

Armstrong, pt 7: Wild Animals, day 1 – Conflict and Coexistence

Some key issues

- human-wildlife conflicts: predator and ‘pest’ control
- **habitat fragmentation** and related issues
- Introduction of exotic species (what should be done? Even inaction, here, is a form of action)
- **Urban sprawl**, conservation, and land-use policy (‘rewilding’ urban areas)
- The special case of **charismatic megafauna**
- Should we always ‘let nature take its course’? Are there cases where intervention is warranted? Required?

J. Baird Callicott, “The Philosophical Value of Wildlife”

- **Utilitarian conservationism** (Gifford Pinchot, T. Roosevelt) v. **biocentric preservationism** (John Muir)
- **Valuation** and the difficulties of quantifying qualitative values
 - The fact/value dichotomy and the case of “wicked” environmental problems
- Why is Callicott a resolute opponent of animal liberation? (The Holstein steer and the Dall ram)
- Foundations of intrinsic value: Animal liberation [Singer], Theocentrism [Muir], Deep ecology [Leopold]
- **Biophilia** (E.O. Wilson), **gaia**, (James Lovelock) and *The Last Child in the Woods* (Richard Louv)

Aldo Leopold, “Game and Wildlife Conservation” (1932) [quote on 451]

- Caught between two mutually antagonistic extremes: the sportsman and the conservationist
- “I have tried to build a mechanism whereby the sportsmen and the Ammunition Industry could contribute financially to the solution of this problem, without dictating the answers themselves.” What are the relative strengths and weaknesses of this kind of policy solution?
- “The worthiness of any cause is not measured by its clean record, but by its readiness to see the blots when they are pointed out, and to change its mind.” (453)

Thinking Like A Mountain

- “Only the mountain has lived long enough to listen objectively to the howl of a wolf”
- “too much safety seems to yield only danger in the long run”

The Land Ethic

- Why does Leopold open with the story of Odysseus hanging a dozen slave girls (on one rope)?
- What is “the ethical sequence”?
 - Progression of ethics
 - Relations between individuals
 - Relations between individual and society (Golden Rule – principle of personality)
 - The land ethic as the third step in a sequence

Dale Peterson, “To Eat the Laughing Animal”

- Bushmeat, **animism**, and fetish medicine
- Urban demand, rural demand, and the worrying prospects of **demographic** growth
 - The collapse of supply: technology, roads and trails, ‘entrepreneurs’ (and the ‘rate of replenishment’)
- Public health

Wild Animals, day 2: Focus on Hunting

Modernity and alienation

- (various kinds of) hunting
 - Hunting is definitely one way to ‘reconnect’...what are some others?
 - Controversial cases
 - the Newfoundland seal hunt
 - whaling
 - Trophy hunting (Safari Club International and the 'big five')

Alastair S. Gunn, “Environmental Ethics and Trophy Hunting”

- Conventional criticisms of hunting (465)
 - Are you convinced by Gunn’s responses (Do you have others), and/or by his subsequent defense of trophy hunting?

Angus Taylor, *Animals and Ethics*, ch. 4, “Is it Wrong to Eat or Hunt Animals” (107-118)

- Rights-based, utilitarian, ‘spiritual’, and virtue ethical views on ‘sport hunting’ (and the risk of fascist undertones?)
- What do you make of the “claim that human beings are natural predators who have a hunting instinct”?
 - And could this ‘instinct’ be channeled in other, less violent ways?
- “the confrontation with death [would be] made all the more meaningful if hunters were to restrict themselves voluntary to *hunting each other*” (!)
- The case of fishing (112)
- The Inuit and the case of subsistence hunting
- The case of cannibalism
- We’ll return to the issue of diet and vegetarianism next week...

Marti Kheel, “The Killing of Game: An Ecofeminist Critique of Hunting”

- Urbanization and public opinion
- Is hunting a ‘sport’? Kheel says no (why?)...what do you say?
- Three “types”
 - the **happy hunter**
 - Teddy Roosevelt (and others’) fear that “hunting was a necessary corrective for men who had become overly feminized by the encroaches of civilization”, or, with Leopold, that hunting is an “instinctual urge”
 - the **holist hunter**
 - “population density”, sustainable yield”, “harvesting the excess”...in some cases, yes, but where might this argument collapse a bit?
 - Aldo Leopold's reading from last week would probably fit in this category
 - the **holy hunter** (and the “wisdom of native peoples”)
- Is it fair to say that “a problem arises...when living beings are forcibly conscripted into an artificial world to play the role of symbols themselves.”