

Topic 3 Human Population, Carrying Capacity and Resource Use Daily Lesson Plans

Lesson 7

Objective(s):

3.2.4 Discuss the view that the environment can have its own intrinsic value

"A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise"
- Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*

"Can any civilization wage relentless war on life without destroying itself and without losing the right to be called civilized?" - Rachel Carson

A corollary to the above argument is reflected in the Noah principle, named for the biblical Noah who saved one pair of every creature on earth in the Ark, which argues that the usefulness of a species is not considered when discussing its conservation, but rather its very presence in the long history of evolution is sufficient to warrant its preservation.

"The extension of rights to species and landforms is a necessary extension of the cultural evolution of Homo sapiens"
- Erlich and Erlich, *Extinction* (1981).

Scientists calculated that up to the 1980's the total area of the deep ocean floor that had been sampled by biologists was equal to the size of a tennis court!

The natural environment "harbours chemicals, fibers, flesh, resins, enzymes, genes and whatnot that we can manipulate, extract, breed, purify and prime into products that will cure our diseases, feed our hungry and line our pockets"
- Nicholas Tackacs, *The Idea of Biodiversity*

"As we cannot know the reason for a fact before we know the fact, we cannot know what a thing is before we know that it is"
- Aristotle.

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Intrinsic Value in Nature: a Metaethical Analysis

<http://ejap.louisiana.edu/EJAP/1995.spring/callicott.1995.spring.html>

Two Proofs for the Existence of Intrinsic Value

The Intrinsic Value of Nature: Moral Truth and Pragmatic Efficacy

A Modern Theory of the Intrinsic Value of Nature

Kant on Objective Intrinsic Value

The Biocentrists on Objective Intrinsic Value in Nature

Toward a PostModern Theory of Intrinsic Value in Nature

Callicott, J. Baird (1985). "Intrinsic Value, Quantum Theory, and Environmental Ethics." *Environmental Ethics* 7: 275-285.

Ehrenfeld, David (1988). "Why Put a Value on Biodiversity?" In Wilson and Peter 1988.

Fox, Warwick (1993). "What Does the Recognition of Intrinsic Value Entail?" *Trumpeter* 10.

Kant, Immanuel (1950). *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*. In A.I. Melden (ed.), *Ethical Theories: A Book of Readings*, Lewis Beck White (translator). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Leopold, Aldo (1953). *Round River*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1953

Norton, Bryan (1992). "Epistemology and Environmental Value." *Monist* 75: 208-26.

OTHERNESS AND ANOTHERNESS

http://www.scu.edu/ethics/practicing/focusareas/environmental_ethics/lesson2.html

How do people normally conceive of people that are considered different from them (different races, gender, social class, country, etc.)? Unfortunately, people have a strong tendency to devalue those that they consider different from them. Scholars have come to refer to this devaluing perspective by the term "Otherness": we treat those who are different as Others (in a very specific sense of that term). Normally scholars apply the notion of Otherness to people, but the term is also useful in analyzing how people often devalue that natural world. We can specify ten major characteristics of Otherness.

"OTHERNESS"

The following are different but interrelated dimensions of the same phenomenon, and may be simply different ways of thinking of the same thing.

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1. "**Objectified**": The Other is treated as "mere object". Inability or refusal to consider the other as a "subject," as part of one's community (of humans, etc.).

* *social* : Headless women on a billboard; Native Americans as team logo.

* *ecological* : Animals in factory farms; animals in advertisements (Chik-fil-A); nature as backdrop for selling SUVs.

>> *response*: insist on the "other" as being a subject in itself and a part of the community

2. **Difference and separation**: The Other is not like us. Inability or refusal to see similarity, continuity, etc.

* *social* : Africans and Native Americans not seen as human beings.

* *ecological* : We are separate from (and above) nature. Culture is not part of nature. Animals are machines that don't suffer.

>> *response*: Point out similarity and continuity; see ourselves as animals and see language as wild; see animals as having intelligence and pain.

3. **The Same as Us** : The Other is just like us. Inability or refusal to see difference and discontinuity.

* *social* : The melting pot ideal. "The Western Tradition" and "human condition" as a single and undifferentiated; thus white males can speak for all.

* *ecological* : Not usually applied to nature.

>> *response*: point out the reality and significance of differences between Other and dominant group (and thus the need to study women and other cultures and give them a voice).

4. **Simplified**: Inability or refusal to see the differences among members of the "Other" group.

* *social* : "Oh, (blacks, women, etc.) are all the same."

* *ecological* : "When you've seen one redwood tree, you've seen them all" (President Reagan). All wetlands are the same and therefore we can destroy one if we make another.

>> *response*: Point out internal differences *within* the Other.

5. **Unchanging**: Inability or refusal to see changes through time in a group. "We" can change and develop, but "they" can't.

* *social* : Native Americans had no history or development.

* *ecological* : Ecosystems in climax as unchanging.

>> *response*: Point out historical changes.

6. **Passive** . The Other is passive and receptive and lacks agency. Only the dominant group has the power to be active and affect things.

* *social* : Women as passive, needing men to solve problems or help them or create culture.

* *ecological* : We impact a passive nature that does not react to our control. We affect nature; nature doesn't affect (e.g., teach or control) us.

>> *response*: Point out examples of how supposedly passive social groups and nature are active, assertive, and affect the dominant group.