## Environmental Ethics – Mark Sagoff

### Environment and Efficiency

* **Pareto Optimality**: state of allocation of resources of maximum efficiency, such that it is impossible to further reallocate to make one preference criterion better off without making another preference criterion worse off
  + Advocates of Pareto Optimality see efficiency, utility, maximization of wealth, satisfaction of wants where others see environmental devastation
* **Intrinsic value**: value of something for itself
* **Instrumental value**: value of something based on how much it offers us

### Approach to Environmental Policy

* One approach to environmental policy is pitched at the consumer level -- consumer values are what matter, and they are measured based on the individual’s **willingness to pay**
* If users are willing to pay more for land with the house, coal mine, or landfill than without, then it is more efficient/valuable to build those on top of the land (than to preserve it)

### Consumer vs. Citizen Approach

* **Consumer approach**: the value that people place on services or their willingness to pay – things that we want for ourselves
* **Citizen approach**: what we think is best for the community
  + Other values, more than just cost vs. benefit, should be protected
* The consumer approach is often short-sighted and individualist, compared to the citizen approach which is often more long-term and collectivist
* The conflict between the two approaches isn’t one that can be solved by treating values as mere preferences, through cost-benefit analysis

### Cost-Benefit Analysis, Values, and Preferences

* **Cost-benefit analysis** links value to willingness to pay – treats all moral values as consumer preferences
  + It intrinsically regards as true that the best solution maximizes efficiency or wealth
  + It treats all judgements other than those made through analysis as mere statements of preference, attitude, or emotion
* Example: Economics uses CBA to offer solutions to many social problems, such as abortion
  + Those who oppose abortion could eliminate it entirely if they were willing to pay more than the price that people pay to have an abortion

### Economic “Neutrality”

* The “beauty” of CBA is that no matter how relevant/irrelevant, wise/stupid, informed/uninformed, responsible/silly, defensible/indefensible one’s wants may be, CBA can derive a policy from them
  + It treats **all preferences as valid and good**, based on the amount that people value them through payment
* The neutrality of CBA is legitimate if private preferences or subjective wants are the **only values that matter**
  + Because this theory is impartial to values, it doesn’t treat the persons who have them with respect or concern
* Different people in different socioeconomic circumstances will be willing to pay less or more for different things
  + E.g. those who are better off may be more open to the citizen approach because they can afford the bare necessities, while those who aren’t as well-off may focus more on the consumer approach in order to gain the bare necessities

### Lewiston Example

* Radioactive wastes buried in the town; residents fear that it is contributing to leukemia in children
* In response to residents’ concerns, an official from a chemical company that was dumping waste in the area said that “corporations are just people serving people”
* Sagoff says this is a view of individual/consumer preferences rather than citizen/community preferences
  + To adopt CBA is to imagine society as a market where individuals trade voluntarily and without coerciqon
  + To have power to act as a nation, we must be able to act, at least at times, on a public philosophy
  + There are some moral functions of public law that cannot be abandoned

## Disability Ethics – Marsha Saxton

### Prenatal Diagnosis (PND)

* Assessment for genetic disabilities such as down syndrome and spina bifida
* May result in abortion requests
* Used to only be performed on “high-risk” pregnancies, but becoming more routine

### Disability Rights

* Allowing expected parents to get PND would better prepare them to take care of a child with a disability
* Medical professionals should become more educated in all aspects of a disabled person’s life, not just the facts of the disability
  + This will allow them to present a more holistic perspective to parents who are trying to make the decision of whether or not to keep the baby
* If we view disabled people as a burden to society, then we are valuing them not based on their contributions but solely on their condition
  + We ignore the potential that disabled people have to lead meaningful lives – this view only exists because the “non-burdensome” are considered the norm

### The Medical Model of Disability

* **Medical model**: idea that a person’s disability is an **inherent problem** that originates in the **individual** and needs to be fixed through medical practices
* The **disability itself** is the source of the problem – it is a biological limitation that has socioeconomic consequences
* Saxton: disabled individuals can lead good lives; the medical system tends to underestimate their functional abilities and overestimate the burdens that they have

### The Disability Paradigm/Social Model of Disability

* **Disability paradigm**: idea that **society** is responsible for disabled people’s experiences – limitations are imposed by society on people with disabilities
* Problems aren’t caused by the disability itself, but by how society is configured around people with disabilities
* Based on the view of disabled people as a minority group, similar to people of colour or women; they are targeted with social discrimination and denied full access to mainstream life
* If suffering does attend life with disability, then to amend suffering we must eradicate **social discrimination**, not eradicate people with disabilities

### The Non-Musical People Example

* If a non-musical person Mary was born in a society of musical people, then she should not be devastated to learn of her musical parents’ or musical husband’s preference for a musical child; she should be able to understand and not take it personally
* Saxton: the social context and experience of discrimination is inseparable from the discussion of choosing/preferring characteristics
  + In order to form meaningful opinions about PND and disabilities, we need to understand the full context of the issue – the real experience of disability in our society

### The Disability Critique

* **Oppression** is the most disabling aspect of a disability – not the disability itself
* The way that society responds to and accommodates people with disabilities, is what pose a challenge to their lives
* Society’s inaccurate perceptions of people with disabilities reinforces the need for PND and selective abortions
* Laura Hershey: “the idea that disability may someday be eradicated has strong appeal for a society weary of spending resources on human needs”

### Brandies University Example

* Students in a genetic counselling training program at the university were given the opportunity to interact with people with disabilities during their internship placement
* Students who interacted with these people said it changed their perspective away from the medical model
* One student thought that elite groups making decisions affecting people with disabilities, without consulting them, was akin to a form of eugenics

### Feminism and Choice

* Feminists sometimes use fetal anomalies as a pro-choice argument for women getting abortions
* This reinforces the notion that women are being oppressed by the existence of disabled children
  + If “choice” means choosing the “right child”/”right gender”, then children become products that are perfectible through technology
* Some feminists believe that selective abortions can help eliminate “burdensome parenting experiences” and enable greater self-determination for women
  + Technological innovations such as PND may save effort, but they do not change social structure, where childcare is largely women’s duty and yet not valued enough to pay women for
  + A woman’s individual decision, when resulting from social pressures or conformity to social norms/trends, has repercussions on all of society

### Ableism and Racism

* Racism: complex history of fear of cultural difference, horrors of slavery, economics of job and land, projected onto one characteristic – dark skin
* PND: complex history of social phenomena including economics of dependence and interdependence, politics of gender and caregiving roles, fear of human difference, projected onto one characteristic – genetics
  + The disability community resists the notion that humanness can be reduced down to a flawed gene
* Singer believes that the analogy with racism fails because people with disabilities are objectively worse off than others, while people of different races are only worse off due to social attitudes and discrimination

## Disability Ethics – Elizabeth Barnes

### Barnes’s Goal

* There are typically two views about physical disabilities:
  + Disabilities are a way of making people different
  + Disabilities are a sub-optimal feature
* Barnes proposes a middle ground: disability can be both just a way of being different and a harm

### Difference-Makers

* **Difference-maker**: a way of being different
* **Negative difference-maker**: a way of being different that makes one worse off
* People tend to think that disabilities are negative difference-makers because:
  1. Having a disability makes life harder
  2. Because of 1, disability has a negative impact on quality of life (QOL)
  3. Because of 2, disability is a negative difference-maker

### Local vs. Overall Quality of Life

* Barnes disagrees with the idea that disability has a negative impact on QOL
* She distinguishes between local and overall QOL:
  + **Local QOL**: quality of life in a given area, or with respect to a specific feature
  + **Overall QOL**: total wellbeing
* If 2 refers to local QOL, then it isn’t substantial enough to support 3
* If 2 refers to overall QOL, then it must be false
  + Many things can affect local QOL and make life harder, but not affect overall QOL; just because having a disability makes life harder, doesn’t mean that a person can’t have a positive overall wellbeing
* A person’s experience with disability can be both positive and negative, depending on the person and their circumstances

### Potential Objection

* **Objection**: One might argue that a disability makes a person worse off than they would’ve otherwise been, so not having a disability increases the chances of higher QOL and is thus better
* **Response 1**
  + In order for the objection to be true, we need to know the objective chance of the person having a higher QOL
  + Since this can’t be measured objectively, we could consider what people with disabilities have to say
  + When we do this, it seems that the objection doesn’t represent people with disabilities – they can have very high QOL
* **Response 2**
  + Even if people with disabilities do have a lower QOL, it doesn’t mean it’s due to the nature of the disability itself

### Disability as a Negative Difference-Maker

* There are two concerns of not viewing disabilities as a negative difference-maker:
  1. Might justify withholding medical treatment (e.g. it’s okay to not give my child a polio vaccination because if they develop polio then their QOL won’t be affected)
  2. Might justify causing a disability
* Barnes’s response:
  + Even if disabilities are only cause harm to local QOL, we should still aim to prevent it
  + Parents have a duty to prevent substantial harm to their children
    - If parents have a duty to prevent disability in their children, would they be morally obligated to prevent gayness under the same consideration?
    - According to Barnes, depends on circumstance
      * In social contexts where being gay can result in harm, e.g. persecution/oppression, parents may have a duty to protect their children

### Selecting Against Disability

* The central goal in almost any difference-maker theory is to prevent practices such as **negative selection** against disability
* Barnes says that negative selection is blameworthy because it displays false and disparaging views about disability
  + Negative selection is based on the notion that disabilities are sub-optimal, which just isn’t true
* We cannot assume that people with disabilities are worse off
  + People with disabilities may have harder lives at times, but they can lead overall enriching and fulfilling lives
  + The argument that disability is a negative difference-maker is unjustified

## Income Equality – John Rawls

### Rawls’s Theory of Justice as Fairness

* **Justice as fairness**: theory that address how liberty and equality in a democratic society should be understood
  + Society of free citizens that hold equal basic rights and live in an egalitarian economic system
* Rawls believes that an individual can only lead a decent life in a democratic society if some form of **social cooperation** occurs when assigning basic rights/duties and determining the division of social benefits

### Social Cooperation

* **Social cooperation**:
  1. Influenced by **publicly accepted rules** that govern citizens’ lives
  2. Incorporate **fair terms**, where all who do their part as the recognized rules require will benefit by an agreed-upon standard
  3. Includes every citizen’s idea of a **rational advantage**, where everyone seeks to gain an advantage for their own good
* The problem with social cooperation is that everyone wants a larger share of benefits from their collaborative work, which creates a conflict of interest
* The role of the principles of justice is to develop fair terms of cooperation and regulate unequal distribution of benefits amongst free and equal citizens

### The Principles of Justice

* The two principles of justice, according to Rawls, are those that “a person would choose in the design of a society if his enemy were to assign him his place” within it
* First principle: everyone has **equal right** to the **most extensive basic liberty** that is compatible with a similar liberty for others
  + Basic rights include: political (right to vote), freedom of speech, freedom of personal property, freedom from arbitrary arrest
  + Citizens of a just society should all have the same basic rights
* Second principle: social and economic inequalities are to be arranged such that they are a) reasonably expected to be **to everyone’s advantage**, and b) attached to **positions of office that are open to all**
  + Distribution of wealth doesn’t have to be equal, but should be to everyone’s advantage

### Ordering of the Principles

* The first principle should come before the second, to ensure that any departures from equal liberties cannot be justified by or compensated for greater social/economic advantages

### Original Position

* Model of society where no one knows their place in the society that will be established – hence, how fair principles of justice can be established by free and equal citizens
* Rawls believes that the **original position** is an appropriate initial state that will ensure that the fundamental agreements reached in it are fair
  + No one should be disadvantaged by natural fortune or social circumstances when choosing principles of justice

### Veil of Ignorance

* **Veil of ignorance**: knowledge limitations that restrict what citizens can regard as fair principles of justice
* No one knows their place in society (class, social status, nor assets, abilities, intelligence, strengths)
* Decisions regarding principles made under this veil of ignorance ensures that no one can obtain unequal advantages

### Public Justifications

* Fair principles of justices are achieved through public justification
* **Public justification**: political conception of justice is accepted by all individuals, and where every person is able to justify their political conception based on terms that everyone can agree on
* Public justification can be achieved through reflective equilibrium

### Reflective Equilibrium

* **Reflective equilibrium**: state of mutual agreement/balance among a set of principles or beliefs
* If we assume all people are free and equal, Rawls believes that they will be able to agree upon political justice through considering various principles of justice as fairness and the arguments against them
* By weighing these conceptions of justice against each other, and being willing to revise, suspend, or withdraw them, reflective equilibrium can be achieved
  + Initial situation can be modified, or existing judgements can be revised
  + Eventually, we will find a description of the initial situation that will both express reasonable conditions and yield principles that match our considered judgements

### Rationality and Self-Interest

* One key concept of justice as fairness is that the parties in the initial situation are thought of as **rational** and **mutually disinterested** (people do not take interest in others’ interests)
* How do Rawls's assumptions of persons as rational and mutually disinterested affect his conclusions?
  + Rawls believes that if the differences between parties are unknown to people, and people are rational and similarly situated, then everyone will naturally be convinced by the same arguments
  + Then, when one person reflects upon the principles and prefers a conception of justice, the rest will agree unanimously
  + Furthermore, no one is in a position to tailor the principles to their own advantage
  + His theory also leaves out people who cannot be rational, e.g. children, people with disabilities, etc. – does this mean we do not have a sense of duty towards them?
* The name “justice as fairness” conveys the idea that the principles of justice are agreed to in an initial situation that is fair

## Economic Inequality – Robert Nozick

### Libertarian Principles and Distributive Justice

* According to libertarians, the market doesn’t need to be a means to some desired pattern; **acquisitions or exchanges** are just in their own right
* Just outcomes are those arrived by the **separate actions of just individuals**, not a particular distributive pattern

### Justice in Acquisition, Holdings, and Transfer

* **Principle of justice in acquisition**: just when one’s labour allows one to acquire an unowned object, as long as there is enough and as good left in common for others
* **Principle of justice in transfer**: just when one acquires their holdings in accordance with the principle of acquisition, then transfers those holdings to another person
* **Justice in holdings**: just when a person acquires a holding justly through the principle of acquisition or transfer; no one is entitled to anything in any other way

### Past Injustices and Rectification

* Past injustices can be rectified through reflection on what would have happened if the injustice hadn’t happened
* Example: acquisition of wealth from colonialism (e.g. land of North America, or wealth from unjust colonial interference in other countries)

### Entitlement Theory

* **Historical principles of justice**
  + Whether a distribution is just, depends on how it came about
  + Whether or not the actual events of acquisition were in accordance with principles, is what matters, not what pattern the distribution falls into
* **Time-slice principles of justice**
  + The justice of a distribution is determined by how things are distributed (who has what) as judged by some structural principles of just distribution

### Patterned Distributions

* A principle of distribution is **patterned** if it specifies that a distribution should vary based on some **natural** **dimension**, weighted sum of natural dimensions, or lexicographic ordering of natural dimensions
* Example: distribution according to IQ – doesn’t look to any past actions, only IQ scores

### Chamberlin Example

* Wilt Chamberlain is a decorated American basketball player
* Example: consumers are willing to give money to watch Wilt Chamberlain play basketball
  + A portion of ticket expenses go to him, which makes his income larger than anyone else has ever had
* Is Chamberlain entitled to his income, if people were entitled to their dispose of resources that they were entitled to, and they chose to spend money on him?
  + When people transfer their money to Chamberlain, no third parties are affected; their shares remain unchanged
* Takeaway: no distribution pattern principle of justice can be **continuously realized** without continuous interference into people’s lives
* Any **favoured pattern** can be **transformed into one unfavoured by the principle**, through people choosing to act in various ways
  + E.g. in Chamberlain example, people giving away/transferring what they were entitled to under a favoured pattern
* To maintain a pattern, one must continuously interfere to stop people from transferring resources that they want to, or continuously take away resources that someone received from others

## Racism – J.L.A. Garcia

### Race, Racism, and Racialization

* Most scholars agree that race is a socially constructed reality (not biological/genetic)
* **Racialization**: the process in which groups become designated as different, and subjected to differential and unequal treatment because of it
* Racial classification can vary greatly from one society to another, and the same person can be classified differently in different places

### Racism and Race

* One objection to racism being real is that since races don’t exist, neither can racism
* Garcia contends that racism can still be real, regardless of whether races are – people make distinctions in their heart, whether consciously or not, based on racial classifications

### Racism in the Heart

* Garcia believes that racism is **rooted** **“in the heart”**
* We conceive of racism as fundamentally vicious **disregard for the welfare** of certain people
* Racism does not involve our beliefs and their rationality/irrationality, but rather our **wants, intentions, likes, and dislikes**, and their distance from moral virtues
* Garcia believes that a person can be racist even if they never act on their attitudes of ill-will/disrespect
* Racism is not always conscious – it can be implicit
* This definition of racism links two senses of definitions:
  1. Belief in superiority of one race over another
  2. Inter-racial “antagonism”
     + 2 is normally the ground of 1, while 1 is normally used to rationalize 2
     + 1 may not logically be necessary for racism
     + When 2 is the result of 1, it is 2 that makes the person a racist

### Individual and Institutional Racism

* Institutions are racist when they are structures of racial domination
* Individuals are racist when they express, support, or justify racial superiority
* **Institutional racism**: racism rooted in government institutions and society as a whole
  + Occurs when racist attitudes (desires, aims, hopes, fears, and plans) infect the reasoning, decision-making, and action of individuals, not only in their private behaviour but also when they **make and execute the policies of institutions** that they operate
* Garcia believes that individual racist attitudes are what contribute to institutional racism

### Racism and Paternalism

* Example: Whites in the US South who were concerned/protective over their slaves, while supporting the hierarchy and oppression
* These people appear to be free of racial hatred, but they still seem to be racists
* According to Garcia, racism can consist of:
  + **Opposition to the well-being** of people in a racially targeted group
  + Racially-based **callousness** to the needs/interests of a racial group
* **Kiplingesque view**: idea that non-Whites are ignorant, backward, undisciplined, and in need of White “civilizing”
  + Civilizing training is supposed to be harsh, but good for the “primitive” people
  + This is racist according to Garcia because it **lacks respect**
  + Treating people in degrading and demeaning ways is a form of **paternalism** that fails to treat people with respect

### Race and Intention

* Doctor example: a doctor realizes that Asians in his area tend to prefer visiting an Asian doctor
  + Reason: due to lack of thought, he has failed to educate his staff on matters of interest/relevance to Asian patients
  + Through this inattention, the consequences have differential results for people of different races
* According to Garcia, this behaviour is not racist
  + Insensitivity to certain race-related differences isn’t racist
  + The doctor didn’t explicitly intend to not serve Asians – he didn’t “discourage” Asians so much as fail to “encourage” them
* Garcia also says that if the doctor tries to change the situation by hiring an Asian doctor, this isn’t racist either, because race is part of the relevant criteria in the hiring situation

## Racism – Tommie Shelby

### Critique of Garcia

* Garcia assumes that no account of racism is adequate unless it makes clear what is wrong with it
* Shelby’s main problem with Garcia’s argument is that Garcia starts off with an initial assumption that racism is wrong, then defines it, but doesn’t defend the assumption well

### Making Moral Arguments

* According to Shelby, to be a good philosopher one must justify why something is wrong
* Example: it is difficult to determine what is morally wrong with murder if
  + The relevant concept is **not clearly wrong**
  + Ordinary use of the relevant concept is so **vague and inconsistent** that its moral appraisal lacks a steady target

### Shelby on Racism

* Shelby starts off by defining racism in a morally neutral way
* While Garcia believes that beliefs about racism are a “secondary and inessential feature” to racism, Shelby believes that **race-based beliefs** are essential and sufficient for racism
  + Shelby: we cannot identify one’s intention as a racist one unless we posit that they hold some racist belief
* Example: if all we know is that a white person Stephen dislikes a black person Andre, we do not know if the white person is racist – there are many reasons why Stephen might dislike Andre
  + In order for Stephen’s dislike of Andre to be racist, it has to be because Stephen’s beliefs about black racial characteristics plays a role in his actions
  + The **exact nature of corresponding beliefs** is relevant to whether a person is racist
* If someone has a dislike for people of a certain race because they were brought up/socialized in a racist culture, Shelby says that the dislike does stem from racist beliefs
  + Just because they don’t recognize it, their beliefs still stem from the involvement of racist beliefs somewhere down the line of the racist culture

### Racism as Ideology

* **Ideology**: widely accepted illusory systems of beliefs that establish or reinforce structures of social oppression
* Shelby believes that racism should be classified as a type of ideology, and thinks that Garcia would agree
  1. It passes the test of **moral significance**, since racist ideology perpetuates social injustice
  2. The **derogatory force** of racism can remain present – racist ideologies are epistemically unsound, irrational, and serve as vehicles for domination/exploitation
  3. Racist beliefs can **infect** the behaviours of individuals, and thus the behaviours of institutions

### Infectious Properties

* Racist ideology is a virus that people can:
  + **Catch and spread** through no fault of their own
  + **Not fully know** that they are contaminated by it
* Acknowledging this aspect means that the “heart” doesn’t have to be involved in order for an action or institution to be racist, and unjust because racist