

## **Introduction: Consequentialism and Environmental Ethics**

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### **1. Ethics and the environment**

One of the defining features of our era will be the way in which humanity deals with environmental challenges. We are faced with the threat that due to human activities, there will be climatological changes which will affect the entire planet, causing harm to millions if not billions of people and leading to massive species extinction. But anthropogenic climate change is only one among many interrelated environmental problems. Every day there is news of the environmental impacts of natural resource extraction, or of the treatment of animals in industrial farms, or of species extinction, or of genetically modified organisms, or of limitations in the supply of clean water, to give just a few examples. In more general terms, the challenge to be sustainable is one of the core ethical issues of our time. The environmental movement in the West is not a new movement, but humanity faces a critical moment in confronting the challenges we face.

These issues are making the headlines, but behind the scenes, philosophers are working on questions both directly within environmental ethics as well as on more general questions in ethical theory which can apply to these issues. Environmental ethics has been and continues to be an exciting area of growth within philosophy. The last decade has seen a steady increase in the number of journals, books, and classes devoted to the subject. For all that, environmental ethics remains a young sub-discipline, and for various reasons, it has been to a significant degree marginalized as a sub-discipline within philosophical ethics. However, not only are issues of environmental ethics of the highest import in today's world, there is room for much fruitful work

in connecting issues in environmental ethics with the best work in contemporary normative theory. Both environmental ethics and ethical theory have much to gain from increased interaction, and this book is an effort to promote such dialogue.

Richard Sylvan's article (1973) "Is There a Need for a New, an Environmental Ethic?" is heralded as beginning a new era for environmental thinking within Western philosophy. Sylvan argues against the anthropocentrism long dominant among ethical theorists. In his famous "Last People" example, Sylvan asks the reader to consider a science-fiction scenario in which people know that they will be unable to reproduce and that the human species will go extinct. If they were to also destroy all the forests and ecosystems and kill all the wild animals just for fun, they would have behaved wrongly, according to Sylvan. Sylvan concludes that what is needed is a new, non-anthropocentric environmental ethic, to explain the wrongness of such behavior.

How should one react to Sylvan's argument? There are three classes of response:

**A.** *Reject the intuition that the last people are acting wrongly.* However, this response to Sylvan is legitimate only insofar as it can be justified on the basis of considerations independent of anthropocentric ethical theories. For Sylvan's intention is to call these theories into question, and thus to use an anthropocentric theory to reject the intuition would simply be to beg the question.

**B.** *In accord with Sylvan's exhortation, generate an entirely new ethical theory.* This is what happened with Deep Ecology, a radical view according to which ethical behavior requires what Arne Naess (1989) calls "Self-realization", which (in effect) is to realize that one is not independent of the rest of the world. True self-realization, according to Naess, is to realize that we are One with other species, and thus harming other species would be harming one's Self.

Although we will not try to defend or reject Deep Ecology here, it is based on highly disputable

metaphysical and ethical assumptions and thus does not have many supporters among philosophical ethicists.

*C. Adapt a traditional form of ethical theory to account for ethical concern for the non-human world.* For instance, Tom Regan (1983) has argued on Kantian grounds that we owe respect to other individual advanced sentient animals, and Paul Taylor (1986) argues more generally that we owe respect to all living things. Thomas Hill, Jr., (1983) has argued that virtue ethics is the proper framework through which to apply environmental ethics, and others such as Ronald Sandler (2007) have developed a more complete environmental virtue ethic. Bryan Norton (2005) has developed an approach to environmental issues based upon the writings of the American pragmatists. And consequentialist views from Aldo Leopold's "Land Ethic" (1980: 262) to Peter Singer's (1975) argument for the ethical treatment of non-human sentient animals have become well-known.

We maintain that it is imperative that there be a more intensive focus on consequentialist environmental ethics. We believe that the consequentialist framework is the correct one in normative theory, and although there has been considerable work in applying consequentialist theory to environmental issues, it has been fragmented. Although this book does not have as its goal the development of a complete consequentialist environmental ethic (or even an unqualified endorsement of consequentialist environmental ethics), it is our hope that it encompasses in a systematic way a discussion of at least most of the facets of a well-developed consequentialist environmental ethic.

## **2. What Is consequentialism?**

“Consequentialism,” Amartya Sen once quipped, is “not a prepossessing term” (1999: 58). Indeed, it is not, though the term has become indispensable in contemporary ethical theory, and it is central to the approaches to environmental ethics taken in this volume. So it’s natural to ask: What, if anything, is unique about the consequentialist point of view? Our answer is ecumenical and aims to be as comprehensive as possible. As we see it, the term “consequentialist” refers to anyone who holds that the rightness or wrongness of an agent’s action depends solely on the value of the consequences of this action, compared to the value of the consequences of any other actions which the agent could have undertaken (Kagan 1998: 60-61, Hurka 2003: 4, and Shaw 2006: 5). That’s a mouthful, but we’ll spend some time unpacking that idea in the rest of this section.

Consequentialists often disagree with one another about the details of the relationship between the rightness or wrongness of an action and the goodness or badness of its consequences. That said, many of these details are not central to this book, and, for this reason, we shall be highly selective in our discussion of them in this introduction. We will not, of course, resolve any of these disagreements here, but we will highlight ways in which they are especially salient to those interested in environmental ethics.<sup>1</sup>

One area of disagreement among consequentialists concerns whether we should evaluate the consequences of actions directly or indirectly. Those who believe that we should evaluate the consequences of actions *directly* are usually called “act consequentialists.”

*Act Consequentialism:* It is morally right for agent A to do action F if and only if the value of the consequences of A’s doing F is greater than the value of the consequences of A’s doing any other action available to her.<sup>2</sup>

Pigeonholing those who believe that we should evaluate the consequences of actions *indirectly* is a somewhat more complicated affair. Perhaps the most widely held version of indirect consequentialism is called “rule consequentialism.” Here is one statement of the view.

*Rule Consequentialism:* It is morally right for A to do F if and only if the value of the consequences of accepting a set of rules which permits doing F is greater than the value of the consequences of A's society accepting any other set of rules.

Rule consequentialists are indirect, rather than direct, consequentialists because they believe that the moral rightness of an action is a function of accepting the set of rules which permits the action rather than a function of the particular action itself. While there are other ways to be an indirect consequentialist – for example, Bradley (2005) and Sverdlik (2011) – we will leave this can of worms only partially opened. We would hazard the opinion that the vast majority of consequentialists are either act consequentialists or rule consequentialists, and it is primarily these two views which are in play in this volume. It is also worth admitting that act and rule consequentialists often agree in practice, if not in all aspects of theory. In most cases which we are likely to encounter, actions which bring about the best consequences on particular occasions are also the actions which are permitted by the set of rules, the acceptance of which would lead to the best results.

Nevertheless, environmental issues are foremost among those that threaten to drive a wedge between direct and indirect forms of consequentialism. Consider one's use of non-recyclable materials to pack a gift for a friend. It may make rather a lot of difference whether, on

the one hand, we think of the rightness or wrongness of this action as being determined by the value of consequences of one's using non-recyclable materials on this occasion or, on the other hand, we think of the rightness or wrongness of the action as being determined by the value of a moral code that permits everyone to act this way.

As the name suggests, what distinguishes consequentialism most sharply from other ethical theories is its focus on the *consequences* of actions (Williams 1973: 83-84 and Hooker 2000: 33 n. 2). But clarification is required to understand what consequences are exactly. On one view, a consequentialist should be concerned with what is caused by, for example, an act of lying or stealing; she is not concerned with whether lying or stealing is bad or wrong in itself. Indeed, she is usually thought to hold that no action can be bad or wrong in itself.

However, some authors who express sympathy for consequentialism have, nevertheless, expressed doubts about whether this line of thought can be maintained (Crisp 2006: 40 n.7, Parfit 2011: 22, and Hiller, this volume) and others have suggested that once these doubts have been taken to heart, we might use a term like “teleology” to replace “consequentialism” (Scanlon 1998: 80 and Broome 2004:10). One might fear that this may put us on the road to perdition. For once we have made the move from the value of consequences to value more generally, we may lose track of the boundaries between various approaches to ethical theory. Alternatively, one might regard this result as a step forward – it may synthesize what is right in different types of ethical theory. Or one may claim that there are still important distinctions between consequentialism and non-consequentialism; in particular, consequentialists are those who claim that an evaluation of the rightness or wrongness of an act cannot be determined without considering the full range of consequences of the action, even if the action itself has value or disvalue.<sup>3</sup>

Most of the papers in this volume put the emphasis squarely on the results of actions – and this is where most ethicists initially attracted to consequentialism believe it should be. When, for instance, we take up the question of the permissibility of factory farming, we typically are concerned with the positive and negative results of such a practice, not its intrinsic value or disvalue – whatever that would be. A little more specifically, we find it quite sensible to point to the disvalue in the suffering experienced by animals in factory farming and of the 1.4 billion tons of waste produced by it (Jamieson 2008: 122) as morally important consequences of the practice; perhaps these on their own suffice for changing society’s judgment that this practice is acceptable. One of us (Kahn) is dubious about any value or disvalue intrinsic to the practice of packing as many animals as possible into one space, but the other (Hiller) does view the intrinsic disvalue as an additional reason to rethink our farming practices. Clearly, this is not the place to settle the matter.

Another area of disagreement among consequentialists concerns whether we should be primarily concerned with the actual value of the consequences of actions or with the value they are expected to have by the agent at the time when the action is undertaken. A little more specifically, we can divide the warring parties into two camps.

*Actual Act Consequentialism:* It is morally right for A to do action F if and only if the actual value of the consequences of A's doing F is greater than the actual value of the consequences of A's doing any other action available to her.

*Expected Act Consequentialism:* It is morally right for A to do action F if and only if the expected value of the consequences of A's doing F is greater than the expected value of the consequences of A's doing any other action available to her.

Where the consequences of one's actions are reliably predictable, the differences between actual act consequentialism and expected act consequentialism are small. For example, the consequences of poisoning the town water supply are reliably predictable. Those who use the well will sicken and die, and the disvalue of these consequences is likely to be very large indeed. As a result both actual act consequentialism and expected act consequentialism will – thankfully – prohibit such an action.

Yet matters are somewhat more complex when it comes, to take another example from environmental ethics, to global climate change. There is some fact of the matter about what the world climate will be like in 100 years, though at present we can at best specify a range of conditions with some degree of certainty (Garvey 2008: 91). So it is at least possible that we will enact policies now that will result in global catastrophe in the future, even if we act with the best of intentions. An actual act consequentialist would judge the rightness or wrongness of our enactment of policies now on the basis of the value which the actual consequences of this enactment will have in, say, 100 years. An expected act consequentialist would judge the rightness or wrongness of our enactment of policies now with reference to our current expectations regarding the value of the consequences of these actions.

A third important area of disagreement among consequentialists concerns what we'll call the nature of the good. Strictly speaking, consequentialism is a theory of the *right* (Brandt 1977: 193 and Pettit 1990: 230). As we have seen, consequentialists hold that the moral rightness and wrongness of actions is solely a function of the goodness and badness of the consequences of these actions, whether understood directly or indirectly, in actual or expected terms. But in what does this goodness or badness consist? While consequentialists do not differ *as consequentialists* in their answer to this question, they do differ in non-trivial respects. Many consequentialists



hold that the good is correctly conceived solely as well-being. We will use the term “welfarist” for a consequentialist who embraces this thesis.<sup>4</sup>

This raises two further questions: What is well-being, and whose well-being is relevant? We consider only some very general answers here for the purposes of sketching the terrain ahead for the readers of this volume.<sup>5</sup>

With regard to the first question, we could do worse than begin by distinguishing between subjective and objective forms of welfarism (Railton 1984: 162). According to subjective welfarists, well-being is rooted in an experiential state such as pleasure or desire-satisfaction (Mill [1863] 1998, Smart 1973, and Harsanyi 1977), while according to objective welfarists, well-being is to be found in what are often thought to be less obviously experiential states such as creativity, autonomy, and friendship (Moore 1903: 183-185, Brink 1989: 217, and Driver 2012: 22). Turning to the question of whose well-being counts in determining the good, we can distinguish inclusivist and exclusivist answers. Inclusivists tend to think that the well-being of every sentient being matters (Bentham 1996 [1789] and Singer 1979: 48-71). Exclusivists, on the contrary are inclined to think of well-being as limited to human beings (Frey 1980). One might think that those who reject welfarism should be called “anti-welfarists,” but this name would be highly misleading. Consequentialists who deny welfarism do not claim that well-being is not a factor in determining the good; rather, they are simply unpersuaded that well-being is the *only* factor determining the good. Hence, it might be more accurate to call such individuals “extra-welfarists.” Some such welfarists include so-called prioritarrians who believe that the good is determined, at least in part, by the way in which well-being is distributed (Arneson 2000 and Dorsey Forthcoming).

At any rate, it is clear enough that a concern for issues within environmental ethics does much to push consequentialists to think very hard about the nature of the good and its relation to their theory (Singer 2002: 40-43). Can an exclusivist theory of the good do justice to questions raised about the survival of non-human animals? Does an extra-welfarist approach derive any advantage when considering whether we must conserve resources for future generations? Can an objectivist approach avoid concerns that she makes too sharp a distinction between us and our environment? Are consequentialist approaches which attribute a good to an entire species or to an ecosystem to be thought of as inclusivist or exclusivist? All of these questions are very much in play here.<sup>6</sup>

The majority of authors who write on ethical theory see utilitarianism as a special case of consequentialism (Donner 2006: 117 and Vallentye 2006: 21), though some have their doubts (e.g., Jacobson 2008). A little more specifically, the typical view is that a utilitarian is simply a consequentialist who is also a welfarist. Such a conjunction of theories provides no room for providing special weight, say, to the welfare of those who are least well off (Hooker 2000: 59 and Parfit 2011: 373). As readers may have gathered for themselves already, we favor an easily digestible view of the relationship between these terms. Occasionally, authors use the term “utilitarianism” to mean something very close to what we mean by “consequentialism” (Bykvist 2010). But we're not inclined to pick a fight over terminology alone, provided the use of the terms is sufficiently clear.

There is, of course, much more to be said about consequentialism than we can say in this introduction. We have aimed in this section to do no more than set out some of the fundamental issues for the theory and its general relationship to environmental ethics.

### 3. Consequentialism and environmental ethics

Perhaps surprisingly, given the prevalence of the consequentialist tradition in ethics over the last century, few philosophers whose work is primarily in environmental ethics explicitly avow consequentialism.<sup>7</sup> One might speculate why this is so:

- (A) Utilitarianism has traditionally been seen by environmental ethicists as being anthropocentric, and in dismissing utilitarianism, environmental ethicists dismiss consequentialism as a whole rather than simply dismiss the utilitarian theory of value.
- (B) Relatedly, environmentalists sometimes describe nature as being *sacred* and such an attitude is incompatible with a consequentialist view in which in principle any aspect of nature may be sacrificed for the greater good.
- (C) Those who are attracted to consequentialism within mainstream philosophical ethical theory have been steered away from working primarily in environmental ethics because of a general distrust of applied ethics, and perhaps also because of the specific history in 20<sup>th</sup> century environmental philosophy with its metaphysically odd Deep Ecological or Heideggerian tendencies.
- (D) Those who are attracted to consequentialism outside mainstream philosophical ethical theory and who are interested in environmental issues become environmental economists rather than environmental ethicists.
- (E) Consequentialist theories, given their technical and calculative nature, are more likely to be endorsed by philosophers with personality traits that are not often found alongside personality traits that lead people to be nature lovers.

These are mere speculations, though we do believe that there is at least a kernel of truth in each. Our overall sense is that the reason why there aren't more consequentialist environmental

ethicists has more to do with historical and sociological contingencies rather than with what the questions within environmental ethics dictate.

Nevertheless, consequentialist environmental ethics is not entirely new. Even before the environmental movements of the 1960's and 1970's, individuals such as Gifford Pinchot (1998 [1947]) argued on utilitarian grounds for not overusing natural resources, since doing so would not be in the best long-term interest of humans. This view is still a fully anthropocentric view, but other consequentialists, such as Singer, have argued (as noted above) that traditional utilitarianism shows that we have obligations to promote the welfare of non-human animals who are sentient. However, Singer's utilitarian view does not ground the kind of obligations that Sylvan believes humans have to non-sentient organisms such as trees, as well as to species as a whole. On Leopold's view, acts are morally correct insofar as they promote the "integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community" (1980: 262); this view is fully non-anthropocentric but is very radical in its implications since most human activity disrupts some biotic system. Clearly, there are many ways to apply consequentialist theories to environmental issues, and many open questions.

First, there are deep questions concerning axiology. These can be placed into two categories, first-order axiological questions and higher-order questions. For the former, the key question is, what kinds of things are valuable (or, are parts of valuable states of affairs)? There is a long list of candidates: human experiences, persons as a whole, other sentient animals, non-sentient animals, other individual living organisms, individual non-living things, species, ecosystems, the Earth (perhaps including its atmosphere), the cosmos as a whole. For higher-order axiological questions, one might wonder the following: Is there only one source of value or is there a pluralism of values? If the latter, how can one compare competing values? An

additional concern is whether the bearers of value are objects or states of affairs – do environmental goods fit more naturally into the former or the latter? Relatedly, if what is valuable in nature is not stasis but events in ever-changing ecosystems, and if we view human beings not as being separate from nature but as parts of ecosystems, can we then view human actions themselves as having value? If so, must we reject consequentialism? Finally, does something's being natural entail that human intervention in it would cause it to lose value? Or can two places which are otherwise identical in terms of their intrinsic physical properties have different intrinsic values if one has been created by humans and the other exists apart from human intervention? If so, how can this be squared with consequentialist theory?

The essays in Part I of this book address these questions. In "The Bearers of Value in Environmental Ethics," Katie McShane discusses a general concern which may differentiate consequentialist and Kantian environmental ethical theories. McShane argues that the fact that consequentialist theories typically focus on the value of states of affairs and non-consequentialist theories typically focus on the value of persons or individual things makes a significant difference with regard to the two types of theories' approaches. McShane concludes that although we may find the Kantian approach more familiar, consequentialists' emphasis on states of affairs makes it better suited to respond to environmental problems.

Robin Attfield has long been at the forefront of consequentialist environmental ethics. In a series of works (1991, 1999, and 2003), Attfield has explicated and defended *biocentric individualism*, the view that what has value are the goods of living creatures. On Attfield's consequentialist view, living beings all have interests and capabilities in defending their own good, and this makes their flourishing valuable, although Attfield's view is *inegalitarian* – it is not the case that the good of all living things is of equal value. In his paper in this volume, "Can

Biocentric Consequentialism Meet Pluralist Challenges?" Attfield defends this view from criticisms from Alan Carter, and Attfield shows how consequentialist biocentric individualism accounts for other claims of moral considerability (such as for species and ecosystems).

Avram Hiller's "System Consequentialism" incorporates a holistic environmental worldview within consequentialist theory. The view has two main aspects. First, we should morally consider natural systems as part of consequentialist calculus. Second, since humans are natural beings and systemically depend upon other humans and on the natural world, when a typical human action is performed, consideration must be given to whether the action and its end together comprise a good system. Human actions, then, may have value other than merely instrumental value.

Alan Carter defends a pluralist version of consequentialism in his "Indirect, Multidimensional Consequentialism," a view which he has also laid the groundwork for in other important work (e.g. 2011a and 2011b). Carter first argues that consequentialism need not contain an injunction to maximize value. Then Carter defends the view that there is a plurality of values, and shows that this multidimensional axiology grounds an environmental ethic that is preferable to those offered by monistic views. Carter gives a detailed account of the structure of consequentialist theory if we countenance a plurality of values.

Ben Bradley's paper "Why Leave Nature Alone?" argues against the idea that there is a neutral state of human non-interference ("moral inertia") which is relevant in comparing outcomes. For Bradley, this means that neither consequentialist nor nonconsequentialist theories can easily claim that there is something intrinsically bad about disrupting wilderness. To claim that human action in wilderness causes it to lose value is to be chauvinistic regarding human

action – such a claim depends upon an unprincipled distinction between human and nonhuman activities.

Since consequentialist theories contain both an account of what is valuable and an account of right action, the essays in Part I about what is of value do not on their own provide a full picture of the pros and cons of consequentialist environmental ethics. Furthermore, a number of specific issues arise when attempting to apply consequentialist theories directly to real-world environmental issues. Thus there are many other open questions for consequentialist environmental ethics.

An important category of concerns connecting consequentialism to environmental ethics regards uncertainty in assessing the value of outcomes. There are several related issues here. First, there is tremendous uncertainty about the long-term environmental consequences of actions, and this uncertainty may render consequentialism inadequate as a practical means of responding to environmental questions. Second, there is the famous non-identity problem (Parfit, 1984, Ch. 16), where those future individuals (both human and non-human) who will be adversely affected by anthropogenic environmental problems will owe their very existence to our actions, and any harm-based theory of right action will need a solution to the problem. Third, due to uncertainty about what features of the environment are morally considerable, we may not have a decision procedure to decide which actions are best. Fourth, there may be special ethical questions that arise due to the potential of environmental catastrophe that are not normally considered in typical discussions of individual harm. Fifth, there are political issues regarding how political actors must consider the interests of those who cannot play a role in public policy deliberation because they are not yet born or are not human.

A wedge issue in distinguishing consequentialist from nonconsequentialist theories is whether it is acceptable to directly cause some harm in the service of a greater good. This question arises prominently in environmental ethics since so many of our actions cause some harm to the environment and to people in a way that is hard if not impossible to avoid. Is it possible for such harm ever to be justified? If not, is there a way to remedy the harm? Finally, although there are deep social and political questions about the environment that consequentialist theories ought to address, there are also personal questions. How does consideration of the environment affect our day-to-day decisions on how to act? What makes for the best life for a person given our current environmental situation?

The selections in Part II of this book address most of the questions mentioned in the preceding two paragraphs, with some authors defending the consequentialist approach and others rejecting it. In “On Some Limitations of Consequentialism in the Sphere of Environmental Ethics,” Alan Holland argues that a consequentialist framework will rarely be acceptable in making environmental decisions. This is because environmental issues typically occur at a large scale (both spatial and temporal) that cannot be delimited in advance, and thus consequences of actions cannot easily be determined at the time of decision-making. However, Holland accepts that an evaluation of consequences still must play a role in environmental decision-making even if environmental decisions cannot be made solely on the basis of an evaluation of consequences.

It is worth inquiring what we should do if, as is arguably the case, the axiological issues discussed in Part I of this book are unresolved. In “Evaluative Uncertainty, Environmental Ethics, and Consequentialism,” Krister Bykvist argues that in addition to the uncertainty regarding the long-term consequences of actions, there is moral uncertainty about what things have value. Although Bykvist’s paper relates to axiological issues, his main concern is a



structural issue for consequentialism in dealing with moral uncertainty. In parallel to how Holland argues that empirical uncertainty may undermine consequentialist approaches to environment ethics, Bykvist argues that moral uncertainty may be problematic for consequentialists. Unlike Holland, however, Bykvist argues that the solution to this problem does not require any radical changes to traditional consequentialist theory. Instead, Bykvist argues that once a distinction is made between what is morally right and what is rational, a consequentialist framework is still appropriate.

The next three papers in the volume address the issue of whether and how it is possible to offset in an appropriate manner environmental damages we cause. Allen Habib argues in “Future Generations and Resource Shares” that typical ways of understanding our responsibility to offset the depletion of natural resources we cause, such as Brian Barry’s view, are misguided. Instead, Habib argues that one must consider what he calls “window resources,” since what resources are needed shifts over time, and just distribution across generations must account for these shifts.

In “Can We Remediate Wrongs?” Benjamin Hale argues that environmental considerations undermine consequentialism. If what is wrong with environmental pollution is the harm that it causes, as a consequentialist would hold, then pollution would be permissible from a consequentialist perspective if the harms could be remedied. However, Hale argues that there is no way to remedy some damages caused by pollution; what is really wrong with pollution is that it is a kind of trespass. Hale claims that restitution and reconciliation are also necessary in responding to environmental damages, but that these do not fit in a consequentialist framework.

In “Moral Bookkeeping, Consequentialism, and Carbon Offsets,” Julia Driver addresses the question of whether offsetting the damages we cause due to anthropocentric climate change using carbon offsets is acceptable. Although some may argue that such offsetting also considers

eco-systems which have been harmed by people, and argues that a consequentialist perspective is better than a non-consequentialist perspective in handling such cases. After discussing the notion of *restitution* generally, Driver argues, unlike Hale, that those who harm nature can compensate for that harm. There are many trade-offs we make in day-to-day life, and carbon offsets are indeed a way of maintaining an acceptable moral bookkeeping.

The final paper in Part II and in the book as a whole is Wendy Donner's "John Stuart Mill's Green Liberalism and Ecofeminism." Donner uses Mill's prescient views on the "Art of Life" to formulate an environmentally-informed view of the good life for a person. Donner argues that the good life is a simple life which is rich in appreciation of natural beauty and which avoids the excesses of materialism. Donner shows that this understanding of the proper place of humans in the natural world applies more than ever to today.

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We are confident that anyone concerned with either practical environmental issues or with ethical theory will find much of value in these pages. Ethical theory quite generally stands to gain from the development of a consequentialist environmental ethic, and criticisms based in environmental concerns made by opponents of consequentialism (such as those in this volume) must be answered for consequentialism to be generally viable. Furthermore, resolution of the pressing environmental issues of our era would be aided by the development of an adequate theoretical framework, and though there is much work yet to be done, we hope that this book is a significant step in its construction.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Readers who seek a more comprehensive treatments of consequentialism would be well-served by starting with Mulgan (2001: 25-52), Brink (2005), and Driver (2012).

<sup>2</sup> We ignore, for the sake of simplicity, cases in which there are two or more actions, F1 and F2, which A can do which have equally valuable consequences and in which there is no other action, F3, which A can do which has more valuable consequences than F1 or F2.

<sup>3</sup> Concerns of this sort come and go. See Nozick (1981: 494-498), Raz (1986: 268-269), and Dreier (1993) and more recently Portmore (2007) and Brown (2011).

<sup>4</sup> Of course, one need not be a consequentialist to hold this view – but it helps. Epicurus was arguably one welfarist who did not embrace consequentialism (Annas 1993: 293-301). Perhaps Hume was another (Gill 2011).

<sup>5</sup> Interested readers might pursue these matters in far greater detail in Griffin (1986), White (2006), and Feldman (2012), among many other sources.

<sup>6</sup> To be sure, the reader may experience vertigo when thinking through the possibilities. One might a subjectivist inclusivist welfarist actual act consequentialist, or one might be an extra-welfarist actual rule consequentialist, or might be an objectivist exclusivist welfarist expected act consequentialist, and so on. But every serious ethical theory must take on issues of this sort, and consequentialism is no exception

<sup>7</sup> In addition to some of the contributors to this volume, Robert Elliot (1997) and Dale Jamieson (2002, vii) have explicitly done so. (Also see Jamieson and Elliot 2009.) Elliot (2001, 181) also notes the paucity of avowed consequentialist environmental ethicists.

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