PEOPLE VS. WILDLIFE

A PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO ENVIRONMENTAL DECISION-MAKING

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-Abstract-

The condition of the environment is in a dire shape. All over the world, the natural environment is losing territory and, unfortunately, will continue to do so. More and more conflicting situations of wildlife and humans are arising. With these changing developments humans have an important role for the future and well-being of the planet. Environmental ethics is investigating the right attitude of humans towards nature. This thesis will search for the best theory to effectively come to conclusions for policy concerning natural environments. Based on the examples of the Albertine's Rift in Africa and the Hedwigepolder in the Netherlands, this thesis aims to prove the worth of a pragmatic approach to environmental decision making. Only with the collaboration of different stakeholders based on agreement and compromise is there a way to find solutions for conflict situations of scarce land and resources. For the sake of the environment it is imperative that humans stick up for values pertaining to the natural environment and that these values are taken into account in policy making decisions.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Human beings have a tremendous influence on nature and other species on this earth. This has not always been the case. If we look at it from a broad perspective, the prevalence of humans over nature is a fairly new development. In the long history of the planet, species normally only grew as far as the environment would allow. Often this meant that a certain species would grow until disease or scarcity would finally make the species decline or level off. During the majority of the history of the planet the different species led their lives according to what the seasons brought them, struggling for resources and fighting for survival. Human kind was also for a long time bound by these forces of nature and the environment. However, with the support of all sorts of technological inventions, man in Western society was able for the most part to overcome the boundaries of scarcity and natural forces.

Nature used to be perceived as a fearsome force that could crush humans in a second. For the greatest part of our humble history we were always in a struggle to survive against for instance forces of the weather, scarcity, animals, diseases and also dependant on whatever nature offered. Only recently mankind has "won" the battle against nature. Living in the Western world conditions changed tremendously compared to the days of mere struggle and survival. This shift has posited nature in a role subordinate to humans. With this power humans now also have different responsibilities. We do not lose our lives as frequently as a few centuries ago but we still are highly dependant on nature. With this new status, a new way of thinking about the relation between humans and the natural world is necessary. It is now not human kind that should be afraid of too little persistence, it is nature that has lost territory and continues to do so. New problems and dilemmas have emerged in the battle of mankind versus nature.

An example of the new dilemmas of the relation between humans and nature is the situation as it is in the Albertine's Rift in Uganda[1], where there is competition for land between people and wildlife because of the growing population and the scarcity of land and resources. There is also a humanitarian crisis that has eluded the world's attention whilst it has been going on for more than a decade. The troubled area spreads out over the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda and Rwanda. The area is troubled in many respects but the main problem is the fact that there are not enough land and resources for everyone. The land of Albertine Rift is extremely rich because of the fertile volcanic soil (Nyiragongo volcano last erupted in 2002), the high altitude which keeps the mosquito's and their diseases away, plentiful rain and its biodiversity (it is the home of gorillas, okapis, lions, hippos, elephants, dozens of rare birds, and on top of that minerals such as gold, tin and coltan, the metal used in microchips). This fertility caused people to crowd into the landscape, cutting down more and more forest to increase farming and grazing land. The paradox is that the richness of the landscape eventually led to scarcity.

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[1] Draper, R., *Rift in Paradise,* National Geographic November 2011

In 1952 Queen Elizabeth Park was established upholding the highest biomass of large mammals of any place on earth.[2] However, over the years the desperate villagers and poachers raided the park bringing down the numbers of elephants, hippos and lions. The number of elephants had dropped in 1980 from 3000 to 150. In May 2010 the bodies of five dead lions were found in the Queen Elizabeth Park. Afterwards two cow carcasses were found nearby that had been laced with a pesticide called carbofuran. Inhabitants of the village Hamukungu, located within the boundaries of the park, are being accused of killing the lions but they aren't prosecuted since there is a lack of proof. The number of villagers has increased enormously and with that also the number of cattle. The shortage of space has created a conflict between villagers and rangers. The villagers sneak into the park to let their cattle graze, presenting an easy snack of cow meat to the lions living in the park. Where the villagers want to provide for their family, the rangers are trying to protect the wildlife.

Another example of the new dilemmas, currently debated in Dutch politics, is the case of the Hedwigepolder. Needless to say, this problem is from a completely different magnitude and severity. The Hedwigepolder concerns a small area that might be flooded for the compensation of natural territory that is lost because of the improvement of access to the harbour of Antwerp. Here the stakes and culture of the inhabitants are opposed to financial and environmental interests of Antwerp and eventually also the European Union.

These developments can give rise to different opinions and views on how to deal with changes in the environment. With this new status quo, a new way of thinking about the relation of humans and the natural world is open for discussion. One could argue that we should protect as much nature and wildlife as possible, NGOs such as Greenpeace seem to go for such a normative framework. One could also argue that nature should only be preserved as long as it is useful for humans, relying more on an anthropocentric and economic worldview. Such theories about the environment have evolved especially in the second half of the 20th century and with this development environmental ethics was born. For some forty years there has been a debate within environmental ethics surrounding the attitude of humans towards nature.[3] Despite the effort of ethicists there can be no doubt about the loss of territory of nature. This thesis will look at different theories within environmental ethics and will examine which theories can best convince policy makers.

With present day developments one can easily grasp the width of this issue. Almost everybody in the world can observe that the natural environment is being sacrificed for all sorts of reasons. In general, nature is making way for humans or for the purposes of humans. Although we can all detect this development there still doesn't seem to be much we are doing against this process. There are NGOs and international organizations who are fighting for the case but these groups continue to be considerably smaller than economically based companies. From this perspective, people find making money more important than the wellbeing of the environment. Americans have for instance indicated in a poll that they rather value economic growth than the

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[2] According to Andrew Plumptre, director of the Albertine Rift Programme of Wildlife Conservation Society

[3] Light, A. and Rolston III, H., *Environmental Ethics* An Anthology, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2003, p. 1

environment.[4] In this thesis I will look at some ethical theories which try to argue why the preservation of nature is of great importance as well. Sometimes the preservation of nature can even weigh more heavily than economic motives.

In the second chapter I will discuss what theory of environmental ethics can give the best answers concerning questions of policy. In this discussion, Deep Ecology of Arne Neass, Ecocentrism of Callicott, Weak Anthropocentrism of Norton and Environmental Pragmatism of Anthony Weston will be considered. These theories are chosen to show the contrast of on one hand two of the most important ecocentric theories, and on the other hand, two pragmatic theories. Environmental pragmatism focuses most on practical issues and less on matters such as intrinsic and noninstrumental values. Environmental pragmatism claims that the focus of traditional ecocentric theories on intrinsic value 'has needlessly divorced [environmental theory] from the practical issues of environmental protection and renewal'.[5] Environmental pragmatism has its downsides as well. It can for instance be too subjective or pluralistic. In the third chapter I will further elaborate the case for an environmental pragmatism and discuss different arguments within the polemics of environmental pragmatism. In the forth chapter I will investigate how environmental theory can be applied to specific cases, looking back at the case studies of the Albertine's Rift and the Hedwigepolder.

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[4] http://www.gallup.com/poll/153515/Americans-Prioritize-Economic-Growth-Environment.aspx
[5] Stephens, P., H., G., *Towards a Jamesian Environmental Philosophy*, Environmental Ethics, vol. 31, no. 2, 2009, p. 1

2. DIFFERENT THEORIES WITHIN ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

To further discuss the relationship between humans and nature this chapter examines different theories of environmental ethics. Environmental ethics is a discipline that investigates whether behaviour of humans that affect the natural environment is morally permissible or not. In this discussion the moral status (whether nature is morally considerable or not) and the value of nature come into play. Discussion points can for instance be how much forest we may destroy for human ends and how much natural environment we have to protect for the sake of nature's preservation. In general the theories in environmental ethics already agree that it's good to preserve the natural environment although there can be different ideas about to what extent we should protect nature. One of the main questions that environmental ethicists are trying to answer is why we need to protect the natural ecosystems of our planet. They are aimed at providing sound logical argumentation for the preservation of the natural environment. Arguments can for instance be: we have to protect the environment because it has value in itself (intrinsic value) or we have to protect the environment because nature is useful (instrumental value). So environmental ethics seems to have a more fundamental theoretical than a practical approach. Nevertheless, this fundamental perspective can eventually lead to more practical accomplishments because if we have good reasons for protecting the natural environment, we can convince people to actually make an effort to do so.

In this chapter I will discuss some ethical theories within environmental ethics and evaluate them. The main focus of this chapter will be to investigate what arguments are practically good for the environment in the sense that they are convincing enough to make people protect and preserve nature more.

First I will discuss Deep Ecology, a theory which advocates the intrinsic value of nature. Deep ecology is one of the most famous movements in environmentalism partly because it has radical political aims. An ecocentric theory which is equally well known but less radical will be the second point of discussion, namely Ecocentrism of Callicott. After Ecocentrism I will discuss the theory of Norton, a significant name within environmental ethics. Eventually I will come to the conclusion that there is something to be said for a different kind of environmental ethics. These arguments will be provided by a more pragmatic approach, represented in this chapter by Anthony Weston. We will see within his theory how environmental ethics actually can make a difference.

2.1 ECOCENTRISM: DEEP ECOLOGY

Ecocentrism comes from the idea that every organism is interrelated to its environment. One of the most striking movements of ecocentrism is Deep Ecology. According to the Deep Ecology movement nature is important because everything in this world is connected. So we are connected with the natural environment. We therefore cannot just destroy nature because we would be destroying a part of ourselves. Deep ecology

borrows its ideas and intuitions from profound mystical worldviews such as the perspectives of Buddhism, Taoism and of authors such as Spinoza and Thoreau. One of the main intuitions of deep ecology is that humans aren't separated from their environment.[6] The world isn't just a mechanical material process in which each part has a separate function. The world is rather a dynamic holistic creative whole where everything is connected in a deeper more fundamental way. As a consequence, deep ecology doesn't base its political and social ideas on economic and material growth, but on ecological sustainability. Its political and social wishes are quite radical. It favours a stop on every process that is draining the earth and even favours that the human population is reduced in number so that nature doesn't get squashed under our ever growing need for food and space to live.

The Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess made the distinction between 'shallow' and 'deep' ecology in 1972 which eventually evolved into a movement of deep ecology.[7] Shallow ecology is an anthropocentric view that sees humans as separate from their environment and as the source of all value. Deep ecology places intrinsic value in the biotic community as a whole where humans are just a link in the greater entity. Arne Naess criticizes mechanistic materialism to replace it with a view in which everything is internally and fundamentally related. This holistic view has far-reaching social, political and economic consequences. Whereas shallow ecology is comparable to natural resource management and conservation development central to most ecological views, deep ecology has radical implications in its ideology of ecological sustainability. Deep ecology aims for a rearrangement on the basis of a completely sustainable society, cultural and biological diversity, appropriate technology, establishing a sense of environment and removing industrial areas to replace them with rich ecosystems. The idea that one should decrease one's material standard of living to improve the quality of life by satisfying the depths of one's soul is based on intuition and for the most part subjective. Interestingly, Arne Naess tried to walk his talk by doing most of his thinking and writing in a self built hut isolated in the mountains to really experience the focus on vital needs such as water, warmth and shelter.

Deep ecology has strong and far reaching political goals and can therefore be criticized for its lack of practical feasibility. Arne Naess offers a set of principles as a platform for the basics of deep ecology.[8] These principle are an example of the far-reaching consequences. He states for example that humans have no right to reduce the richness and diversity of nature except to satisfy vital needs, and that the 'flourishing of non-human life *requires* a smaller human population'.[9] These principles are too demanding and therefore not acceptable in current policy making decisions of the political arena. Another comment, even supported by Arne Neass

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[6] Fox, W., *Deep Ecology: A New Philosophy of our Time,* 1984, in *Environmental Ethics* An Anthology, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2003, p. 252

[7] Naess, A., The shallow and the deep, long-range ecology movement. A summary. *Inquiry*, 1973, 16:95-100

[8] Naess, A., The Deep Ecology Movement: Some philosophical Aspects, 1986, in *Environmental Ethics* An Anthology, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2003, p. 264

[9] Ibid., p. 264

himself, is that the intuition of deep ecology cannot be proven. Although there are scientific theories supporting the holistic world view[10], real tangible proof is by definition not tenable:

> The material standard of living should be drastically reduced and the quality of life, in the sense of basic satisfaction in the depths of one's heart or soul, should be maintained or increased. This view is intuitive, as are all important views, in the sense that it can't be proven.[11]

Another critique is that if you rely on esoteric forms, a large part of the audience cannot connect with your argumentation. The view that there is a clear dividing line between nature and humans is still accepted in many theoretical frameworks. Even though it might seem selfish to green activists, it can also seem reasonable to care more about your fellow humans than nature in general. It is easier to argue from our human perspective, to argue from the value for humans. If something is of value for humans we know it is worth fighting for. If something is of value for something else, say the value of a forest, the case is less obvious. Therefore, anthropocentric views are easier to empathise with and argue for. Anthropocentrists would for instance say that the forest is worth fighting for because it has values for the community. This view often leads to poor treatment of nature because it is comparable to the mechanical economical world domination of humans. If forests only have values for humans sake, it is justified to cut down a lot of forest, for instance to give people nicer living space and more food.

2.2 ECOCENTRISM: CALLICOTT

There are also ethicists who have a less radical political and social agenda but who still assign fundamental value to nature. Callicott is such an author who focuses on the inherent value of natural objects. He bases his non anthropocentric theory on the Land Ethic of Aldo Leopold. He interpreted Leopold in such a way that ecosystems are an object of value independent of human values. Ecosystems have "integrity", they have their own goodness, they also are a moral subject and therefore need to be preserved. Callicott argues that ecological communities and not individuals are the locus of value in nature. Individuals only have value if they contribute to an eco-systematic process. To avoid the interpretation that individual specimens of any species might be sacrificed for the sake of the ecosystems integrity, Callicott specified a ranking on the basis of communitarian principles. This rank differentiates the moral obligations according to the intimacy of the community. This means that we have obligations towards the members of an intimate community (family, fellow citizens) that we may not have to animals in general.

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[10] Warwick Fox refers in his text to the theoretical physicist David Bohm. (*Environmental Ethics* An Anthology, p. 255)

[11] Fox, W., Deep Ecology: A New Philosophy of our Time, 1984, in *Environmental Ethics* An Anthology, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2003, p. 255

Callicot's Ecocentrism has a monistic structure because his ethical system is based on one principle of integrity. In moral monism the goal is to systemize moral intuitions on the basis of a few central principles. If the central principle is warranted, the whole system of moral directives is warranted. A moral principle can guide moral judgment in every situation. Ideally, unification can solve for every situation the moral obligation consistently. We can recognize moral monism in the theory of Callicott for it relates all the moral obligations to the principle of value of ecosystems combined with community based ranking. Norton criticizes the idea of moral monism in environmental ethics in his article *Integration or Reduction*.[12] According to Norton, monism has locked the discussion of environmental values in a "paralyzing dilemma" between the value of nature as instrumental or intrinsic.[13] Polarized thinking and the search for a monistic unified theory is a misguided goal according to Norton. Not only is the discussion leading away from consensus, it also hasn't been able to provide useful practical guidance for controversial problems in environmental policy. In moral monism the discussion is on the level of general and abstract principles to illustrate hypothetical cases. Norton favours a practical philosophy which is more problem oriented and designed to resolve specific problems in policy decisions.

The main message in the critique of Norton on Callicott is that he argues for an ethic that integrates pluralistic principles across multiple levels. He argues against reducing pluralistic principles which, systemized by an underlying value theory, recognizes only inherent value as the ontological unification. Norton proposes an anthropocentric outlook. Chapter three will discuss more of the pluralistic monistic debate.

2.3 WEAK ANTHROPOCENTRIC ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

Weak anthropocentrism of Norton is, contrary to strong anthropocentrism, against 'value systems which are purely exploitative of nature.' Nature has a worth for humans not just because it provides basic needs but also because it contributes to a rational world view. Human experience of nature can thus provide arguments for the preservation of nature. Norton argues that the protection of nature can be justified as being implied by the ideal of harmony with nature. The value of nature is not somewhere out there but can be judged by humans. The ideal of harmony with nature can be justified by spiritual grounds but also by fitting it in a rationally defensible world view. If a sense of harmony with nature becomes part of our worldview nature can fulfil a crucial role in the formation of our values. Norton's point is that human affinity with nature does not have to come from ontological statements about inherent values of natural objects. Kinship with nature can also come from the recognition that we share our long term needs for survival with other species which also benefit from sustainability and harmony.

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[12] Norton, B., G., Integration or Reduction: Two approaches to environmental values, in *Environmental Pragmatism,* Routledge, New York, 1996
[13] Ibid., p 106

Norton tries to avoid ontological commitments which are hard or impossible to prove. In his article, Norton makes a difference between felt preferences and considered preferences. He argues that the felt preferences are of a more pragmatic and direct nature. The considered preferences are of a more substantial character, people have good reasons and a belief system to prefer in this case. Nature doesn't just have a felt preference as an economic mechanical view would argue. Nature also has considered preference because 'nature assumes a crucial role in informing values by contributing to the formation of a rational world view, the criterion by which felt preferences are criticized'.[14]

Basically what Norton is saying is that nature has value to humans because nature contributes to a rational world view valuable for humans. By rational Norton means the post Darwinian framework that scientifically supports a worldview that includes ideals of living with harmony with nature. This is so because 'it can be argued that experiences of nature are essential in constructing a rational world view'.[15] Norton therefore doesn't make the main concern for environmental ethics that nature has intrinsic value that has to be protected. Instead, he says the stable functioning of on-going systems contributes to human values:

> Essential to this adjudication is the development of principles of conduct that respect the ongoing integrity of functioning ecosystems seen as wholes. In this way it transcends concern for individualistically expressed felt preferences and focus the attention on the stable functioning of ongoing systems.[16]

Norton describes his theory as a general argument for the preservation of nature and opposes an individualistic approach. According to me, Norton has done a good job by giving a logically sound argument for the preservation of nature but I do think that this argument is not appropriate for specific cases just because it is too general. The notions that Norton introduces, for instance integrity and harmony, are still only general concepts that need more explanation to be understood. When policy makers are trying to make decisions about the preservation of nature they wouldn't do this with Norton's argument in mind but think of more specific arguments. Maybe it is not good to generalise thinking about nature in such a way that there is only one argument not to harm it. To argue for common values of humans is less problematic because they have comprehensible similar qualities, such as autonomy and rationality. Nature is largely incomprehensible and different wherever you go. Thus the protection of nature needs more specific practical arguments which can be more convincing than one common value.

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[14] Norton, B. G., Environmental Ethics and Weak Anthropocentrism, 1984, in *Environmental Ethics* An Anthology, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2003, p. 172
[15] Ibid., p. 172
[16] Ibid., p. 173

2.4 BEYOND INTRINSIC VALUE: ENVIRONMENTAL PRAGMATISM

Norton is one of the founders of environmental pragmatism but pragmatism is better represented in the work of Anthony Weston. In a way, Norton already constructed an environmental ethics which has a more pragmatic approach because he argues for the use of nature for mankind. He did this because he felt that his predecessors had difficulties with grounding theories of intrinsic value of nature. Instead, he argued, it is easier to construct a theory which proves the importance of nature to mankind so that you don't have to make complicated ontological commitments.[17]

To overcome the difficulties other authors had, Norton tries to understand the value of nature as a value for humans. This value should then be taken into account when it comes to policy concerning the treatment or preservation of nature. The critique that pragmatism would give is that there is no overarching principle to protect nature. Instead, one has to discuss each case differently. Pragmatism is against final, fixed ends objectively grounding the entire field of human striving. Instead valuing is more of a desire which does not have to be grounded.

> We do not need to *ground* these values, pragmatists would say, but rather to situate them in their supporting contexts and to adjudicate their conflicts with others – a subtle enough difference at first glance, perhaps, but in fact a radical shift in philosophical perspective.[18]

Sometimes arguments for the preservation of the natural environment can be spiritual and sometimes more mechanical. The point is that we have to place them within context specific to a certain natural area. What pragmatic environmentalism is trying to say is that there are also practical concrete arguments that can be given for the preservation of wildlife. A general value of nature is often difficult to apply in practice; value is best described in terms of specific cases. Policy makers are sensitive to more practical examples such as the qualities and historical values that can belong to a specific part of nature. These qualities and historical values are often not generalizable, they are context specific.

Anthony Weston describes many of these values in his book *Back to Earth*[19] by telling stories and giving examples. The stories mostly consist of the positive influences nature has on man. For instance the rich sensory immersion, the extraordinary abilities of animals and our connection with nature poetically described by authors such as Snyder and Thoreau. His stories also consists of the negative influences man has on nature and he gives examples of some devastating effects of human actions.

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[17] Ibid., p. 172

[18] Weston, A., *Beyond Intrinsic Value: Pragmatism in Environmental Ethics,* 1985, *Environmental Ethics* An Anthology, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2003, p. 307

[19] Weston, A., *Back to Earth* Tomorrow's Environmentalism, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1994

2.5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Now that we have seen different theories for the preservation of nature we can come to some conclusions. Deep ecology refers to the spiritual importance of nature but it lacks I is based on intuition and it has far reaching political consequences. Therefore, it lacks persuasiveness and convincing arguments for policy makers. Ecocentrism of Callicott made ontological commitments which may not sound convincing in the policy making arena. Weak anthropocentric environmentalism has a good argument but still lacks concrete guidelines persuasiveness. Environmental pragmatism aims at providing more useful arguments by concentrating on a variety of historical, cultural and social values of a particular natural area. In the end, I believe environmental pragmatism is more practical because an unifying principle is not persuasive enough to actually convince policy makers to preserve the environment. Multiple reasons and argumentations can be useful for that particular end. As Norton stated, it is better to take all the different values together and integrate them into pragmatic statements about what is good policy concerning a particular environment. The ethical imperatives do not have to be derived from one abstract principle. To take a plurality of values into consideration is the best way because it stands closest to the way policy issues are actually addressed in real life. Arguments and values must be seen within a context and specific situations can better be seen separately.

> The woods may be valued not only as an expression of freedom and nobility, but also as a refuge for wildlife, and both of these values may in turn be explained by still other, not necessarily human-centered values.[20]

Pragmatism doesn't provide one overarching rule or argument for the protection of nature. Instead, it aims at looking at sound argumentation by placing arguments within the context of concrete examples. This also means that for every specific case we can't just apply the same rule. That doesn't exclude that the central argument of Ecocentrism might be useful, amongst other values, to a lot of cases.

For every case we have to think of the different pro's and con's for the preservation of wildlife. The value of nature can vary from time to time and from place to place. There is a variety of values surrounding our experience of nature:

> By extension we may think of multiple arcs circularities and feedback loops, multiple arcs returning to completion, so that the summation of those arcs is a rough amp of one's whole system of value.[21]

All arguments for the preservation of nature can be useful so it might be good to take a variety of them into account when we have to implement policy about nature. It should be noted that there are also downsides to

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[20] Weston, A., Beyond Intrinsic Value: Pragmatism in Environmental Ethics, 1985, *Environmental Ethics* An Anthology, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2003, p. 311
[21] Ibid, p. 311

the pragmatic approach. The values of pragmatism can be of any kind as long as they are pragmatic, as long as they are appropriate for the discussion. Therefore values can be arbitrary and it is also not clear, a priori, how to deal with conflicts between values. The possible pitfalls and difficulties of environmental pragmatism will be examined in the next chapter.

If you are really looking for an accurate theory about the environment it is best to look for logically sound truths. The point of pragmatism is that theories and values can be used as instruments for understanding what we will or should do, and what our policy concerning the environment is or should be. Theories and values are then rather instruments for the sake of the protection of the environment then a strive for knowledge or truth. You can say that pragmatism isn't the most accurate or truthful. Nonetheless, our intention was to search for the most convincing arguments and within that range pragmatism is most effective. We cannot put all the different natural environments on the same level, some are more valuable than others and thus need more protection. The environment is also different wherever you go, the value of the Sahara desert is completely different than the Niagara Falls. Because they are all different, policy concerning different natural environments will always take different values into consideration which are specific and concrete for each case. To evaluate an environmental issue you have to be flexible to approach the situation from different angles. To be practical one has to evaluate what values are of importance. Pragmatism can give substance to this and therefore fits best to argue for the preservation of the environment. If we look at the practical examples of nature we can see that a pragmatic variety of values are more fitting to convince policy makers that the natural environment has to be protected.

Take for instance the natural environment of Lapland. There are numerous values pertaining to this wide area. For instance, it is the living space of a variety of species, plants, but also native people, the Sami. The natives are highly dependent on nature because of the reindeer living in the area. Not only does the land stand for tradition and historical value to the people living there, it can also be valuable for people who want to learn more about these kinds of landscapes, for instance the readers of National Geographic, not to forget the priceless beauty it contains. To say it contributes to the understanding of a rational world view is then one value amongst many. Taking several values into consideration makes the area of Lapland much more precious an delicate. In this sense it becomes 'better to think of values more concretely, in all their richness and plurality'.[22]

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[22] Weston, A., Beyond Intrinsic Value: Pragmatism in Environmental Ethics, in *Environmental Pragmatism*, Routledge, New York, 1996, p. 295

3. ENVIRONMENTAL PRAGMATISM

Environmental pragmatism is a fairly new direction in environmental thought. As discussed in the previous chapter, environmental ethics has often been concerned with ontological claims and fundamental principles which can justify a right attitude of humans towards nature. One of the main points of environmental pragmatism is to lead the discussion away from theoretical debates and towards an agreement on practical guidelines. The pragmatist has grown weary of what they call the 'paralyzing' theoretical debate over inherent value and nonanthropocentrism. Therefore, pragmatism looks for ways to omit absolute and fundamental claims about nature to focus on real issues and problem solving policy.

Environmental pragmatism is described by a number of authors, put together in the book *Environmental Ethics*[23], edited by Andrew Light and Eric Katz. This collection of papers is the first comprehensive presentation of this new philosophical approach to environmental thought. However, whether literature succeeds in creating a clear and coherent image of the direction and methodology of this new approach remains to be seen. Due to the pragmatic approach of reconstruction with its experimental, improvisatory and pluralistic character, we might even expect a lack of a central systematic ethical construction. The aim of this chapter is to clarify the pragmatic approach and to look at it with a critical eye to examine its possible pitfalls.

Environmental pragmatism tries to connect to classical American pragmatic thought to discuss and explain real environmental issues. The first paragraph in this chapter outlines the main features of classical American pragmatism and the connection with environmental thought. This is necessary to construct a clear and coherent image of the environmental pragmatic approach. Thereafter, I will critically examine a discussion between different pragmatists and critics over the difficulties and strengths of this new approach.

3.1 DEWEY AND RORTY

Classical American Pragmatism originated around 1870 by authors such as Charles Sanders Pierce, William James and John Dewey. After a decline in influence in the first half of the twentieth century, it revived during the 1970s with authors such as Richard Rorty and Hilary Putnam. The founders of pragmatism barely wrote about environmental concerns since they wrote in a time where environmental problems weren't such a pressing issue. We can however, find insight in their theories which can contribute to the environmental debate today. What environmental pragmatists conclude from the pragmatic framework is that pragmatism is a philosophy of environments. A few central concepts of pragmatism are for instance the observation that "the human sphere is embedded at every point in the broader natural sphere" and that "each inevitably affects the

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[23] Light, A., Katz, E., *Environmental Pragmatism*, Routledge, New York, 1996

other in ways that are often impossible to predict, and that values emerge in the ongoing transactions between humans and environment".[24]

The view that human beings are in and a part of nature can for instance be found in the work of John Dewey.[25] Dewey, as an evolutionary naturalist, saw humans not as over and against nature but as a part of evolutionary history. Humans are different in the sense that our communication has enabled a complex social intercourse and self-reflection. This caused the unique possibility to deliberate about and exercise control over our habits and customs. It is thus a special relationship of choice and morality that we have with our environment.

Dewey's naturalism and his relation to environmental thought are described in the article *John Dewey's Pragmatic Naturalism* by Larry Hickman.[26] The view of nature is in line with a rather distinctive feature of pragmatism, namely radical empiricism.[27] Philosophical inquiry in this empiricism has a strong practical starting point. Instead of looking for one overarching theoretical principle, for instance a principle grounding morality, Dewey urges a bottom up approach starting with experience as the basis. Dewey is suggesting with his respect for experience that philosophy seeks more coherence with life as it is lived day by day. In experience we can find patterns and logic which can help to order and direct future events. It is here that we can find an account of his concept of nature. Since non cognitive experience is capable of grasping relations we can grasp what hangs together in all of nature (human and nonhuman) as part of our basic aesthetic experience. Dewey sees nature not as a thing in itself but rather as part of human understanding and something inextricably connected to humans.

> Nature is a construct, or cultural artefact, but is has not been constructed out of nothing. The raw materials of previous experiences and experiments, unanticipated events, chance insights, moments of aesthetic ecstasy, habits, traditions and institutions have all been continuously reshaped and refined by tools that have included religious rituals, philosophical treatises, novels, poems, scientific hypothesis, television documentaries, and many more.[28]

Nature in this sense is the perception and experience we have of nature and not an independent entity. This means that we are intimately involved with nonhuman nature through our experience. Without positing any transcendental claims, nonhuman nature can thus enter the domain of human concerns. Environmental

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[24] Parker, K., A., Pragmatism and Environmental Thought, in *Environmental Pragmatism*, Routledge, New York, 1996, p. 21

[25] Hickman, L., A., Nature as Culture: John Dewey's pragmatic naturalism, in *Environmental Pragmatism*, Routledge, New York, 1996, p. 51

[26] Hickman, L., A., Nature as Culture: John Dewey's pragmatic naturalism, in *Environmental Pragmatism*, Routledge, New York, 1996

[27] Dewey's empiricism is drawn form the radical empiricism of William James.

[28] Hickman, L., John Dewey's Pragmatic Naturalism, in *Environmental Pragmatism,* Routledge, New York, 1996 p. 53

pragmatists do believe that we are a part of the environment and that the environment is a part of us. Environment should thus be treated with seriousness since there is a fundamental relatedness among organisms and their environments. Human understanding is a process of development without any fixed settings. For Dewey the value of nature, as part of human inquiry, is very much like nature itself, a constantly evolving process. Dewey found his conception of naturalistic processes in the theory of Darwin.

> Through Darwin's attack on the notion of fixed species in biology, Dewey found a naturalistic mode for attacking fixities of all kinds, not the least of which entailed philosophers' proclivities for finding or establishing fixed truth.[29]

In Dewey's instrumentalism, nature is a complex of objects of knowledge in which our inquiry and deliberation of non-human nature is an ends-means relationship; conditions, tools and tasks are constantly re-evaluated and reconstructed. A few of the most important features of Dewey's naturalism are his fallibilism, his anti-transcendentalism, his anti-foundationalism, his radical empiricism and his constructivism. [30]

Where Dewey founded the basis of pragmatic thought, Rorty came with a new revolutionary brand of pragmatism. Despite the fact that they worked from different philosophical premises and principles, Dewey and Rorty both come to the conclusion 'that improving our modes of communication is an aesthetical and political imperative for pragmatic democratic flourishing'.[31] Rorty didn't write about the environment but his political social attitude can be helpful in understanding an environmental pragmatic approach. Rorty is important for his pragmatic approach to political issues. His liberal neo-pragmatism might be insufficient for achieving the goals of environmental sustainability but his organizational principles can be useful for environmental thought.

In the article *Compatibilism in Political Ecology*[32] Andrew Light clarifies political ecology on the basis of the framework of Rorty. Light poses that the urgency of the environmental crisis calls for a metaphilosophical environmental pragmatism to link practice to theory through action. The goal is to philosophize under influence of repeated experience. To explain this approach Light uses the public/private distinction drawn from Rorty's *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity.* Where Dewey found his starting point in experience, Rorty tries to place his pragmatism within philosophy of language. To achieve a desired pragmatic end, language must be used as an adaptive tool to cope with the natural and social environment. Rorty made a distinction between public and private vocabularies. Public vocabularies should be used for deliberation about public goods and social and political arrangements, private vocabularies are created for personal fulfilment and self-realization.

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[29] McClelland K., John Dewey and Richard Rorty: Qualitative Starting Points, *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (Summer, 2008), p. 417

[30] Hickman, L., John Dewey's Pragmatic Naturalism, in *Environmental Pragmatism,* Routledge, New York, 1996, p. 55

[31] McClelland K., John Dewey and Richard Rorty: Qualitative Starting Points, *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (Summer, 2008), pp. 414-415

[32] Light, A., Compatibilism in Political Ecology, *Environmental Pragmatism,* Routledge, New York, 1996

The point of pragmatism is that you can focus on inherent value and transcendental relationships in private, while publicly pursuing the best possible solutions to practical environmental questions. The goal of this public discourse is the hope for a better future. It is not the dogmatic and authoritarian claims of truth and goodness about the environment that prevail in the public sphere and in political ecology. It is rather the goal to use experience and language to support desired and pragmatic interests.

> The main thrust of both Dewey's and Rorty's works is therefore democratic in the sense of protecting the freedom to give a sincere and truthful account of oneself, and this includes no less the aesthetical freedom to establish new qualitative starting points. It becomes increasingly difficult to hold on to some overriding absolutist conception of Truth that will invariably decide among competing vocabularies. Whatever gets hashed out between two or more competing vocabularies *becomes* the truthfulness of the matter without reliance on some outside abstract eternal value.[33]

The central message of environmental pragmatism is to keep the discussion away from theoretical delays and work towards a practical debate for environmental goals that we ought to strive for. Environmental pragmatism also stands for the possibility to say publicly what is at stake and why ecological concerns are worth fighting for. Pluralism for environmental pragmatism entails that we should acknowledge different values, regardless of whether they have the same theoretical underpinnings. Pragmatists are against a fundamental theoretical underpinning as the only foundation of an ethical principle so they prefer a shift to link theory with practice.

Ethics has a special relationship with pragmatism. What is right and what we ought to do is dependant on the system of values. Pragmatism is against the dream of Enlightenment which hopes for a universally valid ethical theory. Values for a pragmatist arise in a dynamic and 'infinitely complex system of organisms-in-environment' so the rightness of an action is largely system dependant.[34] Pragmatic ethics is an endeavour that creatively makes its way through different angles and dilemmas instead of applying one foundational principle and perspective to every situation. Pragmatism is thus against an absolute foundation for evaluating the rightness of our actions. However, the fact that there will always be difference and change doesn't mean we can't have some sort of similarity and constancy. The creative mediation of values of conflicting claims to value can consolidate into forms of social agreements. They must be constantly re-evaluated, reconstructed and readjusted to try to make life on the planet relatively better than it is. Pragmatism thus also has a political social philosophy in which the public sphere needs to be involved to constantly reform the social institutions. As we will see later on, this can be translated into a deliberative democracy theory.

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[33] McClelland K., John Dewey and Richard Rorty: Qualitative Starting Points, *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (Summer, 2008), p. 437

[34] Parker, K., A., Pragmatism and Environmental Thought, in *Environmental Pragmatism*, Routledge, New York, 1996, p. 26

After seeing the most important advocates of environmental pragmatism we will now look into some critical remarks by different authors.

3.2 MORAL PLURALISM VS. MORAL MONISM

According to the pragmatists we should uphold a 'relational view of organism-environment that has pluralistic dimensions' to conclude that 'environments are contextually located and significant solutions to problematic situations emerge within such contextually situated environments'.[35] Moral pluralism advocates not inflexible moral rules but rather context specific rules for effective play in various situations. So there is no universal principle or a hierarchical system of principles but different considerations for different cases. This specific point of moral pluralism is disputed in a debate of moral monism against moral pluralism. In *The Case Against Moral Pluralism[36],* Callicott confirms his belief in moral monism and he argues against moral pluralism since it fails to specify what to do if certain imperatives are opposed to each other. Callicott wanted to construct an ethic of the environment and not a management ethic for the use of the environment. In *On Callicott's Case Against Moral Pluralism[37],* Anthony Weston reacts to Callicott's criticism.

Callicott calls the hard choice between contradictory indications the 'Achilles heel' of moral pluralism. If one of the independent principles or values requires an action while another independent principle requires a different action the pluralist theory yields contradictory recommendations. An attempt to act 'upon inconsistent or mutually contradictory ethical principles results in frustration of action altogether or in actions that are either incoherent or mutually cancelling.'[38] An answer to this problematic issue, Callicott admits, is given by Christopher Stone:

> Stone asks us to think of various maps of a single territory. One map might show human population distribution, another land-use patterns, a third the vegetation types, a fourth contours, and so on. If we regard a situation in which we must do something as the "territory" and various theories as the "maps" (or "planes," as Stone later calls them), we may overlay the "planes"/"maps" and see if they indicate a clear path of action.[39]

A multiplicity of principles might converge on one single action. However, according to Callicott, Stone fails to tell specifically what to do in actual cases such as a bison that is trapped in a river. Animal welfare ethics may

[35] Rosenthal., S., B., & Buchholz., A., How Pragmatism is an Environmental Ethic, in *Environmental Pragmatism,* Routledge, New York, 1996, p. 40-41

[36] Callicott, J. B., The Case Against Moral Pluralism, *Environmental Ethics*, vol. 12, no. 2, 1990

[37] Weston, A., On Callicott's Case Against Moral Pluralism, *Environmental Ethics*, vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 283 – 286, 1991

[38] Callicott, J. B., The Case Against Moral Pluralism, *Environmental Ethics*, vol. 12, no. 2, 1990, p. 110

[39] Ibid, p. 110

tell us to take care of individual animals but to protect ecosystems means to let the ecosystems take their own course.[40] Stone's reply is that the pluralist is to apply a 'lexical procedure' for reaching a decision. Lexical means in this sense that one ought to apply a hierarchical order to prioritize. Callicott questions whether this approach is still part of a pluralistic ethic since it is not possible to prioritize without a monistic overarching principle. Another problem of moral pluralism is that it can lead to promiscuity.

> With a variety of theories at our disposal, each indicating different, inconsistent, or contradictory courses of action, we may be tempted to espouse the one that seems most convenient or self-serving in the circumstances.[41]

The question then arises whether moral pluralism makes it possible for a 'box of tools to work his or her way through the moral complexities of life' or if it is maybe a 'bag of tricks to rationalize his or her convenience or self-interest'.[42] Without a comprehensive system and a metaphysical ethical grounding there seems to be an arbitrary feature guiding our decisions.

> Absent such a comprehensive model to focus and order our competing moral concerns, we are left with kaleidoscopic and random, albeit enriched, moral lives-individually. Collectively, socially, we are left with irreconcilable fractional disputes.[43]

Callicott worries that without a comprehensive theoretical system we have no trust in systemized ethical systems. Without a metaphysical grounding what will be left is an arbitrary postmodernist deconstructive system. This shows exactly what is wrong with moral pluralism, the fact that there is no grounding and no connection to a metaphysical system or as Callicott calls it 'the disengagement of ethics from metaphysics and moral philosophy'.[44] Humans have a deep need and a mighty strive for 'consistency, coherency, and closure in our personal and shared outlook on the world and on ourselves in relation to the world and to one another'.[45] Stone is sceptical that a higher truth in a metaphysical sense may be reached. Callicott hopes that people find an intellectual construct that systemizes and comprehends our experience, a univocal ethical theory with a coherent hierarchical multiplicity of moral relationships.

> We must operate effectively within a multiplicity of moral spheres -family obligations, the duties associated with our professional lives, our public lives, our interspecies, and ecosystemic and biospheric relationships- each with its very different set of demands that often compete,

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[40] An example of such a dilemma of interference into a natural ecosystem is in the Dutch Oostvaardersplassen. While the animals are starving in the winter, authorities decided not to interfere with the natural course of nature. http://dier-en-natuur.infonu.nl/natuur/64901-dilemma-in-de-oostvaardersplassen.html

[41] Ibid., p. 110-111

[42] Ibid., p. 111

[43] Ibid., p. 116

[44] Ibid., p. 120

[45] Ibid., p. 115

one with another. At the same time we feel (or at least I feel) that we must maintain a coherent sense of self and world, a unified moral world view. Such unity enables us rationally to select among or balance out the contradictory or inconsistent demands made upon us when the multiple social circles in which we operate overlap and come into conflict. More importantly, a unified world view gives our lives purpose, direction, coherency, and sanity.[46]

To sum up the criticisms of Callicott we can detect three different arguments. The first one is the difficulty that arises when two different values or principles are opposed to each other. The second one is the possibility that the arbitrary character of the principles and arguments of pluralistic ethics might lead to a rationalization and a cover-up for self interest. The third point of critique consists in the lack of a coherent unified metaphysical system which gives structure, direction and purpose.

The first argument of the contradictory principles is quite easily dismissed by Weston because Callicott also notes that it is not a serious problem. Monistic theories also run aground on such practical contradictions for instance with conflicting categorical duties. So the contradictory duties is a problem for both pluralistic and monistic ethical theories.[47] However, this doesn't make it less of a problem. The second argument is not entirely addressed by Weston, although he says something about the fact that one cannot avoid a pluralistic feature in a discussion about the global concerns today. The pluralistic ethic senses that 'diversity and variety run too deep' and for an actual unity to be achieved may be idle hope. The point of the pragmatist is to realize that an absolute and unifying solution will never be at hand. Environmental issues will always have different angles and perspectives to approach. In the process of trying to construct what policy to perform we need to use our experience and language to formulate what are the different values and beliefs. Pragmatism recognizes that the 'struggle itself is a worthy and probably permanent state'.[48] In the process of determining policy we also find a constant struggle for the right course of action. We haven't found one overarching value that can guide us in our attitude towards nature. Rather, our attitude towards nature is a constant inquiry and investigation to value and appreciate the changing values of nature. A plurality of values seen within context and open for re-evaluation thus stands closer to our day to day experience concerning environmental policy making.

The main comment on the critique of Callicott is about the unifying metaphysical framework. Weston replies as follows.

The flaw in this argument, I believe, is that it greatly overrates the role of metaphysical views in shaping and justifying values. Surely what we need is a more "ecological" view of the evolution of

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[46] Ibid., p. 121

[47] Ibid., p. 120.

[48] Weston, A., On Callicott's Case Against Moral Pluralism, *Environmental Ethics*, vol. 13, no. 3, 1991, p. 285

values. Values and their larger justificatory and explanatory contexts evolve together. It is not a matter of deducing morals from metaphysics, but of co-evolving morals and metaphysics.[49]

It is Weston's opinion that there is no specific need to construct a unifying system since this is too demanding and "narrowing" a project. Different perspectives should be judged in terms of their workability. In the end we must look for persuasive theories and since there are always different approaches to environmental concerns - protection of species, animal well being, sufficient wild life and natural areas- it is better to accept a plurality of moral principles and values to grasp the richness of reality. If a principle is useful for the protection of the natural environment it must be taken into consideration, regardless what its position is in a so called hierarchical system of principles. Another reply to the coherent metaphysical argument is that a metaphysical system usually does not get major public support. Metaphysical claims do not seem to appeal to those who want to change our attitude towards nature for the better. The argument we need in environmental ethics 'speak narrative and "vernacular" tongues rather than the language of ethical theory and unified metaphysics'.[50]

3.3 IS ENVIRONMENTAL PRAGMATISM A PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH?

In *Environmental Pragmatism and Environmental Ethics: A Bad Marriage!* Lars Samuelsson argues that a position of environmental pragmatism isn't a philosophical position at all.[51] Samuelsson mainly focuses his critique on the dissociation from theoretical debates. Samuelsson defines environmental pragmatism as the shift from theoretical debates to more practical considerations. Another characteristic he mentions is the moral pluralism advocated by the pragmatist. He thinks the specific turn away from theoretical debates (mainly inherent value debate) is not philosophical.

> The reason is simply that environmental pragmatism, rather than seeking clarity on puzzling problems, advises us to avoid such problems (or at least to sidestep them for pragmatic reasons).[52]

Philosophy is defined in a broad sense as 'seeking clearness about puzzling problems'.[53] According to Samuelsson, an approach that doesn't try to do so is not a philosophical approach. In the same sense the philosopher should not, out of pragmatic reasons, dismiss or avoid the discussion of whether or not there is a

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[49] Weston, A., On Callicott's Case Against Moral Pluralism, *Environmental Ethics*, vol. 13, no. 3, 1991, p. 284
[50] Ibid., p. 286
[51] Samuelsson, L., *Environmental Pragmatism and Environmental Philosophy: A bad Marriage!,* Environmental Ethics, vol. 32, no. 4, pp. 405 - 415, 2010
[52] Samuelsson, L., *Environmental Pragmatism and Environmental Philosophy: A bad Marriage!,* Environmental Ethics, 2010, vol. 32, no. 4, p. 408
[53] Ibid., p. 408

free will (the lack of a free will might threaten morality). It is the task of the philosopher to investigate these kinds of issues.

Environmental pragmatists believe that nothing useful can come from a discussion about inherent values. This is not a philosophical reason according to Samuelsson since a lot of philosophical debates do not have a direct practical use. Philosophy is theoretical by nature. He is also of the opinion that a drive to 'save nature' is not a necessary prerequisite for environmental thought; to be dispassionate and unbiased usually is a merit in a philosophical debate.

It may be objected that the issue of intrinsic value is not a problem that puzzles us but this point is clearly false according to Samuelsson since it is puzzling indeed. It is puzzling because it concerns value questions in general. Samuelsson argues that the question of inherent value is a valuable discussion that must be investigated. The point however of pragmatism is that one still is allowed to investigate inherent value in a private setting. In a public discourse about what is good policy for environmental issues this theoretical claim is redundant. It is the task of pragmatism to see what kind of values stand closer to our experience and to our discourse in public debates. The goal is not to make these theoretical debates disappear but the aim is merely to look for persuasive arguments for these public debates.

My personal reply to Samuelsson is that environmental pragmatism is also concerned with problems that puzzle us. It gives answers to what the origins of our values and beliefs are. Our values and beliefs are grounded in our experience and the language that comes from our public discourse. These are real tangible and workable values and not some distant transcendental values. Environmental pragmatism is an ethic which tries to give direction to what is right or wrong in the discussion about environmental concerns, direction about what we should do and why we should do this. Though it criticizes a theoretical theory of inherent value, it doesn't eschew theoretical claims itself. The only difference is that the basis is practical in the sense of experience and language. Taking an ethical pluralistic position is a philosophical position because it means that you embrace a system of different values based on experience and public discourse. Environmental pragmatism shows us criticism of theoretical frameworks, it shows us concrete purposes and general goals in human endeavour (to pragmatically and progressively organize human society), it shows an image of a Darwinian existential reality and it shows us a way to a more fruitful relation of philosophy with human life as it is lived day by day. This makes environmental pragmatism a philosophical approach.

Postmodernism is also against theoretical foundations, much like environmental pragmatism. Postmodernism and environmental pragmatism both can be said to be philosophical; Callicott even made a comparison between the two.[54] Very much like postmodernism, environmental pragmatism claims that the ultimately unified theory will never be found. Continuing to reconsider, reconstruct, and to improve our existing value system is a process that is never finished. It is not just the assumption that a few basic premises

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[54] Callicott, J. B., The Case Against Moral Pluralism, *Environmental Ethics*, vol. 12, no. 2, 1990

are workable and thus good, as Samuelsson suggests. It is rather the constant process of public discourse and political and social imperatives that publicly justify what ought to be done concerning the natural environment. The pragmatist knows as no other to remain open and sceptical about the ruling values and debates.

3.4 WESTON KATZ DEBATE

Eric Katz is another author that has openly criticized environmental pragmatism. In *Searching for Intrinsic Value* Katz argues that a workable environmental ethic shares many fundamental concepts with pragmatism but 'it cannot ultimately rest on the values of pragmatism, for these values are inextricably bound up with human desires and interest'.[55] According to Katz environmental pragmatism isn't a logically necessary shift in environmental ethics. Environmental pragmatism claims to solve the obstacle of dualisms of traditional value theory. Justification for an environmental ethics attempts to reveal purposes behind the protection of the environment. Katz's point is that human interest is not the only justification. Katz notes that an argument for environmental ethics based on intrinsic value would be 'fundamentally mistaken'. What pragmatists fail to realize is that ecocentric theories also don't assume such a basis for environmental ethics. He points for instance to the Ecocentrism of Callicott in which intrinsic value is dependent on the existence of a valuing consciousness, making it not the independent basis of environmental ethics.

Katz acknowledges that certain key elements of pragmatism fit with environmental ethics. But he doesn't see the need to shift to pragmatism as the most adequate theory of environmental ethics. Pragmatism is only part of the determination of the values of nature. Katz also refers to a point made by Callicott concerning the arbitrary character of pragmatic argumentation. Pragmatism assumes that ethical obligation derives from our experience of what is useful. Anything an agent finds useful in his experiences, might then be justified with pragmatism. The need to protect just as the urge to destroy might then be justified in such a framework. Katz concludes that 'it is good old-fashioned subjectivism that is the problem here'.[56]

It is true that pragmatism places the value of nature on the experience that humans have in relation with nature. It is on the basis of desires and beliefs of humans that nature gets its value. Since everyone will have a different value system this cannot be the basis for an environmental ethic; it will result in a relativism of values.

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[55] Katz, E., Searching for Intrinsic Value: Pragmatism and despair in environmental ethics, in *Environmental Pragmatism,* Routledge, New York, 1996, p. 308
[56] Ibid., p. 315

The key point here is that human desires, interests, or experience cannot be the source of moral obligations to protect the environment. Human desires, interests and experience are only contingently related to the continued existence of wild nature as such.[57]

Anthony Weston responds to this article in *Unfair to Swamps a Reply to Katz*. The common ground lacks because the basis of human interest is not something that can be overcome by any unified ethical project. We simply have to deal with the complexity and diversity of values involved in the environment.

> Pragmatism denies that 'ethical truth' in this sense is a coherent notion, though, and it is not clear how many environmental philosophers still subscribe to it. But otherwise some sort of "swamp" is more or less our actual situation, and the fact that pragmatism attempts to deal with it, so far from being an objection, only reflects its *realism*.[58]

Katz in his turns replies to this comment of Weston by arguing for the need for a foundation. It is prudent to build a house on foundations 'even in regions where earthquakes cause the ground to move'.[59]

3.5 CONCLUSIONS

To conclude this chapter it is useful to summarize the different subjects of the discussion. The basis of environmental pragmatism are Classical pragmatism and the new pragmatism of Rorty. Grown weary of the theoretical foundations and the unifying systems, pragmatists have argued for a philosophical approach to value without any fixities. Instead of searching for the foundational principle, pragmatists argue for an approach that sees reality as pluralistic and approachable through different angles and perspectives. However, there are some critical remarks that can be made if there is an absence of a coherent value system. As we saw in the criticism of Callicott, there is a lack of a metaphysical grounding, which according to him stands in the way of a uniting and hopeful direction much needed in environmental ethics. For Samuelsson, the environmental pragmatic approach can not be called a philosophy at all since it avoids the vital philosophical theoretical debates. This is, however, not entirely the case since pragmatism does have a theoretical debate only not about intrinsic value. With the critique of Katz we found arguments that posits the pragmatic approach as relativistic and subjective.

Despite all the critical remarks there is something to be said for a pragmatic approach to environmental issues. In our constant strive to organize our relationship towards nature, it is valuable to have a justification for the protection and preservation of nature. Environmental pragmatism is a theory that is able to

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[57] Ibid., p. 315

[58] Weston, A., Katz, E., Unfair to swamps; Unfair to foundations, *Environmental Pragmatism*, Routledge, New York, 1996, p. 321-322

[59] Ibid., p. 323

construct arguments which are philosophically based but which also might appeal to policy making decisions. It is also able to explain why the political debate around the natural environment is always going to be strangled with different angles and perspectives. We need a public discussion because there are different positions in society and there is not one clearly better or more valid than the other. To construct a fair and just process, different positions have to be considered and weighed to strive for agreement and compromise. For this reason the framework of pluralism and the focus on public discussion are the best way to tackle problems in society and problems of conflict between wildlife and nature. It might have arbitrary and subjective tendencies because it only looks at the workable solutions based on experience and public discourse. On the other hand it is realistic in the sense that it reflects political argumentation as it is and always will be. It eventually tries to construct the best arguments based on persuasive values to change something in the relation we have with nature.

A philosophical theory is convincing if it can explain the experience we have with day to day issues. Experience tells us there are different values and different arguments to protect the environment. A proof of this fact is the variety of theories in environmental ethics. Also in public and political debate we can detect different arguments with different groundings and backgrounds. A philosophical theory is convincing if it finds coherence with life as it is lived day by day. Reality teaches us there are certain incommensurable arguments of different stakeholders. Different groups in society may find they have a claim for the same piece of land. We will see examples of conflicts in the next chapter. Ethical theory should recognize that there are different values which can be equally important in the debate. John Kekes argues for such a pluralistic ethics in *The Morality of Pluralism*:

> Many values conflict because they are incommensurable and incompatible and yet we want to realize them. The resolution of such conflicts depends on shaping our attitudes towards the conflicting values. This is done by ranking the values. Their comparative ranks depend on their importance within the conception of good life of the person who faces it the conflict. And although there is a plurality of reasonable conceptions and rankings, it is still possible to criticize and justify them.[60]

By recognizing the practical basis we can deliberate on what is the right thing to do for the future. Theoretical truth and practical guidelines must not be seen separate but they are connected through our constant strive to deliberate and improve our attitude towards the future. Environmental pragmatism is successful in linking practice to theory through action.

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[60] Kekes, J., *The Morality of Pluralism*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1993, p. 79

4. ENVIRONMENTAL PRAGMATISM APPLIED TO ENVIRONMENTAL DILEMMAS

Pragmatism is known for its practical emphasis. The practical starting point is indispensable in an exposition of environmental pragmatism. Surely, at one point or another, the environmental pragmatist is bound to turn his argumentation towards practical implications. Meanwhile, pragmatism doesn't seem to have a clear and coherent solution for the different problems we are facing in the environmental discussion. If environmental pragmatism wants to be credible it has to translate its theoretical conclusions into public policy. In other words, environmental pragmatism has to give practical solutions for environmental problems. To clarify what up till now has been an abstract and fundamental discussion, this chapter will focus on examples of current environmental issues to connect the pragmatic method with solutions of environmental problems. First, I will discuss the case of the Albertine's Rift, an example of direct conflict between people and wildlife. After that an investigation of a less severe conflict in the Netherlands will follow, the Hedwigepolder, where economic and environmental aims of the EU are opposed to the interests of the local community of farmers and inhabitants.

An important part of the discussion of these examples will consist of the solutions of the different authors in environmental pragmatism. First we will look at what different ethicist might say concerning the different problems. Then we will see what resolution an environmental pragmatist has to offer.

4.1 ALBERTINE'S RIFT: CONFLICT BETWEEN PEOPLE AND WILDLIFE

The conflict between humans and wildlife is one of the most difficult problems of environmentalists since it is one of the major threats to conservation.[61] It is not a problem pertaining to a particular area but it can be found all over the world. Human survival depends on the land that we are able to utilize for food and places to live. The same thing goes for wildlife which also depends on the natural habitat for their survival. The problem, which seems as old as the hills, arises when there are two different groups both want the same piece of land. Unfortunately, this conflict is usually not settled by a fair trial. With the ever expanding human population and the shrinkage of the wildlife population one can guess who is, in general terms, on the wining side. Even though the circumstances are often different, certain trends are recognizable in the competition for land and resources. These problems arise mostly in areas which are fertile, where there are possibilities to maintain a rich life sustaining agriculture. The paradox of certain conflict situations is that the abundance eventually leads to scarcity since the favourable living conditions attract animals and humans to crowd into the area. This is starting to cause an overpopulation in which, most of the time, humans tend to take more and more land out of the hands of Mother Nature.

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[61] Hill, C.M., Osborn, F.V. & Plumptre, A.J. *Albertine Rift Technical Reports, vol. 1- Human-Wildlife Conflict*, p.5

An example of an area in which a competition for land and resources has been going on is Abertine's Rift, Africa. Albertine's Rift has important ecosystems with high biodiversity spreading out over the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania. Volcanic soil makes the area particularly fertile and this fertility makes the area favourable for humans and wildlife alike. In this area the competition for land and resources is a continuous struggle. On the one hand there are environmentalists who protect the natural environment, for instance the people working at national parks and reserves. On the other hand the local community of inhabitants tries to make a living for themselves by transforming the natural environment into farming and grazing land. The land has become scarcer than ever, so occasionally farmers move into the national parks in order to provide a living for their families. This is causing the natural habitat of wildlife to shrink considerably.

Crop raiding, a phenomenon detectable in multiple countries all over the world, is one of the problems occurring in the Albertine's Rift. Farmers hardly get any assistance of the government concerning crop raiding so they often take the law into their own hands. The methods they employ such as poisoning, chasing and caging, often cause unnecessary suffering to the animals and because of these methods thousands of animals are killed every year. With the support of government permits, 5500 permits in Tanzania in the year 2000, a lucrative trade developed of animals for laboratory use.[62] Another issue of the conflict is the water supply. Since there can be a shortage of water in dry areas, the farmers put a fence around the natural water resources so that wildlife cannot reach it any longer. Another example is the predation of livestock. Cattle and wild animals are usually not a good combination since the cattle can be an easy snack for animals such as lions in Africa, tigers in Asia or wolves in Asia, North America and Eastern Europe. These large predators are often prosecuted for their attacks on the livestock of the farmers.

People's involvement with wildlife has different sociological, economic and cultural aspects. There are also a variety of stakeholders such as the wildlife, the local community, the farmers and inhabitants, the government, agencies and international organisations who try to resolve the problem. There are numerous situations in which the conflict between wildlife and people can arise and the solutions are often not a quick fix but rather a long lasting program.

4.2 HEDWIGEPOLDER: POLITICAL DILEMMA

The Hedwigepolder is a subject of discussion for politics in the Netherlands that has been going on for seven years. Despite the long duration, Dutch politicians haven't been able to construct a solution for this dilemma.[63] The discussion is about the future of a drained part (polder) of the Dutch province Zeeland. The

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[62] Sillero-Zubiri, C., & Switzer, D., *Crop raiding primates: Searching for alternative, humane ways to resolve conflict with farmers in Africa*, p. 12

[63] http://m.nrc.nl/nieuws/2012/05/25/voorlopig-nog-geen-besluit-over-ontpoldering-hedwige/

Hedwigepolder is close to the Belgian border and next to the river Schelde. The surface of the polder consists of 2,99 square kilometres.[64]

The story starts with the deepening of the river Schelde. The deepening of the Schelde is of great importance for the harbour of Antwerp.[65] Every year the deepening of the Schelde is delayed there is an economic loss of 70 million euro's because big boats won't be able to access the harbour of Antwerp.[66] The trouble with the deepening of the river is that it causes damage to the natural area of Westerschelde, a protected European area and part of the Natura-2000[67]. The deepening of a river makes the width of the river decrease. As a consequence, less semi wet/dry areas evolve which are foraging areas for migratory birds. The deepening of the river makes the river banks dry up and this makes it harder for birds to find food. In 2005, the Belgian province of Flanders made the agreement with the Netherlands that a polder of farmland would be flooded to restore and compensate an environment for migratory birds. The agreement stated that the whole area of the Hedwigepolder would be flooded so that a natural habitat for birds would be created.

In the original agreement of 2005 the flooding of the polder would be paid by the province of Flanders since it was their duty to compensate for the lost nature. It was on their account that the river was deepened and it was their task to compensate for loss of the nature area Westerschelde. They had to fulfil the environmental demands of the European Union. Any alternative plan has to be paid by the Dutch government. In 2008 a commission under supervision of Ed Nijpels concluded that it was best for the economy and for nature to flood the Hedwigepolder exactly like was agreed upon in the original agreement of 2005[68]. However, after a political discussion, the Dutch government thought it was necessary to come with a different plan. The main reason of a different approach was the dissatisfaction of the people living in the Dutch province Zeeland. They didn't feel it was right to give the dried land back to the sea. The culture of the people of Zeeland is to fight and thwart the forces of the sea. For the inhabitants of Zeeland it is unthinkable to just give the land back to the sea. Preservation of bird-life organizations demanded that the polder would be flooded to restore a natural environment for birds.

What followed were several contradictory political statements of Dutch politicians, some favouring the flooding and some against it. This discussion is lasting to this day in which there still hasn't been a clear policy decision. The latest developments were articulated by Henk Bleker, the Dutch (outgoing) State Secretary of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation. He came with a plan to flood only a part of the Hedwigepolder. As it turns out, flooding the Hedwigepolder in this new plan is going to cost 62 million euros for relocating dikes

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[64] This is about the size of 450 football fields.

[65] http://www.nu.nl/politiek/2818902/boeiende-puzzel-rond-hedwigepolder.html

[66] http://www.refdag.nl/nieuws/regio_2_210/vlaanderen_schelde_snel_uitdiepen_1_348896

[67] http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/index_en.htm

[68] http://nos.nl/video/11228-nijpels-zeeuwse-polder-moet-onder-water.html

and the purchase of land, costs that will be entirely allocated to the Dutch government.[69] This plan however wasn't accepted by the Dutch parliament.

In short, there has been a lot of upheaval and argumentation back and forth between politicians and the community without any solution. Simply put, there is a group which wants to flood the polder for environmental and economic reasons (mostly politicians and environmental organisations) and there is a group which doesn't want the flooding (farmers and inhabitants of Zeeland).

4.3 DIFFERENT ETHICAL SOLUTIONS

A way of approaching environmental cases such as these is to vindicate a particular theoretical doctrine. Take for instance the classical utilitarian approach which searches for the solution which brings forth the most amount of happiness. The answer of the utilitarian to the problem would then be: Let the people in the Albertine's Rift take the land they need for their numbers are bigger and this will bring the most happiness. Or in the other case the utilitarian would say: Let the Hedwigepolder be flooded because the economic and environmental gains outweigh the interest of the local community of Zeeland. To take one theoretical doctrine such as utilitarianism is in fact relatively easy in terms of determining policy. The downside of this approach is that you override the interests of some stakeholders. These stakeholders might also have valid arguments which must be considered before one gives a final judgement.

Another approach can for instance be the anthropocentric instrumental view or the focus on property rights of different groups. Arguments would then look like this: The national parks in the Albertine's Rift will have to be preserved because the parks are an important source for tourism and biological research. Or they would say: The owners of the Hedwigepolder have a right to say what happens to their land so the decision about the future of the polder is in their hands.

The point is that in cases such as these a multitude of layers and puzzles from different ethical approaches can be analyzed. Different stakeholders can give different arguments which may sound, to a certain extend, equally valid and valuable. To make it more complicated, arguments of libertarians, egalitarians, deontologists can also be added to this debate. Both wildlife and humans have a good claim on the use of land just as politicians and the local community both have something important to say about the future of the landscape. The danger can be found in two outcomes: the tendency towards the exploitation of one group and the possibility of reaching a stalemate.

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[69] http://www.telegraaf.nl/binnenland/11944399/__Hedwige_blijkt_miljoenenstrop__.html

The availability of incompatible moral justifications for each position can form the basis for a brand of self-righteousness on the part of each interest that bodes ill for a consensus solution of the problem.[70]

In both cases described above problems of this kind can be found. In the Albertine's Rift an exploitation of wildlife occurs on behalf of the human population. In the Hedwigepolder, a stalemate is reached in which there is no decision for policy. Of course, every case is different, a fact that is recognized especially by pragmatists, but there are certain common elements to be found in most of the cases. In the process of evaluation we can make different applications of theoretical views. Different stakeholders want different courses of action based on different theoretical doctrines. The problem is that it is hard to decide which argument is more fundamental or more important than another. In most problematic cases, it is impossible to decide which doctrine is correct. Environmental pragmatism requires, as we will see, an approach of different values of different stakeholders, and not the vindication of one particular theoretical doctrine. A position that is much closer to actual political discussion.

4.4 CONFLICT RESOLUTION

In most cases there are different perspectives and approaches that need to be discussed. For instance in the case of the Albertine's Rift where the interests of the farmers are opposed to the conservation of the wildlife population. The previous paragraph discussed the possibility of vindicating one particular ethical framework. In this section environmental pragmatism is applied which recognizes the importance of different values and different theoretical doctrines. Environmental pragmatism tries to find 'those philosophies which work in practice at clarifying and solving environmental problems'.[71] Abstract and fundamental reasoning can still be used to solve disputes. Environmental pragmatism differs from any of the other philosophical approaches because it tries to bring the different theoretical positions together by means of a deliberative process. The separate philosophical positions can lineate and illuminate the opinions which can be brought forward in a public policy debate. The goal is to construct a discussion and a deliberation that can eventually lead to agreement about what kind of management should be guiding our attitude towards a specific natural environment.

None of the philosophical positions advanced above, when taken alone, provides either an adequate or generally accepted framework for resource management. Each, however, provides a viewpoint that incorporates values and objectives to which people can relate. The

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[70] Thompson, P.B., Pragmatism and Policy: The case of water, in *Environmental Pragmatism*, Routledge, New York, 1996, p. 191

[71] Rothenberg, D., Laws of Nature vs. Laws of Respect: Non-violence in practice in Norway, *Environmental Pragmatism,* Routledge, New York, 1996, p. 251

essence of democracy pertains to the process by which these values and objectives are selected and implemented.[72]

Environmental pragmatism tries to emphasize that opinions are pluralistic. In order for a pragmatic approach to work, a political strategy must be chosen that can solve environmental issues within the political context. In several texts about environmental pragmatism the importance of a democratic system for environmental issues is advertised. In *A Pluralistic, Pragmatic and Evolutionary Approach to Natural Resource Management,* Castle states that in order for natural resource management to be successful there are certain requirements that must be met.[73] Castle rightfully points to the worth of a pragmatic approach and the importance of a democratic process.

Describing the democratic process and the values involved, Castle sees natural resource management as a way out of the malaise in the environmental discussion.

Pluralism is not an acceptable comprehensive philosophical system because it does not forbid inconsistencies. For this reason natural resource policy must be pragmatic; it must provide for the making of choices when relevant philosophies come into conflict. The institution of democracy is such a pragmatic device. In practice, of course, democracy is far more than majority rule, providing, though imperfectly perhaps, for minority rights and viewpoints.[74]

It is not that philosophical positions are not important or redundant; they do have a specific purpose in the democratic process. The philosophical positions are to be tested and evaluated by political and public debate so that the most persuasive and convincing can be selected as a guideline for policy implementation. The philosophical position doesn't become an absolute rule since it must constantly be evaluated and reconstructed where necessary.

Castle tries to make a combination of environmental viewpoints with democratic philosophical viewpoints. The environmental discussion should be focussed on what kind of management can be carried on the basis of a fruitful deliberative discussion. Castle describes two fundamental points that have to be kept in mind. First, we have to realize that the natural environment and social systems are in constant change and second we have to acknowledge that preferences among people within any human society vary greatly. On the basis of these conditions Castle calls for natural resource management as an 'approach that is capable of adapting to changing conditions, pluralistic in philosophy and pragmatic in application'.[75]

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[72] Castle, E., N., A pluralistic, pragmatic and evolutionary approach to natural resource management, *Environmental Pragmatism*, Routledge, New York, 1996, p. 241
[73] Ibid., p. 247
[74] Ibid., p. 247
[75] Ibid., p. 232

For a pragmatic approach to work the different stakeholders must be able to contribute to a direct or indirect public or political discussion. It is important to respect the different viewpoints which all have interests in the formation of policy. Different stakeholders, which might have opposing interests, must be able to hear each other's story to relate to their reasoning.

> It would be useful for each group to see themselves as part of the same community, at odds on a given issue, perhaps, but drawing from common moral traditions and headed towards a common future. Such a community might find political solutions that reciprocate each interest, even while they may demand compromise on the case at hand.[76]

The evaluation that is needed for such cases must be context specific, relating to the interests of the local community. Such an approach would be able to eventually assemble a more pragmatic realization of policy decisions. Multiple stakeholders must be able to find their peace in the decision. It is not just a matter of ethical deliberation. Next to ethical argumentation, economic, social and cultural arguments are also valid in the discussion process. Like discussed before, it is a multitude of values and principles that must be weighed and considered so that different stakeholders with different interests are being taken into consideration.

It is our duty to constantly improve the democratic decisions and to learn from history. To construct these decisions the system must be evolutionary.

> Social and natural systems coexist as they pass through time. The forces affecting their survival and performance are unlikely to be either stable or predictable far into the future. Such systems will be required to adjust and adapt if they are to perform near their potential or, perhaps, survive. This, natural resource and environmental policy needs to be evolutionary.[77]

Political dialogue and scientific research can be more productive if these conditions are recognized. Policy decisions should be evaluated in terms of their workability and with the acknowledgment of constantly changing circumstances.

4.5 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO THE CASES

Looking back at the two cases of the Albertine's Rift and the Hedwigepolder, there is not a quick judgement or solution at hand after a philosophical analysis. Philosophical analysis and values play a part in the argumentation of the locals, consciously or not, to build a constructive deliberation aimed at consensus. Different stakeholders will have to put their heads together in order to construct a justified policy decision.

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[76] Thompson, P., B., Pragmatism and Policy: The case of water, in *Environmental Pragmatism*, Routledge, New York, 1996, p. 205
[77] Castle, E., N., A pluralistic, pragmatic and evolutionary approach to natural resource management, in *Environmental Pragmatism*, Routledge, New York, 1996, p. 247

Looking back at our examples different things have to be done. In the Albertine's Rift one has to make sure that there is consensus between people wanting to protect the environment and those that want space to live. Eventually it will be best if both parties moderate their demands so that compromise can be reached. For the Albetine's Rift there might be possibilities for combining the interests of farmers and park rangers. For instance, if there would be an agreement that farmers do their best to protect the wildlife in return for a piece of land. With better education about wildlife farmers might be able to have more respect for the animals in the wild. The same goes for the Hedwigepolder in which a discussion between the different stakeholders might cause mutual respect in terms of different viewpoints. To accomplish this a democratic and deliberative system must be set up. If the inhabitants of Zeeland are able to join a discussion and if they are able to reason with the environmental arguments of the politicians and conclusions of the Nijpels committee, they might be able to do concessions more easily.

To give an idea of what these discussions should be like there are two important questions that should be addressed, questions concerning the settings and methodology of the debate and questions concerning the participants.

The first question that is important to settle is a question about what the debate should look like. The discussion should not be one of opposing enemies that fiercely fight each others claims. There must be respect for the other side, in which there is a recognition of belonging to the same community, to live in a harmonious way with each other. It is important that environmentalists don't get depicted as unreasonable provocateurs. David Rothenberg describes this point in the *Laws of Nature vs. Laws of Respect.* The discussion should be founded on an honest strive for the agreement with sincerity for the specific situation. The principles of non-violent environmental activism described by Rothenberg are equally applicable in the discussion about environmental issues:

> Learn as much about the different sides of the case as you can. Be prepared to give up your principles if you discover information that challenges them. Yet if you are still in the right, steadfastness will also hold with greater knowledge. Above all strive to meet the other side directly, on their own terms.[78]

According to Rothenberg this approach works because it begins with the inhabitation of the other point of view. The goals and aspiration need to be identified by all the different groups of the community. Only if there is mutual understanding and respect can there be a policy based on consensus. The process of communication with the other side is of vital importance. It shows the respect for disagreement that is necessary for a fruitful deliberation.

An example in the text of Rothenberg can be helpful in the discussion of the examples described above. Rothenberg describes what an approach of Gandhi would be to convince people not to kill whales:

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[78] Ibid. p.256

He would say: sit down with the hunters, go with them on a hunt, learn about their way of life. Show them you respect their ways, and gradually teach them why you think they should change. To come from outside with a message of transformation is the hardest stand to take, but it is a necessary one. The change must be phrased as a positive thing, based upon genuine care for other peoples' way of life as much as a desire to save the whales, or any part of nature.

These principles of Gandhian values can well be implemented in the discussion about the Albertine's Rift or the issue of the Hedwigespolder. In the case of the Albertine's Rift it would be helpful if the different stakeholders came together to form some kind of deliberation that is able to build on mutual understanding. Only if the farmers and rangers of conservation know the argumentation of the other side can they be able to manage the whole situation in a way that doesn't allow for exploitation. In other words, there must be discussion in which there can be an equal and fair communication process. In our struggle for land, resources and a new way of life it is best if 'we may all sit down, discuss our differences, and realize that we will all have to change as the world gets smaller and smaller'.[79]

This new approach might bring other insights and alternatives because deliberation and an open debate are more likely to let people work together and share ideas. If opposite stakeholders are only fighting for their own interest this quarrel might cause unnecessary damage to the surroundings and the environment. Instead, if the environmental activist would realize that the process of policy-making is a constant search for improvement for different groups, he would then communicate better with different stakeholders and he would try to work with them to find solutions that can be good and workable for different parties.

Another important question that must be addressed is which people should be involved in such a discussion. Of course the different stakeholders should all be able to have a say in the discussion about the policy and the plans for the future. It is imperative that the local community and the people most connected to the area have the opportunity to give their opinion. It is also important that they are able to reason with the values of external parties which also have interests with the area. There must for instance be organizations which can help with values such as conservation and natural resource management in the Albertine's Rift because the farmers might not be informed about such matters. Campfire is one of those organizations in Zimbabwe that has this cause:

CAMPFIRE (Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources) is a programme designed to assist rural development and conservation. It works with the people who live in these communal lands, supporting the use of wildlife as an important natural

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[79] Ibid. p. 264

resource. CAMPFIRE is helping people in these areas manage the environment in ways which are both sustainable and appropriate.[80]

These kinds of organizations can also be helpful in cases of the Albertine's Rift. For the Hedwigeplder it is important that there will be a discussion amongst the locals and the politicians. Only with their collaboration can there be a solution which is acceptable for the different stakeholders.

In both cases it is important that there will be a fruitful discussion and deliberation about the future of the natural environment. However, it is not just a matter of political argumentation. Pragmatism aims to eventually find the best solution for human interest and human welfare. Since environmental interests are connected to human interest they are also part of the moral concerns. Every situation and context is different so every time the moral concerns must be adjusted and evaluated. This can only be done trough a political process of deliberation. Human interest, according to pragmatism can only be transformed in policy if the political process is based on the experience and discourse of the given community. It is the objective of the participants to construct a debate based on the interest of the stakeholders. The moral thing to do in this case is to trust in this political structure based on pluralistic values to construct a better policy for the future.

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[80] http://www.globaleye.org.uk/archive/summer2k/focuson/mars_pt1.html

5. CONCLUSIONS

The world's environmental condition is in a dire shape. More and more issues of conflict arise as land is becoming scarcer than ever. The overpopulation is causing the natural habitat of wildlife to shrink considerably. To effectively cope with these troubling practices we need collaboration between people. Collaboration aimed at agreement and with an eye for the overall good of the planet.

Pragmatism recognizes the fact that we are all interdependent on our environment. There is, however, not one truth pertaining to the right attitude towards our fellow beings. Pragmatism argues for a casuistic approach in which we have to focus on problem solving. The time to quarrel is growing short on us and the urge for an effective management is becoming ever so needed. To realize a change in our behaviour and our management, I believe different stakeholders need to come together in an open public policy deliberation. Only in this way can the things that are valuable to the different groups be translated into management for the good of the planet, the people and their future.

This thesis defends the pragmatic approach in environmentalism. The pragmatic approach gives the different stakeholders a new way of approaching conflict. For a resolution to really work in environmental issues different groups in society are going to have to work together. This will only be possible if the groups acknowledge that they will have to build a future together in a world in which land and resources are going to be scarcer. If the distribution of the land will be honest and fair different stakeholders will all have to be taken into consideration. In environmental issues this is going to be much harder since wildlife can easily be dismissed as a weak opponent that is not entitled to claim as much as humans. Therefore it is important that different organizations defend and stick up for the conservation of the natural environment. These organizations that aim for the preservation of wildlife can argue from an ethical framework, for instance an ecocentric or a nonanthropocentric framework. These values are an important part of the discussion about what happens with the future of for instance natural reserves. It is important however that these stakeholders know that this is not the only right framework there is. Social, economic and cultural values may just as well have a valid claim as to what happens to the natural landscape.

The pragmatic approach holds that we have to be open to other values and other frameworks. We have to be able to listen to the different stakeholders and reason with their argumentations. Only in this manner can there be a discussion which is aimed at resolution and which avoids conflict. For this to happen it is important that every stakeholder has the opportunity to propagate their interest. The pragmatist lesson for the discussion on environmental issues is that the most fair and honest way for the determination of policy is when a plurality of values through different stakeholder can eventually be constructed in a policy about the environment. Since environmental issues are also moral concerns for human welfare there must be people and groups that stick up for the environmental values. Hopefully in this way there can be an agreement about what policy is good for the environment. Even tough some stakeholders might be driven by self-interest there are

reasons to believe that the democratic system eventually constructs policy that is fair and honest for the community and the environment. In principle, the community chooses together what the best policy is.

Pragmatism is different than other theories because it creates a discussion aimed at resolution. The ethical frameworks discussed in chapter two didn't have that specific quality. Take for instance deep ecology, an ethical theory which bases its framework on transcendental and cosmological assumptions. Weak anthropocentrism also didn't allow multiple values to enter the debate. It is imperative that a discussion can evolve in which multiple values and multiple principles of stakeholders can be brought together. In the discussion about environmentalism we have to combine and integrate the different values and principles into pragmatic statements that can formulate guidelines to improve our attitude towards nature. Only in this way can the different groups in society relate to the problem in a sufficient way and will they be able to build on concessions and compromise instead of fighting over opposing claims.

Pragmatism argues for a different kind of attitude. To have a fruitful discussion the different stakeholders must be committed to their cause. Take, for instance, an NGO that tries to preserve and conserve the natural parks in Tanzania. The park rangers can have the ethical framework to work with different values they want to defend. They can, for instance, argue for the beauty and aesthetics of the ecosystem. They can also argue that the park is good for tourism and a good information source for biological research. With this frame of mind the ranger can be willing and committed to defend the preservation of a national park. On the other hand, there can also be other stakeholders which have an important interest in the national park. In the case of the Albertine's Rift, there are people who desperately need space to live and land to grow crops to provide food for their families. These people obviously have a different approach to the future of scarce land which happens to be protected by park rangers of a national park. If there would be understanding from different groups about the different values, the groups might be able to work together to help for the other side's cause. Environmentalism should rather be a problem solving based, casuistic approach instead of a transcendental foundational approach. It should be concentrated on ecological management and conflict resolution, looking for ways in which different values can be realized next to each other.

When pragmatism will be accepted as a leading theory within environmental ethics, there will be a different kind of discussion. Polemics will rather involve real practical issues and ways to approach these kinds of problems. The discussion will then surround cases like the Albertine's Rift and cases such as the Hedwigepolder. These cases are the situations in which the battles are fought. It is here that the environmental preservation and conservation need people to stick up for values such as the beauty of the wildlife and the aesthetics of nature. Only if there will be a reasonable debate amongst different stakeholders and with different principles taken into account, there can be a way for people to resolve issues such as these. If environmental ethicists will continue to form their argumentation around problems which policy makers will be indifferent on, there will be no real answers to improve our attitude towards nature. Therefore it is necessary to construct a pragmatic discussion between multiple stakeholders that are willing to construct a resolution. Different values will always be mingled in situations of conflict and it is often impossible to choose one value

over the other. For this reason a public discussion and deliberation based on pluralistic values is the best way to approach situations of conflict. We can hope for a resolution if the community is able to stick up for their values and if the community is able to work together. The goal is to find workable solutions that take pluralistic values into account so that there is a fair and honest representation and a hope for a better future for the community and the environment.

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