
In this work, Fox attempts to develop an ethical framework that will provide justifications for “public policy, corporate responsibility, social justice and environmental and animal protection, in a diversity of fields including agriculture, veterinary medicine, conservation, biomedical research and biotechnology.” The ethical framework Fox favors appeals to our sentiments of compassion for others, including animals, and of reverence for life. Much of what he says will have broad appeal among environmentalists. Regrettably, he does not layout the principles of such an ethics in a clear and precise way even though he devotes most of the first five chapters of the book to introducing his favored framework and then returns to these matters in chapters nine through fourteen.

To fairly represent the spirit of his thought, I shall cite brief excerpts from the text. He suggests that global bioethics is opposed to a “materialistic and self-centered mode of collective existence” and to “arrogant chauvinism” and suggests that modern society is correctly characterized by both of these conditions. A consequence of this, Fox believes, is that our biosphere is becoming dysfunctional and this in turn will lead to harm to human beings as well. Fox suggests that global bioethics requires an “absolute ethic of reverential respect for life.” He also says that such an ethic “respects the intrinsic value of living beings (and) their... instrumental value.” Fox opposes this ethical perspective to “situational ethics,” by which he seems to mean a relativistic ethics that would imply that violence toward animals and nature is warranted in some circumstances but not in others. In his view, ethics arises out of instincts of self-preservation and empathy, and arriving at a justi-
fied ethical framework involves combining reason and emotion. Clearly, global bioethics, in Fox’s formulation, is also opposed to individualistic versions of consequentialist and deontological ethical theories.

It would be unfair to say that Fox does not argue for the ethic of reverential respect for life. There are hints of arguments. However, he does not attempt to develop careful arguments to support his clearly controversial ethical assumptions or to rebut the arguments of those who have maintained alternative incompatible positions. For example, in a section called “Beyond Morality,” Fox criticizes what he calls “morality based upon rationalism and not upon feeling.” However, he does not mention any moral thinkers who allegedly subscribe to a purely rationalistic ethics; his argument here involves assertions of alleged psychological facts that are not justified by references to scientific papers. The views of some critics of the views he favors, such as John Passmore, Murray Bookchin, Peter Singer, or Tom Regan, are mentioned but are dismissed with virtually no discussion. Fox seems to think that to call such views “anthropocentric” is to make a strong criticism of them. Similarly, he seems to think that noting that there are some theologians who have endorsed views similar to his global bioethics is to give rational grounds for accepting them. In any case, it is a mistake to call views such as those of Singer or Regan anthropocentric. He also suggests that supporters of such views often mistakenly confuse their own feelings with the feelings of animals. While this may be true, it does nothing toward showing that views that imply that only sentient creatures are entitled to moral consideration are mistaken.

In a section called “Ethics and the Recovery of our Humanity,” Fox appears to be saying that to save ourselves we must have a functional biosphere. To achieve a functional biosphere, Fox argues, we must overcome fear, ignorance, arrogance, selfishness, and greed. I believe that this is correct. Indeed, virtually everyone would agree. However, Fox moves from this to the far more controversial claim that saving ourselves requires that we have a “reverential respect for all life.” He is suggesting that

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7 Ibid., pp. 15–18.
8 Of course, he could have referred to Kant’s works on ethics or to the recent philosopher Alan Gewirth who lays out a rationalist ethics in his book *Reason and Morality* (University of Chicago Press, 1978).
10 Ibid., p. 46.
11 See his mention of what he calls “The Empathetic Fallacy,” ibid., p. 48. In general Fox does not present fair or sympathetic versions of the views he criticizes. His criticisms commit various errors and fallacies. Some of these may be found in chapter four.
12 Ibid., p. 23.