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Peer reviewed

Review: Moran and Political Reasoning in Environmental Practice

By Andrew Light and Avner De-Shalit (Eds.)

Reviewed by [Ryder W. Miller](#)
San Francisco, USA

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Andrew Light and Avner De-Shalit (Eds.) *Moral and Political Reasoning In Environmental Practice*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003. 357 pp. ISBN 0-262-62164-9 (trade paper). US\$27.95

The editors of this book, Andrew Light of New York University and Avner de-Shalit of Hebrew University, have assembled a dozen articles that challenge environmental assumptions and question environmental perspectives. They assert: "Our point, though, is that environmental philosophers should jump into these controversies, rather than standing on the sidelines discussing the metaphysical status of the restored forest preserve" (p. 18).

The arguments are powerful and commanding, and they do not always fall in line with the concerns of environmental activists. The authors categorize environmental concern as "intuition;" they are not very concerned with the advent of biotechnology; they view domestication as a problem on a par with hunting; they question indigenous people's property rights; and they question the need to restore the damaged environment. The assembled authors show how environmental philosophers can play a role in resolving environmental problems, but they do so in a way that asserts humanity's place in the natural world. Some of the entries challenge entrenched environmental positions and strategy.

But the book provides some useful tools to combat environmental problems. In the chapter titled "Constitutional Environmental Rights: A Case for Political Analysis" Tim Hayward explores the goal of establishing a constitutional environmental right as a means of pursuing environmental protection. William B. Griffith's chapter, "Trusteeship: A Practical Option for Realizing Our Obligations to Future Generations?", explores the concept of generational trusteeship of the natural environment. Finn Arler seeks to refine the definition of sustainability in his chapter, "Ecological Utilization Space: Operationalizing Sustainability." Alan Holland and John O'Neill explore the framing of ecological history in their article "Yew Trees, Butterflies, Rotting Boots and Washing lines: The Importance of Narrative."

The philosophers assembled go to great lengths to define terms and explore values and assumptions. They find problems with the bio-centric approach to environmental problems, and provide more human-centered remedies. The work challenges assumptions, is thought provoking, and raises the

intellectual level of the debate.

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