THE VIRTUES OF HUNTING: A REPLY TO JENSEN

ROBERT LOVERING

Santa Clara University

rlovering@scu.edu

Abstract: *In this paper, I attempt to demonstrate that environmental virtue ethics (EVE) fails to provide sufficient justification for the hunting of nonhuman animals. In order to do this, I examine an EVE justification for the hunting of nonhuman animals and argue that it gives rise to the following dilemma: either EVE justifies the hunting of* both *human and nonhuman animals, or it justifies the hunting of* neither. *I then submit that the first lemma ought to be rejected as absurd and, thus, that the second lemma ought to be embraced.*

Introduction

As a way of introducing the central issue of this paper, consider the following exchange:[1]

Smith: How was your weekend?
Jones: Great, I went hunting.
Smith: Isn't hunting immoral?
Jones: Not under certain conditions.
Smith: Such as ... ?
Jones: Such as when one develops environmental virtues through it.
Smith: Environmental virtues? What are they?
Jones: They are traits one can develop through one's interaction with the environment that lead to an environmentally good life: a right relationship between the human agent on the one hand, and Earth and its nonhuman inhabitants on the other.
Smith: And how does hunting contribute to one's development of these environmental virtues?
Jones: Well, take the environmental virtue of humility. Hunting helps us to recognize that humans are part of nature and not separate from it, thereby nurturing the virtue of humility. Or consider the environmental virtue of gratitude. Hunting enables us to be grateful both for the opportunity to hunt and the food it provides, reinforcing the fact that all of nature is a gift, one that we need for survival. Or take the environmental virtue of connectedness ...
Smith: Okay, okay, I understand. But can't these environmental virtues be developed in a less harmful way? I mean, is it necessary to kill animals in order to develop these virtues?
Jones: Yes it is, since the very act of killing animals instills these environmental virtues in a way impossible with other activities. For example, the sense of gratitude that comes from being fed by another creature would be impossible without the kill.
Smith: I can see that, and I trust you can deliver similar arguments for the other environmental virtues. You know, Jones, I find your

environmental virtue ethics justification of hunting to be quite compelling.
Jones: Glad to hear it.
Smith: So, what did you hunt? Pheasants? Elk?
Jones: Humans.

Now, if you're like me, as soon as you realized *what* Jones hunted, you considered his environmental virtue ethics (EVE) justification of hunting to be deplorably insufficient. Moreover, you considered this to be the case *not* because Jones's presentation of EVE was somehow underdeveloped, but because you did not believe that hunting humans *could* be justified *merely* on the basis of the environmental virtues that one may develop through such an activity. In other words, even if Jones were to develop his account of EVE more thoroughly, so long as the justification for hunting humans remained, fundamentally, that through such an activity one can develop environmental virtues, you would deem his defense of hunting humans to be appallingly deficient. If you're like me, then, you hold that Jones's EVE fails to provide sufficient justification for the hunting of humans. That is, you hold that on EVE grounds *alone* the hunting of humans cannot be justified. What I attempt to demonstrate in this paper is, just as EVE fails to provide sufficient justification for the hunting of humans, so it fails to provide sufficient justification for the hunting of nonhuman animals. (Hereafter, "provides sufficient justification" and "justifies" will be used interchangeably.) In order to do this, I examine an EVE justification for the hunting of nonhuman animals and argue that it gives rise to the following dilemma: either EVE justifies the hunting of *both* human and nonhuman animals, or it justifies the hunting of *neither*.[2] I then submit that the first lemma ought to be rejected as absurd and, thus, that the second lemma ought to be embraced. After this, I examine and critique an alternative view regarding the relation between EVE and hunting, namely: though EVE does not provide sufficient justification for hunting, it nevertheless complements and completes other ethical theories, shedding new light on the question of the moral status of hunting. I conclude by discussing three important implications for an EVE approach not only to hunting but any other environmentally oriented activity.

Before moving on, a caveat is in order. Given that EVE is, in Thomas Hill's words, a "work in progress" (Hill 2001, 61) the critique below is *not* to be understood as directed at *every* understanding of EVE, or even every understanding of EVE appealed to in the attempt to justify hunting. Indeed, given the wide variety of views concerning how EVE is to be understood, formulating a critique that would encompass every understanding of EVE is prohibitively difficult, if not impossible.[3] However, the critique below *is* to be understood as directed at an understanding of EVE that is ostensibly widely embraced.[4] Accordingly, despite the fact that my critique is not directed at every understanding of EVE, the scope of it is nonetheless quite broad. Among others, Jon Jensen accepts this widely embraced understanding of EVE, and it is his EVE justification of hunting with which this paper is concerned.

The Virtues of Hunting

Philip Cafaro writes, "Since virtue ethicists are often accused of focusing too exclusively on self-interest and leaving the way open for immorality," attempting a virtue ethics justification of hunting "could be an important test case for virtue ethics generally" (Cafaro 2001, 3). In his "The Virtues of Hunting," Jon Jensen echoes Cafaro's claim by stating that hunting provides a "good test case" for EVE. In turn, Jensen "explores a virtue ethics justification of hunting," attempts to determine whether hunting is justified "within a general framework of virtue ethics," and ultimately contends that, under certain conditions—viz., when it cultivates environmental virtues—hunting can be justified (Jensen 2001, 113 and 123).[5] Jensen's thesis, then, is that EVE provides sufficient justification for hunting, that on EVE grounds alone hunting is justified.

However, it should be noted that, at the end of his article, Jensen seemingly retreats from his original thesis and hints at a weaker thesis: though EVE does not provide sufficient justification for hunting, it nevertheless complements and completes other ethical theories and, in turn, sheds new light on the question of the moral status of hunting (Jensen 2001, 123). Though there is more textual support for the stronger, original thesis than for this weaker thesis, for the purposes of this paper I will examine and critique *both* of these theses (to be referred to as the *stronger* and *weaker* theses, respectively) in turn.

On Jensen's EVE Justification of Hunting

Before considering Jensen's defense of the stronger thesis, one needs to know what Jensen means by "hunting" as well as what he understands EVE to be.

Despite what the title of his article may indicate, Jensen does not attempt to justify hunting in *all* its forms. Rather, he attempts to justify a particular form of hunting, viz., sport hunting. As the name suggests, sport hunting is an activity involving a level of physical exertion, skill, and even a type of competition and is to be distinguished from market (commercial) and subsistence hunting. But Jensen does not even attempt to justify *sport* hunting in all its forms; rather, he is concerned with a particular form of sport

hunting, one that may be characterized (in part) by what it is *not*:

(a) It is not the kind of hunting the primary (if not exclusive) reason for which is to secure a trophy, e.g., a mounted head; and,

(b) It is not the kind of hunting the primary (if not exclusive) reason for which is "mere sport," i.e., pleasure (Jensen 2001, 115).

Hence, the individual who engages in this form of sport hunting is not necessarily disappointed when he fails to secure a kill, and he views hunting to be valuable and worthwhile in a way that renders it significantly different from other sports. And so it is this form of sport hunting—I'll refer to it as *virtuous sport hunting* (VSH)—which Jensen attempts to justify on EVE grounds. (Although Jensen is concerned with justifying this particular form of hunting on EVE grounds, I argue below that EVE fails to justify not only VSH, but every other form of hunting as well.)

As for Jensen's understanding of EVE, it should be noted immediately that defining EVE is, in Jensen's words, "no small feat" (Jensen 2001, 113). Indeed, a principal project for some environmental virtue ethicists is determining how, exactly, EVE is to be understood.[6] Even so, definitions of EVE have been developed and articulated, and the definition Jensen invokes happens to be one that is seemingly widely embraced within the EVE community.[7] He summarizes this definition in the following way:

> [E]nvironmental virtue ethics evaluates the morality of individual actions or types of actions by the standard of the environmentally virtuous person. What would an environmentally virtuous person do in this situation? An environmentally virtuous agent is one who has, and exercises, the environmental virtues. These virtues must be explained and defended in terms of their ability to promote and lead to the environmentally good life (Jensen 2001, 115).

EVE, then, may be properly understood as a derivative of virtue theory. And, quoting Rosalind Hursthouse, Jensen states the following basic moral principle of virtue theory: *An act is right if and only if it is what a virtuous agent would characteristically do (i.e., acting in character) in the circumstances* (Jensen 2001, 113). Accordingly, one may properly understand a basic moral principle of EVE to be: *An act is right if and only if it is what an environmentally virtuous agent would characteristically do in the circumstances.*

Moreover, constitutive of virtue theory is, of course, the development of virtues, understood as traits that, according to Jensen, tend "to lead to some further good, usually some form of human flourishing" (Jensen 2001, 114). Accordingly, what makes traits *environmentally* virtuous is their tendency to lead to or bring about a *particular* good, viz., an environmentally good life: a "right" relationship between the human agent on the one hand, and the Earth and its nonhuman inhabitants on the other (Jensen 2001, 115). And though Jensen emphasizes that the good in question is a distinctly human good rather than a good of the biotic community or ecosystem, he also claims that the environmentally good life "must entail the good of natural systems and other species" since "all evidence indicates that human-well being is inextricably tied to the health of our surrounding ecosystems" (Jensen 2001, 115). Thus, according to Jensen, the environmental virtue ethicist promotes the good of natural systems and other species insofar as doing so serves to produce a distinctly human good. Jensen's environmental virtue ethicist, then, considers natural systems and other species to be *instrumentally* valuable. Whether he considers them to be *intrinsically* valuable as well is another matter, one which will be addressed below.

Given the preceding, we are now in a position to consider Jensen's defense of the stronger thesis: that EVE provides sufficient justification for VSH. According to Jensen, VSH can play a unique role in the development of environmental virtues. For example, VSH can help us appreciate our roles as individuals and as a species in the greater whole, and this means recognizing that humans are part of nature and not separate from it (Jensen 2001, 118). In this way, VSH fosters humility. Moreover, by joining us with the source of our food, VSH can cultivate the virtue of connectedness in a most direct fashion. "When a person hunts, kills, cleans, and processes the animal," Jensen maintains, "the connections are deep and meaningful" (Jensen 2001, 118). Jensen also states that some virtuous sport hunters are "grateful for the opportunity to hunt as well as the food it provides" and suggests that "the latter nourishes the body while the former nourishes the spirit" (Jensen 2001, 119). Finally, according to Jensen, respect can be developed through VSH in the manner in which a person hunts as well as the manner in which the animal is treated during and after the kill (Jensen 2001, 119-20). In short, insofar as VSH cultivates these traits—humility, connectedness, gratitude, or respect—it is justified on EVE grounds. With this in mind, Jensen's justification of VSH on EVE grounds may be summarized as follows:

P1: VSH cultivates certain environmental virtues.

P2: If VSH cultivates certain environmental virtues, then EVE justifies VSH.

C1: EVE justifies VSH.

Objections to Jensen's EVE Justification of Hunting

The objection to be discussed in this section is one which Jensen himself anticipates but, I submit, fails to respond to adequately. Jensen states the objection in the following way: "[E]ven if one accepts my claims, hunting is certainly not the only way to acquire or nurture these virtues. Why then, some will surely ask, should one hunt if there are other, less harmful, ways of reaching the same goods" (Jensen 2001, 121)? In other words, if it is not *necessary* to kill animals to develop environmental virtues, why not develop them through less harmful means, such as gardening or photography?

Jensen replies as follows. Though killing animals may not be necessary for the development of *some* environmental virtues, it *is* necessary for the development of other *specific* environmental virtues, such as connectedness to a food web involving wild nature, humility resulting from awareness of the cycles of death and life, and gratitude that comes from feeding upon another creature (Jensen 2001, 122). "The very act of killing animals," Jensen writes, "deepens and instills virtues in a way that is impossible with other activities" (Jensen 2001, 122). And if it is impossible to develop these specific environmental virtues except by killing animals, then killing animals as a way of developing these virtues is justified on EVE grounds. Jensen's reply to the preceding objection, then, may be summarized as follows:

P3: The very act of killing animals deepens and instills specific environmental virtues in a way that is impossible with other activities.

P4: If the very act of killing animals deepens and instills specific environmental virtues in a way that is impossible with other activities, then killing animals as a way of developing these environmental virtues is justified.

C2: Killing animals as a way of developing these environmental virtues is justified.

Whether Jensen's reply to the preceding objection is successful depends on the soundness of this argument. Since the argument is clearly valid, we need only determine whether the premises are true.

Regarding P3, Jensen submits a considerable amount of empirical evidence in favor of it (Jensen 2001, 122-23). And though I wonder whether *empirical* evidence is the right sort of evidence for supporting claims about what is and is not *possible*, I also recognize that "possible" has numerous senses, ranging from the logical to the metaphysical. Given that Jensen refrains from telling us what sense of "possible" he has in mind, my position on P3 is one of skepticism. That is, regarding the truth value of P3, I have suspended judgment. My skepticism here is inconsequential, however, for it is with Jensen's justification for P4 where I believe the fatal flaw with his argument is to be found. For the sake of the argument, then, I will grant that P3 is true and focus on Jensen's justification for P4.

On what grounds, then, does Jensen hold that P4 is true? On the grounds that it is entailed by his ethical theory, EVE. For if the very act of killing animals in certain circumstances deepens and instills specific environmental virtues in a way that is impossible with other activities, then killing animals in those circumstances is what an environmentally virtuous agent would characteristically do. And given the aforementioned basic moral principle of EVE, if killing animals in those circumstances is what an environmentally virtuous agent would characteristically do, then killing animals in those circumstances is right. Moreover, if an act is *right* in certain circumstances, then it is *justified* in those circumstances.

A problem with the preceding justification for P4 may be detected by revisiting the interchange between Smith and Jones. Like Jensen, Jones invokes P4 in his defense of what I have since referred to as VSH. Unlike Jensen, however, Jones invokes P4 in defense of the VSH of particular animals, namely, *humans*. Indeed, suppose that as the interchange continues, Jones goes on to argue that hunting human animals allows us to develop specific environmental virtues in a way that is impossible when hunting nonhuman animals. For example, Jones contends that the level of humility that can result from awareness of the cycles of death and life involving nonhuman animals cannot possibly reach the level of humility that can result from awareness of the cycles of death and life involving our fellow human beings. For in the latter case, we can empathize with the deceased to a far greater degree than we can with any other kind of animal—awareness of a dead human evokes the humility-inducing "That could be me" in a way impossible with awareness of a dead nonhuman animal. Jones also argues that the level of gratitude we can have for the sacrifice of the nonhuman animal upon which we are feeding cannot possibly reach the level of gratitude that we can have for the sacrifice made by a human animal. For when a human is killed, the sacrifice is far greater than that of a nonhuman animal, since the lives of humans are much more valuable than those of nonhuman animals. "After all," Jones contends, "only human animals are beings with the capacity for behaving virtuously, and this alone suffices to confer upon them a greater worth than any other nonhuman animal." And so on.

Jones argues, then, not only that hunting humans allows us to develop specific environmental virtues, but it does so in a way that is impossible with other activities, even the hunting of nonhuman animals. And, according to P4, if the very act of killing animals deepens and instills specific environmental virtues in a way that is impossible with other activities, then killing animals as a way of developing these virtues is justified. Jones concludes, then, that the VSH of human animals is justified on EVE grounds.

The case of Jones demonstrates, then, that Jensen's EVE justification of VSH produces the following dilemma: either EVE justifies the VSH of *both* human and nonhuman animals, or it justifies the VSH of *neither*. And insofar as one is inclined to reject the first lemma as absurd (as I am), then one is left with the second lemma. That is, one is left with the view that EVE justifies the VSH of *neither* human *nor* nonhuman animals.

On Why EVE Fails to Provide Sufficient Justification for Hunting

So is Jones correct? Is it the case that the VSH of not only nonhuman but human animals is justified on EVE grounds? If Jensen is to show that such is *not* the case, he must demonstrate that EVE accounts for a morally relevant difference (or set of morally relevant differences) between human and nonhuman animals which justifies the VSH of the latter but not the former. It must be *EVE* which accounts for this difference, since what's being considered here is whether EVE provides sufficient justification for VSH, i.e., whether EVE *alone* justifies VSH. To account for the difference by appealing to an alternative ethical theory would be to fail to support the view that EVE *alone* justifies hunting. And unless Jensen demonstrates that EVE accounts for a morally relevant difference between human and nonhuman animals which justifies the VSH of the latter but not the former, his EVE justification of VSH forces us to decide between the two lemmas, only the first of which is consistent with the stronger thesis, namely, that EVE provides sufficient justification for hunting. In effect, then, if we are forced to decide between the two lemmas, we are forced to choose between retaining the stronger thesis at the cost of embracing the absurdity of the first lemma, and embracing the second lemma at the cost of rejecting the stronger thesis. And in this situation, I'm inclined to think that most of us will prefer the second lemma to the first.

Jensen has good reason, then, to try to avoid this dilemma by demonstrating that EVE accounts for a morally relevant difference between human and nonhuman animals which justifies the VSH of the latter but not the former. Unfortunately, Jensen fails to address whether EVE can account for a morally relevant difference between human and nonhuman animals which justifies the VSH of the latter but not the former. But *that* he fails to address this may come as no surprise, for endemic to virtue theory and, in turn, EVE is the general discounting of such considerations, or so I argue below. In order to understand this more clearly, it will help to examine first the comments of one of Jensen's selected representatives of virtue theory—Rosalind Hursthouse—on the related issue of abortion.[8]

According to Hursthouse, the sort of knowledge that the fully virtuous person has about the moral standing of the human fetus "is not supposed to be recondite; it does not call for fancy philosophical sophistication, and it does not depend on, let alone wait upon, the discoveries of academic philosophers" (Hursthouse 1991, 235). Instead, the virtuous person need only be aware of the familiar biological facts, the facts that "most human societies are and have been familiar with" (Hursthouse 1991, 235). Virtue theory, then, "quite transforms the discussion of abortion by dismissing the two familiar dominating considerations [the moral standing of the fetus and women's rights] as, in a way, fundamentally irrelevant" (Hursthouse 1991, 234). That is, the virtue theorist holds that "the status of the fetus—that issue over which so much ink has been spilt—is, according to virtue theory, simply not relevant to the rightness or wrongness of abortion" (Hursthouse 1991, 235-36 and 235, n. 11). According to Hursthouse, then, virtue theory entails that considerations of the moral standing of the fetus are at least somewhat, if not completely, irrelevant to question of the moral status of abortion. As a result, virtue theory does not ask questions regarding the moral standing of the fetus, or at least does not ask them in such a way that may require "fancy philosophical sophistication," a phrase which seems to refer to what many of us would call "philosophical rigor."

Similarly, Jensen contends that virtue theory "asks different questions than those typically raised in the debate over hunting" (Jensen 2001, 113). And one of the questions virtue theory (à la Hursthouse) and, in particular, EVE (à la Jensen) do *not* ask in the debate on hunting (at least in such a way that may require "fancy philosophical sophistication") is whether there is a morally relevant difference between human and nonhuman animals which justifies the VSH of the latter but not the former. More specifically, EVE does not ask whether nonhuman animals possess moral standing to a degree that precludes them from being proper objects of VSH. But this isn't surprising, since considerations of the moral standing of nonhuman animals are somewhat, if not completely, irrelevant to the question of the moral status of VSH. By failing to ask these questions, EVE renders nonhuman animals, in David DeGrazia's words, mere practicing grounds for virtue (DeGrazia 1996, 43). And it is by not asking these questions that EVE fails to account for a

morally relevant difference between human and nonhuman animals which justifies the VSH of the latter but not the former and, in turn, forces us to decide between the preceding lemmas. And if what I suspect is correct, most of us will choose the second lemma over the first, that EVE justifies the VSH of neither human nor nonhuman animals.

Moreover, this is the case regardless of whether considerations of the moral standing of nonhuman animals are *completely* or just *somewhat* irrelevant to question of the moral status of VSH. For even if EVE does *not* deem considerations of the moral standing of nonhuman animals to be *completely* irrelevant to the question of the moral status of VSH, it at least deems them to be *secondary* to considerations of what virtuous agents would characteristically do in the circumstances.[9] For EVE is generally understood as giving *agent*-centered considerations priority over *act*-centered considerations. That is, it deems considerations of the good of agents as having priority over considerations of the moral status of acts which, if the act in question involves nonhuman animals (as hunting does), involves considerations of the moral standing of nonhuman animals. Accordingly, in the case of hunting, considerations of the moral standing of nonhuman animals are deemed secondary to considerations of what virtuous agents would characteristically do in the circumstances. Jensen certainly understands EVE in this way; as stated above, he holds that the good with which EVE is concerned first and foremost is a distinctly *human* good. And giving agent-centered considerations priority over act-centered considerations in this way renders an EVE justification of VSH deeply problematic. To see this, consider Jones again, who cultivates environmental virtues during the VSH of humans. When it comes to evaluating Jones's behavior, it is very difficult to believe that considerations of these virtues have priority over considerations of which entities are proper objects of VSH. That is, it is very difficult to believe that such agent-centered considerations have priority over act-centered considerations. On the contrary, it seems that if Jones's case tells us anything, it is that in order to judge Jones's behavior to be *vicious* (as we are inclined to do, presumably), we must *first* judge the moral standing of humans to be strong enough such that the VSH of them is morally impermissible. In other words, Jones's case suggests that considerations of the moral standing of the objects of VSH have priority over considerations of what environmentally virtuous agents would characteristically do in the circumstances. Likewise, in order to judge Jensen's virtuous sport hunter's behavior to be *virtuous* (as Jensen is inclined to do), we must *first* judge the moral standing of nonhuman animals to be weak enough such that the VSH of them is morally permissible. Again, this suggests that considerations of the moral standing of the objects of VSH have priority over considerations of what environmentally virtuous agents would characteristically do in the circumstances. Thus, so long as EVE is understood as giving priority to agent-centered rather than an act-centered considerations—in particular, so long as EVE deems considerations of the moral standing of nonhuman animals to be secondary to considerations of what virtuous agents would characteristically do in the circumstances—an EVE justification of VSH will be deeply problematic.

Of course, some environmental virtue ethicists reject the view that EVE gives priority to agent-centered considerations.[10] According to such environmental virtue ethicists, EVE does not *necessarily* deem considerations of the moral standing of nonhuman animals to be secondary to considerations of what virtuous agents would characteristically do in the circumstances. But even on this understanding of EVE, it is very difficult to believe that agent-centered considerations *could* trump act-centered considerations—that considerations of what virtuous agents would characteristically do in the circumstances *could* have priority over act-centered considerations, particularly when the act in question is others-regarding, as it is with hunting. The case of Jones suffices to establish this. But another way to convey this pertains to whether virtue is *intrinsically* or *instrumentally* valuable.[11]

The view that virtue is intrinsically valuable entails that virtue is its own end, that it is important for its own sake. The view that virtue is instrumentally valuable, on the other hand, entails that virtue is a reliable way to promote morally right conduct. On this instrumental view, virtue is important insofar as it tends to lead to morally right conduct.

Suppose virtue is intrinsically valuable. Would it follow from this that, insofar as VSH cultivates environmental virtues, VSH is justified? It seems not. The case of Jones suffices as a counterexample to this: surely environmental virtues such as humility, respect, gratitude, and connectedness—even if intrinsically valuable—do not outweigh the intrinsic value of persons or other subjects-of-a-life.[12] That is, even if such environmental virtues are intrinsically valuable, it's difficult to believe that they are *so* valuable that the lives of persons or other subjects-of-a-life may be sacrificed in order to cultivate them. So, even if virtue is intrinsically valuable, it does not follow that EVE justifies VSH.

Suppose, on the other hand, that virtue is instrumentally valuable. In this case, considerations of what the environmentally virtuous agent would characteristically do in the circumstances are secondary to considerations of morally right conduct, since it is the end of morally right conduct that renders virtue instrumentally valuable. Given this, one cannot

justify VSH on EVE grounds without giving priority to considerations of morally right conduct. And considerations of morally right conduct—particularly those pertaining to acts that are others-regarding (such as hunting)—involve considerations of the moral standing of the others in question. Hence, given the view that virtue is instrumentally valuable, considerations of the moral standing of others have priority over what the environmentally virtuous agent would characteristically do in the circumstances. But EVE deems considerations of morally right conduct to be secondary to considerations of what the environmentally virtuous agent would characteristically do in the circumstances. As a result, EVE fails to justify VSH.

Virtue, then, is either intrinsically or instrumentally valuable; either way, EVE fails to justify VSH. Moreover, this is the case regardless of whether EVE is understood as giving priority to agent-centered considerations or as giving equal importance to act-centered and agent-centered considerations.

In sum: without asking questions about the moral standing of nonhuman animals, much less accounting for a morally relevant difference between human and nonhuman animals which justifies the VSH of the latter but not the former, an EVE justification of VSH forces us to decide between the aforementioned lemmas. And if what I suspect is correct, most of us will choose the second lemma (EVE justifies the VSH of neither human nor nonhuman animals) over the first lemma (EVE justifies the VSH of both human and nonhuman animals). That is, we will hold that EVE fails to provide sufficient justification for VSH.

On the Weaker Thesis

Up to this point, the stronger thesis—EVE provides sufficient justification for VSH—has been examined and critiqued. However, as indicated previously, Jensen hints at (and may even prefer) a weaker thesis: though EVE does not provide sufficient justification for hunting, it nevertheless complements and completes other ethical theories, shedding new light on the question of the moral status of hunting (Jensen 2001, 123). Moreover, in addition to the fact that Jensen himself may prefer it, claims comparable to this weaker thesis have been advanced by numerous other environmental ethicists.[13] For example, Geoffrey Frasz maintains, "EVE does not seek to supplant traditional moral theories regarding the environment, but to expand the scope of environmental thinking by asking different kinds of questions and considering issues from the point of view of virtues and vices. It can build upon ideas in current environmental philosophy regarding the nature of the intrinsic value of the natural world, and it can utilize ideas regarding methods and practices involved" (Frasz 2001, 7). There is good reason, then, to examine this weaker thesis carefully.

So what does it mean for virtue theory—and, in particular, EVE—to "complement," "complete," and "build upon" other ethical theories and ideas in current environmental philosophy and the debate on hunting? As with the issue of whether there is a morally relevant difference between human and nonhuman animals which justifies the VSH of the latter but not the former, Jensen does not address this—at least, not in sufficient detail. One can't help but surmise, however, that it means that, though EVE plays a justificatory role in the justification for VSH, it does not play a strong enough one to justify VSH independent of another ethical theory. If this is what is meant, then a question arises: What is the nature of EVE's justificatory role? Is it that EVE is *necessary*, though not sufficient, for the justification of VSH? If this is what Jensen is claiming, there is reason to reject his position. That EVE *is* necessary for the justification of VSH seems unlikely, as it is reasonable to believe that—assuming VSH *can* be justified—it can be on deontological and contractarian grounds (among others), and can be done so independently of considerations of environmental virtues. (Whether deontology and contractarianism *themselves* can be justified is another matter altogether, just as it is an altogether different matter whether EVE itself can be justified.) Moreover, if Jensen *is* claiming that EVE is necessary for the justification of VSH, he should at least attempt to tell us why he thinks VSH cannot be sufficiently justified on the grounds of such competing ethical theories.

However, it's certainly possible that when Jensen (and others) claims that EVE complements and completes other ethical theories, he does *not* mean that it plays some kind of justificatory role. In other words, it may be that when Jensen claims that EVE complements and completes other ethical theories, he means *neither* that EVE is necessary for the justification of VSH *nor* that it is sufficient for the justification of VSH. But, if so, whence the claim that, *under certain conditions, hunting can be justified*? After all, in Jensen's article, the *only* conditions under which hunting can be justified that are discussed are those in which environmental virtues are cultivated. And the *only* justification for cultivating environmental virtues in this way that Jensen discusses is an EVE justification. But if EVE is to be understood as playing no justificatory role in the justification of hunting, then Jensen's claim—that under certain conditions, hunting can be justified—is rendered not only entirely unsupported but completely disconnected from the rest of the paper.

Moreover, it's unclear how arguing that EVE plays no justificatory role in the justification of VSH would shed any light whatsoever on the question of the *moral status* of hunting. In what way would

contending that *one can develop environmental virtues through VSH, though this fact plays no justificatory role in the justification of VSH* shed any light on the question of the *moral status* of hunting? I fail to see how it would. It seems that if EVE's complimenting and completing other ethical theories is to illuminate the question of the moral status of hunting, it *must* play a justificatory role of some sort.

Concluding Remarks

If the preceding is correct, then there are at least three important implications that must be noted. The first two implications concern the stronger thesis, while the final implication concerns the weaker thesis.

First, if EVE is to provide sufficient justification for VSH, it must be modified in such a way that it: (a) asks questions about whether there is a morally relevant difference between human and nonhuman animals which justifies the VSH of the latter but not the former, (b) accounts for such a difference, and (c) deems considerations of the moral standing of nonhuman animals to have priority over considerations of what virtuous agents would characteristically do in the circumstances.

Second, unless (a), (b), and (c) are done, not only is EVE insufficient for the justification of VSH, but it is insufficient for the justification of *every other form* of hunting as well. For if EVE is insufficient for the justification of virtue-oriented forms of hunting (such as VSH), then, *a fortiori*, EVE is insufficient for the justification of non-virtue-oriented forms of hunting, i.e., every other form of hunting. Hence, unless (a), (b), and (c) are done, EVE is insufficient for the justification of hunting nonhuman animals in all its forms, not just VSH.

Indeed, the case can be made that EVE is insufficient not only for the justification of hunting in all its forms, but any other environmentally oriented activity that is others-regarding. For unless considerations of the moral standing of others—nonhuman animals or otherwise—have priority over considerations of what virtuous agents would characteristically do in the circumstances, seemingly unjustified activities—such as Jones's hunting of humans—are not necessarily precluded by EVE. But, according to EVE, considerations of the moral standing of others do *not* have priority over considerations of what virtuous agents would characteristically do in the circumstances. And so it seems that, unless (a), (b), and (c) are done, EVE is insufficient for any other environmentally oriented activity that is others-regarding.

Finally, insofar as one holds that EVE simply complements and completes other ethical theories, shedding some new light on the question of the moral status of hunting, one needs to be clear about what, exactly, this complimenting and completing entails. To be sure, some philosophers have done this very thing with respect to some environmental issues. For example, Frasz contends that the Kantian tradition fails to clearly establish a duty to respect ecosystems. "While this does not mean that Kantian insights are inappropriate here," he writes, "it does suggest that more is needed for environmental ethics" (Frasz 2001, 6). And what is needed, Frasz submits, is EVE. According to Frasz, then, EVE plays a justificatory role where other ethical theories fail to do so and, in this way, compliments and completes other moral theories.

But even if "more is needed" with respect to some environmental issues, it doesn't follow that more is needed with respect to every environmental issue. In particular, it doesn't follow that more is needed with respect to hunting. Indeed, if what was suggested above is correct, there is reason to believe that more isn't needed when it comes to the issue of hunting—that other ethical theories provide sufficient justification for hunting. Suffice it to say that, insofar as one holds that EVE simply complements and completes other ethical theories, shedding some new light on the question of the moral status of hunting, one needs to be clear about what, exactly, this complimenting and completing entails.

As stated above, Jensen and Cafaro agree that hunting provides a good test case for EVE. With the preceding in mind, we are in a better position to determine whether EVE passes the test. I'm inclined to think it does not.

Works Cited

Cafaro, Philip. 2001a. "Thoreau, Leopold and Carson: Toward an Environmental Virtue Ethics," *Environmental Ethics* 23, 3-17.

Cafaro, Philip. 2001b. "The Naturalist's Virtues." *Philosophy in the Contemporary World* 8:2 (Fall-Winter), 85-99.

DeGrazia, David. 1996. *Taking Animals Seriously: Mental Life and Moral Status*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Frasz, Geoffrey B. 1993. "Environmental Virtue Ethics: A New Direction for Environmental Ethics." *Environmental Ethics* 15, 259-274.

Frasz, Geoffrey B. 2001. "What Is Environmental Virtue Ethics That We Should Be Mindful of It?" *Philosophy in the Contemporary World* 8:2 (Fall-Winter), 5-14.

Harris, George W. 1999. *Agent-Centered Morality: An Aristotelian Alternative to Kantian Internalism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Hill, Thomas Jr. 2001. "Comments on Frasz and Cafaro and EVE." *Philosophy in the Contemporary World* 8:2 (Fall-Winter): 59-62.

Hursthouse, Rosalind. 1991. "Virtue Theory and Abortion." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 20:3 (Summer): 223-246.
Jensen, Jon. 2001. "The Virtues of Hunting." *Philosophy in the Contemporary World* 8:2 (Fall-Winter), 113-124.
Kawall, Jason. 2001. "Inner Diversity: An Alternative Ecological Virtue Ethics." *Philosophy in the Contemporary World* 8:2 (Fall-Winter), 27-35.
Regan, Tom. 1983. *The Case for Animal Rights*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
Stocker, Michael. 1990. *Plural and Conflicting Values*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
Tantillo, James A. 2001. "Sport Hunting, *Eudaimonia*, and Tragic Wisdom." *Philosophy in the Contemporary World* 8:2 (Fall-Winter), 101-113.
Veatch, Robert M. 2003. *The Basics of Bioethics*, 2nd Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
Wensveen, Louke van. "Attunement: An Ecological Spin on the Virtue of Temperance." *Philosophy in the Contemporary World* 8:2 (Fall-Winter), 67-78.

Endnotes

1. Jones's lines are taken nearly word for word from Jensen, 2001. For purely stylistic purposes, I did not include citations. Citations for each and every line will be provided as the paper develops.
2. Of course, there is a third possibility, namely, that EVE justifies the hunting of human but not nonhuman animals. For present purposes, I will assume that parties on both sides of the issue will reject this possibility as absurd.
3. For accounts of how we are to understand EVE, see Frasz 2001; Cafaro 2001b; Hill 2001.
4. Others who seemingly embrace this version include Bill Shaw, Geoffrey B. Frasz, Philip Cafaro, James A. Tantillo, Thomas Hill, Jr.
5. For another virtue theory justification of sport hunting, see Tantillo 2001.
6. For example, see Frasz 2001 and Frasz, 1993.
7. See Frasz 2001.
8. Jensen is not alone in relying on Hursthouse's views on virtue theory in support of an environmental virtue ethic. See Kawall 2001; van Wensveen 2001; Cafaro 2001b.
9. Something can be secondary to another in at least two ways: lexically or logically. If X is *lexically* secondary to Y, then Y has priority over X. If X is *logically* secondary to Y, then Y is entailed (or presupposed) by X. For present purposes, it is not important whether Jensen deems considerations of the moral standing of nonhuman animals to be *lexically* or *logically* secondary to considerations of what virtuous agents would characteristically do in the circumstances. Either way, the problem suggested here arises.
10. See Tantillo, p. 102. See also Stocker 1990 and Harris 1999.
11. See Frasz 2001, 11; also Veatch 2003, 189.
12. Regarding the properties of "subjects-of-a-life," see Regan 1983, 243.
13. See Cafaro 2001a and 2001b; and Frasz 2001, 7.