Aldo Leopold- Ecocentrism Essay, Research Paper

Environmental Ethics

1) Leopold strongly suggests the need for land ethic because he sees a great lack for it. Humans see land as an economical resource. Land is used for our needs and enjoyment with the belief that we are the ruler and conqueror of the land. Humans feel superior to the land and all that live on it and therefore lack the sense of being a part of land. To have land ethic is to become a part of the land not a disconnected from it. When we separate ourselves from the land, we forget our obligation to take care of it. We use, abuse, and take land for granted. We are the ultimate consumers of land. Leopold suggests that adopting land ethic will change the human role of conqueror to a plain member citizen. I strongly agree with this point. Like everything else in nature, humans tend to think that anything that is incapable of speaking for itself is there for our use. We have all grown to be consumers. Not many of us think about how much of our resources are extracted and depleted from land everyday. We need to incorporate land ethic into education so that future generations can start thinking differently. If we don?t start thinking differently, we are going to lose a lot of our precious land.

2) The community concept that Leopold refers to derives from the human-nature relationship. As humans, we think of ourselves as superior beings to the environment. We treat the environment in a way that it suits us. We fail to take into consideration that we are a part of the environment, not the master of it. The lack of this realization is the cause of most of the harm that we inflict on the earth. It is because we are so disconnected from the rest of the environment that we do not feel as though we are harming the earth. It is the day that man feels one with the environment he starts treating it as his own, with love and respect.

3) Leopold calls ?Ecological Conscience,? he speaks of the humans process this issue. So far, many land conservation efforts have been underway, but it is a hard concept to advocate and educate people about. Leopold explains, ? it defines no right or wrong, no obligation, calls for no sacrifice, implies no change in the current philosophy of values.? Leopold points out that there is a lack of initiative in society to actually take the responsibility to take care of the land. Education is also a big factor of the problem. How much and what kind of conservation education is needed is uncertain. And even the education does not guarantee action. Self-interest and profit takes priority over conservation and preservation. In a world as advanced as ours, it is almost too late to start to take such precautions. Problems with land abuse have a deeper root that starts with society, starts with our children. There is no meaning to conservation preaching if it starts too late.

4) The land pyramid as Leopold describes it is the ?biotic pyramid.? Leopold sketches the pyramid as a ?successive layer of species that depend on each other for food and services.? Humans, known as carnivores, are at the top of the pyramid. There is a balanced relationship (ideally) between the species where each successive layer decreases in numerical abundance. From this formula we would gather that the pyramid is self-sustained and balanced. However, with the growth of human population and the demand for more and more resources, the ecological balance of the pyramid is thrown off and reversed. People are flourishing while land is disappearing. That means the number of species in the lower part of the pyramid is shrinking. The question is, will this balance be able to handle this sort of change? The sort of change where land is eroded away by constant use and species are forced to extinction. I personally don?t think that this fragile balance can handle such a change. This all ties back into land ethic. If we don?t adopt it now, we are going to destroy one of the most amazing natural systems that man has ever had the privilege of being a part of.

5) Adopting land ethic is a wonderful thing if it is adopted for the right reason. Leopold states that the using land ethic for economic purposes is the wrong reason. Do not use land ethic because it will help you prosper, use it because you have the moral obligation and you care. We need to justify the reasons behind our actions and economy is not a suitable justification.