

What we discussed in class:

- Historical Background II
 - John Stuart Mill, "Nature"
 - Does nature have any value in and of itself?
 - What puts the greatest part of value upon land?
 - Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*
 - Does nature have any value in and of itself?
 - What puts the greatest part of value upon land?

What we will discuss next class:

- Conservation Philosophies (Monday, 1:30pm)
 - John Muir, Selected Readings
 - What is the Hetch Hetchy, and why does Muir want to protect it?
 - Is Muir a mystic in regard to nature?
 - Gifford Pinchot – *The Fight for Conservation*, excerpted
 - How does Pinchot's conception of the first duty of the human race differ from John Muir's conception of the human relation to nature?
 - What does conservation mean to Pinchot?

Take Roll

- practice names

Review: Historical Background I

The Modern Understanding of Land and Animals

- Francis Bacon
 - Anthropocentric conception
 - Philosophical fields
 - epistemology – the study of knowledge
 - "knowledge is power"
- John Locke, "On Property"
 - Kinds of valuing
 - intrinsic
 - instrument
 - resource conception of nature
 - Labor theory of value
- René Descartes
 - Philosophical field
 - Metaphysics – theory of reality (being – what it is to be something)
 - Metaphysical dualism
 - substances: thinking thing / extended thing
 - Mechanical theory of physical world
 - Beast-machine theory

Historical Background II

Competing Conceptions of Nature

- Mill
 - natural thing vs. artifact
 - critique of conception of nature as moral example
- Pope Francis
 - creation

John Stuart Mill (1806-1873, British)

Important Writings

- *On Liberty* (1859)
- *Utilitarianism* (1861)
- "The Subjection of Women" (1869)

"On Nature" (1874)

- In *Nature, The Utility of Religion, and Theism*. Watts & Co. (1874)
 - published posthumously
 - three essays on religion
- an exemplary philosophical analysis (of the definition) – Platonic method
 - what does it mean when we say nature or that something is natural
 - Nature, what is
 - (1) "a collective name for all facts, actual and possible: or (to speak more accurately) a name for the mode, partly known to us and partly unknown, in which all things take place" (388)
 - the nature of a thing
 - *ensemble* or aggregate of its powers or properties; its entire capacity of exhibiting phenomena (387)
 - that is to say, the laws of a thing's nature
 - nature in the abstract sense
 - "the sum of all phenomena, together with the causes that produce them" (388)
 - that is to say, the general laws of nature
 - (2) Nature, not art
 - Art = the product of human agency
 - natural ≠ artificial
 - (3) Nature, what ought to be (ethical use of the term)
 - Nature – a moral norm (example) to be followed or rule of action to be obeyed
 - *Naturam sequi* – a rule of prudence, meaning "follow nature"
 - Examples
 - authority of natural law over positive law

- goodness of act (or a thought or a feeling) in that it accords with nature
 - do what feels right
 - opposite: unnatural = immoral
- technically, not a third (3) sense of the term
 - "if they lay down as a rule for what ought to be, a word which in its proper signification denotes what is, they do so because they have a notion, either clearly or confusedly, that what is, constitutes the rule and standard of what ought to be" (390-91).
- Aim of essay
 - "to inquire into the truth of the doctrines which make Nature a test of right or wrong, good or evil" (391)
 - Montesquieu's confusion
 - Laws of nature
 - material world has its laws
 - animals have their laws
 - Civil Law
- Argument
 - "When it is asserted, or implied, that Nature, or the laws of Nature, should be conformed to, is the Nature which is meant, Nature in the first sense of the term, meaning all which is—the powers and properties of all things?"
 - Nature¹
 - superfluous and unmeaning;
 - no need to recommend to obey to nature, for nothing cannot disobey to the laws of nature
 - rational rule of conduct
 - know the laws of nature
 - "the first principle of all rational action" (392)
 - the rational precept "Naturam observare" ("observe nature")
 - Bacon's maxim: we can obey nature in such a manner as to obey her"
 - "nature is only to be commanded by obeying her" –Bacon
 - a rational rule of prudence ≠ ethical principle
 - Nature²
 - absurd and self-contradictory
 - Naturam sequi
 - (P) "the very aim and object of action is to alter and improve Nature"

- "If the artificial is not better than the natural, to what end are all the arts of life?" (393)
 - (~P) The nature of naturam sequi is good in the exemplary sense
 - "they are God's work, and as such perfect" (394)
 - "nearly all the things which men are hanged or imprisoned for doing to one another, are nature's every day performances" (396).
- Therefore, "the course of nature cannot be a proper model for us to imitate" (397)

(break)

Pope Francis – Laudato Sí – "On Care for Our Common Home"

- Pope Francis, the 266th and current Pope of the Roman Catholic Church
- Laudato Sí – "Be praised"
 - "Translated in English either as "Be Praised" or "Praised Be," the title is a quotation from a popular prayer of St. Francis of Assisi praising God for the creation of the different creatures and aspects of the Earth."¹
 - Originally Published June 18th, 2015
 - Encyclical – Letter by the Pope or Holy Father of the Roman Catholic Church to all Bishops

Note:

No longer "historical," since this is the current Pope. But this Encyclical of Papal Letter is important background for current debates about the environment. This letter is arguably the most significant document to have been published by any organization on the environment this millennium.

Laudato Sí – On Care for Our Common Home

- Subtitle: a direct reference to 1987 United Nations Brundtland Commission Report (BCR), "Our Common Home"
 - BCR defined sustainable development and detailed steps necessary to reorient the world's market economies to a sustainable development model
 - "Sustainable development is development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"
 - need = the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given
 - Explicit coupling

¹ <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/eco-catholic/vatican-confirms-title-environmental-encyclical-laudato-si>

- Social justice
- Economic prosperity
- Environmental stewardship
- **Encyclical:** "The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change." (4)
 - "when we speak of "sustainable use", consideration must always be given to each ecosystem's regenerative ability in its different areas and aspects" (44)

Basic Themes of the Letter

- St. Francis as "example par excellence"
 - care for the vulnerable
 - an integral ecology
 - as opposed to a superficial ecology
 - Cf. deep vs. shallow ecology
 - "We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental" (41).
- Natural world and all its inhabitants
 - God's creation
 - sister Earth
 - duty to care
 - Non-anthropocentric conception of human place in cosmos
 - "The ultimate purpose of other creatures is not to be found in us. Rather, all creatures are moving forward with us and through us towards a common point of arrival, which is God, in that transcendent fullness where the risen Christ embraces and illumines all things. Human beings, endowed with intelligence and love, and drawn by the fullness of Christ, are called to lead all creatures back to their Creator" (24-25).
 - non-biocentric
 - human being created in the image of God
 - Critique of modern (misguided) anthropocentrism
 - "technological mind sees nature as an insensate order, as a cold body of facts, as a mere 'given', as an object of utility" (34)
 - utility = merely instrumental value
 - "man sets himself up in place of God" (35)
 - Nature as abode for renewal of human spirit
- Sustainable development
 - threat of the techno-economic paradigm
 - "an undifferentiated and one-dimensional paradigm" (31)
 - "Nobody is suggesting a return to the Stone Age, but we do need to slow down and look at reality in a different way, to appropriate

the positive and sustainable progress which has been made, but also to recover the values and the great goals swept away by our unrestrained delusions of grandeur" (34)

- globalization
- challenge of rapidification
- throwaway culture
 - "The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth." (7)
- global environmental degradation
- GMO (genetically modified organisms)
 - threat to ecosystems
 - threat to farmer autonomy
- quality of life
 - challenge of social fragmentation
 - inequity
 - degrading poverty
 - an economy which
- favors productive diversity and business creativity
 - economy of scale
 - indigenous, small scale food production systems
- justice between generations
- Common goods
 - climate
 - climate change
 - sources of fresh potable water
 - biodiversity
 - 7th great extinction
 - "the natural environment"
- Concept of an ecological conversion
 - St. Francis as model
 - spiritual relation to nature, God's creation