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## ‘Back Together Again’ Again

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I am very flattered to have my work so closely scrutinised and criticised by Dale Jamieson (1998) in ‘Animal Liberation is an Environmental Ethic’. I am in complete agreement with Jamieson that animal-liberation ethics and environmental ethics are closely related, theoretically, and natural allies, pragmatically. This was the central point of an article, ‘Animal Liberation and Environmental Ethics: Back Together Again’, that I published ten years ago in *Between the Species*, a journal dedicated to animal-liberation ethics. It was reprinted shortly thereafter in my book of collected essays, *In Defense of the Land Ethic*. Indeed, I am now even inclined to agree with Jamieson that animal liberation *is* an environmental ethic; less, however, by design than by ironical outcome, as I explain *infra*. In any case, I wrote ‘Back Together Again’ as a corrective, an antidote (therein I call it a ‘palinode’) to the excesses of my infamous essay, ‘Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair’. Curiously, Jamieson quotes from both pieces, but only cites ‘Triangular Affair’ amongst his references. This is the more puzzling because his very rhetoric often echoes mine of a decade ago. Toward the beginning of ‘Animal Liberation is an Environmental Ethic’ Jamieson (1998: 42) notes that ‘environmentalists and animal liberationists have many of the same enemies’, which implicitly invokes the principle that those who have common enemies are – or should be – allies. Toward the beginning of ‘Back Together Again’ I note the same thing: ‘it would be far wiser [for animal-liberation and environmental ethicists] to make common cause against a common enemy ... than to continue squabbling among[st] ourselves’ (Callicott 1988: 163). While I identify the common enemy impersonally as ‘the destructive forces at work ravaging the nonhuman world’, Jamieson (1998: 42) more specifically identifies them as ‘those who dump poisons into the air and water, drive whales to extinction, or clear rain forests to create pasture for cattle, to name just a few’. Mark well the last of these he names.

Jamieson provides an accurate and insightful history of the emergence of formal environmental and animal-liberation ethics in the late 1960s and early 1970s. He observes, correctly, that ‘the very possibility of an environmental ethic was up for grabs’, at that time (Jamieson 1998: 43). As I then perceived the situation, environmental ethics, born of more ‘holistic’ concerns for such things as anthropogenic species extinction and the destruction of biotic communities and ecosystems, was being routinely conflated with animal liberation, born of

more 'individualistic' concerns for the slaughtering and suffering of sentient animals. I tried to draw as sharp a distinction as I could between these two types of concern and the two types of nonanthropocentric ethics they spawned. Although I now repudiate, as Jamieson charitably acknowledges, many of the conclusions reached in 'A Triangular Affair', I still think that the basic distinction that it draws between animal liberation and environmental ethics is a true, but not a perfect one – despite the ironical and unintended environmental implications that I shortly expose here of familiar animal-liberation ethical theory. For clarity's sake, there is a value, I think, in initially over-drawing a distinction – which is what 'A Triangular Affair' does – and then later pointing out the fuzzy edges, the overlaps, blurry margins, and ... well, whatever other metaphors express the imperfection of the original sharp distinction.

In 'Back Together Again' I also proposed a theory to unify animal liberation and environmental ethics. Jamieson has also done so in his recent contribution to this journal. I am very glad that he has joined me in this important project of reconciliation and solidarity. As it seems to me, there are two basic approaches to the theoretical reconciliation of animal liberation and environmental ethics. I sketch one, Jamieson the other. I recommend a general theory of ethics – communitarianism – that constitutes the foundation of the Aldo Leopold land ethic, which I have long championed and which is most congenial to environmental concerns. I try to fashion an animal-liberation ethic from communitarian theory as well. Jamieson recommends a general theory of ethics – the Modern Classical Paradigm – to which most conventional Modern philosophers are committed and which *seems* (until one traces out the consequences) congenial to animal-liberation concerns. He tries to fashion an environmental ethic from that theory as well. Naturally, I think my approach is the better. It better integrates animal liberation and environmental ethics with our traditional humanistic values; and, surprisingly, it better accommodates the central concerns of animal liberationists as well as those of environmentalists.

#### ZOOCENTRISM

According to Jamieson (1998: 260) 'one can go quite far protecting the environment solely on the basis of concern for animals', because 'nonhuman animals, like humans, live in environments'. We might call this a proposal for a 'zoocentric environmental ethic' analogous to the anthropocentric environmental ethic early advanced by John Passmore (1974) and Kristin Shrader-Frechette (1981), and long championed by Bryan G. Norton (1991). Given ecological interdependencies, to harm the environment is indirectly to harm its morally enfranchised human inhabitants. Holistic nonanthropocentrists, who assert the intrinsic value of species per se, have devoted considerable energy and

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ingenuity to thinking up exceptions to this general rule (Ehrenfeld 1978). Consider, for example, an undiscovered endemic vascular plant species that is rather like most other species in its genus and thus of little or no aesthetic or scientific interest to human beings. Suppose further that it lacks any potential resource value for human beings nor uniquely performs any ecological service. Its extinction, therefore, could hardly constitute a significant harm to human beings. Because a zoocentric environmental ethic, however, morally enfranchises thousands of kinds of animals, each kind with a wide variety of environmental needs and preferences, thinking up exceptions to the harm-to-the-environment-is-a-harm-to-animals rule would be a daunting challenge indeed. The non-descript endemic plant species just imagined might be of value to some other animal, if not to ourselves.

This asset of zoocentrism, however, leads to a complementary liability. The environmental needs and preferences of animals are not only various, they are often contradictory. The now-famous spotted owl (about which more shortly) may need old growth forest to survive, but deer thrive on the accessible tender shoots that spring up following the clear cutting of old growth. Environmental management that benefits deer harms spotted owls, and vice versa. Jaguars in Central and South America need to live in undisturbed rain forests. But, as Jamieson points out, in the same region of the world, rain forest is being felled to provide pasture for domestic cattle. So environmental management that benefits cattle harms jaguars, and vice versa. I do not suggest that such considerations irreparably undermine a zoocentric environmental ethic, but I do suggest that while it may be true that one can go quite far protecting the environment solely on the basis of concern for animals, one may not go there quite as fast as Jamieson supposes.

## INTRINSIC VALUE IN NATURE

Next Jamieson proposes a kind of hybrid animal-liberation/environmental ethic that I think is very intriguing and warrants – no less than does a zoocentric environmental ethic – further, more systematic development. There are, he insists, two kinds of intrinsic value, one 'primary', the other 'derivative'.

Of *primary* intrinsic value are 'creatures who can suffer, take pleasure in their experiences, and whose lives go better and worse from their own point of view' (Jamieson 1998: 47). According to Jamieson (1998: 47), they should be morally enfranchised, as a matter of 'objectivity or impartiality'. Kenneth Goodpaster (1979) demonstrates that this impartiality principle – which is at the heart of the Modern Classical Paradigm of ethical theory – is based on a generalisation of egoism. *I* insist that others consider *me* as an end-in-myself, as a locus of intrinsic value, when their actions affect me. If asked for a reason why they should, I

invoke a relevant capacity that I possess in virtue of which I claim to have intrinsic value, and which entitles me to moral consideration from them. By parity of reasoning, I am obliged to recognise the intrinsic value of those others who possess the same capacity and to consider them morally when my actions affect them.

What is that capacity? According to Kant, notoriously, it is rationality and/or moral autonomy. But that falls afoul of the Argument from Marginal Cases (Regan 1979). Were rationality the proper qualifying capacity, many human beings (the marginal cases: infants, the developmentally very challenged, the abjectly senile) who are not rational and/or morally autonomous would lack intrinsic value and be morally disenfranchised. To affirm their intrinsic value and bring them into the circle of moral entitlement we must pitch the qualification lower. Besides, rationality is not so obviously relevant to the entitlement for which it is supposed to select. More inclusive, and arguably more relevant, is the complex of capacities Jamieson indicates: to suffer, to take pleasure in one's experiences, to have a point of view from which one's life goes better or worse. That is, in a nutshell, the familiar case for animal liberation.

From the point of view of environmental ethics, however, the greatest part of the environment (plants, soils, waters, and the atmosphere) and the aspects of it of most pressing moral concern to environmentalists (species per se, biotic communities, ecosystems) are left out of this account. Only subjects of a life, as Tom Regan (1983) calls them, have primary intrinsic value and thus warrant moral considerability. On this account, the best we can hope for, it would seem, is a zoocentric environmental ethic, which, as already noted, is promising but fraught with unresolved (though not necessarily unresolvable) difficulties.

Launched from this animal-liberation platform other philosophers – among them Paul W. Taylor (1986), Holmes Rolston, III (1988), and Lawrence E. Johnson (1991) – have attempted further to widen the circle of primary intrinsic value and moral considerability. This tack is not taken by Jamieson. Indeed he seems to misunderstand this tack as taken by Rolston (which is not altogether inexcusable because Rolston articulates his environmental philosophy in an unorthodox style), whilst he ignores Taylor and Johnson altogether. But all these 'conativists', as I have elsewhere called them, argue that all living organisms have an inherent *telos*, which each strives, even if unconsciously, to realise. They all have a good of their own, if not a point of view. They have interests, even if they are not interested in their interests. Their lives may go better or worse, whether or not they can know it or care about it. They are teleological centers of life, if not subjects of a life. Incidentally, Rolston does not, as Jamieson insinuates, posit some mysterious G.-E.-Moorean objective property in nature called intrinsic value. Indeed, by 'objective' intrinsic value, Rolston means, more or less, just what Jamieson does when he writes, if 'I look out into the world and see creatures who instantiate properties that bestow moral value' and I fail to accord them moral consideration, then 'I lack objectivity'.

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I myself have not followed Taylor, Rolston, and Johnson in this project of approaching environmental ethics beginning with egoism, generalising that to a moral humanism, as in the Modern Classical Paradigm, moving on from there – with the help of the Argument from Marginal Cases – to sentientism (or animal liberation), and finally stripping consciousness from sentientism to arrive at conativism. The main problem with this approach, in my opinion, is that, at the end of the day, we are still stuck with an individualistic environmental ethic. Though Johnson (1991) pretends otherwise, the things that environmentalists care most about – species per se, biotic communities, and ecosystems – have no interests per se; nor are they themselves teleological centers of life. For his part, Taylor (1986) either ignores holistic environmental concerns or tries to reduce them, most implausibly, to anthropocentric concerns or concerns about individual organisms. Rolston (1988) introduces two other kinds of putatively objective value, 'systemic value' and 'projective value', to reach holistic environmental concerns, but their objectivity lacks the same grounding that he, Taylor, and Johnson provide for the objective intrinsic value of individual, conative organisms (and that Jamieson provides for sentient subjects of a life).

As to *derivative* intrinsic value, Jamieson seems to be following me in my protracted debate with Taylor, Rolston, and Johnson about the ontological status of intrinsic value. However elusive the 'objectivity' of intrinsic value may be on their generic account, I argue, more conservatively and less ambiguously, that there is no value without a *valuer*, that 'value' is primitively a verb and 'intrinsic' correlatively an adverb (Callicott 1999). Thus, as Jamieson (1998: 48) puts it, 'we intrinsically [adverb] value [verb, transitive] something when we value it for its own sake'. This nakedly subjectivist theory of intrinsic value in nature is more encompassing than the objectivist theory; it is not limited, at its farthest reach, to entelechies, to borrow a word from Leibnitz. We may value species per se, lakes and rivers, mountains, biotic communities, ecosystems, the biosphere as a whole intrinsically, that is, for their own sakes. We may, indeed, value anything under the sun intrinsically. Environmentalists therefore are obliged to offer reasons why some things, say old growth forests, should be valued intrinsically, while others, say a pair of old, worn-out shoes, should not be. Or as Jamieson (1998: 49) puts it, 'some account needs to be given of how [a Callicottian] environmental philosopher moves from the claim that wilderness can be intrinsically valued to the claim that wilderness ought to be intrinsically valued'. I provide such an account elsewhere (Callicott 1992).

I was very pleasantly surprised to discover that Jamieson goes so far as to declare that sometimes derivative intrinsic value can trump primary intrinsic value. He claims that during the second world war British PM Winston Churchill evacuated from London derivatively intrinsically valuable works of art, whilst 'resources devoted to this evacuation could have been allocated to life-saving' of human beings who own primary intrinsic value (Jamieson 1998: 48). I am not acquainted with the facts, but supposing this Churchillian trade off really

occurred, Jamieson does not condemn it ethically; indeed, quite the contrary, he seems to endorse it. Nor does he censure Varner (1995), who like Jamieson recognises the primary intrinsic value of sentient animals, for advocating 'therapeutic hunting' of deer and other such animals whose populations irrupt, in the absence of predation, and irreparably harm the derivatively intrinsically valuable biotic communities of which they are members.

In 'Back Together Again' I summarily dismissed as theoretically 'eclectic' – and indeed it is – an earlier attempt by Mary Ann Warren (1983) to integrate animal liberation and environmental ethics. Jamieson's approach promises more theoretical unity. Sentient beings have primary, 'objective' intrinsic value, according to Jamieson, because they care about what happens to them. This is the axiological basis of animal liberation. Such beings value their environments in two ways. The most universal way is instrumentally. This is the axiological basis of a yet-to-be-fully-developed zoocentric environmental ethic. A subset of such beings – human beings, certainly, and, perhaps, some other mammals – can and should value the environment intrinsically. This is the axiological basis of the ecocentric environmental ethic that I have tried to formulate. I hope that Jamieson or some other philosopher that has been inspired by him will fully explore this promising approach to a theory for integrating animal liberation and environmental ethics. It is enticing, but is far from adequately developed. For example, one obvious problem needing resolution is how we determine when derivative intrinsic value ought to trump primary intrinsic value.

#### IMPARTIALITY

Impartiality is integral to Jamieson's concept of primary intrinsic value in ethics. Indeed, he suggests that the moral point of view is 'the point of view of the universe', which point of view is, if not altogether indifferent, certainly impartial (Jamieson 1998: 47). Impartiality in legal judgments is a good thing, but I am not convinced that it is always a virtue in moral judgments. Impartiality in matters moral must, I think, be tempered with an appropriate partiality. For example, in 'Back Together Again', I noted that Peter Singer (1982) argues that he has failed in his duty if he does not give the greater part of his modest income to help feed starving people half way around the globe, thereby reducing himself and his family to the same level of subsistence – just above starvation – that such unfortunate people would endure were he to subsidise their provender and nothing else. Most of us, I believe, would disagree. Ethics does not – nor should it – require such strict impartiality. One ought – morally ought – be partial to one's spouse and children. Someone who actually did what Singer thinks he ought to do would be regarded as an ethical idiot – a modern-day Euthyphro – who lacks good common moral sense. Tom Regan (1983) also finds himself

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struggling with another conundrum born of blind adherence to the principle of impartiality. In a crowded life-boat situation, how can he justify throwing a dog out of the overcrowded boat instead of a child of comparable weight, to keep the boat afloat and save its remaining occupants? To have a right to life – and Regan argues that all subjects of a life do, dogs included – is to have it equally, he insists, and we should therefore respect all such rights impartially. But I submit that to seriously consider which subject of a life to throw overboard, if one or the other must go, a dog or a child, is itself morally repugnant. We ought – morally ought – be partial to the child or to any other human being. Finally, Taylor argues that to have intrinsic value (or inherent worth, as he calls it) is to have it equally, and that we should impartially respect all teleological centers of life. Like Regan, Taylor finds himself compelled to justify preferential regard for human beings when their interests are in conflict with, say, parasites in their stomachs on circumstantial grounds (self defence in this case) rather than on essential grounds (human beings are of greater intrinsic value than worms).

Rolston, incidentally, provides for what we might call differential intrinsic value, and therefore essential grounds for moral partiality. According to Rolston, all organisms have what might be called base-line intrinsic value; animals have an additional increment of it because they are sentient; and human beings have yet another additional increment of intrinsic value on top of that because we are rational, self-conscious, and morally autonomous. Though I have myself been a critic of Rolston's theory of intrinsic value, I think Jamieson has not accurately represented it in 'Animal Liberation is an Environmental Ethic'. Rolston's theory of 'objective' intrinsic value is *formally* the same as Jamieson's of 'primary' intrinsic value, though, like Taylor and Johnson, Rolston extends intrinsic value to conative as well as to sentient beings. So Rolston's theory is by no means as unpopular – either with environmental philosophers or with environmentalists – as Jamieson insinuates. The main difference between Rolston and these other theorists is that he avoids the excesses of untempered adherence to the principle of impartiality. Jamieson (1998: 45) recoils from what he represents as the 'normative implications' that Rolston derives from his theory of moral partiality based on differential primary intrinsic value, among them 'that on many occasions we should prefer the lives of plants to those of animals' (because either the plant *species* are threatened with extinction or because of concern for the threatened 'systemic value' to which the plants contribute). Perhaps Rolston himself does not reason out the normative implications of his theory very well, but they do not seem to be more repellent than the normative implications that Jamieson reasons out from his own. As noted, he thinks that Churchill may have been right to prefer the preservation of works of art over the lives of an indeterminate number of British subjects; and, apparently forgetting that he chides Rolston for something quite similar, Jamieson approves therapeutic hunting as commended by Varner.



## MORAL PARTIALITY

Rolston, however, is stuck with the same sort of impartiality that vitiates Singer's conclusion in the case I mentioned *supra*, an impartiality among all those with premium intrinsic value, viz., among all human beings. Therefore, I have tried to provide a very different theory of moral partiality for environmental ethics launched from a communitarian platform. Membership in communities generates duties and obligations to fellow members and to the community as such. The most primitive (in every sense of the word) community to which each of us belongs is the family. Historically, the next human community to evolve is the clan, then the tribe, then the nation, then the modern limited monarchy or republic and its subdivisions (provinces or prefectures, shires or counties, municipalities or townships, and so on). Jamieson (1998: 46) represents the hybrid approach he recommends (based upon primary and derivative intrinsic value in nature) as being 'rooted in traditional views of value and obligation'. Those 'traditional views' are basically the twin pillars of Modern Classical ethics, utilitarianism and deontology, which, despite their differences, agree, as Goodpaster (1979) has shown and Jamieson (1998) confirms, in universalising egoism, the reasoning behind which I summarised already. The former springs from Bentham, the latter from Kant, both of whom were writing in the late eighteenth century. The communitarian approach I recommend, however, is even more traditional, springing from David Hume and Adam Smith in the mid-eighteenth century. For example Hume (1957 [1751], p. 23) writes:

But suppose the conjunction of the sexes to be established in nature, a family immediately arises; and particular rules being found requisite for its subsistence, these are immediately embraced; though without comprehending the rest of mankind within their prescriptions. Suppose that several families unite together into one society, which is totally disjoined from all others, the rules which preserve peace and order, enlarge themselves to the utmost extent of that society... . But again suppose that several distinct societies maintain a kind of intercourse for mutual convenience and advantage, the boundaries of justice still grow larger in proportion to the largeness of men's views and the force of their mutual connexions. History, experience, reason sufficiently instruct us in this natural progress of human sentiments, and in the gradual enlargement of [them].

Our views and the force of our mutual connexions have recently become planetary in scope. Hence, we now recognise the existence of a global village and affirm the universality as well as the sanctity of human rights, irrespective of race, creed, color, ethnicity, and nationality. In addition, Mary Midgley (1983) has identified the ancient 'mixed' human/domestic-animal community, and Aldo Leopold (1949) the even more venerable 'biotic' community, to both of which we also belong.

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A communitarian theory of value and obligation provides for moral partiality. The way we value and the obligations we owe fellow members of our families are different from the way we value and the obligations we owe fellow members of the global village. We love our family members, and our obligations to them are much more numerous and compelling than those we owe fellow members of the global village. That's why almost all of us (those uncorrupted by utilitarian notions of impartiality) think that Peter Singer is wrong to suppose that he ought to reduce himself and his own family to bare subsistence in order to be fair to starving people in, say, Africa. Similarly, the way we value and the obligations we owe fellow members of the global village are different from the way we value and the obligations we owe fellow members of the mixed community. That's why almost all of us (those uncorrupted by Regan's deontological case for animal rights) think that it is morally repugnant for Regan to suppose that the right to life of a dog and the right to life of a human being are comparable.

When our obligations to members of the different communities to which we belong conflict, I suggest we employ two principles to decide which set of obligations take precedence. The first principle is that obligations generated by membership in more venerable and intimate communities take precedence over those generated in more recently emerged and impersonal communities. I think that most of us, for example, feel that our family obligations (to care for aged parents, say, to educate minor children) take precedence over our civic obligations (to contribute to parish charities, say, to vote for higher municipal taxes to better support more indigent fellow burghers on the dole), when, because of limited means, we are unable to perform both family and civic duties. The second principle is that stronger interests generate obligations that take precedence over obligations generated by weaker interests. For example, while obligations to one's own children, all things being equal, properly take precedence over obligations to unrelated children in one's municipality, one would be remiss to shower one's own children with luxuries while unrelated children in one's municipality lacked the bare necessities (food, shelter, clothing, education) for a decent life. Having the bare necessities for a decent life is a stronger interest than is the enjoyment of luxuries, and our obligations to help supply proximate unrelated children with the former take precedence over our obligations to supply our own children with the latter.

These principles apply as well in quandaries in which obligations to individuals conflict with obligations to communities per se. In a case made famous by Jean-Paul Sartre in *L'existentialisme est un Humanisme*, a young man is caught in the dilemma of leaving his mother and going off to join the French Free Forces in England, during the Nazi occupation of France in World War II. Sartre, of course, is interested in the existential choice that this forces on the young man and in pursuing the thesis that his decision in some way makes a moral principle, not that it should be algorithmically determined by the application of various

moral principles. But the principles here set out apply to the young man's dilemma quite directly and, one might argue, decisively – existential freedom notwithstanding. The first requires the young man to give priority to the obligation to care for his mother, over the obligation to serve his country. But the second principle reverses the priority dictated by the first. The very existence of France as a corporate entity is threatened. The young man's mother has a weaker interest at stake, for, as Sartre reports, his going off – and maybe getting killed – would plunge her into 'despair'. His mother being plunged into despair would be terrible, but not nearly as terrible as the destruction of France would be if not enough young men fought on her behalf. So the resolution of this young man's dilemma is clear; he should give priority to the obligation to serve his country. Had the young man been an American, had the time been the early 1970s, and had the dilemma been stay home with his mother or join the Peace Corps and go to Indonesia, then he should give priority to the obligation to care for his mother. Had the young man been the same person as Sartre constructs, but had his mother been a Jew whom the Nazis would have sent to a horrible death in a concentration camp if her son does not stay home and help her hide, then again, he should give priority to his family-generated duties and stay home.

Finally, let me apply these principles to a moral quandary in which our obligations to human beings conflict with our obligations to *biotic* communities as such. Varner (1996: 176) supplies a case in point:

Suppose that an environmentalist enamored with the [communitarian] Leopold land ethic is considering how to vote on a national referendum to preserve the spotted owl by restricting logging in Northwest forests... . He or she would be required to vote, not according to the land ethic, but according to whatever ethic governs closer ties to a human family member and/or larger human community. Therefore, if a relative is one of 10,000 loggers who will lose jobs if the referendum passes, the environmentalist is obligated to vote against it. Even if none of the loggers is a family member, the voter is still obligated to vote against the referendum.

The flaw in Varner's reasoning is that he applies only the first of the two aforementioned priority principles – that obligations generated by membership in more venerable and intimate communities take precedence over those generated in more recently emerged and impersonal communities. If that were the only communitarian priority principle then he would be right. But the second principle – that stronger interests generate obligations that take precedence over obligations generated by weaker interests – reverses the priority determined by applying the first principle. The spotted owl is threatened with preventable anthropogenic extinction – threatened with biocide, in a word – and the old growth forest biotic communities of the Pacific Northwest are threatened with destruction. These threats are the environmental-ethical equivalent of genocide and holocaust. The loggers, on the other hand, are threatened with economic losses, for which they can be compensated dollar for dollar. More important to

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the loggers, I am told, their lifestyle is threatened. But livelihood and lifestyle, for both of which adequate substitutes can be found, is a lesser interest than life itself. If we faced the choice of cutting down millions of 400-year-old trees or cutting down thousands of 40-year-old loggers, our duties to the loggers would take precedence according to the first priority principle, nor would that principle be countermanded by the second. But that is not the choice we face. The choice is between cutting down 400-year-old trees, rendering the spotted owl extinct, and destroying the old-growth-forest biotic community, on the one one hand, and, on the other, displacing forest workers in an economy which is already displacing them through automation and raw-log exports to foreign markets. And the old-growth-logging lifestyle is doomed, in any case, to self-destruct, for it will come to an end with the 'final solution' to the old-growth-forest question, if the jack-booted timber barons (who disingenuously blame the spotted owl for the economic insecurity of loggers and other workers in the timber industry) continue to have their way. With the second priority principle supplementing the first, the indication of the Leopold land ethic (the holistic, nonanthropocentric communitarian environmental ethic that I have long championed) is crystal clear in the exemplary quandary posed by Varner, and it is opposite to the one Varner, applying only the first principle, claims it indicates.

## COMMUNITARIAN ANIMAL LIBERATION

According to Jamieson (1998: 46), 'one issue on which animal liberationists and environmentalists should speak with a single voice' is the 'production and consumption of beef' and other meats. It seems obvious to Jamieson that opposing human carnivorousness and promoting universal vegetarianism heads the agenda of animal liberation. Let me here go on record as declaring that environmentalists should also be vegetarians and that they should actively support efforts to force the abandonment of all animal agriculture. I am a vegetarian. If everyone were, the numbers of cattle, pigs, chickens, and other meat animals would be greatly reduced, making room for proportionally greater numbers of bison, elk, antelope, wolves, bears, and other wild animals. Cattle and other domestic animals raised for human consumption denude the lands on which they pasture, causing erosion and the loss of rare and endangered plant species. Tropical rain forest is cut down and burned up to create pasture for domestic cattle in Central and South America (a practice which, to his credit, Jamieson opposes, apparently as an animal liberationist as well as an environmentalist). In North America, domestic cattle, pigs, and chickens are fed grains, causing many hectares of land – which otherwise might remain in a natural, unploughed condition and thus serve wildlife as habitat – to be dedicated to corn, soybeans, and other feed crops. Manures from feed lots pollute streams, rivers, and estuaries, sickening fish and other sensitive aquatic organisms. Feed crops,

such as corn and soybeans require the application of fertilisers which eutrophy and pesticides which also poison both surface and ground waters. Soil ploughed for feed crops, moreover, is subject to erosion by both wind and water. I can think of no single cultural shift – at least none so easy and otherwise benign – that could have more positive ecological consequences than the complete abandonment of animal agriculture. Ironically, however, its consequences for the animals themselves that are raised for human consumption are much more ambiguous, for although the animal ‘beneficiaries’ of such a shift would not be subjected to confinement, suffering, and slaughter, all but a small fraction of them would never exist at all. This is what I meant at the beginning of this essay when I emphatically agreed with Jamieson that standard animal-liberation ethics is, at the same time, an environmental ethic, although it is so not by intention but by side effect.

Cattle, pigs, chickens, and other such animals would not now exist had they not been artificially selected by past animal breeders for meat. Indeed, they are precisely ‘meat animals’ (a term I used in ‘Back Together Again’ that Jamieson finds objectionable) because that is their historic *raison d’être*. Suppose we all become persuaded, as I have, that it is environmentally unethical to consume beef and other fleshy viands, and we cease to do so. Suppose, further, that we enact laws banning totally the consumption of beef and other meats. Who then would produce – breed, raise, and tend – cattle and the other erstwhile meat animals? Doubtless a few cattle-, pig-, and chicken-fanciers would. Thus the numbers of cattle, pigs, chickens, and other erstwhile meat animals would dwindle to a negligibly few pets or museum pieces here and there. The irony, the contradiction in the animal-liberation agenda, as characterised by Jamieson, then is this: in the case of the domestic animals that are currently being exploited in the meat industry, by far the animals most often featured in animal-liberation tracts (including Jamieson’s recent article in this journal), if we all cease consuming them, they will all (or almost all) also cease to exist; in being saved they will have been destroyed. That would be a very welcome outcome from the point of view of environmentalists – American environmentalists, such as I, at least – but how could it be from the point of view of animal liberationists? The vast majority of the beneficiaries of the ethic would be nonexistent.

A communitarian animal-liberation ethic, such as I sketched in ‘Back Together Again’, offers a less paradoxical solution to this moral problem. Meat animals are part of the Midgleyan mixed community. We have obligations to them that are derived from the kind of community this is, just as the obligations we have to family members is derived from the kind of community the family is. The implicit social contract – the existence of which Jamieson dismisses summarily, as if too preposterous to warrant discussion – between our ancestors and the animals they domesticated for consumption is roughly and basically that people would undertake to shelter, feed, protect from wild predators, and otherwise care for the animals, in return for which services the animals would

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eventually be eaten, after being skillfully and painlessly slaughtered. The factory farm, the horrors of which are detailed in the animal-liberation literature, represents a violation of this ancient, evolved 'social contract'. In the factory farm, animals are objectified – that is, their subjectivity is denied or ignored – and they are made to suffer terribly. At last they are slaughtered without ceremony or regard for their dignity, the only consideration in the entire meat-production process being economic efficiency. On the other hand, were animals raised and slaughtered on old-fashioned family farms, not factory farms, the ancient, implicit social contract between us and them could be honoured.

From the perspective of communitarian environmental ethics – viz., the land ethic, which I have detailed in many books and journal articles, and so will not recapitulate here – a communitarian animal-liberation ethic represents a compromise. More land would have to be devoted to agriculture, to the mixed community, and proportionally less to nature, to the biotic community. But the beauty of a general communitarian ethical theory – in sharp contrast to the extreme and uncompromising conclusions to which the Modern Classical Paradigm pushes its devotees – is that it facilitates adjudication, compromise, and accommodation among oft-conflicting humanistic, humane, and environmental values and obligations. (Personally, I try to balance all such obligations, and communitarian ethical theory provides me with a coherent method of doing so.) From the perspective of those animal liberationists primarily concerned about the welfare of domestic animals, especially meat animals, a communitarian animal-liberation ethic should be more attractive than the utilitarian and deontological animal-liberation ethics that are most familiar and which Jamieson endorses. Only a communitarian animal-liberation ethic would guarantee the continued existence of domestic meat animals in significant numbers. And while it would permit the slaughter and consumption of such animals, it would embed the breeding, raising, and dispatching of them in an ethical matrix in which they are treated as subjects that enjoy personal moral standing befitting their membership and role in the mixed community. Because ethical animal agriculture is more costly, the human consumption of meat would be much curtailed – bettering our health – and become, as in times past, only an occasional luxury. As a consequence of a much contracted market for the products of ethical animal agriculture, less land would be dedicated to it, and much of the fallow could revert to a wild condition. Further because ethical animal agriculture practiced on old-fashioned family farms would be less intensive as well as less extensive, it would be more ecologically sustainable.

In countries like the United Kingdom, in which animal agriculture has long been practised on a smaller, less intensive scale than in the former colonies, a renewed commitment to the ethical treatment of farm animals – not their ethical annihilation – would help preserve the cherished British landscape, a decidedly pastoral, not a wilderness landscape. The animal-liberation ethic that Jamieson endorses would, along with the virtual extinction of domestic meat animals,

eventuate in the deterioration of the rural British landscape that was constructed to pasture them. I admit that the universal practice of animal liberation as Jamieson conceives it would better serve the goals of most American environmentalists, viz., the recrudescence of wilderness. That is why, as I already explained, I endorse a legislative policy of compulsory vegetarianism. Those British environmentalists, however, more interested in preserving the existing pastoral landscape than in fostering a regrowth first of brush then of the thick forests that covered the British Isles in the distant cultural past have much to fear from the kind of animal-liberation ethic that Jamieson endorses.

I conclude then as follows. The conventional animal-liberation ethic is indeed, as Jamieson claims, an environmental ethic, but one more congenial to American-style environmentalism than to British. However, it is so only accidentally because, if universally practised, there would occur an unintended consequence: the virtual extinction of domestic meat animals which are, from the American environmental perspective, a scourge on the indigenous wild landscape. From the perspective of the animal-liberation movement, however, the conventional animal-liberation ethic is paradoxical for the same reason: if universally practised it would largely eliminate its primary beneficiaries, domestic meat animals. On the other hand, the communitarian animal-liberation ethic that I propose is more congenial to British-style environmentalism, focused more on preserving the pastoral landscape than on restoring the wilderness condition that American-style environmentalists believe to be ideal. And all members and fellow travellers of the animal-liberation movement should prefer my communitarian animal-liberation ethic to the conventional one Jamieson endorses, because, if actually practised, its beneficiaries would not only be treated morally – in a way befitting their membership in the Midgleyan mixed community – they would continue to exist in significant numbers.

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