


Spring 2019

Environmental Philosophy: From Theory to Practice

Chase D. Williams
Bard College, cw0271@bard.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/senproj_s2019

 Part of the [Applied Ethics Commons](#), [Ethics and Political Philosophy Commons](#), and the [Other Philosophy Commons](#)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0 License](#).

Recommended Citation

Williams, Chase D., "Environmental Philosophy: From Theory to Practice" (2019). *Senior Projects Spring 2019*. 185.

https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/senproj_s2019/185

This Open Access work is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been provided to you by Bard College's Stevenson Library with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this work in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/or on the work itself. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@bard.edu.

Environmental Philosophy: From Theory to Practice

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Social Studies
of Bard College

by
Chase Williams

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

May 2019

Acknowledgements

When I entered college, I had one goal: to become a better writer. Of course, I have not developed a prose that could match James Baldwin's, but I have seen improvement. I want to thank the many professors, writing fellows, colleagues, and close friends who have helped me achieve my goal. Further, I want to thank the many people in my life that have supported me in other ways. Allow me to give a special thanks to the following people:

To Mom and Dad, who have both supported me in every way I could imagine. Much of this project is not for me, but for them. I think of how my mother worked her hardest to get me where I am. I think of my dad and his unending work-days and work-nights that reminded me that I can push harder.

To my sisters, for being my hype-women. Despite being a first-generation student, my childhood was an aftermath of insurmountable sacrifices and hardship. All of my achievements would not happen without them.

To Daniel, for taking my project so seriously. Our meetings discussing this project reminded me each week what was at stake in my senior thesis, and why I needed to write it. I'm thankful for his faith in me. I am not sure I could have finished this project without his support.

To Norton, Jay, and Monique, for investing their time and focus in my project. All of them shaped this project by helping me find what was truly important to me.

To Katlin and Tong, who have both been a huge part of my Bard experience. I'm grateful for having the privilege of sharing in great laughs and look forward to their future success.

To Kathy and my Admission family, for making me feel happy and loved each time I enter the office. I hope to see everyone in the near future.

To My dogs Max, Hazel, and Gizmo, they have always showed me love and made me smile.

Lastly,

To all of the hikes I've travelled, rivers I swam in, and skies I've seen shine. I thank them all as well because they have played a huge role in my life.

Thank You.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1 Environmental Pragmatism.....	5
Chapter 2 What Needs To Change.....	26
Chapter 3 What is Missing From Pragmatism?.....	41
Conclusion.....	59
Bibliography.....	63

Introduction

How does environmental theory help solve the environmental issues we face today? Such a question is derivative of another age-old question: how does philosophy relate to reality—reality meaning the world as we experience it. But those asking about environment theory today go way beyond a question on the mere importance of philosophy. We are living in the midst of an ecological crisis. Ice caps are melting. Greenhouse gases are steadily heating the earth at high levels. Various species are losing their own habitats due to rising temperatures. Nature is dying, and in order to solve or address this crisis, we must address how these issues may be resolved.

We need practical solutions. We need activists to solve these issues by taking action to push for environmental policies because these problems are both urgent and threatening to the life of the environment itself. We also need environmental theorists in order to help us identify environmental problems and adequately address them. More simply, we need theorists because their theory helps us consider the many ways of improving the environment. However, some environmentalists have questioned whether the way theories are engaging in discussing the environment actually offers any practical benefits at all. For if an environmental theoretical debate could not provide any practical benefits, it might be fair to recommend that we refocus theories towards questions about specific policies. After all, any true environmental theorist would wish develop good policy in order to sustain the natural world. That is why environmentalists are so desperately wondering these two things: 1) is engaging in theoretical questions that are not directed toward policies actually helping to address the ecological crisis we live in and, if so, 2) what benefit do we see from these theories in reality?

This project is meant to directly engage with these types of questions and concerns. Here, I examine the ways in which theory serves practical solutions. By looking at the relationship between environmental theory and its impact on reality, I attempt to analyze the way in which environmental theory serves, or does not serve, practical solutions.

I first examine how environmental theory translates to practice by beginning with environmental pragmatism. It may be the first environmental theory to show explicit interest in the relationship between environmental theory and its practical solutions. Pragmatists' philosophical tradition argues that there is a gap between the theory and its practice. They claim that theoretical debates within environmental philosophy, although philosophically interesting, have not been useful for policy-making. They believe the way to address this gap is by using "redirecting theory to justify policies" (Light and Katz, 1). While I support pragmatist's relationship between theory and practice by using theory in order to justify policy, still, I suspect that dismissing theoretical inquiries for being unpractical may be unhelpful for our ecological crisis and for policy itself. That is why I wish to examine how theories relate to practice. I suspect that even some theories that may not seem to direct their questions towards policy themselves, do, in fact, provide useful ways to practically promote good environmental policy. In fact, what I find most interesting is that by asking questions that are not directly focused toward developing policies do in fact help address policy solutions by encouraging people to rethink their own relationships with nature.

Although environmental pragmatism rejects directing theory towards questions that don't appear helpful for policy, I suggest that these theories are important and crucial for more robust policy because they help us develop the attitudes we need to address the crisis. I look at

how theories that address our mindsets and also theories that guide us toward a more ideal ecological environment can help people realize how interdependent we are with the natural world. I argue that by looking at these relationships, these theories help us to adequately identify the ways in which policy change must happen—by improving both our actions and also in our attitudes.

By looking at theories that address people's mindsets and utopian theories that promote acting in the spirit of an individual living in an ideal ecological utopia, I find that these various theories do have practical impacts for policy. One of the issues that remain is determining whether pragmatists have truly identified a gap between environmental theory and practical solutions. I suspect that this gap may not exist, but may be a sign of pragmatism missing the point of other environmental theories. Since these theories have all served different purposes, I suspect that we might see the relationships of the theories to policy if we also understand how these theories work together towards addressing the ecological crisis we live in. In the end I support pragmatists saying that theory guides policy. However, I argue that other relationships between environmental theory and practice—like those of mindsets and of utopianism— may work together in order to address real ecological issues.

I defend all environmental theories because they all provide helpful ways for addressing our ecological problem. Some theories address our attitudes and push for a more interdependent relationship with nature. Pragmatist theories are dedicated to creating theory by looking at specific environmental policy issues. Another set of environmental theories are used to develop theoretical models that we may use in order to strive for a more perfect society. This society becomes much more ideal as we strive towards utopian concepts. All environmental theories are

by nature meant to address real-world issues, and I suspect that they do help provide practical environmental solutions; and for the best approach toward our crisis, we must consider how theories may work together to achieve successful policy that completely addresses our issue.

Environmental Pragmatism: Generating Theory for Policy

Introduction

Many new environmental philosophers have loosened their devotions to one certain environmental theory in order to adjust to the evolving needs of the climate. Rather than looking for one right philosophy of the environment, many new theorists practice including multiple environmental theories. As long as the theory expresses an interest in improving the environment, environmentally pragmatic philosophers suggest we put aside these differences and find comfort with using many different theories. The end-goal of practical benefits—that is, sustaining the earth— is important for environmental pragmatists to understand exactly what the relationship between environmental theory may be to the practice of it all.

Within this chapter, I examine what environmental pragmatists are and whether their theoretical approach is good for promoting policy. I suspect that it is a very good choice. However, to say that pragmatism is the primary or only type of philosophy needed for environmental change, may go too far. In this chapter, I aim to show that environmental pragmatism is a helpful framework for environmental ethics because it redirects environmental ethics toward practical concerns and less on theoretical ethical dilemmas. I will also address deep ecologists' issue with environmental pragmatism and why pragmatism may not be as helpful as we think. In the end, I will argue that while environmental pragmatism is a good framework for using theory to justify and create policies, non-pragmatists may also have a way of guiding policies by looking at other environmental questions. Briefly, I'll explain why we must orient

ourselves towards practical concerns in the first place and how to determine what is and is not practical.

Environmental philosophy sparks from a thought experiment known as the Last Man argument.¹ The ethical question concerning the environment is told as follows: *The world is in some state of an apocalypse, and all humans are dead, besides one man. As the man travels along a path, he stumbles upon the very last redwood plant on earth. He has an inclination to destroy the redwood. Would he be morally wrong if he were to destroy the redwood?* The Last Man argument asks whether there is a moral relationship between humans and nature. Since then, environmental theorists have wondered about this and began to develop theories. This question led to a philosophical discussion on ethics and two branches of environmental philosophy: one that saw the environment as having instrumental value for humans, and the other that saw nature as intrinsically valuable.² Over time, however, some many environmentalists were less concerned about this theoretical debate and gave more focus to using theory to finding practical solutions to address the climate crisis. These environmentalists believe that continuing to question the moral relationships between nature and humans fails to address the practical solutions we so desperately need. Alternatively, environmental theories should think about how they can help justify and create environmental policies.

The new wave of environmental philosophy, also known as environmental pragmatism,³ is different from environmental philosophy when it first began in two ways. One major difference is that environmental philosophers now are interested in using thought experiments to

¹For further inquiry, see Routley's "Is There a Need For a New, Environmental Ethic?"

² This is known as the anthropocentrism vs. deep ecology debate.

³Environmental pragmatist philosophers include Ben A. Minteer, Edward Schiappa, Andrew Light, Eric Katz and Bryan Norton.

understand our crisis and more at looking at the crisis itself. They look for policy-making solutions by directing theory towards the policy issues themselves. Another key aspect about the new wave of philosophy today is that, while there may be stark differences within environmental theory today, most environmental theorists have come to an important agreement. They almost all agree that we should treat nature with respect.⁴ However environmental pragmatists disagree that theoretical debates actually matter for addressing ecological issues. While this may seem like a good start for philosophy, environmental pragmatists see the expansion and devotion to our engagement in this debate as avoiding a more simple and more pressing problem: how might we keep nature alive and sustained?

The environment is suffering from harsh, arid climate, and the earth is getting too warm. Some theorists say that we must address solutions for improving nature because it is instrumentally valuable for keeping humans alive and sustaining humanity overall. Others say that nature must be saved because the natural world in itself has an intrinsic value worth saving. This new wave of theory moves away from identifying the differences between the two theories. Instead, these new philosophers look at these two theories as a diverse set of one environmental theory that shows us a way of addressing our environmental crisis from various theoretical perspectives.

Orienting Environmental Philosophy Towards Practical Ends

Let us first address why we need practical environmental ends in the first place. Eric Katz and Andrew Light, two new and important environmental philosophers, explain to us that the

⁴ The Last Man argument asks if there is a need for respect at all and, if so, why.

natural world is suffering and is at a major crisis. Without a sufficient natural world, there is no need for theory and no need for an ethic. While environmental philosophy has been helpful in expanding the discourse regarding the relationship between human and non-human entities, there seems to be no practical change on the conditions of the environment. They claim that “The intramural debates of environmental philosophers, although interesting, provocative and complex, seem to have no real impact on the deliberations of environmental scientists, activists and policy-makers” (Light and Katz, 1). The ultimate goal for them ends up in environmental policy that becomes justified and created with the help of environmental theory. In their opinions, environmental theory that is directed to generate new policies is good environmental policy because it helps strengthen policies and address practical solutions. If what they say is true, then it means that environmental philosophy must change. This change is the primary goal of environmental pragmatism.

What is Environmental Pragmatism?

Environmental pragmatism is not one field of similar philosophical themes. In fact, they can all be quite different. It is a set of approaches that have several key features. This section examines environmental pragmatism by looking at some of its most important aspects. These aspects are 1) the reliance on human experience, 2) the use of pluralist theories, 3) the importance of sustainable science and adaptability, 3) the four types of environmental pragmatist examinations, and finally, 4) the use of policy. In this section, I shall explain these aspects in more detail.

Environmental pragmatism may be understood as a theory concerned with the world as we experience it. This philosophical tradition is less concerned with philosophically grounded truths. In other words, we should look towards philosophy to understand how we experience the world; but in cases when it fails to serve as useful, it has no purpose for how we live. Even in cases when our philosophical understanding of the world is inconsistent or fallacious, we should not reject theories for their fallaciousness. Environmental Pragmatism depends on our own experience in order to consider our relationship to nature. Ben A. Minteer borrows language from E. Anderson to explain that both ‘experience and inquiry’ are ongoing, so this evidence is always capable of being overturned in light of successive experience’ (Minteer, 529). All that we know about climate change and global warming come from human experience and inquiry. To ignore our own experience would lead to a less practical impact, or would at least slow it down. That is why theory is most important when the theory is able to help us address and understand the world as we understand it through experience and inquiry.

The second important feature of an environmental pragmatism is a theory of pluralism. Theory is useful for pragmatists because it influences the way in which environmental policies are chosen and enacted. Pragmatists are not looking for the right theory or the right philosophy. They also don’t believe that finding the right philosophy is the necessary goal of environmental philosophy. The primary goal of environmental philosophy is to contribute philosophical information that could provide a better environmental policy. Pluralism is the pragmatist’s way of rejecting a foundational theory that theorists may recognize as the most righteous ethic or philosophy. Pluralism is a much better position because the many theories introduce important and crucial environmental concerns that come out only as a result of recognizing a certain theory.

For example, while most environmental theories support environmental justice, the consideration for environmental racism comes from a more human-centered ethic, and less of a deep ecological position. Pluralism invites all of these concerns to be addressed regardless of the theories' principles.

Another reason pluralism is beneficial, from a pragmatist view, is because the environment is ever-changing. With so many needs to be met, many theorists and scientists look toward "an embrace of interventions into ecological systems to design solutions for an increasingly human-dominated planet" (Minteer, 528). With a need for technology and a bit of artificial management of the environment, environmental theory examines and monitors the boundaries that technology and ecological interventions must respect when considering these options. Pragmatic environmental theories are dynamic enough to both address the needs of the environment and to use theory needed to consider the limits of interference with nature. They are also anti-foundationalist which prevents limiting theories of our experience or inquiry to a fundamental grounding or principle. Since these theories do not rely on a principle, theories may still provide use even if it's grounding is rejected. Thus pragmatism allows theories to move past fundamental grounding of theories.

There are four possible motives for writing as an environmental pragmatist. One motive is to explore the way American pragmatism is connected to environmental philosophy. These writings defend the compatibility between pragmatism and environmentalism and the necessity of an environmental ethic that is pragmatic in the sense of the philosophical tradition. The second reason they may write is to bring environmental theory closer together toward practical studies like environmental science, environmental policy, and politics. Since the theory has seemed so

disconnected from practical theories, some pragmatists look to close to the gap that exists between both environmental theory and environmental practice. The third reason pragmatists write on environmental theory is to identify the similarities between diverging environmental groups and ideologies. These people look at groups of various missions and beliefs regarding environmental theory and seek to identify the common ground that most environmental groups have with each other. And finally, some pragmatists simply write on environmental philosophy in in order to show how multiple environmental ethics can come together and develop an ethic made up of many ethical theories. Thus, most environmental pragmatists are motivated to write 1) to explore the way American pragmatism is connected to environmental philosophy, 2) to bring environmental theory closer toward practical studies, 3) to close the gap they claims exists between theory and practice, and finally, 4) to show how multiple environmental theories can make up many ethical theories.

The most important feature for environmental pragmatism is that its theory is written to improve policy. Environmental pragmatism asks a question of whether “the traditions, history and skills of philosophical thought have any relevance to the development of environmental policy” (Light and Katz, 1). While pragmatists believe that having theory is very useful for informing policies, philosophy has simply been misdirected beyond a practical issue. Ironically, however, the most important issue right now is the practical issue. Further, they recommend that “the failure of this unified vision to effect practical policy should give us further pause” (3).

What I find most interesting and quite bold is that pragmatists seem to consider policy either the only—or at least, the most important—practical method of changing the environment. For pragmatists to say that environmental theory should aim toward more practical goals implies that

non-pragmatic environmental theory fails to provide practical solutions. For now, this is where I will end in addressing pragmatism's position about theory's relationship to policy. The only goal here is to offer a brief description of pragmatism's policy-driven feature. However, later in the chapter, I wish to problematize the puzzling claim that environmental philosophies other than pragmatism do not, in any way, offer practical solutions.

So far, I have discussed the four distinct features that define pragmatism. The next section takes a look at the relationship between the theory and practice of environmental pragmatism. I will be using Bryan Norton's essay "Integration or Reduction" in order to describe how one pragmatist may describe the relationship between environmentally pragmatic theory and its practice.

Environmental Pragmatism from Theory to Practice

So how does environmental theory affect environmental issues, and how does it contribute, if at all, to practical solutions? Bryan Norton discusses three ways in which environmental theory can be useful in practice. First, environmental theory can justify policies by offering a set of values that defend such policies. Secondly, environmental theory helps to determine which types of policies are best for the environment based on the interests and values of the ecological community. Third, environmental theory can appropriately articulate the environmental movement (Integration, 129). I will start my evaluation of environmental theory's relationship to practice by first introducing this distinction between both types of philosophies. Then I will summarize how Norton believes 'practical' theory may be related to practical solutions.

Norton claims that there are two types of environmental philosophy. One type is an applied environmental philosophy. Applied philosophy uses general philosophical principles to solve issues on public policy. These principles are developed from hypothetical thought experiments. Once they are developed from these experiments, they are used as solution-based frameworks that are used to address real-world issues. Practical philosophy is the other type of philosophy. Unlike applied philosophy, practical philosophy looks toward the actual problems that arise in the world in order to come up with the best theory. It is pragmatic in the sense that it is used as a tool to help address public policy issues. Norton is clearly in favor of a more practical philosophy and less interested in applied philosophy for the sake of environmental philosophy. One of the reasons for his devotion to a practical philosophy over an applied philosophy is that “It is often possible to generalize from problems toward general moral principles, but practical philosophers avoid adopting theoretical principles on purely *a priori* grounds” (Applied, 126). In other words, practical philosophy focuses more on the specific circumstance that needs to be addressed whereas applied philosophy tries to place an abstract theory onto a policy issue with less focus on the specific circumstance (126). The distinction between the two theories shows us that when Norton discusses the theory as it relates to practice, he is often referring to practical philosophy because its theory is most specific toward the policy that it is intended to support.

In order to defend a policy’s position and its recommendations for what action should be taken, there needs to be a rational defense for the policy itself. Oftentimes, however, there may be many different dimensions to one problem. For instance, in some cases there arise not only environmental issues but also economic challenges. Environmental philosophy may help address

rational justifications for why citizens should value some pressing environmental concerns over certain economic needs. Oftentimes, policy-makers never explain the moral responsibility that undergirds the goal of some environmental policy. Environmental ethics is a theory assists in addressing what that moral responsibility is, so that the policy can stand as a rational decision. Norton mentions that “ A good environmental policy will be one that has positive implications for values associated with the various scales on which humans are in fact concerned...”

(Integration, 131). However, there must be a rational defense for why certain values are good for environmentalism and are rational moral environmental values. Environmental theory provides the pluralist framework of various value theories to defend the backing of different types of environmental policies.

Environmental pragmatic theory is also helpful in determining which policies, assuming there are options, are the best ones to support. Given a policy, theorists are able to decide what the criteria should be for making a good environmental policy. Since pragmatists are concerned with integrating a more pluralistic environmental theory, people like Norton look to bring such theories together and seek to develop a multi-scalar theory. He proposes that policy be chosen with the help of the Pareto criterion. The Pareto criterion has the following policy standards: “the policies that should be chosen are those that, from the viewpoint of the representative individual in each community, the policy will have positive(or at least non-negative) impacts on goals formulated by the person on the individual level, on the community level, and on the global level” (132). This criterion appeals to the environmental pragmatist because it calls for a unification of theory for the sake of good policy that seeks to benefit everyone. Pragmatism invites almost every type of environmentalist to engage in promoting environmental activism and

policy change.⁵ However, there are some necessary sacrifices that some theories may face. If we take the controversial theories of preservation versus conservation, for instance, preservationists might argue that conserving resources is not enough; rather than managing how much we use from nature, we should make our greatest efforts to not use them at neglectful levels, so that nature may be restored. On a theoretical level, the two approaches may seem incompatible because they are supporting two very different environmental management approaches. But considering the pressing need to address better management on a practical level, conservationists and preservationists may sacrifice foundational principles in order to create and enact practical solutions and not stall environmental change. Thus it is through the common goal of both theorists to offer practical solutions to the environment that may provide an opening to a more unified environmental movement and a more pluralistic environmental theory.

Norton clarifies that theory, for him, is important for creating practical solutions to promote environmental change. For instance, the third way in which its theory relates to practice is that environmental theory is an opportunity for the environmental movement to have some type of clear mission or environmentally unifying goal. Norton states this in a clearer way when he says that "... theory-building that addresses real-world problems, in the spirit of John Dewey and Aldo Leopold– the forest philosopher– is absolutely essential if the environmental movement is to develop a vision for the future" (Integration, 108). He offers two important claims in his message here. First, he claims that environmental theory is necessary for the future of an environmental movement. Environmental theory provides a space for the movement to address its goals and to justify its moral values. Further, he tells us that theory is not an

⁵ Some exceptions that are not compatible with pragmatism are Bookchin's call for a revolution and potentially radical environmental philosophies like that of Dave Foreman, who calls for ecosabotage.

inessential aid to environmentalism.⁶ Environmental theory plays important roles within promoting environmental change. Theorists are also needed for informational reference. For example, “Philosophers have a lot to offer policy-makers in specific, complex situations in which they face many moral directives...” (109). The need for an environmental theory suggests that it is necessary for policy changes. Thus, environmental theory relates to practice by assisting policy-making and addressing clear goals for the environmental movement.

Two Cases Addressing the Relationship between Theory and Policy

The previous section discussed the general relationships between environmental theory and practical environmental problems. In this section, we will look at two environmental issues that use an environmentally pragmatic theory in order to provide a solution to the issue. The first issue will be a policy issue regarding water. The second issue addresses how definitions are heavily politicized in the way they are described due to competing interests and values. I will attempt to show how a pragmatic theory succeeds in providing resolutions, or at least a way to escape moral gridlock, for these practical issues. For each issue, I will summarize the major concern that required pragmatic theory. Then, I will analyze how the theory contributed to finding a practical solution.

The first case involves water policy contentions over Edwards Aquifers in Texas. It is a crescent located in Uvalde. It connects with springs that help sustain and nourish the Guadalupe, Comal and Colorado rivers. The west is a land consisting of many farmers who rely on the water for helping with farming and irrigation. The land these farmers have are not in great conditions,

⁶ One of the concerns that may be raised from Norton is that all environmental theories have the goal of addressing real-world problems. Thus, we may need more of an explanation for what he means by this. For more context, see Bryan Norton, “Integration or Reduction: Two Approaches to Environmental Values”. *Environmental Pragmatism*.

are dry and heavily reliant on the water. Further, farmers, citizens, and living organisms (some of which are endangered species) in the ecosystem all rely on this aquifer for water in the west. Farmers even have a practice of fishing and using the water through cultural practices and gathering food. In the middle of the expansive aquifer, though, lies San Antonio City. This is a metropolis, where water is much easier to access and utilize. The city of San Antonio wishes to use its property rights to a section of the aquifer for economic prosperity. However, farmers do not support using the water for economic gains because it affects the amount of water use and access to water in their own community. This affects their irrigation practices, the perpetuation of dry farmland, and their fishing practices. Environmentalists are also very involved within the contention. They believe that water needs to be managed and should not be considered as an economic profit. Many environmentalists propose rights for water as a preventative measure from exploitation of natural resources. Further, they have also defended non-human entities in the water. Clearly, all three groups have the intent to address water policy from different moral positions.

How do these three approaches resolve issues with the use of the aquifer? Some theorists propose that we might examine the theories deeply in order to determine which theory is best. Pragmatists would reject this action because it does not lead to any consensus and will likely remain as discourse and not as a practical solution. Rather, through a pluralist perspective, the pragmatic question to solve the dilemma is: "Different issues are in contention over water use. How can the contention be resolved in a manner that is consistent with our political ideals" (Thompson, 2000)? There can be a resolution in many ways. One option is that all three theories can look for areas of compatibility and then come up with a multi-layered theory that recognizes

all concerns. For example, utilitarian and egalitarian theory can work together to consider places where both of the theories collide. One caveat, however, is that theories may not always simply converge or become compatible. Thompson argues that "... the more likely consequence of the three-way analysis is that each group of disputants will go away with a firm rationale for why their view is morally right, and a dispute that might have been settled legally, economically, or politically becomes a moral one" (Thompson, 204). Thompson's concerns come from a pragmatic worry that by focusing solely on resolving moral theories, theorists will fail to provide some practical solutions. Thus, he proposes that political means of achieving some agreement is another reasonable solution to solving the issue. For instance, a legally settled contract that respects environmentalists' interests, economic interests, and farmers' interests would suffice as a solution for reaching an agreement amongst the three moral theories. Although this will require major sacrifices, this option escapes the issue of fundamental disagreements due to three conflicting moral positions.

Thompson's example of water policy presents the potential for using political mechanisms as a way to resolve moral theories; and further, that these political mechanisms may need to be used in order to achieve practical solutions. Now, it may be true that this circumstance does not explicitly offer an actual policy choice in the end; but the important part of this solution for pragmatists is that this situation is capable of avoiding environmental theories' moral gridlock by trying to satisfy the different types of ethical positions in this situation. However, in the some sense, perhaps pragmatists should face scrutiny for not offering any explicit policy.

Our next example looks at the relationship between environmental theory and practical solutions by looking at the politics of definitions. Edward Schiappa explains how the definition

of wetlands has been motivated by various politicians' values and interests. Generally, wetlands might be described, by Shiappa, as lands that are saturated in water that create anaerobic conditions. These lands are useful because "wetlands interact with other ecological systems, such as groundwater tables and rivers, in a way that enhances the overall environment and, in particular, water quality" (Shiappa, 211). Unfortunately, they vary so much upon size and content that it becomes too difficult in defining key elements of wetlands. As a result, the many definitions of wetlands become a method for politicians to disguise themselves as environmentalists. Shiappa writes on George Bush as a good example of a politician repurposing the definition of wetlands to disguise himself as a supporter of environmentalism. In his election of 1989, Bush promised to prevent a net loss of wetlands. Proponents, particularly developers, were against this idea and put pressures on him to revoke his commitment. As a result, Bush had to either continue with his commitment of no net loss to wetlands and support environmentalists, or disregard his promise as a means of sustaining support from developers and opponent of no net loss. When Bush was given such a dilemma, he chose another way out. In 1991, Bush changed the criteria for identifying a wetland from needing to fulfill one of several criteria needing to all of the criteria. As a result, wetlands that did not fit all of the criteria were destroyed because they were no longer considered wetlands. Yet, Bush was technically still able to say that he fulfilled his promise of not having any net loss of wetlands. In the end, Bush believed that he had fulfilled his promises and managed to cause more environmental harm by achieving these goals.

Schiappa claims that Bush's strategy was an example of redefining terms as a means of competing interests (Shiappa, 18). Bush faced a practical issue of either supporting

environmental interests by regulating the misuse of wetlands or he could support the economic interests of development by either disregarding the commitment or by simply redefining the term 'wetland'; either way, Bush was not choosing a position that supported both parties. The definition given to wetlands in 1991 intended to support the interest of developers. Interestingly, however, when scientists and policy-makers think of definitions, Schiappa claims, they think of it as object. However, this case is a prime example for why definitions within policy is not objective, and further, why it contains certain interests and values.

If what Schiappa says is true, he develops a further argument that follows: "definition should be treated less as a traditional philosophical or scientific question of 'is' and more as an ethical and political question of 'ought' (209). In other words, the essentialist and foundational theories must change because they incorporate biased definitions that can potentially harm the interests of human and non-human entities. Instead of creating definitions that may harm the world, Schiappa believes "new definitions are a matter of deciding what sort of world we wish to 'make'(209). His proposal to rethink how we define things is one that philosophically suggests that theory ought to be useful for the world. When it is not useful, then we ought to abandon it. One concern of this example is that Schiappa does not give a clear ending to what exactly the right policy may be. If pragmatism is unable to express an explicit solution, perhaps pragmatism is not as helpful as it claims to be. At best, however, pragmatic theory, as he uses it, is a useful tool to identify places where policy relies on certain pretenses like that of objectivity within definitions. Through theoretical examinations of these pretenses, we may begin to sort out ways in which we can assure that policies are addressed in a way that is useful for helping the world.

In the end, it seems that the practical solutions are not necessarily as clear, but it does not necessarily mean that pragmatism does not help justify policies in the future.

Objections Against Environmental Pragmatism

While pragmatists believe that theory should be incorporated into policy, some theorists have addressed objections towards an environmental pragmatism. Some of the major objections come from the sentiment of deep ecologists who believe that pragmatism undermines the importance of an environmental ethic by suggesting that any environmental theory is good enough. This section looks at one objection to identify potential weaknesses within the environmental pragmatist's framework. I will attempt to respond to this objection.

Environmental pragmatism's pluralist approach is much more serious for deep ecologists than it is for the environmental pragmatists. While pragmatists argue that the most pressing concern for environmental theory is to guide environmental policy, some deep ecologists believe that a human-centered approach toward the environment is too weak for sufficient environmental change because a human-centered approach remains oppressive in nature.⁷ Environmental pragmatists claim that regardless of whether the theory is rooted in oppression, it still has potential to be address practical environmental issues just as much as deep ecologists can address practical issues through policy. Therefore, they suggest that deep ecologists move beyond their problems with human-centered approaches. Yet, deep ecologists are directly in opposition with the approach of human-domination over nature. In order for such deep ecologists to support a pluralist and pragmatic framework, deep ecologists would require moving past human

⁷ Human-centered philosophical approaches stem from the ideology that the environment ought be respected because it has instrumental value for humans. Deep ecologists find this ideology indicative of humans dominating nature and justifying the exploitation of natural resources.

domination for a faster push for good policy (Sarewitz, 229). But what net good does fast pushes for policy do if the roots of exploitation persists through a human-centered approach towards nature? Deep ecologists point out that if people believe that nature is primarily of instrumental value to humanity, nature should always be left to compete with humanity's many other values—like economic prosperity and innovation (Convergence, 154). Pragmatism may, therefore, risk nature's chance of living by not protecting the environment from difficult circumstances where economic opportunities and a forest are odds against each other. Even at its best, and when both theories care for the environment, it seems that this might mean that humanity may be justified to value economic decisions over environmentally conscious decisions.

One environmentally pragmatic response towards this criticism is that values of humans like economic prosperity and an environmental consciousness are not mutually exclusive. Practically, an environmental pragmatist might suggest something like the American Green New Deal, policy which addresses both economic prosperity and environmental benefits as well. These values are not mutually exclusive, and the potential for both values are clearest when deep ecologists shift their philosophical concerns from asking “Does nature have something more than instrumental value?” to “What types of policy would satisfy values of economic prosperity and innovation as well as an environmental consciousness?” The deep ecologists' objection comes from a philosophical tradition that does not consider the mutual inclusivity of both types of values. Therefore, the ideology that we must prioritize one value over the other is the type of argument that leads deep ecologists to make this assumption.

Let's assume that we find the pragmatist's argument reasonably justified. There still seems to exist unaddressed practical issues that are never solved in the real world. For instance,

America's Green New Deal Policy looks to address economic opportunity and also environmental change; it is a practical solution that seems fitting for an environmental pragmatist. So, exactly why does it not pass quickly and efficiently, and why is there such backlash? We may say it is the politics of environmental solutions. But, when we say that environmental solutions are political, that is to say that environmental solutions may need to compete against incompatible values. I suspect that pragmatists are quick to assume that political mechanisms will lead to some practical benefits. But it may just be that interests between groups may never come together to create policies. If that was the case, the only other way one could promote policies is by trying to change the interests of the people.

The Green New Deal Policy, many citizens believe, does not guarantee economic security and prosperity. A lifestyle of unsustainable energy use at least allows its workers to remain in conditions where they have some form of employment. Thus, environmental policies must make constant efforts to express the urge and demand for such a change in economy. This example, I suspect, allows us to inspect the benefits of aiming for policies that will entail many types of values. Unfortunately, as seen from policy examples using pragmatism, even if pragmatists are right to say that we must come together and find values that are multi-faceted, it is not always easy for everyone to come together and make environmental decisions. Even pragmatic solutions are neither easy nor simple ways to institute practical solutions because environmental policy underlies so many different types of values and interests. For these circumstances, pragmatists show that we should at least try to make decisions for reasons that are not moral positions in order to expedite the process. Environmental pragmatism, may be an effective and a great mechanism for exploring various ways of reach environmental policies. But

in the case that interests may never come together, rather than encourage multiple views, perhaps that would require us to bring people closer by addressing their interests and changing them.

In some ways, however, there is good reason to take issue with environmental pragmatists. For it is possible that policy alone will not lead to the practical solutions that pragmatists so desperately demand. As shown in the examples, pragmatism did not end in a set policy. Instead, these articles expressed a way for environmental theory to direct itself to a policy question. If we take pragmatism at its best, I believe that pragmatism is helpful because it allows us to explore as many options to address environmental problems so that we can achieve better policies.

Further Concerns

I'd like to remind my reader that this project is meant to identify how environmental theory relates to practical goals for environmental change. We started off by examining environmental pragmatism, and exploring both its criticisms of past environmental theory and a pragmatic proposal for how environmental theory ought to contribute to practical solutions. Pragmatism has so far been able to show that environmental theory that looks beyond moral decision-making can help lead policy toward solutions. Further, environmental theory is also helpful for justifying why policies are made. One concern is that pragmatism has still yet to give an example of how environmental theory has led to any explicit policy.⁸ The question, therefore becomes "how do we urge citizens and policy makers to push for a more environmentally conscious world?" Hence, it should be clear that while I do not think we should dismiss

⁸ Bryan Norton who writes *Toward a Unity Among Environmentalists* has faced scrutiny for proposing a pragmatist position toward environmental theory, and yet, not offering a concrete policy.

environmental pragmatists, I do believe that pragmatists have yet to fully answer the question regarding what it takes to make practical change. The next chapter is intended to focus on theories that call for change may provide more environmentally practical lifestyle. Further, I aim to show how theories that engage in moral debates can be useful for guiding policies as well.

Another qualm I have with the environmental pragmatist's position is that their most basic criticism of previous philosophy is that its philosophy has been impractical. That is to say, the examination of moral theories and our feelings toward nature has no practical benefits for the environment. The issue I have with this critique is that it dismisses the potentially practical benefits of environmental theory much too quickly. Environmental philosophy is not simply for the pleasure of philosophers and theorists. It seems that philosophy prior to pragmatism would have also likely had some important practical use for the world. In the next chapter, I will test whether environmental theory provides any other practical solutions that guide policies by looking at other environmental concerns beyond policy. I suspect that it does; and following chapter two, we shall explore the ways in which environmental policy can utilize non-pragmatic theories in practical ways that can address our ecological crisis.

What Needs to Change?

Introduction

Pragmatists have so far clarified that theory relates to practice when we direct it towards questions on policy. But just because pragmatists are right to identify this relationship does not mean there aren't any more ways in which theory serves practice. Since the point of this project is to identify how theory may address our ecological crisis, we might also take a look into this relationship by asking: what needs to change in order to improve our ecological crisis? Here, I look at two different theories. Each theory demands a different type of improvement for nature. By looking at these two changes, it becomes clear that pragmatists' demand for policy is not the only change we need, and therefore, it is also not the only relationship between theory and practice. I argue that pragmatists miss out on addressing other ways we can help solve our ecological crisis.

First, I look at philosopher Aldo Leopold's theory of change by experiencing naturing. I will identify what, for him, seems to be the major causes of a misled environmental ethic. Then, I move into Christopher Stone's defense of granting nature legal rights. I will explain how Stone's solution for improving the environment belies more than just a pragmatic solution, but also, a deeply theoretic notion to address how we may think about nature. Afterward, I show how these two theories propose that not only does the environment require us to find solutions for improving nature, but a long-term change requires us to fix ourselves.

Before I begin, readers may wish to know exactly what I mean when I say "theory" and "practice"? This is not something I wish to focus on too much, for the sake of my project.

However, we might recognize theory as either a set of principles or ideologies that influence the way people set their beliefs, values, and thoughts. The practice of theory means the way theory becomes translated in reality. Some activities and ways of living do not require as much theory, just practice. But when it comes to environmental ethics and philosophy, the root of the issues concerning the environment is especially important for many theorists.

Change by Experience

Aldo Leopold claims that we have reached an environmental crisis because we have lost our touch and relationship with nature. We must refrain from segregating people and nature and explore our relationship between the land, plants, other humans and other animals. Each is a functional part of a whole community, so we ought to see all of its entities as valuable as the other. Thus, we must experience nature in a new way. Within this section of the chapter I'll explain how Leopold believes that improving the environment requires a new relationship with nature by examining his book *Sand County Almanac*, and by including some arguments made in his essays.

Conservationists, he thinks, lack the capacity to improve our ecological crisis due to humanity's faith in an Abrahamic concept of land. This concept of land suggests that land is a commodity owned by people. It comes from an examination of ecology's historical and theological examination of nature.⁹ For Leopold, there is no simple set of policy changes that solve environmental issues. Policy changes alone cannot solve the issue concerning our ecological crisis. The solution to our environmental concerns is "a shift in the way things are"

⁹ This interpretation comes out more thoroughly in the introduction; see Lynn White's *Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis*

(Leopold, 3). That is, we must shift away from what Leopold calls the Abrahamic concept of land. This section will introduce ways in which Leopold sees nature as being problematized over time.

History serves as a useful way to learn how ecological issues have come to exist. Leopold argues that the biblical Abraham believed he knew what land was useful for. “It was to drip milk and honey into Abraham’s mouth” (Land Ethic, 173). Abraham’s “knowledge” perpetuates a belief that man had some control and rightful property over nature because its entire role was to serve humans. Leopold condemns this ideology for being false and dangerously human-centered in its approach. Yet, this approach to land as being owned continues throughout history. The land was seen to have only instrumental value for the purpose of people, and so the exploitation of nature began. The issue is that nature turned out to be more important and related to us than we perceived it to be. After all, if both humans and plants are a part of the food chain, then it must be true that “when a change occurs in one part of the circuit, many other parts must adjust themselves to it” (182). This shift in thinking is the type of change Leopold believes can help address our own ecological crisis.

We live in a society where the individual is recognized as a legitimate and separate being. For Leopold, this diminishes and falsifies the true interdependence that exists between people, the earth, plants, and animals. The truth, according to him, is that nature and man are codependent on one another and require a shared reliance on each other. The description of a person being one and the land being another is incorrect; and further, for us to separate humans or individuals from the land ignores the necessary dependence that needs to occur between the

land and ourselves. In Leopold's "Thinking Like a Mountain", Leopold uses a mountain's ecology to explain how our concept of land requires a more social identity rather than anti-social.

At the beginning of Leopold's "Thinking Like a Mountain," a wolf is shot and slowly dies on a mountain in front of Leopold. As a couple of wolf pups howl around the dead wolf, his young naivety leads to the conclusion that less wolves on the mountain is good because it provides more deer for hunters (Thinking, 114). However, his change of heart occurs when he looks at the wolf up close and into his dead eyes. He retells the moment: "after seeing the green fire die[in the wolf's eyes], I sensed that neither the wolf nor the mountain agreed with such a view" (115). This is not a poetic metaphor or symbol. The wolf and the mountain, unlike the young Leopold, were aware of their interdependence with each other. He recalls many mountains without wolves having "south-facing slopes wrinkle with a maze of new deer trails. I have seen every edible bush and seedling browsed, first to anaemic desuetude, and then to death" (116). With less wolves to control the deer population, many deer would eat the plant and producer organisms at the bottom of the food chain. Leopold says that with a deer influx, "in the end, starved bones of the hoped-for deer herd, dead of its own too-much, bleach with the bones of the dead sage, or molder under the high-lined jumps" (116). The wolf is one of the most primary consumers to eat deer; and in doing so, they control the deer population by a natural feeding. The food chain, from wolf-eats-deer to deer-eats-shrubs, maintains a natural and important ecological balance of the land and its organisms' population. And for Leopold, to think of a naturally manageable population for the community is what it means to "Think Like a Mountain".

The story of the wolf on the mountain is a call for more enlightened engagement with our ecology. When thinking of an ecological community, animals, plants, people and the land itself

all engage in a biological relationship. This relationship, as elucidated in his stories, helps maintain a biological equilibrium among the natural and biological beings and events. And, as it seems in his description, a human-centered approach to nature is devastating towards the ecology of a land, and thus to our own well-being, because it undermines the necessary functions that all members of a community play. Thus, a shift from an individual to a more social and ecological identity. And if we accept a more interdependent relationship with the land, then we must have a serious conversation about the ethical commitments that we ought to have to maintain a natural balance and order among the land.

Only until we arrive at the appendix of *Sand County Almanac* do we learn about the need for a “Land Ethic”. In order to rid our oppressive system of man in possession of nature, the land ethic “changes the role of Homo Sapiens from conqueror of the the land-community to plain member and citizen of it” (Land, 173). To call for an ethic for the land is to call for a more moral and interdependent relationship that exists between things. Through the relationship of living in a forest with bats, for instance, the land ethic calls for an appreciation and an ethical care for both bats and the trees because all of these entities are so interconnected. Since these entities are interconnected, we must also admit that for one entity to be uncared for would lead to serious harms against the others. If damaging a reservoir, for instance, disrupts the access of water for citizens of the land, we must see that the citizens are not the only concern. We also must care about the reservoir itself because it is within the relationship that keeps many of the organisms living—including ourselves. Thus, the land ethic demands love, not only for some members of the ecological community, but for the entire community, including the land that affirms the life given to entities through its resources. In his own words: “It is inconceivable to me that an

ethical relation to land can't exist without love, respect, and admiration for land, and a high regard for its value. By value, I of course mean something far broader than mere economic value; I mean value in the philosophical sense" (187).

We must love nature; but love cannot happen without an experience or relationship. An ethic for the land creates a set of standards that provide some sense of care and interest in the land. We are only ethical toward "things we can see, feel, understand, love, or otherwise have faith in" (180). Simplified, Leopold suggests we work on rebuilding a caring relationship with nature. We must experience nature more in order to be ethical towards it. No longer do we experience nature only as a property that serves humans with its resources. The land is also a relationship between people, animals, plants, and resources that aim to preserved a healthy community. Our love for the land reflects our valuing of and appreciation for the land's participation and engagement within the community. Thus, a land—and all of the things in the land's community— which we show love toward is the beginning to a land ethic and a healthy ecology.

Climate change is one of the clearest examples of a practical environmental concern. But just because it is practical does not mean that there is no deeper philosophical or ethical concern that translates well into our practical issues. Eban Goodstein, an economist and director of Bard College's Center for Environmental Policy writes on the idea of a concern for the environment beyond a simple policy approach. Goodstein argues in his book *Fighting For Love in the Century of Extinction* that in order to improve the state of the climate we must do two things. First, we must be willing to stabilize the climate by a way of using the executive and legislative branch to enforce some new policies and create a new set of guidelines for what we can and cannot do with

nature. The second thing that must be done is for us to embrace the love for nature that we ought to have. Goodstein is a proud supporter of Leopold's Land Ethic and agrees with Leopold that we must come to connect with nature more by getting to know and appreciate it more.

Goodstein mentions that having a moral recognition of our role in relation to the natural may not be necessary, but it is certainly a good quality. A clean climate revolution, for him, might not require a strict practice and faith in the land ethic. He explains:

And so beyond focus, this is a moment in history that demands a new politics. For some of us, this will be a politics grounded primarily in a concern for our children and grandchildren and for the people across the globe who will suffer from a global heating. For others, it will be motivated as well by the clear recognition that the diversity of life on Earth is at stake (Goodstein, 141).

Knowledge is very important here. If a group of individuals fight against climate change for their children and future generations, but fail to engage in an effort to save the entire ecosystem, this may lead to an ineffective climate fight. The young Leopold showed this to us on a smaller scale in "Thinking Like a Mountain" when he only considered what was best for humans and dismissed other living members, which he soon realized would lead to destruction for almost all of the ecological community in the long run. Allow me to add that I am not disagreeing with what Goodstein says. In fact, climate change fighters that wish to save their children are perfectly legitimate and passionate to develop a clean energy revolution. But, when they say that they fight climate change for the safety of their children and future generations, they must necessarily also be fighting for the safety and protection of all members of the Land, including the plant, animals, and our natural resources. For those who disagree and may only believe in a

need for policy, I will offer a serious engagement and explanation for why our attitudes towards nature is a necessary component for changing the climate.

Change by Granting Rights to Nature

Christopher Stone's "Should Trees Have Legal Standing" proposes environmental change by granting rights to nature. Stone sees nature's lack of rights as a reason for why and how nature came to be in a crisis (Stone, 56). Giving rights to nature in two ways. Firstly, allowing nature to operate under the function of legality would give nature a more reasonable and righteous review. Secondly, by granting rights to nature we reshape the way in which we both view nature and consider environmental issues through both psychic and socio-psychic aspects. In this section I will explain how Stone sees psychic and socio-psychic aspects as useful ways to both redress and reshape the way people treat nature.

At first glance, such a request may seem strange and even impossible. But many entities have not been granted legal personhood or legal standing. Children and black Americans, for instance, were not recognized as human when the constitution was instituted; as a result, infanticide occurred and slavery tainted the world (498). Further, corporations, governments, institutions, and real estate have already been given a legal standing to defend themselves in the courts, so nonhuman legal standing is not as surprising as it may seem. Stone is not proposing that every single right that is granted to people should be given to nature. However, it will soon be clear how both the legal operations and the psychic and socio-psychic aspects of the environment can provide a necessary good for the environment.

Stone believes that nature deserves to be a holder of rights. At minimum, nature deserves some sort of review by public authorities when its treatment is not adequate or justified. But more than that, Stone's claim that they be holders of rights is meant to satisfy three key criteria. First, human guardians should be given the opportunity to take legal action on behalf of nature if it wishes.¹⁰ Secondly, the courts must consider the harm done against nature as reasonable context and circumstances when deciding any type of reparations. And third, any sort of reparation or support for nature should benefit it (460). While in some cases, there may be some legal support that helps nature, it still matters if this support comes only out of the interest of the landowner or the natural resource itself. This is an issue for Stone because if nature itself does not have the chance to have rights, then, by logic, it is only by harming humans through destroying nature that environmental actions can be taken as legal offenses. Stone addresses why this is such a shallow argument, and quite frankly an insufficient way of protecting nature in the long run (461). The 'rightlessness' which nature faces on a daily basis comes from the fact that they are not and were never holders of legal rights in the first place. Comparisons of groups that face a similar exclusion from legal rights and protection experienced similar circumstances. Nature must have legal protections for its own sake because it has been further destroyed by being alienated from society as some objectified thing.

There are four positive impacts that come from nature becoming a holder of rights in a legal sense. These impacts are 1) having standing in the court as a right in itself, 2) having nature's injuries recognized, 3) nature benefitting from the right and finally 4) nature having a body of written rights. To have standing in the court is fundamental because it allows and

¹⁰ Questions concerning whether nature can actually without any legal action will be reconciled late when I explain the role of a guardians of nature. They would likely speak on behalf of the circumstance that would require legal action.

requires society to take a consideration of nature seriously. Since nature is unable to speak in a language clear for us to understand, there shall be an opportunity for guardians to take the role of representing nature (464). Having a guardian and allowing rivers, for instance, to have a standing in court would prevent the court from dismissing environmental destruction based on the concern that nature is incapable of expressing its harm. Guardians represent individuals that are unable to consciously represent themselves in court. By having this right and having a legitimacy in court, judges can no longer dismiss nature or undermine its interests and welfare simply because it is “incapable of expressing itself through language” (Stone, 468).

The second reason why nature should have the status of being a holder of rights is because having this status would allow the courts to finally recognize nature’s injuries. The issue so far has been that when cases are decided as legitimate or sufficient to act on, the case rests on harm against a human rather than against nature itself. So, the economic sufferings get transferred to people and not necessarily to nature itself. Additionally, environmental instability oftentimes cause harm to the ecological community that depends on it rather than some sort of economic cost. By recognizing the rights of nature, humans would not be the primary concern in the end. Nature would be given the chance to be recognized as the directly harmed entity when our actions affect it negatively.

Thirdly, nature would ultimately benefit overall, which is a right in of itself. This is helpful for two important reasons. First, nature as a beneficiary of the courts would be guaranteed a legal representative to protect them during legal cases. And more than that, as a beneficiary, nature would be able to reap economic benefits for any harms committed against it. Funds would then accumulate and be attributed directly to the land that was violated (450). The

natural world is able to receive these economic benefits because their holder-of-rights status grants them personhood under law.

The final impact of having rights is having a more substantive body of rights. If rights were given to trees, rivers and marshlands, over time standards would be clearer regarding what exactly it means to treat nature with respect, or what it means to have a moral consideration for nature and its ecological impacts. All four of these implications express distinct important reasons why the rightlessness of nature needs to change.

Nature also deserve rights for psychic and socio-psychic reasons. There is a shift in the way we think about nature when it receives rights. This is why beyond the legal-operational arguments that Stone mentions concerning the need of rights for nature, one major reason nature needs rights is because “Part of the reason is that ‘right’... in the ordinary language, and the forces of these meanings, inevitably infused without thought, becomes part of the context against which the ‘legal language’ of our contemporary ‘legal rules’ is interpreted” (450). In short, I take Stone to say that a shift in language surrounding nature is inevitably a shift in the way we think of nature. This seems to be true for Stone at least in legal cases where nature must claim injury from a person or a private corporation. Judges, lawyers, and the jury may begin to reconsider how nature should be treated in a legal fashion. However, the call for a shift in the way we see nature in a legal sense transcends law and comes back toward a shift in moral obligations and potential duties of citizens in relationship to nature itself.

We are called by Stone to recognize and respect our reservoirs and forests rather than otherize its existence. Stone shows what he means by othering nature as he points out some of the opposition’s hesitation to give out rights to nature. One of the most concerning questions for

Stone comes from either members in opposition to giving nature rights or ones simply curious. They ask “What is in it for us?” (491). This question is odd, at least for non human-centered theorists, and yet insightful for citizens to consider how we view nature currently. This question is utterly human-centric and ignores anyone and everyone outside of the category. Moreover, to ask what the benefit is for members who already can be holders of rights is somewhat absurd. He gives the example that when Blacks demand rights and fair treatment, the response “What is in it for us?” is neither a good nor important question. For Blacks ought to be granted fair treatment according to the law because it is the right thing to do and not because it in any way benefits whites. This example is analogous to questioning whether nature should have rights due to the concern that humans may not benefit from this implementation.

Despite the claim that Stone defends nature irrespective of human benefit, he does believe that humans benefit from nature by being granted rights. Stone points out the harms humans face from global warming and climate change when he says that

The earth’s very atmosphere is threatened with frightening possibilities: absorption of sunlight, upon which the entire life cycle depends, may be diminished; the oceans may warm, melting the polar ice caps, and destroying out great coastal cities; the portion of the atmosphere that shields us from dangerous radiation may be destroyed (450).

These are the issues that concern most citizens on a global scale today. Perhaps that is because this is the current way that citizens also are most often in touch with their environment. Thus, if we are to seek a positive environmental experience and relationship with nature, we must move away from the practices and traditions of othering and alienating the relationship between nature and humans.

By demanding legal rights for nature, we are calling for a new perception of nature. Like Leopold, Stone condemns the traditional interpretation of land as property that is purely economically-based and independent of any ethical, moral or civil duties. This new perception of nature does not require a change in the tools that allow us to operate in the 21st century. The point of this perception is to encourage a love for nature. He claims that “A radical new conception of man’s relationship to the rest of nature would not only be a step towards solving the material planetary problems; there are strong reasons for such a changed consciousness from the point of making us far better humans” (495). The problem Stone describes has been one of human mismanagement and an estrangement from the value and love of nature. His call to love nature is, therefore, not only meant to improve the welfare of nature but also to improve the welfare of humanity itself. We must begin to consider how we ought to live differently and how our own lifestyles can be changed by reevaluation of our own values.

Both Stone and Leopold suggest that some type of policy or institution of laws and rules for nature is important. Leopold, for instance, handles environmental management and addresses environmental policy in his later life. In this sense, they seem to align with pragmatists to the extent that they believe theory should guide policies. Leopold and Stone, however, differ from pragmatists by showing and suggesting that the attitude people have towards nature may also guide policy making and policy decisions. Leopold comes up with the land ethic, which is meant to address the interdependence that exists between nature and ourselves. Stone argues that granting nature legal right shifts the way people may think and feel about violating nature. By shifting our mindsets to this new view of nature, we may also use this to further policy, which would lead to practical benefits and more environmentally conscious decisions. These theories

show that perhaps the way people think about nature, and the way we imagine our relationship with nature, also guides policies by developing a framework for people to make appropriate environmental decisions. Moreover, it also shows us that theories that show concern for other questions are not interested in policy. In fact, it shows how good policy strategies can form when we allow theories to engage in more philosophical concerns that may not seem directly interested in policies.

Environmental pragmatism clearly suggests that the way in which we debate about the environment itself stifles practical solutions. However, both Leopold and Stone suggest otherwise when they show that the way we think about our relationship with nature has practical effects and helps us make good policy decisions. Environmental pragmatists, by defending pluralism, miss out on the practical importance of addressing attitudes within theory because, as a pluralist, they propose that all sincere environmental theories are enough for developing practical solutions.

When asking environmental theorists what it may take to make environmental changes, they give us a variety of approaches. Many would address change by guiding policies. But some theorists suggest that there is more to guiding policy than justifying the policies actions and directing all theories to policy itself. Leopold and Stone have shown us that the way we think about nature impacts both policy by starting with the attitudes of people. Pragmatic theorists like Norton, however, defend a pluralist position, claiming that addressing the ideologies of sincere environmentalists does not actually lead to practical solutions. As a result, pragmatism contradicts theorists like Leopold and Stone. It may be the attitude that people have towards nature that is important for policy decision-making. But we have yet discuss how theories that

address our attitudes can actually guide policy in a useful way. For the next section, we shall discuss what pragmatism misses out when they fail to address the address our attitudes toward nature.

What is Missing from Environmental Pragmatism?

Introduction

Environmental theory for environmental pragmatists has so far been geared toward practical solutions. Practical solutions, for them, turn out to be various theories directly looking to find answers to different policies. However, as expressed in chapter two, many non-pragmatists interested in promoting environmental theory do so with an interest to inspire people by making individuals more self-aware and thoughtful about their own relationships to the environment. Non-pragmatists promote policy by addressing changes in our attitudes. Such mindsets are more than contemplative thought experiments or theoretical debates without a practical purpose. After all, changes in the way we think or feel about the natural world will affect the way we interact with it! Therefore, I posit that there are other types of practical solutions than policy recommendations that are necessary to resolve environmental concerns and address policy.

Since environmental pragmatists' have focused on addressing the role of environmental theory by directing theory to specific policy concerns, I claim that this has led to addressing only one aspect needed for environmental change. Using theories like those I have discussed already in chapter two, I have argued that some environmental theory provides practical solutions by reflecting the way in which people may experience nature or feel towards it. I move further into this argument to suggest that certain theories that do not fit into the environmental pragmatists' framework also serve the practical use of addressing attitudes for policy. Some theories also, I discuss later, encourage individuals to strive for a more ideal ecological society. With that said,

pragmatism's quest for pluralism and search for practical solutions are certainly ideas, I believe, that we ought to adopt; but if we only use environmental theory insofar as it can contribute directly to environmental policy, we miss out on other ways in which we must address the environmental crisis—that is, by confronting how we, as humans, interact with the natural world and by developing utopian frameworks to strive for vital environmental change. In all, I argue that there are three key ways in which environmental theory relates to practical solutions: 1) it promotes policy by inspiring people to change the way they interact with nature, 2) it justifies the need for certain policies by offering a pluralist approach to address ecological issues, and finally, 3) it models utopian frameworks to promote good and necessary environmental change.

In Calicott's essay *Environmental Philosophy is Environmental Activism: The Most Radical and Effective Kind*, he, unlike his pragmatic counterparts, believes in utilizing theory's search for a truer and more accurate environmental ethic as a "force of social change" (Calicott, 19). He points out that much of environmental theory has been criticized for having no real impact in the world. One environmental philosopher, Kenneth Sawyer, states that "In no case does the reasoning of an ethical theorist actually cause a norm to be socially instituted or cause a norm once in force to lose that status" (20). In other words, the environmental theory's engagement with the world, no matter how much it tries, does not end in any change in beliefs. Calicott responds to Sawyer's claim by suggesting that environmental theory's role is meant to carefully "articulate and effect such a radical change in outlook" (21). He also responds to Bryan Norton's *Towards a Unity Among Environmentalists* by blaming Norton for inaccurately depicting the theoretical debates within environmental philosophy as causing strife between environmental philosophers. Deep ecologists express a disinterest in compromising for

pragmatists because they find anthropocentric philosophies insufficient for adequately addressing nature and its value (21). Even a pragmatic theory is problematic for them because pragmatism's neutral position implies that an anthropocentric ethics is enough to care for and respect nature. Calicott's own dissatisfaction with Norton's pragmatism shows that even though pragmatists may believe their position to be pluralist and unifying, deep ecologists like Calicott find certain environmental ethical positions towards nature as uncompromising.

Whether one may be in favor of Calicott, Norton, or Sawyer, there is a striking disagreement that exists between pragmatists and deep ecologists. But if the point for pragmatists was to avoid theoretical disagreements between various theories, it seems that the pragmatist is unsuccessful since a new debate between the deep ecologist and the pragmatist opens. In some way, pragmatists may very well argue that there is no hostility on their end, but the disagreement between deep ecologists and environmentalists still are important and just as much a practical problem for pragmatists if they still are to engage in theoretical debate. Therefore, it appears that pragmatism may not be so different from the philosophical tradition which it so desperately aims to reject.

I propose that there is a way to avoid this type of contention. Rather than investigating exactly whether past environmental theories were practical enough, perhaps the real question is whether a gap between environmental theory and its practice existed in the first place. I argue that it does not, because there have been plenty of practical theories existing prior to pragmatism. Obviously, even with an environmentally-oriented mindset, there also needs to be some engagement and push for policy which could lead to real issues being addressed to promote the environment. I suspect that the major issue is that pragmatism has dismissed environmental

theory that has not directly asked questions about specific policies because, as they claim, they concern themselves with debates on theory. But in doing so, pragmatists have failed to consider the value in asking alternative questions concerning our moral relationship with nature.

What is Practical and Not Practical?

When environmental pragmatism claims that environmental policy is the clearest practical solution to ensure environmental change, they are not wrong for saying so. But, it does miss out on the nuanced requirements for making such improvements. For instance, policy very often needs support from scientists, politicians, and supportive citizens. In order to have people in support of improving nature and the climate, we must instill a sense of interest, passion, and encouragement to implement changes that lead to practical environmental benefits. This shows that not only is policy needed on its own, but it is in need of supportive and passionate people who care and wish to make such change. Unfortunately, and quite strangely, there seems to be no clear literature that confronts the many components needed to make environmental change happen. In fact, this type of theoretical engagement, pragmatists seem to suggest, is recognized as less practical in solution simply because it does not directly influence policy or some change for the environment. The criticism of non-pragmatic environmental theory is clear in Light and Katz's statement when they write that "it is difficult to see what practical effect the field of environmental ethics had on the formation of environmental policy" (Introduction, 1). But what makes something practical in the first place?

Pragmatists are very clear in stating that their concern and goal is to address the gap that exists between environmental theory and the practice of it as a whole. In doing so, pragmatists

propose using theory to benefit policy. They are right to say that policy is most certainly necessary for addressing environmental concerns. However, the issue coming from pragmatists is the dismissal of past philosophical engagement due to its concern to find the right theory. Here is where I believe pragmatists make a mistake. If past philosophy—that is, past philosophical questions that concern humans’ moral relationships with nature— is not practical, then what is it? At first glance pragmatists take this to suggest that its philosophy has no great practical value. But of course past philosophers like Rolston found practical value to exploring such theories, and so should we! For the way in which we see ourselves in relation to nature directly affects how we treat nature! I would argue that that is practical enough and to satisfy pragmatists promotes good policy.

Addressing Inequality and Oppression

Pragmatism’s willingness to utilize political or economic justifications as opposed to moral reasons for defending policies may turn out to be an issue. While multiple ways of reaching an agreement might be beneficial for expediting the process of creating policies, sacrificing moral justifications for other ones may fail to address issues about oppressions if it does not explicitly confront it. Deep ecologists may argue that nature is oppressed and treated unfairly due to exploitation of corporations and market incentives. While pragmatists may come up with a quicker way of reaching policies by considering non-moral arguments, I suspect that it also falls short of addressing the needs for theorists like deep ecologists to depend on.

Pragmatic change does not necessarily address certain moral attitudes and the treatment of both human and non-human entities. For example, consider this analogy: we are living during

the 1800s and slavery is prominent in the southern states of America. Many citizens in the north have discussed wanting to get rid of slavery. However, there have been two arguments made against slavery in the south. One argument is that slavery is immoral and does not treat black folks with human dignity and respect. Northerners wish to address the heinous actions of southern slave-owners for being unethical and treating people like property. The second argument is an economic one. Northerners also argue that slavery allows for an unfair economic advantage of the south. In order to address the unequal economic circumstances between the North and South, individuals in the north demand that the government abolish slavery. In the end, the economic argument is reviewed by government officials and slavery is abolished.

The issue of slavery, one might notice, is still not completely addressed so long as there is no moral or ethical engagement. In the end, both arguments abolish slavery, which is important. However, without condemning the actions and the mindsets of the individuals who participated in the acts of slavery, the inherently unethical attitudes never change.

Thus, it seems that individuals would likely not change their mindsets toward slaves, but instead, they will, at most, abide by certain policies that would protect black people from becoming enslaved. Hence, it seems reasonable, in this situation, not only to search for the quickest way to resolve slavery, but slavery also must be recognized as a moral concern for individuals.

I use this analogy to show that mindsets do matter because mindsets affect the way in which humans and non-human entities interact with one another. So, as far as pragmatism should be concerned, we must remember to address moral issues that cannot be resolved through pragmatic means.

This analogy works in the same way for environmentalism. Addressing environmental issues through pragmatic ways does not confront the moral or ethical issues relating to environmental problems. Environmental theory is not only about finding ways for natural resources to be used less often. Environmental theory is written to address systemic ideologies relating to otherness and the domination of nature. While pragmatic solutions are useful because they can address environmental problems through fast and agreeable solutions, the issue underlying much of the environmental movement requires addressing the way in which people ethically treat nature, which comes from a mindset of power and domination over nature. Hence, pragmatists, no matter how much policy they create, they must directly address moral matters like oppression, exploitation, and domination of nature by creating policy that reflects the issue as a moral because moral issues may only be confronted by addressing the moral mindsets of people. If this moral justification fails to serve as a potential policy justification, it may very well reflect the attitudes of humans that do not care for nature as it should. More importantly, we should notice that this lesson on mindset and inequality does not come out of questioning policy. It comes out of questioning our own ethics and morals.

Addressing the Mindsets of Others

One of the major missing links within the tradition of environmental pragmatism is that it does not recognize the practical importance of having an environmentally moral mindset toward nature. In chapter two, I discussed the importance of the land ethic and Stone's proposal to give nature rights in order to show how these theorists actually promote a mindset necessary for environmental change. And although the change does not directly happen by looking at policy, it

is practical. There are two ways in which one's mindset leads to practical solutions that pragmatists ought to consider in order to fully address the environmental crisis.

The first practical benefit that comes from an environmental mindset is that it leads to more people to engage in environmental activism. While environmental pragmatists mention that previous types of environmental philosophy "seem to have no real impact on the deliberations of environmental scientists, activists, and policy makers," they imply that only these actors are a part of influencing policy (Light & Katz, 1). However, citizens themselves also need to show interest and support for what happens. In order for policy to work effectively and the way it is intended to work, community members ought to also have an interest in the policy. Many environmentalists have spent time identifying how to effectively implement environmental policy by designing a way to control the interests of stakeholders. One report addressed by the CEO of the World Environment Center claims that in order for successful stakeholder engagement to occur, there needs to be an interest coming from the public community and also a commitment by the public to engage policy changes (Yosier, 18). Both criteria for good stakeholder engagement requires people whom environmental pragmatists do not primarily aim to reach. However, it is clear that the mindsets of citizens and common people are also especially important for good environmental policy.

In order to promote environmental engagement and support for living things in one's own community, it matters that people feel like they are part of this community and are aware of its importance. The community can be realized by addressing theories that challenge one's own idea of their relationship between themselves and the natural world. A more environmentally interested mindset would thus lead to more successful environmental policies. The pragmatists'

claim that we should be targeting scientists and policy makers is not wrong. But, in their pursuit for better environmental policy, we should not narrow the stakeholders to only these professionals. The best solution for a more efficient policy strategy would be to encourage more environmentally conscious citizens to support environmental policy and also push for professionals on various environmental mechanisms to promote good policy that should function well in reality.

The other practical benefit coming from environment theory that addresses the environmental mindset of individuals is that it inspires individuals. Environmental philosophy and ethics, including environmental pragmatists, recognize human interaction with nature as a gateway into reimagining the relationship that exists between people and the natural world.¹¹ Others like Paul Taylor in *Respect for Nature*, persuade their audiences through an analytical tradition of showing that we must respect nature because we all have moral duties of doing so. A pluralist position offers plenty of ways to find an importance in the environmental movement so that activism is able to persist by addressing individual's values and by recognizing why they are fighting for such changes. When Eban Goodstein writes in his book *Fighting for Love in the Century of Extinction*, he does not narrow himself down to a purely economic framework of the environment. He reminds his audience of the ethics and also of the reason why there is such a need for environmental change. He ends his book addressing some solutions that need to be executed in order to prevent climate change or global warming from destroying the world; and further, he suggests that inspiration serves a fundamental role in environmental change by providing motivation needed to push for change. He writes the following:

¹¹ See "Conscious Animals and the Value of Experience" by Lori Gruen *Environmental Pragmatism* by Andrew Light and Eric Katz.

Those of us fortunate enough to have fallen in love with the natural world have only a short window of time to change the course of history. And that passion— for pikas and polar bears, for salmon and seals, for chimpanzees and cheetahs and flowers and corals and fish and frogs and trees and tortoises and bees and birds—must carry us into a hard, serious, and sustained fight to gain the real political power to preserve creation (Goodstein, 141).

Goodstein's remarks accompany the many pragmatic solutions he offers to stop climate change like promoting strategies and policies that can stop global heating and maintaining standing forests. He asks of his audience to channel such passion and love for the natural world into actions that support an environmental shift into a new way of caring for the environment. When such passion is embodied and engaged to promote policies actions that can save the world, the mindset needed to take action is what I consider inspirational. Environmental theories like Leopold's "Land Ethic" encourage people to address their own relationship and experience with nature and to consider how their relationship reflects their lives and other living things in their ecological community. This inspiration shows practical benefits for two reasons.

The first reason theory's inspirational value is a practical good is because it encourages more individuals to develop moral and ethical attitudes towards how they interact with nature. This inspiration can then be turned into activism, which may be engaging in more political discourse or promoting some sort of environmental policies. It can also be turned into a form of activism by changing the way in which someone uses natural resources or interacts with nature at all. The second reason is that inspiration is also a practical benefit for the environmental movement because it inculcates an attitude that allows activists to build the longevity to fight for

environmentalism in the longer-term. Since environmental change can be gradual and also long, inspiration allows activists to embody the passion that they need in order to keep fighting for nature. Thus, environmental theory that encourages inspiration, and an environmental attitude overall, is a theory that provides opportunities for a greater activist engagement and more policy interests.

Utopian Ideals for Better Policy

What about a revolution? Environmental pragmatists work through a democratic system where policy is a way in which political change can occur. However, some theorists like Murray Bookchin have argued that any type of environmental policy within the existing system of capitalism and patriarchy will never be enough to redress environmental issues because the institutions that perpetuate environmental destruction are not removed through policy alone (Bookchin, 3). Policy's way of addressing these institutions is by regulating them and enforcing rules; but as we will see, the mere nature of having systems like markets driven by greed lead to underlying social issues that keep environmental problems alive. Institutions must be dismantled and our morals ought be reshaped. Such idealism, I propose, may not be practical in nature, but these utopian ideals have practical value because it can serve as a useful tool for helping environmentalists conceptualize what it would take to reach a more ideal world. First, I will address Bookchin's essay, "What is Social Ecology" in order to show how it is different from pragmatism and also how it works to guide both policies and decision-making on an individual level. Later, I will identify two ways in which his call for environmental change might serve as an important practical tool.

Unlike environmental pragmatism, “What is Social Ecology?” claims that only through careful reasoning and examining the social, cultural, and political aspects with nature can we truly solve it. The idea of a ‘social ecology’ for Bookchin is meant to point out that the environmental crisis that we live in exists because of deeply-rooted social relationships surrounding an irrational domination and exploitation of nature (Bookchin, 1). These social issues— economic, ethnic, cultural and gender conflicts— are a part of the environmental problem. He claims that “to separate ecological problems from social problems...would grossly misconstrue the sources of the growing environmental crisis” (1). Since understanding the social issues is such an important part of fixing the problem for Bookchin, we must look at the foundation of our own ecological relationships with nature.

While our current relationship with nature is dominant and hierarchical, our natural and more ethical relationship with nature should be mutual by helping to support one another. Bookchin defends the premise that our current human-nature relationship is hierarchical and nature-dominated by examining the historical realities of societies. Hierarchies, while they may have started without being exploitative, developed out of needs which came from an increase in elders, increased population, and other forms of biological and social traits (4). By working between social and biological traits, hierarchies worked with the two in order to develop statuses. Later on, social structures like labor structures and institutions led to a combination of a hierarchical structure alongside a set of social class struggles.

Hierarchies and domination come from the interactions between people and the distinctions made. An example is gender roles. Bookchin describes gender as having biological features, but also having social features that intersect biological feature by forming ideologies

and efforts to form patriarchal institutions (7). As new social and hierarchical institutions begin to expand, new ideas begin to form. Markets, he shows, enforce the social hierarchical nature of class structure, ethnicity and gender roles. As trade and more interaction with people and goods become more accessible, humans develop a market culture interested in growth and expansion (8). These ideas become important in contributing to the destruction of nature because these efforts are intentional strategies to exclude moral agendas in order to achieve the most from markets (8). Thus, it is through these many social constructions and institutional developments that such an ecological crisis has formed; and not until redressing social relationships with nature and other humans do we finally begin to address solutions that may replace our social structures.

The solution for Bookchin is to overthrow dominating social structures like class and remove institutions like markets. The goal, for him, is to reshape the way in which humans live and interact with nature. Bookchin writes the following:

Unless we realize that the present market society, structured around the brutally competitive imperative of “grow or die,” is a thoroughly impersonal, self-operating mechanism... we will tend to focus on the symptoms of a grim social pathology rather than on the pathology itself, and our efforts will be directed toward limited goals whose attainment is more cosmetic than curative (Bookchin, 1).

Bookchin demands that we address dismantling the reckless system of markets rather than finding solutions to mitigate the harms that come from the system itself. His recommendations are good because they show that policy is not the ultimate solution. In order to improve our ecological crisis, we will have to do much more than just create policy. We can no longer have

an approach to promote growth that would come at the cost of exploiting other living things. Policy only works as far as addressing how exploitation can be limited, but it does not address the will or desire of individuals and corporations to engage in the market as only economically-driven decision-makers.

Thus, there is a two-fold change that needs to happen. We must revisit our morals and develop a society where it's not just policies but also a mindset within the citizens that respects nature enough to protect it from becoming exploited. In order to change the nature of hierarchy and domination, social groups must be “[reconstructed] along ecological lines” (10). In other words, growth and human flourishing should not come at the cost of nature’s existence under a Bookchin ecology. Thus, it becomes clear for Bookchin that such a solution is one that transcends policy goals, and proposes a radical change.

There are two ways we may interpret Bookchin’s theory. Firstly, the theoretical structure of Bookchin is a call for extreme practical change. Markets must be overthrown. Social groups must be refigured in order to promote more of an ecological relationship. Despite the fact that such change has yet to happen in the world, this does not undermine its practical potential. It works to address what changes need to happen and also to look closely at the historical social formations that led to ecological problems in the first place.

In one sense, Bookchin may not be a utopian call but simply a very difficult call for a revolution. Of course, to have a Bookchin revolution, we would need to replace our current mindset of growth and domination of nature with one that aligns with ecological interests; but it also requires, as he puts it:

...such a goal remains mere rhetoric unless a movement gives it logistical and social tangibility. How are we to organize such a movement? Logistically, “free nature” is unattainable without the decentralization of cities into confederally united communities sensitively tailored to the natural areas in which they are located. Ecotechnologies, and of solar, wind, methane, and other renewable sources of energy; organic forms of agriculture; and the design of humanly scaled, versatile industrial installations to meet the regional needs of confederated municipalities – all must be brought into the service of an ecologically sound world based on an ethics of complementarity (11).

Bookchin’s call for a revolution, despite its difficulty, has very practical impacts and calls for real change to be achieved. After all, the ecological crisis he recognizes is a real one, which requires real solutions. and expectations. Consequently, by examining this environmental theory, one may be able to identify what type of restructuring and what moral change needs to happen in the world in order to fix our ecological crisis.

The second way of interpreting Bookchin’s theory is to consider Bookchin’s “What is Social Ecology?” a utopian framework. Let us take Bookchin at his worst. That is to say, let us imagine that this theory will never fully show up in reality. If such a radical change is too radical to be feasible, then should this theory be ignored? Absolutely not! The question for environmentalists, though, becomes whether the theory actually has any practical influence on the practical world at all. Since a utopian framework is not possible, it may not necessarily be practical in itself. That is, we will never reach the utopia, so it will never exist in the world as we experience. However, this, I believe, does not prohibit the practical value that can come out of a utopia.

Murray Bookchin's utopia provides a theoretical guide that can teach us how to live in accordance to a much more ideal society. Just because the society that we desire may never exist, Bookchin still sets up strategies and requirements for individuals to consider acting in accordance to this utopian ideal. In his "What is Social Ecology?" essay, Bookchin's audience is anyone. That is to say, all citizens who are a part of the state are called to take action. Despite the call for a political revolution, he suggests that the revolution begins by addressing our own attitudes. It is the realization of the structural issues and institutional problems that would begin to allow us to address these issues (Bookchin, 1). With an attitude that recognizes an ecological ethic—that is, an attitude that looks to reject common practices in the world when we are dominating nature—we may begin to start making decisions outside of the structures of institutions like markets. This is not to say, however, that only a mindset of a changed ethic is necessary. Bookchin's call for a new social ecology is a guide to consider how we make political and individual decisions. For example, citizens can model this utopia in practice by transitioning into using ecotechnologies, pushing for stronger environmental policies, and voting for more environmentally conscious politicians to represent us. Despite utopias being unreachable, individuals in any society may use utopian theories in practice by making individual decisions that align with this theory. Citizens may work toward restructuring markets through policy and considering new ways of constructing a social structure. Therefore, utopian theory, while it may not practically exist, it does not undermine their practical influence on society.

Utopias in philosophy have been recognized as having practical use since as long as Plato. When Socrates discusses his idea of two cities, one ideal and one not, he argues that this

theory of a utopian city serves to help guide the state into a better city overall. When Socrates defends the practical use of an ideal city he says:

Until philosophers are kings, or the kings and princes of this world have the spirit and power of philosophy, and political greatness and wisdom meet in one, and those commoner natures who pursue either to the exclusion of the other are compelled to stand aside, cities will never have rest from their evils,—nor the human race, as I believe,—and then only will this our State have a possibility of life and behold the light of day. Such was the thought, my dear Glaucon, which I would fain have uttered if it had not seemed too extravagant; for to be convinced that in no other State can there be happiness private or public is indeed a hard thing (Republic).

The ideal city for Socrates, while not practical, has the practical use of showing people how to live in a way that can reflect a utopian society. As a result, the real city, which is imperfect, is led toward a more perfect city because people make decisions that reflect the ‘spirit’ of an ideal city. This is analogous to how I understand the practical influence of having an environmental utopian theory. It shall guide us toward an ecological society where people may be guided to act according to a more ecological society. Thus, Bookchin’s theory, even as a utopia guides society to act in the spirit of a revolutionary and ecologically enlightened society.

Bookchin’s ideal world may be described as too much of a utopia for environmentalists. While markets might very well stay, Bookchin’s theory at least allows individuals and even large corporations engaging in markets to consider incorporating ecological values that may take into account ethics rather than a solely a competition-based system. This utopian theory reminds pragmatists that despite the daily efforts to make gradual-change, our efforts to improve our

ecological community is only solved if as we act in accordance to the ecological principles that guide us in utopian theory. Consequently, even if Bookchin's theory does not turn the world into a utopian society, it certainly sets high ecological goals that can be practically reached with the help of both theory to help justify policy and a theory to inspire activists.

So far, we have discussed two relationships between theory and practice that are not considered under pragmatism. One is theory that inspires people to push for policy by addressing their individual attitudes towards the environment. The second theory is a utopian theory that guides people into a more ecologically sound society by offering them an ecological guide to act in accordance to a society that embraces the interdependence between humans and nature. I have also defended both theories' impact on developing real-world solution. With two new relationships between theory and practice, I posit that these relationships in various theories are helpful, including pragmatism, for providing realistic policy-based solutions.

Conclusion

The relationship between theories and their practice are all dependent on their philosophical traditions. In chapter one, we saw that environmental pragmatists make a persuasive case, saying that environmental theory should let go of theoretical discussion if it offers no practical solution for the environment in the real world. Although pragmatism aimed to unify varying theories by refocusing theories on policy itself, its pluralist approach has led to much disagreement between pragmatists and deep ecologists. In the end, a new theoretical question emerged: how do theories that are not driven by policy improve ecological issues in the real world?

When we ask such a question, the answer to how theory improves the practical issues of the environment, we must look at both the theory's goals and its impact. In Chapter two, I introduced two ways in which theorists demand change. Through the lens of experiencing nature, and demanding rights for nature, I explore how nature inspires people to change the way they live, and how the changes in viewpoint lead to addressing which policies should be pursued. In Chapter three, we explore two types of theories: mindset theories and utopian theories. These two theories, it turns out, not only aim to ask such theoretical, but it positively supports pragmatic theory by addressing the mindsets of people and helping people live more ecologically utopian lifestyle with policies that have the spirit of such a utopia. In the end, these theories are practical contributions towards environmental policy and decision-making overall.

There are three major ways in which environmental theory leads to different practical solutions. The first is through policy. Pragmatists support environmental ethics and theory insofar as it contributes to help understand policy a bit better and identify philosophical

justifications for such policy. Secondly, certain theories that do not look toward policy as their goal still practically influence the world by practically inspiring others to live their own lives with a morally aware environmental mindset. Further, theories of mindsets are able to encourage long-term activism to address policies by reminding individuals why they ought to continue to fight for nature. Thirdly, environmental theory that is utopian helps identify ideal goals worth striving for. Even if policy is the way in which change may happen, utopian frameworks encourage individuals to act in accordance to a more ecological lifestyle by changing both their attitudes and encouraging more activism and actions to improve environmental policy. Utopian frameworks, therefore, can serve as a model for how individuals can live their lives as if they were living in a cleaner and more protected natural world. Thus, theories that justify policy, theories that inspire and change attitudes toward nature, and utopian theories, show relationships to the real world impacts.

With all three theories in mind, we may begin to also recognize the naturally collaborative ways in which theories relate to other theories for the benefit of an overall practical benefit. Policy itself uses some theories to justify its own reasoning for making certain environmental changes or regulations to how we work with and use nature but policy also very difficult and complicated to accomplish. That is why policy-guiding environmental theory would also benefit from mindset environmental theories because it is the impassioned attitudes that can push for such policies overall. Further, policy-guiding theories will be most useful for environmental scientist stakeholders in policy, but it is mindset theories that gain such support from citizen stakeholders to implement and sustain policies. Further, environmental policy is not some simple solution to solving the environment. Hence, utopian theories remind the

environmental movement and other theorists of the larger picture. The environment is in a crisis and we must reconsider the way in which we live in it, even beyond policy.

If a collaboration between different types of theories serves for better practical solutions in reality, environmental pragmatists ought to rethink the issues of theory and practice. While pragmatists saw a gap between theory and practice, I have shown how such a gap is misleading and, I believe, incorrect. The idea of a gap while, misleading, does however point out that environmental theory may not necessarily create theory; but, it can offer helpful assistance to create good environmental policy. Further, with the help of all of these theories, they can work to accomplish practical solutions and address environmental problems.

All environmental theories are interested in answering real-world issues. Pragmatism's calling to move beyond theoretical debate, I have shown, directly contradicts the idea that mindsets and the attitudes we have towards nature does matter. The way we understand our relationship with nature, as expressed in Leopold and Stone, not only allows us to rethink our interactions with nature, but they also affect which environmental policies we need in order to address our ecological crisis. Further, we have seen that theories that do not direct its questions to policy, but instead to theoretical questions and discussions about our relationships to nature, have led toward more ways in which environmental change could happen. Consequently, by examining environmental theories that ask questions beyond "which policy is best?" we begin to identify more ways of using environmental theory for practical solutions like addressing mindsets and developing utopian ways to guide people and policies.

Climate change and global warming are putting excruciating pressures on our community. Environmental theory has examined the underlying issues that are responsible for

these problems. Certainly, environment policy is a huge part of changing the environment.

Perhaps environmental pragmatists are correct to say that one of the ultimate goals is developing policy. However, the best strategy for having good policy must look beyond what type of policy needs to be made. It looks at the people that need to demand such policies. And it looks at the ecological utopian guidelines but which these policies shall model. We must, therefore, not only have goals for creating policy, but have goals for achieving a new relationship with the natural world.

Works Cited

- “Applied Philosophy vs. Practical Philosophy: Toward an Environmental Policy Integrated According to Scale.” *Environmental Philosophy and Environmental Activism*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1995, pp. 125–45.
- Bookchin, Murray. “What Is Social Ecology?” *Radical Environmentalism: Philosophy and Tactics*, Wadsworth Pub Co, 1993, pp. 91–107.
- Callicott, J. Baird. “Environmental Philosophy Is Environmental Activism: The Most Radical and Effective Kind.” *Environmental Philosophy and Environmental Activism*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1995, pp. 19–35.
- Callicott, J Baird. “The Convergence Hypothesis Falsified:: Implicit Intrinsic Value, Operational Rights, and De Facto Standing in the Endangered Species Act.” *Nature in Common?*, edited by Ben A. Minteer, Temple University Press, 2009, pp. 142–66. *JSTOR*, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt14bs7w2.12>.
- Goodstein, Eban. *Fighting for Love in the Century of Extinction: How Passion and Politics Can Stop Global Warming*. New England UP, 2007.
- Gruen, Lori. “Conscious Animals and the Value of Experience.” *The Oxford Handbook of Environmental Ethics*, Oxford UP, pp. 91–99.
- Jr, Don Marietta, and Lester Embree, editors. *Environmental Philosophy and Environmental Activism*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1995.
- Leopold, Aldo. *Aldo Leopold: A Sand County Almanac & Other Writings on Conservation and Ecology*. Edited by Curt Meine, Library of America, 2013.
- . “Manitoba.” *Aldo Leopold: A Sand County Almanac & Other Writings on Conservation and Ecology*, Oxford UP, 1949, pp. 139–42.
- . “The Land Ethic.” *Aldo Leopold: A Sand County Almanac & Other Writings on Conservation and Ecology*, Oxford UP, 1949, pp. 171–89.
- . “Thinking Like a Mountain.” *Aldo Leopold: A Sand County Almanac & Other Writings on Conservation and Ecology*, Oxford UP, 1949, pp. 114–17.
- Light, Andrew, and Eric Katz, editors. *Environmental Pragmatism*. USA and Canada, 1996.
- . “Introduction.” *Environmental Pragmatism*, edited by Andrew Light and Eric Katz, Routledge, 1996, pp. 1–18.
- Norton, Bryan G. “Diverging Worldview, Converging Policies.” *Toward Unity among Environmentalists*, 1 edition, Oxford UP, 1994, pp. 187–205.

- Norton, Bryan G. "Integration or Reduction: Two Approaches to Environmental Values." *Environmental Pragmatism*, edited by Andrew Light and Eric Katz, Routledge, 1996, pp. 105–38.
- Norton, Bryan G. *Toward Unity among Environmentalists*. Oxford UP, 1994.
- Plato. *The Republic*. translated by Jowett Benjamin, 1 July 1994, Project Gutenberg, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1497/1497-h/1497-h.htm>.
- Roberts, David. "The Green New Deal, Explained." *Vox*, 21 Dec. 2018, <https://www.vox.com/energy-and-environment/2018/12/21/18144138/green-new-deal-a-lexandria-ocasio-cortez>.
- Routley, Richard. "Is There a Need for a New, Environmental Ethic?" *Proceedings of the XVth World Congress of Philosophy*, p. 4.
- Sarewitz, Daniel. "Who Is Converging with Whom?: An Open Letter to Professor Bryan Norton from a Policy Wonk." *Nature in Common?*, edited by Ben A. Minteer, Temple University Press, 2009, pp. 228–32. *JSTOR*, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt14bs7w2.17>.
- Schiappa, Edward. "Towards a Pragmatic Approach to Definition: Wetlands and the Politics of Meaning." *Environmental Pragmatism*, edited by Andrew Light and Eric Katz, Routledge, 1996, pp. 209–30.
- Stone, Christopher. "Should Trees Have Standing: Toward Legal Rights for Natural Objects." *Southern California Law Review*, Vol. 45, 1972, pp. 450–501.
- Taylor, Paul W. *Respect for Nature: A Theory of Environmental Ethics - 25th Anniversary Edition*. Anniversary edition, Princeton University Press, 2011.
- Thompson, Allen, et al., editors. "Environmental Ethics, Sustainability Science, and the Recovery of Pragmatism." *The Oxford Handbook of Environmental Ethics*, 1 edition, Oxford UP, 2016, pp. 528–39.
- Thompson, Allen, and Stephen M. Gardiner, editors. *The Oxford Handbook of Environmental Ethics*. 1 edition, Oxford UP, 2016.
- Thompson, Paul B. "Pragmatism and Policy: The Case of Water." *Environmental Pragmatism*, edited by Andrew Light and Eric Katz, Routledge, 1996, pp. 187–208.