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Attfield, Robin, "Saving Nature, Feeding People and Ethics"

Attfield, Robin. "Saving Nature, Feeding People and Ethics." *Environmental Values* 7, no. 3 (1998): 291–304. doi:10.3197/096327198129341591 .

Holmes Rolston's case for holding that it is sometimes right to let people starve in order to save nature is argued to be inconclusive at best; some alternative responses to population growth are also presented. The very concept of development implies that authentic development, being socially and ecologically sustainable, will seldom conflict with saving nature (sections 1 and 2). While Rolston's argument about excessive capture of net primary product is fallacious, his view should be endorsed about the wrongness of "development" in areas where sustainable development is impossible, but not unqualifiedly endorsed about those areas where it is feasible (section 3). Important as policies promoting sustainable levels of population are, representing population growth as a cancer is misguided, and could engender indifference to suffering (sections 4 and 5). The neo-Malthusian paradigm (which makes population growth the cause of both poverty and environmental degradation) appears to conflict with a considerable body of empirical evidence; the kind of policies needed in Third World countries are ones which enlist people's energies for producing food and preserving nature alike (section 6). (Source: The White Horse Press)

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