

**MORAL PHILOSOPHY,
ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS,
& GLOBAL WARMING**

**PPE Capstone
Winter 2008**

**Gore's claim that
the global warming
crisis is a moral
question**

**I will accept his
general empirical
claims**

MY PROJECT

**How do we make
sense of this as a
moral question?**

**One moral
philosopher's take
on the issues**

**What kind of things
are intrinsically
valuable, good or
bad?**

**What makes an
action right or
wrong?**

WHAT IS MORAL PHILOSOPHY?

Consequentialism
• Priority of
goodness over
rightness

Deontology
• Priority of
rightness over
goodness

Extrinsic value

Intrinsic value

VALUE

**Anthropomorphic
values v. non-
anthropomorphic
values**

**Environmental
values**

**Not much
discussion in
classical
philosophy**

**Begins in the late
60s and takes off in
the 70s**

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

**Rachel Carlson
*Silent Spring***

**Paul Ehrlich *The
Population Bomb***

**The charge of
anthropomorphism**

**Singer's charge of
speciesism**

**INTRINSIC VALUE
OF NATURE?**

**Routley's charge of
human chauvinism**

Deep ecology

**Does it make sense
to assign moral
value to entities
that don't have
interests?**

Status of animals

PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS

**Balancing human
interests with other
interests**

**Failure to engage
public policy
makers**

**Conceptual
problems with non-
anthropomorphic
approaches**

**Political suicide
and public policy
goals**

ENVIRONMENTAL PRAGMATISM

**Stress human
values and
consequences for
humans**

**Still may value
aspects of nature
for their own sakes**

Is it real?

**What are the time
parameters?**

GLOBAL WARMING

**Obvious short-term
moral implications
for a
consequentialist**

**Short-term moral
implications for a
deontologist**

**What if we can
delay the affects of
global warming?**

**Utilitarianism and
the future**

**LONGER-TERM MORAL ISSUES
FOR GLOBAL WARMING**

**Problems of
assigning value to
the future**

**Problems of
predicting future
consequences**

Moral duties that transcend consequentialist thinking

Rights to life, liberty and happiness

DEONTOLOGY AND LONG-TERM GLOBAL WARMING

Correlativity of rights and duties

Can we have a duty to the future – to future people?

**Common sense:
Obligation to
persons whether
they exist now or
later**

**Future persons do
not yet exist**

FUTURITY PROBLEMS

**Their existence
(and quality of
existence) depends
on what we do now**

**Moral duty to *all*
future persons?**

**Ruining the
environment –
global warming**

**Changing the size
and composition of
the population**

**HOW WE AFFECT
THE FUTURE**

Affecting culture

**Wars affect all
three, so a duty for
lasting peace?**

Duties of pregnant women?

Duties to the near future

**PROBLEM OF
NON-EXISTENCE**

Duties to the distant future – moral communion

The missile thought-experiment

**Total happiness
utilitarianism and
population**

**Average happiness
utilitarianism and
population**

**CONSEQUENTILIALISM
AND FUTURITY**

**Contemporary
moral philosophy
and utilitarianism**

Modest deontology

**Contingencies of
your own existence**

**Responses to the
environment and
global warming
affect who will be
born**

PARFIT'S PARADOX

**Totally different
possible
populations in two
hundred years**

**No complaint from
those who owe their
existence to a
reckless policy?**

**Kant's categorical
imperative**

Commodification

**RESPECT FOR
PERSONS**

**Respect for future
persons**

**Not a formula,
simply and
approach**