Environmental Philosophy or Philosoph of the Environment

I. Philosophy of the Environment

A. Attempts to rethink our society's understanding of and

relationship with the environment

B. This rethinking moves in two somewhat different

directions, however both involve ethics and an attempt

to redefine ethical boundaries

II. Ethics

A. Ethics is an attempt to define a moral sphere, the area

of human existence that requires moral accountability

B. Tied to defining the moral sphere is the question of moral

responsibility

C. An the attribution of moral standing to beings within the

sphere of moral accountability and responsibility

D. In western society moral sphere is the human sphere and

humans are those with moral standing

E. Two dominant moral traditions

1. In Christianity the moral sphere is the human sphere,

the Golden Rule, and humans have moral standing, because they possess souls

2. With the Enlightenment the moral sphere remains

the human sphere

not sure all humans were human, but

humans were "ends" and by being endowed

with reason and consciousness had moral

standing

moral sphere was human interaction but determined by rational principles

F. Moral questions

1. How ought I live my life?

How should I relate to other human beings?

What values and ideals should I embody in

my life?

What should I be and do?

2. How should society be organized to reflect its highest

values and ideals?

( If a society believes that every life is valuable and that every person should have a right to pursue the goods of society, then it ought to be organized in that way)

3. What is the ultimate basis, or foundation, for a moral life? God, reason, none?

III. Rethinking the Ethical -- Philosophies of the Environment

A. Animal Rights and Animal Liberation

1. Attempts to extend the moral sphere to some animals

2. By using the tools of Enlightenment moral philosophy-

Utilitarianism and Kantina rights theory

3. Ethical Extensionism

B. Environmental ethics - Biocentric and Ecocentric ethics

1. Attempts to redefine the western human relationship

to the environment

2. Uses ideas from other world views which don't see the

world as human centered and from ecology

Our approach will be to analyze the philosophical and religious basies for our culture's understanding of and relationship with the environment, western society's past relationship with the environment, state of the world, and then an examination of the two directions of the philsophy of the environment

IV. Philosophical and religious articulation for our relationship to the environment

A. Environment, natural world, plants, animals, ecosystems, are

means, not ends, they have no moral standing are beyond

the sphere of moral accountability

1. they do not have moral standing, a soul, reason,

consciousness

2. and we do not believe that they are enchanted, holy,

or divine - natural world is mechanism

3. matter in motion has no inherent value, no intrinsic

value

4. San Francisco Peaks near Flagstaff are sacred to

Hopi and Navajo, built a ski resort

5. Devil's Tower is sacred, 600 climbers a year

B. Scientific world view - given articulation by Descartes

1. the world is extended substance, matter in motion,

following the laws of cause and effect -- it is

disenchanted

2. animals are just matter in motion, therefore animals

are absolutely, metaphysically separate from humans,

no reason

3. goal of man is mastery and control of nature

C. Marx

1. nature is to be transformed to fulfill needs, digestion

or enjoyment, it has a use value, no inherent value

2. nature is man's inorganic body, means to life, and

the material, object, and instrument of his life activity

3. Essence of man is utilizing nature as instrument and

means

E. Echoed throughout western philosophy, this is the

Enlightenment world view -- mastery and control of nature

1. Man is qualitatively different, the difference

is absolute, metaphysical, not relative

2. Nature has use value for man "Lord of the Earth"

3. Technology is a tool that gives man mastery and

control over nature and this tool keeps improving

4. other cultures are primitive, superstitious, without

value, ethnocentric

F. however the dominant religious tradition in wesern society

echoed the same view

1. Judeao-Christian traditon is highly anthropocentric

2. the creation myth establishes man's dominance and

qualitative difference

- man names the animals and is given dominion over them

- physical creation is to serve man

- man is mad in image of God

3. Repeated to Noah: "As the green herbs, I have delivered all flesh to you." as quoted by St. Thomas

Aquinas

"We refute the error of those who claim that it is a sin for man to kill brute animals . For animals are ordered to man's use in the natural course of things, according to divine providence. Consequently, man uses them without any injustice, either by killing them or employing them in any other way. "

4. Paul in New Testament continually inveighs against

the body

5. constant dichotomy in Bible wilderness = evil

A and E banished from Garden into "accursed"

"thorns and thistles"

Moses wanders in wilderness for forty years

before he finds the promise land

Jesus fasts in wilderness and is tempted

6. Puritans believed they were the new chosen people,

that America was wilderness and opportunity

A waste and howling wilderness

Where none inhabited

But hellish fiends and brutish men

That devils worshipped

"the snare of Satan", Devil's den

therefore need to be tamed, forests cut down,

marshes and wetlands filled in, animals killed,

create a new garden

Luther Standing Bear: "We do not think ofthe great open plains, the beautiful rolling hills, and the winding streams with tangle growth as "wild." Only to the white man was natauare a "wilderness" and only to him was the land "infested" with "wild" animals and "savage" people. To us it was tame . . . . Not until the hairy man from the East came and with brutal frenzy heaped injustices upon us and the faimlies we loved was it "wild" for us.