

Philosophical Analysis of Environmentalism

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1 Overview

Environmentalism identifies *the environment* as the sum of all existents on Earth, living and non-living, except for the human mind. Although man “the animal” is part of the environment his mind is not. To an environmentalist, the rational aspect of man is evil because it has the distinct ability to manipulate the environment in *un-natural* ways. Therefore although man is part of the environment, the products of human ingenuity exist only to destroy it.

Observe the environment - qua a collection of non-rational existents - deals only in force and man is faced with the alternative of answering with force or certain death. The effectiveness of man’s effort to forcefully manipulate the environment is determined by the degree in which man is rational. Environmentalism holds that the good is to restore the environment back to a state before it was affected by the mind of man. Attaining and preserving this state is the goal of environmentalism and is necessarily at odds with human survival since man can only survive by using his mind.

Environmentalism is the union of altruism and collectivism. Altruism holds that the well-being of everybody who is *not you* is the standard of good and self-sacrifice is the highest virtue. Environmentalism takes a collectivist approach and names *non-man* as the standard of good since man’s mind is the ultimate de-

stroyer of nature. The highest virtue to an environmentalist is not *self-sacrifice* but *collective sacrifice* of all the products of rationality.

2 Q & A

Q *Isn't it in your self-interest - a core ethical principle of Objectivism - to preserve the environment which you live in?*

A First, “preservation” is the in-between step between progress and regression. The goal of environmentalism is not to preserve but to regress back to the ideal of a pre-rational world. While it is not in my self-interest to destroy the environment, it is also not in my self-interest to preserve it in it’s current state when I know that human ingenuity and technological progress will increase the quality of my life.

Q *Will environmentalism ever become a major political movement like The Green Party?*

A No. Like The Libertarian Party, The Green Party is a union of individuals who share a common conclusion but have no philosophical consistency in their beliefs. This necessarily tears a party apart since each individual’s values are potentially radically different.

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