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Enlightened Self-Interest: In Search of the Ecological Self (A Synthesis of Stoicism and Ecosophy)

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Abstract

Neass' Ecosophy and the Stoic attitude towards environmental ethics are often believed to be incompatible primarily because the first is often understood as championing an ecocentric standpoint while the latter espouses an egocentric (as well as an anthropocentric) view. This essay, however, argues that such incompatibility is rooted in a misunderstanding of both Ecosophy and Stoicism. Moreover, the essay argues that a synthesis of both the Ecosophical and Stoic approaches to environmental concerns results in a robust and satisfying attitude toward the environment, namely an enlightened self-interest, which not only guards our fragile environment from abuse, but also provides self-interested reasons and motivations for the protection of our natural surroundings.

"No humane being, past the thoughtless age of boyhood, will wantonly murder any creature, which holds its life by the same tenure that he does. The hare in its extremity cries like a child. I warn you, mothers, that my sympathies do not always make the usual phil-anthropic distinctions. Such is oftenest the young man's introduction to the forest, and the most original part of himself. He goes thither at first as a hunter and fisher, until at last, if he has the seeds of a better life in him, he distinguishes his proper objects, as a poet or naturalist it may be, and leaves the gun and fish-pole behind. The mass of men are still and always young in this respect."

(Henry David Thoreau, *Walden; Or, Life in the Woods*)[1]

1 Thoreau 1854, p. 138.

Introduction

In *The Nature of the Gods*, Cicero (45, p.77) writes: "Now the universe is, so to speak, the sower, planter, begetter, tutor, and nurturer of all things ordered by nature; it gives nourishment and support to all things, for these are in a sense its limbs and parts." As much as the above could be understood as a precursor of many of the ecocentric attitudes found amongst environmentalists today, it is important to note that the ancients did not share most of our contemporary environmental concerns and views. Cicero, several pages down, continues: "It remains finally for me to show in my peroration that all things in this universe of ours have been created and prepared for us humans to enjoy" (Cicero 45, p.103).

There is a deeper similarity worthy of investigation, however, underlying the prima facie contrast between ancient approaches to ethics and morality and contemporary environmental movements. In particular, I think there is a striking similarity between Stoicism and Arne Naess' elucidation of deep ecology, one that gives birth to a novel and quite reasonable approach to environmental ethics.

This paper explores the possibility of such a synthesis. I propose an approach that, at first glance, may appear to take one step back from the type of environmental consciousness advocated by followers of Aldo Leopold or Albert Schweitzer, but one that I believe provides a reasonable alternative. We can redefine our place in the world by revisiting the wisdom of the ancients in light of our contemporary understanding of and concerns for the environment. And thus, rather than taking a step back, it is my hope that the vision of an enlightened self-interest presented in this paper proves to be a stride toward an environmental consciousness.

Stoicism and Oikeiosis

The Stoics identify happiness or flourishing (eudaimonia) as the goal or end (telos) of living. The fact that morality and the pursuit of the good life are not separate concerns, but rather, are intimately intertwined, is a salient feature of Stoicism. For the Stoics, happiness can only be achieved by living in agreement, or in accordance, with nature.

The Stoic theory of Oikeiosis speaks of a natural 'primary attachment' to oneself. In Letter 121, Seneca writes:

> An animal has a primary attachment to itself; for there must be something to which other things can be referred…Nature brings forth her offspring, she does

> not toss them aside. And because the most reliable form of protection comes from what is closest, each one is entrusted to itself…Nature has bestowed on animals this primary tool for survival, attachment to and love for oneself. (Seneca 64b, pp.88-89)

And again, Diogenes Laertius records Chrysippus' understanding of this 'primary attachment' or a primal familiarity with oneself as follows:

> An animal's first impulse, say the Stoics, is to self-preservation, because nature from the outset endears it to itself, as Chrisippus affirms in the first book of his work On Ends: his words are, 'The dearest thing to every animal is its own constitution and its consciousness thereof.' (Laertius, n.d., 193)

Hierocles explains Oikeiosis in terms of circles of familiarity:

> The first and nearest circle is the one which a person has drawn around his own mind…Second, further from the centre and enclosing the first one, is the one in which are placed parents, siblings, wife and children. Third is the one in which are uncles and aunts, grandfathers and grandmothers, siblings' children and also cousins. Next the circle including other relatives. And next the one including fellow-demesmen; then the one of fellow tribesmen…The furthest and largest, which includes all the circles, is that of the whole human race. (in Annas, 1993, p.267)

Oikeiosis, then, suggests that human beings should feel akin to all beings that are similar to them precisely because they are "familiar." Oikeion (meaning 'akin to' or 'what belongs to you') as opposed to allotrion ('alien' or 'not belonging'), then, suggests that if humans are essentially rational beings, all rational things belong to the same "familiar" group. Thus, humans, by nature, belong to the community of rational beings. This, of course, illustrates the ratiocentricity environmentalists criticize. However, I shall argue that the theory of Oikeiosis leaves ample room for rational valuers to bestow value on their environments in virtue of their intimate entanglement with them in a manner that, for the purposes of moral considerability, blurs the distinction between rational and non-rational entities.

It may prove useful to interpret the Stoic notion of various and widening circles of familiarity in light of the insight offered by the ethics of care. Understanding the moral importance of the proximity of the various spheres in terms of the care-focused insight that morality starts in the home (that is, that it arises out of the close kin ties one first encounters in the home) sheds light on why the various circles are categorized in ever-distanced relations to the moral agent who rightly remains at the center of her moral world. Such a comparison also suggests to me that the idea that morality ought to be grounded in the primitive human impulse to care about that which is familiar is, in fact, on the right track.

Thus, Oikeiosis, to my mind, implies a natural tendency of human beings to be concerned with others (human as well as possibly non-human members of the community of rational beings) and it suggests a much wider citizenship than merely the local citizenship we normally think we possess (i.e. being a citizen of Athens, of Poland, of Canada, etc.). "Morally, we have a dual citizenship, in the embedded circumstances of our life and in the community of reason" (Annas, 2002, p.109). Marcus Aurelius (c. 170-180, p.44) writes: "[M]y nature is rational and social; and my city and country, so far as I am Antoninus, is Rome; but so far as I am a man, it is the world." We are members of a universal moral community of rational beings where moral considerability is owed to all such members within this community (including ourselves). In arguing that membership of a community implies that moral agents in that community ought to treat all other members with equal moral considerability, I by no means deny that we may indeed give priority to certain members of our moral community over others (a claim the synthesis I propose in fact endorses). Although individual cases may call for certain proximity-related choices, generally, when we move beyond such individual cases, we ought to consider all members taking part in the moral community to be morally considerable. And such considerability applies equally to all members of a moral community even if individual agents in individual cases under certain circumstances may be justified to assign more weight to one member than another.

The bond of this universal citizenship defines us as much as our ability to reason does. It at once unites all rational beings and, prima facie, distinguishes rational from non-rational beings, but also hints at the intimate entanglement of reason with the cosmos as a whole. To the Stoics, the universe is rational in a sense: it has order. Being mindful of that is part of what it means to flourish as a human being. Part of the reason mindfulness of the order of the universe becomes important for the Stoics derives from their deterministic view of agency and freedom of the will, a position that earned the Stoics numerous critics even in ancient times. Perhaps part of the aversion many people have to Stoicism today stems from its deterministic (and arguably fatalistic) metaphysics, which informs and shapes Stoic ethical thought. Human beings, on the Stoic view, are born into their stations in life and cannot exercise control over most of the things that affect them. In the *Enchiridion*, Epictetus reminds us of this and offers counsel about how we should cope with the feeling of helplessness that accompanies the realization that our cherished freedom is, at least for the most part, an illusion.

> Remember that you are an actor in a play, which is as the playwright wants it to be: short if he wants it short, long if he wants it long. If he wants you to play a beggar, play even this part skilfully, or a cripple, or a public official, or a private

> citizen. What is yours is to play the assigned part well. But to choose it belongs to someone else. (in Holowchak, 2004, p.202)

Eudaimonia for the Stoics, in light of their deterministic view of the world, can be achieved only by living in agreement or in accordance with nature. And, being mindful of the ordered universe, for a follower of Stoicism, accomplishes just that. That is, such mindfulness is necessary in order to live in accordance with nature. It is important to note, however, that, although order is unveiled to reason, it is not necessary for an ordered universe to be rational itself. However, recognizing this order should prompt the contemplative soul to realize that her rationality, which is capable of appreciating the natural order, is inseparably wedged into and intimately determined by the natural world she observes. Even though the Stoics were quite ratiocentric, their conception of the value of rationality is intimately intertwined with the world that gives birth to and harbours rational beings. This, I hope to show, goes some ways toward my proposed thesis that, although the enlightened self-interest of rational beings may be the source of value, the value such rational creatures bear spills over and is intimately tied to the non-rational world.

Seneca, in Letter 66 (64b, p.20), while arguing for the thesis that no one good is greater than any other, states that "Ulysses hastened home to the rocks of his beloved Ithaca just as Agamemnon did to the noble walls of Mycenae; for no one loves his homeland because it is great, but because it is his own." The passage suggests that the 'primary attachment' is not only to other rational beings, but to anything that is one's own or one's 'familiar.' Thus, the concept of Oikeiosis can be stretched beyond the sphere of reason and rationality (though perhaps only in the presence of a rational valuer). The theory of Oikeiosis seems to suggest that something is instilled with value precisely because it belongs to, or is a familiar of, the valuer. The humble, rocky Ithaca is as valuable to Ulysses as the wealthy, noble Mycenae is to Agamemnon. As a means of foreshadowing my proposed synthesis, it is interesting to note that Aldo Leopold thinks of the land as a community, which comes quite close to the theory of Oikeiosis interpreted in the manner I am suggesting above.

One's universal citizenship appears, in some sense, to widen one's self (at least insofar as one comes to care for one's immediate family as much as one cares for oneself, etc.). Furthermore, Oikeiosis suggests a certain re-structuring of the self and one's understanding of one's place in the world. Oikeiosis, then, promises a possible means by which something (i.e. a place or a natural ecosystem) can be instilled with value.

Arne Naess' Ecosophy

Arne Naess' Deep Ecology is not so much an activist stance (as might be the case with the shallow ecological movement), as it is an environmentalist philosophy, an ecosophy. Ecosophy's primary concern is with the "[r]ejection of the human-in-environment image in favor of the relational, total-field image" (Naess, 1995a, p.3) where organisms are viewed as knots in a biospherical net, web, or field of intrinsic relations. Ecosophy "is meant to characterize a way of thinking about environmental problems that attacks them from the roots, i.e., the way they can be seen as symptoms of the deepest ills of our present society" (Rothenberg, 1995, p.155).

It is important to remember that, although Naess' Ecosophy focuses on deeper, perhaps more basic issues, it does not discount all the shallow ecological concerns. Focusing solely on resource depletion and pollution problems is not enough, however. We must begin by restructuring our understanding of ourselves and our relationship to the environment. The deep ecology platform developed by Arne Naess and George Sessions, which is an attempt to unify the intentions of like-minded environmentalists, consists of "a series of standpoints that supporters of a deep ecological view [movement] would agree upon in general, proceeding to elaborate their own specific variants in different yet compatible ways" (Rothenberg, 1995, p.156). The platform, then, being both descriptive and normative, is a sketch or framework rather than a robust theory and thus is open to some interpretation and requires substantial filling in. The platform has at least three clear purposes:

(1) It can provide a firm philosophical grounding for activism.

(2) It can encourage decision-makers to connect to philosophical and religious assertions with concrete policy.

(3) [And] [i]t can be used to get as many people as possible to think about themselves and nature in a new way. (Rothenberg, 1995, p.157)

In general, if one were searching for a maxim of Ecosophy, it might be the fact that "everything hangs together." In other words, everything is intimately connected and interrelated. The fundamental characteristics or attributes of Ecosophy, then, stem from the above-mentioned maxim. In order to begin acting in accordance with the platform of Ecosophy, a reconstruction and a new understanding of the self is required. I turn to this task presently.

Naess presents Ecosophy as an attempt to answer questions the human species has been struggling with for the past 2500 years, "basic questions about who we are, what we

are heading for, and what kind of reality we are part of" (Naess, 1995b, p.13). Naess's ecosophical answer to these questions is that: "We under-estimate ourselves. I emphasize 'self.' We tend to confuse it with the narrow ego. Human nature is such that with sufficient all-sided maturity we cannot avoid 'identifying' our self with all living beings, beautiful or ugly, big or small, sentient or not" (Naess, 1995b, p.13). The self, according to Naess, develops in stages and matures through them. We first move from ego to the social self and then from the social to the metaphysical self. Finally, we can develop an ecological self. To the question of who we are and what kind of reality we are part of, the answer is that we are "in, of and for Nature from the very beginning" (Naess, 1995b, p.14). Frances Vaughan writes:

> This view recognizes both our biological and psychological dependence on the environment. Although we may feel subjectively separate from nature and each other, we are actually interdependent and interconnected with the whole fabric of reality. (in Devall, 1995, p.103)

Of course, whether or not the self indeed develops in the types of stages outlined by Naess is perhaps a question best answered by developmental psychologists and it ought to be explored further (though due to space constraints, I cannot attempt a meaningful analysis in this essay). For the purposes of my thesis, however, it is enough to take Naess' statement merely metaphorically and understand it as echoing the moral agent's relationship to the land or ecological community, a relationship that widens the self across and in accordance with the various spheres of familiarity to which the Stoic theory of Oikeiosis refers. I propose a merger of Oikeiosis and Ecosophy. As with all syntheses, however, the fusion gives rise to an offspring that closely resembles its parents, but is, nonetheless, its own unique individual.

The Synthesis: Enlightened Self-Interest and Wide Egocentrism

Although there are some important differences between Naess' Ecosophy and Oikeiosis, there are also some very interesting and unique similarities. In what follows, I argue that some of the differences, which, at first glance, might be viewed as driving the two theories further apart can, in fact, be reinterpreted within the frameworks of each theory in such a manner as to actually reveal a deeper-seated compatibility.

Naess explains that, according to his deep-ecological view, self-realization is not the seeking of pleasure (which suggests hedonism) or happiness (which, to him, suggests eudaimonism). Thus, right from the outset, Naess appears to be rejecting eudaimonic theories (like Stoicism). Naess offers a striking and quite memorable example:

> Let us consider the praying mantis, the formidable group of voracious insects. They have a nature fascinating to many people. Mating is part of their self-realization, but some males are eaten when performing the act of copulation. Is he happy, is he having pleasure? We don't know. Well done if he does! Actually he feeds his partner so that she gets strong offspring. But it does not make sense to me to attribute happiness to these males. Self-realization yes, happiness no. I maintain the internal relation between self-realization and happiness among people and among some animal groups. (Naess, 1995b, p.29)

If, however, the male praying mantis is said to be living in accordance with its nature (when it is being eaten by its mate), then, given that this is its station in life (and given that it has no choice over its nature, station, and most circumstances), death in this very context appears to be a form of flourishing (realizing the organism's nature). This is not what most people may consider happiness to be, but perhaps some common beliefs are wrong. Happiness conceived of as flourishing, which is living in agreement with one's nature, appears to capture some of the essential characteristics of Naess' notion of self-realization. And so, although I think that Naess is correct about the fact that hedonism is not really compatible with self-realization, I do not think Naess fully appreciates the term 'eudaimonia', which he translates as happiness. When also understood as 'flourishing' (especially taken in the context of Stoicism), eudaimonism seems to be quite compatible with Naess' notion of self-realization.

It is true that the term eudaimonia and its translations are a matter of scholarly dispute. More specifically, the distinction is sometimes illuminated by contrasting psychological happiness with prudential happiness (Haybron, 2002, p.306) where psychological happiness is purely subjectivist while prudential happiness is not. Many contemporary notions of happiness are psychological in this sense. Such a notion of happiness is masterfully appropriated by present-day hedonists like Fred Feldman (2004), who construe the question of happiness or the good life subjectively. Feldman (2004, p.13) explains that he is interested in exploring what features make a life a good one for the individual living that particular life. However, it is clear that when the Stoics (or Aristotelians for that matter) talk about eudaimonia, they have more than psychological subjectivity or pleasure in mind. Although pleasure may play a role in the determination of eudaimonia, the life as a whole and its relation to the kind of organism that lives it becomes important. When Naess identifies eudaimonia with happiness, he is following an accepted convention. However, the above passage suggests that he is also identifying happiness with psychological happiness, which falsely implies that eudaimonia is subjective in nature, something both the Stoics and Aristotelians deny. For both, a person

may very well be mistaken about her own life and think herself eudaimon when she in fact is not. This is partly what distinguishes the moral sage from the fool. An objective account of eudaimonia is reached by Aristotle via his ergon argument and by the Stoics via their argument that eudaimonia is attainable only to those who live in accordance with nature. Both arguments suggest to me that the term eudaimonia has to do with the objective flourishing of a being (something that ought to be organism-specific), which is a more general state than just psychological happiness and which may or may not include the latter. Thus, eudaimonia and self-realization are concepts that are much more closely related than Naess acknowledges.

Another commonly misunderstood difference between accounts like Stoicism and Ecosophy is that the first is egocentric while the latter appears, on the face of it, to be an ecocentric view. However, even though followers of Naess often speak of ecocentrism, I think Naess' theory is a very novel, and admittedly quite interesting, form of egocentrism. The self is widened via the process of self-realization. I do not think that this kind of egocentrism is detrimental to an environmental ethic. On the contrary, it may be quite beneficial. I side with those who think that benefiting the environment indirectly is still noble and should continue to play an important role in any environmental ethic. I concur with Cafaro's (2005, p.139) position according to which "any reason that convinces you to treat nature more gently is a good reason."

Naess himself claims that "we have to kill in order to eat, but there is a basic intuition in deep ecology that we have no right to destroy other living beings without sufficient reason" (in Bodian, 1982, pp.28-29). This tension is also present in Schweitzer's ethics of reverence for life, which I shall address later. Even Naess agrees that, given sufficient reason, human self-interest can and should override environmental concerns (of course this is true for extreme cases only since, for the most part, the welfare of the environment is tightly interconnected with our own well-being and flourishing).

The wide egocentrism proposed by Ecosophy quite closely resembles the Stoic emphasis on the agent's conception of self. More specifically, Naess' notion of self-realization is strikingly similar to the Stoic ideal of living in accordance or agreement with nature. That is, self-realization amounts to a deeper understanding of one's own place and station in the world as well as the interrelatedness of one's entire being with the cosmic order. Self-realization suggests the adoption of a Stoic approach to living well. In other words,

realizing one's interdependence with one's environment and other entities in existence in the environment seems to promote the same type of response to one's surroundings and to others in the world as the Stoic theory of Oikeiosis encourages, namely one that instills with value that which is perceived as 'familiar.' Self-realization (the widening of one's self) enlarges the sphere of our 'primary concern;' our newly acquired self-understanding encourages and compels us to care for the environmental processes and systems that weave themselves through our very being and become an inseparable part of our selves. The environment becomes our "familiar" (in the most intimate sense) via the process of self-realization whereby we come to perceive value in our surroundings much like Ulysses saw value in his beloved Ithaca.

A wider, deeper self contributes to concern for the environment because the realization of a much wider, interconnected and interdependent self identifies nature (one's environment and the relations it has to every other existing thing and system) with the self and thus, caring for nature ultimately becomes a matter of enlightened self-interest. Naess writes:

> We need an environmental ethics, but when people feel they unselfishly give up, even sacrifice, their interest in order to show love for Nature, this is probably in the long run a treacherous basis for conservation. Through identification they may come to see their own interest served by conservation, through genuine self-love, love of a widened and deepened self. (Naess, 1995b, p.17)

It appears that the Ecosophical view is much closer to Stoicism than many people have acknowledged.

It may be objected that, although the Stoic notion of universal citizenship is a kind of widening of one's self, the Stoics focus only on rational beings while the deep ecological wide self encompasses both rational and non-rational entities. The Stoics, however, viewed the universe itself as being driven by, and infused with, rationality and order. That is why the community of rational beings includes humans and gods alike (the gods being quite literally personifications of natural processes). Thus, there is a sense of a unity in Stoic metaphysics that is similar to the ecosophist's notion of the widened self.

Although the Stoics focus on rationality as the prerequisite to universal citizenship, reason seems to weave itself through the natural order of the world insofar as rational creatures must be mindful of this order and their own place within it if they are to flourish. In a sense then, citizenship in the universe might be taken to mean belonging to the community of rational beings and belonging to (or being a "familiar" of)

the cosmic order, namely nature itself. If this interpretation is not stretching Stoic cosmology and metaphysics too far, then perhaps the synthesis of Ecosophy and the theory of Oikeiosis can extend care to non-rational entities such as animals, plants, landscapes, and ecosystems insofar as all these things share in the ordered cosmic nature. As already pointed out, however, this does not suggest (at least not for my synthesis of Stoicism and Ecosophy) that the universe as a whole must be viewed as rational, but rather that a ratiocentric theory (like Stoicism) has the requisite tools for instilling value, which is essentially tied to rationality, into the non-rational world in a manner that deeply and irreversibly intertwines the valuer and the valued (whether or not the valued is rational).

The relation between order and reason, of course, is such that the order of the universe may be an objective fact that will be true regardless of whether or not someone recognizes it. And to the extent that rationality presupposes the recognition of that order, it would be wrong to say that the order itself is necessarily rational. However, for rational beings to recognize this order ought to suggest to them that it is in virtue of the ordered nature of the universe that rationality is possible in the first place. Thus, if there is value in reason, this value is intimately related to the natural world that gives rise to and nourishes this rationality (even if the world itself is non-rational). This, I wish to suggest, is the Stoic insight that emerges out of and drives my proposed synthesis.

In an important sense, on the synthesized view, proponents of enlightened self-interest can be said to, at least metaphorically, project their rationality (and their awareness) onto the surrounding world precisely by entangling their selves with the world and thereby, in a somewhat eerie act of introspection, symbolically granting rationality to the universe itself, for ultimately, as spatio-temporally extended objects in the world, we are the universe becoming aware of itself (I think that, for the sake of the synthesis, it is not too far-fetched to interpret Ecosophy in this somewhat loosely-Hegelian manner).

Thus, rationality and self-interest (the self-interest of rational beings) appears to be the driving or motivating force behind the preservation of the environment on both the Stoic and the Ecosophical accounts. After all, morality is intended for humans, not rivers. If a theory promotes the welfare of the non-rational parts of nature by recognizing an intimate interdependency between rational beings and non-rational environments, which ought to be preserved precisely because they nourish and host rational beings, neither the

rational creatures nor the environments they live in suffer from the adherence to and the implementation of such a theory.

William O. Stephens considers some other points of incompatibility between Stoicism and ecologically-minded thinking in his article "Stoic Naturalism, Rationalism, and Ecology." He argues that the Stoics were most definitely anthropocentric. He writes: "Epictetus holds that animals are born to serve humans; they are not born for their own sake" (Stephens, 1994, p.278). The synthesis is not meant to outright reject such Stoic claims, but rather soften them by widening the understanding of the self in a manner that acknowledges the intimate relation between humans and non-humans as well as rational and non-rational entities. Thus, for example, the Stoic claim that animals are born to serve humans is transformed, by the synthesis, into an enlightened self-interested understanding of the relation between animals and people, which though ultimately self-interested becomes nonetheless fundamentally benevolent. Animals and ecosystems are no longer viewed as property, but as salient parts composing a community of entities that belong to one of the spheres of an agent's wide self.

The synthesis of Stoicism and Ecosophy offers a unique approach to our environmental concerns that maintains an egocentered and anthropocentric pursuit of happiness and human flourishing, but recognizes the intimate interdependence of human welfare and well-being and the integrity of the environments we inhabit.

Stephens further points out that for the Stoics, value is in the eye of the valuer (and thus not inherent in the object valued). He writes:

> The Stoics held that human beings may, of course, err in their value judgments, but "[i]t is because human beings (and animals too) see certain things as valuable that these things are valuable." Thus, inasmuch as deep ecologists do maintain the "inherent value" of things, the Stoics are manifestly in explicit disagreement with them. (Stephens, 1994, p.283)

I do not think that Stephens' criticism holds. If Ecosophy advocates an enlightened self-interest (as I have argued), then Ecosophists endow the environment with value only insofar as their wide selves benefit from the welfare and integrity of the environment, which they naturally do since the wide self is intimately interconnected, intertwined, and entangled with its surroundings. The value Stephens claims the deep ecologists attribute to the environment is not, on a view like Naess', one that is inherent in the object, but rather is attributed to the environment only insofar as the human doing the attributing is an integral

part of the environment. The value attributed to the environment, on such a synthesized view, becomes inseparable from the value attributed to oneself, a valuation of oneself, which stems from one's natural 'primary attachment' to oneself; the value attributed to the environment is identical (one and the same) with the value attributed to oneself.

Ecosophy is certainly a very enlightened anthropocentrism (one that redefines human nature and the self), but it is still egocentric and anthropocentric insofar as it is the human species that must work at self-realization and understanding of the intricately interconnected web of reality of which organisms are interrelated knots. This kind of understanding, moreover, seems to presuppose reason and thus rational beings capable of this understanding. It is certainly true that human beings, on the ecosophical view, are an integral part of nature, but ecosophists, like Naess, do not write their platforms and profess their enlightened understanding of selfhood for rivers, forests, landscapes, and ecosystems (even if this is done, to some considerable degree for their sake), but rather the platforms and articles are written for human beings by human beings and out of an enlightened self-interest.

Some Further Objections to Enlightened Self-Interest

I think that enlightened self-interest, as argued for in this paper, resonates with many of the concerns and insights of thinkers like Aldo Leopold and Albert Schweitzer. Leopold, in his Land Ethic, complains that conservation education today is lacking in that people strive to conserve the land only insofar as it is profitable and refrain from recognizing any further obligations to the environment. He mockingly states that such conservation practices, in terms of land-use, merely amount to an enlightened self-interest, which defines no right or wrong, assigns no obligation, calls for no sacrifice, and implies no change in the current philosophy of values (Leopold, 1949, pp.207-208). Enlightened self-interest, on his view, appears to be merely a colourful façade, a false front, with no deeper content.

I must concede that the kind of enlightened self-interest Leopold criticizes is truly lacking in depth. However, the synthesis I propose takes self-interest beyond the shallow consciousness of which Leopold speaks. The synthesis of Stoic Oikeiosis with Arne Naess' formulation of deep ecology approaches Leopold's vision of a land ethic much more closely than the conception of enlightened self-interest he criticizes. Leopold (1949, p.204) writes: "The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land." Oikeiosis, as reinterpreted in light of Naess' Ecosophy, does just that. In fact, combined with the Stoic insistence on having

knowledge of nature in order to live in accordance with it, the synthesis developed in this paper is meant to prompt us to begin to understand the interdependence between environment and its inhabitants at a much deeper level, one that literally enlarges not only the boundaries of the community, but also the boundaries of the self.

On such a view, obligations to the self and the community become irreversibly entangled with obligations to the environment. The land is endowed with the kind of intrinsic value that human beings enjoy in virtue of its inseparability from the valuers. Thus, although what I am advocating is ultimately an egocentric and self-interested approach to environmental conservation, the self-interest I am defending is truly an enlightened one; it redefines the self in such a manner that drawing boundaries between the self and the other (between the land, in all its interdependent complexity, and the inhabitants of the land) becomes impossible. I think that my proposed approach captures what lies at the heart of the land ethic; it delivers this essence in a manner that is much more palatable for beings, which not only require the environment to thrive and flourish, but must also confront it at times in order to survive. The difference between homo sapiens and other species is that we have the mental capacity to impact the environment on a global scale, a mental endowment, however, in virtue of which we are also capable of grasping our intimate kinship to the land that both sustains and threatens us.

Leopold (1949, p.214) writes: "An ethic to supplement and guide the economic relation to land presupposes the existence of some mental image of land as a biotic mechanism. We can be ethical only in relation to something we can see, feel, understand, love, or otherwise have faith in." The wide, enlightened self offers just that; it provides proper relata for an ethical relation to hold where the valuer and the valued, the terms to be related, are intimately linked.

A further criticism of the view developed in this paper may come from followers of Albert Schweitzer. Schweitzer's ethics of reverence for life condemns every act of destruction even though it recognizes that the necessity to destroy and injure life is imposed upon all living creatures precisely because an animal's very survival requires the consumption or destruction of some life.

One virtue of the ethics of reverence for life is that, as a moral theory, such a view does not allow for ad hoc exceptions to the moral code and rules of conduct it espouses (recall that any form of destruction is evil on Schweitzer's view). In like manner the enlightened

self-interest view need not postulate ad hoc exemptions because ultimately, it is the self-interest that drives our moral choices since the view I am putting forward recognizes our 'primary attachment' to be to oneself. However, as already argued, the widened self, a self that encompasses its surroundings and recognizes its ultimately and inseparably interrelated and interdependent existence with the surrounding environment, cannot detach itself from the very context that gives it life. In a way, the enlightened self-interested view sees both self-preservation (even at the cost of other life) and the preservation of all other life as a good whereas Schweitzer's view must recognize an inevitable evil in any manner of destruction. Thus, the ethics of reverence for life reveals an awkward internal tension of valuing all life (including one's own) while facing the inevitability of having to destroy some life in order to sustain one's own. This is something the enlightened self-interest view manages to avoid without having to sacrifice the type of reverence for life Schweitzer advocates.

Other passages in Schweitzer's work, however, seem to echo the kind of reverence for life the enlightened self-interested person is fully capable of embracing. Schweitzer writes:

> The world is a ghastly drama of will-to-live divided against itself. One existence makes its way at the cost of another; one destroys the other. One will-to-live merely exerts its will against the other, and has no knowledge of it. But in me the will-to-live has come to know about other wills-to-live. There is in it a yearning to arrive at unity with itself, to become universal. (Schweitzer, 1923, p.245)

The recognition of and yearning for unity with all life is precisely what lies at the core of the enlightened, widened self's infusion of value into, and recognition of value in, the environment, which is not alien, but rather a familiar of the valuer herself. The enlightened self-interested, wide self has no choice but to recognize a 'primary attachment' to all of life (in fact, even the non-living systems that support all life) and it does so in virtue of its self-interested nature in conjunction with its enlightened understanding of its own widened self-awareness.

In a sense, I think Schweitzer's model of a truly ethical person is reflected much better by the kind of synthesis provided in this paper than by his own theory, which appears to be in constant tension with itself. The enlightened self-interested person (of the sort that emerges out of the synthesis between the Stoic theory of Oikeiosis and Naess' Ecosophy) fits Schweitzer's mould of a "truly ethical man" amazingly well, perhaps even better than his own ethics of reverence for life.

At the very least, I cannot help but notice that Schweitzer's ethics of reverence for life seems to be driven by and appears to have at its core a similar philosophical intuition that drives the enlightened self-interest view I argue for in this paper, one that is perhaps best expressed in Schweitzer's own words: "Reverence for life which I apply to my own existence, and reverence for life which keeps me in a temper of devotion to other existence than my own, interpenetrate each other" (Schweitzer, 1923, p.249).

Conclusion

Naess' formulation of Deep Ecology has much more in common with Stoicism than it may appear to have at first glance. Naess' primary concern, like that of the Stoics, is with the self (even though the self is substantially redefined on both views). Stoicism promotes self-betterment by nourishing and developing an understanding of one's intimate entanglement with nature, with the aim of living in agreement with it. Ecosophy encourages Self-Realization, which underscores the self's interconnectedness with the non-rational systems that serve as habitats for human beings. Both views are egocentric and are concerned with the development and flourishing of individuals, first and foremost. Also, both theories understand flourishing of the individual in relation to an appropriate interaction with others and with objects that affect human welfare. Although one criticism of the Stoic approach to environmental ethics is that it approaches environmental concerns only indirectly, the synthesis of Stoicism and Naess' Ecosophy suggests that, although environmental concerns continue to be addressed indirectly, our indirect obligations to the environment can never cease to oblige us as long as we continue to hold the view that we have direct obligations to ourselves. This is precisely because of the intimate entanglement of the self with the environment; I must indirectly care about the environment because it (the environment) is, at least in part (and a very important part at that), directly my-self.

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