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Inner Diversity: An Alternative Ecological Virtue Ethics

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Abstract: *I propose a modified virtue ethics, grounded in an analogy between ecosystems and human personalities. I suggest that we understand ourselves as possessing changing systems of inter-related subpersonalities with different virtues, and view our characters as flexible and evolving.*

What is an environmental virtue ethics? There are at least two clear possibilities. First, an environmental virtue ethics could turn to a standard virtue theory from theoretical ethics and apply it to environmental questions. Thus, we might ask, "What would an environmentally virtuous person do in such and such a situation?" "What traditional virtues should an environmental activist develop?" "Are there additional virtues, beyond the traditional virtues, which an environmentally virtuous agent ought to develop?" and so on, while making use of traditional virtue theories. This approach is common in discussions of environmental virtue ethics. For example, Geoffrey Frasz writes

I use the term virtue in a modified version of the sense developed by Aristotle. An environmental virtue refers to a mean between two vices, qualities the possession of which will partially enable a person to lead the environmentally good life. The

good for humans in this case is living in harmony with nature . . . Environmental vices would be those qualities of a person the possession of which would frustrate the movement of a person toward the environmentally good life.¹

Thus Frasz applies a traditional virtue theory (that of Aristotle) to environmental concerns, while keeping the central elements of this theory unchanged. This first approach to an environmental virtue ethics leads to important insights – including characterizations of non-traditional virtues, and new ways of understanding more familiar virtues.²

A second understanding of environmental virtue ethics would, in a certain sense, invert the approach of the first understanding. Thus, rather than take the framework of a standard virtues ethics and apply it to environmental issues, we could take our knowledge of ecology and the natural world, and see how these understandings might lead us to change the basic framework of standard virtue ethics. Based on these changes to standard virtue ethics, we could then see how such an ecologically-based virtue ethics would apply to environmental issues.

Here I develop a proposal of this second variety. I begin with a brief discussion of standard virtue ethics, and draw attention to a potential problem for such theories insofar as they oversimplify

human characters and personalities. I then turn to the alternative account. The proposal is grounded in a loose analogy between ecosystems and human personalities. Based on this analogy, and several suggestive remarks by the Norwegian ecophilosopher Sigmund Kvaløy, I propose that we understand ourselves as possessing systems of inter-related subpersonalities with different virtues, and see our characters as flexible and evolving.³ In the third section of the paper I show how this alternative ecological virtue ethics would have an impact upon those concerned with the environment.

Standard Virtue Ethics

Virtue ethics is distinctive in its emphasis on character and leading a good overall life. Indeed, much of what drives contemporary virtue ethics is a rejection of the focus on solving particular moral quandaries that is common to familiar consequentialist and deontological theories. There is a focus on how we should *be*, rather than what we should *do*.⁴ Virtue ethicists generally hold that judgements about good character or virtue are primary or basic, in the sense that other moral notions such as right action, or good states of affairs can be explained or defined in terms of virtues or character. An account of right action commonly held by virtue theorists is given by Rosalind Hursthouse:

*An action is right iff it is what a virtuous agent would characteristically (i.e. acting in character) do in the circumstances.*⁵

We can characterize a right action as that action (or one of a set of equally acceptable actions) which an agent morally ought to perform, all things considered. A worry for standard virtue ethics can be drawn out through consideration of the following scenario: A manager in a large business is responsible for dozens of workers. He is hard-working, tough-minded, and impartial in making business decisions. Within the practice of business then, we could consider this man virtuous. But suppose he were to apply the same virtues in the same fashion in his interactions with his young daughter. Surely compassion, patience, and benevolence are required in these interactions, and so we might see the manager as an excellent businessman, but a poor father. The problem here for standard virtue theories comes when we try to decide whether the businessman is virtuous, *tout court*. We can trust his judgements in business, but not in matters of child-rearing. It seems wrong to claim that he is entirely virtuous, yet it would be

unfair to say that he entirely isn't, ignoring the virtuous business behavior.

Or compare a soldier who is able to storm an enemy machine gun nest, but who is entirely unable to gather up the nerve to ask a woman out on a date. Is this man courageous? If we claim that he isn't, it seems that very few people, if any, can be considered virtuous. Even the best of humans typically have certain areas where they lack virtue. It seems that the soldier is courageous in some areas, and perhaps somewhat cowardly in others.

The soldier has different characters – one comes into play in battle, another in his ordinary social life. The business manager, on the other hand, crudely applies the same character from his business dealings to his life at home. Rather than trying to simply describe such persons as virtuous or not, we can look at their different characters, and the way they are deployed in different situations.

An Alternative, Ecological Account

The alternative proposal draws on seeing humans as analogous to ecosystems. We are to model ourselves (in part) on the natural world. I should stress that I am not claiming any sort of logical entailment about the nature of the virtues which follows from facts or concepts drawn from ecology. Indeed, many of these ecological concepts are themselves grounded in analogy. Rather, the test of this alternative account will be whether it gives us an attractive picture of how humans should guide their lives. I hope also to show that the proposal allows us to avoid the worry raised above for standard virtue ethics.

We can see ourselves as complex, changing systems of personalities (or, more modestly, subpersonalities). We embody different subpersonalities in different situations – we see the world and behave in a different fashion in the presence of an old friend from when we are teaching a class, and we are different again when we wander alone along a familiar trail. We notice different aspects of our surroundings, we react differently, and exhibit different character traits. Sometimes the difference can be stark – compare a prison guard on duty, and at home playing with her children. On the current proposal we are encouraged to develop a wide range of virtuous subpersonalities – with a wide range of interests, knowledge, and virtues, thus allowing us to be sensitive to changing situations and environments. In addition, we should strive to have our subpersonalities be healthy and morally virtuous.

We can now turn to the analogy, in which

key concepts from ecology and the characterization of ecosystems will be deployed. We find interesting analogues for many of these when we turn our attention to human characters and subpersonalities.

Diversity

Ecosystems have different populations carrying out different functions or activities within the system as a whole. For humans, this would mean having different characters to apply to different situations and having a wide, diverse range of knowledge and projects. A person as a whole should not be overly specialized (though she could have ranges of rather specialized knowledge, insofar as these help her overall). Sigmund Kvaløy suggests that

we can conceive of a human being as a being who at birth is like a complex root system that is trying not to fix a permanent personality structure, but to grow in a multiplicity of personalities and never to fix any of these either. I have in mind a dynamic and multidirectional but organically ordered pattern. Contrasting this, we "civilized" peoples live today as we did five thousand years ago under pyramidal systems that demand from us that when we are born we must be one, single, rigidly identifiable person.⁶

Thus, we are to understand ourselves as changing and evolving, with a wide range of subpersonalities filling different niches. We have an inner diversity of characters, each of which tends to come into prominence in different sets of circumstances. Kvaløy presents the following example:

Up until about 70 years ago, Norwegian communities along the western and northern coasts were semi-nomadic. Part of the year they were stationary in one place with their farms and families. But every winter for three or four months they left home on a sailing vessel, normally owned collectively by five or six neighbors, to go fishing at the Lofoten Islands far away in the north . . .

These men had to be members of two extremely different societies with two different ways of social integration. They were also meeting nature in two different ways. In my view they did it because they developed two different personalities. The theory of permanent ego centering does not

cover this phenomena. These two different personalities go deeper than mere role playing, because in role playing, you keep the same center and merely act differently. At the same time, the varied personalities of these boatmen were dynamic, always shifting, adjusting, and growing.⁷

I would suggest that the range of different subpersonalities is much broader. We are quite different people in different circumstances – when we interact with colleagues, when we are teaching a class, or when we are hiking a familiar trail. We see the world in different ways; different aspects of the environment are relevant to us, we react differently, and different virtues (or vices) are expressed. And each of these subpersonalities adapts and grows over time – for example, our relationships change and evolve, and with them change our corresponding subpersonalities.

Some might balk at the suggestion that we have a range of different personalities in such cases (as suggested by Kvaløy)– they might argue that we should see ourselves as having a single personality which is expressed in different ways in different circumstances. On behalf of Kvaløy, I would simply stress how different we can be in different circumstances. Consider again the prison guard who at work can be cold, alert to threats, committed to a set of prison rules, and so on. The way she sees the world around her and her reactions to it are shaped by her role. The same guard at home could be patient, compassionate, and indulgent while playing with her children. She sees the world differently at home – not in terms of threats to herself, or various prison policies, but perhaps in terms of what would please her children, and shared memories or jokes. Her reactions and behaviours would be extremely different. Thus, it seems plausible to claim that such a guard has two different personalities. After all, in the one case the guard could be cold, impartial, and rigid, while in the other she is kind, indulgent, and compassionate. Her reactions and interpretations of the world in these cases share very little.

In any case, to avoid begging questions about what is required to distinguish personalities, I will speak of ‘subpersonalities’. This recognizes that a person will typically have a wide range of different ways of interpreting and interacting with the world, while also capturing an element of integrity and continuity between these different characters.

We are thus not encouraged to develop simple habits that we then apply straightforwardly for the rest of our lives.⁸ There is no single perfect state towards which are striving, no single state from which (once attained), we would wish never to deviate. We

are encouraged to grow and change, as the world and our immediate environment change around us. We are encouraged to have a wide, diverse range of subpersonalities, skills, and knowledge. In this way, we will be sensitive to the changing world around us.

Consider a college-level athlete who ignores his studies as he is quite confident that he has a promising career in professional athletics. He devotes himself almost exclusively to his sport, and lets other relationships and projects wither away. He is, of course, devastated when he suffers a career-ending injury. We can imagine a person with a single-minded devotion to a particular religious group. When she loses her confidence in this group, her life is thrown into a tailspin. If these agents had maintained further commitments, relationships, and so on, the impact of these losses would have been mitigated. By looking to ecosystems we can draw lessons for human character development: depth and diversity often make their possessors more resilient in the face of adverse events.⁹ And note that here we are not simply applying traditional virtue ethics to environmental concerns. Instead, we can see that looking to the natural world can provide lessons for virtue theorists.

We can compare this approach to standard virtue theories. Recall the worry raised in the previous section, that we are too complex to simply classify as virtuous or not; that we are often virtuous in some areas and in some subpersonalities, but not others. The current proposal provides us with an alternative that acknowledges that we have different subpersonalities that come into play in different circumstances – some generally virtuous (given the circumstances under which they typically arise), and some generally vicious. We ought to strive towards (i) developing a wide range of subpersonalities, and (ii) ensuring that each of these subpersonalities is virtuous and is deployed in suitable circumstances. In a sense, we are striving to become many virtuous characters!

Ecosystems vary significantly in terms of diversity - compare an arctic region with an equatorial rainforest. Correspondingly, different people will have different potentials for inner diversity, depending both on inner potentials and external circumstances. We might compare the soil and the land with our inner potentials, and climate and other systems with the external circumstances (such as our culture) in which we find ourselves. With this point in hand, we can recognize that there are many different ways for humans to develop and flourish, each by developing these varying individual potentials. There is not a single ideal set of characters, anymore than there is a single, ideal ecosystem. But not just any random grouping of subpersonalities or populations will work together in a viable system.

Given this diversity, wide range of goals, and personalities, how do we determine when an action is right? The standard virtue theory account of moral rightness seems inadequate. I would propose the following as a replacement:

An action is morally right, if and only if, an unimpaired, fully-informed virtuous observer would deem the action to be morally right.

A 'virtuous observer' here refers to a being with a wide range of integrated virtuous characters. With full-information about a given case such an observer would be able to understand the motives of the agents involved, understand the relationships and commitments of the agents involved, accurately predict the consequences of various courses of action, and so on. Thus, she will not lack information crucial to good decision-making – information that may not be available to an agent immersed in a situation. She will also have a broad range of virtuous subpersonalities to draw upon in interpreting and assessing the action before her. Finally, such an observer must be unimpaired – she must not be coerced, or under the influence of drugs which diminish her mental acuity, and so on. The presence of any of these sorts of impairments would lead to questionable judgements.

Such an observer could deem the actions of the business manager at work to be morally right, and his actions at home to be wrong, even while we refrain from declaring the manager to be virtuous (or not), *tout court*. And similarly with the case of the soldier, a fully-informed, virtuous observer could distinguish between his actions in battle, and his actions and character in normal, daily life.

Dominant Personalities

In ecosystems we find dominant species, those which are crucial to the structure and stability of the systems. These species are often used to characterize various ecosystems - thus we have beech-hemlock forests, etc. In the case of human inner communities, we find certain subpersonalities which tend most to characterize a given person. Intuitively, these are subpersonalities which we would find it difficult to imagine the person without; if such a subpersonality were lost, we might speak of the person no longer being herself. For example, we might consider that subpersonality which is most often deployed by a person in her day-to-day life to be a dominant subpersonality. A driven athlete might be focused on achieving certain goals in this realm, and

typically see the world through such a lens. We could understand this to be one of her dominant subpersonalities, as it so crucially shapes who she is.

Not all of our subpersonalities are equally important to us; some play relatively minor roles in isolated circumstances. But our dominant subpersonalities shape our overall nature, providing focus to our projects and overall systems of characters. Our other subpersonalities must cohere with our dominant personalities. We thus need not worry that the current proposal will lead us to scattered sets of disjointed projects and subpersonalities (which may seem to be a problem, given our emphasis on diversity). On the other hand, we do want our non-dominant subpersonalities to be sufficiently varied and strong so as to allow effective functioning should a dominant subpersonality be lost.

For a person as a whole to be healthy, her dominant subpersonalities must be resilient, persistent, and resistant (and this can, of course, be greatly influenced by the other subpersonalities in the system). That is, the person's main subpersonalities should not be easily destroyed or abandoned. We thus have an alternative understanding of what constitutes a strong character.

Dynamism and Succession

Ecosystems evolve and change – e.g. from open field to (eventually) hardwood forest. These forests will over time evolve also. Analogously, humans will change over time. But whereas on standard virtue theories we are encouraged to arrive at a single, set character, on the current proposal our characters should be seen as much more flexible, and changing. We are not aiming to achieve some perfect, unchanging character. Note also that at any given moment we will possess a range of different characters – some of which will change, some of which will gradually fade away and be replaced by new characters, and so on.¹⁰

Integrity

The diverse populations in an ecosystem interact in ways that lead to the overall flourishing of the system (or which at least allow for the continuing existence of the populations of the system). We might draw on our analogy in the following way. We cannot simply throw together a group of randomly chosen mammals, trees, plants, and insects, place them in a randomly chosen area of the earth, and expect a viable system to emerge. Similarly, our

subpersonalities must fit with our basic, individual potentials, while working together in a loose, but coherent structure. Our various subpersonalities and goals must be integrated, with our dominant subpersonalities playing a key shaping role. Ideally, we should not entirely isolate our business lives from our roles as parents, and so on. Kvaløy writes,

What I am talking about is different from "split personality." I am speaking about a really radical utilization of an enormous potential for complex, deep "permeation" or interpenetration [...] I am using a social model for the psychic world of the human individual, starting with that internal society and then explaining the individual, rather than the usual method of beginning with the human individual and then going out to society.¹¹

We thus do not have isolated subpersonalities – they influence with each other, and we deploy them in different circumstances. We tend to do this naturally in our daily lives. We are different people when we interact with our parents rather than when we interact with students, and are different again while we interact with colleagues.

What of the prison guard? It might seem that her keeping a firm wall between her character at work and her character at home is what allows her to lead a flourishing life. In response, I would suggest that while such a stark split between characters might be the best approach in her circumstances, she is not able to fully flourish, given this need for such a harsh split. We can justifiably worry that maintaining the rigid barrier between her home and work lives will be emotionally draining, and we might also worry that she will be unable to entirely maintain this barrier – perhaps in a moment of frustration she will react as the prison guard with her children. To lead a fully flourishing life a change in employment might be required for our prison guard.

Virtue theorists typically acknowledge the importance of personal commitments and relationships, but often little is said beyond this.¹² The current proposal begins to expand on this by positing that we should have a broad range of integrated interests, commitments, skills, and personalities. This emphasis on integrity (within a broad range of commitments) can add an element to traditional virtue ethics. Bernard Williams draws attention to the importance of integrity in human lives. But he emphasizes integrity in the sense of maintaining one's commitments to one's projects (and not easily abandoning them). In criticizing utilitarianism, he writes:

It is absurd to demand of such a man [one with strong commitments], when the sums come in from the utility network which the projects of others have in part determined, that he should just step aside from his own project and decision and acknowledge the decision which utilitarian calculation requires. It is to alienate him in a real sense from his actions and the source of his action in his own convictions. [...] this is to neglect the extent to which his actions and his decisions have to be seen as the actions and decisions which flow from projects and attitudes with which he is most closely identified. It is thus, in the most literal sense, an attack on his integrity.¹³

With Williams' integrity it seems that one can have integrity while being both a strong supporter of PETA and a factory farm owner, to the extent that one works hard on both of these commitments, both are strongly held, and one's actions flow from these commitments. What Williams rules out is abandoning a strongly held commitment for the sake of utilitarian demands (for example), where the agent involved does not regard utilitarianism as a central commitment. Similarly, a political libertarian might complain that taxation for projects which she does not wish to support interferes with her integrity and commitment to her own projects.

But there is another form of integrity. We must strive after cohesiveness among our projects and personalities - this can be difficult to achieve, but is worthwhile. The current, ecological integrity requires that one's projects cohere. To follow with our rather unlikely example, how can one, as a supporter of PETA justify one's ownership of a factory farm? The projects conflict, and one would thus lack the current, ecological integrity. An ecological virtue ethic would thus encourage us to avoid fractured lives, where our work lives are entirely distinct from our personal lives, which are in turn distinct from the charitable commitments we hold, etc. Instead, all of these dimensions of our lives must work together as a system.

We can focus for a moment on the integrity of those who espouse a range of broadly 'green' values. Mark Sagoff writes that

Not all of us think of ourselves primarily as consumers. Many of us regard ourselves as citizens as well. As consumers, we act to acquire what we want for ourselves individually; each of us follows his or her

conception of the good life. As citizens, however, we may deliberate over and then seek to achieve together a conception of the good society.¹⁴

Sagoff presents several examples to draw out the tension between our citizen and consumer selves. We drive gas-guzzling cars while voting for policies which will increase gas taxes, or fund more public transportation. Other writers draw attention to similar tensions, noting that it can be very difficult to act on our preferred values (and our green values in particular) under current political and social conditions.¹⁵ As such, it is commonly suggested that we can justifiably make significant compromises in living up to our green values.

A worry is that we are too quick to excuse ourselves in these cases. We'd like to act on certain values, but it is hard, so we don't really need to, as long as we make some donations, and perhaps write articles telling people why they should care about the environment. I certainly agree that there will need to be compromises. But it seems that the pendulum has swung too far, from extremely demanding claims being made, to an easy acceptance of extremely watered-down levels of commitment. There are demands of integrity at stake here. Even if our living in accordance with our values may not have massive consequences on society as whole, we still need to try to live up to our values, and to levels that demand significant changes on our part.

Our consumer values undermine our citizen values, in at least two ways. First, the projects often conflict in obvious ways - one set of values tells us not to use private vehicles, the other tells us to do so. We end up giving money to corporations that we then try to fight in other moments. We undo our own work. Second, as we continue to live in accordance with our consumer values, our commitment to our citizen values can be watered down to complacency. We become the person who likes to think he is generous, though he almost never gives anything because he is waiting for some hazy time in the future when he'll finally have enough to begin sharing (and which mysteriously never quite seems to arrive...). And while it is certainly true, and very important, to recognize that we may not be able to entirely control our ability to act in accordance with our citizen values due to the cultural and political conditions under which we live, we cannot end here. Integrity demands of us that we at least do that work which we can. We can work to reshape our consumer self. If we, as environmentalists, are going to demand changes in society, shouldn't we also act as role models? Anything less begins to smell of hypocrisy.

Adaptability and Openness

Ecosystems do not have firm borders. They are thus open to influences from others. These influences can lead to changes within the system, some of which can be seen as welcome (increased diversity and strength), while others can be seen as detrimental (reduced diversity, integrity, and perhaps beauty). In the case of humans, we can see outside influences as good (new interests, new sources of strength, new knowledge), or bad (perhaps a cult conversion, where one becomes narrow, interests and characters are lost). A healthy human will be open to good influences, and resistant to those which are bad. We could thus perhaps adopt a variant of Aldo Leopold's land ethic in considering whether an influence or change is good or bad for a person:

A change or outside influence is good for a person when it tends to preserve (or increase) the integrity, stability, and beauty of her inner community (as judged by an unimpaired, fully-informed, virtuous observer). It is bad when it tends otherwise.¹⁶

Note that in the case of the well-being of a person, 'integrity' and 'beauty' take on moral connotations. Or we could add that the influence must also improve (or at least not worsen) the person's characters from a moral point of view in order to be seen as a good influence. This represents a significant disanalogy between persons and ecosystems. When we look at changes within ecosystems there are important difficulties in determining whether such changes are for the better or for the worse.¹⁷ However, when judging the quality of changes within people we can appeal to moral standards to guide our assessments.

Application to Environmental Concerns

With our sketch of the proposed theory in hand, we can now consider whether this theory might generate interesting consequences for more specifically environmental concerns. I will focus on three such consequences.

Adaptability

Louke Van Wensveen, in her recent book on environmental virtue ethics, takes a rather dim view of many traits that might be seen as virtues in non-environmental contexts:

Take, for example, the virtue language generated by Western corporate cultures. If one needs to make a profit in business, it generally helps to be "tough," "efficient," and "shrewd." It may also help to be caring and trustworthy, but usually these traits are redefined as being, in fact, tough - that is, they produce "hard" results. Although the same combination of traits may aid in the achievement of environmental goals, ecologically minded people generally do not speak this way. First on their lips is not toughness, but humility and sensitivity, not efficiency but sustainability, not shrewdness but wisdom . . . Clearly, business practice and the practice of dedication to ecological well-being generate distinctive ways of using virtue language each calibrated to the unique goals of the underlying practice.¹⁸

It is not clear that the virtue language Van Wensveen associates with corporate culture should be dismissed by 'ecologically minded people'. Van Wensveen herself notes that the corporate traits may aid in the achievement of environmental goals, but seems to think that they are nonetheless inappropriate (as reflected in the practice of ecologically minded people of ignoring or rejecting such traits). I think we can move beyond this if we recognize the need for different subpersonalities in different situations. It all depends on the situation at hand - at times environmentalists need toughness (consider protesters under difficult conditions). We need efficiency - we have only limited time, so we must be efficient with it. We may need shrewdness in order to find a clever solution to an apparent dilemma, or an unexpected way of fighting against a powerful corporation - one that would simply overpower resistance without shrewd tactics. Efficiency and toughness applied in a person focused exclusively on economic gain can, of course, be extremely dangerous. But efficiency and toughness applied in an environmentally sensitive subpersonality can be crucial to the success of various environmentally valuable projects.

The same environmentally sensitive person, when the projects are achieved (and at various points during the struggle) can shift to a more sensitive, humble subpersonality which can appreciate what has been achieved. And note that this is compatible with integrity. The environmentalist who takes on different subpersonalities when in meetings, when teaching, when alone, etc. does not exhibit the problematic undermining projects which characterize those who, for example, are too quick to accept an easy citizen versus consumer split.

Resiliency

We will be more resilient in the face of inevitable setbacks - not only via such virtues as courage or patience, but also in having a wide range of projects, and personalities. Recall the case of the athlete who abandons all other projects, and is thus devastated when his athletic career is ended. The current proposal, under which we see ourselves as a system of interacting subpersonalities with a wide range of projects and virtues, would encourage us to develop this inner diversity. We would thus have alternatives, other places to look for solace, and other goals to achieve when our plans fail. Sadly, many environmental battles are lost - to be effective, we must be willing to take up new fights, and battle on. If we focus entirely on one project, we may simply give up on environmental concerns if the project fails.

Breadth of Vision

The emphasis on many subpersonalities and projects encourages us to avoid narrow overspecialization. An associated wide range of knowledge (given a wide range of characters) will provide environmentally concerned persons with several benefits. Such persons (i) can draw on different disciplines for solutions to environmental problems, (ii) can appeal to a wide range of other cases and situations in developing solutions, (iii) can understand and communicate more effectively with a wide range of persons, and (iv) can develop a more encompassing set of goals (such persons can look for solutions to problems with an eye towards a wide range of values). Furthermore, such persons will possess different virtuous characters with which to apply this knowledge.

Conclusions

By turning to ecosystems, and modeling ourselves on them, interesting possibilities result. The current proposal does not encourage us to aim at a single, unchanging, rigid character, which could be quite ineffective in changing circumstances. It does not oversimplify humans and see them as straightforwardly virtuous or not - it recognizes that persons have different personalities in different situations, and that some may be virtuous, while others are not. It tells us to develop a wide range of commitments, knowledge, and characters and to have these cohere - an important form of integrity.

With a broad range of characters, commitments and knowledge, we will be better, more

effective environmental agents. We can take on different characters in debating, while hiking, or while teaching a class. We can appeal to and understand a broader range of people - allowing for more effective action, and a greater potential for reaching agreements. Our various subpersonalities will also be constantly changing in small ways - allowing us to adapt and interact suitably with the changing world around us. We would thus be encouraged to develop a depth and range of characters, interests, and abilities - an inner diversity - that is rarely found today.¹⁹

Notes

1. Geoffrey B. Frasz, "Environmental Virtue Ethics: A New Direction for Environmental Ethics," *Environmental Ethics* 15, (1993), 259ff. Jennifer Welchman, in "The Virtues of Stewardship," *Environmental Ethics* 21, (1999), 411-23, examines virtues of stewardship - loyalty and benevolence - in light of Hume's account of the virtues.

2. See, for example, Thomas E. Hill, Jr., "Ideals of Human Excellence and Preserving Natural Environments," *Environmental Ethics* 5, (1983), 211-24, Philip Cafaro, "Thoreauvian Patriotism as an Environmental Virtue," *Philosophy in the Contemporary World* 2, (1995), 1-7, and Ron Erickson, "On Environmental Virtue Ethics," *Environmental Ethics* 16, (1994), 334-6. Erickson presents a brief discussion of an overlooked virtue (solidarity), while Hill and Cafaro present alternative understandings of more commonly discussed virtues (humility and patriotism, respectively).

3. Sigmund Kvaløy, "Complexity and Time: Breaking the Pyramid's Reign," in *Wisdom in the Open Air: the Norwegian Roots of Deep Ecology*, eds. Peter Reed and David Rothenberg (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 116-45. Reprinted and revised from *Resurgence* 106 (1984): 12-21. Note that Kvaløy is also known as Sigmund Kvaløy Sætereng.

4. For more on this distinction, see Edmund Pincoffs, *Quandries and Virtues* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1986).

5. Rosalind Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 28.

6. Kvaløy, 131.

7. Kvaløy, 133.

8. Standard virtue ethicists might appeal to Aristotle's notion of proper habituation to suggest that we can have a single character that can be appropriately applied to all circumstances. Gilbert Harman's "Moral Philosophy Meets Social Psychology: Virtue Ethics and the Fundamental Attribution Error," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 99 (1999): 315-31, drawing on recent work in social psychology, raises important difficulties for such claims.

9. I do not mean to endorse the strong claim that increased diversity in an ecosystem *always* increases the stability of the system (a view which has fallen into disrepute in several quarters). Rather, I claim only that this diversity-stability claim does seem to be correct in many cases, particularly with respect to resiliency.

10. To some extent, Alasdair MacIntyre is sensitive to this sort of dynamism in his virtue ethics. He stresses the importance of having a narrative structure to our lives – a continuity through the various projects and changes which we undergo. See his *After Virtue*, 2nd ed. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984).

11. Kvaløy, 134. For a philosophically-informed discussion of multiple personality disorders, see Nicholas Humphrey and Daniel C. Dennett, "Speaking for Ourselves," *Raritan: A Quarterly Journal* 9, (1989), 68-98.

12. See Bernard Williams, "A Critique of Utilitarianism," in *Utilitarianism: For & Against*, J.J.C. Smart and Bernard Williams (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 93-118; Michael Stocker, "Friendship and Duty: Some Difficult Relations," in *Identity, Character, and Morality*, eds. Owen Flanagan and Amélie Oskenberg Rorty (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990), 219-33; Susan Wolf, "Moral Saints," *Journal of Philosophy* 79, (1982), 410-39.

13. Williams, 116-7.

14. Mark Sagoff, *The Economy of the Earth: Philosophy, Law, and the Environment* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 27 (italics in original).

15. See, for example, J. Baird Callicott, "How Environmental Ethical Theory May Be Put into Practice" in *Beyond the Land Ethic: More Essays in Environmental Philosophy* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999), 45-9, and Karen J. Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It Is and*

Why It Matters (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 45.

16. See Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac with Sketches Here and There* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949), 224-5. His original characterization of the land ethic:

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.

17. See Dale Jamieson, "Ecosystem Health: Some Preventative Medicine", *Environmental Values* 4, (1995), 333-44.

18. Louke Van Wensveen, *Dirty Virtues: The Emergence of Ecological Virtue Ethics* (Amherst, NY: Humanities Press, 2000), 9.

19. I would like to thank my fellow participants in the NEH Summer Institute, "Environmental Ethics and Policy: Alaska as a Case Study" (June 2001, James Liszka, director), Phil Cafaro, and Thelo Rax for many helpful comments and suggestions.

