

Dale Jamieson. *Ethics and the Environment: An Introduction*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008. xi, 221 pages.

Jamieson has written a careful and compelling introductory text—as those familiar with his work would expect. He successfully navigates difficult waters for those writing textbooks. For example, he is effective in conveying the fundamentals of the positions he discusses (such that students will gain a basic understanding, even without reading primary sources) without going into such depth of exposition that the primary sources are simply recapitulated (leaving little for students to discover in the original works). Similarly, he includes some quite rigorous philosophical analysis, and considers several matters in striking depth, but he does so while maintaining a lucid, flowing text, and avoids getting caught up in complexity for its own sake. Given that Jamieson's book is intended primarily as a text, rather than as original research, this review will generally focus on providing an overview of the volume's seven chapters, rather than a critical engagement with particular arguments.

Jamieson's first chapter, "The Environment as an Ethical Problem," begins by exploring the concepts of nature and environment, and draws attention to basic questions that arise in considering whether (or in what senses) humans and their activities are natural. With this in hand, Jamieson considers the complexities that arise in establishing what constitutes an environmental problem, and turns to important sources of—and potential solutions to—such problems, insofar as they are caused by human behaviors. He provides overviews of technology, economics, and religious traditions in this light, illustrating how they've contributed to environmental problems, and how they might play roles in solutions. Finally, Jamieson argues that viable responses to the environmental problems we face will require drawing upon all of these resources (given that these problems typically have multiple, interacting causes), in addition to critical ethical and aesthetic reflection.

Chapter two, "Human Morality," provides an excellent overview of several issues that often arise in environmental ethics classes (indeed, in ethics classes in general). Jamieson begins by sketching a broadly evolutionary account of how human morality has emerged out of more general patterns of cooperative behavior found across many species, and has taken on distinctive features through our use of reason. He then examines a number of common challenges to morality, so construed. Amoralists hold that we have no reason to concern ourselves with morality; Jamieson nicely brings out a number of implausible consequences of such a view. He then considers ways in which some might argue that God is necessary to morality, carefully discussing familiar worries for divine command theories, and arguing against claims that God or belief in a God are somehow necessary for moral motivation. Finally, Jamieson turns to cultural relativism (treated as the view that there are binding moral codes, but that these are relative to—and only applicable within—particular cultures), and brings out important problems with simple versions of such a position. Jamieson's work in this chapter is clear, careful,

and important for students to consider. Those who appreciate James Rachels' highly regarded work in this vein should be similarly impressed with that of Jamieson.

The chapter "Meta-Ethics" provides an overview of this field, with an eye toward implications for environmental ethics and policy. These issues are not often treated in environmental texts, and Jamieson's discussion here is welcome. Jamieson begins by distinguishing meta-ethics, moral theory, and practical ethics, and then turns to an examination of key positions in meta-ethics—realism (both naturalistic and non-naturalistic), subjectivism (including emotivism and prescriptivism), and response-dependence / sensibility theories. The chapter closes with a very helpful section on intrinsic value, where Jamieson distinguishes four quite different senses of intrinsic value, senses that are not always clearly distinguished in much of the environmental ethics literature.

Jamieson turns to normative moral theory in his fourth chapter. He distinguishes various forms of consequentialism, illustrating the breadth of this family of theories, and considers how different versions of the view might respond to common objections. Jamieson next presents virtue ethics, nicely illustrating its appeal and application to selected environmental problems, while drawing attention to important worries it faces. Finally, Jamieson presents Kantian theories, with particular attention given to how recent Kantians have attempted to refine or move beyond Kant's account of our duties involving nonhuman animals.

Overall, Jamieson's discussions of these traditional approaches to morality are clear and accessible, though Kantians and virtue ethicists might quibble over whether he has sufficiently attended to responses made on behalf of these theories to common objections. For example, while discussing virtue ethics, Jamieson writes:

Environmentalists are just as articulate in denouncing vice as in praising virtue. They often see greed, selfishness, lack of sensitivity and other failings as the heart of our indifference to nature. . . . However, we should remind ourselves that while a great deal of environmentally destructive human behavior can rightly be denounced as greedy or vicious, much is humdrum and ordinary. As we saw in chapter 1, many of our environmental problems have the structure of collective action problems. These involve many people making small contributions to very large problems. They do not intend to cause these problems, and in many cases feel quite powerless to prevent them. (pp. 91–92)

There is a suggestion that talk of virtue and vice falls short when discussing cases of ordinary behaviors that involve us in collective action problems. But virtue ethicists can plausibly maintain that vices and virtues are still relevant in discussing ordinary, humdrum behaviors. Complacency, for example, might be implicated in much ordinary, mildly environmentally destructive behavior; and mild vices are still vices. Beyond this, virtue ethicists can point out that particular societies and circumstances can tend to produce certain vices in their members—those living behind the Iron Curtain in the 1960s, for example, might have been led by social pressures towards a vicious distrust of their neighbors, and so on. Social, political

(and related) structures in contemporary wealthy, free-market societies might make individuals prone to such vices as selfishness and apathy, and also make acting in responsible, virtuous fashions extremely difficult or impossible. Thus, virtue ethicists can argue that we need to look at broader political and social changes in order to produce societies in which humans can flourish without having significant detrimental impacts upon the rest of the world, or future generations.

Jamieson's fifth chapter, "Humans and Other Animals," begins with a compelling discussion of speciesism—one that should be effective in helping students to recognize why many have thought our privileging of human interests (and dismissal of those of nonhumans) to be unjustified. This is followed by overviews of Singer's and Regan's positions concerning the moral status of nonhuman animals. The latter half of the chapter takes a practical turn, focusing on the use of animals as food. Jamieson considers the status of animals on factory farms, the limits of seeking out "free-range" and "organic" products, and the significance of killing versus causing pain. Once again Jamieson's discussion is careful and clear, and anticipates many common reactions that students will have to such issues ("Maybe we don't need to become vegetarians, so long as we buy free-range meat"), without being so exhaustive as to leave a class with little left to discuss.

Jamieson's sixth chapter is entitled "The Value of Nature." He begins with accessible overviews—and common criticisms—of biocentrism and ecocentrism. He then turns to value pluralism, and examines three kinds of value often invoked in discussions of environmental issues: prudential, aesthetic, and natural (where this latter form is that often attributed to wild or natural entities); the section on environmental aesthetics is an especially welcome addition to an environmental ethics text. Jamieson closes the chapter with a series of informative, real-world case studies in which various forms of value previously discussed come into conflict.

The seventh and final chapter, "Nature's Future," begins with a consideration of the impact and demands of human activities across the globe, factoring in population growth, changes in technology, and wealth. Jamieson effectively brings out the vast disparities across countries in carbon dioxide emissions, and draws attention to certain complexities in making such calculations. He then turns to questions of justice with respect to future generations (and, to a lesser extent, questions of environmental justice within current generations). Finally, Jamieson sketches three possible scenarios for the future, depending on the actions humans take—or fail to take: "environmental catastrophe; continuing and increasing global inequality and environmental degradation; or a change in the way of life of the world's most privileged people. These three scenarios are not clear-cut, nor are they mutually exclusive" (p. 196). He outlines what might lead to these varying outcomes, and, while being realistic, points to certain signs of hope that we might move towards the third scenario (drawing on examples from Europe, American history, and the apparent willingness of developing nations to seek green forms of development, if wealthy nations are also willing to play their part).

If there is a shortcoming to the volume, it lies in the lack of coverage of cer-

tain important approaches within environmental ethics. There is no discussion of ecofeminism, and only brief mentions of deep ecology, and intragenerational environmental justice. Jamieson is quite upfront about this—there are, of course, limits to how much one can do in any given book. And instructors could easily supplement Jamieson's volume (and related primary sources) with additional readings in these areas. One might also hope for additional coverage in these areas in future editions.

Jamieson has a knack for finding compelling examples to illustrate difficult points, and a strong ability to anticipate common student reactions to important claims and arguments. He also provides thoughtful responses to such reactions, encouraging students to think more deeply about the issues. These are no small achievements. *Ethics and the Environment* would serve as excellent text for any lower-level environmental ethics course, and could well be used in many environmental studies and ethics classes, more broadly.

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