**Chapter Summary**

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Chapter 17: Environmental Ethics – Pollution and Resource Use

At the start of Chapter 17, William Baxter recommends optimizing our polluting and resource use, but any attempt to do this will create conflicts. We can treat optimization and its conflicts as economic problems, but this would place those in poverty and other vulnerable populations at a disadvantage. Instead of treating these things as economic issues, then, we do better to add some moral constraints. However, even in doing this, we are faced with a crossroads: should we take an anthropocentric or ecocentric perspective? Baxter’s approach is entirely anthropocentric but adopting a mild ecocentrism has advantages, detailed in the text. It adds a moral incentive to caring for commons; it also may keep us from neglecting some human interests we are not yet aware of. So, the authors ask, how would an ecocentric optimization project deal with climate change? Broadly, they suggest, critical human needs must be addressed first, nations should partner to address climate issues, and human needs ought to take precedence over discretionary wants. High-income nations that benefitted from using the commons, moreover, ought to help those lower-income nations that now are particularly struggling with unpaid externalities. As the climate continues to change more drastically, however, more natural and human interests are being driven together. Ultimately, this growing overlap will drive the recommendations of ecocentrism and anthropocentrism into much closer agreement.