## Framework

I affirm.

The value is **morality**, as “should” implies that the resolution is a normative question.

Violating an individual’s freedom disrespects individuality, which morality must uphold.

Warren **Quinn 89** explains[[1]](#footnote-1)

Whether we are speaking of ownership or more fundamental forms of possession, something is, morally speaking, his only if his say over what may be done to it (and thereby to him) can override the greater needs of others. **A person is constituted by** his **body and mind.** They are parts or aspects of him. **For that** very **reason, it is fitting that he have primary say over what may be done to them**-not because such an arrangement best promotes overall human welfare, but **because any arrangement that denied him that say would be a grave indignity.** In giving him this authority, morality recognizes his existence as an individual with ends of his own—an independent being. Since that is what he is, he deserves this recognition. **Were morality** to withhold it, were it **to allow us to kill or injure him whenever that would be collectively best, it would picture him not as a being in his own right but** as **a cell in the collective whole.** This last point can be illustrated not by thinking of bodies or minds but of lives. The moral sense in which your mind or body is yours seems to be the same as that in which your life is yours. And if your life is yours then there must be decisions concerning it that are yours to make-decisions protected by negative rights. One such matter is the choice of work or vocation. We think there is something morally amiss when people are forced to be farmers or flute players just because the balance of social needs tips in that direction. Barring great emergencies, we think **people's lives must be theirs to lead**. Not because that makes things go best in some independent sense but **because the alternative seems to obliterate them as individuals. This obliteration**, and not social inefficiency, is one of the things that **strikes us as appalling in totalitarian social projects for example, in the Great Cultural Revolution.** None of this, of course, denies the legitimate force of positive rights. They too are essential to the status we want as persons who matter, and they must be satisfied when it is morally possible to do so. But negative rights, for the reasons I have been giving, define the terms of moral possibility. Their precedence is essential to the moral fact of our lives, minds, and bodies really being ours.

Thus the standard is creating a system of equal freedom.

There are 2 additional warrants.

1. Kant’s categorical imperative states that an action must be universally willed, meaning that it must be possible for all rational agents to will it as an end.

This aspect of the categorical imperative is essential for mutual recognition of the agency of others. **Farr 2** writes[[2]](#footnote-2)

**One** of the most popular **criticism**s **of Kant’s moral philosophy is that it is too formalistic.**13 That is, the universal nature of the categorical imperative leaves it devoid of content. Such a principle is useless since moral decisions are made by concrete individuals in a concrete, historical, and social situation. This type of criticism lies behind Lewis Gordon’s rejection of any attempt to ground an antiracist position on Kantian principles. The rejection of universal principles for the sake of emphasizing the historical embeddedness of the human agent is widespread in recent philosophy and social theory. I will argue here on Kantian grounds that **although a distinction between the universal and the concrete is** a **valid** distinction, **the unity of the two is required for** an understanding of human **agency.** The attack on Kantian formalism began with Hegel’s criticism of the Kantian philosophy.14 The list of contemporary theorists who follow Hegel’s line of criticism is far too long to deal with in the scope of this paper. Although these theorists may approach the problem of Kantian formalism from a variety of angles, the spirit of their criticism is basically the same: The universality of the categorical imperative is an abstraction from one’s empirical conditions. **Kant is** often **accused of making the moral agent an abstract, empty**, noumenal **subject. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Kantian subject is** an **embodied**, empirical, concrete subject. However, this concrete subject has a dual nature. Kant claims in the Critique of Pure Reason as well as in the Grounding that human beings have an intelligible and empirical character.15 It is impossible to understand and do justice to Kant’s moral theory without taking seriously the relation between these two characters. The very concept of morality is impossible without the tension between the two. By “empirical character” Kant simply means that we have a sensual nature. We are physical creatures with physical drives or desires. **The** very **fact that I cannot simply satisfy my desires without considering the rightness** or wrongness **of my actions suggests that my empirical character must be held in check** by something, or else I behave like a Freudian id. My empiri- cal character must be held in check **by my intelligible character**, which is the legislative activity of practical reason. It is through our intelligible character that **we formulate principles that keep our** empirical **impulses in check.** The categorical imperative is the supreme principle of morality that is constructed by the moral agent in his/her moment of self-transcendence. What I have called self-transcendence may be best explained in the following passage by Onora O’Neill: In restricting our maxims to those that meet the test of the categorical imperative we refuse to base our lives on maxims that necessarily make our own case an exception. The reason why a universilizability criterion is morally signiﬁcant is that it makes our own case no special exception (G, IV, 404). In accepting the Categorical Imperative we accept the moral reality of other selves, and hence the possibility (not, note, the reality) of a moral community. **The Formula of Universal Law enjoins no more than that we act only on maxims that are open to others also.**16 O’Neill’s description of the universalizability criterion includes the notion of self-transcendence that I am working to explicate here to the extent that like self-transcendence, universalizable moral principles require that the individ- ual think beyond his or her own particular desires. **The individual is not allowed to exclude others as** rational **moral agents** who have the right to act as he acts in a given situation. For example, if I decide to use another person merely as a means for my own end I must recognize the other person’s right to do the same to me. I cannot consistently will that I use another as a means only and will that I not be used in the same manner by another. **Hence,** the **universalizability** criterion **is a principle of consistency and** a principle of **inclusion.** That is, in choosing my maxims **I** attempt to **include the perspective of other moral agents.**

The categorical imperative also states that one must not treat a human being as a means to someone else’s ends. Embracing this aspect of the categorical imperative is necessary to challenge racism. **Farr 2** continues[[3]](#footnote-3)

Whereas most criticisms are aimed at the formulation of universal law and the formula of autonomy, our analysis here will focus on the formula of an end in itself and the formula of the kingdom of ends, since we have already addressed the problem of universality. The latter will be discussed ﬁrst. At issue here is what Kant means by “kingdom of ends.” Kant writes: “By ‘kingdom’ I understand a systematic union of different rational beings through common laws.”32 The above passage indicates that Kant recognizes different, perhaps different kinds, of rational beings; however, the problem for most critics of Kant lies in the assumption that Kant suggests that the “kingdom of ends” requires that we abstract from personal differences and content of private ends. **The Kantian conception of rational beings requires** such an **abstraction. Some** feminists and **philosophers of race** have **found** this **abstract** notion of **rational beings problematic because** they take it to mean that **rationality is** necessarily **white, male, and European.**33 Hence, the systematic union of rational beings can mean only the systematic union of white, European males. **I ﬁnd this interpretation** of Kant’s moral theory quite **puzzling.** Surely another interpretation is available. That is, the implication that in Kant’s philosophy, rationality can only apply to white, European males does not seem to be the only alternative. The problem seems to lie in the requirement of abstraction. There are two ways of looking at the abstraction requirement that I think are faithful to Kant’s text and that overcome the criticisms of this requirement. **First,** the **abstraction** requirement **may be best understood as a demand for intersubjectivity** or recognition. **Second, it may be understood as an attempt to avoid ethical egoism** in determining maxims for our actions. It is unfortunate that Kant never worked out a theory of intersubjectivity, as did his successors Fichte and Hegel. However, this is not to say that there is not in Kant’s philosophy a tacit theory of intersubjectivity or recognition. The **abstraction** requirement simply **demands that in the midst of our concrete differences we recognize ourselves in the other and the other in ourselves.** That is, we recognize in others the humanity that we have in common. Recognition of our common humanity is at the same time recognition of rationality in the other. We recognize in the other the capacity for selfdetermination and the capacity to legislate for a kingdom of ends. This brings us to the second interpretation of the abstraction requirement. **To avoid** ethical **egoism one must abstract from** (think beyond) one’s own **personal interest** and subjective maxims. That is, the categorical imperative requires that I recognize that I am a member of the realm of rational beings. Hence, I organize my maxims in consideration of other rational beings. Under such a principle other people cannot be treated merely as a means for my end but must be treated as ends in themselves. **The merit of the categorical imperative for a philosophy of race is that it contravenes racist ideology** to the extent **that** racist ideology **is based on the use of persons** of a different race **as a means to an end** rather than as ends in themselves. Embedded in the formulation of an end in itself and the formula of the kingdom of ends is the recognition of the common hope for humanity. That is, maxims ought to be chosen on the basis of an ideal, a hope for the amelioration of humanity. This ideal or ethical commonwealth (as Kant calls it in the Religion) is the kingdom of ends.34 Although the merits of Kant’s moral theory may be recognizable at this point, we are still in a bit of a bind. It still seems problematic that the moral theory of a racist is essentially an antiracist theory. Further, what shall we do with Henry Louis Gates’s suggestion that we use the Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime to deconstruct the Grounding? What I have tried to suggest is that instead of abandoning the categorical imperative we should attempt to deepen our understanding of it and its place in Kant’s critical philosophy. A deeper reading of the Grounding and Kant’s philosophy in general may produce the deconstruction35 suggested by Gates. However, a text is not necessarily deconstructed by reading it against another. Texts often deconstruct themselves if read properly. To be sure, the best way to understand a text is to read it in context. Hence, if the Grounding is read within the context of the critical philosophy, the tools for a deconstruction of the text are provided by its context and the tensions within the text. Gates is right to suggest that the Grounding must be deconstructed. However, this deconstruction requires much more than reading the Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime against the Grounding. It requires a complete engagement with the critical philosophy. Such an engagement discloses some of Kant’s very signiﬁcant claims about humanity and the practical role of reason. With this disclosure, deconstruction of the Grounding can begin. What **deconstruction will reveal** is not necessarily the inconsistency of Kant’s moral philosophy or the racist or sexist nature of the categorical imperative, but rather, it will disclose the **disunity between Kant’s theory and his own feelings** about blacks and women. **Although** the theory is consistent and emancipatory and should apply to all persons, **Kant** the man **has his own** personal and moral **problems**. Although Kant’s attitude toward people of African descent was deplorable, **it would be equally deplorable to reject the categorical imperative without ﬁrst exploring its emancipatory potential.**

2. Human Worth.

It follows from practical reason that rational beings have inherent value.

Christine **Korsgaard 96** writes[[4]](#footnote-4)

This is just a fancy new model of an argument that first appeared in a much simpler form, Kant’s argument for his Formula of Humanity. The form of relativism with which Kant began was the most elementary one we encounter - the relativity of value to human desires and interests. He started from the fact that when we make a choice we must regard its object as good. His point is the one I have been making - that being human we must endorse our impulses before we can act on them. Kant asked **what** it is that **makes** these **objects good**, and, rejecting one form of realism, he decided that the goodness wa**[i]s not in the objects themselves. Were it not for our desires** and inclinations, **we would not find** their **objects good.** Kant saw that **we take things to be important because they are important to us** - and he concluded that **we must therefore take ourselves to be important.** In this way, the value of humanity itself is implicit in every human choice. Ifnormative skepticism is to be avoided - **if there is any such thing as a reason for action** - **then humanity as the source of all reasons** andvalues **must be valued for its own sake.**

Only a system of equal freedom respects the right of human beings to set their own purposes.

**Ripstein 9** writes[[5]](#footnote-5)

The same right to be your own master within **a system of equal freedom** also **generates** what Kant calls **a**n “internal **duty**” **of rightful honor, which “consists in asserting one’s worth as a human being in relation to others**, a duty expressed by the saying do not make yourself into a mere means for others but be at the same time an end for them.”14 Kant says that this duty can be “explained. as obligation from the right of humanity in our own person.” Kant’s characterization of this as an “internal duty” may seem out of place, given his earlier characterization of the Universal Principle of Right in terms of restrictions on each person’s conduct in light of the freedom of others. But the duty of rightful honor is also relational: it is a duty because it is a limit on the exercise of a person’s freedom that is imposed by the Universal Principle of Right. Just as the rights of others restrict your freedom, so that you cannot acquire a right to anything by acting in ways inconsistent with the innate right of another person, so, too, **the humanity in your own person restricts the ways in which you can exercise your freedom** by entering into arrangements with others. **Your innate right prevents you from being bound by others more than you can in turn bind them;** your duty of **rightful honor prevents you from making yourself bound by others** in those ways. Rightful honor does not warn you away from some juridical possibility that would somehow be demeaning or unworthy. You do not wrong yourself if you enter into a binding arrangement inconsistent with the humanity in your own person. Instead, your duty of rightful honor says that no such arrangement can be binding, so no other person could be entitled to enforce a claim of right against you that presupposes that you have acted contrary to rightful honor. Rightful honor does not demand that you behave selfishly, or refrain from helping another person with some particular project, or make another person’s ends your own. To do any of these things is just to adopt some particular purpose, and so is an exercise of your freedom. In later chapters, we will see that **rightful honor prevents you from giving up your capacity to set your own purposes**, and so prevents others from asserting claims of right that assume that you did. In private right your rightful honor prevents you from entering into an enforceable contract of slavery, even if you were to believe the arrangement to be to your advantage. In public right, it prevents officials from making arrangements on your behalf that are inconsistent with your innate right. **Rightful honor** also **provides the link from private right to public right by imposing a duty on each to leave the state of nature,** which Kant characterizes as a condition **in which everyone is subject to the choice of others.**

Reason must be embraced as the starting point.

**Hill and Boxill 1** writes[[6]](#footnote-6)

It may seem that this is mistaken, because there are cases where knowing what is in conformity with duty requires more sophisticated intellectual argumentation than is available to ‘common human reason’. This may or may not be true. In any case, the objection now under consideration maintains that Kant’s remark is mistaken for a different and perhaps more fundamental reason. It can allow that, suitably qualiﬁed, Kant’s remark is right that ‘common human reason’ can always know what is in conformity with duty. The qualiﬁcation is that to be able to know what is in conformity with duty common human reason must always have the morally relevant facts vividly before it. But, so the objection goes, emotions, passions, and attitudes often make it extremely difﬁcult if not impossible for common human rea-son to have the morally relevant facts vividly before it. As Aristotle reminds us, the emotions, passions, and attitudes focus our attention on certain facts and distract our attention from other facts. The conﬁdent person tends to overlook facts that a fearful person notices; and an angry person tends to overlook facts that a happy person notices. In other words, **emotions**, passions, **and attitudes** tend to make certain facts vivid, and to make others obscure. Indeed they **often make morally irrelevant facts vivid, and** morally **relevant facts obscure.** But if common human reason must have the morally relevant facts vividly before it to know what is in conformity with duty, the emotions, passions, and attitudes can make it very difﬁcult for common human reason to know what is in conformity with duty. We can see this in a case that Kant himself constructs: according to him, a person cannot will that his maxim not to assist others in need be made a law of nature because many cases could occur in which he would need the assistance of others. But this argument depends on the possibility of such cases being sufficiently vivid to the person in question, and we know that they will not be if he is very proud and self-confident. Generally, if the maxims we can will to be universal laws depend on the factual beliefs we have vividly before us, and the maxims we can will to be universal laws determine what we think is right, our emotions, passions, and attitudes can determine what we think is right. The problem is that if our emotions and passions can make morally irrelevant facts vivid, and morally relevant facts obscure, they can mislead us into thinking that what is right is wrong, and that what is wrong is right. If this is correct, conﬁdent, complacent, **well-positioned white people will not only ﬁnd it difficult to do what they know to be right; they will ﬁnd it** still **more difﬁcult to know what is right, even when they sincerely** claim that they are **try**ing to do so. Indeed, such sincere people are likely to be particularly dangerous for, feeling their own sincerity, they will be unlikely to believe that they can be mistaken. We do not think that **Kant** was altogether unaware of this problem, for he **frequently warned of the dangers of self-deception.** His mistake seems to have been to suppose we can always overcome our self-deceptions, and bring the morally relevant facts vividly before us, by a sufficiently strenuous rational self-examination. Still, **the solution** to this difficulty **is not to abandon** reliance on **reason.** On the contrary, **we can only solve this** difficulty **if we rely even more on reason.** It was **reason** that **led us to appreciate that** the **emotions**, passions, and attitudes **can distort** the **results** of reason’s efforts to determine what is right; and it was reason that led us to see that rational self-examination alone may not always enable us to bring all the morally relevant facts vividly before us. Finally, it is reason that will enable us to solve the problem, which in general is to ﬁnd some way to bring the morally relevant facts before common human reason. **The ﬁrst step**, of course, **is to listen to** what **others** are saying. Reason will only lead us to the truth if we listen to what others are saying. But we are not repeating this fact made familiar by every defender of freedom of expression. Listening to others with different viewpoints, different emotions and attitudes, and consequently different blind spots is a beginning, but it is not enough. The conﬁdent and complacent do not listen sympathetically to those they feel to be their inferiors, even when they invite these inferiors to speak. Somehow we must design institutions that will help us to listen to others sympathetically. Morally relevant facts that are obscure to us may be vivid to others, and if we listen to them sympathetically these facts may become vivid to us too. Rousseau believed that **institutions that reduced inequalities** and dependencies would **help us to listen to others sympathetically.** We believe he was right, but that is not the point we want to press now. Our point is that **only by rational reﬂection together with** adequate **understanding of the** social and psychological **roots of racism can we design the institutions that will help us to listen to others sympathetically** and consequently to know what is in conformity with duty.

## Advocacy

I advocate that developing countries accept the Precautionary Principle when environmental protection and resource extraction conflict.

Joel **Tickner et al. 99** defines the Precautionary Principle according to the Wingspread Statement[[7]](#footnote-7)

The first major effort in the United States to bring the precautionary principle to the level of day-to-day environmental and public health decision-making at the state or federal level was a January 1998 conference of activists, scholars, scientists, and lawyers at Wingspread, home of the Johnson Foundation in Racine, Wisconsin. Convened by the Science and Environmental Health Network (SEHN), participants discussed methods to implement the precautionary principle and barriers to that implementation. **The Wingspread definition** of precaution (see Appendix) **has three elements: threats of harm; scientific uncertainty; and preventive, precautionary action. The litmus test for** knowing **when to apply the precautionary principle is the combination of threat of harm and scientific uncertainty.** Some would say the threatened harm must be serious or irreversible, but others point out that this does not allow for the cumulative effects of relatively small insults. **If there is certainty about cause and effect**, as in the case of lead and children's health, **then acting is no longer precautionary**, although it might be preventive. In essence, the precautionary principle provides a rationale for taking action against a practice or substance in the absence of scientific certainty rather than continuing the suspect practice while it is under study, or without study. **Instead of asking what level of harm is acceptable, a precautionary approach asks:** How much contamination can be avoided? **What are the alternatives to this** product or **activity, and are they safer?** Is this activity even necessary? **The precautionary principle focuses on options and solutions rather than risk. It forces the initiator of an activity to address fundamental questions of how to behave in a more environmentally sensitive manner**. The precautionary principle also serves as a "speed bump" to new technology, ensuring that decisions about new activities are made thoughtfully and in the light of potential consequences.

## Contention

The Precautionary Principle challenges environmental racism.

Carolyn **Raffensperger 4** writes[[8]](#footnote-8)

MM: How does the Precautionary Principle connect with another rising ecological principle: environmental justice? Raffensperger: It seems to mesh quite well. California's EPA has adopted the Precautionary Principle along with the idea of assessing cumulative impacts to guide the agency's environmental justice policy. What they're saying is: **people of color have taken the brunt for** all of these **various tech**nologies **and landfills and other things** that have been **sited in their neighborhoods**. Regulators tend to evaluate them all individually and not look at their cumulative impacts, and we need to apply the Precautionary Principle to address those cumulative impacts. We need to begin preventing harm and looking at it systemically rather than with this kind of piecemeal risk assessment. **Environmental justice advocates** have also been quite clear about the burden of proof -- for so long they **have carried not only the burden of toxic chemicals, but** the burden of **having to prove that they have been injured. With the Precautionary Principle saying, that's not your job, it really is industry's responsibility to monitor, test and pay for damage and clean-up, it has codified things they have been saying all along.**

Prioritizing environmental protection treats all people as valuable in themselves and is key to environmental justice for minorities. Troy **Hartley 95** writes[[9]](#footnote-9)

UTILITARIAN DOCTRINE Hedonistic, or narrow, utilitarianism bases moral utility on the principles of greatest happiness. Actions are morally right if they promote happiness (or pleasure) and wrong if they don’t. All things desirable are desirable because there is inherent pleasure in them or they promote pleasure and avoid pain.18 A **conflict can arise between utility and justice when a discriminatory society produces** a **higher** level of **net happiness than a nondiscriminatory society.** It is **this conflict** that **produced an environmental justice movement within** the civil rights, **minority**, **and low-income communities** and challenges the traditional economic analysis of Mill’s utilitarianism. Within mainstream economic principles, the potential compensation criterion assesses the gains to a segment of society relative to the losses to another segment of society. If the gains outweigh the losses, then the action is beneficial to society. **In theory,** the **winners could compensate the losers** and society would still be ahead. **In practice, compensation rarely occurs**.20 Environmental justice rejects an assumption of the potential compensation criterion. The substitutability assumption states that individuals, knowing their preferences, can substitute one set of preferences for others.21 That is, for low-income or minority communities, the preference for economic gains from the siting of polluting industry and jobs in their neighborhoods can be substituted for public health gained from a safer environment. The environmental justice movement and particularly Bullard’s environmental blackmail concept challenges this traditionally held economic principle. Consistent with Taylor’s view that utility and justice are incompatible,22 the environmental blackmail concept questions whether it is just to subject minority or lowincome communities to polluting industries at any level of compensation. One could still argue from a utilitarian viewpoint that jobs in highly polluting industries are often low paying. If the jobs paid more (that is, higher compensation), the community would be willing to put up with the pollution and reduced public health in exchange for greater economic wealth. To assess this presumption, it is helpful to review a siting example from upper New York state. Residents of Yorkshire, a rural, low-income community of 3,850 people in upstate New York (not a predominantly minority community), rejected Browning Ferris Industries’ plan to build a regional landfill for nontoxic wastes. BFI had offered the community an economic development package worth more than $1 million per year. The economic incentive package included the following promises: up to 100 jobs in a town that had been impacted by three recent plant closings; $1.6 million in annual fees to the city, which was enough to cut local taxes by three-quarters for the average family; $100 million in construction expenditures; and $1.15 million in annual grants to promote longterm economic development in Yorkshire (Yorkshire’s annual town budget was only $810,000). During negotiations with the community, BFI offered local officials the authority to determine the source and type of wastes the landfill could accept. Nevertheless, seventy percent of Yorkshire’s registered voters signed a petition opposing the landfill, and the town board voted unanimously to reject BFI’s proposal.23 The potential compensation criterion assumes that a level of compensation (jobs and economic development assistance) can be found that is acceptable to the losers. The Yorkshire example challenges this assumption because an acceptable level of compensation could not be found. Bacow and Milkey came to a similar conclusion while assessing Massachusetts’ efforts to overcome local opposition to hazardous waste facilities.24 They asserted that past compensation experience reveals the social costs of hazardous waste facilities to be uncompensable.25 **The environmental justice movement would probably agree that the level of environmental degradation and reduced** public **health** in minority and low-income communities **is monetarily uncompensable**. Even if a utilitarian accepted an unequal distribution of environmental quality, doing so would not constitute an acceptance of unequal environmental protection under socially acceptable laws. The potential compensation criterion enables economists to justify an unequal distribution of environmental quality. The community with lower quality trades that quality for other preferred goods or is compensated in some other manner.26 However, if socially acceptable rules constrained the economic system, the utilitarian would support the application and enforcement of those rules in an equitable manner.27 For example, economists often site clearly defined and enforced property rights as a mechanism to address environmental problems.28 Utilitarians would not support the inequitable enforcement of property rights, particularly because it could give one party an unfair economic advantage over another. KANTIAN RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS **Under a Kantian view,** to have moral worth an action must be performed as a duty even to the detriment of one’s inclinations.29 Kantian ethics requires that actions not be aimed at any specific ends (for example, one’s own inclination or utilitarian gains). Instead, **moral action** should be based on a principle or a moral rule.30 To be a moral rule, the rule **must be a categorical imperative**. There are three formulations of the categorical imperative: (1) for **a rule** to be a moral law, it **must be** a **universal** law, legislatively valid for everyone; (2) the rule must **treat all human beings as** an **ends** and never merely as a means to an end; **and** (3) **a person must recognize the rule as binding upon him or her**, and thus, the person must act as if he or she is a member of an organized society of ends.31 Kant held that through reason we know the categorical imperative to be true.32 **The environmental justice movement would**, most likely, **view a safe environment for all**, low or high-income and white or minority communities, **as a moral law, satisfying the** three formulations of a **categorical imperative**, and based on reason. The Kantian aspects of the environmental justice movement are best demonstrated through the thoughts of some of its academic and political leaders. **Bullard views environmental concerns as issues of equity and social justice** as well as an issue of public health.33 Bunyan **Bryant and** Paul **Mohai** of the University of Michigan **consider environmental justice in terms of a “safe and clean environment as a basic right for all**, regardless of race or color**.”**34 That is, a safe, clean environment is a fundamental human right, a moral law. **Dorcetta Taylor**, formerly of Yale University and now with the University of Michigan, **has also noted that minorities participate in** the **environmental justice** movement **because it is based on** principles of **fairness and justice with a strong emphasis on civil rights and social justice**.35 The Environmental Justice Transition Group recommended to the Clinton administration’s transition team that an environmental justice model be established that includes “a framework of equal justice and equal protection . . . to ensure every citizen’s right to be free from pollution.”36 This approach need not go beyond an anthropocentric philosophy that views the environment as instrumentally valuable for human health reasons. The Kantian view of environmental justice has allowed the environmental justice movement to challenge the reductionist, utilitarian approach to environmental decision making without embracing more controversial, nonanthropocentric principles.

Environmental protection is an essential starting point for solidarity with people of color. **Cone 7** writes[[10]](#footnote-10)

Until recently, ecological justice has not been a major theme in the liberation movements in the African-American community. "Blacks don't care about the environment" is a typical comment by white ecologists. Racial and economic justice has been at best only a marginal concern in the mainstream environmental movement. "White people care more about the endangered whale and the spotted owl than they do about the survival of young blacks in our nation's cities" is a well-founded belief in the African-American community. Justice fighters for **blacks and** the **defenders of the earth** have tended to ignore each other in their public discourse and practice. Their separation from each other is unfortunate, because they **are fighting the same enemy**—human beings' domination of each other and nature. The **logic that led to slavery and segregation** in the Americas**, colonization and apartheid** in Africa, and the rule of white supremacy throughout the world **is the same** one **that leads to** theexploitation of animals and the **ravaging of nature. It is** a mechanistic and instrumental **logic that defines everything** and everybody **in terms of** their **contribution to** the **development** and defense **of white world supremacy**. People who fight against white racism but fail to connect it to the degradation of the earth are anti-ecological, whether they know it or not. People who struggle against ecological injustice but do not incorporate in it a disciplined and sustained fight against white supremacy are racists, whether they acknowledge it or not. The fight for justice cannot be segregated but must be integrated with the fight for life in all its forms. The **leaders in the mainstream environmental movement are mostly middle- and upper-class whites** who are unprepared culturally and intellectually to dialogue with angry blacks. The leaders in the African-American community are leery of talking about anything with whites that will distract from the menacing reality of racism. What both groups fail to realize is how much they need each other in the struggle for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation. I want to challenge the black freedom movement to take a critical look at itself through the lens of the ecological movement and also challenge the ecological movement to critique itself through a serious and ongoing engagement of racism in American history and culture. Hopefully, **we can** break the silence and **promote genuine solidarity** between the two groups **and thereby enhance** the **quality of life for the whole inhabited earth**—humankind and otherkind.

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