

EDITORIAL PREFACE

In the last few decades, environmental concerns have come to infuse governmental, academic and corporate priorities. Many new journals have been published, aiming to enhance awareness and inspire dialogue. Why, then, mount yet another environmental journal – particularly one dealing with philosophical matters?

For many environmental activists and practitioners, the field of philosophy is the paramount “academic” discipline, mired in abstract theory and intelligible only to a select, academic audience. Philosophers themselves have not been particularly successful in repudiating this assumption. While environmental philosophy has been a recognized discipline for decades, in most cases, the publications in this field have fostered dialogue only among philosophers, for philosophers.

Environmental Philosophy aims to accomplish something different. First, our hope is to open up the dialogue between philosophers and a broad range of interdisciplinary thinkers and practitioners. Robert Frodeman’s seminal piece entitled “Environmental Philosophy and the Shaping of Public Policy” sets the stage for a rethinking of the meaning of philosophy as a narrowly-defined discipline, arguing instead for a significant role in the development of environmental policy. In an age of scientific uncertainty, decisions are often based upon judgment calls. Philosophy is poised to explore the foundations of such judgment calls and to consider how they can best be justified in implementing sound environmental decision making.

Like Frodeman, David Seamon takes philosophy into new territories – this time, into the question of how architectural spaces can be designed in a more holistic manner. Both of these thinkers recognize the need to engage philosophical questions in an interdisciplinary forum and to find ways of expressing philosophical ideas in a language that reaches beyond the academic and is not exclusive to a small, select audience.

At the same time, *Environmental Philosophy* is more than just an “applied philosophy” journal. As we address interdisciplinary issues, there is a need to think deeply about underlying assumptions, about ontological foundations of current attitudes and worldviews, and to grapple with contested visions of the future. Kenneth Maly asks us to give serious and concerted attention to questions that are often taken for granted in a world defined by busy-ness. A major philosophical approach underlying many of the papers presented is phenomenological in nature: emphasizing the need to address questions of the *Lebenswelt* (the “lived world,”) and to reveal the experience of nature and its unfolding, prior to definition by paradigm, Bruce Foltz and Bruce Martin engage in profound, philosophical reflection to illumine some of the deeper meanings of spirit and the holy in human experience. Scott Cameron similarly grapples with the environmental insights of a phenomenological thinker as he works closely through a textual analysis of Martin Heidegger’s *magnum opus*, *Being and Time*.

The Editors recognize that “environmental” questions invoke more than deliberations about the meaning of wilderness areas but also necessarily include issues relating to the *built* environment as well. Seamon’s piece builds on this recognition, as does Robert Chapman’s work, where he aims to break down the philosophical barriers that exist between “culture,” on the one hand, and “wilderness” on the other.

We also include superior undergraduate submissions in the journal. We are pleased to present a poem, written by University of Toronto undergraduate Mary Edwards, prepared as

part of a group project in a third year course in “Issues in Environmental Ethics.” Frequently, undergraduate essays are of a calibre deserving international recognition. We invite submissions for consideration in this unique category.

We also welcome book reviews and entries for our Report on Books. *Environmental Philosophy* builds on a former publication of the International Association for Environmental Philosophy, entitled *Call to Earth*, and we have found that members welcomed a regular update on publications of related interest.

Each piece in this collection aims, in some sense, to rethink the traditional limits of philosophy, to engage new questions in meaningful ways and, ultimately, to help us to actively engage in policy development and sustainable action. In the next volume, we are delighted to be able to present an interview with the renowned Arne Naess, together with some papers on Deep Ecology and its relation to environmental philosophy. In all cases, our aim is to challenge traditional assumptions, provoke new ways of thinking and take an active part in building a more sustainable world.

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