

1. The first point of Callicott triangle of stances is Leopold’s land ethic. Callicott takes Leopold’s land ethic as the paradigm case of what an environmental ethic is:

> Leopold… is universally recognised as the father or founding genius of recent environmental ethics. His ‘land ethic’ has become a modern classic and may be treated as the standard example, the paradigm cases, as it were, of what an environmental ethic is. *Environmental ethics* then can be defined ostensively by using Leopold’s land ethic as the exemplary type (Callicott, 1980, p.311).

We saw in the first two lectures that Aldo Leopold, author of *A Sand County Almanac* (1949), advocated a new ethic of conservation; in particular, he advocated the adoption of a ‘land ethic’. Let us briefly remind ourselves of some of what he says:

> The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the 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 (1998 [1949], pp.88-89).

> It is inconceivable to me than an ethical relation to land can exist without love, respect, and admiration for land, and a high regard for its value. By value, I of course mean something far broader tham mere economic value; I mean value in the philosophical sense (ibid., p.99).

> A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise (ibid., p.99).

While Leopold's land ethic did not provide 'a systematic ethical theory or framework to support his ethical ideas concerning the environment' (Brennan and Lo, 2008), his claim that the land as a whole is an object that deserves moral considerability was influential in its suggestion that ecological wholes, such as species and ecosystems, rather than individuals, have moral value. Indeed, Holmes Rolston III argued that we have a responsibility to give moral consideration to species rather than indiviuals (Rolston, 1998, p.134).

Both Rolston and Leopold are ecocentrists. Ecocentrists take the view that systems have intrinsic value and moral standing, and hold the view that our own value as individuals is neutral until we explain how we contribute to systems. Their environmental ethics may be called 'holistic'; it is concerned with the good of larger systems (such as the biosphere as a whole), as well as of species, rather than individuals. The pain and suffering of individuals is not intrinsically bad but should rather be seen as good or bad within systems (see lecture two).

2. We now turn to the second point on Callicott's triangle of stances: humane moralism. Callicott refers to advocates of animal liberationism or animal liberationism as 'humane moralists'. Animal liberationism, in contrast to the holistic environmental ethic of Leopold's, is individualistic; in other words, it is primarily concerned with the good of individuals, not of systems and species. Pain and suffering is intrinsically bad and is to be prevented. Animal liberationists are very much concerned with the welfare of animals used in exploitative practices, such as factory farming, animal experimentation, the fur trade and so on. They believe that the individual interests of nonhuman animals matter and are morally significant. Peter Singer, for example, argues that animals' interests should be given equal consideration as the like interests of human beings, and that an understanding of why this is so amounts to a proper understanding the principle of equal consideration of interests (Singer, 1995, ch.1).

Animal liberationism and Leopold's ethics, then, rest on very different foundations. As Callicott says,

> [T]here is no doubt that Leopold sincerely proposes that land… be ethically regarded. The beech and chestnut, for example, have in his view as much 'biotic right' to life as the wolf and the deer, and the effects of human actions on mountains and streams for Leopold is an ethical concern as genuine and serious as the comfort and longevity of brood hens. In fact, Leopold to all appearances never considered the treatment of brood hens on a factory farm or steers in a feed lot to be a pressing moral issue. He seems much more concerned about the integrity of the farm wood lot and the effects of clear-cutting steep slopes on neighbouring streams (1980, p.314).
>
> Animal liberationists put their ethic into practice… by becoming vegetarians… (No one however has yet expressed…qualms about eating

> plants…)…. Leopold, by contrast did not even condemn hunting animals, let alone eating them, nor did he personally abandon hunting' (ibid., p.314).
>
> The urgent concern of animal liberationists for the suffering of domestic animals, toward which Leopold manifests an attitude of indifference, and the urgent concern of Leopold, on the other hand, for the disappearance of species of plants as well as animals and for soil erosion and stream pollution, appear to be symptoms not only of very different ethical perspectives, but profoundly different cosmic visions as well (ibid., p.315).

Of course, that Leopold hunted animals and, according to Callicott, appeared indifferent to the suffering of animals is not altogether inconsistent with his land ethic, as his land ethic is concerned with species rather than with individual animals and their suffering.

3. The third point of Callicott's triangle of stances is ethical humanism; this stance rejects the claim that animals have moral standing, and tends to disregard nonhuman interests or at least considers nonhuman interests to be of little significance in comparison to human interests. Ethical humanism can be associated with anthropocentrism:

> The orthodox response of 'ethical humanism'… to the suggestion that nonhuman animals should be accorded moral standing is that such animals are not worthy of this high perquisite. Only humans are rational, or capable of having interests, or possess *self*-awareness, or have linguistic abilities… it is variously argued (ibid., p.317).

It is argued by the ethical humanists that animals lack the criteria that they think is necessary for moral standing (such as rationality, linguistic ability, self-awareness, and so on). Now, those in the animal welfarist camp (or the 'humane moralists', as Callicott sometimes calls them) argue that if animals are not accorded moral standing on the basis that they lack such characteristics then humans that lack such characteristics would, theoretically, on this view, also not be accorded moral standing. But, of course, this is something the ethical humanists would be against; as Callicott says, 'the ethical humanists would be morally outraged if irrational and inarticulate infants, for example, were used in painful or lethal medical experiments, or if severely retarded people were hunted for pleasure. Thus, the double-dealing, the hypocrisy, of ethical humanism appears exposed. Ethical humanism, though claiming to discriminate between worthy and unworthy ethical patients on the basis of objective criteria impartially applied, turns out after all, it seems, to be *speciesism*, a philosophically indefensible prejudice (analogous to racism) against animals… In short, the ethical humanists' various criteria for moral standing do not include all or only humans, humane moralists argue, although in practice ethical humanism wishes to make the class of morally considerable beings coextensive with the class of human beings' (ibid., pp.316-17).

Note that in pointing out what the ethical humanist's claims regarding moral standing lead to (that is, that some humans lack moral standing), the animal liberationist is *not* implying that she thinks that some humans lack moral standing. Indeed, the animal liberationist widens the scope of moral standing to include all sentient animals and humans. Rather, she is saying that the criteria that the ethical humanist appeals to as a

reason for denying moral standing to animals is morally irrelevant and gives the ethical humanist, not the animal liberationist, a reason for excluding many humans from the moral sphere. In other words, if one considers the capacity for self-awareness, linguistic ability, or rationality to be necessary for moral standing, then, to be consistent and to avoid the charge of being biased, one will have to exclude many humans who lack such characteristics from having moral standing. But the animal welfarist or animal liberationist argues that the possession of rationality, linguistic ability, or the capacity for self-awareness may be sufficient for standing in the moral sphere, but it is not necessary. She argues that there is another characteristic that suffices for a being to matter morally; that characteristic is sentience. The ability to suffer, she argues, is not only necessary for having standing in the moral sphere, but sufficient too. As such, the animal liberationist argues that all those creatures capable of feeling pain and suffering should be given moral consideration.

However, there are of course many living things that are nonsentient, and from the animal liberationist's perspective there is no moral reason to respect nonsentient creatures. For this reason Callicott claims that animal liberationism diverges considerably from an environmental ethic, since nonsentient things, such as trees and so called 'lower' life forms (animals which are less complex in terms of their capacities than sentient ones), may be important for preserving ecological integrity, and as such, according to an environmental ethic, how we treat them may matter in a moral sense. Indeed, Callicott states that, in terms of an environmental ethic, 'the effect upon ecological systems is the decisive factor in the determination of the ethical quality of actions' (1980, p.320). So animal liberationism, it is said, differs considerably not only from humanism, but also from an environmental ethic.

(We should say here that animal liberationism as it is presented by Callicott does not, as he suggests, provide direct reasons for respecting nonsentient beings, but one could consistently consider oneself to be animal liberationist whilst taking the view that nonsentient and sentient creatures have moral standing, although to say as such is to imply a different presentation of 'animal liberationism' than that presented by Callicott).

Summary of stances

So we have briefly outlined the three points of Callicott's triangle, all of which are presented by Callicott as being at odds with one another. Environmental ethics, with its concern for the environment and which creates 'obligations over and above self-interest' (Callicott, 1980, p.236, quoting Leopold, 1949, pp.223 and 209), is at odds with humanism which is anthropocentric, human-centred, and self-interested. Environmental ethics, with its concern for wholes, species and systems, is also apparently at odds with animal liberationism, since the latter is concerned with individuals and their suffering, not systems or species. And, of course, animal liberationism is at odds with humanism or anthropocentrism because of the latter's human chauvinism and its lack of awareness that there are other beings besides humans that matter morally.

Are there any allegiances?

There certainly are tensions between these different positions, and they may advocate different policies and practices with respect to environmental and animal welfare concerns. Ecocentrists tend to claim that their stance supports preservation (of ecosystems, of species and habitats, and of biodiversity), and claims that anthropocentrism supports nothing but conservation; conservation grounded in a purely instrumental approach to the natural world and natural entities. But to this, Bryan Norton has replied that there is a range of anthropocentric grounds for preservation—scientific, educational and spiritual grounds (some of them non-instrumental), and that these grounds are strengthened by an adequate consideration of future human interests. He further claims that these grounds are so strong that non-anthropocentric approaches do not add anything to the discussion and are a distraction: debates about the intrinsic value of nature are futile when all parties agree in the importance of sustaining the earth for future generations (see Norton, 1991, 1995 and 2008). (A crucial issue here is whether any distinctive policies are required if anthropocentrism is rejected).

But all this ignores the strong case for heeding animal suffering and animal welfare, advanced by animal liberationists, including Peter Singer (on a utilitarian basis) and Tom Regan (on a rights basis). Taking animals' interests seriously would oblige us to be concerned about the individual welfare of nonhuman animals, both domestic and wild. (There are of course different responsibilities to domestic and wild animals, as Rolston has argued, but this hardly justifies, *pace* Rolston's suggestion, having one ethic for nature and another for culture (see Rolston, 1998, pp.125-29)). Paul Taylor (a biocentrist) has argued for the moral standing of all living creatures, and also for their equal worth (see lecture 2); he also presents some defensible policies for transactions with nature (see *Respect for Nature*, 1986, ch.6). However, it is unclear as to whether these policies can be derived from this egalitarian basis, and it is far from clear why rare species should be preserved, granted that there would be equal value in the lives of members of populous species that take over the habitats of less populous ones. (For further problems with Taylor's egalitarian biocentrism, see lecture 2.) To be plausible, biocentrism needs to recognise greater significance in some capacities than others (as K. Goodpaster and Robin Attfield do), and also to take into account the value in the lives of possible future members of species (as Attfield does on Parfitean grounds; see lecture four).

Ecocentrists strongly suggest that normative stances which are primarily concerned with the good of individuals (such as biocentrism and sentientism) neglect the good of species and of ecosystems, which is not a resultant good of their members (see, for example, Rolston, 1998). These entities certainly have non-resultant properties, including causal ones, but their value might still turn on that of their members (plus other affected individuals), including future ones. Ecocentrism is at its most plausible when it recognises individual goods as well as systemic ones as having intrinsic value. It becomes less plausible when intrinsic value is represented as anthropogenic (as it is by Callicott, 1980), and much less so when the biosphere is regarded as one's Greater Self (as in Naess' Deep Ecology; see Naess, 2000, for example). This, probably, is egoism.

Callicott's presentation of the stances

So we can go along with Callicott to a certain extent and say that there certainly are tensions between the different stances, even if we discard (as he later did) the kind of ecological holism which recognises nothing more than instrumental value in individuals and their states. Animal welfarists have to explain why we should not intervene to prevent predation in nature, and some of them think we should thus intervene (Steve Sapontzis (1984), for example). Some environmentalists accuse animal liberationists of ignorance of how ecosystems function. But this can be recognised without ascribing intrinsic value to such systems, as ecocentrism does.

That said, Callicott's presentation of the stances is not without its problems:

1. Callicott appears to confuse areas of ethics (for example, the branches of environmental ethics and animal ethics (see lecture 1 for a definition of environmental ethics)) with specific normative stances (sentientism, ecocentrism, anthropocentrism, etc.).

2. Leopold's land ethics is just one environmental ethics on offer, but so is animal liberation, as Dale Jamieson claims in his 'Animal Liberation is an Environmental Ethics' (1998).

3. Callicott sets up a contrast between animal ethics and environmental ethics in general—the former is individualistic, and views pain and individual suffering as bad; the latter is holistic and concerned with systems, and does not view pain as intrinsically bad. But environmental ethics need not disregard individual interests, nor need it deny that pain is bad. Consider, for example, biocentrism, a normative stance in environmental ethics—this stance considers the interests of individuals to be important and, concerned as it is with the interests of individual creatures, could well consider the pain and suffering of individuals to be something that should be avoided for the sake of the individuals themselves.

4. Just as environmental ethics need not disregard individual interests, animal ethics need not disregard ecosystems or nonsentient life, or be committed to interventions that disrupt ecosystems, even when those interventions would prevent pain and suffering. Animal ethicists, such as Singer, could say that preserving ecosystems and looking after nonsentient entities is morally important, for the survival of sentient creatures depends on intact ecosystems; and the flourishing of nonsentient entities, such as trees, is in the interests of sentient ones. Indeed, taking animals' interests seriously will involve giving due consideration to the preservation of habitats and ecosystems.

5. Callicott misrepresents the animal liberationist view, claiming that, according to such a view, predators should be regarded as 'wanton… murderers of their fellow creatures, who not only kill… but cruelly toy with their victims, this increasing the measure of pain in the world' (1980, p.320). Perhaps Callicott is implicitly

suggesting that it follows from the animal liberationist position, with its concern for minimising and preventing animal suffering, that we should interfere with predation and the suffering of wild animals. While some animal ethicists think we should intervene to prevent predation (Sapontzis, 1984), most recognise a distinction between the suffering of animals in the wild and animal suffering which results from human generated processes, and could well explain why we should not intervene to prevent predation. That animals suffer in the wild is part and parcel of the life and death cycles of wild animals, cycles which themselves are essentially parts of a natural ecological process that sustains all life, and which we would be foolish to try to prevent. Besides, interference with predation would actually cause suffering, not alleviate it, not least because it would prevent animals from fulfilling their natural tendencies and potentials, and could easily result in some animals starving to death. This, in turn, would of course (to a certain extent) disrupt the ecological balance, which could have disastrous consequences for both animals and humans. There will be occasions on which injured animals can and should be rescued, but no comprehensive policy of intervention is remotely justifiable, nor, for that matter, seriously possible. Indeed, Peter Singer suggests that, as far as wild animals are concerned, we should adopt a policy of non-interference ('except in a few very limited cases'), and should not attempt to 'police all of nature' (Singer, 1995, pp. 225-26).

But the position is very different where animal suffering results from humanly generated processes. Factory-farming, for example, involves vast amounts of avoidable suffering, as writers such as Singer have brought to attention (Singer, 1995), as does the long-distance transport of live animals for slaughter. Another area for concern is that of animal experimentation; for while some of this is thought to be indispensable for discovering and testing medicines intended for human use, much of it is conducted rather to test cosmetics and cleaning products, and could be discarded without significant loss to human interests. As far as the suffering of wild animals in captivity is concerned (for example, bears in bear-bile farms, and wild animals kept in barren conditions in zoos), such suffering is also avoidable, as well as morally significant, and in such cases there are obligations to assist the relevant animals, by, for example, putting pressure on governments for change, and calling for the release of these animals into an environment or sanctuary that will allow them to exercise their species-specific tendencies.

Further, the animal liberationist's claim that animals' interests should be given proper consideration, or even equal consideration as the like interests of humans, does not require that all animals be treated the same; different animals have different interests and, therefore, will require different treatment. Domestic animals will need to be treated differently from wild animals, and where we have made ourselves responsible for the quality of life liveable by particular animals (by making them captive or by using them as a means for our own purposes), then treating them fairly will involve giving their interests due consideration, even when that means that their interests sometimes count for more than our own.

6. Callicott is highly critical of animal liberationism, and favours an ecocentric approach: 'animal liberation, if pursued at the practical… level would have ruinous consequences on plants, soils, and waters… the animal liberation / animal rights movement is… entirely unpractical. An imagined society in which all animals capable of sensibility received equal consideration or held rights to equal consideration would be so ludicrous that it might be more appropriately and effectively treated in satire than in philosophical discussion. The land ethic, by contrast, even though its ethical purview is very much wider, is nevertheless eminently practicable, since competing individual claims may be adjudicated and relative values and priorities assigned to the myriad of the biotic community' (Callicott, 1980, pp.337-38). Here, Callicott is suggesting that the claims of individuals may be overthrown by whatever is in the good of the system. But this has serious implications in practice.

   Consider what some of those implications might be.

Conservationism vs. preservationism

Implementation of the land ethic would probably see wilderness as something that should be preserved, rather than used as a mere resource. Conservationism might be seen as wise usage, while preservationism might be summed up in the slogan 'let it be' (Schmidtz, 1997, p.328). But David Schmidtz, in his article 'When Preservationism Doesn't Preserve' (1997), outlines why trying to put preservationism into practice can be self-defeating.

The following quote highlights some of the problems with treating wilderness as something to be preserved:

> [E]ven if our own attitude is one of deep and unconditional reverence for wilderness, we have to be aware that other people may have, in their own eyes, more pressing things to think about. If we really care about wilderness, we cannot just look at it through our own eyes… Like us, the people of Africa care for the natural heritage when they can afford to do so, when rewards for doing so go to them and not just to others, and when they know how to do so. Some of them have been practising wise use for a long time, killing wildlife when it threatens their families, hunting it for food, and for sport as well. When we try to impose our preservationist ideals on local villagers who have to live with wildlife, we risk starting a war between locals and wildlife, a war that both sides lose. The problem is that 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 local people. According to Brian Child, 'the simple fact is that wildlife will survive in Africa only where it can compete financially for space. The real threat to wildlife is poverty, not poaching' [Schmidtz cites Child, 1993, p.60]… Norman Myers says, 'In emergent Africa, you either use wildlife or lose it. If it pays its own way, some of it will survive' [Schmidtz cites Myers, 1981, p.36].

> Kreuter and Simmons conclude that, because elephants 'compete directly with humans for use of fertile land, we believe elephants will continue to be eliminated unless they provide… direct personal benefits to the people who incur the cost of living with them' [Schmidtz cites Kreuter and Simmons, 1995, p.161]…When it comes to African wildlife, preservation ethics runs into a problem… preservationism does not preserve (Schmidtz, pp.331-32). (For the full references for Kreuter and Simmons, Child, and Myers, see entry for Schmidtz in the bibliography.)

Even if one's own attitude towards the land is one of reverence for wilderness, we have to be aware that for those who depend on using the land to meet their basic needs, preserving wilderness is not worth the cost and does not benefit them at all. Indeed, where people rely on using the land and its inhabitants in order to make a living, then preservationist ideals fall foul of pitting those people and their needs against wildlife, resulting in such people understandably viewing the environment in which they live and its inhabitants as an obstacle to their own survival, waging a 'war between locals and wildlife'.

(Note that strong-sustainability, as presented by Beckerman (1994), or ultra-strong sustainability, as presented by Daly (1995) (see lecture five) would probably call for the preservation of species whatever the human costs.)

What about 'wise-usage' alternatives? Can these avoid the pitfalls of preservationism? Schmidtz presents practical alternatives to preservation—alternatives which allow locals to be self-sufficient and make a living, without pitting wildlife against people. One of the cases Schmidtz presents to highlight what wise-usage of the natural environment might involve in practise is the case of Nyaminyami, in north-western Zimbabwe, where locals were given authority over wildlife. Before this happened, there had been many problems, not just in Nyaminyami but all over Zimbabwe, 'with wildlife molesting villagers [Schmidtz cites Bonner, 1993, p.255], to the point where villagers came to feel they were being persecuted for the sake of the animals. And they were basically right. One major effect of the [hunting] bans was to prevent locals from making significant money. Wildlife groups have failed to ask: What could make it *rational* for villagers to choose wildlife over cattle? [Schmidtz cites Bonner, 1993, pp.259-61]' (Schmidtz, 1997, p.334). (For the full reference for Bonner, see entry for Schmidtz in the bibliography.)

However, in 1989 local residents of Nyaminyami were given authority over wildlife in their area. Decisions were made by the local villagers, who had knowledge and an understanding of their local environment. Locals were allowed to sell hunting permits, cull herds, set up tourist trips, and were permitted to keep the profits resulting from such activities. Some of the money went into a pot to compensate farmers for loss of corn due to wildlife trampling over it, which defused resentment towards wildlife. Rangers sometimes hunted impala to sell meat to locals, making locals less dependent on cattle for food. All this enabled the community to become more self-sufficient. Since the villagers were making more money from hunting, they were 'better off turning their land over to wildlife rather than grazing cattle' (Schmidtz, 1997, p.344). (Cattle are a threat to wildlife, since they require vast clearing of the land for grazing, and, as Schmidtz says,

‘cattle crowds out wildlife’ (ibid., p.334). In addition, cattle degrade the land in a way that wildlife does not.)

This case suggests that preservation policies are not always the best way forward if we are interested in protecting the environment. In contrast to policies that advocate preserving the land and it inhabitants at the cost of human beings not being able to meet their basic needs, policies that advocate wise usage can allow for people who rely on nature’s resources for their survival to generate an income from such resources, and where people are able to benefit from their natural environment in this way, this provides strong incentives to replenish and protect the land and its inhabitants.

It should be said here that many of the wise use alternatives to preservation that Schmidtz presents involve hunting wildlife, and are presented in such a way that they suggest that hunting could be a better option for generating an income in certain areas than some alternatives; a better option from both an environmental ethics and an animal ethics standpoint. But is hunting an ethical wise use alternative? Consider that hunting was banned in Tanzania in 1973, and legalised again in 1984. During the period of the ban, the wildlife apparently virtually disappeared because of poachers. Schmidtz claims that ‘Without the licensed hunters to keep poachers in line, the poachers ran amok’ (ibid., p.333). But when wildlife starts to disappear, this can have a negative impact on the wider environment and its inhabitants. Further, poachers usually use snares not rifles, and hunting with snares causes more suffering to animals than hunting with rifles. (Animals caught in snares can be trapped for days on end with horrific injuries, and often starve to death or die of exposure. Of course, animals killed by rifles do not have to endure such a horrific death.) The snares were usually laid by local people trying to make an income. All this suggests that hunting may have its benefits not only for local people in terms of earning a living, but also for the natural environment and its inhabitants. If locals are able to generate an income from selling hunting-licenses or from tourists interested in hunting, then perhaps they will not have to resort to poaching animals with snares which ‘is a disaster for the wildlife’ (ibid., p.333).

Schmidtz realises that hunting poses ethical problems, and admits that he finds ‘something appalling about sport hunting’ (ibid., p.334), but notes that ‘we should hesitate before concluding that regular tourism is benign whereas hunting is destructive. Actually, tourism may do more damage than hunting relative to the money it brings in… because dollar for dollar hunting does not need nearly as much infrastructure as tourism does [Schmidtz cites Bonner, 1993, p.244]. Hunters in jeeps do not use precious water the way tourist hotels do, and do not demand wilderness—fragmenting highways the way tourist hotels do’ (Schmidtz, 1997, p.335). This is true, but it does not make hunting justifiable, even if it makes it a better option than regular tourism in terms of limiting environmental damage.

Of course, the ecocentrist would probably argue that hunting is the better option where the alternative is grazing cattle or regular tourism; cattle competes with wildlife and results in more destruction of the land and its surrounding ecosystems than hunting does, and regular tourism, as Schmidtz says, is hardly good for the environment. Indeed,

shooting animals (whether for sports-hunting or as a method of culling) may be something that they could support for ecological reasons (to preserve habitats and species). On the other hand, ecocentric positions tend to support preservation, and could even support preservation policies that disregard human interests. As such, it could follow from the ecocentrist's stance that wildlife is to be preserved (and accordingly, wild animals are to be left alone, rather than hunted or culled) whatever the costs to humanity

Would hunting or culling animals be supported under an animal ethic? Probably not. Schmidtz notes that there is something to be said for Cynthia Moss's claim that elephants deserve more than to be culled like rodents (Schmidtz, 1997, p.335). As he says, 'The individualistic animal rights position is a powerful position, given the nature of elephants, but it leaves us in a horrible quandary, for the price of absolute rights may be extinction… Cynthia Moss [Schmidtz cites Moss, 1988, p.226] said she would rather see elephants go extinct that see individual animals murdered for the sake of population control, and she is not alone' (Schmidtz, 1997, p.336-37). (For the full reference for Moss, see entry for Schmidtz in the bibliography.)

It seems, then, that we are back to Callicott's argument—that animal liberationism is in direct conflict with ethical holism, and both are at odds with ethical humanism. But perhaps there is a way out of this apparent conflict. Mary Midgley argues that there need not be a clash of interests between animal liberationists and deep ecologists, but she recognises why the views of animal liberationists and deep ecologists might be seen to be in tension:

> Twenty years back, when both these causes [concern for animals and concern for the environment] first became prominent, they were often seen as clashing. Extreme 'deep ecologists' tended… to emphasize the value of the whole so exclusively as to reject all concern for the interest of its parts, and especially for the interests of individuals…. On the other side, extreme 'animal liberationists', for their part, were busy extending the very demanding current conception of individual human rights to cover individual animals. That did seem to mean that animals claims… must always prevail over every other claim… including claims from the environment (Midgley, 1992, p.113).

But Midgley notes that the two positions can be reconciled, partly because animals and plants need each other (ibid., p.114). As she says, 'the whole environment cannot be served except through its parts, and animals form an essential part of every ecosystem… examples are pollinating insects and birds, beavers to maintain swamps, scavengers to recycle waste…. Even with captive animals, too, large-scale ill-treatment… does have bad environmental effects… it produces appalling pollution' (ibid., p.114). At a practical level, there can be a real convergence between animal liberationism and deep ecology, but a workable approach to ecological problems has to contain an attitude to wholes and to individuals, and while it is always possible for the two to be in conflict, it is always necessary to attempt to bring them together (ibid., p.116). As Midgley says, 'concern for the whole and concern for individuals are simply not alternatives. They are complementary, and indeed inseparable, aspects of a decent moral problem' (ibid., p.117).

Midgley considers a case in which a population of herbivores have begun to degrade their habitat by over-gazing (ibid., p.118). She realises that often this problem is caused by human actions (consider, for example, that people may have removed predators, or may have misused other areas of land upon which the herbivores could have grazed), but knowing this does not help solve the problem because 'past actions often cannot be undone' (ibid., p.118). What should be done in such cases as this? We are presented here with a moral dilemma. Should one leave the habitat to degrade, resulting in all the animals that use that habitat being affected, or is a cull something that needs to be considered and put into place? This, Midgley notes, is a choice of evils, but she also says that a compromise has to be reached. We need to think about what the lesser evil is, and to do this we need to look at things realistically, carefully studying local factors, recognising that inventive thinking may be required, rather than proceeding 'by any sweeping fiat from general principles' (ibid., p.118).

One answer, she suggests, is contraception—this proposal could satisfy animal liberationists and deep ecologists, and it could work well with small populations of large animals. But it is not without its problems. The relevant animals would need to be regularly monitored, as well as dosed; this may prove difficult, and may not be feasible at all with smaller mammals. Consider animals such as birds, rabbits, and mice. It is far from clear how we would dose them, and even less clear how we would monitor their behaviour (ibid., p.120). But in spite of the difficulties involved in implementing the contraception proposal, if we could find a way around these difficulties in practise then it could be an appropriate solution and one well worth implementing:

> If contraception could be made to work, it would have great merits… inventive, unexpected ideas of this kind are badly needed. But ideas that are not worked out on a practical level are mere fantasies… The problem mainly arises, of course, from steadily growing human numbers and human bad practice. In meeting it, we are certainly going to have to take many measures which are in one way or another objectionable. For instance, we will need to restrict human freedom to do many things… which have become ecologically damaging (ibid., p.120).

In considering the best approach to tackling environmental problems, a clash of interests is to be expected, and we will most likely have to choose between evils which, in one way or another, will be objectionable. But often a choice will have to be made, lest more harm is caused to the environment and / or to the creatures concerned, and our choice will largely depend on what works at a practical level; ideas based on general principles are all well and good, but if they are not practicable, then, as Midgley says, they remain 'mere fantasies' (ibid, p.120).

With respect to the dilemma at hand, Midgley concludes by arguing that 'As we go 'up' the scale of life, our acceptance at culling becomes more hesitant. That is reasonable, because individuality does become more important in the lives of more social and intelligent beings. It does mean that we should be less willing to cull deer than rabbits, and elephants than deer… But to veto all culling, whatever the alternative, is surely

fanatical over-simplification. It seems to me a position only possible for people who do not realistically grasp how bad the alternatives presented to us now are' (ibid., p.121). Indeed, many people would be less hesitant to cull, say, mice, than, say, elephants. But it is not unreasonable to suppose that different lives have different value in respect of different capacities and potentialities. Indeed, Singer argues that 'the life of a self-aware being, capable of abstract thought, of planning for the future, of complex acts of communication, and so on, is more valuable than a being without these capacities' (Singer, 1995, p.20). To kill creatures that possess such capacities is to deprive them of future goals, plans and potentials (ibid., p.21). Further one generally finds that beings which possess these capacities to a great extent have more complex lives than those whose capacities are somewhat limited in comparison. There appears to be a correlation between the possession of capacities and complexity of life. And the greater a being's capacities the more it stands to lose from death. Death deprives creatures from developing and fulfilling all those potentialities and capacities that they could have fulfilled in life. As Attfield argues, 'Death is a deprivation… for… *non*human creatures whose essential capacities are unfulfilled. But the greater the extent to which creatures are capable of plans and projects… or of the development of conscious relationships, the more they stand to be deprived from death, and the more value is present in the kind of lives which they lead' (1995, p.90).

Considerations such as these may play a part in deciding whether to cull a population of animals. Of course, where there are harmless solutions to, say, overgrazing, then surely we should try to find ways to implement those solutions. But, unfortunately, we will often be presented with dilemmas in which our only option is to attempt to minimise harms or large-scale damage by choosing the lesser evil and implementing solutions that themselves do some harm. However, as Midgley plausibly notes, in hard cases such as these, we can accept and use our responsibility to do much good (Midgley, 1992, p.120). And while there will often be a clash between rival causes (such as animal liberationism and deep ecology) we need to find a way in which these causes can be reconciled. This will require a degree of honesty and openness; it will involve recognising when our principles work in practise and being open about the alternatives when our principles are not practicable.

It is worth mentioning here that while Callicott, in his 1980 article, presents animal liberationism and ethical holism as being fundamentally at odds with each other, Callicott wrote a later paper entitled 'Animal Liberation and Environmental Ethics: Back Together Again' (1988). As the title suggests, he retracted his earlier thoughts about animal liberationism and environmental ethics being in conflict. However, his former article was influential in provoking ethicists to think of the animal liberation position and the ecocentrist one as in direct conflict: as he says, 'my article 'Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair' has led to an increasingly acrimonious divorce between individualistic animal welfare ethics and holistic ecocentric ethics. I think this estrangement is regrettable because it is divisible. Animal welfare ethicists and environmental ethicists have overlapping concerns. From a practical point of view, it would be far wiser to make a common cause against a common enemy—the destructive forces at work ravaging the nonhuman world—than to continue squabbling among ourselves' (1988, p.163). Similarly, Midgley believes that the apparent clashes of interests between animal

liberationists and deep ecologists can be resolved, and that the two positions overlap considerably, particularly in practise.

The example of factory farming: overlapping concerns

But perhaps we can go further than this and say that it is not just animal welfare ethics and ecocentric ethics that overlap. There is an example that highlights how the three corners of Callicott's triangle—animal welfare ethics, ecocentric ethics *and* humanism—overlap. The example to be considered here is that of factory farming.

It is often said that factory farming produces more food at a lower cost, but this is a misrepresentation. The environmental costs borne from intensive rearing methods, and the costs paid by people in the Third World, are enormous:

> Already more than one third of the world's grain is used to feed livestock. As a way of feeding billions it is highly inefficient. China, which used to be an exporter of grain, now imports it. It also uses up a lot of water. Lester Brown of the Worldwatch Institute has calculated that it takes around 180 litres of water to produce one battery egg and around 25,000 litres per kilogramme of beef. I find these figures astonishing and I suspect many people will. If they, or anything resembling them, are accurate, how much water does it cost to rear the 20 million more pigs born each year in China? (Mullin, 1999, p.64).

Large amounts of cropland are given over to producing food, not for people, but for animals. More worryingly, in Third World countries an increasing amount of land is used to grow cereal crops that are exported as animal feed. The irony of the claim, often made, that factory farming can feed the world's population is that people suffering from hunger and malnutrition are growing crops in order to sell them for animal feed. It takes a massive amount of grain to produce animal meat, and much of this grain is not converted directly into meat, but is used to maintain the lives of farm animals (so they can reach slaughter weight) before they are killed. Contrary to factory farming methods being able to sustain the world's population then, it seems that they actually do the reverse, and rather than promoting sustainable food resources, undermine the goal to reduce hunger.

Further, animal farming is also a major source of the greenhouse gases methane and nitrous oxide. These emissions are associated with animals' manure and the use of mineral nitrogen fertilizer used to grow animal feed. Intensive rearing causes extensive pollution to water and soil due to the use of large amounts of fertilizer used on crops, the manure produced by the farm animals, and the ammonia gas emitted from the manure and slurry (Turner, 1999, p.43; Turner cites the Silsoe Research Institute, 1998, pp.49-50).

In addition, intensive rearing needs enormous amounts of soil space to grow crops in order to feed the massive numbers of animals reared. Consequently, tropical forests and countryside are cleared to provide space to grow soya crops, sometimes displacing local people, who are pushed out of their settlements. They often move to the city slums or further out into the rainforest. Once settled in the forests they do not know how to farm in

such tropical environments. More forest is then cleared for the production of soya crops, leaving more destruction behind, and pushing locals further on (Lutzenberger and Halloway, 1999, p.7).

With the world population rising, modern farming methods are not as efficient as they are often made out to be. Indeed, we should be encouraging sustainable methods of farming, not moving away from them. The situation looks even worse when we consider that a large proportion of the crops produced in the Third World are actually used as feed for livestock. Such is the ludicrous situation that has occurred through modern agricultural methods. Not only this, but 'when the landscape is cleared of its traditional peasants we have cultural genocide' (ibid., p.8).

The conversion, then, of a huge amount of plant protein into a comparably small amount of meat protein is extremely wasteful. Not only does it deplete the global environment, but it withholds vast amounts of grain that could be used to feed a large number of starving people. This grain would, of course, have to be effectively distributed. (Problems concerning distribution are too complex to mention here.) Intensive rearing has actually brought devastation and desolation to humans, animals and the environment simultaneously. Forests are obliterated, more people are left homeless and hungry, and animals are made to endure wretched existences.

The above outline of some of the details regarding the practice of factory farming serves to highlight the overlapping concerns of animal ethicists, deep ecologists and humanists. Factory farming as a practice causes immense animal suffering, ruins the environment and has negative impacts for humans. All this suggests that it is not just animal ethicists and ecocentrists that have overlapping concerns; humanists should be concerned with factory farming as a practice too. Recognising such concerns could not only assist in resolving conflicts of interests, but could well shed light on the problematic nature of some practices, as well as open up some workable solutions to controversial moral dilemmas. So perhaps we can go further than Callicott does in his later article, and say that not only is it wiser for environmental ethicists and animal welfare ethicists to unite in practise, so too is it perhaps wiser for proponents of all three of the stances presented by Callicott to overcome clashes of interest through a recognition of overlapping concerns.

Bibliography

- Attfield, Robin, *Value, Obligation, and Meta-Ethics*, Value Inquiry Book Series (Amsterdam – Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1995).
- Beckerman, Wilfred, ''Sustainable Development': Is it a Useful Concept?', *Environmental Values*, 3, 1994.
- Brennan, Andrew and Yeuk-Sze Lo, 'Environmental Ethics', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2008, accessed at http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-environmental, on 12.12.12.
- Callicott, J. Baird, 'Animal Liberation and Environmental Ethics: Back Together Again', in *Between the Species*, Vol.4, Issue 3, 1988, pp.163-69.

- Callicott, J. Baird., ‘Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair’, *Environmental Ethics*, Vol.2, Winter 1980, pp.311-38.
- Daly, Herman, ‘On Wilfred Beckerman’s Critique of Sustainable Development’, in *Environmental Values*, 4, 1995.
- Jamieson, Dale, ‘Animal Liberation is an Environmental Ethic’, *Environmental Values*, Vol.7, 1998, pp.41-57.
- Leopold, Aldo, ‘The Land Ethic’ [originally appeared in Leopold’s *A Sand County Almanac*, 1949], in *Environmental Philosophy: from animal rights to radical ecology*, eds. Zimmerman et al (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1998).
- Leopold, Aldo, *A Sand County Almanac* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949).
- Lutzenberger, Jose A., and Melissa Halloway, ‘The Absurdity of Modern Agriculture’, in *The Meat Business*, eds. Geoff Tansey and Joyce D’Silva (London: Earthscan Publications Ltd, 1999).
- Midgley, Mary, ‘Beasts Versus the Biosphere?’, *Environmental Values*, Vol.1, No.2, 1992, pp.113-21.
- Mullin, Chris ‘Why I Do Not Eat Meat’, in *The Meat Business*, eds. Geoff Tansey and Joyce D’Silva (London: Earthscan Publications Ltd, 1999).
- Naess, Arnes, ‘Identification, oneness, wholeness and self-realization’ [an extract from Naess’ *Economy, Community and Lifestyle* (1989)], in John Benson, *Environmental Ethics: an introduction with readings* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000).
- Norton, Bryan, ‘Convergence, Noninstrumental Value and the Semantics of ‘Love’: Comment on McShane’, *Environmental Values*, Vol.17, No.1, 2008, pp.5-14.
- Norton, Bryan G., *Towards Unity Among Environmentalists* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).
- Norton, Bryan, ‘Why I Am Not a Nonanthropcentrist’, *Environmental Ethics*, 17 (4), 1995, pp.341-58.
- Rolston III, Holmes, ‘Challenges in Environmental Ethics’, in *Environmental Philosophy: from animal rights to radical ecology*, eds. Zimmerman et al (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1998).
- Sapontzis, Steve, ‘Predation’, *Ethics and Animals*, Vol.5, Issue 2, 1984, pp.27-38.
- Schmidtz, David, ‘When Preservationism Doesn’t Preserve’, *Environmental Values*, Vol.6, No.3, 1997, pp.327-39. (In this lecture, the quotations from Schmidtz’s article reference the following works: Brian Child, ‘The Elephant as a Natural Resource’, *Wildlife Conservation* (March/April), 1993, pp.60-61; Norman Myers, ‘A Farewell to Africa’, *International Wildlife*, 11, 1981, pp.36-46; Urs P. Kreuter and Randy T. Simmons, ‘Who Owns the Elephants?’, in *Wildlife in the Marketplace*, edited by Terry Anderson and Peter J. Hill (Lanham: Rowan and Littlefield, 1995), pp. 147-65; Cynthia Moss, *Elephant Memories* (New York: William Morrow, 1988); and Raymond Bonner, *At the Hand of Man* (New York: Vintage, 1993).)
- Silsoe Research Institute, *Biennial Report*, 1996-1998 (Bedford: Silsoe Research Institute, 1998).
- Singer, Peter, *Animal Liberation*, Second Edition with a New Preface by the Author (London: Pimlico, 1995).

- Taylor, Paul [1986], *Respect for Nature: A Theory of Environmental Ethics*, with a new foreword by Dale Jamieson, 25th Anniversary Edition (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011).
- Turner, J., *Factory Farming and the Environment: A Report for Compassion in World Farming Trust* (Petersfield, Hampshire: Compassion in World Farming Trust, 1999).