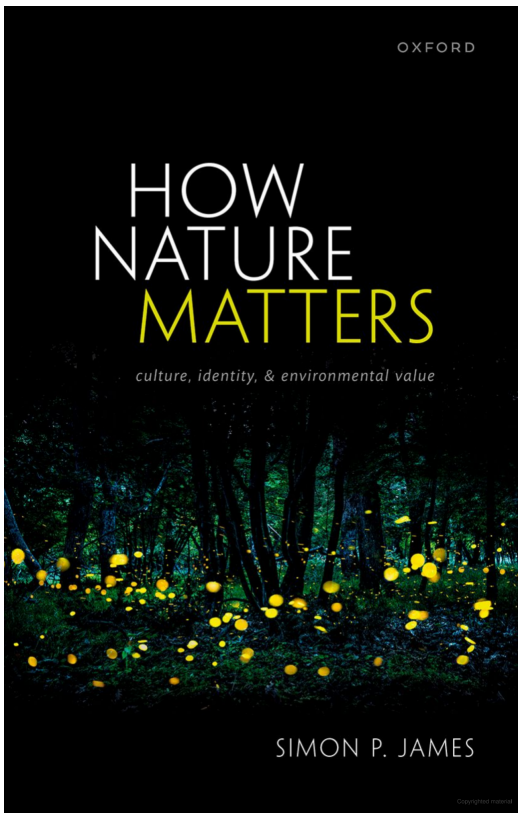
How Nature Matters

Culture, Identity, and Environmental Value

Simon P. James



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[Dedication]

For Emily

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'Cultural Ecosystem Services: A Critical Assessment', *Ethics, Policy & Environment* 18 (3) (2015), 338-50. (Chapters 1 and 2)

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Introduction[1]

Picture a wide brown river flanked by thick tropical forest. Picture tree roots poking through banks of rich red mud, like splayed fingers reaching down into the water. Add some animals—a few macaws in the branches, a caiman drifting downstream. As we'll see later, talk of what is *natural* is often frowned upon; but, for want of a better word, let us stick with it for now. The river, the trees, the macaws—let's call these natural entities.

Do any of those entities matter? Well, yes—even those who deny any interest in environmental issues would admit that some of them matter. Even the most committed anti-environmentalist would admit that some parts of the rainforest matter, if only because they are good for us humans and because *we* matter. And on this point, at least, the antienvironmentalist would be right. The river, the trees, the macaws—such entities really are good for us humans: they really do contribute to our well-being. This is not simply because they can be dammed, felled, or shot for their feathers; for they contribute to our well-being even when they are left untouched. As some people like to say, rainforests supply us with 'ecosystem services' such as flood control, food production, and carbon sequestration.

Not all natural entities are good for us, of course, and those that are good for us might not be good for us all the time. (A river, for instance, might provide fish on Tuesday but none on Wednesday.) Moreover, some natural entities might be good for us in some respects but bad in others. They might have 'disvalue' for us to the extent that they detract from our well-being. (On Thursday, that river might burst its banks and flood one's home.) Furthermore, what value natural entities have does not entirely depend on the contributions they make to human wellbeing. On the contrary, many such entities are valuable for their own sakes. Nonetheless, though I say a little about the topic of disvalue in Chapter 6 and a lot about the topic of intrinsic value in Chapter 9, my main goal in this book is to consider the contributions so-called natural entities make to human well-being. I argue that we must transform how we think about those contributions, if we are to understand how nature matters.

According to what I will call the standard view, nature's contributions to human well-being can be understood in terms of the concepts of *instrumentality* and *causation*. It is assumed that when some natural entity benefits us humans, it has instrumental value for us. It is assumed that the entity is a means that brings about—that is,

[1] *How Nature Matters: Culture, Identity, and Environmental Value.* Simon P. James, Oxford University Press. DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780198871613.003.0001

causes—the valuable end of increasing our well-being. And it is assumed that this instrumental value can be compared with whatever other sorts of instrumental value the entity has for us. This is the assumption underlying the notion of an ecosystem service, for instance. For those who like to think in such terms, nature provides us humans not just with 'material' ecosystem services such as flood protection and carbon sequestration, but with 'cultural' ones, too.[1]

As I will try to show, when people in environmental organizations seek to understand nature's contributions to human well-being, they tend to do so in this way. Whether or not they adopt the ecosystem services approach, they tend to think in terms of causation and instrumentality. However, as I will also try to show, this *means- end model* is severely limited. If we are fully to understand nature's contributions to well-being, we must, I will contend, give up our twin preoccupations with causation and instrumentality and start thinking in terms of meaning and part-whole relations—in terms, that is, of what I will call a *partwhole model*. We must come to see that natural entities can benefit us, not just as causally-efficient means to certain valuable ends, not just as resources and service-providers, but as parts of traditions, narratives, and cultural identities—as parts, that is, of various meaningful and valuable wholes.

In developing my argument, I will consider twelve case studies, concerning, amongst other things, the role of reindeer in Saami culture, the practice of dugong hunting in the Torres Strait, and the religious significance of the site where the Buddha is said to have become enlightened. I will also engage with several policy-focused debates about nature's value, such as the ongoing dispute surrounding the concepts of *relational value* and *nature's contributions to people*. But this book is about more than just ethics and policy. It is also a response to those writers, such as Steven Vogel and Bruno Latour, who argue that environmental thinkers should stop thinking in terms of what is natural and what isn't. So to say this book is about nature isn't merely to say that it is about the sorts of things that concern environmentalists. It is also to say that it is about the need to frame those concerns in terms of the concept of *nature*. In this sense, too, this book is about how nature matters.

*

In this book, then, I present a new account of nature's value for us. But 'nature' and 'value' are slippery terms. So, before I present my argument, some clarifications are in order.

Begin with 'nature'. As just noted, there is a great deal of debate about whether one may justifiably talk about what is natural and what isn't. I engage with these debates in Chapter 8. In this introductory section, however, I will merely indicate, in a very rough and ready way, what I mean to refer to when I use the term.

[1] See, for instance, TEEB (The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity), *Mainstreaming the Economics of Nature: A Synthesis of the Approach, Conclusions and Recommendations of TEEB* (Bonn: UNEP, 2010), p. 34.

Briefly stated, I use the term 'nature' to denote that which environmentalists characteristically seek to protect. There are of course other options. 'Earth', as in 'Friends of the Earth' or 'Earth First!', is one. Yet that term is potentially misleading, since it calls to mind the Planet Earth, and that thousand trillion tonnes of matter hurtling through space is not something that environmentalists characteristically seek to protect. A second option would be to use some phrase drawn from the biological sciences—to write of *biodiversity*, for instance, or of *ecosystems*. However, as I'll argue below, such terms often fail to capture what environmentalists characteristically seek to protect. Take the Trump Administration's 2017 decision to remove grizzly bears from the endangered species list, for example. Not all of those who objected to that decision did so merely because they wanted to maximize biodiversity, for example, or protect certain sorts of ecosystems. Some First Nation objectors, for instance, appealed to the bears' cultural and spiritual significance.[2]

A third option would be to use 'environment'. This word is employed in a wide variety of ways in discussions of environmental issues. It is sometimes used to refer to *the* Environment, a vast collective entity that is supposed to encompass everything from the summits of the world's highest peaks to the lightless depths of its deepest ocean trenches. In other cases it is used to denote the milieu in which some organism or group of organisms lives. In this sense, one can speak of multiple envir- onments—mine, yours, or that of a grizzly bear. Whichever interpretation one adopts, though, environments often seem to contain quite a few things that environmentalists do *not* characteristically seek to protect. Electric lights, for example, are a prominent feature of many human and non-human environments, but there are no environmental campaigns to protect *them*. The scope of the term 'environment' needs to be restricted in some way, and an obvious way to do this is to say that environmentalists characteristically seek to protect *natural* environments— coral reefs, for instance, or old-growth forests, rather than hotel foyers and shopping malls. Using the term 'natural' in this way does not commit one to the dubious notion that naturalness is an on-off concept, such that any particular environment is either 100 per cent natural or not in the slightest bit natural at all. One can consistently suppose that naturalness admits of degrees and that, accordingly, an environment qualifies as natural to the extent that its present state is not the intended result of human actions. This is (roughly) what I suppose in what follows. So, for instance, I am happy to say that the Amazon rainforest is more natural than downtown Tokyo, even though much of its 5.5 million square kilometres has to some extent been shaped by human actions.[3] (That account of naturalness would not, I admit, be endorsed by all. Steven Vogel, for example, argues that to postulate a continuum between what is natural and what is not is to betray one's commitment to an outmoded dualistic metaphysics.[4] I engage with Vogel's argument, and various

[2] See, for instance, *The Grizzly: A Treaty of Cooperation, Cultural Revitalization and Restoration* (https://www.piikaninationtreaty.com/the-treaty).

[3] See further, Charles Mann, '1491', *The Atlantic Monthly* (March, 2000): 41-53.

[4] See Vogel, *Thinking Like a Mall: Environmental Philosophy After the End of Nature* (Cambridge,

other expressions of nature-scepticism, in Chapter 8. I ask readers who have these sorts of concerns to set them aside until then.)

The phrase 'natural environments' does not quite capture what environmentalists characteristically seek to protect, however. It is true that environmentalists often take the protection of certain environments as their main goal; but there are exceptions. Reconsider those grizzlies. They are the sorts of things that environmentalists characteristically seek to protect. But although any particular bear provides an environment for various parasites and symbiotic microorganisms, those people who seek to protect grizzly bears do not usually see themselves as seeking to protect certain shambling, furry, and tick-harbouring environments. Their primary concern is to protect something that does not qualify as an environment: the individual subjects-of-lives we call bears, perhaps, or the species to which those individuals belong. Granted, to protect bears outside of zoos one must protect the environments to which they are adapted; however, the goal of protecting those environments does not replace that of protecting the bears.

In many cases, then, environmentalists seek to protect things other than environments. For this reason, I say that this book is about natural *entities*, rather than just natural *environments*. And I use 'entities' in a broad way to denote not just organisms and things, but also systems, processes, and events.[5] So when I say that this book is about nature, I mean that it is about certain sorts of organisms (such as grizzly bears), certain sorts of inanimate things (such as mountains), certain sorts of processes (such as the water cycle) and certain sorts of events (such as the spring thaw).

So much, then, for 'nature'. What do I mean by nature's *value* for us? Like 'nature', 'value' has many different meanings. Used as a verb, it can

To say that nature has value *for us* is, I take it, to say that it has value because it contributes to a certain valuable end—namely, human wellbeing. So to say that some natural entity has value for certain humans is, I will suppose, to say that the entity increases those humans' well-being (or at least prevents its decrease). In making these stipulations, I do not mean to deny that there are significant differences between people of different genders, ethnicities, and so forth. On the contrary, the arguments I set out below presuppose that humanity is in various important respects diverse. Nor, in focusing on nature's value for us, do I mean to suggest that each and every natural entity, landslides and coronaviruses included, has value for us. Such entities can freeze

MA: MIT Press, 2015), p. 24.

[5] E. J. Lowe, for one, adopts such a broad reading of 'entity'. In his view, '[a]nything that does or could exist is, it would seem, uncontroversially describable as an "entity" of some sort'. Clearly, organisms, things, systems, and processes count as entities on this reading of 'entity'. Lowe suggests that events count, too. (*A Survey of Metaphysics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 15 and 216.) mean to regard as good (as in 'I value your support'). More narrowly, it can connote measurement and, in many cases, pricing (as in 'I have taken Grandmother's ring to be valued'). Used as a noun, it can mean one's basic moral commitments (as in 'Capitalists and communists have different values'). It can also mean the goodness of something (as in 'Biodiversity is of immense value'). In this book, I will be primarily concerned with value in the last of these senses.

us, burn us, hunt us, infest our homes, and infect our bodies—they can have disvalue for us to the extent that they detract from our well-being. This does not mean that the model I will present is limited, though. For, if it works, my model applies not just to those cases when nature has value for us but also to those when it has disvalue for us. Either way, I shall argue, we need to think not just in terms of causation and means-end relations, but also in terms of meanings and part-whole relations.

Value for us is, therefore, defined in terms of the concept of human well-being. And I will take well-being, for its part, to be synonymous with quality of life. To say that someone has high well-being is, I will suppose, to say that they are flourishing or living well, that their quality of life is high.

There is a great deal of disagreement amongst philosophers about what is involved in living well.[6] Some hold that it is simply a matter of feeling good or of getting what one wants. Others contend that more is involved. After all, they point out, some people who both feel good and seem to have got what they want have sub-optimal well-being. Picture a heroin addict, needle in arm, sinking back into warm oblivion.

There is also the difficult question of how living *well* might be related to living *morally*. Can the former be achieved without the latter? Could someone given to lying or stealing achieve full well-being? It depends what one means by well-being. If one means being content and having enough resources and power to get what one wants, then, sure, some manifestly immoral people seem to have achieved very high levels of well-being. But if one can't live well without living morally, if a good life must be a *morally* good life, then such individuals, for all their contentment, resources, and power, do not qualify as having achieved full wellbeing. That, certainly, would have been the Buddha's verdict. In his view, someone who lacks moral virtues such as compassion cannot be living as well as they might. Aristotle, working about one hundred years later and about three thousand miles to the west, would have agreed with the general point. By the lights of his ethics, only those who have developed moral virtues such as justice can achieve full well-being.

These are deep and difficult issues, of course; but I won't say more about them right now. I will leave that for later chapters. For it is high time that I explained how my argument will proceed.

*

The book is structured as follows. In Part 1, I introduce the standard - 'means-end' - model of nature's value for us, according to which natural entities have instrumental or 'service' value for us on account of their causal powers, and argue that it is in certain respects deficient. In particular, I suggest, this model tends to come up short when it is applied to cases when nature contributes to our well-being by virtue of the religious, political, historical, personal, or mythic meanings it bears. To make sense

[6] See further, Guy Fletcher, *The Philosophy of Well- being: An Introduction* (Abingdon: Routledge,

of these sorts of cases, ones, that is, in which nature has *cultural* value, a new model of nature's value is needed, one that registers the fact that natural entities can have value for us, not just as causally efficacious means to certain ends, but as parts of certain meaningful wholes. I present such a model in Part 2. In Part 3, I consider that model's implications for debates about concepts of naturalness, the intrinsic value of natural entities, and environmental policy and practice. Along the way, I examine the following case studies:

(i) *Mayotte* (Chapter 1)
(ii) *Navajo relocation* (Chapter 3)
(iii) *Saami reindeer herding* (Chapter 3)
(iv) *The great forest sell- off* (Chapter 3)
(v) *The Mahabodhi tree* (Chapter 4)
(vi) *The Great Lisbon Earthquake* (Chapter 6)
(vii) *Cornflowers* (Chapter 6)
(viii) *Dark skies* (Chapter 6)
(ix) *Eating whales* (Chapter 6)
(x) *Dugong hunting* (Chapter 9)
(xi) *Jumbo Valley* (Chapter 10)
(xii) *Bauxite mining at Wane Kreek* (Chapter 10)

Here is a detailed chapter-by-chapter outline.

Part 1: Means and Ends

Chapter 1: Instrumentality and Causation

It is typically assumed that if some natural entity has value for us, then it must be of *instrumental* value to certain humans on account of its *causal* relations to them.

This *means- end model* provides a good account of many cases in which natural entities have value for humans. For instance, when a tree supplies Siobhan with shade from the fierce midday sun, then it is of instrumental value for her on account of its causal relations to her. More generally, when nature provides us with supporting, provisioning, or regulating ecosystem services, the means-end model gives a good account of the value the relevant service-providers have for us. The connections between the ecosystem services approach and nature conservation are explored in *Mayotte*, the first of the book's case studies.

Chapter 2: Cultural Ecosystem Services

The means-end model is often applied to cases in which nature has cultural value because of its political, religious, mythic, personal, or historical meanings. Those who presuppose this model typically use the concept of a *cultural ecosystem service* to try to make sense of such cases. They suppose that when natural entities have cultural value, they supply us with cultural ecosystem services.

Some object to this practice on the ground that 'ecosystems' is rarely an appropriate name for the provider of the relevant cultural service. Some object to attempts to price

2016).

such services. Both those criticisms have some force, though neither provides a decisive reason to reject attempts to conceive of cultural value in terms of the provision of ecosystem services.

Chapter 3: Limitations of the Standard Model

The main problem with attempts to conceive of nature's cultural value in terms of service-provision is as follows. To think in terms of serviceprovision is to presuppose that when nature has cultural value, it serves as a causally-efficient means to certain ends.

Such suggestions fail to capture the intimacy of the relations between people and the natural entities they value. (As metaphysicians say, they imply, wrongly, that those relations must be external rather than internal.) Take the cultural value of reindeer for the Saami people of northern Europe. One of the reasons reindeer are of value for the Saami is because they are integral to that people's cultural identity. This is not to suggest that reindeer have a certain sort of instrumental value for the Saami, for that suggestion would imply, implausibly, that the reindeer could be replaced, without loss of value, by some alternative service provider. Nor is it to suggest that there are two distinct entities, the Saami on the one hand and the reindeer on the other, and a causal relation tying them together. On the contrary, one cannot describe who the Saami as a people are without referring to the fact that they are *reindeer* herders. To comprehend the value reindeer have for the Saami, one cannot restrict oneself to thinking in terms of causality and instrumental value. One must move beyond the means-end model.

Part 2: Parts and Wholes

Chapter 4: The Meanings of Things

Nature is shot through with meaning. The sweeping dunes of a desert can symbolize God's ontological simplicity and lofty indifference.[7] Buddleia, the 'butterfly bush', can serve as a wonderfully non-indigenous emblem of wildness for post-Brexit Britain.[8] The bamboo's hollow core can allude to what Buddhists regard as the essenceless nature of all things.[9] In this sense of 'meaning', all manner of natural entities, from hedgerows to the changing of the seasons, can be said to have meaning.

Meaning typically depends on context. A word has whatever meaning it has in the context of the sentence in which it occurs; a musical phrase acquires its meaning from its place in a particular musical piece; a particular sacred grove owes its meaning to some wider constellation of religious beliefs and practices—and so forth. In short: when x has meaning, it typically has meaning in relation to some whole, y.

Chapter 5: Constitution

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[7] See Belden Lane, *The Solace of Fierce Landscapes: Exploring Desert and Mountain Spirituality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[8] See Mark Cocker, *A Tiger in the Sand: Selected Writings on Nature* (London: John Cape, 2006), pp. 113-14.

[9] See Miaohui, quoted in B. Grant (ed.), *Daughters of Emptiness: Poems of Chinese Buddhist Nuns* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2003), p. 122. contributes to their well-being, then, by the lights of the part-whole model, the reindeer have constitutive value for the Saami.

In many cases, value tracks meaning. In particular, when some natural entity has value for us on account of its meaning, and that meaning depends on some context, y, then the entity's value for us will typically depend on y. More precisely, the entity will be of *constitutive* value—of value, that is, because it is *part of*, rather than a *means to*, y.

This *part-whole model* of value sheds light on the three cases presented in Chapter 3 (namely, *Navajo relocation*, *Saami reindeer herding*, and the *Great forest sell- off*) as well as the fourth case, *The Mahabodhi tree*, which was presented in Chapter 4. In each of those four cases, some natural entity has value because it contributes (though not of course intentionally) to some meaningful whole which, in turn, qualifies as valuable by virtue of its links with human well-being. Take the example of the Saami's reindeer. The reindeer play an important role in the Saami's cultural identity. If, as seems likely, their having that identity

This conception of constitutive value is then compared with three other kinds of value—namely, (1) value for us, (2) value all things considered, and (3) aesthetic value.

Chapter 6: Value and Disvalue

Many natural entities have cultural value, but some have cultural *dis- value*. An entity acquires this kind of disvalue when it undermines a meaningful and valuable whole, as when an earthquake destabilises one's religious faith. But entities can also acquire cultural disvalue by contributing to wholes that are meaningful but *dis*valuable, as when— for example—a particular flower is adopted as an emblem of an evil political cause. In cases of the latter sort, the whole will count as disvalu- able, even though it is valued by devotees of the relevant cause. And those entities that contribute to that disvaluable whole will thereby acquire cultural disvalue. If, by contrast, a meaningful whole is not morally bad but merely based on false beliefs, it might nonetheless qualify as valuable and, accordingly, natural entities might acquire constitutive value because of the roles they play in it. The same may be said of traditions and other meaningful wholes that have recently been invented. They, too, might qualify as valuable, and natural entities might therefore have constitutive value because of the roles they play in them. These issues are explored by means of four further case studies: *The Great Lisbon Earthquake*, *Cornflowers*, *Dark skies*, and *Eating whales*.

Chapter 7: Deep Ecology, Essentialism, Narrative, and Relational Value

In some respects, the part-whole model resembles certain other accounts of environmental value. In particular, the claim that natural entities can have constitutive value as parts of certain meaningful and valuable wholes may call to mind the following claims and approaches: (a) the deep ecological proposal that natural entities have value as parts of what Arne Naess once called one's 'comprehensive Self';[10] (b) the 'essentialist' claim, defended by writers such as William J. Fitzpatrick, that nature can have constitutive value because certain kinds of engagement with it are essential com-

[10] 'Ecosophy T: Deep Versus Shallow Ecology', in L. P. Pojman (ed.), *Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application, 3rd ed.* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2001), pp. 150-7, at p. 151.

ponents of human well-being; (c) the narrative-based account set out in John O'Neill, Alan Holland, and Andrew Light's jointly-authored book *Environmental Values*; and (d) the view, chiefly associated with the work of the Intergovernmental SciencePolicy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, that in many cases natural entities have, not just intrinsic and instrumental value, but also *relational value*. Comparing the part-whole model with these accounts not only situates it within the field of environmental philosophy as a whole; it also illuminates some of its key features.

Part 3: Wider Issues

Chapter 8: Why *Nature*?

The preceding arguments might be used to support the conclusion that not just some natural entities but also some *non*-natural ones have constitutive value for people on account of the meanings they bear. NotreDame Cathedral, for instance, seems to have constitutive value for many Parisians just as Uluru ('Ayer's Rock') has constitutive value for some indigenous Australians. What is more, even when a certain natural entity has constitutive value, it is a further question whether it has such value precisely because it is (or is taken to be) natural. Reconsider the Saami's reindeer. Even if they qualify as being in some sense natural, it is a further question whether they are of value to the Saami *because* they are (or are taken to be) natural in that sense.

Do any entities have constitutive value precisely because they are (or are taken to be) natural? It depends what one means by 'natural'. In the present context, that word may be taken to mean something like *largely unshaped by human intentional actions*.

That concept of naturalness has not made sense to all people in all times. Be that as it may, the fact remains that many people in modern Western societies do distinguish between what is natural and what is human in this way. For some of them, moreover, natural entities are of constitutive value precisely because they seem to be natural. One such case is presented in Robert Pogue Harrison's *Forests: The Shadow of*

ii 'Valuing Nature Non-Instrumentally, *Journal of Value Inquiry 38* (2004): 315-32. *Civilization*. If Harrison is correct, then wild nature has constitutive value for us precisely because it evokes a radically non-human—and, in this sense, natural—realm.

Chapter 9: Beyond Value for Us

Previous chapters will have focused on nature's value for us—that is, the value it has by virtue of the contributions it makes to human well-being. Readers towards the dark green pole of the environmental spectrum may dismiss this focus on human well-being as unacceptably anthropocentric. But to highlight nature's constitutive value for us is not to deny that it can have other kinds of value. And in fact there are reasons to think that some natural entities have constitutive value because of the meanings they have for certain non-human animals. Besides, whether or not meaning-apprehension is a distinctively human capacity, some such entities certainly can have instrumental value for animals, as berries have value for bears or aspen twigs value for beavers. In addition to this, there are reasons to think that some natural entities are valuable for their own sakes, and not simply for the sake of other things, such as those human or

non-human beings to whose well-being they contribute. There are reasons, that is, to think that some natural entities have intrinsic value.

The relations between nature's intrinsic values and its constitutive values are explored by means of a tenth case study, *Dugong hunting*.

Chapter 10: Constitution and Rights

The fact that some natural entity, x, has constitutive value does not entail that x ought, all things considered, to be protected. Nonetheless, in some cases such entities ought to be protected for precisely this reason. The point may be made in terms of *rights*. More precisely, when x has high constitutive value for Person A, the normative reasons for action that derive from its having that value may be appropriately expressed in the language of rights. One can say that x should be protected out of respect for A's rights. In the book's eleventh case study, *Jumbo Valley*, the relevant right is a right to religious freedom. In its twelfth and final one, *Bauxite mining at Wane Kreek*, it is a certain kind of property right.

Part 1: Means and Ends

1. Instrumentality and Causation[(2)]

Those who seek to protect nature are sometimes portrayed as misanthropes and enemies of economic growth, the sorts of people who would happily sacrifice jobs to protect owls. But that portrayal is usually very inaccurate. Certainly, the arguments marshalled by conservation biologists, ecological economists, and environmental policymakers often rest on appeals to *human* interests. The focus is often fixed on what I have called nature's value for us—the value it has by virtue of its contributions to our well-being. Moreover, that value tends to be conceived of in *economic* terms. When it is deemed to have value for us, nature is typically conceptualized as a store of *capital* from which we humans derive certain benefits—not just *goods* such as pelts, medicine, minerals, and timber, but also various *services*.

These services need not derive from the current state of nature: people sometimes speak of the 'evosystem services' that we derive from evolutionary processes.[1] Furthermore, those services that have their source in nature's current states need not derive from its *ecological* properties. We do not derive hydroelectric power, for instance, from riverine *ecosystems*. It's the water's physical but non-ecological properties that are key.[2] In many cases, nonetheless, nature's services derive from its ecological properties.

In recent years, these 'ecosystem services' or 'ecoservices' have attracted a great deal of attention within the environmental sector. The ecosystem services approach (as I shall call it) has been adopted by many influential organizations, including the World Wide Fund for Nature, the US Environmental Protection Agency, the United Nations Environmental Programme, and the powerful US organization The Nature Conservancy. It even has its own high-impact academic journal—*Ecosystem Services*.

Advocates of the ecosystem services approach point out that nature provides us with a range of services which are both of value for us and supplied free of charge.

[1] Daniel P. Faith, Susana Magallon, Andrew P. Hendry et al., 'Evosystem Services: An Evolutionary Perspective on the Links between Biodiversity and Human Well-being', *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability* 2 (2010): 66-74.

[2] On the distinction between geosystem services and ecosystem services, see N. Small, M. Munday, and I. Durrance, 'The Challenge of Valuing Ecosystem Services that Have No Material Benefits', *Global Environmental Change* 44 (2017): 57-67, at p. 59.

[(2)] *How Nature Matters: Culture, Identity, and Environmental Value*. Simon P. James, Oxford University Press. DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780198871613.003.0002

This observation has proved very useful for environmentalists. For to show that a certain natural entity supplies us with valuable services is to provide one reason to leave that entity undisturbed (or, if not entirely undisturbed, then at least in a state that enables it to continue to provide the relevant services). And if those services can be *priced*, then the ecosystem services approach provides an *economic* reason for leaving the entity alone—something useful to have in one's pocket if one is addressing people whose eyes naturally fall to the bottom line.

Consider a farmer who is considering whether to fell the trees of a certain wood for timber. An advocate of the ecosystem services approach would urge her to consider the various services the wood already provides and would continue to provide were it left alone. They could point out that it plays a role in nutrient cycling (a *supporting* service), provides goods such as fruit and nuts (*provisioning* services), regulates carbon and water cycles (*regulating* services), and gives local people a range of non-material benefits, from aesthetic inspiration to spiritual solace (*cultural* services).

To be sure, unless she is unusually public-spirited, the farmer might not be swayed by such arguments. Why, she might ask herself, should I forego the chance to make money for myself and my family so that I can preserve certain ecosystem services for the good of society? In such circumstances, environmental bodies sometimes offer to pay individuals for the ecosystem services that are provided by the entities they own. So, in this case, the government could pay the farmer for leaving the trees unfelled. The farmer, it is true, loses out on the opportunity to profit from the sale of timber; but she receives compensation from the government. And some wider part of society continues to receive the benefit of being provided with water regulation, aesthetic inspiration, and all those other ecosystem services.

That made-up example is, I admit, rather short on detail. To see how exactly the ecosystem services approach can be used to support nature conservation, it may help to examine an actual case. So, to that end, consider the following case study.

Case study 1: Mayotte

Politically, Mayotte is a French *departement,* whose currency is the euro and whose official language is French. Geographically, however, the *departement* lies in the Comoros archipelago, between Mozambique to the west and Madagascar to the east. It consists of one 'big' island (*Grande- Terre*), one smaller one (*Petite- Terre*), and a collection of islets—all enclosed within a barrier reef.

Though home to a remarkable variety of plant and animal species, Mayotte's marine and coastal ecosystems are vulnerable to a variety of threats, including pollution and the proliferation of plastic fishing- related litter.[3] Indeed, they have been 'deteriorating

[3] Thierry Mulochau, Clement Lelabousse, and Mathieu Sere, 'Estimations of Densities of Marine Litter on the Fringing Reefs of Mayotte (France-South Western Indian Ocean) - Impacts on Coral Communities, *Marine Pollution Bulletin* 160 (2020): 1-10.

for several decades'.[4] Between 1989 and 2004, for instance, the coral cover of the barrier reef decreased by 15 per cent and that of the enclosed fringing reefs by 60 per cent.[5]

In a field study conducted during 2014 and 2015, Ewan Tregarot and his colleagues examined four of the ecosystem services provided by the islands' mangroves, coral reefs, and seagrass meadows: (1) protection against coastal erosion, (2) carbon sequestration, (3) coastal water purification, and (4) fish biomass production. They used several methods to assess the monetary value of these ecosystem services. For example, they assessed the value of the coastal protection service by estimating the cost of installing artificial breakwaters to protect coastal areas from tsunamis and cyclonic swells. To assess the value of the carbon sequestration service, they estimated how many tonnes of carbon dioxide the relevant ecosystems sequestered and then multiplied that figure by the stock market value of a ton of carbon dioxide. The combined annual value of the four ecosystem services was, they estimated, 124 million euros. They added, however, that it would have been 162 million euros, had the ecosystems been 'in pristine conditions.'[6]

Unfortunately, the prospects of those ecosystems being restored to anything even approaching pristine conditions are, as things stand, dim. Consider the issue of sewage, for instance. In 2015, Mayotte's sole working water treatment plant could handle the waste produced by just 10,000 of the *departement*'s 270,000 inhabitants. Be that as it may, Tregarot et al.'s study sends a clear message to policymakers: the conservation of Mayotte's marine and coastal ecosystems makes financial sense.

In the case of Mayotte, as in many others, the ecosystem services approach serves environmental causes by providing an economic reason to protect nature. For some, though, it is more than merely useful for environmentalists. For Marion Potschin and Roy Haines-Young, the approach is not merely a challenge to 'conventional wisdoms about conservation and the value of nature', it has 'taken on many of the features of a Kuhnian paradigm'.[7] His Royal Highness, the British Prince of Wales is similarly impressed. In his view, the 'shift towards seeing Nature as the provider as a set of economically vital services, rather than resources that can be used to fuel economic growth', is 'one of the most important conceptual shifts in history'.[8]

These assessments are overblown. The ecosystem services approach has, it is true, helped people to see that environmental concerns are often in line with economic ones. Even so, it remains essentially instrumentalist in the sense that it is focused entirely

[4] Ewan Tregarot, Pierre Failler, and Jean-Philippe Marechal, 'Evaluation of Coastal and Marine Ecosystem Services of Mayotte: Indirect Use Values of Coral Reefs and Associated Ecosystems', *International Journal of Biodiversity Science, Ecosystem Services & Management* 13 (3) (2017): 19-34, at pp. 24, 30.

[5] Tregarot et al., 'Evaluation of Coastal and Marine Ecosystem Services of Mayotte', pp. 30-1.

[6] Tregarot et al., 'Evaluation of Coastal and Marine Ecosystem Services of Mayotte', p. 19.

[7] Marion B. Potschin and Roy H. Haines-Young, 'Ecosystem Services: Exploring a Geographical Perspective, *Progress in Physical Geography*, 35 (2011): 575-94, at p. 575.

[8] Foreword to Tony Juniper, *What Has Nature Ever Done for Us? How Money Really Does Grow on Trees* (London: Profile Books, 2013), pp. x-xi.

on nature's value as a means to the end of human well-being. It is true that one could both endorse the approach and concede that some natural entities are valuable for their own sakes.[9] Yet such non-instrumentalist commitments have no place in the approach itself. By the lights of the ecosystem services approach, a natural entity has value only if it is (or presumably, could be) a means to the end of human well-being. Hence the basic presuppositions of the approach are entirely instrumentalist and anthropocentric, and in this respect entirely unrevolutionary.

That judgement might, I admit, seem unfair. After all, serviceadvocates will point out, the ecosystem services approach is often employed to take account of cases in which nature has 'non-use values'— ones, that is, in which people derive value from nature *without* using it. And this—they will continue—indicates that the approach is *not* essentially instrumentalist.

In addressing this issue, it must first be noted that different researchers divide the category of non-use values in different ways. Some include bequest value, for example; some don't. However, all include *existence value*. In fact, the authors of the influential Millennium Ecosystem Assessment use the phrases 'non-use values' and 'existence values' inter- changeably.[10] In view of this, let's address the charge of unfairness by focusing on the concept of existence value.

According to Lawrence H. Goulder and Donald Kennedy, existence value is 'the satisfaction one enjoys from the pure contemplation of the existence of some entity.'[11] To contemplate x is not, they suppose, to use x. So to say that x has existence value is, in their view, to say that some people get something out of contemplating the fact that x exists even if they neither use x nor intend to do so.

It is common practice to conceive of existence value in terms of the provision of cultural ecosystem services. In fact, existence value is sometimes treated as a 'cultural service'.[12] So the ecosystem services approach can accommodate some non-use values—namely, existence values. Yet it remains instrumentalist to its core. It is true that existence values do not depend on the actual use of a good or service. Nonetheless, they are thought to qualify as values because they are means to the end of human well-being (the spiritual, aesthetic, or cultural satisfaction to which Goulder and Kennedy refer). Suppose, for example, that blue whales have existence value for Maya. She has never

[9] As does Tony Juniper. See his essay, 'We Must Put a Price on Nature if We are Going to Save It', *The Guardian*, 10 August 2012.

[10] Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. *Ecosystems and Human Well-being: A Framework for Assessment* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2005), p. 133.

[11] 'Interpreting and Estimating the Value of Ecosystem Services', in P. Kareiva, H. Tallis, T. H. Ricketts, G. C. Daily, and S. Polasky (eds), *Natural Capital: Theory and Practice of Mapping Ecosystem Services* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 15-33, at p. 16.

[12] See, for instance, Mark L. Plummer, Chris J. Harvey, and Leif E. Anderson, 'The Role of Eelgrass in Marine Community Interactions and Ecosystem Services: Results from EcosystemScale Food Web Models', *Ecosystems* 16 (2) (2013): 237-51, at p. 242. Though I will not argue the point here, it seems to me that to treat values as services is to imply that the relevant values *are* services—and to do this is, it would seem, to make a category error.

seen a blue whale; she has certainly never used one. Still, to say that blue whales have existence value for Maya is to say that the creatures supply her with the satisfaction of knowing that they exist. They are a means to the end of her satisfaction. To think in terms of existence values is therefore to remain within a thoroughly instrumentalist conceptual framework.[13]

To draw these points together, let us return to the example of the wood. It has value for the farmer who sees it as nothing more than potential timber. It has value for those who stand to benefit from the ecosystem services it provides and will continue to provide if left undisturbed. It has existence value for those people who are simply pleased that it exists. Yet in all three cases, the wood is taken to have instrumental value.

The point applies generally. When natural entities are taken to have value for us, they are typically taken to have *instrumental* value for us. Whether they are seen as resources to be plundered or as providers of valuable services, they are taken to have value as means to the end of human well-being. This, I emphasize, is not to say anything about the *amount* of value such entities are taken to have (to see a thing as having merely instrumental value may be to see it as having a great deal of value).[14] It is to identify the *kind* of value they are taken to have.

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The concept of instrumental value is more complex than is generally supposed. Some take 'x has instrumental value' to mean that x has some value because it brings about some valuable end; others take it to mean merely that x brings about some valuable end.[15] To further complicate matters, it has been suggested that to say that x brings about some valuable end is not to say that it has value, for x could be merely a 'nonvaluable means' to something that is valuable.[16]

These are interesting debates; however, they have little bearing on the practical issues this book addresses. I will follow the vast majority of environmental ethicists in adopting a broad—or as R0nnow-Rasmussen would put it, 'weak'—conception of what it means for something to have instrumental value.[17] To say that x has instrumental value is, I will take it, to say that it is a means to one or more valuable ends.[18]

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[13] Chelsea Batavia and Michael Paul Nelson, 'For Goodness Sake! What Is Intrinsic Value and Why Should We Care?', *Biological Conservation* 209 (2017): 366-76, at pp. 371-2.

[14] See Dale Jamieson, 'Values in Nature', in D. Jamieson, *Morality's Progress* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 225-43, at p. 236.

[15] Toni Ronnow-Rasmussen/Instrumental Values: Strong and Weak, *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 5 (2002): 23-43, at pp. 24-6.

[16] Roger Crisp, 'Animal Liberation Is Not an Environmental Ethic: A Response to Dale Jamieson', *Environmental Values* 7 (1998): 476-8, at p. 477.

[17] See Ronnow-Rasmussen, 'Instrumental Values, pp. 24-6.

[18] As Ben Bradley notes, something might be instrumentally good in virtue of causally contributing to the prevention of something bad ('Extrinsic Value', *Philosophical Studies* 91 (1998): 109-26, at p.

What *kind* of relation is supposed to obtain between means and ends? The question makes sense, for, as the following examples show, relations come in various forms:

(1)Acts of the Apostles is one of the books of the New Testament.

(2)'Fierce' has the same meaning as 'ferocious'.

(3) The proposition 'Tom is a tortoise' entails the proposition 'Tom is a tortoise or Tom is a turtle'.

The relation between Acts of the Apostles and the New Testament is that of a part to a whole. The relation between 'fierce' and 'ferocious' is one of synonymy. The relation between the two propositions in (3) is that of logical entailment (which is to say that the laws of logic dictate that if the first proposition is true then the second must also be true). In none of those three cases is the relevant relation causal. Acts of the Apostles neither causes nor is caused by the New Testament; the meaning of 'fierce' neither causes nor is caused by the meaning of 'ferocious'; the first proposition in (3) neither causes nor is caused by the second.

Means and ends, by contrast, are essentially causally related.[19] Suppose, by way of illustration, that I want to remove a screw from a piece of wood. The screw's removal is the end that I wish to bring about. If I use a screwdriver to remove the screw, then the screwdriver is a means to that end. It helps to bring that end about, where this *bringing about* is a matter of causation. When I turn the screwdriver, certain forces get applied to certain points on the head of the screw, causing it to rotate and so lift out of the wood. One could tell a (very boring) causal story about the whole process.

Now, to return to the theme of natural entities, consider the instrumental value of wetlands. One of the reasons wetlands have value for us is because they filter out pollutants and excessive nutrients. They bring about the end of water purification, where, as in the example of the screwdriver, this *bringing about* is a matter of causation. The process by which pollutants and excessive nutrients get filtered out, like that by which a screw gets removed from a piece of wood, takes the form of a causal chain.[20]

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We have seen that when natural entities are taken to have value for certain humans, they are typically taken to have *instrumental* value for them. More fully, they are

110). Accordingly, 'valuable end' here should be taken to refer either to the achievement of something good or to the prevention of something bad.

[19] As G. E. Moore put it, 'Whenever we judge that a thing is "good as a means," we are making a judgment with regard to its causal relations.' (*Principia Ethica, Revised edition*, edited by Thomas Baldwin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 73.) Katie McShane makes a similar observation. '[T]o say that a means is used to achieve an end', she notes, 'implies that the means is somehow causally efficacious in bringing about the end.' ('Why Environmental Ethics Shouldn't Give Up on Intrinsic Value, *Environmental Ethics 29* (1) (2007): 43-61, at p. 51; see also, Ben Bradley, 'Extrinsic Value', *Philosophical Studies* 91 (1998): 109-26.)

[20] Some of those who adopt the ecosystem services approach recognize this. For example, N. Small et al. note that the various relations between 'ecosystem organisation' and 'value' for us humans take the

taken to have instrumental value for those humans on account of their *causal* relations to them. We can express this general point by saying that when they think about nature's value for us, when, that is, they consider the various ways that natural entities contribute to human well-being, ecological economists, conservation biologists, environmental policymakers, and a good many other people tend to presuppose a *means-end* model of that value.

In many cases, this model is appropriate. When, for instance, a tree supplies Siobhan with shade from the fierce midday sun, then it is of instrumental value for her on account of its causal relations to her. More generally, when nature provides us with supporting, provisioning, or regulating services, the means-end model gives a good account of the value the relevant service-providers have for us. In many other cases, however, it comes up short. We will consider some such cases in the next chapter.

2. Cultural Ecosystem Services[(3)]

Sir Charles Dormer, the seventeenth-century wit, said that wood was 'an excrescence of the earth provided by God for the payment of debts'.[21] He was partly right. Not, perhaps, about God's motives, but about the value of trees. They really are of value because they can be cut down and sold. They really do benefit us in manifestly material ways.

When nature supplies us with such benefits, its value for us can be understood in terms of causation and instrumentality. It has value for us because it is a causally efficient means to the end of human well-being. But nature provides us with more than merely material benefits. It inspires poets, novelists, musicians, sculptors, architects, and painters. It symbolizes religious teachings, political ideals—even, sometimes, abstract metaphysical ideas. It embodies myths and legends. It comforts, refreshes, provides solace. It draws our gazes away from our everyday self-centred concerns. It shapes who we take ourselves to be. It shapes who we actually are. Can nature's provision of such non-material or 'cultural' benefits be adequately framed in terms of the means-end model? In this chapter, I argue that in many cases it cannot.

In Chapter 7, I will consider the increasingly popular practice of framing nature's cultural benefits as 'nature's contributions to people'. In this chapter, however, I will continue to focus on the ecosystem services approach, both because it is so influential and because, as we saw in the previous chapter, it so evidently rests on the means-end

form of 'causal links' ('The Challenge of Valuing Ecosystem Services that Have No Material Benefits', p. 58).

[21] Quoted in *The Diary of Samuel Pepys: A Selection*, edited by R. Latham (London: Penguin, 1985), p. 767.

[(3)] *How Nature Matters: Culture, Identity, and Environmental Value.* Simon P. James, Oxford University Press. © Simon P. James 2022. DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780198871613.003.0003

model of nature's value for us. I will argue that the approach typically does a poor job of accounting for those cases when natural entities have cultural value.

Natural entities, then, can have cultural value—but how are to understand 'cultural' here? In discussions of nature's cultural value, the adjective is not typically used to denote high, as opposed to low, culture. It is not typically supposed that nature has cultural value only in relation to fine art, for instance, or classical music. Those who write about nature's cultural value tend to work with a broader reading of 'cultural', taking the word to mean something like 'relating to the habits, traditions, and beliefs of a society'.[22] Accordingly, they might refer to the cultural value of lions for the Maasai or that of Uluru for the Pitjantjatjara people.

Those who adopt the ecosystem services approach conceive of such values in terms of the concept of a *cultural ecosystem service*. They hold that nature provides us with a wide range of such services, pertaining to such matters as cultural diversity, spirituality, knowledge systems, education, inspiration, aesthetics, social relations, sense of place, cultural heritage, recreation, and ecotourism.[23]

Over the last few decades, talk of cultural ecosystem services has become increasingly common in academic disciplines such as conservation biology and ecological economics.[24] Moreover, it has had a significant impact outside academic circles. In the United Kingdom, for instance, discussions of cultural ecosystem services played a key role in the UK National Ecosystem Assessment (UK NEA), which, in turn, had a significant influence on the content of *The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature*, a Government White Paper which had a major impact on pre-Brexit UK environmental policy.[25]

If something provides a service to a person, then it supplies her with some sort of benefit. A cultural service involves the provision of a cultural benefit. It is typically supposed, by those charged with identifying and assessing cultural ecosystem services, that a benefit only counts as 'cultural' if it is 'intangible', 'non-material', or 'subjective', where each of these adjectives is meant to indicate that the relevant benefit can only be understood by using the qualitative approaches employed in disciplines such as history and cultural geography.[26] Since ecosystems often seem to provide benefits that fall into this category, cultural ecosystem services are thought to be extremely common.

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[22] Colin McIntosh (ed.), *Cambridge Essential English Dictionary, 2nd ed.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 90.

[23] Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. *Ecosystems and Human Well-being,* pp. 58-9.

[24] Aleksandra Kosanic and Jan Petzold, 'A Systematic Review of Cultural Ecosystem Services and Human Wellbeing', *Ecosystem Services* 45 (2020): 1-10, at p. 6.

[25] For a detailed study of the effects of national ecosystem assessments on policy formation in the UK, Spain, Portugal, and Japan, see Lucy Wilson, Cristina Secades, Ulf Narloff, et al., 'The Role of National Ecosystem Assessments in Influencing Policy Making', *OECD Environment Working Papers* 60 (2014).

[26] See, for example, Andrew Church, Jacquelin Burgess, Neil Ravenscroft, et al., 'Chapter 16: Cultural Services', in the *Technical Report* of the UK national ecosystem assessment (2011), p. 639; compare Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. *Ecosystems and Human Well- being*, pp. 56, 58.

Consider the ecosystem services a stretch of ocean might provide for a community of lobster fishers. Since the ocean provides the community with lobsters, it is clear that it counts as the supplier of a provisioning ecosystem service. Yet it provides more than this, for lobstering is more than just a means to obtain lobsters, and the lobsters themselves are more than just food for the table. Indeed, in supplying lobsters, the ocean is likely to serve as the focal point for a range of spiritual and aesthetic practices—even for an entire way of life. And, in so doing, it is likely to provide a generous smorgasbord of cultural benefits.[27] As one lobsterwoman puts it, 'Lobstering is not what I do to earn a living. It's who I *am*.'[28]

Cultural services can, therefore, only be provided when certain cultural factors are present. In the case sketched above, lobsters provide a cultural service only because there exist certain cultural practices centred on lobstering. Even so, in this as in other such cases, the services are thought ultimately to flow from something extra-cultural. What exactly might this extra-cultural source be?

In many cases, 'ecosystems' is not the best answer. Consider the following passage from J. A. Baker's book *The Peregrine*:

In the flat fens near the coast I lost my way. Rain drifted softly through the watery green haze of fields. Everywhere there was the sound and smell of water, the feeling of a land withdrawn, remote, deep sunk in silence. To be lost in such a place, however briefly, was a true release from the shackles of the known roads and the blinding walls of towns.[29]

Was Baker the recipient of certain cultural services? Though it seems almost sacrilegious to translate his rich prose into the bland idiom of service-talk, a case could be made for saying that he was. After all, the fen provided him with solace and a sense of place. Perhaps it also supplied him with what the authors of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment call an aesthetic experience.[30] Yet, even if Baker was the beneficiary of certain services, it is not at all clear that the relevant service provider is best described as an *ecosystem*. When Baker looked through the watery green haze, when he heard and smelled the water, he was not perceiving an ecosystem. He was responding to a certain *place*.

It might be objected, at this point, that the fen could be experienced as Baker experienced it only because of the presence of certain unexperienced ecological conditions. For example, it could be argued that if fenland ecosystems did not involve the circulation of sufficient quantities of nutrients, fens would be unable to support so much

[27] Compare K. M. A. Chan, Anne D. Guerry, Patricia Balvanera, et al., 'Where are *Cultural* and *Social* in Ecosystem Services? A Framework for Constructive Engagement', *Bioscience* 62 (2012): 744-56, at p. 745.

[28] Julie Eaton, quoted in Megan Mayhew Bergman, ' "We Have No Market, but Lots of Lobsters": A Maine Lobsterwoman Fights for her Livelihood', *The Guardian*, 23 July 2020.

[29] *The Peregrine* (New York: New York Review Books Classics, 1967), pp. 145-6.

[30] See, for instance, Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. *Ecosystems and Human Well- being: A Framework for Assessment* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2005), p. 40.

plantlife and would not, therefore, be experienced by aesthetically sensitive individuals as attractively green. But once one starts thinking about such chains of dependencies, it is hard to know where to stop. Just as the properties of the fen-as-experienced depend on the existence of fenland ecosystems, so those ecosystems depend for their existence on certain wider conditions (such as the Gulf Stream). And those conditions, in turn, depend on certain extra-planetary factors (such as the energy output of the sun). And maybe, as theists believe, everything ultimately depends on God (who, on this conception, is the ultimate serviceprovider). However, to arrive at that conclusion is to have had several thoughts too many. If the concept of a cultural service is to retain any sense, it is better to stop with the fen—to suppose, in other words, that it is *this* that provides the relevant cultural service.

The same may be said of other sorts of cultural services. When a woman obtains a sense of history from her visit to the valley of the Somme in northern France, where in 1916 one million people were either killed or wounded, insensitive individuals might say that she is the beneficiary of a cultural service. But the service provider is clearly not an ecosystem. Nor is it ecosystems to which we are responding when we find spiritual inspiration on the summits of mountains or solace in secluded woodland glades.[31]

Cultural services are typically supplied by entities that have meaning for people. Ecosystems do not fit the bill: after all, most people do not know what they are. To draw an example from my own life: I am familiar with the wood that borders our village, that couple of square miles of oak, beech, hazel, and holly, bordered on three sides by farmland and on a fourth by a winding river. But I'm not sure what the relevant *ecosystem* is. Does the entire wood comprise one ecosystem or several? Or is the wood part of some larger ecosystem? I really have no idea.

The general point here is that since ecosystems cannot be experienced, they do not typically qualify as the providers of cultural services. The word 'places' is, in many cases, more appropriate. The *flat fens near the coast*—these words introduce Baker's description of a particular place. Similarly, the woman who obtains a sense of history from her visit to the valley of the Somme is responding to a certain *place*. In other instances, people derive cultural services from other sorts of experienceable things, such as animals, plants, mountains, or rivers.

The phrase 'cultural ecosystem services' is therefore misleading, since 'ecosystems' is not always an appropriate name for what is supposed to supply the relevant services. But that does not provide a decisive objection to the practice of using the ecosystem services approach to assess nature's cultural value. For one could continue to think in terms of service-provision but simply drop the reference to ecosystems. One could say, as many do, that one of the reasons nature has value for us is that it supplies us with *cultural services*.

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[31] Thomas Kirchoff, 'Pivotal Cultural Values of Nature Cannot be Integrated into the Ecosystems

Let us grant that those cases when nature has cultural value for us are not best conceptualized in terms of the provision of cultural *ecosystem* services. Can they be adequately conceived of in terms of the provision of cultural services?

Of those writers who argue that they cannot, a good number focus their attention on the practice of *pricing* cultural services. One ought not to conceive of nature's cultural value in terms of service-provision, they contend, because to do so is to imply, wrongly, that it is always legitimate to price the relevant services.

Such objections take various forms.[32] Some argue that cultural services cannot be accurately priced. Some argue that providing people with economic reasons to protect natural entities of cultural value can erode non-economic reasons for doing so—and that this is a regrettable result.[33] Some argue that to attach a price to an entity is to indicate how much money one would need to receive in order to give it up; and this—they maintain—can evince a morally deplorable attitude, 'an expression of potential betrayal', even if a huge sum is named.[34]

These sorts of objections to thinking in terms of cultural services are not obviously decisive, though. For even those who concede that there are good reasons not to price cultural services might think that pricing is, in certain extreme situations, the way to go. Take Christopher Belshaw, for instance. He maintains that although 'we may well be justifiably suspicious of someone who is in the habit of viewing everything in monetary terms', circumstances sometimes demand that a price be attached to something that it seems inappropriate, even sacrilegious, to price.[35] After all, we sometimes need to price human lives; so why not spiritual, aesthetic, and other sorts of cultural services? If naming a price is the only way to stop the bulldozers, then surely one should get naming.

Besides, there may be good reasons to identify and evaluate cultural services, even if—contrary to Belshaw—such services should never be priced. For the more thoughtful advocates of the ecosystem services framework do not insist that all services be priced. Walter V. Reid, for example, maintains that 'although it is possible to calculate the economic values of some ecosystem services, this can't be done for others, including many of the cultural services provided by ecosystems'.[36] Similarly, The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) reports state that in some circumstances it

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Services Framework', *PNAS* 109 (46) (2012): E3146.

[32] For a fuller discussion of them, see my paper 'Cultural Ecosystem Services: A Critical Assessment', *Ethics, Policy & Environment* 18 (3) (2015): 338-50, at pp. 342-3.

[33] See further, Gary W. Luck, Kai M. A. Chan, Uta Eser, et al., 'Ethical Considerations in On-ground Applications of the Ecosystem Services Concept', *Bioscience*, 62 (2012): 1020-9, at p. 1024.

[34] John O'Neill, Alan Holland, and Andrew Light, *Environmental Values* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), p. 84. Compare the following: Yung En Chee, 'An Ecological Perspective on the Valuation of Ecosystem Services', *Biological Conservation* 120 (4) (2004): 549-65, at p. 552; Roger Scruton, *Green Philosophy: How to Think Seriously about the Planet* (London: Atlantic Books, 2012), p. 201.

[35] Christopher Belshaw, *Environmental Philosophy: Reason, Nature and Human Concern* (Teddington: Acumen, 2001), p. 59.

[36] Walter V. Reid, 'Nature: the Many Benefits of Ecosystem Services', *Nature* 443 (2006): 749.

may be 'unnecessary, or even counterproductive' to price cultural or other kinds of ecosystem services if doing so 'is seen as contrary to cultural norms or *fails to reflect a plurality of values*'.[37]

To adopt the ecosystem services approach is not, therefore, to commit oneself to the questionable view that all the cultural benefits we derive from nature can and should be priced. In the next chapter, I challenge the ecosystem services approach on different grounds. That approach is limited, I argue, not because it licenses the wholesale pricing of nature, but because it presupposes, wrongly, that nature's cultural value can always be adequately conceived of in terms of causation and instrumentality.

3. Limitations of the Standard Model[(4)]

In this chapter, I argue that in many cases nature's cultural value cannot be adequately conceptualized in terms of causation and instrumentality. In *many* cases, note. I admit that in *some* cases, nature's cultural value can be adequately conceptualized in such terms. Suppose that Joe likes to escape from the stresses of his day-to-day life by visiting a beechwood near his home. Under the trees, he feels his anxiety melt away. Is the beechwood merely a means to the end of his well-being? It might be. The beechwood calms his mind; but perhaps a trip to a museum or a cathedral would have done just as well.

Admittedly, it sounds strange to say that Joe's beechwood was the provider of a cultural *ecosystem* service, since it is not at all clear that it is his encounter with an ecosystem per se that calms his mind. What calms his mind is, rather, the *place*. Be that as it may, the case of Joe and the wood can plausibly be interpreted in terms of the provision of cultural services. Certainly, the provision of a feeling of calm is the sort of benefit that is conventionally categorized as 'cultural'.[38] And if some other entity, such as a museum, could have provided that benefit, if it could have served as an equally effective means to that end, then the conceptual framework of service-provision seems to be appropriate.

Yet not all cases of nature's cultural value can be adequately conceptualized in terms of causation and instrumentality. Consider the following case study, for instance:

Case study 2: Navajo relocation

In 1962, an area of 1.8 million acres in northeastern Arizona was designated a Joint-Use Area for two First Peoples—the Hopi and the Navajo. The controversial Navajo-Hopi Land Settlement Act of 1974 split the area down the middle. Those who

[37] TEEB, *Mainstreaming the Economics of Nature: A Synthesis of the Approach, Conclusions and Recommendations of TEEB* (Bonn: UNEP, 2010), p. 11, emphasis in original; compare Chan et al., 'Rethinking Ecosystem Services . . .', p. 14.

[38] See Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. *Ecosystems and Human Well-being*, pp. 58-9.

[(4)] *How Nature Matters: Culture, Identity, and Environmental Value.* Simon P. James, Oxford University Press. DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780198871613.003.0004

found themselves on the wrong side of the fence—that is, nearly 100 Hopis and at least 6000 Navajos—were forced by the Bureau of Indian Affairs to relocate. Since there was not enough room on the existing Navajo reservation to accommodate the relocating Navajos, 400,000 acres of 'New Lands' were created, 90 per cent of which lay in an area that had been contaminated in a 1979 accident at a uranium mine run by United Nuclear. The Navajos were outraged, and many refused to leave the Joint-Use Area. In the mid-1990s, an accommodation agreement was drawn up which permitted these Navajos to take out seventy-five- year leases on Hopi-partitioned land. Not all agreed. A couple of dozen 'resisting Navajos' refused either to move or to enter into lease agreements with the Hopis.

This is a vexed debate; and, as one would therefore expect, there is considerable disagreement about its history.[39] Was the partition of the Joint-Use Area merely a response to increasing friction between the Hopi and the Navajo? Or was it, as some allege, a move designed to help secure mineral rights for Peabody Coal, a company which subsequently developed and operated two strip mines on the site?

I will not take a stand on this ongoing dispute here. Instead, I want to consider what value those Navajos who refused to relocate saw in the places where they lived.

One of the most influential and famous resisters was the activist Katherine Smith. She lived on Big Mountain, an upland *mesa* which, in 1974, became part of Hopi-partitioned land. In 1972, two years before that partition, she told Senate investigators that she would never quit her home there. I will 'never leave the land, this sacred place', she said. 'The land is part of me and I will one day be part of the land . . . All that has meaning is here.'[40]

Such feelings remain to this day. Of those Navajos who continue to refuse to relocate, Roman Bitsuie, former Executive Director of the Navajo-Hopi Land Commission, said the following: 'The land is the center of[the Navajos'] orientation in experience and the base of their sense of reality and identity. To separate them from it would cause them to lose contact with all that is sacred and holy to them. To force people to live such a life of meaninglessness is religious persecution and a condemnation to a slow death, for believing in and practicing their religion is living.'[41]

For this chapter's second case study, we move from the heat of the American Southwest to the cold of northern Europe. But in this case, too, we find evidence of a remarkably close human-nature relationship.

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[39] See further, Eric Cheyfitz, 'The Navajo-Hopi Land Dispute: A Brief History', *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies 2* (2) (2000): 248-75.

[40] Quoted in Ward Churchill, *Struggle for the Land: Native North American Resistance to Genocide, Ecocide and Colonization* (San Francisco: City Lights, 2002), p. 151.

[41] Bitsuie, Holy Wind and Natural Law (http://indians.org/welker/dineway.htm). The original quotation contains two typos. I have corrected 'sense of reality and identify' to give 'sense of reality and iden-

Case study 3: Saami reindeer herding

Reindeer are not as important as they once were to the Saami people of northern Europe. Nowadays, only about 10 per cent of their number continue to herd the animals, and they rarely maintain the old practice of following the reindeer migration. Instead, they usually work on specific parts of the reindeers' grazing territories at specific times of year. And when they herd the animals they do so on snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles rather than on foot or on skis.

Nonetheless, reindeer still have much value for the Saami. They continue to provide them with meat, milk, means of transportation, and the raw materials needed to make the traditional items, such as antler-handled knives and fur-lined boots, of which tourists are so fond. Yet, more than this, reindeer continue to have a great deal of cultural value for the Saami; indeed, they seem to qualify as what Sergio Cristancho and Joanne Vining call a 'culturally defined keystone species', one, that is, 'whose existence and symbolic value[is] essential to the stability of a cultural group over time'.[42] As one commentator notes, the practice of reindeer-herding 'remains at the heart of[Saami] culture and is central to their celebrations and traditions'.[43] It is central to Saami languages, for instance. Northern Saami, for its part, has well over 1000 terms for classifying reindeer according to sex, age, appearance, ownership, and character. Their specificity is remarkable. An *alesgahcin* is a small backward-pointing tine on a reindeer antler at the point where the antler bends forward. A *sarat* is a small male reindeer which chases a female reindeer out of the herd in order to mate with her.[44] References to reindeer are essential not only to the language but also to the associated form of life. In Northern Saami, 'herd' is *eallu*; 'life', *eallin*.

Reindeer are also closely linked with the Saami's sense of who, as a people, they are. Although, as the anthropologist Robert Paine observes, they are not all agreed on who they see themselves as being, many Saami continue to see themselves as reindeer herders. Reindeer remain a key component of their 'sense of self'.[45] As one Saami elder put it: 'I have never had any other livelihood than reindeer management . . . I feel that the whole of my identity is bound up with my reindeer district . . . '[46]

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tity', and I have also changed 'live such a life or meaninglessness' to 'live such a life of meaninglessness'.

[42] Sergio Cristancho and Joanne Vining, 'Culturally Defined Keystone Species', *Human Ecology Review* 11 (2) (2004): 153-64, at p. 155.

[43] Nicole Crowder, 'Off the Grid: Preserving the Tradition of Reindeer Herding in Scandinava's Sami Culture', *Washington Post*, 10 February 2015. In fact, just a few centuries ago, the Saami were reindeer *hunters* (Robert Paine, *Herds of the Tundra: A Portrait of Saami Reindeer Pastoralism* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994), p. 13). Nonetheless, many *modern* herders regard reindeer herding as an important part of their identity.

[44] Ole Henrik Magga, 'Diversity in Saami Terminology for Reindeer, Snow, and Ice', *International Social Science Journal* 58 (187) (2006): 25-34, pp. 29 and 31.

[45] *Herds of the Tundra*, pp. 199-200, 113.

[46] Paine, *Herds of the Tundra*, p. 191. A district is 'an administrative unit which includes a specific geographical area and whose main task is to organize reindeer husbandry . . . ' (https://reindeerherding.org/sami-norway).

In many respects, these cases are unlike one another. Even so, each seems to involve some natural entity being of value for certain people because it contributes, by virtue of the meanings it embodies, to their well- being.[47] Each seems to involve some such entity being of what I shall call *cultural value* for certain people. For example, Katherine Smith's wellbeing seemed partly to depend on her continuing to live on Big Mountain—the place she described as the bearer of 'All that has meaning'. The well-being of the Saami reindeer-herders, and probably that of many other Saami too, seems partly to depend on the meanings they find not just in various reindeer-involving practices but in reindeer themselves.

In both of these cases, moreover, it appears that nature benefits people by contributing to their sense of *cultural identity*. This complicates matters. As Dale Jamieson notes:

Whether or not people with a cultural identity are happier or more functional than those without such an identity is a matter for psychological investigation. It would not be an easy investigation to undertake, however, for such murky notions as 'having a cultural identity', 'being functional', and 'being happy' would have to be made operational - that is, we would have to know what counts as evidence for and against each of these attributions.[48]

Jamieson is right to be sceptical. It certainly would be difficult to determine whether or not it is a general truth that people with a sense of cultural identity are better off than those without. Nevertheless, it is clear that *some* people's well-being depends on their retaining their sense of cultural identity. Both Katherine Smith and the Saami elder quoted above seem to fall into this category. Though it may well be hard to identify how exactly their retaining their sense of cultural identity contributes to their well-being, it is plausible that it does so contribute. It is plausible to suppose that it would, all things being equal, be bad for them, were their senses of cultural identity to be eroded, distorted, or destabilized.[49]

So it seems that one of the reasons Big Mountain had value for Katherine Smith was because it played an important role in her sense of cultural identity. Ditto reindeer

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[47] Granted, the reindeer are semi-domesticated. Nonetheless, since their physiology and behaviour are largely not the intended results of human actions, they qualify as natural, according to the account of naturalness sketched in the Introduction. I say much more about the topic of naturalness in Chapter 8.

[48] 'The City Around Us', in D. Jamieson, *Morality's Progress* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 244-81, at p. 270.

[49] I say 'all things being equal' to allow for the possibility that one might intelligibly choose to sacrifice some of one's cultural identity in order to avoid some terrible outcome. (Though extreme, such cases are not merely hypothetical. History shows that indigenous peoples have often been pressured to give up their cultural identities. The enforced assimilation of indigenous peoples in Canada during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries provides one of many examples.) On the various ways people can be harmed when their senses of cutural identity are eroded, distorted, or destabilized, see Will Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community and Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 175-7; also Charles Taylor, 'The Politics of Recognition', in C. Taylor, K. A. Appiah, J. Habermas, et al., *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 25-73.

and their Saami herders. In cases of this kind, it seems, nature has value for certain people because it shapes their senses of who they are.[50]

Granted, one could *try* to express this point in terms of instrumentality and causation. For example, one could adopt the instrumentalist idiom of the ecosystem services approach and say that the two cases illustrate cultural ecosystem services that nature provides. Moreover, one could try to conceive of those instances of service-provision in explicitly causal terms. Certainly, some of those who adopt the ecosystem services approach seem to think that when nature provides us with cultural ecosystem services, it does so by causing certain mental states, such as 'aesthetic experiences' or 'moral satisfaction', to arise in us.[51] '[C]ultural services and non-use values generally', we are told, 'involve the production of *experiences* that are valued without entering markets.'[52]

But these attempts to conceive of nature's value in terms of instrumentality and causation seem forced. Those terms fail to capture the intimacy of the nature-human relations in such cases.

Begin by considering instrumentality. To say that x has instrumental value is, we supposed, to say that it is a means to some valuable end (or ends). In some cases, x might be the only *possible* means to that end, as my continuing to write this book is the only possible means to the end of my eventually writing the thing.[53] In most instances, however, the end in question could be achieved by some other means. This tends to hold true of instrumentally valuable natural entities. If some natural x is a means to some valuable end, it will typically be just one of multiple possible means to that end. Even if none are actually *available*, alternative service providers will typically be *possible*.[54] It follows that if some natural x has value *merely* as a means to some valuable end, x will tend to be *replaceable*. That is to say, it will (all things held equal) typically be the case that x could in principle be replaced with some other entity,

[50] Marion Hourdequin and David B. Wong defend the following, similar claim: 'The nonhuman world may enter into who we are, just as other human beings and communities may enter into who we are. If we, as persons, have value, whatever is bound up with us ought also to have value.' ('A Relational Approach to Environmental Ethics', *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 32 (1) (2005): 19-33, at p. 27.)

[51] On 'aesthetic experiences', see Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, *Ecosystems and Human Well-being: A Framework for Assessment* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2005), p. 8; on 'moral satisfaction, see Berta Martin-Lopez, Irene Iniesta-Arandia, Marina Garda-Llorente, et al., 'Uncovering Ecosystem Service Bundles through Social Preferences', *PLoS ONE* 7(6) (2012): 1-11, at p. 6.

[52] Kai M. A. Chan., Joshua Goldstein, Terre Satterfield, et al., 'Cultural Services and Non-use Values', in P. Kareiva, H. Tallis, T. H. Ricketts, G. C. Daily, and S. Polasky (eds), *Natural Capital:* The implication is that the Navajo people's ancestral lands benefit the Navajos by causing them to experience what Bitsuie calls 'a sense of reality and identity' and that reindeer benefit their Saami herders by causing them to experience a 'sense of self'.

[53] I am grateful to OUP's reviewers, both Allen Thompson and his anonymous co-reviewer, for pointing this out to me (though the book-writing example is my own).

[54] Compare Jane Howarth, 'Neither Use nor Ornament: A Consumer's Guide to Care', in J. Benson, *Environmental Ethics: An Introduction with Readings* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2000), pp. 161-70, at p. 162.

some other means to the relevant end, without incurring a loss of value. For example, the disturbingly instrumentalist claim that sand dunes are merely a means to erosion-prevention indicates (without logically entailing) that that end could be achieved in some other way—by alternative service providers such as groynes, seawalls, or seagrass meadows. It indicates that sand dunes are in the relevant sense replaceable. Conversely, the fact that a certain natural x could *not* (all things held equal) be replaced without loss of value indicates (without logically entailing) that x is *not* of merely instrumental value.

Theory and Practice of Mapping Ecosystem Services (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 206-28, at p. 207. Emphasis in original.

In neither of the cases we considered above do any such replacements seem possible. The shotgun-wielding, fence-wrecking Katherine Smith would certainly not have happily moved to any other place, even one with greener grass and better amenities. For her, no other place would do. More generally, as Bitsuie observes,

Navajo religion is 'site-specific' - that is to say the people have particular places which serve as the foci of religious activity. There are sites, including the whole of Navajo territory, that are significant to the entire Nation, as well as to individual clans (extended families). These are places where: an event in sacred history (such as those mentioned in the creation story) took place; people can communicate with the supernatural to ask for protection or healing; medicinal plants or ceremonial materials can be gathered or places where something supernatural occurred. It is because of the ties to these religiously significant places that these families are unable to move to another location with the same kind of ease as nontraditional people.[55]

The claim that the Navajos value such places because of the services they provide implies replaceability. It implies that those places could be replaced, without loss of value, by any others that provide the same services. For at least some Navajos, however, no such replacements are possible because it is these particular places, with their particular historical identities, that have value for them.[56]

The case of the Saami is slightly different. Saami reindeer-herders may see *individual* reindeer as being of merely instrumental value and hence as replaceable;[57] however, the entity that provides them with the relevant cultural benefit is the *kind* to which those

[55] Bitsuie, Holy Wind and Natural Law.

[56] See further, O'Neill, Holland, and Light, *Environmental Values*, p. 146. See also Robert H. Winthrop's argument that the ecosystem services approach is unable to capture the value of the various plants, such as biscuit root and bitter root, used in First People's religious rituals on the Columbia Plateau in the Northwestern United States. Winthrop found that the roots represented 'environmental goods for which—at least for these Indian communities— there were no acceptable substitutes, monetary or otherwise. The notion of ES[ecosystem services], flowing 'like interest or dividends' from the edible roots of the Columbia Plateau, is simply inadequate to explain the cultural constraints imposed on project mitigation measures or to characterize the complexity of the human/nature relationship at work here' (Winthrop, 'The Strange Case of Cultural Services: Limits of the Ecosystem Services Paradigm', *Ecological Economics* 108 (2004): 208-14, at p. 212).

[57] I am grateful to Steven Vogel for prompting me to consider this point.

individuals belong, and that kind does not seem to be replaceable without loss of value. The Saami would not, I predict, count that nothing had been lost were they forced to swap reindeer herding for, say, trout farming, even if the latter proved more lucrative. For them, as for Smith, there are no alternative service providers. Their relations with nature are closer than talk of service-provision, or any other form of instrumental relation, would suggest.[58]

References to causation are also inadequate. As John Heil observes, causal relations are typically conceived of as external relations—relations, that is, in which 'you could have the relata, just as they are, without their standing in the relation'.[59] Yet neither of the cases we have considered in this chapter can adequately be framed in such terms. Take Smith's claim that the land she inhabited for decades was 'part of' her. It seems that the land shaped, not just her sense of who she was, but who she actually was. It seems, in other words, that Smith would not have been who she in fact was, were it not for her connection to Big Mountain.[60] The case of the Saami's reindeer invites a similar interpretation. It is not as if there are two distinct entities, the Saami on the one hand and the reindeer on the other, and an external relation tying them together. No, one cannot describe who the Saami as a people are without referring to the fact that they are *reindeer* herders. Their cultural identity, and not just their *sense* of it, seems to be bound up with the animals.[61]

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The means-end model cannot, therefore, provide an adequate account of either of the cases sketched above. To comprehend the cultural value of Big Mountain for Katherine Smith, or of reindeer for the Saami—to provide a complete and adequate account of those values, one cannot rely solely on appeals to instrumentality and causation.

What follows? Not very much, one might think. It is one thing to say that some indigenous people find a sort of value in nature that is hard to frame in terms of instrumentality and causation, but it is quite another to suppose that anyone else does. After all, the conclusions I have drawn about nature's value for people such as

[58] Ken Shockley reaches a similar conclusion regarding the value of the American bison for the Crow people ('The Environmental Constituents of Flourishing: Rethinking External Goods and the Ecological Systems that provide them, *Ethics, Policy & Environment* 25(1) (2022): 1-20, at pp. 9-10).

[59] 'Causal Relations', in A. Marmodoro and D. Yates (eds), *The Metaphysics of Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 127-37, at p. 128. True, not everyone conceives of causal relations in this way: Heil, for instance, thinks that they are internal relations. Barbara Muraca tells me that Alfred North Whitehead thought this, too. Still, there is no evidence to suggest that those party to debates about nature's value conceive of causal relations as being anything other than external relations.

[60] Though, interestingly, the reverse does not hold true.

[61] I do not mean to imply that everyone has an accurate sense of who they are. It is clear that some people—such as those suffering from certain schizophrenic delusions—do not. In the cases we are considering, however, the person's sense of who they are is, I will suppose, largely accurate. For instance, I take it that Smith was correct to suppose that her identity had been shaped by the *mesa* on which she had lived and worked for decades.

Katherine Smith will not even apply to all indigenous people. Some such people might be too absorbed in social media and global issues to care much about the natural entities that so impressed their ancestors. In many cases, in fact, the relevant entities will no longer even be accessible. The bison will be long gone, the sacred rivers fenced off. And, more generally, what are we to say of those of us who do not self-identify as indigenous and who, anyway, spend most of our waking lives staring at computer screens? Maybe our ancestors found lots of cultural value in nature—but do we?[62] Do any natural entities have value for us in anything like the way that Big Mountain had value for Smith?

These worries are not groundless. For some people, especially some inhabitants of urban and highly technological environments, natural entities might not have much of the sort of value Big Mountain had for Smith. For them, nature's value might be mostly instrumental in form. However, as the following case study shows, that is far from being the whole story.

Case study 4: The great forest sell-off[63]

On 28 October 2010, the Public Bodies Bill went for its first reading at the British House of Lords. If it had become an Act of Parliament, the bill would have enabled the UK Government to sell off all of England's publicly owned forests. The facts soon got out, sparking a public outcry. Many feared that new, private owners would restrict access to forests or, worse, fell them for timber. Tens of thousands of people wrote in protest to their local Members of Parliament, more than 30] local campaigns sprang into life across the country, and an online petition against the proposed sell-off received over half a million electronic signatures.

On 17 February 2011, Caroline Spelman, MP, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, told Parliament that a mistake had been made and that the clauses about forestry would be removed from the Public Bodies Bill. Exactly one month later, an Independent Panel on Forestry was set up to advise the Government about the future direction of forestry and woodland policy in England. On 19 May 2011, the Panel issued a formal 'call for views', which elicited over 42,000 responses. The Panel's report was published in July 2012, and the Government published its response to it in January 2013. Owen Paterson, MP, Spelman's successor, confirmed that the Government had backed down. 'England's Public Forest Estate', he wrote, 'will remain secured in public ownership.'[64]

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[62] As time has passed, many natural entities have no doubt lost the cultural value they once had. Conversely, though, some will have lost cultural *disvalue*. Take the yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*), for example. This lovely bird once had a certain amount of cultural dis- value in Scotland, Northern Ireland, and the north of England, where it was associated with the Devil and hence persecuted (Stefan Buczacki, *Fauna Britannica* (London: Hamlyn, 2005), p. 380). Nowadays, thankfully, it does not seem to have this cultural disvalue. (I discuss the topic of cultural disvalue in Chapter 6.)

[63] This case study has been adapted from my article 'Protecting Nature for the Sake of Human Beings', *Ratio 29* (2) (2016): 213-27.

[64] Defra, *Government Forestry and Woodlands Policy Statement, Incorporating the Government's*

For our purposes, it is the responses to the Panel's call for views that are significant. Many respondents appealed to the instrumental value of forests: to their role—or perceived role—in mitigating climate change, preserving biodiversity, buoying up the national economy, and so forth. Yet many claimed that forests provided a different sort of benefit. Here is a small sample:

'Forests and woods . . . are part of our cultural heritage'.

'Forests and woods . . . are integral to our inherited beliefs and values . . .[and] part of our nation's identity'.

'England's trees, native woods, plantation forests, wood-pasture and parkland . . . are an essential part of the . . . social well-being of England.'

'In some parts of England, forests and woods are an essential part of local landscape character, giving identity and a sense of place.'

'People are very passionate about our forests in Norfolk and identify very strongly that woodlands are part of our local cultural heritage.'

'Forests and woods . . . are part of our natural and cultural heritage.'

'I feel I am a part of the forest where I live, and the forest is a part of me and it is where I feel at home.'

There are, it is true, many different sorts of claims here. Some respondents appealed to cultural identity, others to social well-being or the feeling of being at home. Some appealed to national identity. Yet many respondents, and all of those just quoted, seemed to feel that some forests are of value for them even though they are not of merely instrumental value for them. In this respect, their views resemble those of Katherine Smith or the Saami reindeer herders. Their beloved woods appear to have value for them in something like the way Big Mountain had value for Smith or reindeer have value for their Saami herders.

Now it could be that such people are rare in post-industrial societies.[65] But even if they are rare, they deserve to have their interests represented in discussions about what should happen to the natural entities they hold dear.[66] It would certainly be unjust to argue that the cultural benefits they derive from those entities may permissibly be ignored or downplayed because they cannot be adequately expressed using the instrumentalist conceptual frameworks that hold sway in environmental circles. Indeed, this would be particularly unjust, since when places are integral to people's lives, they

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Response to the Independent Panel on Forestry's Final Report (2013) (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/221023/pb13871-forestry- policy-statement.pdf).

[65] Though for a contrary view, see Clifford Geertz 'Afterword', in S. Feld and K. H. Basso (eds), *Senses of Place* (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 1996), pp. 259-62, at pp. 260-1.

[66] Granted, it may not be *easy* to represent their interests. Suppose one must decide whether a certain natural entity has constitutive value for the members of a certain community. It may not be obvious who counts as belonging to that community or who deserves to speak on the community's behalf. On these difficulties, see Rachel Nussbaum Wichert and Martha C. Nussbaum, 'Legal Protection for Whales: Capabilities, Entitlements, and Culture', in L. Cordeiro-Rodrigues and L. Mitchell (eds), *Animals, Race, and Multiculturalism* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), pp. 95-120, at pp. 110-11.

are likely to be of very great value for those people (as Big Mountain was to Katherine Smith, for example).

To be sure, others have argued that the ecosystem services approach fails to capture all the ways nature contributes to people's lives. They have contended that it silences 'other - and often marginalized - ways of knowing and valuing', and that it 'closes down possibilities for justice' because it tends to 'marginalise people by denying the recognition of their . . . conceptions of value'.[67] What I would add is that these procedural injustices do not arise simply because the ecosystem services approach encourages the pricing of natural entities. The approach threatens to marginalize people because it rests on the twin pillars of instrumentality and causation. If we restrict ourselves to thinking in such terms—in terms, that is, of the means-end model—we will be unable to do justice to all the various ways that nature has value for people.

[67] The first quotation is from Henrik Ernstson and Sverker Sorlin, 'Ecosystem Services as Technology of Globalization: On Articulating Values in Urban Nature', *Ecological Economics* 86 (2013): 274-84, at p. 274; the second two quotations are from Thomas Sikor, Janet Fisher, Roger Few, et al., 'The Justices and Injustices of Ecosystem Services', in T. Sikor (ed.), *The Justices and Injustices of Ecosystem Services* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), pp. 187-200, at p. 199. Compare Sian Sullivan, 'On "Natural Capital", "Fairy Tales" and Ideology', *Development and Change* 48 (2) (2017): 397-423.

Part 2: Parts and Wholes

4. The Meanings of Things[(5)]

Environmental philosophers typically have a lot to say about what sorts of entities have what sorts of values. However, with the notable exception of those working in the sub-field of environmental hermeneutics, they tend to have much less to say about nature's *meanings*.[1]

In this chapter, I will buck this trend by focusing on nature's meanings. This is not to say that I will try to tease apart the various meanings of the word 'nature'. (I won't do that until Chapter 8.) Nor is it to say that I will try to define what meaning is or—still more ambitiously—offer some original theory of meaning, on a par with those that have been developed by writers such as Paul Horwich and Robert Brandom. Instead, I will focus my attention on some of the many different meanings—political, religious, mythic, and so on—that people find in trees, mountains, and other more or less natural entities. And I will ask what it means to say that such entities have meaning.

To this end, let us consider a fifth case study.

Case study 5: The Mahabodhi tree

The sacred fig (*Ficus religiosa*) is a hardy and characteristically long- lived semi-evergreen tree, native to tropical Asia. The small figs it bears provide food for a wide variety of animals and its broad heart-shaped leaves have prominent 'drip-tips' to allow water to run off. A tall, wide- spreading tree, it serves as the focal point of life in many South Asian villages and as a source of shade along roadsides and in public places. It is widely regarded as a symbol of prosperity, longevity, and happiness.

The tree has religious meanings in Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism. In the *Katha Upanishad,* for instance, it symbolizes' ultimate reality (*Brahman*) and in the *Bhagavad Gita*, the divine Krishna proclaims that 'Among all trees, I am the fig tree.'[2]

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[1] For an introduction to that sub-field, see Martin Drenthen, 'Environmental Hermeneutics', in S. M. Gardiner and A. Thompson (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Environmental Ethics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 162-73.

[2] Respectively, *The Upanishads*, translated by Juan Mascaro (London: Penguin, 1965), Verse II.vi.1 (p. 65); *The Bhagavad Gita*, translated by Bibek Debroy (New Delhi: Penguin, 2005), Chapter 10, 26 (p. 147).

(5) *How Nature Matters: Culture, Identity, and Environmental Value.* Simon P. James, Oxford University Press. Simon P. James 2022. DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780198871613.003.0005

The sacred fig has particularly strong connections with meditative practices. As Albertina Nugteren explains, its distinctive form tends to invite and repay the meditator's attention: 'It is a tree of light and shade, of rustling leaves, of a sun-dappled, quivering, shady reflectiveness which does not draw one into the dark recesses of irretraceable growth, like a *banyan* does; on the contrary, it affords cool, translucid reflectiveness without obscuring one's view, without imposing itself, without enclosing.'[3] These, presumably, were amongst the qualities that recommended it to the historical Buddha, when, prior to his momentous awakening, he chose to meditate under a sacred fig tree. That choice ensured that that kind of tree would have a special meaning in the set of traditions that would come to be known as Buddhism. In fact, centuries before any images of the Buddha appeared, it was the bodhi tree, the 'tree of awakening', that artists depicted in Buddhist temples.[4]

According to Buddhist tradition, descendents of this tree are alive today. The most famous of these is the Mahabodhi tree in the village of Bodh Gaya in the northeastern Indian state of Bihar. Many ancient legends surround this 'symbol and physical reminder of the Buddha's enlightenment'.[5] Were it to die, the scriptures say, the surrounding area would become devoid of plants, 'spread with sand like a silver plate', and even the air above the site would become a no-go zone for living beings.[6] The tree is also said to mark what will be the last plot of land to remain when, at the end of the current eon (*mahakalpa*), the world is destroyed, and the first to appear when it re-emerges. It continues to play an important role in modern Buddhist traditions. Each year, hundreds of thousands of pilgrims visit the tree, many returning with leaves as souvenirs. (One that falls into one's lap without touching the ground is said to be particularly valuable.)[7] When His Holiness Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama, first ordained novices, he did so under its branches.[8] When in 2017 steps were taken to revive the practice of full female ordination in Tibetan Buddhism, the requisite ceremonies were, again, performed beneath the tree.[9]

What does it mean to say that some entity, such as the Mahabodhi tree, has political, mythic, or any other sort of cultural meaning? Not merely that the entity indicates certain backwards- or forwards-looking causal chains (as in, respectively, 'Those yellow spots mean the tree was infected' or 'That crack in its trunk means it will soon fall down'). Nor is it to attribute purpose (as in 'Fig trees are meant to grow tall'). In claims to the effect that some entity has cultural meaning, the word 'meaning' is typically

[3] *Belief, Bounty, and Beauty: Rituals around Sacred Trees in India* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), p. 207.

[4] Mike Shanhan, *Gods, Wasps and Stranglers: The Secret History and Redemptive Future of Fig Trees* (White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2016), p. 37.

[5] Nugteren, *Belief, Bounty, and Beauty*, p. 199.

[6] G. P. Malalasekera, *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names, vol. 1* (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2006), p. 320.

[7] *Nugteren*, *Belief,* Bounty*, and Beauty*, p. 215.

[8] David Geary, *'Rebuilding the Navel of the Earth: Buddhist Pilgrimage and* Transnational Religious Networks', *Modern Asian Studies* 48 (3) (2014): 645-92, at p. 663.

[9] See further, Janet Gyatso, 'Recently, Under the Bodhi Tree', *Tricycle*, Winter 2017.

not being used in any of those ways. Nor do such claims entail that the entity must be *valued* by those for whom it has meaning.[10] For the entity might have meaning for the relevant people because it serves to remind them of some disaster or humiliation—something best forgotten. Even so, the entity in question must *matter*, in either a positively or a negatively valenced way, to them. So from *The Mahabodhi tree* we may reasonably infer that the tree matters to Buddhists.

To say that something has meaning is, moreover, to imply something about the *context* within which it has meaning. Indeed, Thomas E. Hill suggests that '*[e]very* meaning situation includes, and depends upon . . . a context in which the bearer occurs and the determination of the meaning comes to focus'.[11] It is unclear whether that universal claim is true. (If it were, then we would be forced to the disorientating and potentially depressing conclusion that *everything*, that is, the contextless sum total of what exists, lacks meaning.[12] Be that as it may, it is clear that meaning *tends* to depend on context. A treasured heirloom, a spoken word, a nod of the head—as one peels away the relevant contexts, such things lose meaning. At the limit, they become mere things, sounds, movements. The same holds true of natural entities. Strip away the cultural context and Big Mountain is simply, well, not even a particularly big mountain, but simply one mountain amongst others.[13]

It seems, then, that when an entity has religious, political or any other sort of cultural meaning, it has it by virtue of its relations to some wider meaningful whole. Big Mountain has such meaning by virtue of its relations to the whole we (oversimplistically) called *Navajo culture*. Likewise, the Mahabodhi tree has meaning by virtue of its relations to the whole we might (also oversimplistically) call *the Buddhist tradition*.

Much could be said about how exactly meaningful entities are related to the wholes within which they have meaning. It could, for instance, be noted that to say that x has cultural meaning is to say, not merely that x matters, but that it does so by virtue of certain non-causal relations that it bears to some wider meaningful whole.[14] However, since it is not my aim to give a comprehensive account of what it means to

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[10] For a different view, see Joshua Seachris, 'From the Meaning Triad to Meaning Holism: Unifying Life's Meaning', *Human Affairs* 29 (2019): 363-78, at pp. 368-9 (n. 9).

[11] Hill, *The Concept of Meaning* (New York: Humanities Press, 1971), p. 61; compare the following: David E. Cooper, *Meaning* (Chesham: Acumen, 2003), pp. 30-1; Cooper, *A Philosophy of Gardens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 110-11; *Dilthey: Selected Writings*, edited and introduced by H. P. Rickman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 262; Thaddeus Metz, 'The Concept of a Meaningful Life', *American Philosophical Quarterly* 38 (2) (2001): 137-53, at p. 145; Robert Nozick, *Philosophical Explanations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 601; Seachris, 'From the Meaning Triad to Meaning Holism', pp. 363-5; Tom Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, p. 117; Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, pp. 719-20.

[12] See Robert Nozick, *Philosophical Explanations*, p. 602.

[13] And perhaps not even that. For can we be sure that mountains would still 'show up' for us as mountains, if our impressions were stripped of *all* meaning? On this and other relevant issues, see Cooper, *Meaning*, p. 58.

[14] See further, Cooper, *Meaning*, pp. 33-4.

have meaning, I can set these complicated matters aside.[15] For present purposes, all we need note is that the relations that obtain between meaningful entities and the wholes within which they have meaning can take various forms. An entity can, for example, have meaning by *illu min ating* an entire world of meanings, as—in Heidegger's famous discussion—a temple illuminates or 'gathers' the world of the ancient Greeks.[16] In many instances, though, the relevant relation lends itself to being expressed in terms of *parthood*, *contribution*, and the playing of *roles*. This is the case with the examples we discussed above. Take Big Mountain. Whatever other relations obtain between it and Navajo culture, whether or not, for example, it may be said to *illuminate* that culture, it nonetheless has a special meaning as part of that meaningful whole—because of the contribution it makes to it or the role it plays in it. Something similar may be said of the Mahabodhi tree. The foregoing discussion implies not simply that it matters to Buddhists, but that it matters to them because it forms part of—or makes a contribution to, or plays a role in—the meaningful whole we have been calling the Buddhist tradition.

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At least two objections might be raised at this point. First, it might be objected that talk of *parthood* must, in this context, be construed as merely metaphorical. After all—the objector will argue—Big Mountain, that vast mass of rock and earth, cannot *literally* be part of anything as intangible as a culture, for instance, or a person's identity.[17]

This objection is not decisive, however. Although natural entities certainly are material, they are not *merely* material. Big Mountain, for instance, is not just so many tonnes of rock, earth, and vegetation, it also has meaning; and insofar as it has meaning, it can form part of (or contribute to, or play a role in) a meaningful whole such as a cultural identity.[18] Conversely, despite the common tendency to describe cultural benefits as 'non-material', it would be a mistake to suppose that traditions, identities, and other meaningful wholes enjoy a ghostly and immaterial mode of being, like

[15] For those who would like some more detail: my account of meaning combines what Seachris ('From the Meaning Triad to Meaning Holism') calls meaning-as-significance and meaning-as-intelligibility. For a detailed defence of such an account, see Cooper, *Meaning*.

[16] See Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, edited by David Farrell Krell with a foreword by Taylor Carman (Abingdon: Routledge, 1993), pp. 106-7.

[17] I am grateful to Chris Cowie for prompting me to consider this objection.

[18] The objector might contend that to speak of the mountain's meaning is to refer, not to the mountain itself, but merely to our impressions of it. In what follows, however, I suppose that Big Mountain, or indeed anything else we might identify as a natural entity, is partly constituted by the meanings it has for us, and that, as so constituted, it can be part of a meaningful whole such as a culture. We will return to the question of whether reality is ultimately the way it is independently of any subjective contributions, such as its being taken to have certain meanings, in Chapter 8.

Descartes' *res cogitans*.[19] On the contrary, as is recognized by those working in the field of material culture studies, 'the "material" and the "cultural"' are not 'fundamentally opposed', for 'materiality is an integral dimension of culture'.[20]

A second objection to my claims about nature and meaning runs as follows. I have supposed that natural entities such as Big Mountain have meaning when they form parts of (or contribute to, or play roles in) certain meaningful wholes. Yet these meaningful wholes are always of human origin. They are *human* cultures, *human* traditions, *human* identities. Hence—the objector concludes—my account of nature's meaning must be rejected as anthropocentric.

This objection also fails. For one thing, to say—as I have done—that some meaningful wholes, such as Navajo culture and the Buddhist tradition, are meaningful to humans is not to deny that some such wholes could be meaningful to non-humans. In Chapter 9, indeed, I will argue that some non-human animals can apprehend meanings. For another thing, humans sometimes regard *natural* entities as meaningful wholes. Suppose that the members of a certain forest-dwelling tribe regard the forest they inhabit as a meaningful whole within which the various components of their lifeworlds—their village, the adjacent river, the marshy land downstream, and so on—have meaning. And suppose, further, that they see their own lives as having meaning in the context of the forest. Granted, the forest is meaningful to the tribespeople: it is in their eyes, so to speak, that it has meaning. But if it is anthropocentric to acknowledge this, then it is so in a merely formal sense. It is not anthropocentric in any sense that ought to perturb environmental thinkers. For to say that the forest has meaning for the tribespeople as a context within which their own lives have meaning is not to imply that man is the measure of all things. Quite the opposite.

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Big Mountain, the Saami's reindeer, the Mahabodhi tree—I have suggested that each of these cases involves some entity having meaning in the context of some wider meaningful whole. But I have said very little, so far, to explain what a meaningful whole is. In the remainder of this chapter, I will try to put this right. I will not, I concede, try to explain what *exactly* a meaningful whole is. Nor, even, will I try to identify all the features such wholes tend to have. Instead, I will merely note five relevant features.

First, meaningful wholes can be *multiple*, which is to say that any particular entity can have meaning in relation to a number of different wholes. Again, the example of the Mahabodhi tree serves to illustrate the point. As we have seen, that tree has

[19] According to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, cultural services are 'the nonmaterial benefits people obtain from ecosystems . . . ' (*Ecosystems and Human Well- being: A Framework for Assessment* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2005), p. 58.

[20] Chris Tilley, Webb Keane, Susanne Kuchler, Mike Rowlands, and Patricia Spyer (eds), *Handbook of Material Culture* (London: Sage, 2006), p. 1.

meaning in the context of the Buddhist tradition. Yet those Hindus who regard the Buddha as an incarnation of Vishnu would presumably see it in the context of a set of stories about that god and his various incarnations. For them, the tree would have meaning in the context of a distinctively Hindu meaningful whole. (And, of course, a single individual could see the Mahabodhi tree as having meaning in the context of both Buddhist and Hindu traditions— and a variety of other meaningful wholes, too.)

Second, any one of these contexts or wholes *changes over time*. For instance, it would be a mistake to suppose that the meaningful whole we have been calling the Buddhist tradition is static. Like other religions, Buddhism changes, and today's Buddhism is in many respects unlike the Buddhism that European colonizers would have encountered in the sixteenth century, just as that Buddhism differed from the Buddhism that existed at the time of, say, Asoka. As Buddhists themselves say, everything changes. Accordingly, to understand what it means to be a Buddhist, one must think in terms of what Kwame Appiah calls 'mutable practices and communities rather than sets of immutable beliefs'.[21] Relatedly, as Buddhists also say, nothing is *permanent*—and this includes meaningful wholes. In fact, some Buddhists texts refer to a time, five thousand years after the Buddha's passing, when the Buddhist tradition will have become extinct.[22] During this period, the Mahabodhi tree would not have meaning for Buddhists because there would be no Buddhism and no Buddhists.

Third, even when one restricts one's attention to a particular timeslice, the wholes within which an entity has meaning will be to some degree *indeterminate*.[23] For example, it may, at any particular point in time, be unclear whether certain beliefs or practices may be counted as part of Buddhism. Take the practice of symbolically ordaining trees into the Buddhist monastic community by blessing them and wrapping them in orange clerical robes. That practice is of recent provenance: the first tree ordination was performed in 1988. So is it part of the Buddhist tradition? The question is hard to answer, and not simply because there is no monolithic entity, *the* Buddhist tradition. For the boundaries of any particular Buddhist tradition, such as Sri Lankan Theravada, are typically hard to make out. To some extent, this indeterminacy reflects our epistemic limitations. Were we smarter or more knowledgeable, the tradition's boundaries might seem sharper. But perhaps it also reflects ontological indeterminacy. Perhaps the boundaries of, say, Sri Lankan Theravada would seem fuzzy even to an omniscient observer.

Fourth, meaningful wholes can sometimes be revealed by *natural science*. This might seem surprising. Natural sciences such as geology and biology appear, after all, to deal with causal relations rather than relations of meaning. Telling someone about the geology of *mesas* would not help them to see the cultural meanings of Big Mountain

[21] *The Lies that Bind* (London: Profile Books, 2018), p. 67.

[22] Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism, 2nd ed.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 80.

[23] As Hill puts it, the boundaries of any 'context of any bearer of meaning' can 'scarcely be sharply drawn' (*The Concept of Meaning*, p. 61).

any more than telling them about the biology of fig trees would help them to see the religious meanings of the Mahabodhi tree. To reveal meanings, it would seem, one needs anthropologists and cultural geographers, not geologists and biologists.

Even so, meaningful wholes can, in some cases, be revealed by science. For the discovery of causal relations can affect the meanings people see in the world. Indeed, one such phenomenon is regularly referred to by environmental philosophers. It is often said that the science of ecology has revealed the causal relations that obtain between what seem to be causally unrelated events—between, say, the burning of coal in Siberia and coastal erosion in Senegal. Knowledge of such relations can influence the meaning one sees in the world. As J. Baird Callicott observes, once one has taken to heart the results of 'ecology as a science', the world seems less 'a collection of objects . . . a plurality of separate individuals' and more 'a unified system of integrally related parts'.[24] Its meaning has changed.

Fifth, meaningful wholes can have *value for us*—they can have value, that is, on account of the contributions they make to the well-being of one or more humans. Consider, one more time, the meaningful whole I have called the Buddhist tradition. It is, I admit, unclear whether all of its value takes the form of value for us, but it surely derives *some* of its value from the contributions it makes to human well-being. It provides some humans—namely, Buddhists—with solace in times of trouble, it gives them certain moral and spiritual goals at which to aim, it shapes their sense of religious identity—in these and other ways it contributes to their well-being. And the same may be said of the meaningful wholes we considered in earlier chapters. Navajo culture, for instance, has value for the Navajo, which, amongst other things, is to say that it would typically be bad for members of that group were their culture to be eroded, distorted, or destabilized.

5. Constitution[(6)]

As we saw in the previous chapter, the fact that an entity has cultural meaning does not *entail* that it has value. Even so, value and meaning frequently go hand in hand. In particular, entities often have value *because* of the meanings they bear.[25] In such cases, both the entity's meaning *and its value* will depend on the role the entity plays

[24] J. Baird Callicott, 'Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair', *Environmental Ethics* 2 (4) (1980): 311-38, at p. 321.

[25] The use of the word 'because' in this sentence should not be taken to imply that the meanings *cause* the relevant values. 'Because', here, should instead be taken to denote a relation that need not be causal—the sort of relation that might alternatively be expressed by the phrase 'by virtue of'. Using 'because', however, makes for more elegant phrasing—and, for that reason alone, I will continue to use the word.

[(6)] *How Nature Matters: Culture, Identity, and Environmental Value*. Simon P. James, Oxford University Press. DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780198871613.003.0006

in some wider meaningful whole. Reconsider the Mahabodhi tree. As we saw, the tree has a certain religious meaning in the context of a multi-faceted and indeterminate whole which, for ease of reference, I called *the Buddhist tradition*. Now suppose that the tree has value for Buddhists because it has this religious meaning. The tree's value, like its meaning, will depend on the meaningful whole to which it contributes. It will have value because of the role it plays in the Buddhist tradition.

To make sense of these sorts of cases, it may help to appeal to the following distinction between two kinds of value:

(1) Instrumental value—the value something has as a means to a valuable end.

(2) Constitutive value—the value something has as a part of a valuable whole.[26]

To clarify that distinction, consider the following examples:

1 a) Scaffolding was erected to allow Michelangelo to complete *The Creation of Adam*, the remarkable centrepiece of the fresco he painted on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. The scaffolding was of instrumental value—it was a means to the valuable end of painting *The Creation of Adam*. By contrast, *The Creation of Adam* itself has constitutive value because it is an important part of the entire fresco.[27]

2 b) Suppose Li Jing claims that, 'One of the things money can buy is a good education.' Li Jing is claiming, rightly or wrongly, that money has a certain instrumental value. She is suggesting that money has value as a means to procuring a good education. Now suppose that Fen claims that, 'Learning to think clearly is part of a good education.' Fen is claiming that learning to think clearly has constitutive value as part of a good education.

3 c) A good tennis player can serve well. This is not to say that being able to serve well is a means to the end of becoming a good tennis player. It is not to say that the one somehow causes the other. The suggestion, rather, is that the ability to serve well has constitutive value because it is part of what it means to be a good tennis player.

Big Mountain, the Saami's reindeer, and the Mahabodhi tree all have constitutive value. Big Mountain has constitutive value for some Navajos because of the roles it plays in their culture, just as reindeer have constitutive value for their Saami herders

[26] The distinction between instrumental and constitutive value is discussed in more detail in the following works: Jeremy Moss, *Reassessing Egalitarianism* (Houndmills, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 39; Donald S. Maier, *What's So Good About Biodiversity?* (Dordecht: Springer, 2012), pp. 15-16; Ben Bradley, 'Extrinsic Value', *Philosophical Studies* 91 (1998): 109-26, at pp. 120-1 (note that, following C. I. Lewis, Bradley uses the term 'contributory value' to refer to what I have been calling constitutive value); Gerald Dworkin, *The Theory and Practice of Autonomy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 80; Donald H. Regan, 'Duties of Preservation', in B. G. Norton (ed.), *The Preservation of Species* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 195-222, at p. 203.

[27] There are in fact two valuable ends here. The scaffolding is a means to a certain valuable *goal*—namely, the painting of the fresco. *The Creation of Adam*, by contrast, is part of a valuable *entity*—namely, the entire fresco. (On the distinction between these two meanings of 'valuable end', see Katie McShane, 'Why Environmental Ethics Shouldn't Give Up on Intrinsic Value', *Environmental Ethics* 29 (2007): 43-61, at p. 51.) Nonetheless, the fact remains that the *The Creation of Adam*, unlike the scaffolding, has constitutive value.

because of the roles they play in the herders' cultural identity. Similarly, the Mahabodhi tree has constitutive value for Buddhists because of the roles it plays in the Buddhist tradition. In each of these cases, the use of the word 'in' suggests that we are dealing with a part-whole relation rather than a means-end one. Accordingly, to understand each of these cases, one cannot rely exclusively on a meansend model of nature's value. One must appeal to relations of meaning and to what Per Ariansen calls nature's 'constitutive value'.[28] One needs to adopt what I will call a *part-whole* model of nature's value for us.

What exactly am I suggesting? First, I am considering the value of any natural x, where x could be a particular organism, inanimate thing, place, system, event, or process (or, indeed, a particular *kind* of organism, etc.). Second, my specific interest is in x's value for one or more human beings. For simplicity's sake, I will refer to x's value for a single individual, 'Person A': that is, the value x has by virtue of the contributions it makes to A's well-being. Third, I want to identify the conditions under which x would have constitutive value for Person A. By this, I mean more than merely the conditions under which x might be *taken* to have such value. I mean the conditions under which it would *really* have such value. So I use the phrase 'constitutive value' as shorthand for 'constitutively valuable'. Fourth, I seek to identify sufficient, rather than necessary, conditions. That is to say, I do not maintain that the account I set out below captures the *only* way that natural entities can have constitutive value. I do not deny that such entities might have such value for other reasons— ones, perhaps, that have nothing to do with relations of meaning.[29]

Bearing these points in mind, it might seem that I am proposing the following:

x has constitutive value for Person A if x is part of a whole that is both meaningful and valuable.

This formulation is, I believe, along the right lines—but it lacks precision. First, it is vital that x forms part of the relevant meaningful whole, not for some reason unconnected with x's having meaning, but by virtue of the fact that x has a certain

[28] 'The Non-Utility Value of Nature: An Investigation into Biodiversity and the Value of Natural Wholes', *Communications of the Norwegian Forest Research Institute* 47 (1997): 3-45, at 31-8. See also, Bryan G. Norton, *Sustainability: A Philosophy of Adaptive Ecosystem Management* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. 394-5.

[29] Here is one (very speculative) suggestion. Suppose that Russell Powell is right to claim that 'the received view in biology and philosophy of science' is that 'species are individuals located in space and time with organisms as their constituent parts, rather than atemporal sets with organisms as their members'. It follows that each individual member of a valuable species has constitutive value as a part of that species. It also follows that the last individual of that species, that *endling*, would have a great deal of constitutive value for this reason. Indeed, because that individual's death would mean the extinction of its species, then that individual might have constitutive value as an *essential* part of its species. (See Powell, 'On the Nature of Species and the Moral Significance of their Extinction', in T. L. Beauchamp and R. G. Frey (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Animal Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 603-27, at p. 606. For a good introduction to the question of whether biological species really are spatio-temporal individuals with organisms as their parts, see Richard A, Richards, *The Species Problem: A Philosophical Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), Chapter 6.

meaning. Second, it is not enough to say merely that x is part of the relevant whole: it must be a sufficiently important part of it. In some (but not all) cases, x will be an *essential* part of the relevant meaningful whole, as Big Mountain was, we supposed, an essential part of Katherine Smith's cultural identity. But even if x is not an essential part of the relevant whole, it must be such an *important* part of it that A's well-being would decrease were x to be sullied, destroyed, closed off to A, or rendered meaningless to A. Third, it is vital that the whole be, not just meaningful, but meaningful *to* A, and not just valuable, but valuable *for* A—contributive, that is, to A's well-being.

Making these changes, one arrives at the following formulation:

x has constitutive value for Person A if x, because of the meanings it bears, is an important part of a whole that is both meaningful to A and valuable for A.

This formulation is more precise. Suppose that x and A stand for Big Mountain and the Navajo people, respectively. Big Mountain is an important part of Navajo culture. And Navajo culture is both meaningful to and valuable for the Navajo.

But one more tweak is needed. For, in the sorts of cases we have been considering, it is not enough that the relevant whole be both meaningful to and valuable for the relevant people. It must be valuable for them *because* it is meaningful to them. Reconsider Navajo culture. That culture is, I have suggested, valuable for the Navajo people, which, amongst other things, is to say that the Navajos would (all things being equal) be worse off were they forced to relinquish their distinctive cultural practices. And, of course, Navajo culture is meaningful to the Navajo people. But it is not the case that Navajo culture has cultural value for the Navajo people for reasons that are independent of its being meaningful to them. On the contrary, it has this value for them because it is meaningful to them. The same may be said of the value of the Saami's cultural identity for Saami reindeer herders and the value of the Buddhist tradition for Buddhists.

Accordingly, we come to the following more accurate, though much less elegant, formulation:

x has constitutive value for Person A if x, because of the meanings it bears, is an important part of a whole that is both (i) meaningful to A and (ii) valuable for A because it is meaningful to A.

The account of constitutive value presented above lies at the heart of the part-whole model of nature's value for us. It fits nicely with the cases we have discussed. Take the example of Katherine Smith. Big Mountain had value for Smith because it was, by virtue of the meanings it bore, an important part of a whole—her cultural identity—that was not only meaningful to her but valuable for her because it was meaningful to her. Something similar may be said of the value of reindeer for their Saami herders, or of the Mahabodhi tree's value for Buddhists.

As we saw in Chapter 3, the means-end model has trouble with such cases—ones, that is, in which there is an *irreplaceable* natural entity to which those for whom it has value are connected by *internal* relations. The part-whole model has no such trouble. Big Mountain played such an important role in Smith's cultural identity, it formed such

an important part of that meaningful whole, precisely because it was the particular entity that it was—precisely because it was irreplaceable. Moreover, Smith's cultural identity was linked to that place by relations of meaning— and such relations need not be external.

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In the next chapter, we will compare the part-whole model with some other models of nature's value. Before then, however, it may be helpful to consider how constitutive values, as described above, relate to some other, more familiar kinds of value. Accordingly, in the remainder of this chapter I discuss the relations between constitutive values and the following three kinds of value: (1) value for us, (2) value all things considered, and (3) aesthetic value. Doing this will, I hope, help to bring the part-whole model into sharper focus.

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In this chapter, I have distinguished between two kinds of value— instrumental value and constitutive value, but I have not said much about a concept I mentioned in the Introduction—that of *value for us*. How does this sort of value relate to constitutive value?

I introduced the concept of value for us by contrasting it with the concept of nature's intrinsic value. Now, as we shall see in Chapter 9, the phrase 'intrinsic value' is used in several different ways in discussions of environmental ethics. However, the claim that some natural entity has intrinsic value always implies that its value does not entirely depend on the contributions it makes to human well-being.

If, by contrast, a natural entity has value for us, it has value because of the contributions it makes to human well-being.[30] In some such cases, the *us* will encompass just some humans; in others, all of them. For example, to say that the Mahabodhi tree has value for *Buddhists* is to say that it has value for *some* of us humans. By contrast, the sun has value for us in the sense that it has value for *all* humans. In either instance, as more generally, the phrase 'value for us' simply indicates that we are dealing with

[30] Note that the categories *intrinsic value* and *value for us* are not exhaustive. For instance, an entity could have non-intrinsic value on account of the contribution it makes to something other than human well-being. (I provide a fuller account of what it means to have intrinsic value in Chapter 9.) nature's instrumental value for us. By contrast, a thing has *constitutive* value for us when it is part of a whole which itself has value for us— which itself, in other words, has value on account of the contributions it makes to human well-being. Recall, once again, the example of the Mahabodhi tree. We saw that that tree has value for Buddhists because of the role it plays in the Buddhist tradition—a meaningful whole which itself has value for Buddhists. It is, I admit, unclear whether something that forms part of a whole that has value for us must *necessarily* have constitutive value for us. Even so, setting any modal anxieties to one side, it seems clear that the Mahabodhi tree has constitutive value for Buddhists. It has constitutive value for them because of the role it plays in their religious tradition—

a case in which an entity has value because it contributes to the well-being of one or more human beings.

So the 'us' in 'value for us' can refer either to all humans or to some subset of them. Moreover, the word 'value' in the phrase can denote values of different kinds.

Most obviously, many things have *instrumental* value for us. Vegetation, for instance, has value for us because it produces oxygen. Yet the fact that the oxygen could be produced in other ways—such as by electrolysis—indicates that we are here dealing with an instance of

Something similar may be said of the other cases we have discussed. Consider reindeer. The animals have meaning and value for their Saami herders because of the roles they play in the herders' cultural identity. As we saw in Chapter 3, that meaningful whole seems to have value for the herders, which, amongst other things, is to say that the herders would (all things held equal) be worse off were their identity to be eroded, distorted, or destabilized. Moreover, the reindeer themselves, those hardy and lichen-liking ruminants, have constitutive value for their Saami herders because of the roles they play in the herders' cultural identity. Here, once again, we have a case where a natural entity has constitutive value for certain people on account of the role it plays in a certain meaningful whole which itself has value for those people.

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Next, consider the relations between constitutive value and *value all things considered*. If an entity has the latter, then it comes out as having value, as being, so to speak, a plus rather than a minus on one's axiological ledger, when all relevant considerations are taken into account. So suppose that I unwisely eat a half-eaten pie that I find in a bin. If the pie tastes good, then it has a certain value. But when, later on, I find myself reaching for the antacid tablets, I reflect that the pie did not have value all things considered. All things considered, I conclude, the minuses outweighed the pluses.

I have argued that when natural entities have value for us because of their meanings they typically have constitutive value for us on account of the contributions they make to one or more meaningful and valuable wholes. But I have not suggested that such entities must have value all things considered. Consider the 'holy rats' of the Karni Mata Temple in the Indian town of Deshnoke, for instance. Believing them to be sacred, the temple's priests care for their murine temple-dwellers, giving them water and feeding them grains, milk, and coconuts. As a result, the population of holy rats has swelled to approximately twenty-five thousand.

The rats seem to have some measure of constitutive value to priests and worshippers because of the role their kind plays in certain religious legends concerning the female warrior-sage Karni Mata. Be that as it may, if the animals turn out to be spreading bubonic plague, they are unlikely to have value all things considered.

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a meaningful whole which itself has value for them.

So to say that an entity has constitutive value because of the meanings it bears is not to say that it must have value all things considered. It follows that constitutive values need not *override* values of other sorts. Suppose that a certain stretch of heather-coated moorland has constitutive value for the villagers who live on its edge. That value must, I have argued, be taken into account by decision makers. It must be considered in debates about whether to construct a wind farm on the site, for instance. However, to say that the moorland has constitutive value is not to say that it *must* be treated in ways that preserve that value. It is certainly not to endorse the 'localist' notion that the concerns of the locals override all other considerations. On the contrary, perhaps constructing the wind farm would produce benefits so great as to overwhelm those concerns. The salient point is that in considering the value all things considered of any particular entity, one must look beyond that entity and those who know it.[31]

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I have argued that many natural entities contribute to our well-being because we find them meaningful. They have what I called *value for us* because they have meaning to us. How, if at all, does nature's *aesthetic* value fit into this picture?

Clearly, aesthetic value is connected to human well-being. Not only do we tend to take pleasure in beauty but, as pretentious art critics like to say, ugliness can prompt something like pain. It may even be, as Jennifer Welchman argues, that a disposition to appreciate aesthetic value 'is a constitutive good of human flourishing'.[32] But it is a further question whether the aesthetic value of an entity *consists* in its power to enhance our well-being.

The following argument indicates that it could so consist:

(1) To have aesthetic value is to have the capacity to produce a certain sort of pleasure in suitably qualified human subjects.

(2) To produce such pleasure in a particular human subject is to contribute to the well-being of that subject.

Therefore (3) to have aesthetic value is to have the capacity to contribute to human well-being.

(1) does not imply that one should approach aesthetically valuable objects in the hope of deriving pleasure from one's encounters with them. It implies merely that it is pleasant to appreciate aesthetic value. But various questions remain. What, one might ask, is the relevant sort of pleasure? (Kant said it is disinterested pleasure, but others give different answers.) And what does it mean to be suitably qualified in this context? Is knowledge of the aesthetic object required? If so, knowledge of

[31] See further, Clare Palmer, 'Place-Historical Narratives: Road - or Roadblock - to Sustainability?' *Ethics, Policy and Environment* 14 (3) (2011): 345-59.

[32] 'Aesthetics of Nature, Constitutive Goods, and Environmental Conservation: A Defense of Moderate Formalist Aesthetics', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 76 (4) (2018): 419-28, at p. 419.

what sort—and how much?[33] Moreover, even if it were precisely formulated, (1) would not command universal assent amongst aestheticians and philosophers of art. Jerrold Levinson, for instance, questions the claim 'that an art work is valuable only in so far as experience of it (or engagement with it) is *pleasant* or straightforwardly *enjoyable*'.[34] On the contrary, he continues,

[m]any art works unmistakably offer us rewards which do not naturally cash out as pleasure or enjoyment at any level, rewards which are at least distinct from and independent of any pleasure or enjoyment that may attach to them. Much art is disturbing, dizzying, despairing, disorienting—and is in fact valuable in virtue of that. We are glad, all told, that we have had the experience of such art, but not, once again, because such experience is, in any natural sense, pleasurable.[35]

But even if, as Levinson suggests, the aesthetic value of artworks does not entirely consist in their power to give us pleasure, it is a further question whether (1) holds true of nature's aesthetic value. For the sake of argument, let's assume that the answer is a tentative 'Quite possibly'. Let us suppose that (1) is, if not categorically true, at least plausible insofar as it applies to nature's aesthetic value.

At first sight, (2) might seem plausible; for it might seem that pleasure of any sort is a good thing, something the presence of which makes one's life better. But, again, there is room for scepticism. Certainly, on some conceptions of human well-being, the enjoyment of beauty need not be good for one—not *ultimately*, at least. Consider Petrarch's imaginative reconstruction of his ascent of Mount Ventoux, for instance. Having admired the view from the summit, the poet admonishes himself 'for continuing to admire the things of this world when I should have learned a long time ago from the pagan philosophers themselves that nothing is admirable but the soul'.[36] The implication is that a disposition to enjoy natural beauty might *detract* from his ultimate goal—that is, to live 'a good and happy life', one that is 'in accord with God.'[37]

But, these reservations aside, let us suppose that (2), like (1), is plausible. Now if both (1) and (2) are not merely plausible but true, then (3) follows; and (3), in turn, implies that aesthetically valuable entities, when perceived in the appropriate conditions and with the requisite patience, discernment, background knowledge, and so forth, can give us a special sort of pleasure and in this way enhance our well-being.

That chain of reasoning contains a lot of 'if's. Much more would need to be done to establish that aesthetic value really can contribute to our well-being in the manner

[33] On these and other, related issues, see Emily Brady, *Aesthetics of Natural Environments* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003).

[34] 'Pleasure and the Value of Works of Art', *British Journal of Aesthetics* 32 (4) (1992): 295-306, at p. 296.

[35] Levinson, 'Pleasure and the Value of Works of Art', p. 296.

[36] Petrarch, *Selections from the* Canzoniere *and Other Works*, translated and edited by M. Musa (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 17.

[37] Ljiljana Radenovic describing Petrarch's view in'Education and the Good Life: Petrarch's Insights

described. But let's suppose that it can. We can now fold the topic of *meaning* into the mix. We can ask whether it is possible for an aesthetically valuable natural entity to have value for us on account of the meanings it bears—and more specifically the roles it plays in one or more meaningful wholes.

As Roger Scruton points out, some *artworks* have 'aesthetic meaning'— a meaning that is 'understood in and through an aesthetic experience'.[38] This sort of meaning, we might add, can be possessed not only by works of poetry or literature but also by material artworks, such as paintings and sculptures. Moreover, it needn't be explicit. A painting, for example, can have aesthetic meaning even if it contains no depictions of skulls or doves or any other explicitly symbolic objects. On the contrary, though I lack the space to defend the claim here, it seems to me that Wassily Kandinsky was right when he said that even the most abstract artworks are shot through with meaning.[39]

In some cases, an artwork has aesthetic meaning by virtue of the role it plays in—or the contribution it makes to—some wider meaningful whole. Take Vivaldi's 'Spring'. Its aesthetic meaning (and value) partly depends on the role it plays in *The Four Seasons*. Someone who had never heard 'Spring' in the context of its three companion-concertos would miss some of the work's aesthetic meaning and value. Amongst other things, they would fail to notice that the sawing, rumbling notes in the first movement anticipate the storm that finally breaks in the third movement of 'Summer'.

Natural entities, too, can have aesthetic meaning by virtue of the roles they play in wider meaningful wholes. Picture a snowdrop pushing its way up through the snow. Some formalists may disagree, but it is at least reasonable to suppose that the flower's aesthetic value could partly depend on its signifying life's renewal after winter—on, that is, its relations to the meaningful whole which is known, in many parts of the world, as *the turning of the seasons*. So, like the aesthetic value of Vivaldi's 'Spring', that of the snowdrop seems to depend on the role it plays in a wider meaningful whole. Though—once again—more work would be needed to prove the point, the flower's aesthetic value seems to be partly constitutive in form. In this respect, it seems to be like the cultural value of Big Mountain, for instance, or that of the Mahabodhi tree.

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and the Current Research on Well-being', *Journal of Beliefs & Values* 42 (1) (2021): 95-109, at p. 96. Such views are not peculiar to Christians. I once complimented a Buddhist monk on the natural beauty of his temple's richly forested grounds. With a sweeping gesture, he declared that 'All this is suffering'. His point, I take it, was that a preoccupation with nature's beauty could obstruct one's path to awakening.

[38] 'Analytical Philosophy and the Meaning of Music', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 46 (1987): 169-76, at p. 170.

[39] 'It is never literally true that any form is meaningless and "says nothing."' (*Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, translated with an introduction by M. T. H. Sadler (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1977), p. 29, n. 6.) Compare Maurice Merleau-Ponty's claim that even basic sensory qualities such as colours have 'an affective meaning' which depends on the roles they play in the meaningful whole we call 'human experience'. (*The World of Perception*, translated by Oliver Davis, foreword by Stephanie

6. Value and Disvalue[7]

Big Mountain, the Saami's reindeer, the Mahabodhi tree—clearly these entities have cultural value. But matters are not always so clear. An entity might, for instance, have cultural *disvalue* when it undermines a valuable meaningful whole or contributes to a disvaluable one. And even when a culturally significant entity doesn't seem to have cultural dis- value, it might nonetheless be unclear whether it has cultural value.

In this chapter, I consider four tricky cases of this sort.

Case study 6: The Great Lisbon Earthquake

On the morning of Saturday, 1 November 1755, the Portuguese city of Lisbon was struck by a massive earthquake. It was All Saints' Day, and the city's cathedral and churches were packed; in fact attendance was mandatory for all Roman Catholics in the city.[40] Altar candles went tumbling—fires sprang up and spread.[41] Terrified citizens fled to the open space of the docks, only to find that the sea had disappeared and the bed of the River Tagus was dry.[42] Forty minutes after the initial shock, the city was hit by a tsunami, 'rising up as it were like a mountain'.[43]

The earthquake's effects were felt as far afield as the islands of the Caribbean, which were hit by waves over four metres high.[44] Lisbon itself was devastated. Although there is some disagreement about how many of the city's inhabitants died, all commentators agree that the city's death toll was in excess of ten thousand. Thirty-five of the city's forty churches were destroyed, along with sixty-five of its seventy convents.[45] The city's red light district was, however, left standing.

Most of Lisbon's churches, it turned out, were built on alluvial sediments, which liquefied during the earthquake.[46] The brothels were built on firmer ground. So it seems that the destruction of the one and the sparing of the other could be attributed to geology, building regulations, and other non-supernatural causes. But this was not discovered until much later. At the time, the earthquake seemed to present Christians with a crisis. In fact, many have supposed that the terrible event resulted in a

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Menase, introduction by T. Baldwin (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002), p. 46.)

[40] Ryan Nichols, 'Re-evaluating the Effects of the 1755 Lisbon Earthquake on EighteenthCentury Minds: How Cognitive Science of Religion Improves Intellectual History with Hypothesis Testing Methods', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 82 (4) (2014): 970-1009, at p. 973.

[41] Nichols, 'Re-evaluating the Effects of the 1755 Lisbon Earthquake, pp. 973-4.

[42] David Bressan, 'November 1, 1755: The Earthquake of Lisbon: Wrath of God or Natural Disaster?' *Scientific American*, 1 November 2011.

[43] The Reverend Charles Davy, quoted in Lucas Joel, 'Benchmarks: November 1, 1755: Earthquake Destroys Lisbon', *Earth*, 1 November 2015.

[44] Bressan, 'November 1, 1755'.

[45] Nichols, 'Re-evaluating the Effects of the 1755 Lisbon Earthquake', p. 974.

[46] Bressan, 'November 1, 1755'.

[7] *How Nature Matters: Culture, Identity, and Environmental Value*. Simon P. James, Oxford University Press. DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780198871613.003.0007

widespread loss of faith. Commentators have said that it 'shattered' confidence in 'the harmony of the world and a gracious ruler of it' and 'sh[ook] the foundations of faith'.[47]

In recent years, this interpretation has been called into question. Ryan Nichols, for one, has argued that the disaster was met, not with a sweeping loss of faith, but with an outbreak of victim-blaming. Protestants claimed that the Catholics were getting their comeuppance. (John Wesley asked, is God 'now making Inquisition for Blood? If so, it is not surprising that He should begin there[i.e., in Portugal], where so much Blood has been poured on the Ground like Water.')[48] Even the Portuguese themselves sought to blame others, such as Lisbon's tiny minority of Protestants, for the disaster.[49] But these debates about what Nichols calls the 'Secularizing Interpretation' are largely immaterial; for my main aim, here, is not to work out what actually happened in the aftermath of the disaster, but to consider the possibility that a natural event could result in a loss of faith (as the earthquake surely must have done in *some* cases). So, that caveat noted, let us imagine someone—call her Maria— who loses not just her family but also her faith to the disaster. And let us consider whether her loss of faith can be understood in terms of the part-whole model sketched in the previous chapter.

The natural entity, here, is *the earthquake*. Though it may seem strange to refer to an earthquake—that is, an event—as an *entity*, recall that I am using that word in a broad sense to refer, not just to things, but to processes and events. The relevant meaningful whole, for its part, might (though no doubt oversimplistically) be referred to as *Catholicism*. I will suppose that, before the earthquake, that whole was not just meaningful to Maria but also valuable for her—contributive, that is, to her wellbeing. That is to say, I will suppose that being Catholic, like being Navajo or being Buddhist, is one of the various ways that we humans can live well. From this it follows that to the extent that the earthquake destabilized or in any other way undermined her Catholicism, it had *disvalue* for Maria.

What *kind* of disvalue? Well, the earthquake did not cause Maria to lose her faith in anything like the way it caused fissures to open and candles to topple. She lost her faith, rather, because she found herself confronted by an event which *did not make sense within*, and so served to destabilize, her faith. Suppose, by way of analogy, that a fictional character were to act uncharacteristically and inexplicably strangely in just one of a novel's chapters. Imagine that in a newly discovered chapter of *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth heads into town mid-story for a Hunter S. Thompson-style evening of drinking and drug-taking. And suppose that the familiar narrative resumes, with no reference to those strange events, in the very next chapter. It would be natural to assume that the chapter is a fake—but suppose that its authenticity is established

[47] Jurgen Moltmann, quoted at Nichols, 'Re-evaluating the Effects of the 1755 Lisbon Earthquake', p. 975; Susan Neiman, *Evil in Modern Thought: An Alternative History of Philosophy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), p. 246.

[48] Quoted at Nichols, 'Re-evaluating the Effects of the 1755 Lisbon Earthquake', p. 992. Note Wesley's use of the term 'inquisition'.

[49] Nichols, 'Re-evaluating the Effects of the 1755 Lisbon Earthquake', p. 994.

beyond reasonable doubt. In that case, our views on what it would mean to be a young woman like Elizabeth—perhaps, indeed, our general conception of Georgian society—would be thrown into question. Certainly our sense of Elizabeth's character would begin to waver. That meaningful whole would start to lose its coherence. We would feel we had lost, or at least were losing, our sense of who Elizabeth is.

Maria's loss of faith could, I suggest, be understood in a broadly— *broadly*—similar way. Imagine her thoughts after the earthquake. She tries to reconcile the terrible event with her Catholicism. She tries to find a religious meaning in it, some sign of divine purpose. But she can't. She feels that her Catholicism, that body of teachings and traditions which until only recently had seemed wholly and unimpeachably meaningful, is starting to fall apart. It still means *something* to her, of course. But what meaning it retains does not hang together in a way that could support her faith.

To understand what Maria lost, we cannot restrict ourselves to thinking in terms of causal relations and instrumental value. We must also consider the possibility that events can destabilize what were once meaningful wholes. We must think in terms of parts and wholes and relations of meaning.

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I have suggested that the Great Lisbon Earthquake would have had cultural disvalue for Maria. It is reasonable to suppose that she would have *taken* it to have this value—that, looking back on the events of 1 November 1755, she would have come to despise the earthquake, not just because it killed her family, but also because it destroyed her faith. It is reasonable to suppose that, in this case at least, what was taken to have disvalue really had disvalue just as, in other cases, what is taken to have value really has value.

In some cases, however, there will be a difference between the sort of value an entity is taken to have and the sort of value the entity really has. For instance, x may contribute to the well-being of, and so have value for, Person A, even if A regards x as being of value in itself, independently of any relation to her own well-being.[50] Indeed, x might have constitutive value for a person even if she regards it as having *dis*value. For example, wild nature might play an important positive role in the form of life of a rugged frontiers-person, even though she regards it as an enemy to be uprooted and replaced with farmland.

So, the fact that an entity has constitutive value for a certain person does not entail that that person (or anyone else) must take that entity to have that value. Conversely, the fact that something is *taken* to have constitutive value does not entail that it *really* has that value.

[50] I am grateful to Chris Diehm for drawing my attention to this possibility. For further discussion of it, see Christine Korsgaard's remarks on how entities can be valued 'partly for their own sakes', given the roles they 'play in our lives.' ('Two Distinctions in Goodness', *Philosophical Review* 152 (2) (1983): 169-95, at p. 185.)

Consider, by way of example, the following case study:

Case study 7: Cornflowers

The cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*) once served as Prussia's national emblem, partly because its particular tint of blue matched the Prussian military uniform and partly because Queen Louise of Prussia purportedly hid her children amongst cornflowers while fleeing Napoleon's forces. The incident seems to have left a deep impression on at least one of those children: the boy who would grow up to become Kaiser Wilhelm I long retained his affection for the plant. In fact, after the 1871 Unification of Germany, the 'Kaiser's flower' became a national emblem for the country as a whole. By the same token, in Austria the cornflower has frequently been associated with pan-German and right-wing ideologies. For instance, when, between 1934 and 1938, the Nazi party was banned in the country, Austrian Nazis took to wearing blue cornflowers as secret badges. Until 2017, members of the right-wing populist Freedom Party of Austria wore it for the opening of parliament.[51] (After 2017, they used sprigs of edelweiss instead.) In 2019, Andre Poggenburg, a man who 'has repeatedly come under fire for his use of Nazi-era vocabulary', incorporated the cornflower into the flag for Awakening of German Patriots, his new far-right party.[52]

I have no idea whether one may justifiably speak of Nazi culture as a whole; but suppose, for argument's sake, that one can. And suppose, further, that blue cornflowers have a special symbolic meaning within that culture. Suppose, indeed, that they are an essential part of it. This might seem to entail that the flowers have constitutive value. After all, Nazi culture is both meaningful to and valued by Nazis. So if—as we have been assuming—cornflowers play an essential role in it, then, by the lights of the arguments presented above, they might seem to have constitutive value. Just as the overall value of, say, Big Mountain is enhanced by the role it plays in Navajo culture, so—one might think— the overall value of cornflowers is enhanced by the role they play in Nazi culture.

But no: these conclusions are much too fast. Natural entities have constitutive value for us, recall, when they are parts of meaningful and *valuable* wholes. The mere fact that a certain whole is *valued* is not enough. Hence, in the scenario we are considering, the mere fact that blue cornflowers are valued because of their role in Nazi culture does not entail that they have constitutive value. On the contrary, it implies that the flowers acquire some constitutive *dis*value because of the role they play in a meaningful but *dis*valuable whole.[53]

Why is this? Why shouldn't cornflowers acquire constitutive value because of their relations to Nazi culture just as Big Mountain acquires such value because of its relations to Navajo culture? Why exactly does Nazi culture, unlike Navajo culture, fail to qualify as a valuable whole?

[51] Bethany Bell, 'The beautiful flower with an ugly past', *BBC News Magazine*, 22 May 2016.

[52] Josie Le Blond, 'New far-right German party adopts former Nazi secret symbol', *The Guardian*, 11 January 2019.

[53] I am grateful to Joe Saunders for making this suggestion.

To address this question, we must recall that we are here considering *value for us*—the value things have by virtue of the contributions they make to human well-being. A meaningful whole qualifies as valuable for us, in this sense, if and only if it bears the right sort of relation to human well-being. This is, I admit, a vague requirement; nonetheless, we can all agree that it is met in the case of the Navajo. Clearly Navajo culture is one of the manifold ways that we humans can live well—one of the many ways in which we can realize well-being.

To see why Nazi culture does not so qualify, it may help to recall the brief discussion, in the Introduction, of the relations between living well and living morally. In that discussion, we considered the claim that the former cannot be achieved without the latter. That claim strikes me as being plausible. If, however, it is not merely plausible but true, then we have one way to explain why Nazi culture does not qualify as one of the manifold ways that humans can live well. It does not qualify because it is essentially morally bad. And because Nazi culture is not a valuable whole, cornflowers do not acquire constitutive value because of the role they play in it. Quite the opposite: they seem to acquire some constitutive disvalue.

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It seems, then, that natural entities can have cultural disvalue in at least two ways. They can have such disvalue when they undermine valuable and meaningful wholes (as, for Maria, the Great Lisbon Earthquake undermined Catholicism). Alternatively, they can have cultural disvalue when they contribute to meaningful but *dis*valuable wholes. This, I suggested, is the case with *Cornflowers*. Blue cornflowers are (we supposed) both meaningful to and valued by Nazis. However, they do not thereby acquire constitutive value; for, I proposed, if a meaningful whole is morally bad, entities do not acquire constitutive value by contributing to it. On the contrary, they seem to acquire some degree of constitutive disvalue.

The moral badness of Nazism should be self-evident—but other cases will be harder to appraise. First, there is the task of identifying the relevant whole. Suppose that a certain practice is morally bad. Does that mean that the culture within which that practice has a home is also bad? Second, there is the question of what *kind* of badness one is dealing with. Some kinds are worse than others, as cruelty, for instance, is worse than callousness and malevolence worse than indifference. Third, one must ask *how* bad the relevant meaningful whole is. Not all morally bad meaningful wholes will be as morally bad as Nazi culture. On the nearside of Hitler and his admirers, there are innumerable tricky cases.

We will return to these issues in Chapter 9, when we consider the role a morally questionable practice—dugong hunting—plays in the culture of the Torres Strait Islanders. For now, though, it is enough to note my general claim: that a meaningful whole can fail to count as valuable for *moral* reasons.

In some cases, by contrast, there might seem to be non-moral reasons why a certain meaningful whole fails to qualify as valuable. Once again, the point may be made by means of a brief case study:

Case study 8: Dark skies

With increases in light pollution, dark night skies—truly dark night skies—have become rarer. This has had a number of unwelcome consequences for non-human organisms. It can interfere with plant growth, causing them to grow more, or less, than is good for them. It can also be bad for animals. Amongst other things, it can make crepuscular and nocturnal prey species more vulnerable to predation; interfere with the breeding behaviour of frogs and various other animals; inhibit the production of the multi-function hormone melatonin; disrupt bird migrations; and kill vast numbers of flying insects, with adverse ecosystemic effects.[54]

Light pollution is also bad, of course, for those people who take an interest in dark skies. Consider—and please bear with me here—those who practise, endorse, or follow the results of astrology (hereafter 'astrologers'). *Serious* astrologers—those, that is, whose commitment to astrology extends beyond checking the horoscopes in their local paper—'believe that the sky provides their life with purpose and direction and as such needs to be honoured'. So, as one would expect, 'they feel a sense of responsibility to maintain dark skies'.[55] Accordingly, they bemoan the fact that 'with light pollution from the cities, it is becoming more and more difficult to see the starry canopy of the night sky'.[56]

It is sometimes said that the main flaw in astrology is the absence of any plausible mechanism that would enable the movements and relative positions of celestial bodies to directly cause such things as human personalities. Some astrologers suggest that gravity or electromagnetism could perform this function; but these suggestions are very implausible, since the gravitational or electromagnetic influence of, say, Saturn will be miniscule here on Earth and so drowned out by the gravitational or electromagnetic influences of things much closer to home. (For instance, my laptop will currently be exerting a much greater electromagnetic effect on me than does Saturn.) Astrologers could, presumably, postulate some new force, unknown to contemporary science, to explain celestial influences on such things as human personality. This would be justified, if there were some astrological phenomenon that could not be explained by scientists. But no such phenomenon exists. What goes on in the heavens can directly affect what goes on down here on Earth, of course. Just think of the tides. But there is no compelling evidence that the movements and relative positions of celestial bodies can directly affect people's personalities.

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[54] Links to a number of relevant studies are provided athttp://cescos.fau.edu/observatory/ lightpol-environ.html.

[55] Both quotations are from Darrelyn Gunzburg, Bernadette Brady, and Patrick Curry, 'Special Issue Introduction: Inside the World of Contemporary Astrology', *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* 13 (1) (2019): 5-11, at, p. 7.

[56] Lilan Laishley, 'Astrology as Religion: Theory and Practice', *Journal for the Study of Religion,*

I make these claims in passing, since it is not my aim here to criticize astrology. My aim, rather, is to assess what we should make of the night sky's value for astrologers if astrology really is, as critics contend, hogwash. So, to this end, let us suppose, for argument's sake, that astrology really is, as Brian Cox declared in his *Wonders of the Solar System*, 'a load of rubbish'.[57]

The first task is to identify the relevant natural entity. There are various options here; but let us suppose that it is *the sky*. Clearly that entity is valued by astrologers. To put the point crudely, astrologers feel they get something out of what one of their number calls 'the great symbol of the living sky'.[58]

As the word 'symbol' implies, they seem, moreover, to value the sky because of the various meanings it embodies. And in this case, as in others, meaning depends on context. The sky has certain meanings for astrologers because of the role it plays in a wider constellation of meanings which, for simplicity's sake, I will call *the astrological worldview*.

However, as we saw above, if x has constitutive value for Person A because of the role it plays in some meaningful whole, then that whole must be not only meaningful to A but valuable for A—that is, contributive to A's well-being. Is that condition met in the case of *Dark skies*?

Recall that Nazi culture did *not* meet that condition because, being essentially morally bad, it does not qualify as one of the myriad ways that humans can live well. Not so astrology. No doubt some astrologers are morally corrupt; perhaps, in some cases, it is astrology that has corrupted them. But the same can be said of any number of meaningful and valuable wholes. (Christianity, for instance, has inspired plenty of serial killers.) The important point is that astrology, like Christianity but unlike Nazism, does not recommend the harming of others.

But is this enough to vindicate the astrological worldview? Granted, it might not be essentially morally bad; however, as critics such as Cox contend, it seems to be based on falsehoods and bad reasoning. Don't *those* facts—if, as we have been supposing, they are indeed facts—dis- qualify it from being a valuable whole?

To say that they do is, I think, to set too high a standard for what counts as a valuable whole. It seems to me, rather, that a whole could qualify as valuable for those who find it meaningful even if it rests on beliefs that are false, even silly. I don't think I would want to assert that believing silly things can improve one's life; but I am too much of a liberal to deny that this is possible. It seems to me, then, that we should accept, on liberal grounds, that the astrological worldview is both meaningful to astrologers and valuable for them. It also seems to me that we should, where relevant, take this fact into account in judging the value of dark night skies. Of course there are

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Nature and Culture 1 (2) 2007: 172-88, at p. 184.

[57] See further, Martin Robbins, 'Astrologers Angered by Stars', *The Guardian*, 24 January 2011.

[58] Steven Forrest, *The Night Speaks: A Meditation on the Astrological Worldview* (San Diego: ACS Publications, 1993), p. 6.

other, better reasons to regret light pollution. But it seems that *one* of the many reasons dark skies have value is because of the role they play in the astrological worldview.

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Like *Dark skies*, the following case study—the last of this chapter—is about a meaningful whole which, despite appearances, turns out to be valuable, too.

Case study 9: Eating whales

On 18 July 2019, people in the Japanese whaling town of Minamiboso celebrated their nation's resumption of commercial whaling by hauling a Baird's Beaked whale, nearly ten metres long, onto the shore and butchering it in front of a crowd of spectators, many of them local schoolchildren.[59] The school principal defended whaling, and her decision to let her pupils watch its bloody results, by appealing to Japanese culture. 'Eating whale', she said, 'is part of our food culture, and we want to teach the children to have pride in their hometown and its traditions.'[60]

To some, such claims seem dubious. Japan's whale-eating culture is an 'invented tradition', maintains Jun Morikawa, author of *Whaling in Japan*.[61] Jeff Kingston, a professor of Asian Studies at Temple University in Tokyo, agrees. 'If the media and a few leaders tell[the Japanese people] that whaling and eating whale meat is part of Japanese tradition and culture, people are willing to believe it.'[62]

Though the debate about Japanese whale-eating is often heated, all parties to it agree that whale meat was *once* a staple food in Japan. During the food shortage that followed World War II, the occupying American authorities urged the Japanese to eat whales—and by the early 1960s, national consumption of the product had risen to over two hundred and twenty-three thousand tonnes per year.[63] These historical facts suggest that at least some of those elderly Japanese citizens who regard whale-eating as an authentic tradition are looking back, with the eyes of nostalgia, to the dishes of whale meat they were once served at home and in school cafeterias.[64]

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[59] Elaine Lies, 'Japanese Town Celebrates First Whale Catch of the Season', *Reuters World News*, 18 July 2019.

[60] Lies, 'Japanese Town . . .' Similarly, the Japan Small-Type Whaling Association refers to 'the important role' whale meat plays 'in maintaining cultural identity' (quoted in Matthew Scully, *Dominion: The Power of Man, the Suffering of Animals, and the Call to Mercy* (London: Souvenir Press, 2002), pp. 170-1).

[61] Quoted in Jeff Kingston, 'Whaling Whoppers Debunked', *Japan Times*, 25 April 2010. Compare E. J. Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). See further, Morikawa, *Whaling in Japan: Power, Politics, and Diplomacy* (London: Hurst & Company, 2009).

[62] Chris Hogg, 'The Forces that Drive Japanese Whaling', *BBC News*, 15 June 2006.

[63] Mari Yamaguchi, 'Whale Meat Fetches "Celebration Prices" after Japanese Hunt', *ABC News*, 4 July 2019.

[64] Philip Brasor and Masako Tsubuku, 'In 2019, How Hungry is Japan for Whale Meat?', *Japan Times*, 11 January 2019.

But nostalgia is only partly to blame: nationalism plays an important role, too. Japanese nationalists, including a good many politicians and other public officials, insist not just that the consumption of whale meat is an essential part of what it means to be Japanese, but that the practice must be defended against those foreigners who seek, imperialistically, to bring about its end.[65]

Claims that cultural traditions have been invented must be handled with care. As Rob van Ginkel observes, it is all too easy to suppose that some other culture's tradition is invented or in some other way inauthentic because it does not match up with one's own preconceptions about how people of that culture should behave.[66] But these sorts of concerns are of little relevance here; for my aim is not to assess whether Japan's whaleeating culture really is invented, but to consider how the accusation that it is invented might be framed in terms of the part-whole model.

So suppose that Japanese whale-eating really is, as Morikawa and Kingston argue, an invented tradition. Must we conclude that the tradition is not in fact meaningful to any Japanese? Must we conclude that it is not valuable for them?

The answer to the former question would seem to be 'no': some Japanese people seem to find a great deal of meaning in the eating of whale meat. Nowadays, it is true, very few Japanese people feel this way. Nonetheless, the practice still has meaning for *them*.

Moreover, to turn to the second question, it is not at all clear why the mere fact that a tradition is invented must prevent its having value for those who find it meaningful. True, Japan's whale-eating culture might not, all things considered, have value for anyone. (For instance, some vegans would argue that it is a morally bad meaningful whole and that it therefore cannot contribute to anyone's well-being, no matter how good the meat tastes.) It is hard, however, to see why its being *invented* should prevent it from having value for anyone.

But perhaps what is significant is not exactly that the tradition is *invented*, but that it is so *young*. Perhaps, as Thaddeus Metz suggests,

> there would be much less reason to refrain from interfering with a *new* practice that involves wrongs to animals than there would for a practice that has been firmly rooted in a people's culture . . .[T]he longer the way of life has lasted . . . the more it warrants respect . . . Such accounts well for the morally significant difference between the Muslim tradition of *halal* slaughter and, say, a twenty-first century 'Society of Mouse Crushers,' those who have joined together to indulge their fetish for seeing women in high heels step on live mice.[67]

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[65] See further, Arne Kalland and Brian Moeran, *Japanese Whaling: End of an Era?* (Richmond: Curzon, 1992), pp. 147-9. See further, Scully, *Dominion*, Chapter 4.

[66] Rob van Ginkel, 'The Makah Whale Hunt and Leviathan's Death: Reinventing Tradition and Disputing Authenticity in the Age of Modernity', *Etnofoor*, XVII (1-2) (2004): 58-89.

[67] 'Duties toward Animals versus Rights to Culture: An African Approach to the Conflict in Terms of Communion', in L. Cordeiro-Rodrigues and L. Mitchell (eds), *Animals, Race, and Multiculturalism* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), pp. 269-94, at p. 292.

But why should the fact that a practice—or a tradition—is *new* matter? It is not clear why a young tradition (such as celebrating Earth Day) should count for less, all things held equal, than an old one (such as slavery). In any case, the example Metz uses to support his claim is unconvincing. Even those who condemn *halal* slaughter on the grounds that it causes unnecessary harm would concede that the practice's *point* is not to cause harm. By contrast, as Elisa Galgut observes, the whole point of mouse-crushing is to harm mice.[68] So, even if mouse-crushing culture qualifies as a meaningful whole, it does not qualify as a morally acceptable one. We should object to it, not because it is new, but because it is morally bad.[69]

So far, then, we have found no good reason to deny that Japan's whale eating culture could be both meaningful to and valuable for at least some people. Again, this is not to say that it *is* valuable for anyone; merely that we have yet to be presented with any compelling reason to think that its being invented and of recent origin should prevent it from being so. Accordingly, if Japan's whale-eating culture really is invented and of recent origin, it is hard to see why the fact that it bears these properties should prevent the whales themselves from having some constitutive value because of the roles they (inadvertently) play in it. Even if—as I believe—the practice of whale hunting ought to be discontinued, the whales could nonetheless have some measure of constitutive value precisely because of the roles they play in a culture which, though invented and of recent origin, is both meaningful to and valuable for some people.

These conclusions mirror those we drew from *Dark skies*. From *Dark skies*, recall, we inferred that a meaningful whole such as a culture may be based on falsehoods and yet be both meaningful and valuable. From *Eating whales*, I have drawn the conclusion that such a whole may be both invented and of recent origin and yet have value for those who find it meaningful.

7. Deep Ecology, Essentialism, Narrative, and Relational Value[(8)]

I have argued that natural entities have constitutive value when they contribute to meaningful and valuable wholes. So the means-end model of nature's value for us must, I have proposed, be combined with a partwhole one. In this chapter, I compare the latter model with some accounts of environmental value which are, in certain respects, similar—namely: (a) Arne Naess's Ecosophy T; (b) William J. Fitzpatrick's

[68] 'A Critique of the Cultural Defense of Animal Cruelty', *Journal of Animal Ethics* 9 (2) (2019): 184-98, at p. 191.

[69] Galgut, 'A Critique of the Cultural Defense of Animal Cruelty', pp. 191-2.

[(8)] *How Nature Matters: Culture, Identity, and Environmental Value*. Simon P. James, Oxford University Press. DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780198871613.003.0008

'essentialist' position that certain ways of engaging with nature are essential components of human well-being; (c) the narrative-based account set out in John O'Neill, Alan Holland, and Andrew Light's jointly authored book *Environmental Values*; and (d) the view, chiefly associated with the work of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, that many environmental values are 'relational'. Comparing the part-whole model with these accounts will not just allow us to see where it sits in the field of environmental philosophy as a whole; it will also illuminate some of its key features.

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The Norwegian philosopher, activist, and mountaineer Arne Naess famously distinguished between two sorts of environmentalist. On the one hand, there are those—the *shallow ecologists*—who see rivers, mountains, forests, and the rest of the natural world as being of value only if they are useful—or potentially so—for us humans. On the other hand, there are the *deep ecologists*: a diverse band of radical thinkers united in their commitment to an eight-point platform of non-anthropocentric tenets, including a belief in the non-instrumental value of 'human and nonhuman life on earth', a conviction that

'[p]resent human interference with the nonhuman world is excessive' (and getting worse), and a commitment to 'a substantial decrease of the human population'.[70]

Naess maintains that these general tenets can consistently be endorsed by people of very different, even incommensurable, theoretical persuasions. One deep ecologist might endorse them because of her commitment to Daoism, another might do so because of her Spinozan conviction that all things are ultimately 'one'; others might draw inspiration from other sources, such as Gandhi's *satyagraha* or Heidegger's later thought. Naess expresses this pluralism in terms of the concept of an *ecosophy*, 'a philosophical world-view or system inspired by the conditions of life in the ecosphere'.[71] Different deep ecologists, he claims, may well endorse different but equally valid 'ecosophies'.

Naess's preferred ecosophy, Ecosophy T, takes its cue from a certain conception of personal identity. It is widely acknowledged that one's identity depends on one's relations to other humans, such as one's 'family or friends'.[72] But it is, Naess suggests, less often realized that one's identity also depends on one's relations to 'other living beings', non-human ones included, as well as to 'ecosystems, the ecosphere, and the

[70] Arne Naess and George Sessions, 'The Deep Ecology Platform', in N. Witoszek and A. Brennan (eds), *Philosophical Dialogues: Arne Naess and the Progress of Ecophilosophy* (Lanham, MD: Rowmann & Littlefield, 1999), pp. 8-9.

[71] *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, translated by David Rothenberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 38.

[72] 'Self-realization: an Ecological Approach to Being in the World', *The Trumpeter* 4, 3 (summer 1987): 35-42, at p. 35.

Earth with its long history'.[73] In short, each of us has not just a 'social self' but also an 'ecological self', which depends on our 'constitutive relations' with nature.[74]

He illustrates the point with an example of how the Norwegian government

heavily subsidized the resettlement of people from the arctic wildernesses, concentrating them in so-called centres of development, that is, small areas with a town at the centre. But the people, as persons, are clearly not the same when their bodies have been thus transported. The social, economic *and natural setting* is now vastly different. The objects with which they work and live are now completely different. There is a consequent loss of personal identity. 'Who am I?' they ask.[75]

The implication is that these people not only felt they had become different people but actually had become different people.

Naess's position is in several respects unlike the one I have defended in this book. For one thing, my main aim has been, not to persuade anyone why they should value nature, but to reveal the various ways that nature is in fact of value to people. The first word of the book's title is 'how', not 'why'. By contrast, Naess's position is expressly normative: his main concern is to tell us what we should do. Granted, Naess himself eschews talk of moral shoulds: 'I am not much interested in ethics or morals', he claims.[76] Yet in claiming this, he seems to have a peculiarly Kantian conception of morality in mind—one in which moral actions (which are performed out of moral duty) must be distinguished from 'beautiful' ones (which spring from certain sorts of inclination). Accordingly, though Naess shuns talk of duties and obligations, he implies that we should, in some sufficiently broad sense of that term, realize that our true selves are ecological.[77] More than this: he maintains that we should break through the confines of the 'narrow ego' and directly realize our ecological selves.[78] We should do this for several reasons: because 'maturity' demands it, for instance, and because it will bring joy and meaning to our lives.[79]

In this respect, then, my (primarily descriptive) aim differs from Naess's (primarily normative) one. We also approach questions of nature's value from different directions. I have argued that natural entities can have value as parts of certain wholes that are meaningful to and valuable for us humans. So far as I'm aware, however, Naess never makes this claim, preferring instead to say that such entities have 'an intrinsic or inherent value, or value in themselves' (a proposal I discuss in Chapter 9).[80]

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[73] Naess, 'Self-realization', p. 37.

[74] Naess, 'Self-realization', p. 35.

[75] Naess, 'Self-realization', p. 37; emphasis in original.

[76] Quoted in Warwick Fox, *Toward a Transpersonal Ecology: Developing New Foundations for Environmentalism* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1995), p. 219.

[77] Naess, 'Self-realization', p. 40.

[78] Naess, 'Self-realization', p. 35.

[79] Naess, 'Self-realization', p. 35.

[80] Arne Naess 'Intuition, Intrinsic Value, and Deep Ecology', in N. Witoszek and A. Brennan (eds), *Philosophical Dialogues: Arne Naess and the Progress of Ecophilosophy* (Lanham, MD: Rowmann & Littlefield, 1999), pp. 166-70, at p. 169.

Naess and I also have different conceptions of the relations between identity and environmental concern. Granted, we both take questions of identity to be important. Naess, as we have seen, proposes that concern for nature can flow from an expanded sense of identity. I haven't defended that specific claim: my argument, rather, has been that natural entities can have constitutive value for people by virtue of the contributions they make to certain meaningful wholes which themselves have value for those people. Even so, it seems to me that when a meaningful whole has value for a person—when, that is, it contributes to their well- being—it will typically be closely related to that person's identity (or at least their sense of it). It seems to me, for instance, that one of the reasons Navajo culture has value for the Navajos is because it contributes to their cultural identity. Likewise Saami culture for the Saami or the Buddhist tradition for Buddhists.

So I am happy with Naess's focus on identity. I am also happy to endorse much of what he says about that topic. Naess's Ecosophy T implies that mountains, rivers, and the rest of the natural world are not out there, beyond the boundaries of one's self, but, in a manner of speaking, inside the self from the very beginning. Similarly, I have suggested that natural entities can contribute, not just to a person's sense of who she is, but to who she actually is. In such cases, the entities are in a sense inside the self (just as the self is in a sense outside itself). In this respect, Naess might be said to have anticipated the part-whole model.

In one important respect, though, my account of identity diverges from that of Naess. Naess holds that something can contribute to one's identity only if one identifies with it—that is, reacts spontaneously to its interests as if they were one's own.[81] Accordingly, he maintains that the 'ecological self of a person is that with which this person identifies'.[82]

Like J. Baird Callicott, I see these bold claims about identification as unwelcome additions to Naess's account.[83] A natural entity certainly can contribute to a person's identity, but there is no reason to suppose that it can do this only if the person reacts spontaneously to its interests.[84] Recall the example of the late Katherine Smith. As we saw in Chapter 3, her identity seemed partly to depend on her relations with Big Mountain. Yet there is no reason to think that she saw the mountain's interests as her own. For one thing, the mountain does not seem to have any interests with which to identify. (Naess would have disagreed; but on this issue, at least, he seems to have been wrong.[85] And even if, in some sufficiently attenuated sense of 'interests', Big Mountain really does have interests, it is a further question whether Smith must have identified

[81] Arne Naess, ' "Man Apart" and Deep Ecology: A Reply to Reed', in Witoszek and Brennan (eds), *Philosophical Dialogues*, pp. 198-205, at p. 200.

[82] Naess, 'Self-realization', p. 35.

[83] J. Baird Callicott, 'Notes on "Self-Realization: An Ecological Approach to Being in the World" ', *Worldviews* 21 (2017): 235-50.

[84] Compare Callicott, 'Notes on "Self-Realization"', p. 243.

[85] 'If we were to see ugly buildings or installations on the very summit of Mount Fujiyama, we would

with those interests simply because the entity contributed to her identity. Indeed, if we take identification to involve the apparent merging of self and world, then it is not clear that Smith could have both identified with Big Mountain and cared about it as an entity distinct from herself.[86]

In sum, then: Naess recognized that natural entities can have value because of the constitutive relations they bear to a certain meaningful whole—namely, one's identity. And to this extent he really did anticipate the part-whole model. However, he then proceeded to frame his views on constitution in terms of identification, and in so doing, the latter came, as Callicott observes, to eclipse the former—not just in Naess's work but in that of many other deep ecologists too.[87] In fact when, in the early 1990s, Warwick Fox set out to find 'what is tenable and distinctive about the deep ecology approach', he settled on its commitment to 'transpersonal identification'.[88] By this time, the theme of constitutive relations had been well and truly eclipsed. One of my aims, in developing the part-whole model, is to bring it back into view.

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The second position I would like to examine is set out in an interesting paper by William J. Fitzpatrick. Like Ecosophy T, Fitzpatrick's account bears some resemblance to the part-whole model; however, as with Ecosophy T, there are also some illuminating differences.

Fitzpatrick argues that 'a broad range of natural things and places have non-instrumental value by virtue of playing constitutive, and not merely instrumental, roles in the flourishing[that is, the well-being] of human beings'.[89] The point, he suggests, can be made by means of a comparison with friendship. Genuine friendship is not a human good merely because it tends to have certain favourable effects, such as the production of pleasure. It is a human good because it is, as Aristotle recognized, an essential constituent of human well-being. And friends are of non-instrumental value because they are 'constituents of friendship'.[90] Now, Fitzpatrick continues, the same holds true of certain sorts of engagement with the natural world. Like friendship, some such engagement is an essential constituent of human well-being: 'engagement with at

be spontaneously repelled by them, finding that the dignity, majesty, aloofness, etc., of the mountain had been violated. In this context, it would be in the interest of the mountain, as spontaneously experienced by us, to retain those characteristics on which its dignity, etc. rest.' (Naess, ' "Man Apart" and Deep Ecology', p. 201.) For some compelling arguments for thinking that ecosystems cannot have interests, many of which would also apply to mountains, see Harley Cahen, 'Against the Moral Considerability of Ecosystems', Environmental Ethics 10 (1988): 195-216.

[86] See further, Val Plumwood, 'Nature, Self, and Gender: Feminism, Environmental Philosophy, and the Critique of Rationalism', *Hypatia* 6 (1) (1991): 3-27, at pp. 15-16.

[87] Callicott, 'Notes on "Self-Realization"', p. 241.

[88] *Toward a Transpersonal Ecology*, p. 147 and *ff.*

[89] William J. Fitzpatrick, 'Valuing Nature Non-Instrumentally', *Journal of Value Inquiry* 38 (2004): 315-32, at 321.

[90] Fitzpatrick, 'Valuing Nature', p. 321.

least some range of natural things and places is . . . a core ingredient of human flourishing'.[91] And just as friends derive non-instrumental value from being constituents of friendship, so 'a broad range of natural things and places' are of non-instrumental value because they are constituents of such engagement.[92]

Fitzpatrick's argument turns on the claim that engagement with some natural entities is an essential constituent of human well-being. To try to justify that claim he appeals, first, to some passages from Ralph Waldo Emerson which attest to 'aesthetic delights that run so deep that they come across as nothing less than fundamental goods for human beings . . . without which a human life would be significantly impoverished'.[93] Second, he refers to our need, as humans, to see 'how we fit into a larger, magnificent order'.[94] In neither case, he suggests, is there a 'plausible substitute' for engagement with the natural world.[95] Fitzpatrick does not claim that either sort of engagement with nature is a sufficient condition for well-being; but he does suggest that both are necessary.

Is he right? Are some sorts of engagement with nature essential to human well-being? If nature is thought to encompass everything that is not supernatural, then such claims are trivially true. Whenever one engages with anything other than spirits, ghosts, demons, and the like, one is engaging with nature in this sense. If, however, the concept of nature is construed more narrowly, as encompassing just those parts of the biosphere whose current states are not for the most part the intended products of human actions, then Fitzpatrick's claims are highly contentious. True, some sorts of engagement with the world around us are essential components of human well-being. But why should only engagement with the natural world do? Suppose, with Fitzpatrick, that aesthetic appreciation counts as a kind of engagement with the world. It is hard to see how someone could flourish were she completely impervious to the aesthetic qualities of the world around her. But what of someone who could appreciate the aesthetic qualities of sculptures, paintings, and other human artefacts but not those of natural entities, processes, places, and events? It is not at all clear that such a person would be incapable of flourishing. Likewise, even if human beings can flourish only if they have a sense of how they fit into some magnificent ordered whole, it would take a great deal of argument, and more than Fitzpatrick provides, to show that that whole must be a 'grand natural order'.[96] Fitzpatrick maintains that one 'cannot fully grasp' one's sense of being part of some grand order 'while milling about in a shopping mall, or sitting in the office'.[97] That isn't obviously true; but even if it were true, it would not entail that one can appreciate one's place in such an order only when one is in

[91] Fitzpatrick, 'Valuing Nature', p. 329.
[92] Fitzpatrick, 'Valuing Nature', p. 321.
[93] Fitzpatrick, 'Valuing Nature', p. 327.
[94] Fitzpatrick, 'Valuing Nature', p. 327.
[95] Fitzpatrick, 'Valuing Nature', p. 329.
[96] Fitzpatrick, 'Valuing Nature', p. 327; my emphasis.
[97] Fitzpatrick, 'Valuing Nature', p. 327.

the midst of natural, rather than artefactual, entities. Can a cathedral or a synagogue provide no sense of one's place in the great scheme of things?

Fitzpatrick therefore fails to establish that 'engagement with at least some range of natural things and places is . . . a core ingredient of human flourishing'.[98] A woman who does her utmost to avoid green and growing things might participate in any number of other worthwhile activities. She may be a talented scientist or artist, or a great supporter of humanitarian causes; and if she is any of these things, it is not at all clear that her life must be deficient. Strange though it may seem to those of us who enjoy hiking, birdwatching, and reading books on environmental ethics, it remains to be shown that engagement with nature is an essential part of human well-being.[99]

In sum: on at least one point, I agree with Fitzpatrick: certain natural entities really do have constitutive value because of their relations to human well-being. However, we disagree about the nature of those relations. Fitzpatrick claims that natural entities enter into forms of thinking, feeling, and acting that are essential to human well-being. I do not make this bold claim. All I have argued is that in many cases natural entities have value for us because they are parts of certain meaningful wholes. To be sure, those wholes themselves have value for us, in the sense that they contribute to human well-being. But they needn't be essential components of human well-being. Recall the Mahabodhi tree. It has constitutive value because of the role it plays in the Buddhist tradition. That tradition contributes to the well-being of Buddhists; but it is a further question whether it is an essential component of human wellbeing in general. And I have not argued that it is.

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In their jointly authored book Environmental Values, John O'Neill, Alan Holland, and Andrew Light argue that when places contribute to human well-being, when, to use my phrase, they have value for us, they do not always do so as means to the valuable end of enhancing human wellbeing. They begin by pointing out that when places make such contributions, they often do so as the particular places they are. Suppose that a particular glacial valley contributes to the well-being of those who live in it. It needn't do so merely as a token of the general type, glacial valley.

It might have value for the valley-dwellers because it is the particular place it is. That, they might think, is where I flipped my quadbike; that the depression that floods every spring; that the spot where I first kissed the woman who would become my wife. The place might have—in fact, probably will have—value for its inhabitants because it is bound up with their lives, their sense of who, as individuals and as a community, they are.

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[98] Fitzpatrick, 'Valuing Nature', p. 329; my emphasis.

[99] For a detailed defence of this claim, see Robin Attfield, 'Beyond Anthropocentrism', in A. O'Hear and H. Rolston (eds), *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement 69* (2011): 29-46, at p. 36.

For O'Neill, Holland, and Light, particular places can have value for us because they contribute to the 'larger narrative context' that allows us to 'make sense' of our own lives and hence to flourish.[100] Accordingly, when such places are sullied, destroyed, fenced off, or in any other way lost, those who live in them lose 'something integral' to their lives—and this, O'Neill, Holland, and Light maintain, is a noncompensable loss.[101] Suppose the valuable valley were flooded to form a reservoir. No sum of money could adequately compensate its former inhabitants.[102] Even some other valley, all lush and green and made ready for them to occupy, would not do.

O'Neill, Holland, and Light are right. When a particular place is essential to a person's identity, it will typically have constitutive value for that person. In this respect, their narrative-based account of environmental value prefigures my part-whole model. In other respects, however, the two differ. First, just as their account is in several respects wider than mine, so mine is in several respects more encompassing than theirs. Whereas O'Neill, Holland, and Light focus their attention on the value of places, I have considered the value of a wider range of natural entities, including organisms and natural events. Whereas they focus on the value of particular entities—that is, particular places—I have also devoted quite a bit of space to the value of particular kinds of entities (such as reindeer). Whereas they focus almost entirely on history, I have also considered religion.

Furthermore, the part-whole model is compatible with a wider range of theoretical stances. O'Neill, Holland, and Light present their narrative-based account of environmental value as an alternative to those accounts that presuppose that natural entities have intrinsic value.[103] They also contrast it with those approaches to environmental ethics that rest on appeals to human rights.[104] A narrative-based account of environmental value is, they suggest, to be distinguished from accounts that are based on either nature's intrinsic value or human rights.

By contrast, accepting my part-whole model does not compel one to eschew appeals to either intrinsic value or human rights. On the one hand, the model allows, though does not presuppose, that some natural entities have intrinsic value. Hence it can consistently be endorsed both by those who believe that some such entities have intrinsic value and by those who do not. (I say more about the concept of intrinsic value, and O'Neill, Holland, and Light's objections to its use, in Chapter 9.) On the other hand, the part-whole model is compatible with efforts to protect natural entities by appealing to human rights: indeed, in Chapter 10, I argue that it reveals normative reasons for action that may appropriately be expressed in the language of human rights. Nonetheless, since it does not rely on any appeals to human rights, it can consistently

[100] John O'Neill, Alan Holland, and Andrew Light, *Environmental Values* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), p. 163.

[101] O'Neill et al., *Environmental Values*, p. 66.

[102] O'Neill et al., *Environmental Values*, pp. 78-9.

[103] O'Neill et al., *Environmental Values*, p. 121.

[104] O'Neill et al., *Environmental Values*, pp. 38-9.

be endorsed both by those environmentalists who make such appeals and by those who do not.

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In recent years, a number of writers, including Sandra M. D^az, Kai M. A. Chan, and Unai Pascual, have recommended that we think about environmental issues in terms of the concept of nature's contributions to people (NCP). Because these writers adopt a similar outlook on the matters I'll be discussing, and because much of their work on those matters has been conducted under the auspices of the Intergovernmental SciencePolicy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), I will refer to them collectively as the 'IPBES writers'.

The IPBES writers define 'nature's contributions to people' as follows:

All the positive contributions or benefits, and occasionally negative contributions, losses or detriments, that people obtain from nature. It resonates with the use of the term ecosystem services, and goes further by explicitly embracing concepts associated with other worldviews on human-nature relations and knowledge systems (e.g. 'nature's gifts' in many indigenous cultures).[105]

The IPBES writers' case has much to be said for it. First, as I argued in Chapter 2, the forests, rivers, etc. from which we derive benefits are not always well described as ecosystems. In many cases, it really is better to use some word—such as 'nature'—whose meaning is not so closely bound to the presuppositions, methods, and results of the natural sciences. Second, the IPBES writers are right to acknowledge that the ecosystem services approach has been less than fully successful in 'the unpacking and valuation of some "cultural ecosystem services" not readily amenable to biophysical or monetary metrics . . .'[106] Third, they rightly urge environmental thinkers to look beyond the familiar dichotomy between those of nature's values that are unconnected with human well-being (roughly, its intrinsic values) and those that derive from its usefulness, or potential usefulness, to us humans (which are all instrumental values).[107] Fourth, the IPBES writers make the plausible suggestion that those of nature's values that fall into neither of those categories are bound up with questions of meaning and culture. For instance, Pascual and his colleagues associate such values with 'the meaningfulness of relationships' and the goal of living 'a meaningful and satisfying life'.[108]

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[105] Unai Pascual, Patricia Balvanera, Sandra D^az, et al., 'Valuing Nature's Contributions to People: the IPBES Approach, *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability* (2017) 26: 7-16, at p. 15.

[106] Sandra D^az, Unai Pascual, Marie Stenseke, et al., 'Assessing Nature's Contributions to People', *Science* 359 (6373) (2018): 270-2, at p. 271.

[107] Kai M. A. Chan, Patricia Balvanera, Karina Benessaiah, et al., 'Why Protect Nature? Rethinking Values and the Environment', *PNAS* 113 (6) (2016): 1462-5, at p. 1462.

[108] Pascual et al., 'Valuing Nature's Contributions to People, p. 15. See further, Sanna Stalhammar and Henrik Thoren, 'Three Perspectives on Relational Values of Nature, *Sustainability Science* 14 (2019): 1201-12, at p. 1206.

D^az and her colleagues maintain that 'the NCP approach recognizes the central and pervasive role that culture plays in defining all links between people and nature'.[109]

In sum, then, the IPBES writers appeal to certain values that are bound up with questions of meaning and culture and which fail, moreover, to count as either intrinsic or instrumental. They maintain that these relational values must be considered if we are accurately to assess nature's contributions to people.

But what exactly does it mean for something to have relational value? On this matter, many of the explanations offered by the IPBES writers raise more questions than they answer. The jointly authored paper 'Why Protect Nature?', a seminal contribution on the topic, is a case in point. Its authors suggest that relational values are 'not present in things but derivative of relationships and responsibilities to them'.[110] Yet that statement fails to distinguish relational values from instrumental values— which, after all, can be derivative of relationships. Indeed, if, as several writers suggest, natural things can be valuable for their own sakes on account of their relations to other things, then it also fails to distinguish relational values from intrinsic values.[111]

The statement provided in 'Why Protect Nature?' also fails to clarify whether claims about relational values are about the nature of valuing or about what has value. Suppose that the IPBES writers take the former option. Suppose, in other words, that they mean to suggest that valuing can be relational. That suggestion might seem banal. After all, every instance of valuing is relational in the sense that it involves a relation between a valuing subject and a valued object.[112] But at least some IPBES writers seem to make claims about relational value in order to defend substantive metaethical positions. For example, Barbara Muraca postulates the existence of relational values as a way of challenging both the subjectivist notion that we project value onto an essentially valueless world and the objectivist notion that objects can have value independently of any subjective contribution, as if value were 'like some sort of primary quality'.[113]

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[109] D^az et al., 'Assessing Nature's Contributions to People, p. 270.

[110] Chan et al., 'Why Protect Nature?', p. 1462.

[111] For a defence of the claim that natural things can be valuable for their own sakes on account of their relations to other things, see Levi Tenen, 'No Intrinsic Value? No Problem: Why Nature can still be Valuable for its Own Sake', *Environmental Ethics 42 (2) (2020):* 119-33. (I discuss this issue further in Chapter 9.) I am grateful to Rogelio Luque-Lora for suggesting to me that talk of relational values can encourage one to overlook the fact that values of other kinds, including not just instrumental values but also intrinsic ones, can be, in various senses, relational. He defends that claim in his forthcoming paper 'The Trouble with Relational Values.'

[112] D. S. Maier and A. Feest, 'The IPBES Conceptual Framework: An Unhelpful Start', *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 29 (2016): 327-47, at p. 334.

[113] Barbara Muraca, 'The Map of Moral Significance: A New Axiological Matrix for Environmental Ethics, *Environmental Values 20* (2011): 375-96, at p. 382. Though Muraca is, I believe, right to challenge those positions, the metaethical issue with which she is engaging has little bearing on my aim, in this book, to assess how nature matters. So, although I say something about this issue in Chapter 9, I do not say very much.

In a more recent paper, Austin Himes and Muraca reaffirm that the 'process of valuation' is 'essentially relational'.[114] But to propose that we need to consider relational values along with values of other kinds is, they add, to advance a thesis about the 'content of valuation'—about, that is, 'what is valued and how the value is attributed and articulated'.[115] Picking up on this suggestion, Luuk Knippenberg and several of his colleagues (including, as it happens, Barbara Muraca) argue that to postulate relational values is to imply that some relations—including what they call some 'humans-nature relationship[s]'—are of value.[116] Such relations have value, they maintain, 'in a myriad of instances running in scale from the interactions between a child and a dog, a farmer and her land, a community and its forest, a government agency designing a plan for landscape renewal, humanity struggling to keep the Earth whole'.[117] Drawing on my own work, they suggest that in any such case the relevant 'relationship can be seen to have constitutive value' as 'an integral part of a greater valuable whole' such as 'a flourishing human life'.[118] Interpreted in this way, a commitment to relational value is not to be contrasted with a commitment to either subjectivism or objectivism. It is to be contrasted with the claim that it is only relata, and not the relations between them, that can have value.

Knippenberg and his colleagues make a good case. It is plausible, for instance, that not just Big Mountain itself but also its relation to the Navajo people has constitutive value as part of Navajo culture. Likewise, it is plausible that not only the Saami's reindeer but also their relation with their Saami herders has constitutive value as part of the herders' cultural identity.

So the claim that human-nature relations can have value is plausible. But it is unclear why one must appeal to what is sometimes billed as a 'new concept'—that of relational value—to make the point.[119] The point can be made, as Knippenberg and his colleagues themselves do, by appealing to constitutive values and intrinsic values.

Moreover, the plausible claim that human-nature relations can have value sits uneasily with the claim, frequently made by the IPBES writers, that relational values

[114] Austin Himes and Barbara Muraca, 'Relational Values: the Key to Pluralistic Valuation of Ecosystem Services', *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability* 35 (2018): 1-7, at p. 2.

[115] Himes and Muraca, 'Relational Values', p. 2.

[116] Luuk Knippenberg, Wouter T. de Groot, Riyan J. G. van den Born, et al., 'Relational Value, Partnership, Eudaimonia: a Review', *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability* 35 (2018): 39-45, at pp. 39 and 41. As Stalhammar and Thoren ('Three Perspectives', p. 1204) note, the reference to *relationships*, rather than merely *relations*, seems to bias the discussion, since 'the notion of "relationship" already tends to be more imbued with values at the outset than "relations" '.

[117] Knippenberg et al., 'Relational Value', p. 41.

[118] Knippenberg et al., 'Relational Value', p. 41.

[119] Relational value is described as a new concept in Matthias Winfried Kleespies and Paul Wilhelm Dierkes, 'Exploring the Construct of Relational Values: An Empirical Approach.' *Frontiers in Psychology* 11 (2020): 1-14, at p. 1. For a different argument for the conclusion that references to relational values can be perfectly translated into references to other sorts of values, see Patrik Baard, 'The Goodness of Means: Instrumental and Relational Values, Causation, and Environmental Policies', *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 32 (2019): 183-99, at p. 196.

may be contrasted with both intrinsic values and instrumental ones.[120] For to say that relations can have value is not to say that they must have any particular kind(s) of value. For example, it is not to deny that they can be valuable because of their usefulness. Take the relation between Buddhists and the Mahabodhi tree. As we saw, that tree has constitutive value as part of the Buddhist tradition. The same holds true of the relation between the tree and its Buddhist devotees. Yet that relation might have other kinds of value, too. For instance, it might have instrumental value for tour operators in Northern India, which is simply to say that the fact that Buddhists revere the Mahabodhi tree might be useful for those who wish to attract tourists to the area.

[120] The IPBES writers often confuse this claim by loading the concept of intrinsic value with some unneeded conceptual baggage. Intrinsic value, they maintain, is 'independent of human judgement' and 'independent of any human experience or evaluation' (respectively, Sandra D^az, Sebsebe Demissew, Julia Carabias, et al., 'The IPBES Conceptual Framework - Connecting Nature and People', *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability* 14 (2015): 1-16, at p. 11 and Pascual et al., 'Valuing Nature's Contributions to People', p. 14). That, however, is a nonstandard and metaethically extravagant construal of what it means for something to have intrinsic value. In discussions of environmental ethics, claims to the effect that x has intrinsic value typically mean, not that x has whatever value it has independently of human judgement, etc., but simply that x is valuable for its own sake, and so not merely for the sake of any other things, such as human well-being, to which it may contribute. I address this issue in Chapter 9.

Part 3: Wider Issues

8. Why Nature?(9)

In developing the part-whole model, I have taken my cue from environmental thought. Accordingly, I have focused my attention on the kinds of entities that environmental thinkers characteristically care about—eucalyptus forests and koalas, for instance, rather than smartphones and car parks. I have focused, that is, on those entities which count as 'natural' in the sense of being largely unshaped by human intentional actions. I have argued that some such entities have a certain kind of value—constitutive value—on account of the meanings they bear.

However, that conclusion would also seem to hold true of many entities that do not seem to be natural. Take President Emmanuel Macron's response to the fire that ravaged Notre-Dame de Paris in April 2019. 'Like all of my countrymen,' he said, 'I am sad tonight to see this part of us burn.'[1] His words imply that the cathedral—that apparently non-natural entity—has constitutive value for the French just as, say, the Mahabodhi tree has constitutive value for Buddhists. What is more, even when a certain natural entity has constitutive value because of the meanings it bears, it is a further question whether it has that value because it is (or is taken to be) natural. Suppose that a certain river valley plays a key role in a certain farmer's sense of who she is. Even if the valley qualifies as being in some sense natural, it is a further question whether it is of constitutive value to the farmer because it is (or is taken to be) natural in that sense. Perhaps the valley has constitutive value for the farmer only to the extent that it has been transformed by human actions. Perhaps it has such value for her only because she and her forebears mixed their labour with it.

So, what exactly is the role of naturalness in my account? In this chapter, I provide an answer. But before we can get on with the answering, we need to return to a matter touched upon in the Introduction. We must clarify what nature and naturalness mean.

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When environmentalists speak of their love of nature or of the need to protect it, they are rarely using the word 'nature' to denote some vast and nebulous entity,

[1] Tom Goodenough, 'Picture Gallery: Notre-Dame Cathedral Devastated by Fire', *The Spectator*, 15 April 2019.

(9) *How Nature Matters: Culture, Identity, and Environmental Value*. Simon P. James, Oxford Uni-

Nature with a capital 'N'. They mean to express their love of particular entities and kinds of entities—this stretch of coastline, for example, or these species of seabird. Moreover, they do not take 'nature' to encompass absolutely everything that is not supernatural, smartphones and car parks included. Rather, their statements indicate a contrast between what is natural and what is in some sense 'human'. They imply the presence of a line, if only a fuzzy one, between the world of fur, feathers, and rock and that of plastic, concrete, and steel.

In some academic circles, that contrast is thought to be dubious. '[T]here is not one single case', proclaims Bruno Latour, 'where it is useful to make the distinction between what is "natural" and what "is not natural".'[2] Steven Vogel is also sceptical. 'The distinction between humans and nature', he maintains, 'depends on a philosophical and biologically untenable dualism that forgets that human beings themselves are part of nature . . .'[3] Very often, indeed, the notion that there exists some realm—nature—that is distinct from the 'human' world is regarded not merely as useless or untenable, but also as naive and dangerous, like talk of witches or demonic possession.

The relevant human-nature distinction can be challenged in two complementary ways. One strategy, that of the anti- humanist, is to target its first element by arguing that any entity we take to be human will be partly constituted by factors we take to be non-human.[4] The anti-humanist typically argues that we humans are physical entities through and through, subject to the same physical causes as any other such entities. She may well add that any artefact, be it a hammer or a smartphone, is not wholly a manifestation of human will but instead harbours forces that operate 'independently of humans'.[5] Her general conclusion is that wherever we look, either into ourselves or outwards to the things we make, we find nothing that is entirely cut off from the rest of reality.

The second strategy, a mirror-image of the first, targets the second element of the human-nature distinction. Whereas anti-humanists argue that any entity we take to be human will be partly constituted by factors we take to be non-human, those I call nature sceptics argue that any entity we take to be natural will be partly constituted by

[2] 'Fifty Shades of Green': Bruno Latour on the Ecomodernist Manifesto, Presentation to the Panel on Modernism at the Breakthrough Dialogue, Sausalito, June 2015 (https://undisci- plineden-vironments.org/2015/06/27/fifty-shades-of-green-bruno-latour-on-the-ecomodernist- manifesto/). To be pedantic, even Latour must admit that there is *one* such case—namely, when one means to challenge the distinction.

[3] Steven Vogel, *Thinking Like a Mall: Environmental Philosophy After the End of Nature* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2015), p. 24.

[4] 'Anti-humanist' is not, I concede, an ideal term—but I can't think of a better one. Certainly, the sort of anti-humanism I have in mind must be distinguished from the misanthropic 'antihumanism' that has been challenged by writers such as Murray Bookchin (in, for example, *Reenchanting Humanity: A Defense of the Human Spirit Against Antihumanism, Misanthropy, Mysticism, and Primitivism* (London: Cassell, 1995)).

[5] Vogel, *Thinking Like a Mall*, pp. 104 (emphasis removed) and 110.

factors we take to be non-natural. Hence—they conclude—what we take to be natural is not really natural at all. To all intents and purposes, nothing—or at least nothing on earth—is natural.[6]

Though much could be said about the first of these strategies, my main concern here is with the second. I want to know what it means to be sceptical of nature, and whether there are any good grounds for this sort of scepticism.

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Though nature sceptics supply various arguments in support of their position, they all begin by assuming that the concept of nature is of something that exists independently of the social and historical forces that hold sway in the human world. Having made this assumption, some of their number proceed to observe that this very concept is itself the product of such forces and hence 'a cultural product', 'an artifact of human cultural life', or something of that kind.[7] This, they suggest, reveals some sort of incoherence in the concept. As Vogel puts it, 'because each appeal to nature as independent of the social turns out upon analysis to possess its own social meaning and its own historical pedigree', no such appeal can 'in truth achieve the origin it claims to know'.[8]

This, then, is one argument for nature scepticism—but it is not a very good one. Begin with the suggestion that the concept of a natural-as- opposed-to-human realm is some sort of product or artefact—words that imply intentional production. Granted, concepts are sometimes intentionally produced: in the 1930s, for example, Arthur Tansley came up with the concept of the ecosystem.[9] But no one 'came up' with the concept of a natural-as-opposed-to-human realm, so that concept should not be described as a product or artefact.[10] Besides, even if the concept of nature had been intentionally produced, the argument implied by the nature sceptics' claims would fail. For the fact that a particular concept is the product of certain social and historical forces does not entail that that to which the concept refers is the product of such forces.[11] If it were

[6] This sort of scepticism, then, is not about whether what is natural is *good*. It is about whether anything counts as natural in the first place.

[7] Don Cupitt, 'Nature and Culture', in N. Spurway (ed.), *Humanity, Environment and God* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), p. 35; Roger J. H. King, 'How to Construe Nature: Environmental Ethics and the Interpretation of Nature, *Between the Species 6* (1990): 101-8, at p. 102.

[8] 'On Environmental Philosophy and Continental Thought', in D. R. Keller (ed.), *Environmental Ethics: The Big Questions* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 257-67, at p. 260. (Article originally published in *Philosophy Today* 42 (1998): 169-81.)

[9] Though the word used to denote that concept was suggested to him by A. R. Clapham (A. J. Willis, 'The Ecosystem: an Evolving Concept Viewed Historically', *Functional Ecology* 11 (1997): 268-71, at p. 268).

[10] On nature sceptics' use of '[m]etaphors of human labor', see Eileen Crist, 'Against the Social Construction of Nature and Wilderness', *Environmental Ethics* 26 (1) (2004): 5-24, at pp. 7-13.

[11] It seems that Vogel himself came to acknowledge this point (see *Thinking Like a Mall*, p. 35). Similar points are made in the following works: John O'Neill, 'Wilderness, Cultivation and Appropria-

otherwise, then we would be forced to suppose that there was no natural selection before Darwin and no ecosystems before Tansley. In the present case, then, one can consistently endorse both the following claims: (1) the concept of what is natural (and hence independent of social and historical forces) arose due to the influence of certain social and historical forces and (2) some entities really are natural in this sense.

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It is a further question, though, whether any entities really are natural in this sense. Nature sceptics give several reasons for thinking that no entities merit that description.

To understand the first of their reasons, we will need to step back for a moment to consider some wider and deeper metaphysical and epistemological issues. In particular, we must consider what I will call the topic of subject-dependence.

Let us call an entity subject- dependent if it would not be the entity it is were it not for the fact that it is (or would be) taken, by one or more subjects, to be that entity. The International Date Line is subjectdependent in this sense. If we were to abstract away our language, our conceptual schemes, our social conventions—if we were to bracket all these subjective and intersubjective factors and take up what Thomas Nagel calls a 'view from nowhere', the Line would not show up.[12] In this respect, it seems to differ from the Grand Canyon. It seems that the Canyon would be the entity that it is even if no subjects would take it to be that entity. The Canyon seems to be subject-independent.

Now, in light of that distinction, consider what nature sceptics say about the concept of nature. Nature, writes Vogel, is supposed to be 'a world somehow beyond or underneath the human one'.[13] For Latour it is thought to be a realm of 'non-mental entities', independent of our 'symbolic representations', and 'indifferent to our quarrels, our ignorances, and the limits of our representations and fictions'—in short, a realm of 'things-in-themselves'.[14]

Such claims imply that

(A) An entity is natural if and only if it is subject-independent.

That proposition could be expressed in various ways. One could say that an entity is natural if and only if it is mind-independent. Alternatively, one could refer to its independence from language, for instance, or social practices, or conceptual schemes. The basic point, however, remains the same: an entity is natural if and only if it is what it is in itself, independently of how it could be taken to be by any subjects.

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tion', *Philosophy and Geography* 5 (1) (2002): 35-50, at pp. 43-4; Dale Jamieson, *Ethics and the Environment: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 165.

[12] Thomas Nagel, *The View from Nowhere* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

[13] 'On Environmental Philosophy and Continental Thought', p. 258.

[14] *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy*, translated by Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp. 22, 34, 13-14; Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, translated by Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), p 67.

Nature sceptics, of course, deny that we may justifiably pick out anything as being natural in this sense.[15] As noted above, their reasons for doing so are not merely theory-driven. They also worry about the moral and political implications of appealing to what is subject-independently the case and so (it is implied) not up for debate. Though he is not himself a nature sceptic, Bryan Bannon expresses this Latourian worry very well:

If there is a nature to which one can appeal in order to justify one's political project, then one's opposition has little choice but to accede to one's political will. After all, one cannot challenge the constitution of the cosmos. In this way, even those included in the polis can still be disenfranchised by finding themselves on the wrong side of nature. Hence, Nature operates as a means by which social hierarchies are maintained, with examples including the enslavement of Africans, the project of colonization in general, the subordination of women, and the contemporary failure to extend certain civil rights to homosexuals.[16]

For nature sceptics, then, we cannot justifiably pick out anything as being natural in sense (A). In support of this conclusion, some make the epistemological argument that since our epistemic encounters with the world are necessarily mediated by various subjective factors (such as our language and conceptual schemes), we have no epistemic access to how entities are in themselves, independent of any such factors. From this they infer that 'nature itself cannot be known, cannot be grasped or understood . . .' And they point out that this claim, in turn, entails that 'Claims that nature is thus-and-such have to be eschewed . . .'[17] By the lights of this argument, then, one cannot justifiably make any claims that nature is 'thus-and-such'. So one could not justifiably claim that the Grand Canyon, for example, is natural.

Some nature sceptics go further by offering an ontological argument. The problem with the claim that certain entities are natural in sense (A) is not, they contend, its implication that what is natural in this sense cannot be 'grasped or understood'. The problem is that nothing—or at least, nothing on earth—is natural in this sense. Nature scepticism is justified, they maintain, because there simply 'is no nature, in the sense anyway of an origin or a world somehow beyond or underneath the human one . . .'.[18]

Making this argument does not commit one to the absurd notion that 'how people understand the world is the world',[19] for one can affirm that anything that might be taken to be a thing must be in some respects subject-dependent and yet consistently

[15] Or anything on earth, at least. They may concede that some abstract entities, such as the number five, are subject-independent in the relevant sense.

[16] *From Mastery to Mystery: A Phenomenological Foundation for an Environmental Ethic* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2014), pp. 24-5.

[17] Vogel, 'On Environmental Philosophy and Continental Thought', p. 261. Here Vogel is describing, rather than endorsing, one form of nature scepticism.

[18] Vogel, 'On Environmental Philosophy and Continental Thought', p. 260 (emphasis removed). Compare Phil Macnaghten and John Urry's claim that ' "nature" is not a self-evident set of entities which are simply there, waiting to be "sensed" ' (*Contested Natures* (London: Sage, 1998) p. 108.

[19] Sergio Sismondo attributes that claim to advocates of 'strong' social constructivism. ('Social Constructivism', in J. Baird Callicott and Robert Frodeman (eds), *Encyclopedia of Environmental*

deny that the world is merely what we subjects take it to be.[20] But it does commit one to the claim that there is no 'ready-made world', no way that any entities are in themselves, wholly independent of any subjective factors.[21] That claim, for its part, is not absurd: it has been capably defended by writers such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Hilary Putnam. But it is contentious. And if it is in fact false—if, that is, some entities really are natural in sense (A)—and if, moreover, some of those entities exist on earth, then the conclusion of the ontological argument for nature scepticism must also be false. If, moreover, some of those entities can be identified, then the conclusion of the epistemological argument must be false, too.

One way to challenge those nature sceptics who appeal to the subjectdependence of things is, therefore, to accept their definition of what it means to be natural—namely, (A)—but to contend that some identifiable things on earth really are natural in that sense.[22] However, another strategy would be to reject (A)—to suppose, that is, that an entity can be in some sense natural and subject-dependent.

That is, I think, a reasonable supposition. Take the claim that the Grand Canyon is a natural entity. Confirmed nature sceptics will interpret that claim in heavyweight metaphysical terms. To claim that the Canyon is natural is, they will say, to imply that it is some sort of mysterious thing-in-itself, entirely unconditioned by subjectivity. But there is no need to accept this contentious conception of what it means to be natural. Indeed, one could accept the anti-realist claim that in the absence of certain subjective factors the Canyon would not be the entity that it is and yet consistently add that it is nonetheless natural in a different sense of the word 'natural'. One could consistently claim that it is natural, not in the sense that it is entirely unconditioned by subjectivity, but in the sense that it has, for the most part, been physically unaffected by human actions.[23]

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Ethics, Volume 2 (Farmington Mills, MI: Macmillan Reference, 2009), pp. 249-51, at p. 249). The reference to *understanding* is puzzling; for the very idea of understanding seems to presuppose something independent of the act of understanding—something that is to be *understood*. But perhaps we shouldn't get hung up on the reference to understanding. Perhaps the constructivist means to make the more general claim that the world is merely what we take it to be. This may be true in some cases. For example, if a consensus forms that mullet haircuts are fashionable, then (arguably) the world changes: mullets become fashionable. But it is absurd to claim that it is *universally* the case that the world is merely what we take it to be. To their credit, both Vogel and Latour expressly reject this sort of constructivism (see Vogel, *Thinking Like a Mall*, Chapter 2; Latour, *Politics of Nature*, pp. 32-4).

[20] This, it seems to me, is what Maurice Merleau-Ponty does. See my paper 'Merleau-Ponty and Metaphysical Realism', *European Journal of Philosophy* 26 (2018): 1312-23, at pp. 1315-16.

[21] Hilary Putnam, *Reason, Truth and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 123.

[22] Holmes Rolston III takes this approach in 'Nature for Real: Is Nature a Social Construct?', in *The Philosophy of the Environment*, edited by T. D. J. Chappell (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), pp. 38-64.

[23] Expressed in a Kantian way, my suggestion is that environmentalists' claims about what is

Admittedly, the claim that the Grand Canyon has been for the most part physically unaffected by human actions—the claim that that particular entity is in that particular sense natural—doesn't withstand much critical analysis. Standing on the South Rim, walking on hot asphalt, surrounded by tourists, litter bins, and gift shops, very little naturalness is on show. The place seems more 'human' than not.

But other places seem more natural. Take The Spectre, a jagged rock spire in Antarctica's Queen Maud Mountains, approximately 280 miles from the South Pole. The spire does not seem to have been very much affected by human actions; in fact, as I write, only ten people have even visited the place.[24]

At this point, though, another component of the nature's sceptic's case clicks into gear: the argument that nothing on earth qualifies as natural because absolutely everything in the planet's biosphere, even that which is remote and seemingly untouched, has been physically affected by human actions.

This argument forms the centrepiece of Bill McKibben's wonderful book The End of Nature. McKibben acknowledges that humans have been modifying their environments, intentionally and unintentionally, for as long as they have been around. But he points out that the onset of anthropogenic global heating changed everything:

We have changed the atmosphere, and thus we are changing the weather. By changing the weather, we make every spot on earth manmade and artificial. We have deprived nature of its independence, and that is fatal to its meaning. Nature's independence is its meaning; without it there is nothing but us.[25]

The implied argument is as follows:

(1) If x is natural, then it is not artificial.

(2) For any y, if either the identity or existence of y depends to any degree at all on anthropogenic causes, then y is artificial.[26]

(3) For any z, if z exists on earth, then either its existence or its identity (or both) is partly the result of anthropogenic causes.

Therefore (4) nothing on earth is natural.

The argument is not compelling. Although even seemingly pristine places such as Antarctica have been affected by anthropogenic global heating, some things on earth, such as the cold insides of rocks, are unlikely to have been physically affected by human actions.[27] So Premise 3 is contentious. Premise 2 is also open to question, since it is not clear that all of those things that have been influenced by anthropogenic causes count as artificial, on any standard reading of 'artificial'. Take Yellowstone

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natural, and what isn't, could reasonably be construed as 'empirical' rather than 'transcendental'.

[24] Tom Whipple, 'Antarctic Adventurer Leo Houlding Scales Earth's Most Remote Mountain', *The Times*, 27 January 2020.

[25] *The End of Nature* (London: Penguin, 1990), p. 54.

[26] If y's *identity* depends on anthropogenic causes, then without those causes y would not be y. If y's *existence* depends on anthropogenic causes, then without those causes y would not exist.

[27] On the effects of global heating in Antarctica, see Craig Welch, 'The Big Meltdown', *National Geographic*, 29 October 2018.

National Park. It exists because of human beings—because, amongst other things, of the efforts of legislators, rangers, and volunteers. Yet to call it 'artificial' would be to overstretch the meaning of that word. Contrary to McKibben, there is no good reason to suppose that any degree of human causal influence, even a tiny bit of it, is enough to 'denature' a thing, still less make it artificial. A considerable degree of influence is required. Moreover, the kind of influence is also relevant. Imagine two entities, x and y, which have been influenced to the same degree by human actions. But suppose that whereas x was intentionally shaped by human beings, y was not. All things held equal, x will be less natural than y.

Taking these points into consideration, we arrive at the following, alternative conception of naturalness:

(B) An entity is natural to the extent that its current state has been largely unaffected by human actions (especially ones intended to shape the entity).

That (admittedly loose) definition does not entail that something counts as natural only if it is 100 per cent natural. It does not set 'up nature as an object "over there"—a pristine wilderness beyond all trace of human contact'.[28] By its lights, The Spectre, for instance, counts as natural, even though it has been affected by global heating.[29] (Conversely, New York's Times Square does not count as natural, even though much that goes on it, from the accretion of pigeon droppings to the sprouting of weeds, is not of human design.)

These claims do not have the moral and political implications that rightly concern nature sceptics such as Latour. The claim that some entities on earth are natural in sense (B) does not imply that what is natural must be good and so should be admired, preserved, or emulated. Nor does it imply that what is not natural must be in some sense bad. The claim is not normative. Moreover, to recall the arguments of the anti-humanists, accepting that some entities are natural in sense (B) does not commit one to accepting the existence of some essentially human ontological domain, hermetically sealed off from the rest of reality. It neither presupposes nor entails that sort of dualism.

Not all nature sceptics are happy with talk of degrees of naturalness, however. Vogel, for instance, protests that

[r]ecasting a binary opposition as a continuum doesn't render it less dualistic, it only extends the dualism along an axis whose poles (even if reached only asymptotically) remain fundamentally opposed to each other. Why is 'naturalness' measured along an axis whose negative pole (so to speak) is the human and not, say, the shrimp or the beaver? Human beings here are still being anthropocentrically picked out here[sic] as animals with the remarkable ability to remove items from nature. That this removal is

[28] Timothy Morton, *Ecology without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 125.

[29] Similarly, consider the rather hackneyed example with which I opened this book: that of the Amazon rainforest. Most of that rainforest has been largely unshaped by human intentions, even though much of it—and more than is generally realized—has been so shaped. (On the various ways humans have shaped that part of the world, see Charles Mann, '1491', *The Atlantic Monthly* (March, 2000): 41-53.)

always partial and takes place by degrees does not transform the fundamentally dualist (and anthropocentric) character of the position.[30]

Vogel is using 'dualism' in a non-standard way. That term is typically used to refer to a difference between two things that are not, in relevant respects, at all alike. For instance, a mind-body dualist thinks that mind and body are very different—so different that it's hard to see how they could interact. If, by contrast, two things, x and y, lie on a continuum, then it is odd to speak of an x-y dualism. For example, the smallest dog in the world and the largest lie on a continuum, but it would be very odd—a misuse of language—to suppose that there is a dualism between them.

Even so, Vogel is right to point out that to postulate a human-nature continuum is to imply a distinction between those parts of the worlds that are conventionally described as 'human' and 'natural', respectively. He denies that that distinction 'has any ontological significance'.[31] The claim that reality is ultimately divided into a human part and a nonhuman (or natural) part makes just as little sense, he contends, as the claim that it is ultimately divided into a shrimp-influenced part and shmature, 'the world independent of the actions of shrimp', or a beaver- influenced part and bature, 'the world independent of the actions of beavers'.[32] Shmature, bature, nature—the notions, he suggests, make equally little sense.

In Vogel's opinion, then, there is 'no deep ontological difference' between the human and natural worlds, and it is 'anthropocentric' to suppose that there is.[33] He suggests that it is only because we are ourselves human that we are inclined to divide reality up into human and non-human (or natural) parts.[34] That is no doubt true; but if it is anthropocentric to distinguish what is 'human' from what is not, it is so in a merely formal sense. It is anthropocentric in the formal and trivial sense that the worlds we humans inhabit reflect our distinctly human concerns.[35] When, by contrast, environmental thinkers denounce anthropocentrism, they are using the term 'anthropocentrism' in a substantive sense. They are using it to denote the view that such things as mudskippers and mangroves have value only to the extent that they serve human interests. And a view can be formally anthropocentric without being substantively so. After all, one can distinguish between humans and nature and yet value the latter for its own sake.

It would therefore be a mistake to dismiss any and all appeals to a human-nature distinction as (substantively) anthropocentric. More generally, it is not at all clear

[30] Vogel, *Thinking Like a Mall*, p. 24.

[31] Vogel, *Thinking Like a Mall*, p. 169.

[32] 'Why "Nature" Has No Place in Environmental Philosophy', in G. E. Kaebnick (ed.), *The Ideal of Nature: Debates about Biotechnology and the Environment* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), pp. 84-97, at p. 89.

[33] Vogel, 'On Environmental Philosophy and Continental Thought', p. 24.

[34] Vogel, *Thinking Like a Mall*, p. 24.

[35] However, since we share some concerns with some of our non-human cousins, not all of our distinctly human concerns are *distinctively* human. (I defend this claim in *Environmental Philosophy: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity, 2015), p. 55.)

that, as Vogel seems to assume, the distinctions we make in thinking about values are legitimate only if they mirror the fundamental structure of reality. It may well be the case, as Vogel suggests, that ultimately, at ontological ground zero, reality is not divided up into 'human' and 'natural' parts. But so what? Consider the face I absentmindedly doodle on the back of a Post-it note. That wonky face has much less aesthetic value than Rembrandt's breathtaking Self Portrait at the Age of 63, but it is not clear that there must exist some deep ontological difference between the two. It is not clear that the things that should matter to us must show up in our deep ontology.

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To recap: A distinction is often drawn between those things on earth that are natural and those that aren't. Nature sceptics argue that nothing—or at least nothing on earth—falls into the former category. Their arguments may be classified as follows:

(1) Appeals to the provenance of the concepts of nature and naturalness.

(2)Appeals to the subject-dependence of reality.

(3)Appeals to the physical impact humans have had on things.

Suppose, contrary to the evidence, that nature sceptics such as Vogel are correct. Suppose that we cannot justifiably claim that anything on earth is natural in sense (B). Nevertheless, the fact remains that some people take some things on earth to be natural in this sense. Furthermore, some of those things may have constitutive value precisely because they are so taken.

Consider organic food. An apple, for instance, would not qualify as organic if its colour, shape, scent, and taste had been meticulously engineered by biotechnologists. Its various properties would need, rather, to have been largely unaffected by human intentional actions.

More generally, it would seem that food that is organic must be natural in sense (B). Now, organic food—or, at least, food that is taken to be organic—plays an important role in many people's lives. No doubt some such people would say that they would not be who they are were they to give up their commitment to eating organic food. Perhaps some of them would be right. For such people, those foods they take to be organic would have constitutive value precisely because they are taken to be natural.

The love of nature provides a second example. When people claim that they love nature, they are using the word 'nature' to denote certain parts of the world that seem to have been largely unaffected by human actions. That is to say, they are working with a conception of naturalness consistent with the one specified above as (B). Love of nature, moreover, plays an important role in the lives of nature lovers. Perhaps, indeed, some nature lovers would not be who they are were it not for that love. As with the example of organic food, it is irrelevant whether the entities they love really are natural in sense (B). It is enough that they are taken to be natural in this sense.

And precisely because they are so taken, they could have constitutive value for nature lovers.[36]

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I won't say more about either organic foods or the love of nature here. Instead, I would like to consider what is, I believe, a more interesting conception of the axiological significance of naturalness—one inspired by Robert Pogue Harrison's fascinating study of the meanings of forests.[37]

Harrison's Forests: The Shadow of Civilization is about more than just the physical entities denoted by the word 'forest'. It is also about—in fact primarily about—the concept forest and the various roles it has played in Western intellectual culture. It surveys a huge swathe of history, beginning with the sweeping cedar forests of Gilgamesh and ending with contemporary worries about biodiversity loss. But it is not just a survey; for the book gestures towards what is, I believe, a compelling argument for the cultural importance of forests. In what follows, I try to present that argument.

It seems to me that Harrison makes three main claims. First, he maintains that forests have traditionally been thought to mark the boundary of civilization and, more broadly, the human world. We find this, he suggests, in Gilgamesh, a work in which 'forests represent the quintessence of what lies beyond the walls of the city'.[38] We find it in Roman conceptions of forests as marking the boundaries of res publica.[39] We find it in the medieval Northern European conception of a forest as land placed off limits by royal decree and thereby excluded from the public domain.[40] And we find it in the present day. Granted, the world's forests are not what they once were; yet those forests that remain continue to evoke a realm unbound by 'the law of civilization' and independent of 'the voracious world of social humanity'.[41] The same may be said of

[36] In the unlikely event that nothing is natural, then the value of seemingly natural entities for nature lovers would be like the value of visible heavenly bodies for astrologers. That is to say, those entities the nature lover mistakenly takes to be natural would nonetheless have constitutive value for her, just as the stars and planets the astrologer mistakenly takes to have astrological meaning nonetheless have constitutive value for him.

[37] *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

[38] Harrison, *Forests*, p. 17.

[39] Harrison, *Forests*, p. 49.

[40] Harrison, *Forests*, p. 69.

[41] Harrison, *Forests*, pp. 2 and 74. Although Harrison usually claims that forests symbolize, allude, or in some other manner indicate nature, conceived of as a realm independent of human beings, he occasionally claims that they provide 'the most pervasive and privileged emblem for the originating source of both nature and culture' (p. 241). A similar ambiguity is present in Heidegger's work, from which he extensively draws. In 'The Origin of the Work of Art', Heidegger takes 'earth' (*die Erde*) to name both (a) that which stands opposed to the world of meanings and (b) that which 'gives rise' to that world (Iain D. Thomson, *Heidegger, Art, and Postmodernity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 90).

the concept forest. It continues to provide 'an index[that is, a sign or measure] of our exclusion' from nature.[42]

Second, Harrison claims that it is, broadly speaking, a good thing that forests play this role. Echoing Henry David Thoreau, he suggests that humans can flourish ('dwell') only if they remain alive to that radically non-human realm which is evoked by forests.[43] In suggesting this, Harrison does not mean to make the implausible claim that humans can flourish only if they encounter wild forests. Nor does he mean to imply that they can flourish only if they keep such places in mind. His claim, rather, is that humans can flourish only if they are sensitive to 'the alien element' in the world; and one way to do this is, he suggests, to contemplate the meanings of forests.[44]

But even that heavily-qualified claim is bold, and Harrison himself says very little to justify it. For a putative justification we must look elsewhere: to the work of Don Maier, an analytically-minded admirer of Harrison.

Here is Maier's justification for why we need to retain a sense of a non-human realm:

As the world is more and more transformed and presumed subject to transformation . . . , as it is more and more a thing of human design and management and regarded as such, as it is more and more evaluated and modified just to achieve those design and management goals, there is less and less of it recognized and recognizable as something outside of, setting off, framing those characteristically human endeavours.[45]

This is troubling because

human projects derive some part of their special meaning as an expression of human striving and creativity insofar as they are set off from that which is not such a project. If everywhere we looked, we saw ourselves reflected back as designers, creators, and managers; if we could not look at anything or any place without seeing in it our own desires and ambitions . . . then many of us would say that something enormously valuable would be absent from our world.[46]

For Maier, then, we need to retain a sense of a radically non-human realm if our projects are to retain 'part of their special meaning'. I think Harrison would agree. He would, I suspect, say that we need to retain a sense of that non-human realm, if we are to flourish as humans.[47]

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[42] Harrison, *Forests*, p. 201.

[43] Compare Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 282-3.

[44] Harrison, *Forests*, p. 265.

[45] Donald S. Maier, *What's So Good About Biodiversity? A Call for Better Reasoning About Nature's Value* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2012), p. 458.

[46] Maier, *What's So Good About Biodiversity?* pp. 435-6. Compare the following: Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, edited by David Farrell Krell with a foreword by Taylor Carman (Abingdon: Routledge, 1993), p. 232; Michael F. Smith, 'Letting in the Jungle', *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 8 (2) (1991): 145-54, at p. 152; Robert E. Goodin, *Green Political Theory* (Cambridge: Polity, 1992), pp. 39-41; Dale Jamieson, 'Climate Change, Responsibility, and Justice', *Science and Engineering Ethics* 16 (2009): 431-55, at p. 443.

[47] So Harrison and Maier seem to think that we humans can flourish only if we are related in the right way to what is taken to be natural in sense (B). Though a form of nature essentialism, this is, I

Harrison's third claim is that, throughout history, humans have destroyed forests. Of course they have felled trees and burnt vegetation— that much is obvious. But, more than this, humans have managed to corrupt what might be described as the meaning of forests—both the meanings of particular forests and the meaning of the concept forest.

This, at least, appears to be one of the points Harrison is making in his discussion of the entry for the word foret in Diderot's Encyclopedie. The author of that entry seems, he notes, to be clear in his mind about the value of forests. 'Our oaks', writes Monsieur Le Roy, 'no longer proffer oracles, and we no longer ask of them the sacred mistletoe; we must replace this cult by care; and whatever advantage one may previously have found in the respect that one had for forests, one can expect even more success from vigilance and economy.'[48] Le Roy's aim, it emerges, was not to destroy forests, but to manage them so that they might provide a sustainable yield of timber. But in trying to achieve this, he and his successors changed the way forests came to be seen. Any particular forest came to be regarded as merely one element of a management problem. Even the concept forest was transformed. For Le Roy, foret calls to mind, not some radically non-human realm, but the project of sustainable forestry.

Though revolutionary in its time, this instrumentalist view of forests is now the norm, even amongst environmental policymakers. All too often, forests seem to us as they would have seemed to Le Roy: as merely useful, or potentially so. 'The worst crime against nature, proclaims Eugene Lapointe, the president of IWMC World Conservation Trust and a former Secretary-General of CITES, 'is waste, not to use resources.'[49] Granted, we now have a wider conception of use. We recognize that forests provide us not just with goods such as timber, but also with important ecosystem services, such as protection from landslides. But, as I argued in Chapter 1, the outlook remains essentially instrumentalist.

For Harrison, this is a bad thing. In his view, recall, the forest traditionally symbolized 'a margin of exteriority with respect to civilization'—it pointed, that is, to that which lies beyond the human world.[50] Conceived of as a provider of goods and services, it lies firmly *within* that world. What Harrison calls *the* forest, that symbol of the non-human, has been all but destroyed. It can therefore no longer help us to frame, and so provide meaning for, our lives. In Harrison's Heideggerian terms, it can no longer enable us to dwell.

Harrison suggests that we are becoming aware of this loss: 'We call it the loss of nature, or the loss of wildlife habitat, or the loss of biodiversity, but underlying the ecological concern is perhaps a much deeper apprehension about the disappearance of

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think, more plausible than the kind of nature essentialism I discussed (and rejected) in Chapter 7.

[48] Harrison, *Forests*, pp. 115-16.

[49] Quoted in Matthew Scully, *Dominion: The Power of Man, the Suffering of Animals, and the Call to Mercy* (London: Souvenir Press, 2002), p. 188.

[50] Harrison, *Forests*, p. 201.

boundaries . . . '[51] We are becoming increasingly anxious 'about the loss of an edge of exteriority'.[52] For when we turn to the wild forests that once served to indicate our 'exclusion' from nature, we are, more and more, confronted by reflections of ourselves. Perhaps the forests themselves have disappeared, replaced with plantations, or worse. And even if the physical entities remain, they no longer tend to present themselves as independent of us. They are resources, capital, suppliers of services, or else—to adopt the language of postmodern nature scepticism—social constructions, inventions, the outcomes of negotiations amongst interested parties.[53] The ghost of the non-human has been thoroughly exorcized, the shadow of civilization thoroughly dispelled. Now there is only us and what we do.

Harrison concedes that we are still able to flourish, to dwell; but, in losing sight of the boundaries of the human world, we are, he suggests, coming increasingly to dwell 'in oblivion of the meaning of dwelling'.[54]

We are losing sight of what Thoreau saw: that to dwell means to be alive to a radically non-human realm.

Though Harrison has much more to say about these matters, there is no need to provide a more detailed account here; for we are now in a position to relate his argument to the case presented in parts 1 and 2 of this book.

Begin by setting aside the concerns of the nature sceptics. Bracket the question of whether any forests really are natural in the sense of being largely unshaped by human actions. The fact is that forests are often *taken* to be natural in this sense. Indeed, they are sometimes taken to evoke, symbolize, or (as Harrison puts it) 'represent' nature, conceived of as a realm that is independent of the human world.[55] As such, they play a role in the meaningful and valuable whole which Maier—translating Harrison's Heideggerian turns of phrase—calls 'a form of human relating that is a constituent good in pursuing a human life on this planet'.[56] Just as Big Mountain has constitutive value by virtue of the roles it plays in Navajo culture, just as reindeer have such value by virtue of the roles they play in Saami culture, so forests have constitutive value by virtue of the role they play in the 'form of human relating' to which Maier refers.

Call this the Harrison-Maier view. I think it's basically correct. Other readers—possibly most of them—will disagree. I do not have enough space, here, to win them over, so I will restrict myself to saying just this: if the Harrison-Maier view really is correct, then some entities have constitutive value precisely because they are taken to

[51] Harrison, *Forests*, p. 247.

[52] Harrison, *Forests*, p. 247.

[53] Compare Harrison, *Forests*, p. 121. See also, Eric Katz, *Anne Frank's Tree: Nature's Confrontation with Technology, Domination, and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: The White Horse Press, 2015), Chapter 4.

[54] Harrison, *Forests*, p. 199. Compare Heidegger, 'Introduction to "What is Metaphysics?" ', translated by Walter Kaufmann, in William McNeill (ed.), *Pathmarks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 277-90, at p. 281.

[55] Harrison, *Forests*, p. xi.

[56] Maier, *What's So Good About Biodiversity?* p. 476.

be natural. If that view is correct, then the part-whole model does not just illuminate how things in general, from Notre-Dame cathedral to Big Mountain, matter. It sheds special light on—well, possibly on how *nature* matters, but certainly on how what we *take* to be natural matters.

9. Beyond Value for Us[(10)]

So far, I have focused on nature's value for us—that is to say, the value it has because of the contributions it makes to human well-being. Clearly natural entities can have instrumental value for us; I have argued that they can have constitutive value for us as well. But this typology is not exhaustive. Natural entities might have values that are not 'for us' in the relevant sense. They might be able to—and I shall argue, do in fact— have values that do not depend on their contributing to human wellbeing. In this chapter, I consider what other kinds of value natural entities might have, and I ask how these values would sit with respect to the part-whole model.

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Mangroves, canyons, alpine meadows—just as such entities can contribute to human well-being, so they can contribute to the well-being of non-human animals (hereon 'animals'). They can have value for them, just as they can have value for us.

But what *kinds* of value can natural entities have for animals? For instance, can they have constitutive value for animals in anything like the way they can have constitutive value for us humans? Could a natural entity, by virtue of the meanings it has for some animal, contribute to a whole that is both meaningful to and valuable for that animal?

It's hard to say. In Chapter 4, I did not define 'meaning'—and, without such a definition, it is difficult to assess whether or not any animals can apprehend meanings. That said, I did identify some general features of cultural meanings. I suggested that when something has cultural meaning, it doesn't just matter to certain meaning-sensitive subjects; it matters to them because of the non-causal relations it bears to one or more meaningful wholes.

It is not absurd to suppose that some animals could be privy to such meanings. Consider badgers (*Meles meles*). David E. Cooper makes the plausible suggestion that the animals inhabit 'field[s] of significance', the various constituents of which 'signify or point to one another,' thereby forming a meaningful whole. For a badger, he suggests, 'the droppings at the entrance to the tunnel indicate a fox, which signifies a threat to the badger's young, whose squealing expresses hunger, which refers the badger to the berries behind that tree, the scent on which means the recent presence of a fox, which

[(10)] *How Nature Matters: Culture, Identity, and Environmental Value.* Simon P. James, Oxford University Press. DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780198871613.003.0010

indicates . . . etc.'.[57] Certain entities seem, that is, to matter to the badger precisely because of the roles they play in—or contributions they make to—certain meaningful wholes. For badgers, it seems, these entities are what Jacob von Uexkull once called 'meaning-carriers' (*Bedeutungstrager*).[58] Granted, badgers might not be able to *reflect* on meanings. It's unlikely that they can ask themselves whether a certain phenomenon means one thing or another. But we humans don't tend to do much of that sort of reflection, either. It is true, moreover, that we humans find some meanings in the world that are hidden from badgers. I suspect that irony is lost on badgers, for example. But, again, why should this matter? The badgers may be privy to meanings that are hidden from us humans.

So, although much more argument would be needed to prove the point, it seems reasonable to suppose that some non-human animals *can* find cultural meaning—or something very much like it—in things. It also seems reasonable to suppose that such things could be valuable for the animals—that is, contributive to their well-being—precisely because they are meaningful to them. Consider a badgers' sett, for example. That network of tunnels and chambers is not of human design: it qualifies, that is, as *natural*, according to the conception of naturalness defended in the previous chapter. It would of course be bad for any badger were its sett to be destroyed or fenced off. The sett seems, that is, to contribute to the well-being of, and so have value for, each of the badgers for whom it is home. Some of this value can be understood in terms of causation and instrumental value: for instance, one of the reasons the sett is of value for the badgers is because it shelters them from the rain. Yet, in addition to this, it seems likely that the sett also has value for the animals because of the non-causal roles it plays in certain meaningful wholes-namely, the badgers' various fields of significance (*Umwelten*). Accordingly, its destruction would not just result in the badgers getting cold and wet; it would also uproot and disorientate them. That is to say, it would be bad for the badgers in something like the way it would be bad for you or I to find that our once-familiar surroundings no longer make sense.

Admittedly, I have not done enough here to prove that natural entities can have constitutive value for any animals.[59] Still, I hope I have done enough to show that that claim ought not to be dismissed outright. Besides, even if I am wrong and nature cannot in fact have *constitutive* value for animals, it can have *instrumental* value for them, as berries have instrumental value for bears and aspen twigs for beavers. It is clear that natural entities can contribute to the well-being of, and so have value for, animals in this way.

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[57] 'The Idea of Environment', in D. E. Cooper and J. A. Palmer (eds), *The Environment in Question: Ethics and Global Issues* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 165-80, at p. 170.

[58] 'The Theory of Meaning', translated by B. Stone and Herbert Weiner, special issue edited by T. von Uexkull, *Semiotica* 42 (1) (1982): 25-82.

[59] A good place to begin, for those who would like to prove that point, would be the growing literature of biosemiotics. For an introduction to that field, see Wendy Wheeler, *Expcecting the Earth: Life/Culture/Biosemiotics* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 2016).

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To say that some natural entity has value for A is, I stipulated, to say that some of that entity's value derives from the contribution it makes to A's well-being. It is clear that some natural entities have value of this sort. Some have value for humans and some have value for non-humans. It is, however, a further question whether any natural entities are valuable *for their own sakes*, independent of the contributions they might make to anything else (such as the well-being of any humans or non-humans).

In discussions of environmental ethics, this sort of value, the value something has when it is valuable for its own sake, is typically called *intrinsic value*. In the following pages, I will ask whether any natural entities have intrinsic value. But first we must pause to clarify what it *means* for something to have such value. This matter will, I hope, become clearer as the chapter progresses; but for now I will restrict myself to making just two points. First, I take 'has intrinsic value' to mean 'is intrinsically valuable'. That is to say, I take it to mean 'deserves to be taken to have intrinsic value' rather than merely 'is taken to have intrinsic value'. Second, claims about acting for something's sake can be ambiguous. In some cases, they imply that the something in question has a good that can be promoted (e.g., 'For Julie's sake, we should go to Disneyworld'). In other cases, they imply, not that the relevant something has a good, but merely that it is of value (e.g., 'For the sake of convenience, we should go to Disneyworld'). Claims that animate natural entities are valuable for their own sakes could be understood in either way. Claims that inanimate natural entities such as mountains and rivers are so valuable must, however, be understood in the latter sense.

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As we saw in the previous chapter, some environmental thinkers hate talk of nature; others are perfectly happy with it. Likewise intrinsic value. Every few years some new assault on the concept is launched, triggering a series of defensive manoeuvres. And so the debate goes back and forth, and forth and back, like any number of other seemingly irresolvable debates in philosophy. Nevertheless, as I will try to show in what follows, when claims to the effect that natural entities have intrinsic value are rejected, they are typically rejected because the concept of intrinsic value has been saddled with superfluous and theory-heavy baggage. When that baggage is offloaded, the claims reveal themselves to be more plausible.

Consider the argument that natural entities don't have intrinsic value because whatever value they do have is, in a certain sense, *relational*. Anthony Weston expresses the point very well. Talk of a thing's intrinsic value, he maintains, directs our attention 'away from that thing's relations to other things' and away, therefore, from the wider network of relations on which that thing—as well as its value—depends.[60] To drive

[60] 'Between Means and Ends, *The Monist* 75 *(2) (1992):* 236-49, at p. 242.

the point home, he appeals to the example of a condor. Rather than speaking of the creature's intrinsic value, he suggests,

[w]e need to understand the place of condors in the larger system, and the place of the values of condors amongst those values 'adjacent' to them. We might begin by speaking of the mountain winds that condors make visible; of the great cycle of life into death and rebirth that includes and invites carrion eaters, in quite specific and sometimes surprising ways; of the ongoing evolutionary processes of which they are, with us, a part. Pressed further, we might speak of the other birds of the mountains, of the feeling of a sky alive with a variety of birds, free life in the air, watching us as well as vice versa. We might speak of our own experiences in the mountains and close encounters with great birds: the hawk that shared my orchard running trails, the treeful of turkey vultures sharing the sun with me one early spring afternoon at Lion's Head in the Taconic Mountains.[61]

The implied argument runs as follows:

The Appeal to Relationality

(1) If an entity has intrinsic value, then it must have that value by virtue of its non-relational properties.

(2) No natural entities have value by virtue of their non-relational properties.

Therefore (3) no natural entities have intrinsic value.

The meaning of *non- relational*, here, needs explaining. In some cases, a property depends on relations that obtain within the entity that possesses the property. For example, the Eiffel Tower has the relational property *being taller than it is wide*. These are not the kind of relational properties I am concerned with here. Instead, I apply the adjective 'relational' only to those properties that depend on relations between the property-bearer and some *other* entity. The Eiffel Tower's property *being taller than it is wide* does not fall into this category. However, its property *being taller than the Arc de Triomphe* does.[62]

John O'Neill observes that a second distinction may be drawn between two senses of 'non-relational property'.[63] According to what he calls the 'weak' interpretation of that phrase, the 'non-relational properties of an object are those that persist regardless of the existence or nonexistence of other objects'; according to the 'strong' interpretation, they 'are those that can be characterized without reference to other objects'.[64]

Though Premise (2) is not *obviously* true, it's a challenge to think of any natural entities that *do* have value by virtue of their non-relational properties, even on the weak reading of 'non-relational property'. Certainly, as Karen Green observes, the 'central

[61] Weston, 'Between Means and Ends', p. 245.

[62] Katie McShane makes a similar distinction ('Why Environmental Ethics Shouldn't Give Up on Intrinsic Value', p. 48).

[63] John O'Neill, 'The Varieties of Intrinsic Value', *The Monist* 75 (2) (1992): 119-37, at pp. 123-4.

[64] O'Neill, 'The Varieties of Intrinsic Value', p. 124. There is, O'Neill observes (p. 125), some dispute about whether relations to valuing subjects count. If they do count, then on the strong interpretation of 'non-relational property', the claim that some entity has value by virtue of its non-relational prop-

values that we recognise in nature', such as 'rarity' and 'diversity', are 'values based on extrinsic[i.e., relational] properties of things'.[65]

So let us say that Premise (2) is at least *plausible*. What of Premise 1? Is that also plausible?

Some have argued that it is, in any case, *false*. Several writers, including Christine Korsgaard, Shelly Kagan, Wlodek Rabinowicz, and Toni R0nnow-Rasmussen, claim that a thing can have intrinsic value—that is, be valuable for its own sake—by virtue of its relational properties. In support of that claim, they appeal to various examples, including a mink coat (Korsgaard), the pen Abraham Lincoln used to sign the Emancipation Proclamation (Kagan), and Princess Diana's dress (Rabinowicz and R0nnow-Rasmussen).[66] John O'Neill, for his part, appeals to an example of a natural entity to make what is essentially the same point:

[O]ne might value wilderness in virtue of its not bearing the imprint of human activity, as when John Muir opposed the damming of the Hetch Hetchy valley on the grounds that wild mountain parks should lack 'all . . . marks of man's work'. To say 'x has value because it is untouched by humans' is to say that it has value in virtue of a relation it has to humans and their activities.[67]

O'Neill is referring to the value something has as 'an end in itself'.[68] That is to say, he is referring to what I have called intrinsic value. He is therefore suggesting that something could have intrinsic value by virtue of its relational properties. Admittedly, that claim would not be accepted by all.[69] But it is at least plausible. And if it is not merely plausible but *true*, then Premise (1) is false and The Appeal to Relationality unsound.

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erties entails that values can be subject-independent (or objective in a 'strong' sense, to use O'Neill's terminology). (I discuss the subject-dependence of values below.)

[65] 'Two Distinctions in Environmental Goodness', *Environmental Values* 5 (1996): 31-46, at p. 35. Green's claim does not entail that nature's values tend to be relational in the IPBES writers' sense of 'relational'. When those writers refer to relational values, they seem to be thinking of relations between human beings and natural entities. By contrast, the relations to which Green refers can obtain between natural entities.

[66] See the following: Christine Korsgaard, 'Two Distinctions in Goodness', *Philosophical Review* 152 (2) (1983): 169-95, at p. 185; Shelly Kagan, 'Rethinking Intrinsic Value', *The Journal of Ethics* 6 (1998): 277-97, at pp. 285-7; Wlodek Rabinowicz and Toni Ronnow-Rasmussen, A Distinction in Value: Intrinsic and for Its Own Sake', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 100 (2000): 33-51, at p. 41.

[67] 'The Varieties ofIntrinsic Value', *The Monist 75* (2) (1992): 119-37, at pp. 124-5. Muir makes this claim in a 1907 letter to Theodore Roosevelt (transcription available athttp://con- tent.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/kt0x0nd9tp/?order=2).

[68] 'The Varieties of Intrinsic Value', p. 119.

[69] Miles Tucker, for instance, would be unconvinced. In 'The Pen, the Dress, and the Coat: A Confusion in Goodness' (*Philosophical Studies* 173 (2016): 1911-1922) he asks his readers to reconsider Kagan's example of Lincoln's pen. He argues that Kagan's position implies that it is fitting to care about the pen for its *own* sake because it is fitting to care about *something other than the pen* (the freeing of the slaves). And this, Tucker maintains, is 'impossible' ('The Pen, the Dress, and the Coat', p. 1917).

But that objection is unconvincing. When Kagan claims that Lincoln's pen has intrinsic value he means to say something about what kind of attitude it is fitting to take towards the object. To say

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The Appeal to Relationality is not the only argument that has been directed at the claim that natural entities can have intrinsic value. Some try to refute that claim by arguing that (a) intrinsic values are supposed to be independent of the interests, attitudes, perspectives, or conceptual schemes of any possible subjects and (b) appeals to such allegedly subject-independent values are dubious.

The implied argument is as follows:

The Appeal to Subject-dependence

(1) Intrinsic values must be subject-independent.

(2) Appeals to subject-independent values are dubious.

Therefore (3) appeals to intrinsic values are dubious.

Various reasons are provided in support of (2). Some argue that appeals to subject-independent values are dubious because there are no such values. For instance, Marcel Wissenburg argues 'against attributing intrinsic value to nature' on the ground that '[t]here can be no value without a valuer . . .'[70] Alternatively, some argue that appeals to subjectindependent values are dubious because such values, if they exist, must be unknowable, or in some other way epistemically inaccessible. For example, James Justus and his colleagues argue that intrinsic values, being 'valuer independent', must be 'independent of stakeholder valuation' and hence 'cannot have a role in conservation decision making'.[71]

But let's set aside the question of whether (2) is true. The fact is that the Appeal to Subject-dependence fails. It fails because (1) is false.

To see why this is so, it may help to consider J. Baird Callicott's account of intrinsic value. To say that something has intrinsic value is, on Callicott's account, to say that it 'is valuable *for* its own sake'; but it is not to say that it is 'valuable in itself, that is, completely independently of any consciousness, since no value can . . . be altogether independent of a valuing consciousness'.[72] Consider, Callicott suggests, the value of a newborn infant. It does not have value 'independent of valuing consciousness'.[73] On the

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that it would be fitting to adopt this attitude *because* of the pen's relational properties is, however, to offer an *explanation* of why it is fitting to adopt said attitude—and this is a distinct undertaking. All that matters, for the purposes of Kagan's example, is that it is fitting to care about the pen for the pen's own sake. The fact that one must appeal to something other than the pen in order to explain *why* it is fitting to adopt that attitude is irrelevant. (I owe this response to Richard Yetter Chappell. See his 'Final Value and Fitting Attitudes' (https://www.philosophyetc.net/2016/04/final-value-and-fitting-attitudes.html).) For a detailed defence of the claim that natural entities can be valuable for their own sakes by virtue of their relations to other entities, see Levi Tenen, 'No Intrinsic Value? No Problem: Why Nature can still be Valuable for its Own Sake', *Environmental Ethics* 42 (2) (2020): 119-33.

[70] *Green Liberalism: The Free and The Green Society* (London: UCL Press, 1998), p. 97.

[71] James Justus, Mark Colyvan, Helen Regan, and Lynn Maguire, 'Buying into Conservation: Intrinsic versus Instrumental Value, *Trends in Ecology and Evolution 24* (4) (2008): 187-91, at pp. 187-9.

[72] 'On the Intrinsic Value of Nonhuman Species', in Callicott, *In Defense of the Land Ethic: Essays in Environmental Philosophy* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1989), pp. 129-56, at pp. 133-4.

[73] J. Baird Callicott, 'Intrinsic Value, Quantum Theory, and Environmental Ethics', *Environmental*

contrary, what value it has 'is wholly conferred upon it by its parents, other relatives, the family dog, family friends' and various other valuing subjects.[74] 'To be sure,' he concedes,

part of the value of the newborn infant is merely instrumental. At a crass material or economic level it is valuable as a 'human resource' to 'society' because one day it will fill an empty chair in a schoolroom, perhaps serve in the armed forces, or maybe even discover a cure for cancer.[75]

But that is very far from being the whole story, for '[a]lmost certainly its parents, most probably its other relatives, family friends, and benignly disposed strangers value it for itself, above and beyond either its material-economic or psycho-spiritual utility'.[76] And, he adds, what holds true of newborn infants also holds true of nature. It may be - and, we can add, may *deserve* to be - 'valued for its own sake'.[77]

Recall, however, that Callicott also claims that 'no value can . . . be altogether independent of a valuing consciousness'.[78] Set aside the question of whether his account, taken as a whole, is plausible.[79] It is *coherent*. He consistently holds both that some entities are valuable for their own sakes and that all values are subject-dependent. The fact that these claims may be consistently held entails that (1) is false and, therefore, that The Appeal to Subject-dependence is unsound.[80]

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Instrumental value comes in degrees. If x is a particularly *effective* means to some valuable end—as one knife, for example, might be sharper than another—then x will (all things held equal) be of high instrumental value. Even more so if x is the *only* available means to that end. Likewise, if x is a means to an especially *valuable* end.[81] Constitutive value also comes in degrees. The woods that border our village have constitutive value for my family and I; however, reindeer will, I am sure, have more such value for their Saami herders.

Ethics 7 (3) (1985): 257-75, at p. 262.

[74] Callicott, 'Intrinsic Value, Quantum Theory . . . ', p. 261. Callicott claims that this, at least, is what 'Hume's classical subjectivist axiology' implies. However, he then maintains (on p. 263) that that axiology 'is entirely adequate for environmental ethics proper'.

[75] Callicott, 'Intrinsic Value, Quantum Theory . . . ', p. 261.

[76] Callicott, 'Intrinsic Value, Quantum Theory . . . , pp. 261-2.

[77] Callicott, 'Intrinsic Value, Quantum Theory . . . ', p. 271.

[78] Callicott, 'On the Intrinsic Value of Nonhuman Species', p. 134.

[79] For some criticisms of it, see Eugene Hargrove, 'Weak Anthropocentric Intrinsic Value', *The Monist* 75 (2) (1992): 183-207, at pp. 195-6.

[80] For similar responses to what is, in effect, the Appeal to Subject-dependence, see the following: Mark Sagoff, 'Intrinsic Value: a Reply to Justus *et al.*' *Trends in Ecology and Evolution* 24 (12) (2009): 643; Wilfred Beckerman and Joanna Pasek, *Justice, Posterity, and the Environment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 131.

[81] On these and other complications, see Patrik Baard, 'The Goodness of Means: Instrumental and Relational Values, Causation, and Environmental Policies', *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental*

It is sometimes said that intrinsic value, by contrast, does not admit of degrees. And this—critics allege—renders the concept of such value useless, or nearly so, for environmental decision-makers. For instance, Lynn A. Maguire and James Justus argue that appeals to nature's intrinsic value provide a poor basis for decision-making because such value is conceived of 'as "priceless," even "infinite," trumping other assertions of value . . .'[82] This, they suggest, presents a problem because decision-makers need to trade some goods off against others and no tradeoffs can be made with anything that has infinite value. Therefore, as soon as something of allegedly intrinsic value appears on the negotiating table, other considerations—concerning social justice, for example—get shoved aside. For Maguire and Justus, this seems to have been what happened with the notorious attempts to conserve Indian tigers by displacing people, sometimes forcibly, in order to create vast nature reserves. In those attempts, they suggest, we seem to have 'an example of the intrinsic value of non-human organisms being taken to trump the sociocultural values of those displaced'.[83] One could, it is true, respond by assigning intrinsic value, not just to the tigers, but to the people whose lives were disrupted; but then one would be faced with multiple competing goods, each of which is taken to have infinite evaluative weight. One would arrive, that is, at a stalemate.[84]

The implied argument runs as follows:

The Appeal to Trade-offs

(1)To say that x has intrinsic value is to say that x is priceless.

(2)To say that x is priceless is to say that its value has infinite weight.

(3) Environmental decision makers must trade off some values against others.

(4)One cannot trade off values that have infinite weight.

(5) So, appeals to values that have infinite weight are of limited use in environmental decision making.

(6) So, appeals to what is priceless are of limited use in environmental decision making.

Therefore (7) appeals to intrinsic value are of limited use in environmental decision making.

The argument's premises are not all false. Premise 4 certainly is true; and Premise 3, for its part, is often taken to be true.[85] What of premises 1 and 2? Well, entities with intrinsic value really are sometimes said to be priceless, and appeals to what is priceless really are sometimes taken to trump all other considerations. Consider

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Ethics 32 (2019): 183-99.

[82] 'Why Intrinsic Value Is a Poor Basis for Conservation Decisions', *BioScience* 58 (10) (2008): 910-11, at p. 910. Maguire and Justus do not put this point as well as they might have done. The adjective 'priceless' is typically applied, not to an entity's value, but to the entity itself. By contrast, to say that an entity is of infinite value is to say that the entity's value, rather than the entity itself, is infinite in extent.

[83] Justus et al., 'Buying into Conservation', p. 189.

[84] See further, Justus et al., 'Buying into Conservation', p. 189.

[85] Though for some compelling criticisms of it, see John O'Neill, Alan Holland, and Andrew Light, *Environmental Values* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), chapter 5.

Douglas J. McCauley's work, for instance. He claims that 'Nature has an intrinsic value that makes it priceless . . . ' And this means, he adds, 'that the aggregate value of a chunk of nature—its aesthetic beauty, cultural importance and evolutionary significance—is infinite . . .'[86]

Yet claims to the effect that some natural x has intrinsic value do not have to be, and usually aren't, interpreted in this way. As we have seen, such claims are usually taken to mean merely that x is valuable for its own sake. And this is to say something, not about the *amount* of value x has, but about the *kind* of value it has. Imagine a climber hanging from her ice axe over a precipitous drop. She doesn't have any special attachment to that particular axe. Any other sufficiently strong axe would have done just as well. Its value for her is merely instrumental. Nonetheless, that value is tremendous. The axe is of much greater value for her, at that moment, than her wedding ring, even though she values the ring for its own sake.[87]

The Appeal to Trade-offs therefore fails. Against Maguire and Justus, the claim that some natural entity has intrinsic value does not entail that it is of infinite value. It does not entail that the entity ought not to be sacrificed in order to bring about some truly immense good, or to avoid some truly immense evil.

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In *Environmental Values*, John O'Neill, Alan Holland, and Andrew Light helpfully explain that intrinsic value can be construed as non-instrumental, non-relational, or subject-independent. They also challenge several of the arguments that have been marshalled against the claim that natural entities can have intrinsic value. They themselves do not exactly reject that claim, but they do argue that appeals to intrinsic value are of very limited use in discussions of environmental ethics.

Their argument is as follows. To understand 'our appraisals of nonhuman nature' we must use *thick* normative concepts—that is to say, ones that are both descriptive and evaluative.[88] Take the concept of cruelty. The claim that a certain practice is cruel implies both that the practice 'involves the intentional infliction of suffering' (description) and that it is in itself bad (evaluation).[89] The concepts of truthfulness, loyalty, generosity, and courage are also thick in this sense. By contrast, a *thin* evaluative concept, such as the concept of what is *right*, has no descriptive component. It is merely evaluative. O'Neill, Holland, and Light argue that if we are to understand all the manifold ways that nature matters, we must use thick concepts. We must refer to such

[86] 'Selling Out on Nature', *Nature 443 (2006):* 27-8, at p. 28.

[87] Dale Jamieson gives a similar example to make the same point in 'Values in Nature', in Jamieson, *Morality's Progress* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 225-43, at p. 236. For further discussion of that point, see Dominic Hyde, 'Is There a Need for Intrinsic Values in Conservation Biology?', *Australasian Journal of Logic* 15 (2) (2018): 498-512, at p. 503.

[88] *Environmental Values* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), p. 121.

[89] O'Neill et al., *Environmental Values*, p. 122.

things as cruelty, vandalism, hubris, and integrity.[90] We cannot rely on the manifestly thin concept of intrinsic value.

Call this The Appeal to Thickness. It is largely convincing. If we are to understand all the many and various ways that nature matters, we cannot rely on thin concepts. So we cannot rely on the bare contrast between intrinsic and non-intrinsic values. What's more, O'Neill, Holland, and Light are surely right to bemoan the amount of time and energy environmental ethicists have spent debating what it means to say that something has intrinsic value and whether any parts of nature have value of that sort. As they suggest, appeals to nature's intrinsic value are less helpful than is often supposed.

However—and this is the key point—they are *sometimes* helpful. The notion that nature has value only to the extent that it contributes to human well-being holds sway in many circles; indeed, as we saw in Chapter 2, it is dominant in many *environmental* circles.[91] Against this backdrop of anthropocentrism, claims that natural entities are valuable for their own sakes play an important *expressive* role. They express one's resistance to anthropocentrism. Consider Pope Francis's criticisms of the tendency to see 'nature . . . as an object of utility, as raw material to be hammered into useful shape' and his insistence that many natural entities 'have an intrinsic value independent of their usefulness'.[92] In making these claims, he is not (or not merely) appealing to a thin concept to make an abstract point. He is expressing his resistance to anthropocentrism.

The upshot is as follows. If, as I have suggested, anthropocentrism should be rejected, then appeals to nature's intrinsic value are not merely justified but vital. Contrary to the claims of O'Neill, Holland, and Light, such appeals have a crucial (albeit limited) role to play in contemporary discussions of environmental issues.

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So far, we have considered four objections to the claim that natural entities can have intrinsic value: The Appeal to Relationality, The Appeal to Subject-dependence, The Appeal to Trade-offs, and The Appeal to Thickness. None of them are compelling. So far, then, we have found no good reason to deny that environmental ethicists might usefully appeal to nature's intrinsic value. And we have found no good reason to deny that natural entities can have intrinsic value. It is another question, though, whether any such entities really do have intrinsic value.

I would answer that question with 'yes', but justifying that response would, I'm afraid, take us too far off track. We have already spent more than enough time considering the topic of intrinsic value in a book which is, after all, supposed to focus on

[90] O'Neill et al., *Environmental Values*, p. 121.

[91] In their review paper on this issue, Haydn Washington, John Piccolo, Erik Gomez- Baggethun, et al. conclude that 'anthropocentrism continues to be modern industrial society's dominant ideology, even in venues where ecological sustainability or conservation of Nature is a stated goal' ('The Trouble with Anthropocentric Hubris, with Examples from Conservation', *Conservation* 1 (2021): 285-98, at p. 294).

[92] *Laudato si'*, paragraph 140.

nature's value for us. So, for now, let us merely suppose for argument's sake that at least some natural entities have intrinsic value—and let us ask how those values would relate to nature's constitutive values.

This is a tough question, and it can be approached from several different angles. There is, first of all, the job of distinguishing values of the two kinds. Indeed, when something has constitutive value as an *essential* part of an intrinsically valuable whole, it might seem that no such distinction can legitimately be made. It might seem that to have value as an essential part of such a whole simply is to have intrinsic value. But this seeming would be only that—*seeming*. Take Act 5, Scene 3 of *Romeo and Juliet*, in which (spoiler alert) Romeo, upon finding Juliet (apparently) dead, kills himself, and Juliet, waking up to find her (genuinely) dead lover, kills herself too. Let us suppose that the play itself has intrinsic value—that it is valuable for its own sake, rather than merely for the feelings it evokes, for instance, or the income it generates for those in the entertainment industry. Act 5, Scene 3 is surely an essential part of the play: without it *Romeo and Juliet* would not be *Romeo and Juliet*. It follows that Act 5, Scene 3 has constitutive value as an essential part of the intrinsically valuable whole that is *Romeo and Juliet*. Nonetheless, although that scene might have intrinsic value for other reasons, the fact that it is an essential part of an intrinsically valuable whole does not entail that it has intrinsic value. It entails, rather, that the scene is valuable, not for its own sake, but for the sake of the whole to which it contributes. To say that Act 5, Scene 3 is an essential part of an intrinsically valuable whole is not, therefore, to say that it has intrinsic value. It is to say that it has constitutive value.

It seems, then, that intrinsic value can be distinguished from constitutive value even in cases where an entity has constitutive value as an essential part of an intrinsically valuable whole. So we are brought back to our initial question: How do nature's intrinsic values relate to its constitutive values? The following case study introduces a scenario where the two are not merely distinct but seem, in fact, to provide conflicting reasons for action.

Case study 10: Dugong hunting

The dugong (*Dugong dugon*) is a herbivorous marine mammal that inhabits warm coastal waters from Mozambique to the South Pacific archipelago of Vanuatu. Its body is shaped like a bulbous cylinder, tapered at both ends, with a broad muzzle at one extremity and a fluked tail, like that of a whale, at the other. Though the animals can live for over seventy years, their low reproductive rate means that populations are unlikely to be able to increase by more than 5 per cent annually. The species is therefore highly susceptible, not to natural predation (because of their large size, thick skin, and dense bone structure, dugongs have few natural enemies) but to anthropogenic threats such as hunting.[93] Categorized as 'vulnerable' on the IUCN Red List, the dugong is the only surviving member of the formerly- diverse family *Dugongidae*. Its closest relative,

[93] David W. Macdonald, *The Encyclopedia of Mammals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 112.

the gigantic Stellar's sea cow (*Hydrodamalis gigas*), was hunted to extinction shortly after it was first encountered by Europeans in the eighteenth century.

The Torres Strait Islanders are a traditionally seafaring people who nowadays inhabit several dozen of the hundreds of islands that lie between Australia and New Guinea. The Strait supports a 'globally significant' population of dugongs.[94] Dugong hunting, as well as the preparation and sharing of the creatures' meat, has played an important role in the Islanders' culture for over four thousand years. Nowadays it remains 'an important part' of their 'traditional way of life'.[95] True, the practice is restricted in ways it once wasn't. Twenty-first century Islanders are not permitted to hunt for commercial reasons or to do any hunting at all in the 1.3 million hectares set aside as a dugong sanctuary. Moreover, they must hunt by throwing a traditional spear (*wap*) from a vessel of no more than six metres in length.[96] Even so, the 'cultural values of dugong and dugong hunting' remain 'extremely high'.[97] Indeed, the animals are said to be 'an essential element' of the Islanders' 'living maritime culture', a 'cultural keystone species'.[98]

There is some debate over whether the Islanders' practice of dugong hunting is sustainable. In the view of Aurelie Delisle and her colleagues, the evidence suggests that it is.[99] Other writers, such as Dominique Thiriet and Rebecca Smith, demure.[100] Yet not all of those who object to dugong hunting focus on the issue of sustainability. Some appeal to the animals' welfare, condemning as cruel a practice that requires sentient beings to be 'speared, dragged by the spear line and then drowned in a process that takes between 15 minutes and two hours.'[101] The amended 2001 Animal Care and Protection Act implicitly recognizes the welfare issue. 'Direct destruction of the brain would', it states, 'be a more humane way to kill a dugong, however, where this is not appropriate[and bear in mind that hunters are trying to kill animals that often weigh

[94] Helene Marsh, Thomas J. O'Shea, and John E. Reynolds III, *Ecology and Conservation of the Sirenia: Dugongs and Manatees* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 412.

[95] Joe Crouch, Ian J. McNiven, Bruno David, et al., 'Berberass: Marine Resource Specialisation and Environmental Change in Torres Strait During the Past 4000 Years', *Archaeology in Oceania42 (2007): 49-64* (https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2017L00371/Replacementper cent20Explanatoryper cent20Statement/Text).

[96] Marsh et al., *Ecology and Conservation of the Sirenia*, pp. 413-14.

[97] Marsh et al., *Ecology and Conservation of the Sirenia*, p. 414.

[98] Australian Government: Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, 'Dugong' (http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/the-reef/animals/dugong); James R. A. Butler, Alifereti Tawake, Tim Skewes, et al., 'Integrating Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Fisheries Management in the Torres Strait, Australia: The Catalytic Role of Turtles and Dugong as Cultural Keystone Species', *Ecology and Society* 17 (4) (2012): art. 34.

[99] Aurelie Delisle, Milena Kiatkoski Kim, Natalie Stoeckl, et al., 'The Socio-cultural Benefits and Costs of the Traditional Hunting of Dugongs *Dugong dugon* and Green Turtles *Chelonia mydas* in Torres Strait, Australia', *Oryx* 52 (2) (2018): 250-61, at p. 253.

[100] Dominique Thiriet and Rebecca Smith, 'In the Name of Culture: Dugong Hunting is Simply Cruel', *The Conversation*, 7 April 2013.

[101] Thiriet and Smith, 'In the Name of Culture'.

more than 300 kilograms by throwing spears from little boats] drowning may be the only method reasonably available to a hunter.'[102]

Though more evidence and more argument would be needed to prove the point, it seems that dugongs play an important role in the Torres Strait Islanders' culture and so have a great deal of constitutive value for the Islanders themselves.[103] At least two conditions would need to be met if the creatures are to retain that value. First, dugongs would need to continue to play sufficiently important roles in the Islanders' culture. Second, some actual dugongs would need to exist in the Torres Strait. (In the unhappy event that those dugongs were to become extinct, the Islanders might continue to value the creatures, but they could no longer hunt them. So although dugongs might retain some constitutive value for the Islanders, they could not retain the high degree of constitutive value that they currently have for them.)

Now switch to thinking in terms of nature's intrinsic value. Would the fact that individual dugongs have such value provide a reason to refrain from hunting them? Perhaps it wouldn't. Inuit whalers, for their part, sometimes claim that the whale 'gives itself up' to the community.[104] Picking up on such claims, one could argue that it is morally permissible to hunt dugongs, even though they have intrinsic value, because the creatures freely offer themselves up to their hunters. But although that argument *could* be made, it would not be very persuasive. For one thing, dugongs, like whales, actively try to avoid dying.[105]

In view of this, let's suppose that if dugongs are valuable for their own sakes, then the fact that they are so valuable really would provide a reason to criticize the practice of hunting them. How strong a reason? On what I will call *The Strong View*, it provides a very strong reason.

Indeed, advocates of this view will contend that because dugongs have intrinsic value, the entire practice of dugong hunting is morally flawed. Furthermore—they will continue—if that practice is *essential* to the Islanders' culture, then that culture must also be morally flawed and hence disvaluable. And if that culture is not a valuable

[102] 'Animal care and protection and traditional hunting—causing as little pain as is reasonable', Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/75530/animal-care-protection-traditional-hunting-dugongs-turtles.pdf).

[103] The meaningful whole, here, is Torres Island culture (or cultural identity). However, turning up the magnification, it may be that dugong hunting plays an especially important role in the gender identities of the Islanders. For, as Aurelie Delisle and her colleagues observe, dugong hunting is a male-only activity (Delisle et al., 'The Socio-cultural Benefits and Costs . . . ', p. 255).

[104] Milton M. R. Freeman, Lyudmila Bogoslovskaya, Richard A. Caulfield, Ingmar Egede, Igor I. Krupnik, and Marc G. Stevenson, *Inuit, Whaling, and Sustainability* (Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press, 1998), p. 42.

[105] There is evidence that sperm whales, at least, learned how to evade nineteenth-century whalers (see Hal Whitehead, Tim D. Smith, and Luke Rendell, 'Adaptation of Sperm Whales to Open-boat Whalers: Rapid Social Learning on a Large Scale?' *Biology Letters* 17 (3) (2021)). On dugongs' avoidance of predators, see Aaron J. Wirsing, Michael R. Heithaus, and Lawrence M. Dill, 'Living on the Edge: Dugongs Prefer to Forage in Microhabitats that Allow Escape from rather than Avoidance of Predators, *Animal Behaviour* 74 (1) (2007): 93-101.

whole, then dugongs do not acquire constitutive value by contributing to it. According to *The Strong View*, then, the fact that dugongs have intrinsic value implies that they do not have constitutive value (at least not for the reasons cited above).

By contrast, according to what I will call *The Weak View*, dugongs have intrinsic value; yet the fact that they have this value does not imply that the Islanders' culture is disvaluable. On the contrary, advocates of this view will maintain that that culture is valuable, and that because it is valuable dugongs acquire some measure of constitutive value because of the part they (inadvertently) play in it.

For advocates of *The Weak View*, then, both intrinsic values and constitutive ones are in play. They find themselves faced, therefore, with the task of relating the one to the other.

At first sight, the appearance seems to be one of conflict. Appeals to intrinsic value and appeals to constitutive value tend, in this case, to provide conflicting practical reasons. Appeals to the former count in favour of discontinuing the hunting of dugongs. Appeals to the latter count in favour of continuing it in a sustainable fashion.

But to say that appeals to the intrinsic value of dugongs and appeals to their constitutive value tend to conflict is not, of course, to say that they must always do so. As Elisa Galgut observes, cultures are not static and many have moved in more animal-friendly directions: instead of wearing real leopard skins, one wears fake ones; instead of sacrificing a chicken, one empties one's pockets into a river—and so on.[106] Accordingly, the Islanders' culture could conceivably evolve in such a way that dugongs, though not the hunting of them, remained central to it. And if (as seems likely) the Islanders were to insist that it's the *hunting* that's essential, perhaps the norms of the tradition could develop to allow more humane methods of hunting. Perhaps some way could be found to honour what has constitutive value for the Islanders without destroying what seems to have intrinsic value.

10. Constitution and Rights[(11)]

Big Mountain, reindeer, the Mahabodhi tree—not only do such entities have constitutive value, but the fact that they have this value shapes how we should act in our dealings with them. If, to focus in on just one example, a certain river provides a

[106] I allude to the wearing of leopard skins by members of the Shembe Nazareth Baptist Church and *Kapparot*, an ancient ritual conducted in some Jewish communities. For more detail on those two practices, see Galgut, 'A Critique of the Cultural Defense of Animal Cruelty', *Journal of Animal Ethics 9 (2)* (2019): 184-98, at p. 191. For further discussion of the possibility of reforming traditional hunting practices, see Jean Kavez, *Animalkind: What We Owe to Animals* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 168-9.

[(11)] *How Nature Matters: Culture, Identity, and Environmental Value*. Simon P. James, Oxford University Press. DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780198871613.003.0011

religious symbol for a people, or figures in their founding myths, or contributes to their cultural identity—if it does any of these things, then the fact that it does so must be taken into account by environmental decision makers. The fact that it has constitutive value will typically provide one reason to refrain from damming it, for instance, or diverting its flow.

But how should such reasons figure into the decision-making process? How exactly should decision makers take the constitutive value of a culturally valuable natural entity into account? One option would be to consider the entity's constitutive value, and the normative reasons provided by its having that value, in light of its other values and the normative reasons provided by them. So, for instance, in deciding whether to permit the damming of that culturally valuable river, one could compare its constitutive value with the other values it possesses, including its value as a potential source of hydropower. And one could consider the normative reasons provided by its having these different values. Amongst other things, one could observe that the river's possession of instrumental value as a potential source of hydropower provides one reason to give dam engineers the green light, while the fact that it has constitutive value provides one reason to signal red.

This approach has something to be said for it. If we restrict ourselves to thinking in terms of values, then we should of course pay attention to nature's constitutive values. However, given how decisions about environmental matters tend in fact to be made, will values of this sort be given the attention they *deserve*? There are reasons to think that they will not.

To bring those reasons into focus, it may help to recall that *instrumental* values, for their part, lend themselves to being quantified. This is clearly the case if the entity one is considering is a source of hydropower or some other product that has a value on an actual market. But it may also be the case if the entity has value for other reasons. For instance, one way to price the geosystem or ecosystem services supplied by an entity is to calculate how much it would cost us humans to provide the relevant services. So, sticking with our example, one could argue that the river provides a means by which people can travel up or downstream and so saves the government the trouble and expense of constructing a road—and, as one would expect, arguments of this sort tend to impress practically minded decision makers in government and elsewhere.

Now consider nature's constitutive values. Whether or not they are, as Bryan Norton suggests, 'noncompensable in economic terms', they certainly resist being monetized.[107] More generally, indeed, they tend to resist quantification. What figure, for instance, could be put on Big Mountain's value for the Navajos or the Mahabodhi tree's value for Buddhists? Those questions will probably seem disrespectful to Navajos and Buddhists, respectively, especially if 'figure' is taken to mean 'cash value'; but they may well seem inappropriate to others, too. In particular, those charged with valuing the relevant

[107] Bryan G. Norton, *Sustainability: A Philosophy of Adaptive Ecosystem Management* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), p. 431.

entities might conclude that when an entity has very high constitutive value for certain persons, it would be disrespectful to those persons to quantify its constitutive value.

This would be a risky strategy, however. For those decision makers whose eyes are fixed on the bottom line are unlikely to be impressed by considerations that cannot be expressed in pounds or dollars. And they are very unlikely to be impressed by ones that cannot be quantified at all. So to leave constitutive values unquantified is to risk leaving them out of the decision-making process.

We are presented, then, with what might be called *the tragedy of quantification*. When a certain natural entity has low constitutive value, then those responsible for assessing its value may be happy to get quantifying. But when an entity has a great deal of constitutive value, as Big Mountain has for some Navajos, then they may consider it disrespectful to quantify that value and very disrespectful to express it in monetary terms.[108] Yet if the constitutive value is left unquantified, then it is at risk of being ignored altogether by decision makers.

So what should be done in such cases? How are we to ensure that the immense constitutive value of such entities as Big Mountain is taken seriously by decision makers? The following case study provides a clue.

Case study 11: Jumbo Valley

In the late 1980s a Japanese company hired Oberto Oberti, a Vancouverbased architect, to find a suitable site for a year-round glacier skiing resort. He found what seemed to be the perfect location: the great swathe of wild alpine terrain that is Jumbo Valley in British Columbia's Purcell Mountains. By the early 1990s, plans to transform the site into a massive resort were in full swing, led by a consortium of investors called Glacier Resorts Ltd.

Not everyone welcomed those plans. The Ktunaxa Nation, whose land traditionally encompasses Jumbo Valley, were particularly unhappy. For them, the area—*Qat'muk*—was home to the Grizzly Bear Spirit, an important source of guidance, strength, protection, and spiritual solace.[109]

Negotiations with the Ktunaxa Nation Council continued for ten years before hitting an apparently insurmountable obstacle. Council representatives revealed a fact which, as a tribal secret, they had hoped to keep hidden: that if the area were developed, if indeed any permanent overnight accommodation were built there, the Grizzly Spirit would quit the area for good.

In 2012, the British Columbia Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations approved Glacier Resorts' plans. A series of legal challenges swiftly followed, all of them unsuccessful. In 2017, the Ktunaxa Nation took to the Supreme Court of Canada to appeal the minister's decision to approve Glacier Resorts' development. The appellants in *Ktunaxa Nation v. British Columbia* argued that the proposed devel-

[108] Similarly, it may seem disrespectful to price an entity that has a large amount of *intrinsic* value.

[109] *Ktunaxa Nation v. British Columbia (Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations)*, 2017 SCC 54,[2017] 2 S.C.R. 386, paragraph 11 (https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/ en/item/16816/ index.do).

opment would (amongst other things) breach the Ktunaxa's right to the 'fundamental freedoms' of 'conscience and religion' as defined in subsection 2a of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. There was some disagreement, amongst the Supreme Court justices, on the question of whether the minister's approval constituted such as breach (on which, more below); however, overall, the appeal was unsuccessful. It was concluded that the Ktunaxa's 'constitutional right to freedom of religion' had not been violated.[110]

Though their 2017 appeal was not upheld, the Ktunaxa eventually prevailed. In January 2020, a plan was announced to create an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area over a region of the Purcell Mountains that includes Jumbo Valley. Joining forces with Patagonia, Inc. and several other private funders, the federal government bought all tenures from Glacier Resorts Ltd.[111] The plans for the ski resort were permanently shelved, and the area—including what Patagonia's director of environmental campaigns called its 'incredible mix of environmental value and also cultural value'—was protected.[112]

Set aside any doubts you might have about whether *Qat'muk* really is home to the Grizzly Bear Spirit. As in *Dark skies*, any doubts we might have on that score should not prevent us from acknowledging that the area seems to contribute to the well-being of—and so seems to be of value for—the Ktunaxa. This contribution seems, moreover, to be that of a part to a whole rather than a means to an end. *Qat'muk* is not of value for the Ktunaxa because it supplies certain spiritual services that could in principle be supplied in some other way. The people of that nation do not believe that the Grizzly Bear Spirit could up sticks and make a home for itself in some other place. No, *Qat'muk* plays what appears to be an essential role in Ktunaxa religion precisely because it is regarded as the home of the Grizzly Bear Spirit. As Natasha Bakht and Lynda Collins noted back in 2017, when Glacier Resorts' plans were still on the table:

There is no alternative for the Ktunaxa. If the ski resort is built, their relationship with the Grizzly Bear Spirit will be destroyed.[113]

In short, then, *Qat'muk* seems, on account of its religious meaning, to have constitutive value for the Ktunaxa. And the fact that it has this value opens up a road into the legal domain. Because *Qat'muk* has constitutive value for the Ktunaxa, one can intelligibly appeal to that people's rights to try to protect it.

Now, as we saw, the Ktunaxa's appeal to those rights was not upheld. Nonetheless, the main reasons given for thinking that the Ktunaxa's right to religious freedom had *not* been violated are surely weak.

Here is how the majority of the Supreme Court justices (hereon 'the majority') expressed those reasons:

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[110] *Ktunaxa Nation v. British Columbia*, opening summary.

[111] Megan Michelson, 'The Controversial Ski Resort That Will Never Exist', *Outside*, 21 January 2020.

[112] Michelson, 'The Controversial Ski Resort'.

[113] Natasha Bakht and Lynda Collins, ' "The Earth is Our Mother": Freedom of Religion and the

The Ktunaxa must show that the Minister's decision to approve the development interferes either with their freedom to believe in Grizzly Bear Spirit or their freedom to manifest that belief. Yet the Ktunaxa are not seeking protection for the freedom to believe in Grizzly Bear Spirit or to pursue practices related to it. Rather, they seek to protect the presence of Grizzly Bear Spirit itself and the subjective spiritual meaning they derive from it. This is a novel claim that would extend[subsection 2a of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms] beyond its scope and would put deeply held personal beliefs under judicial scrutiny. The state's duty under[subsection 2a] is not to protect the object of beliefs or the spiritual focal point of worship, such as Grizzly Bear Spirit.[114]

So although, in the majority's opinion, the state is obliged to protect people's freedom to hold religious beliefs and (within certain limits) their ability to act on them, it is not obliged to protect 'the spiritual focal point of worship'. Accordingly, the majority opinion was that developing Jumbo Valley would neither have prevented the Ktunaxa from *believing* in the Grizzly Bear Spirit nor have prevented them from *acting* on that belief. Moreover, although the majority acknowledged that the proposed development might have driven the Spirit from *Qat'muk*, it insisted that the state is not obliged to protect the spiritual focal point of worship itself: either the Spirit itself or merely its presence in *Qat- muk*.[115]

All three of those conclusions are highly questionable. First, although the proposed development would not have prevented the Ktunaxa from believing in the Grizzly Bear Spirit, it is not clear what role that belief plays in the Ktunaxa's religion. To be sure, it is commonly assumed that religion is all about what one believes: that if one believes in God, then one is religious; and that if one doesn't, then one isn't. But there are compelling reasons to think that that belief-centric assumption betrays a distinctively Christian conception of religion, one that is in certain respects at odds with some non-Christian conceptions.[116] Whether or not that allegation is fair, it is an open question what role mere belief in the Grizzly Bear Spirit plays for the Ktunaxa. Perhaps what matters to them is not what one *believes*, but what one *does*.

This brings us to the majority's second point: that developing Jumbo Valley would not have prevented the Ktunaxa from practising their religion. In one sense, this is true. Those of the Ktunaxa's rituals that are focused on the Grizzly Bear Spirit are typically not performed at *Qat'muk*, so they could continue to have been performed if that place had been turned into a ski resort.[117] But to pursue this line of reasoning

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Preservation of Indigenous Sacred Sites in Canada', *McGill Law Journal* 62 (3) (2017): 777-812, at p. 807.

[114] *Ktunaxa Nation v. British Columbia*, majority opinion.

[115] The majority are not clear on this point. In some places, they refer to the protection of the Spirit; in others, to protecting its presence in *Qat'muk*.

[116] Ninian Smart, *The World's Religions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 247. Compare Kwame Anthony Appiah's defence of the claim that 'religion is *not*, in the first instance, a matter of belief' (*The Lies that Bind* (London: Profile Books, 2018), p. 36).

[117] Natasha Bakht and Lynda Collins, ' "The Earth is Our Mother" ', 803.

is to presuppose an unacceptably thin conception of what is involved in performing a ritual. Sure, if *Qat'muk* had been developed, the Ktunaxa could have continued to utter the appropriate words and move their bodies in the appropriate ways. However, as the dissenting Justice Moldaver put it, these would have become 'nothing more than empty words and hollow gestures'.[118]

Consider, next, the majority's claim that the state is not obliged to protect 'the spiritual focal point of worship'. That claim is plausible when applied to some religions. Take Christianity. Clearly the state both can and should protect Christians' freedom to gather together to pray, attend Christian churches, and so forth; yet it is absurd to suggest that the state is under any obligation to protect 'the spiritual focal point of worship'—namely, God. God needs no protection. And since God is supposed to be essentially omnipresent, it makes just as little sense to suggest that the state has any obligation to protect God's *presence* in any particular place.[119]

Ktunaxa religion presents a very different case, however. For the Ktunaxa, the Grizzly Bear Spirit may not be essentially place-based (otherwise it could not quit its home without ceasing to exist), but it clearly is place-based in a way that the omnipresent God of theism is not. So to protect the spiritual focal point for the Ktunaxa is not exactly to protect the Grizzly Bear Spirit; it is to protect the Spirit's presence in a certain place—*Qat'muk*.[120] And it is not absurd to suppose that the state might have been able to protect *that*. It could have protected it by not giving the green light to Glacier Resorts' plans.

Of course there may be political reasons against pursuing—still more, acting on—this line of thought. The state, presumably, would not wish to create a precedent that might justify First Nation peoples appropriating Crown land by means of appeals to their constitutional right to religious freedom. It would not want a 'religious freedom right, exercisable against the state, to be transformed into a kind of property right, exercisable against all'.[121] But it is not clear that that result would be *unjust*. After all, First Nation peoples were typically run off their land by European settlers. Accordingly, in the twenty-first century, their land rights are rarely 'presumed, but instead must be proven through lengthy and expensive litigation in which the legal tests are difficult to

[118] *Ktunaxa Nation v. British Columbia*, minority opinion.

[119] Admittedly, the Eucharist presents a tricky case. For although God is supposed to be present everywhere, God is also supposed to be present in a special way in the sacramental bread. For Catholics, indeed, the bread is the transubstantiated body of Christ. Now suppose that God revealed that there would be no more transubstantiation if some particular place in Canada were to be despoiled. On the majority's interpretation of Section 2a, the state would be under no obligation to prevent that despoilation (see further, Howard Kislowicz and Senwung Luk, '*Ktunaxa Nation*: On the "Spiritual Focal Point of Worship" Test', 7 November 2017 (https:// ablawg.ca/2017/11/07/ktunaxa-nation-on-the-spiritual-focal-point-of-worship-test/)).

[120] Nicholas Shrubsole arrives at a similar conclusion (*What Has No Place, Remains: The Challenges for Indigenous Religious Freedom in Canada Today* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019), p. 46).

[121] Kislowicz and Luk, '*Ktunaxa Nation*'.

meet'.[122] Given this historical context, it is not clear that it really would be unjust to allow First Nation peoples to appropriate Crown land through appeals to their right to religious freedom.

In sum: although the Supreme Court ruled that the Ktunaxa's right to religious freedom had not been violated, it seems that it was wrong to do so. It seems, rather, that the partially dissenting justices, Judge Moldaver and Judge Cote, were correct: the proposed development *would* have infringed that right. But, anyway, the justices' actual ruling in this case is not my primary concern here. My main concern is with the general possibility that our discussion of the case has illuminated: the possibility that when x has constitutive value for a people, A, one might be able to appeal to A's rights to protect x.

That possibility may be more formally expressed as follows: when x has high constitutive value, the normative reasons for action that derive from its having that value may be appropriately expressed in the language of rights. In *Jumbo Valley*, the relevant right was a constitutional right to religious freedom; but in other cases, such as the one presented below, appeals to other rights may be appropriate.

Case study 12: Bauxite mining at Wane Kreek

On 28 January 1958, the Republic of Suriname ('The State') granted a concession to Suralco, a mining company, to extract bauxite in an area of northeast Suriname known as Wane Kreek. The company operated an open-cast mine in the area from 1997 to 2003, when a joint-venture known as BHP Billiton-Suralco took over.[123]

Wane Kreek forms part of the ancestral territory of two indigenous peoples, the Kalina and the Lokono. These peoples enjoy what has been described as 'a special physical and spiritual relationship with their lands and natural resources' and a particularly special relationship with both certain trees (which they refrain from felling) and certain animals (which they refrain from hunting or capturing).[124] They try, moreover, to avoid either killing young living things or taking more from their environments than they need.[125] The Wane Kreek area is their 'main hunting and fishing ground', and it 'contains ancient villages and sacred sites that they consider fundamental to their origins and identity'.[126]

The Kalina and Lokono peoples were greatly affected by the mining operations. They were banned from entering the area that had been set aside for mining; the resultant noise and deforestation caused the wildlife they hunted to flee the area; local streams were contaminated; and traditional agricultural practices could not be continued in the now-contaminated soil.[127]

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[122] Kislowicz and Luk, '*Ktunaxa Nation*'.

[123] *Kalina and Lokono Peoples v. Suriname*, IACTHR (2015) Series C, No. 309, paragraph 88(https://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/casos/articulos/seriec_309_ing.pdf).

[124] *Kalina and Lokono*, paragraph 33.

[125] *Kalina and Lokono*, paragraph 34.

[126] *Kalina and Lokono*, paragraph 84.

[127] *Kalina and Lokono*, paragraph 217.

Representatives of both peoples claimed that the State had not consulted them before granting mining permits and authorizing the mining operation.[128] In 2007, they petitioned the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. In 2014, the case—*Kalina and Lokono peoples v. Suriname*—was transmitted to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights ('the Court'), which issued its judgement on 28 January 2016.

The Court ruled that the State had 'failed to ensure the effective participation, by means of a consultation process, of the Kalina and Lokono peoples before undertaking or authorizing the exploitation of the bauxite mine within their traditional territory'.[129] By six votes to one, it declared that the State had therefore violated Article 21 (Right to Property) of the American Convention on Human Rights.[130]

In defending this verdict, the Court referred to the 'close relationship' that indigenous peoples such as the Kalina and Lokono have with 'their lands, as well as with the natural resources within those lands, and the incorporeal elements that are derived from them'.[131] It maintained that this relationship 'must be protected' under Article 21 in order to ensure that the Kalina and Lokono peoples 'may continue to enjoy their traditional way of life' and that their 'cultural identity' may be 'respected'.[132] In addition to this, the Court ruled that the State must not only work with a representative of the Kalina and Lokono peoples to create a convincing rehabilitation plan, but also appoint an expert to check that the plan is implemented.[133] (It is a further question whether the State has fully complied with this ruling.[134]

The Court affirmed that 'traditional lands' have a special value for 'indigenous peoples'.[135] Those lands are not, it acknowledged, of merely instrumental value for them. They ought not to be thought of merely as the providers of cultural or any other kind of service. For indigenous peoples, they are much more than this. They are 'a component of their world vision, their religious beliefs and, consequently, their cultural identity'.[136]

The implications for the case of *Bauxite mining at Wane Kreek* are clear. The Kreek would seem to have high constitutive value for the Kalina and Lokono peoples because it plays an important role in their cultural identities. The fact that it has this value

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[128] *Kalina and Lokono*, paragraph 118.

[129] *Kalina and Lokono*, paragraph 212.

[130] I am relating just one part of a complicated case. For a fuller account, see *Kalina and Lokono Peoples v. Suriname*.

[131] *Kalina and Lokono*, paragraph 129.

[132] *Kalina and Lokono*, paragraph 164.

[133] *Kalina and Lokono*, paragraph 290.

[134] See further, Jeanice L. Koorndijk, 'Judgements of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights concerning indigenous and tribal land rights in Suriname: new approaches to stimulating full compliance, *The International Journal of Human Rights* 23 (10) (2019): 1615-47.

[135] *Kalina and Lokono*, paragraph 130.

[136] *Kalina and Lokono*, paragraph 130. Similarly, the Kari-Oca 2 declaration, drawn up by a gathering of indigenous persons at RIO+20, states that 'Our lands and territories are at the core of our existence - we are the land and the land is us . . .' (https://www.ienearth.org/kari-oca-2-declaration/).

provides a normative reason for action—a reason that the Court expressed in terms of rights. In allowing the mining operations in Wane Kreek, the State was found to have violated the Kalina and Lokono peoples' right to property and therefore to have failed to respect those peoples' cultural identities. In this case, as in *Jumbo Valley*, appeals to nature's constitutive value lend themselves to being expressed in the language of rights.

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In this context, *rights* may be taken to denote any legal, moral, or political rights that can be possessed by human beings. This includes, but is not limited to, those universal, inalienable, and unconditional rights that are called *human rights*, but it excludes any rights that may be possessed by chimpanzees, rivers, or any other non-human entities.

Not everyone likes talk of rights, of course. John O'Neill, Alan Holland, and Andrew Light question the Rawlsian assumption, embedded in many theories of rights, that 'individuals have an identity that is prior to and independent of their membership of communities'.[137] That assumption is, they suggest, in tension with appeals to 'human rights to environmental goods' because

an environment is not just something of instrumental value or a physical precondition of human life. Rather, an individual's identity, their sense of who they are, is partly constituted by their sense of belonging to particular places . . .[Hence there are reasons to think that] if one treats individuals as having an identity that is prior to and independent of such attachments one will not be properly able to capture this dimension of environmental concern.[138]

That is spot on; however, as O'Neill, Holland, and Light go on to concede, it is 'a moot point' whether 'this constitutes a reason for rejecting rights as such, or only a particular conception of rights'.[139] I believe the latter is the case. Consider attempts to protect nature by appealing to a right to cultural identity.[140] To affirm such a right is tacitly to acknowledge that in at least some cases a person's identity depends on their culture and hence—it is implied—the communities to which they belong. So appealing

[137] *Environmental Values* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), p. 38. Compare John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), Part 1.

[138] O'Neill et al., *Environmental Values*, p. 39.

[139] O'Neill et al., *Environmental Values*, p. 39.

[140] For an example of one such attempt, see the dispute precipitated by the Mexican Government's decision to permit mining on the Wixarika people's ancestral lands. This decision was said to have had a 'significant impact' on the 'right to cultural identity' of the Wixarika people. Argument submitted to The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights by The Inter-American Association for Environmental Defense and The Mexican Environmental Law Center (CEMDA). (https://aida-americas.org/sites/default/files/ publication/AIDA%20AND%20CEMDA%20JOINT%20SUBMISSION%20UPR%20 MEXICO%20MARCH%202013.pdf).

to a right to cultural identity, whether to protect nature or for some other reason, does not presuppose the contentious Rawlsian assumption that justifiably worries O'Neill, Holland, and Light. The same may be said of appeals to those rights, such as the right to property in *Bauxite mining at Wane Kreek*, which allow that a person's identity can take the form of a *cultural* identity.

O'Neill, Holland, and Light do not therefore provide a good reason to reject all attempts to protect nature by appealing to rights. Moreover, *Bauxite mining at Wane Kreek* shows that such appeals can sometimes be effective. Admittedly, in other cases, they are of less use. For one thing, as Steve Vanderheiden explains, negative rights only protect against harms 'for which some human agent can be held responsible through their acts or omissions'.[141] So, to be sure, one might justifiably appeal to the Saami's right to their cultural identity in an effort to thwart a private company's plan to exterminate reindeer. But one could not do so in an effort to protect the reindeer from, say, an outbreak of some non-anthropogenic virus. Viruses can't violate rights. For another thing, appeals to rights, even to universal, inalienable, and unconditional human rights, do not carry *overriding* legal force. Many legal theorists believe that one human right can conflict with another (as when— arguably—a criminal's right to freedom is curtailed to protect the rights of law-abiding citizens). Moreover, some deny that appeals to human rights necessarily trump appeals to other values, such as happiness or preference satisfaction. Such rights are, as James Griffin puts it, 'resistant to trade-offs, but not too resistant'.[142] Be that as it may, rights have become what one commentator calls 'the dominant concept in the moral and political discourse of contemporary democracies'.[143] And as one would therefore expect, appeals to rights, and especially to human rights, have a great deal of force in discussions of policy and practice. I have argued that this force can be harnessed to protect those parts of nature, like Jumbo Valley and Wane Kreek, that have immense constitutive value for those who find meaning in them.

[141] 'Human Rights and the Environment', in S. M. Gardiner and A. Thompson (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Environmental Ethics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 301-10, at p. 303.

[142] *On Human Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 37.

[143] Tom Campbell, 'Rights', in J. Skorupski (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Ethics* (Abingdon: Routledge: 2013), pp. 669-79, at p. 669.

Conclusion[12]

To recap: natural entities, or some of them at least, provide us with more than just material benefits. They embody myths, religious teachings, and political causes; they shape our identities and—to quote J. Claude Evans —'feed the soul with the meaning that constitutes a life genuinely worth living'.[1] In such cases, nature has cultural value. In environmental circles, it is commonly assumed that to say that some entity has cultural value is to say that it is a causally efficient means to the end of promoting human well-being. But that means-end model typically fails to capture what kind of value natural entities have when they have cultural value. On the one hand, it suggests—without logically entailing—that having cultural value is a matter of providing certain 'cultural services' —services which could, in principle, be provided by one or more alternative service providers. On the other hand, it suggests that the relevant people and the relevant culturally valuable natural entities are bound together by external, rather than internal, relations. Both suggestions are typically false. The Saami, for instance, would justifiably complain were they forced to exchange their reindeer for herdable mammals of some other species. For them, there are no alternative service providers. Indeed, one cannot even specify who, as a people, they are without referring to their dealings with reindeer. The Saami-reindeer relation is in this respect internal, not external.

To comprehend nature's cultural value, one cannot restrict oneself to thinking in terms of causation and instrumentality. One must think in terms of meaning and constitution, too. One must acknowledge that natural entities can benefit us as parts of traditions, narratives, cultural identities—as parts, that is, of meaningful wholes. If an entity is to acquire value because of the contribution it makes to a certain whole, then the whole must, it is true, be not only meaningful but also valuable because it is meaningful. In some cases—such as that of *Cornflowers*— this criterion is not met. However, in a large number of other cases, ranging from *The Mahabodhi tree* to *Bauxite mining at Wane Kreek*, natural entities really do have constitutive value because of the contributions they make to meaningful and valuable wholes. In some instances, moreover, they have this value because they are taken to be largely unshaped by human actions—because, that is, they are taken to be, in one sense of that many-sensed term, *natural*.

[1] *With Respect for Nature* (New York: SUNY Press, 2005), p. 193.

[12] *How Nature Matters: Culture, Identity, and Environmental Value*. Simon P. James, Oxford University Press. DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780198871613.003.0012

To say that natural entities can have constitutive value for human beings is not to deny that they can also have values of other kinds. They can, for instance, have instrumental value for humans and non-humans alike. There are reasons to think that they can also have constitutive value for non-humans (as a bear's winter den might have certain meanings to, and hence a certain constitutive value for, the bear). Furthermore, it seems likely that some natural entities have intrinsic value. This is not to say that they have that value independent of their relations to other entities, or that they have infinite value. It is merely to say that they are valuable for their own sakes.

Values of these different sorts can generate practical reasons that pull in different directions. In the case of *Dugong hunting*, for instance, appeals to the constitutive value of dugongs provide a reason to continue the sustainable hunting of the animals. By contrast, appeals to the creatures' intrinsic value provide a reason to cease that practice altogether.

It may seem disrespectful to express the value of a natural entity that has very high constitutive value (or very high intrinsic value) in monetary terms. But to leave the entity unpriced is to risk its being ignored by fiscally minded decision makers. This is the tragedy of quantification. One response to it makes use of the concept of a *right*. For when an entity has high constitutive value for certain people, the normative reasons for action that derive from its having that value may be appropriately expressed in the language of rights. The entity should be protected, the argument runs, because failing to do so would violate those people's rights. In different cases, appeals to different rights will be appropriate. In some instances, it may be appropriate to appeal to A's right to religious freedom; in others, to their right to property or to cultural identity.

*

I have defined naturalness in terms of independence from human actions (especially intentional ones). An entity is natural, I have stipulated, to the extent that its current state has not been shaped by humans. When we imagine those parts of reality that are most natural, our mind's eye is drawn to the fringes of the human world: to places like that rainforest I mentioned in the Introduction. Yet even the most natural entities are connected to us. They affect us causally, for instance. Amazonian rainforests generate oxygen breathed in Harare and Seoul. Saharan dust falls in Edinburgh. But, as we have seen, natural entities affect us in other ways too. They shape our art and literature, our worldviews and philosophies, our religions, our political systems. They shape who we take ourselves to be—even who we are. Natural entities, then, are both remote and near. Though un-designed and in this sense unshaped by our actions, they can, by virtue of their meanings, shape our lives. Recall, one last time, the case of Katherine Smith, the Navajo activist. Although I know very little about Smith, I like to think that she spoke truly when she said that Big Mountain, that stretch of upland *mesa*, was 'part

of' her.[2] *Part of her*—we shouldn't picture two entities, Smith and the Mountain, and an external relation tying them together. We shouldn't ask how that entity over there (the mountain) was of value to this entity right here (Smith). We should say, rather, that Big Mountain, that more or less natural entity, was part of Smith. Alternatively, if that sounds too self-centred and anthropocentric, we should say that when we consider who Smith was, we find our gazes drawn outwards, into a wider more- than-human world.

[2] Quoted in Ward Churchill, *Struggle for the Land: Native North American Resistance to Genocide, Ecocide and Colonization* (San Francisco: City Lights, 2002), p. 151.

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