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ON ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS:

A Series of Essays

by:

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THESIS

ON ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS: A Series of Essays

I began these essays on environmental ethics with this assumption: While humanity's study of ecosystems (spurred by our concern for the health of these systems) will tell us what man may and may not do, it can provide little guidance for what we should do within these limits. Simply reacting to our problems is not choosing a course of action: When someone walks through the woods, the occasional lake or swamp whose location prohibits one's passage offers no guidance through the remaining hills and fields. Certainly it is true that virtue often comes cradled in necessity (in a world of limits, frugality attains virtue), but the virtuous is surely not simply the pursuit of the possible. This type of guidance for society must come from a widely-held ethic. I came to feel that the threads of such an ethic lay in that unique expression of environmental sensitivity that came to voice in the early 1970's.

As I began to look more deeply into environmental ethics, I first found it necessary to explore the nature of experts, and especially their role in our society and its changes. I saw this exploration as desirable because of my coming role as one of these experts. But, more to the point, I found it necessary because of the role the expert has played in shaping our dealings with our environment. I also found this ethical examination required developing further my understanding of those changes currently occurring in society. After all, from where are new ethics or new understandings of old ethics to emerge if not the flux of contemporary society? Through these inquiries and my thoughts on environmentalism and the ethics of man's relation to nature, I began to define a philosophy or way of thought from which these ethics may flow and toward which I felt society was moving.

After outlining this 'giving room' philosophy, I explored some of its possible applications in society. More essays in this series will likely follow, as giving room continues to coalesce over time.

ON EXPERTS AND ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

Ours is a society which places a degree of trust in our experts which transcends the historical role of 'men of technique' and encompasses the role earlier civilizations have reserved solely for religious or spiritual leaders. We deliver unto our scientific 'priests' the function of defining reality. In all questions (take social or environmental ones), the failure of any approach, including those based in science, leads to calls for more study and better experts. It is strongly characteristic of our bureaucratic technology (often termed the technocracy) that all of our eggs are progressively shifted into the basket of scientific technique. If the ghettos are in flames, we look to the social scientists; if our streams cloud and stink, we look to the ecologists and chemical engineers. Both the genesis and the failure of this tendency lie in many factors, too numerous and well-discussed elsewhere to attempt lengthy expostulation here, but some outlines will be necessary for further discussion.

One major drawback in trusting reality to science alone rests squarely with the very nature of scientific knowledge. Science deals in a repeatable, verifiable, objective knowledge. One salient characteristic of this type of knowing is its lack of what has been conventionally known as wisdom. Its offerings are confined, by and large, to productive knowledge, rather than directive knowledge (Adler, 1975). Science can predict, but it gives no feel for potential. Marvelous at showing us what can be done, it flounders in the far more meaningful and necessary questions of what ought to be done. While technical problems usually require technical solutions, our one-sided addiction to science as the provider of both the why and the how is nothing short of maniacal. It leads us to many of our troubles.

Another drawback of scientific reality is its role in fostering a misconception which dominates our society, reinforcing the expert's role in a pervasive way: the illusion that reality

exists in only one way. This viewpoint teaches that all but one interpretation of any situation must, of necessity, be based on faulty perception or understanding. They must flow from a subjective whim or bias.

This viewpoint, while strongly touted by the technocracy and readily believed by the vast majority of "educated" westerners, is routinely seen in its shabby pretentious nature by even the most pedestrian of philosophers. The distinctly human nature of everything that is known (indeed, of the process of knowing itself) places all reality as we can ever conceive it, in an internal position. Thus with reality stuck between our ears, it becomes individual and inseparable from man and therefore as many-faceted as there are human viewpoints. This is not to say that there is not a common phenomenon 'out there' -- only that the reality people experience is solely internal.

This is the realization that is hinted-at by the old question of whether a tree which falls in a forest and is unheard by man makes a sound or not. Of course, when the tree falls, the energy flow we call sound waves occurs, with or without the man. But, the realization the question tries to communicate is the experience, not simply the conscious understanding, that the sound we hear is internal and therefore doesn't exist without man; that the mind is like an eolian wind-harp through which the universe blows and creates the sound which is our reality.

Science's unique approach separates-out the repeatable, predictable portions of this process of reality and, utilizing Newton's foundation-building 'net' of calculus, chops the process up and quantifies it. The limitation in the expert's science lies not in what it considers, but rather in what it deletes. Science considers only those portions of an essentially indivisible reality which are most easily predicted and ignores those portions which are entirely personal. Alan Watts (1966) describes these experiential portions as like, "the box of a violin reverberating with the sound of the strings. They give depth and volume to what would otherwise be shallow and flat."

Interestingly enough, physics, the rock and vantage of science, with the advent of Einstein's relativity and Heisenburg's uncertainty principle, has moved toward a fuller appreciation and understanding of these concepts. In the process it has brought into the changes many of the more advanced thinkers of our day and our recent past. Ruth Anshen (1970) in the World's Perspectives' introduction to Ivan Illich's Deschooling Society, describes the changes in this way:

"...underlying the new ideas, including those of modern physics, is a unifying order, but it is not causality; it is purpose, and not the purpose of the universe and of man, but the purpose in the universe and in man. In other words, we seem to inhabit a world of dynamic process and structure. Therefore we need a calculus of potentiality rather than one of probability, a dialectic of polarity, one in which unity and diversity are redefined as simultaneous and necessary poles of the same essence."

Yet, while many have begun to see our single-visioned attitude as bankrupt, it pervades our society. This is the attitude which pleads, in a disagreement between factions on a purely social issue, for the intervention of cool heads to ferret out the real color of the situation. Objectivity is the byword; emotion is distasteful and should be avoided. If a thing cannot be quantified, it's open to interpretation and not as real as a numberable reality. From this point of view, religion is a joke and the anguish of the ghetto becomes "perceived deprivation" since it can be shown objectively that the standards of living of today's slum dwellers outclass many kings of the past. This is, then, a viewpoint which allows us to stagnate in moral conservatism and surge forward in material progress.

Why then, you might ask, do I pursue an expert's role in society? What possible role can the expert take which can thwart the problems I claim are created by science and experts?

Following Friedmann (1972), the role I see for experts can be encapsulated by the process of mutual learning. Taking a multi-faceted view of reality called perspectivism, suggested by Karl Mannheim's Sociology of knowledge, Friedmann examined the particular characteristics of experts and the non-experts with whom they deal and found some very interesting strengths and weaknesses in each. In Friedmann's words, perspectivism recognizes that, "the intellectual products and behavior of each social group reflect those partial and conflicting perspectives on the world in which social position and self-interest are fused with ways of knowing and acting. A single truth does not exist."

In Friedmann's mutual learning, the viewpoint of both the expert and the non-expert take on value. The expert contributes concepts, theories, analyses, his processed and verifiable knowledge, new perspectives, and systematic research procedures. In turn, the non-expert or client contributes his intimate experiential knowledge of context, his awareness of realistic alternatives, of norms and priorities. Most importantly he contributes the operational details and feasibility judgements so necessary for the expert's offerings to take on meaning. By taking this multi-faceted view of reality, the expert's partial knowledge becomes grounded in experience. In mutual-learning each participant has something to teach and something to learn. The heart of mutual learning is the group where face-to-face relationships allow true, respectful mutual learning to occur through dialogue.

My belief in the concepts of mutual learning has led me to certain opinions on the necessity for and nature of the ethics of being an expert. I feel these ethics are made even more important by the peculiar role of the expert in our society, a role which places him inevitably in the position of a change-agent. Many 'good scientists' would object to me labeling them as change agent, protesting that their true role as scientists is objective and detached. They deal only with the facts. In my view, these uninvolved experts choose involvement of a most insidious kind. They still make numerous a priori pragmatic and moral judgements in the process of taking-on their objective

role; but for these objective thinkers this becomes a sloppy and unaware process, dimly perceived and never questioned.

Sol Alinski (1971) defines a central ethic for change agents: a profound respect for the fundamental dignity of the individual. This ties in well with our founding father's notion of equality as a state where no man could become another man's means to an end. Unfortunately this is just where problems arise: often the expert/change agent, on fire with utopian ideas, utilizes his clients, trying to further the 'ends' he sees for society. Clients, in this sense, are all who rely on the expert's advice. The expert's priestly role as the definer of reality gives him great power. He has the situation in hand and the end goal in sight; the only job he sees is convincing these clients of his ideas. Instead of projecting this elitist contempt, the ethical change agent accepts his client's values and attempts to reach a mutual agreement on means and ends. The ethical change agent loses none of the conviction of his beliefs, he simply learns that other views can be equally valid.

In the area of man/environment relations I see the ethical expert's role as one of clarifying, articulating, extending, and relating to that expression of changing social values most recently reflected in the environmental movement. One of the most fundamental qualities of the environmental movement was its reflection of high technocratic man's first wholesale questioning of his a priori assumptions about his meaning and role in the world. These assumptions have strongly affected man's actions, especially toward the environment.

It is admittedly risky to attempt to examine and define the nature of the far-reaching changes currently loose in society. Nevertheless, as I have argued, experts by their contemporary role are change agents. They must attempt this thorny task, albeit with humility. My approach to the emerging ethics of man/environment relations, and to the greater processes of resocialization underway worldwide is one of respect for their character at any given point, but especially for the thrust or destination of the changes. As an expert and change agent I am part of this process and I affect it, just as it

affects me. This role allows me to communicate with the collective philosophy of society, helping it to respond more directly to physical and social realities, but recognizing that the Jungian 'collective unconscious' is the only true determiner of policy.

There is a naive attitude about ideas and the role of intellectuals in creating them which pictures society as (1) uninvolved in the production of ideas, and (2) powerless to affect new ideas as they are 'injected' into society. An alternative to this approach sees society as the milieu or medium from which ideas emerge, much in the way new musical ideas are seen to progress from previous developments. Creative individuals use society's past ideas as building blocks for their inspirations. In this view, society has free choice and selects among various ideas; the results of this selection are expressions of performance and will by all of society. In my opinion, the latter viewpoint holds the most validity.

I'm impressed with the efficiency of ideas that grow like crystals out of perceived needs, with the marvelous fluidity of adoption of an idea-whose-time-has-come. A danger experts face in their 'frontiering' position in ideas is their tendency to win legislative approval for ideas which are poorly understood and sanctioned by, not only the general public, but also by the bureaucrats charged with their enforcement. Diffusing an idea too fast, even when it's an idea-whose-time-is-coming, results in hasty, less-considered and intuited decisions to adopt. I feel this lower quality adoption lengthens the time for an idea's full adoption because its benefits aren't fully realized.

Perhaps an example will make this point more obvious: consider the heavy advertising exploitation of the 'back to the earth' movement which has steadily grown in volume and tackiness over the last three years. I can hardly agree with a school of thought with attributes the existence of the theme of NATURAL to a Madison Avenue gimmick. I feel, instead, that this theme results from the first emergence of a society-wide attitude that man should at least try to be a part of nature. Of course, other components of the social situation

such as resource scarcity and an embryonic rejection of technology and materialism dictated forms and trends in this movement too. The media blitz we see is the result of this development occurring in a commercial society. As the theme grew in strength during the environmental movement, the media sensors detected shifts and began exploiting the developing market. With this began an effect much like electronic feedback, a magnification. The result is a real gap in the sequential progression from new knowledge, through shifting attitudes, and finally to changes in performance which reflect the adoption of concepts. People can consciously understand and agree with various emerging ethics (lower consumption, love the earth, forsake the artificial), adopt the material trappings of a 'natural' life, but never reach the attitude and performance changes wherein the true satisfactions and benefits of greater environmental sensitivity lie. This is not to say that too-rapid adoption of an idea-whose-time-is-coming will thwart the thrust of the change; it merely causes a lower quality adoption, creating a dissonance of conflicting habits and beliefs within the individual.

In summary, we must begin to realize the limited nature of the expert's approach. We must all, expert or lay person, see the place of scientific knowledge in our future. Not exalted, but never ignored.

ON SOCIAL CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

Let me say at the outset that, recognizing full well the dangers and difficulties inherent in anyone diagnosing contemporary social trends, I am firmly convinced that society is passing through nothing less than an axis, a sea-change if you will. Throughout history, there have been periods of shifting winds and tides, periods when the quality and nature of thought stirs to a new current, times when the air holds a tang of new ideas and opinions substantially unlike the offerings of the past. Years later we give the changes labels, for example, the Romantic Movement or the Scientific Revolution; but somehow from the hindsight of a society altered by them, they seem less unsettling and therefore less meaningful than when they happened. They seem more like a background than a focal point. This may be why each sea-change catches so many of its beneficiaries so unaware, so unready, so complacent that their current human course is all-inclusive.

The history of the western, technological humanity which built the bureaucratic technology of today contains many of the roots of our current day problems. This list of the fundamental flaws it brought us is long and varied, but has been widely summarized as evolving from a series of illusionary dichotomies between different aspects of single things. These dichotomies allow society to fall strongly out of balance with one of the two aspects created by these artificial divisions. A prime example is the peculiar tendency in Judaeo/Christian theology to separate the spiritual from the physical. In a development alien to most of the great religions, this school progressively, over hundreds of years of theology, removed God from the earth and from the material realm entirely. Paradoxically, the religious tradition which had most severely condemned idolatry and the reverence of any physical thing provided western man a stupid, graceless, material world, bereft of meaning, to be used and abused to build the most materialistic society man has ever known. Building on

on this fundamental philosophical approach, the American and Western European societies entered the Scientific Revolution prepared to spawn a society which, having pushed the spiritual entirely out of the 'real' world, finishes by finding the religious experience a bit too immaterial for its consideration.

This spiritual/material split, which exists in the western mind is just one of many of the artificial dichotomies recognized as uniquely ours. To add to the list, there is the fracturing of single phenomena into action and reaction. There is the conscious/subconscious split which tells us, paradoxically, that the root of consciousness is the un-conscious. There is the objective/subjective split, the separation of professional and personal life, and the list goes on and on. The result of these artificial dichotomies is, as I said before, invariably an imbalance toward one aspect. The results of these imbalances accrue to a malaise of spirit which is most commonly termed existential alienation. The effects of alienation have been variously described as a feeling of meaninglessness, of not belonging, as a fear and suspicion of the outside environment, or of separation from everything and everyone. But alienation is much more than its describable aspects: it is, above all, the experience of these things.

The sea-change loose in this society is, then, nothing less than a rebalancing, a healing of these western dichotomies. It signals a shift toward holism and a recognition of synergistic principles which show that any whole, be it man or universe, is greater than simply the sum of its parts.

The rebalancing, since it involves greater emphasis on previously denigrated subjective, experiential, mystical traditions, is often read more as a movement toward these neglected aspects, rather than a rebalancing. This interpretation often appears in criticisms of our eclectic popular culture and its "supermarket of consciousness" (Roszak, 1975) running the gamut from satanism, through eastern religions and psychedelic experimentation to gestalt therapy. Inviting

cynicism, the experimental fringe of social change is populated with both the wheat and the chaff of the cultural harvest underway. Many experiments are misguided and will fail -- many others will not. An awareness of the rebalancing underway allows the change agent to discriminate in his personal choices while respecting the shift toward a more balanced society.

There are objections raised to the shift in emphasis toward decentralization, ethnic and community identity, and increased personal attachment which ask, "Who speaks for the whole city or nation? Aren't we becoming conservative and isolationist?" Nothing could be further from the truth. In these arguments we can see the mistaking of two polar aspects of the same thing for separate approaches. Inner concern and outer concern complement and reinforce the thing of which they are each a part, humanness. Roszak (1975) nicely describes this fusion in his latest book, The Unfinished Animal,

"Suddenly, as we grow more introspectively inquisitive about the deep powers of the personality, our ethical concern becomes more universal than ever before; it strives to embrace the natural beauties and all sentient beings, each in her and his and its native peculiarity. Introspection and universality: center and circumference. Personal awareness burrows deeper into itself; our sense of belonging reaches out further. It all happens at once, the concentration of mind, the expansion of loyalty."

The energy generated by the fusion of divided western man springs forth from countless spaces in our culture as a new vision of human potentiality. This vision of human nature as an open door rather than a closed box infuses psychotherapy, the current religious 'revival', and the academic philosophy of our day. It permeates our popular culture as well. Witness songwriter Jackson Browne's image of humanity as Late for The Sky, singer Grace Slick's pronouncement that, "What we are, and what we shall be/ will not explode until the 29th Century,"

or songwriter John Denver's exhortation to look to, "All that we can be/ And not what we are."

It is important to realize that while this vision of potentiality actually began as the literary Romantics' reaction to the beginning of the Scientific Revolution, when it fed the prideful fire of the Enlightenment, by far its widest and most visible support to date is in our current culture. It is the dawning realization of our age that the same aspects of our selves and our work whose neglect now impoverishes our lives can become our greatest resource. Pollution is truly resources out of place, be the pollution chemical or moral. The Irish philosopher Philip McShane tellingly titles his slim volume on some of these ideas, Wealth of Self, to contrast Adam Smith's formulation of capitalism, Wealth of Nations.

So what replaces alienation, you might ask. The emotion that replaces apathy and alienation, the essence of inhumanity, is, fittingly enough, the essence of humanity: wonder. McShane (1974) argues that man is essentially wonder-full, that his healthful, functioning state is characterized by a response of wonder at the world, the ancient, "illumination of the commonplace." It is precisely this "illumination" that prevades much of Romantic as well as current poetry with its naive innocence and emphasis on the rediscovery of childhood.

Part of the impetus for this reaction of wonder is based in the realization which replaces single-vision: that all that man knows, and can ever know, is miniscule when compared with the possibilities for knowing. Indeed, no competent expert (if he is well-versed in scientific theory) would disagree that our knowledge of anything can be extended infinitely in any direction. Unfortunately our big-science and its culture engenders the attitude that we have most of what is to be known already pegged-down; current efforts are only a matter of clearing up the loose ends. It's quite a shock to see that, given the infinite nature of reality, all we can ever know neatly occupies a single point when placed on a straight line. This is a mathematical concept of great simplicity -- an emotional experience of humbling proportions.

Lynton Caldwell (1971) supports this view in a discussion of the ethics of environmentalism, arguing that, "From his limited human perspective, [man] views the world most wisely and most accurately when he views it with an attitude of wonder," pointing out that, "Emerson understood that an infinitude of nature lay beyond science and human intellect."

One final thread of the sea-change can be described as personalization, a taking of responsibility for one's actions, a personalizing of the morals and opinions voiced politically. The difficulty of this literal treatment of what has often been holier-than-thou moralizing was described in the '30s by Bertold Brecht in his poem, "To Posterity" by the lines, "Alas! we who sought to sow the seeds of kindness/ Could not ourselves be kind," or, more recently, by songwriter Stephen Stills, in a poem about '60s agitation entitled, "America's Children," "But you know/ If we can't do it with a smile on our face/ If we can't do it with love in our hearts/ Then, children, we ain't got no right to do it at all/ You know, we're supposed to be some kind of different," and perhaps some were. By and large the strident rhetoric of the '60s has given way to quiet introspection in the '70s. In a circumstantial verification of inner/outer fusion, volunteerism has steadily increased in all sectors through the '70s until now it threatens to be labeled the new movement of the decade (US News & World Report, 1974; Gallup, 1976).

Personalization also reinforces the movement away from centralized big government and toward self-sufficiency and the "short-loop society" (Love, 1974). The tendency to institutionalize our mistakes in a big way by centralizing authority, production flows, and social design has been openly and rationally criticized by increasing numbers of Americans. The 'accountability' of the post-Watergate era, the tendency in contemporary therapy to stress taking responsibility and living in the here-and-now, and the movement in academic philosophy which preaches the heresy that all philosophy which is not personal is meaningless, all of these reflect the tendency to see the world in the direct, responsible, unhypocritical way that personalization stresses.

Occupying a central position in both the potentials and personalization aspects of current social change is Abraham Maslow's theory of self-actualization, his, "psychology of being." Maslow's premise was that, rather than look at the norm for gauges of human health, psychology should recognize that many barriers to psychic health exist and focus on the rare examples of full health and realization of potential. His conclusion, drawn from investigations of these premises led him to a pyramidal theory of human needs, with the base occupied by the most fundamental physical needs. The satisfaction of these needs for food and shelter, allows man to begin to satisfy higher needs such as those for security and companionship. The peak of health Maslow termed self-actualization, a state where the entire personality is tuned toward a growth motivation.

Maslow's integrative theory unifies and aids the recent remarkable efflorescence of the therapeutic revolution often known as the eupsychian network, or the Human Potentials Movement. Embracing non-verbal communication, transactional analysis, sensory awareness, and gestalt therapy this personalizing, expansionary constellation of techniques strives for, as Roaszak (1972) describes it, "a kind of splendid psychosensory athleticism, with all the emotional knots untied and the kinks carefully smoothed away."

It is from this rich, gravid compost of harmonizing rhythms, lit by the light of potentiality that the environmental ethics of a new era, even now, tentatively emerge and grow. The task remaining in these essays is to provide some signposts and outlines of a philosophy which begins to effectively integrate the trends of today.

ON GIVING ROOM

Let me tell you a story. Several summers ago I spent a few days camping in the Virginia Blue Ridge Mountains. I had driven up to the scenery I enjoyed so much from the flatlands below to try slowing myself down and relaxing a little after a hectic school year. Intentions notwithstanding, it was a contradictory experience to say the least. I chose to visit a remote area known as Upper Crab Tree Falls, deep in the George Washington National Forest, situated at the end of a rocky, rutted jeep trail. I call the experience contradictory because I found when I arrived that the unrestricted jeep trail had brought not only myself and my friends but a capacity caravan of vacationers spanning a wide range from quiet respectful hike-ins, through Winebago campers and late model Chevies, to drunken motorcyclists. Still, the scene was not as raucous as it might have been. I was able to spend many hours alone thinking and walking; but the strongest memory I bring back from those days, springs from an obscure incident that took place one afternoon while a friend and I visited the nearby campsite of a small group in their late teens.

We were sitting on some logs around the remains of their post-lunch fire, talking and smoking with one of them, a 19-year-old dropout who'd become an auto mechanic, while several of the others pursued activities around the camp. As we talked, one girl stood at a nearby chopping-log and systematically stripped small branches, leaves, and bark from the severed trunk of a sapling she'd cut as a walking stick. While I knew from years of scholarly exposure to the forest that the effect of cutting a sapling is something less than highly significant, my feelings on the cumulative pressures of many people combined with some sort of ethical objection to the unnecessary destruction made me feel a bit put-out. I kept this to myself; cutting live material was illegal 40 miles north in Shenandoah National Park, but no such regulations held for the National Forest. Besides, I knew the futility of trying to change

behavior by its criticism. As we talked she grew dissatisfied with her choice of material and moved off, eventually felling another, straighter sapling. As she stripped this second, more acceptable tree, I consoled myself that she was young and thoughtless; anyway, I felt sure that many Americans would look on her actions with disapproval rather than agreement.

This helped for a while until, uneasily, I began to examine why most people would oppose her destruction of the young trees. Leave them alone; they're pretty. Leave them alone; they'll grow up to be big trees some day and provide solitude for our children. Spare them; their destruction is symptomatic of humanity's disregard of our earthly life-support system. Spare them; someday they'll become timber resources. Pretty for use, solitude for us, life-support for us, resources for us. Us, us, us, us! It felt so wrong. Why, I asked, doesn't the tree have any inherent right to its own existence? Doesn't the fact of its existence give it some significance in and of itself? In the months that followed I came to view this distinction as the most telling difference between what I had previously intuited as an older, discredited approach and a newer, sea-change related approach to man/environment relationships.

Following Roszak (1972), I began to flesh out the meanings of the older and newer approaches. In analogy to Machiavelli's secrets of political power, the secret of our incredible dynamism and power over nature lies in our simple willingness to break faith. In The Prince (1965), Machiavelli repeatedly acquaints the reader with routes to gaining power through this fundamental casting-aside of respect for others. There are few limits to the power that one person can gain over another with the simple willingness not to honor the other's claim to respect. When one casts aside respect for another, that other person becomes a mere object, no longer bound to us by an inner feeling of belonging, of equality.

In the same way, humanity has broken faith with nature. By accepting the experts and their objective reality, the

universe of life becomes dead. Symbiosis becomes parasitism. No intrusion is too crass; no use too bold. In Roszak's words (1972), "nothing - no sense of fellowship or personal intimacy - bars [our] access to the delicate mysteries of man and nature. Nothing [inhibits our] ability to manipulate and exploit."

A giving-room philosophy would be a mirror, then, of the role of a balanced individual in society. Ideally, an individual in society takes and gives. He asserts his right to space, to shelter, to a job. He takes what is needed to live, and rightly so. At the same time, the need to take is balanced by the need to live with other people, to get along. The healthy member of society needs people emotionally and physically just as he needs the framework of society in which to survive. It is the dysfunctional person that takes with no thought of giving, that lives with no respect or need for others. This person uses, rather than communes with his peers and often suffers for it, emotionally if not physically, as does his society.

A giving-room philosophy, then, would not take from humanity the right of continuing its existence, of taking what it needs from the universe of life. As giving-room philosophy, instead, would teach that the role of man in nature should follow the role of the individual in society. Humanity, feverish with the sea-change, is beginning to crack Bacon's egg of objectivity. A giving-room philosophy would teach that humanity is involved in a mutual relationship with nature just as each individual is with other men and women. It would teach that humanity can no more continue to live in contempt of nature than it could live in contempt of itself.

Therefore man's role would become, in a giving-room philosophy, not simply rationalizing and more efficiently functionalizing his uses of and relations to nature, but in addition, giving room to the other inhabitants of our universe of life. Humanity's role would include allowing the chameleonic flux of the worldwide gene pool enough room to continue

on its journey. It would be a role which would allow other species to play out the destiny they are expressing just as we are doing. After all, who are we to assume that we now can or should consciously control and manage the cosmic and evolutionary processes that created us as a single part of a community of living beings?

A giving-room philosophy would teach that people are not the only source of value (Miller, 1975). It would teach that nature exists for purposes other than man's, including it's own. It would teach respect for the creative forces that have made the world, the universe, and man. The emergence of a giving-room philosophy would herald the passage of man through the current Adolescence of the Enlightenment to a responsible, caring adulthood, bridling the power-knowledge of objectivity.

A giving-room philosophy would teach harmonizing toward Diversity and away from man-made oversimplification. Diversity in many aspects of both society and nature could provide a healing, harmonizing effect. Some of the shifts in society that would flow from this include decentralization, short-loop living, and an expansion in styles and alternatives in living. Decentralization in society would allow more individual access to government and responsibility, when balanced with reticulate (branching) public-power systems to send decisions and attitudes up into the system. Short-loop living (Love, 1974) would allow more self-sufficiency and variety in the energy-flows and material-cycles in society. When systems such as power provision and food production shift to a grand society-wide scale, as they have done, they become unmanageable and more liable to catastrophic breakdowns. Large loop, centralized societies also suffer from monism, the tendency of a large system to impose its own internal order and decisions on its components. In each case, a giving-room philosophy would emphasize a rebalancing of currently distorted emphases.

A giving-room philosophy would emphasize harmonizing toward Freedom vs. control, both of man and nature. The recent trend toward the expansion of civil liberties and the elimination of victimless crimes involves this change in society just as does the current preservation of wildlife habitat. A giving-room philosophy would emphasize Humility vs. our expert/objective assumption of total knowledge and control. It would teach the folly of arrogance joined to science (Caldwell, 1971). It would signal man's recovery from the tragic flaw of "hubris," the Greek's term for the overweening pride of the doomed. It would teach as Caldwell (1971) suggested, "to resist the temptation to treat the familiar with contempt on the assumption that it's nothing more than one sees." Instead it would stress a sense of wonder and respect for the familiar. It would signal a humble new attention to our deficient directive knowledge over the bloated reams of our productive knowledge.

Finally, a giving-room philosophy would emphasize the importance of Posterity, of the long-range vs. the short - range focus. It would teach our obligation not only to each other and to nature, but to the future of both. A sustainable standard of living would become our goal, separating needs from wants and leading us to internal values. It would teach of our communion with and responsibility to our children's children's children and their universe of life. Objectivity and overemphasis on the material has centered us too much on the physical realm of our present and near future, without properly acquainting us with the eons of time from which we come and into which we move. Our debt to all who have come before can only be paid in concern for those who shall follow after.

A giving-room philosophy would embody these outlines and much more. I'd like to stress that a giving-room philosophy is not my idea for what will make the world right. It is, rather, that philosophy which I feel is emerging from society. At times it rides the crest of society's great sea-change. At

others, it wells from beneath, giving movement and substance to the advancing line. As the change moves forward, it glints white on the edge, then resubmerges. First it was conservation, then later it highlighted the issue of natural beauty. Later still, the foaming streak that was the environmental movement heralded the barrier bar of environmental awareness. And even now, the sea-change rushes on, toward its shore.

Soon the full force will churn white as the reality of resources scarcity and interlocking crises rises to meet the movement, changing forever our society and its direction. May we all be ready to learn; may the light that's lost within us truly reach for the sky.

Before the Deluge - Jackson Browne

Some of them were dreamers,
And some of them were fools,
They were making plans and thinking of the future.
And with the energy of the innocent,
They were gathering the tools,
They would need to make their journey back to
nature.

While the sand slipped through the opening,
And their hands reached for the golden ring,
In their hearts they turned to each other's
hearts for refuge,
In the troubled years that came, before the
deluge.

Some of them knew pleasure,
And some of them knew pain,
And for some of them it was only the moment
that mattered.
And on the brave and crazy wings of youth,
They went flying around in the rain,
And their feathers, once so fine, grew torn and
tattered.

And in the end, they traded their tired wings,
For the resignation that living brings,
And exchanged love's bright and fragile glow,
for the glitter and the rouge,
And in a moment they were swept, before the deluge.

Now let the music keep our spirits high,
And let the buildings keep our children dry,
Let creation reveal its secrets by and by,
by and by.
When the light that's lost within us reaches
the sky.

Some of them were angry,
At the way the earth was abused,
By the men who learned how to forge her beauty
into power.
And they struggled to protect her from them, only
to be confused,
By the magnitude of the fury, in the final hour.

And when the sand was gone, and the time arrived.
In the naked dawn, only a few survived,
An in attempt to understand, they, so simple and
so few,
Believed that they were meant to live, after the
deluge.

Now let the music keep our spirits high,
And let the buildings keep our children dry,
Let creation reveal its secrets by and by, by
and by,
When the light that's lost within us reaches the
sky.

ON APPLICATIONS OF GIVING-ROOM

In the time that has passed since the recent peak of environmental interest in the early '70s, many newer ways of controlling civilization's detrimental effects on the global ecosystem have been brought to bear. They run the gamut from land capability approaches such as popularized by Ian McHarg, through such devices as floodplain and aquifer protection, to controls on effluents from autos and factories. My purpose here is not to catalog these responses, but to deal with one aspect of these approaches which concerns me.

Our current approach to managing man's relations with his natural environment are designed to maximize our benefits from and uses of the environment without damaging its functioning. Crafted from a man-centered viewpoint, they threaten to simply become sophisticated systems approaches to exploiting the earth. We should question if the economic highest and best use is necessarily the ecologic highest and best use. Some balancing is requisite.

Take the example of a group of workers on an assembly line. The canny plant manager knows that if he runs his line at too high a speed, quality will suffer and his employees will begin to evidence physical and mental breakdowns. The prevailing alternative for many years has been to keep the rate of assembly lines at the maximum allowable by the limitations of which the plant manager is aware. Under this approach the employees are pushed, but remain sane and are capable of providing quality labor. In many ways, our methods of dealing with the environment are just reaching this stage, where enough space is given, so as not to break the system.

Far-thinking plant managers have moved beyond this approach to slow production lines even more and allow flexibility in changing positions within working teams. They find that sacrificing efficiency on the front-end often produces unexpected results on the rear-end: higher productivity per man-hour, greater creativity in meeting new situations and design requirements, and greater job satisfaction. The act

of sacrificing the maximum perceivable efficiency and giving room may or may not pay off in the long run, but it creates a more humane workplace. In the same way, humanity must learn to give room in its relations with the environment. It is as if all our knowledge of the functioning of the system draws a box of limits around man's activities; I argue that giving nature a slice of the space inside the limits box is desirable. It may or may not prove more beneficial, but it creates a richer, more alive ecosystem.

Here the perceptive reader will ask: But isn't your eventual goal still anthropocentric? Aren't you "giving room" to allow a better system to exist as your home? This is, in fact, a very thorny question for all ethical arguments. Virtue often accompanies necessity; to argue that we create virtue to fit the necessary is similar to the argument that, were there not a God, man would find it necessary to invent him. One can take the Kantian approach of the categorical imperative and become lost in arguing brotherhood in purely selfish terms, but I feel ethics evolve from something else. It is impossible to prove in concrete argument that any ill-considered class or group of individuals (or an ecosystem) requires consideration solely on the fact of its existence. As Wittgenstein has often been quoted as saying, ethics and morality can only, "make themselves manifest" (1972). They cannot be tied to logic or proven.

At this point, therefore, I will cease attempting to justify giving room on ethical or moral grounds; that volley has been fired previously, in the earlier essays of this series. Of course, arguable reasons for giving room to the environment exist: we need to conserve the gene pool so as to provide raw material for undreamt uses of new species and new uses of existing species. Only the rich, varied gene stock of native corn allowed our elaborate hybrids to be developed. Similarly, only the existence of previously "useless" grasses permitted primitive man to develop such plants as rice and wheat. It can be argued that we should give the gene pool room to elaborate and express new, unexpected potentials of life.

It can be argued (and perceptive scientists will agree) that man knows very little, relatively speaking, and in many ways will always be more ignorant than enlightened; therefore, he shouldn't try to totally control and plan a functioning system he'll never completely understand.

All of these arguments, anthropocentric, vivicentric (life-centered), and ethical, lead me to urge man to give room in many ways not previously pursued. But how to bring this ethical dirigible to earth? How to apply this approach to our current situation? I have said before that I feel giving room is a philosophy emerging from society. In this context, something must be said about the reciprocal relationship between the development of ideas in the collective consciousness of society; in particular, the role of institutions (in the broadest sense) in affirming and furthering these changes in consciousness. This is a point often made; for example, noted political scientist and environmental writer, Lynton Caldwell, argues this view persuasively. A clear explanation of this view occurs in the foreword to Should Trees Have Standing? (Stone, 1975) when Garrett Hardin quotes lawyer and author Christopher Stone as asserting,

...societies, ... progress through different stages of sensitiveness, and ... in our progress through these stages the law -- like art -- has a role to play, dramatizing and summoning into the open the changes that are taking place within us.

This is to suggest that changes in institutions, such as the law, can act to reinforce and widen the acceptance of a giving-room approach. Just such a change is persuasively presented by Dr. Stone in his book, Should Trees Have Standing? Dr. Stone's approach, premised on an explicit giving-room philosophy, would go a long way toward answering my objections to our present course.

Even though we should question the hidden assumptions of can = should which are implicit in numerous new

land-capability and performance-control approaches to ecosystem management, I feel that these can function as the limits box into which humanity places itself. Stone's approach offers an opportunity to legally cut the environment's slice from the room that remains inside the box.

One of Stone's largest difficulties is, after effectively arguing to allow concerned, informed, responsible persons to apply for guardianships to assert the rights of the environment, he falls short of constructing a basis, a judicial "myth" as he calls it, to be asserted in court. This "myth" would be similar to current "myths" such as one-man-one-vote or, all-men-are-created-equal. Stone openly admits that such a "myth" must be given substance through a body of rules, developed over time. He therefore does not attempt to construct such a "myth", a wise move, though he deals with some aspects of its nature. I feel this "myth" is the giving room philosophy, and that a body of rules can develop with its teachings as a basis.

Before fitting the giving room philosophy for such a suit of lights, I will turn to a cursory treatment of Stone's fundamentals.

Standing, that is the right to sue, to have your day in court, must currently be established on three grounds: that a genuine dispute exists, that the parties to the dispute will perform in an adversary manner, and that standing is being granted to someone who can adequately represent the interests asserted. Stone's suggestion is to grant a guardianship to an individual or group such as the Sierra Club, much in the manner as is done for an incompetent or infant, assuming the party speaks knowingly for the environmental values he asserts.

Stone points out the existence of similar legal fictions, where some rights are granted to non-humans such as corporations, universities, ships, or municipalities. He argues that granting such rights to the environment requires more imagination than it required to convince the Supreme Court in the 1880s that a railroad corporation was entitled to protection as an individual under the fourteenth amendment. Stone also points out our changes in rights given to various classes of people:

blacks, children (who once could be killed at a parent's whim), and women.

Stone takes care to explain that to have rights requires first that a remedy must exist, such as a court and government to review one's claim and enforce one's rights. This we have. In addition, upon gaining rights, the environment would be given standing, through the guardianship, its own damages would be ascertained as an individual factor in weighing judicial relief, and (via a trust fund) relief would accrue directly to the environment.

Stone admits ontological problems (those of boundaries). In the current kepone poisoning of Chesapeake Bay, would rights be asserted on the basis of one oyster? the bay? the entire estuary? or perhaps the Atlantic seaboard? While not ignoring the problems inherent in such an approach, Stone suggests that ontological boundaries would vary with the controversy and problem addressed. He also points out that judicial discretion and legal costs would deter capricious claims.

Nevertheless, Stone leaves us with a basis for asserting the rights of the environment without a firm idea of what rights would be given. This is an important point: the granting of standing to the environment allows only argument for rights given legislatively or in case law from a "myth". It does not confer the rights of a man or a corporation, but only those given the environment. Stone suggests the doctrine of "irreparable harm" as a possible component; I agree, though just what constitutes "irreparable harm" would no doubt be a hot contest for many years. This seems laudable: hot contests bring subjects into public discussion and thought, no small accomplishment.

My suggestion is a NEPA-like environmental rights act or possibly an amendment to NEPA, which would affirm our commitment to a vivicentric harmony and would explicitly state four principles: that the U.S. shall strive to, (1) Give Room in every way possible to the universe of life beyond what is simply necessary to the functioning of the ecosystem.

(2) Promote Diversity of species and food webs in the ecosystem wherever appropriate,

(3) Avoid disruption of energy flows and biogeochemical cycles, and

(4) Avoid irreparable harm to the natural environment involving the loss of significant resources, all with the ultimate goal being the richness, variety, and expressed potential of life.

Application of these principles could be the basis for body of rules assigning the environment legal rights. The extension of the NEPA approach to State and local areas could hasten this development. Only time can tell if this approach could institute a "dramatizing and summoning into the open" the emerging philosophy I call giving room.

Two attempts to name the environment as a plaintiff in legal action have been instituted. A 1974 suit, brought in U.S. District Court (Conn.) named Bottom Marsh and Brown Brook as plaintiffs in anti-pollution actions. Both are presently awaiting disposition (Stone, 1975). It seems that this approach is an idea whose time has come. It is to us, here and now, to begin to build a meaningful "myth" and body of rules from the experiences and thought of today.

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