

FROM THE FOUNDING EDITOR

A Final Word or Two

I began editing this journal in the fall of 1978. The first issue appeared at the beginning of 1979 as a spring issue. The American Conservation Association and Chevron USA provided some money to make possible the publishing and mailing of a few introductory issues, and the response was enough subscribers for the journal to begin publication for real. I became an instructor in the philosophy department at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque in my first professional philosophy job and the editor of a journal cosponsored by the university and an environmental nonprofit in California, the John Muir Institute of Studies. One year later the John Muir Institute and the University of New Mexico suggested that I create a nonprofit, Environmental Philosophy, Inc., that would take over the ownership and management of the journal. In 1981, the journal and I moved to the University of Georgia and in 1990 moved to the University of North Texas, where as chair of the philosophy department, I established the first M.A. and Ph.D. programs with a major focus on environmental ethics and environmental philosophy.

The creation of this journal was important. During the 1970s, although some philosophy papers on environmental philosophy did appear in that decade, established journals were usually only willing to publish at most one paper on the subject per year. Interest in the subject was focused outside of philosophy on the writings of some biologists with national reputations. The appearance of *Environmental Ethics* and other journals that gradually came to be thereafter made it possible for professional philosophers to establish themselves in this subject area and create a field within philosophy.

As a student at the University of Missouri, I was not at first interested in the environment, but at the end of my freshman year I went into a cave on a whim and it was the beginning of many years of cave exploring. Eventually I became identified with a large cave near the university called Devil's Icebox. After obtaining my M.A., I spent two years in Germany as a U.S. Army officer and another year and a half as a Berlitz teacher teaching English to adult Germans. When I returned to Missouri for my Ph.D. work, I found that Devil's Icebox was in danger from residential water pollution, and people said that I should save the cave. While I was writing my dissertation, I was also engaged in a political battle to protect the cave. The cave ultimately became a state park.

During the struggle, some professional environmentalists began following my efforts. They told me about Aldo Leopold's land ethic and said that because I was an environmental activist with a philosophical focus on ethics, I should spend my future years as a philosopher developing a field called environmental ethics. I told them that I would do so if I ever had time and upon graduation I went to

the University of Vienna as a postdoctoral visiting scholar to do research on my favorite philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein. Returning to the United States one year later without a job, I applied for a Rockefeller Foundation in Environmental Affairs in order to keep my promise to do something about environmental philosophy and environmental ethics and also for gainful employment. My project was to research the history of ideas behind the arguments I and my opponents used in the political struggle over the cave. While doing research at the Smithsonian Institution, I learned that the National Endowment for the Humanities was funding institutes on engineering ethics. I visited the NEH and suggested that it also should fund institutes on environmental ethics. After I admitted that little had been written on such a subject, I was told that I should produce an interdisciplinary book to provide a basis for such institutes. It occurred to me that a journal on environment and philosophy would be more effective than just one interdisciplinary book.

The journal became a reality at the University of New Mexico. Three years later it moved to the University of Georgia, and nine years after that it moved to the University of North Texas. Although I am stepping down as the editor-in-chief, the journal will continue to be housed at UNT with a new editor, Allen Thompson, taking over from the philosophy department at Oregon State University. Environmental Ethics Books and the Center for Environmental Philosophy, Inc. will also continue at UNT as well as the center's visiting scholar program in association with the philosophy department there.

Over the past forty plus years I have worked hard to establish the field of environmental philosophy and extend the range of what the field covers through workshops, conferences, and editorials encouraging authors to write in new areas. These areas have included, among others, ecofeminism, ecological restoration, urban environmental philosophy, environmental ethics and the history of philosophy, Western and non-Western traditions, environmental aesthetics, animal ethics versus environmental ethics, anthropocentric and nonanthropocentric ethics, and the reduction of all value to instrumental value, following John Dewey. The journal has also provided special issues on South America, Africa, and Asia.

I have tried to keep my own views separate so that authors would not feel they needed to focus on my personal interests to be published. Nevertheless, I have made some contributions with edited books and selected articles. I am currently working on a book called *Environmental Ethics and the Culture War*.

With regard to this special issue, readers might enjoy taking a look at chapter two of my book *Foundations of Environmental Ethics*, where I discuss the beginnings of settler colonialism by the Germanic occupation of northern Europe in Roman times through freehold farmsteading pushing Celts and Romans aside, which then was reenacted in North America centuries later as homesteading through illegal occupation and preemption acts at first, culminating in the Homestead Act of 1862.

I have enjoyed my years as editor, and I hope that readers will continue to support the journal in the years to come and that it will continue to play its important role in the future in environmental philosophy and in the protection of nature.