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THE VARIETIES OF INTRINSIC VALUE*

To hold an environmental ethic is to hold that non-human beings and states of affairs in the natural world have intrinsic value. This seemingly straightforward claim has been the focus of much recent philosophical discussion of environmental issues. Its clarity is, however, illusory. The term 'intrinsic value' has a variety of senses and many arguments on environmental ethics suffer from a conflation of these different senses: specimen hunters for the fallacy of equivocation will find rich pickings in the area. This paper is largely the work of the underlabourer. I distinguish different senses of the concept of intrinsic value, and, relatedly, of the claim that non-human beings in the natural world have intrinsic value; I exhibit the logical relations between these claims and examine the distinct motivations for holding them. The paper is not however merely an exercise in conceptual underlabouring. It also defends one substantive thesis: that while it is the case that natural entities have intrinsic value in the strongest sense of the term, i.e., in the sense of value that exists independently of human valuations, such value does not as such entail any obligations on the part of human beings. The defender of nature's intrinsic value still needs to show that such value contributes to the well-being of human agents.

I

The term 'intrinsic value' is used in at least three different basic senses: (1) **Intrinsic value**, Intrinsic value is used as a synonym for non-instrumental value. An object has instrumental value insofar as it is a means to some other end. An object has intrinsic value if it is an end in itself. Intrinsic goods are goods that other goods are good for the sake of. It is a well rehearsed point that, under pain of an infinite regress, not everything can have only instrumental value. There must be some objects that have intrinsic value. The defender of an environmental ethic argues that among the entities that have such non-instrumental value are non-human beings and states. It is this claim that Naess makes in defending deep ecology:

The well-being of non-human life on Earth has value in itself. This value is independent of any instrumental usefulness for limited human purposes.¹

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(2) **Intrinsic value₂** Intrinsic value is used to refer to the value an object has solely in virtue of its 'intrinsic properties'. The concept is thus employed by G. E. Moore:

To say a kind of value is 'intrinsic' means merely that the question whether a thing possesses it, and in what degree it possesses it, depends solely on the intrinsic nature of the thing in question.²

This account is in need of some further clarification concerning what is meant by the 'intrinsic nature' of an object or its 'intrinsic properties'. I discuss this further below. However, as a first approximation, I will assume the intrinsic properties of an object to be its non-relational properties, and leave that concept for the moment unanalysed. To hold that non-human beings have intrinsic value given this use is to hold that the value they have depends solely on their non-relational properties.

(3) **Intrinsic value₃** Intrinsic value is used as a synonym for 'objective value' i.e., value that an object possesses independently of the valuations of valuers. As I show below, this sense itself has sub-varieties, depending on the interpretation that is put on the term 'independently'. Here I simply note that if intrinsic value is used in this sense, to claim that non-human beings have intrinsic value is not to make an ethical but a meta-ethical claim. It is to deny the subjectivist view that the source of all value lies in valuers—in their attitudes, preferences and so on.

Which sense of 'intrinsic value' is the proponent of an environmental ethic employing? To hold an environmental ethic is to hold that non-human beings have intrinsic value in the first sense: it is to hold that non-human beings are not simply of value as a means to human ends. However, it might be that to hold a defensible ethical position about the environment, one needs to be committed to the view that they also have intrinsic value in the second or third senses. Whether this is the case is the central concern of this paper.

II

In much of the literature on environmental ethics the different senses of 'intrinsic value' are used interchangeably. In particular senses 1 and 3 are often conflated. Typical is the following passage from Worster's *Nature's Economy*:

One of the most important ethical issues raised anywhere in the past few decades has been whether nature has an order, a pattern, that we humans are bound to understand and respect and preserve. It is the essential question prompting the

environmentalist movement in many countries. Generally, those who have answered 'yes' to the question have also believed that such an order has an intrinsic value, which is to say that not all value comes from humans, that value can exist independently of us: it is not something we bestow. On the other hand, those who have answered 'no' have tended to be in an instrumentalist camp. They look on nature as a storehouse of 'resources' to be organised and used by people, as having no other value than the value some human gives it.³

In describing the 'yes' camp Worster characterises the term in sense 3. However, in characterising the 'no's' he presupposes an understanding of the term in both senses 1 and 3. The passage assumes that to deny that natural patterns have value independently of the evaluations of humans is to grant them only instrumental value: a subjectivist meta-ethics entails that non-humans can have only instrumental value. This assumption is widespread.⁴ It also underlies the claims of some critics of an environmental ethic who reject it on meta-ethical grounds thus: To claim that items in the non-human world have intrinsic values commits one to an objectivist view of values; an objectivist view of values is indefensible; hence the non-human world contains nothing of intrinsic value.⁵

The assumption that a subjectivist meta-ethics commits one to the view that non-humans have only instrumental value is false. Its apparent plausibility is founded on a confusion of claims about the source of values with claims about their object.⁶ The subjectivist claims that the only sources of value are the evaluative attitudes of humans. But this does not entail that the only ultimate objects of value are the states of human beings. Likewise, to be an objectivist about the source of value, i.e., to claim that whether or not something has value does not depend on the attitudes of valuers, is compatible with a thoroughly anthropocentric view of the object of value—that the only things which do in fact have value are humans and their states, such that a world without humans would have no value whatsoever.

To enlarge, consider the emotivist as a standard example of a subjectivist. Evaluative utterances merely evince the speaker's attitudes with the purpose of changing the attitudes of the hearer. They state no facts. Within the emotivist tradition Stevenson provides an admirably clear account of intrinsic value. Intrinsic value is defined as non-instrumental value: ' "intrinsically good" is roughly synonymous with "good for its own sake, as an end, as distinct from good as a means to something else" '.⁷ Stevenson then offers the following account of what it is to say something has intrinsic value:

'X is intrinsically *good*' asserts that the speaker approves of X intrinsically, and acts emotively to make the hearer or hearers likewise approve of X intrinsically.⁸

There are no reasons why the emotivist should not fill the X place by entities and states of the non-human world. There is nothing in the emotivist's meta-ethical position that precludes her holding basic attitudes that are bio-centric. Thus let the H! operator express hurrah attitudes and B! express boo attitudes.⁹ Her ultimate values might for example include the following:

H! (The existence of natural ecosystems)

B! (The destruction of natural ecosystems by humans).

There is no reason why the emotivist must assume that either egoism or humanism is true, that is that she must assign non-instrumental value only to her own or other humans' states.¹⁰

It might be objected, however, that there are other difficulties in holding an emotivist meta-ethics and an environmental ethic. In making humans the source of all value, the emotivist is committed to the view that a world without humans contains nothing of value. Hence, while nothing logically precludes the emotivists assigning non-instrumental value to objects in a world which contains humans, it undermines some of the considerations that have led to the belief in the need to assign such value. For example, the standard last man arguments¹¹ in defence of an environmental ethic fail: the last man whose last act is to destroy a rain forest could on a subjectivist account of value do no wrong, since a world without humans is without value.

This objection fails for just the same reason as did the original assumption that subjectivism entails non-humans have only instrumental value. It confuses the source and object of value. There is nothing in emotivism that forces the emotivist to confine the objects of her attitudes to those that exist at the time at which she expresses them. Her moral utterances might evince attitudes towards events and states of affairs that might happen after her death, for example,

H! (My great grand-children live in a world without poverty).

Likewise her basic moral attitudes can range over periods in which humans no longer exist, for example,

H! (Rain forests exist after the extinction of the human species).

Like the rest of us she can deplore the vandalism of the last man. Her moral utterances might evince attitudes not only to other times but also to other possible worlds. Nothing in her meta-ethics stops her asserting with Leibniz that this world is the best of all possible worlds, or, in her despair at the destructiveness of humans, expressing the attitude that it would have been better had humans never existed:

H! (the possible world in which humans never came into existence).

That humans are the source of value is not incompatible with their assigning

value to a world in which they do not exist. To conclude, nothing in the emotivist's meta-ethics dictates the content of her attitudes.

Finally it needs to be stressed that while subjectivism does not rule out non-humans having non-instrumental value, objectivism does not rule it in. To claim that moral utterances have a truth value is not to specify which utterances are true. The objectivist can hold that the moral facts are such that only the states of humans possess value in themselves: everything else has only instrumental value. Ross, for example, held that only states of conscious beings have intrinsic value:

Contemplate any imaginary universe from which you suppose mind entirely absent, and you will fail to find anything in it you can call good in itself.¹²

Moore allowed that without humans the world might have some, but only very insignificant, value.¹³ It does not follow from the claim that values do not have their source in humans that they do not have humans as their sole ultimate object.

The upshot of this discussion is a very traditional one, that meta-ethical commitments are logically independent of ethical ones. However, in the realm of environmental ethics it is one that needs to be re-affirmed. No meta-ethical position is required by an environmental ethic in its basic sense, i.e., an ethic which holds that non-human entities should not be treated merely as a means to the satisfaction of human wants. In particular, one can hold such an ethic and deny objectivism. However, this is not to say that there might not be other reasons for holding an objectivist account of ethics and that some of these reasons might appear particularly pertinent when considering evaluative statements about non-humans. It has not been my purpose in this section of the paper to defend ethical subjectivism and in section IV I defend a version of objectivism about environmental values. First, however, I discuss briefly intrinsic value in its Moorean sense, intrinsic value₂—for this sense of the term is again often confused with intrinsic value₁.

III

In its second sense intrinsic value refers to the value an object has solely in virtue of its 'intrinsic properties': it is value that 'depends solely on the intrinsic nature of the thing in question'.¹⁴ I suggested earlier that the intrinsic properties of an object are its non-relational properties. What is meant by 'non-relational properties'? There are two interpretations that might be placed on the phrase:

(i) The non-relational properties of an object are those that persist regardless of the existence or non-existence of other objects (weak interpretation).

(ii) The non-relational properties of an object are those that can be characterised without reference to other objects (strong interpretation).¹⁵

The distinction between the two senses will not concern me further here, although a similar distinction will take on greater significance in the following section.

If any property is irreducibly relational then rarity is. The rarity of an object depends on the non-existence of other objects, and the property cannot be characterised without reference to other objects. In practical concern about the environment a special status is ascribed to rare entities. The preservation of endangered species of flora and fauna and of unusual habitats and ecological systems is a major practical environmental problem. Rarity appears to confer a special value to an object. This value is related to that of another irreducibly relational property of environmental significance, i.e., diversity. However, it has been argued that such value can have no place in an environmental ethic which places intrinsic value on natural items. The argument runs something as follows:

1. To hold an environmental ethic is to hold that natural objects have intrinsic value.
2. The values objects have in virtue of their relational properties, e.g., their rarity, cannot be intrinsic values.

Hence:

3. The value objects have in virtue of their relational properties have no place in an environmental ethic.¹⁶

This argument commits a fallacy of equivocation. The term 'intrinsic value' is being used in its Moorean sense, intrinsic value₂, in the second premise, but as synonym for non-instrumental value, intrinsic value₁, in the first. The senses are distinct. Thus, while it may be true that if an object has only instrumental value it cannot have intrinsic value in the Moorean sense, it is false that an object of non-instrumental value is necessarily also of intrinsic value in the Moorean sense. We might value an object in virtue of its relational properties, for example its rarity, without thereby seeing it as having only instrumental value for human satisfactions.

This point can be stated with greater generality. We need to distinguish:

- (1) values objects can have in virtue of their relations to other objects; and
- (2) values objects can have in virtue of their relations to human beings.¹⁷

The second set of values is a proper subset of the first. Moreover, the second set of values is still not co-extensive with

(3) values objects can have in virtue of being instrumental for human satisfaction.

An object might have value in virtue of its relation with human beings without thereby being of only instrumental value for humans. Thus, for example, one 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'.¹⁸ 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. Wilderness has such value in virtue of our absence. However, the value is not possessed by wilderness in virtue of its instrumental usefulness for the satisfaction of human desires. The third set of values is a proper subset of both the second and the first. Intrinsic value in the sense of non-instrumental value need not then be intrinsic in the Moorean sense.

What of the relation between Moorean intrinsic value and objective value? Is it the case that if there is value that 'depends solely on the intrinsic nature of the thing in question' then subjectivism about values must be rejected? If an object has value only in virtue of its intrinsic nature, does it follow that it has value independently of human valuations? The answer depends on the interpretation given to the phrases 'depends solely on' and 'only in virtue of'. If these are interpreted to exclude the activity of human evaluation, as I take it Moore intended, then the answer to both questions is immediately 'yes'. However, there is a natural subjectivist reading to the phrases. The subjectivist can talk of the valuing agent *assigning* value to objects solely in virtue of their intrinsic natures. Given a liberal interpretation of the phrases, a subjectivist can hold that some objects have intrinsic value in the Moorean sense.

IV

In section II I argued that the claim that nature has non-instrumental value does not commit one to an objectivist meta-ethics. However, I left open the question as to whether there might be other reasons particularly pertinent in the field of environmental ethics that would lead us to hold an objectivist account of value. I will show in this section that there are.

The ethical objectivist holds that the evaluative properties of objects are real properties of objects, that is, that they are properties that objects possess independently of the valuations of valuers. What is meant by 'in-

dependently of the valuations of valuers'? There are two readings of the phrase which parallel the two senses of 'non-relational property' outlined in the last section:

(1) The evaluative properties of objects are properties that exist in the absence of evaluating agents. (Weak interpretation)

(2) The evaluative properties of objects can be characterised without reference to evaluating agents. (Strong interpretation)

The distinction is a particular instance of a more general distinction between two senses in which we can talk of a property being a real property of an object:

(1) A real property is one that exists in the absence of any being experiencing that object. (Weak interpretation)

(2) A real property is one that can be characterised without reference to the experiences of a being who might experience the object. (Strong interpretation)

Is there anything about evaluations of the environment that make the case for objectivism especially compelling? I begin by considering the case for the weak version of objectivism. For the purpose of the rest of the discussion I will assume that only human persons are evaluating agents.

1. Weak Objectivity

A popular move in recent work on environmental ethics has been to establish the objectivity of values by invoking an analogy between secondary qualities and evaluative properties in the following manner:

(1) The evaluative properties of objects are analogous to secondary qualities. Both sets of properties are observer dependent.

(2) The Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics has shown the distinction between primary qualities and secondary qualities to be untenable. All the properties of objects are observer dependent.

Hence,

(3) the evaluative properties of objects are as real as their primary qualities.¹⁹

The argument fails at every stage. In the first place the conclusion itself is too weak to support objectivism about values: it is no argument for an objectivist theory of values to show that all properties of objects are observer dependent. The second premise should in any case be rejected. Not only is it the case that the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum theory is but one amongst many,²⁰ it is far from clear that the Copenhagen interpretation is committed to the ontological extravagance that all properties are observer dependent. Rather it can be understood as a straightforward instrumentalist

interpretation of quantum theory. As such it involves no ontological commitments about the quantum domain.²¹

More pertinent to the present discussion, there are also good grounds for rejecting the first premise. The analogy between secondary qualities and values has often been used to show that values are not real properties of objects. Thus Hume remarks:

Vice and virtue . . . may be compared to sounds, heat and cold, which, according to modern philosophy, are not qualities in objects, but perceptions in the mind . . .²²

For the Humean, both secondary qualities and evaluative properties are not real properties of objects, but, rather, illustrate the mind's 'propensity to spread itself on external objects': as Mackie puts it, moral qualities are the 'projection or objectification of moral attitudes'.²³ The first premise of the argument assumes this Humean view of the analogy between secondary qualities and values. However, there are good grounds for inverting the analogy and that inversion promises to provide a more satisfactory argument for objectivism than that outlined above.

On the weak interpretation of the concept of a real property, secondary qualities are real properties of objects. They persist in the absence of observers. Objects do not lose their colours when we no longer perceive them. In the kingdom of the blind the grass is still green. Secondary qualities are dispositional properties of objects to appear in a certain way to ideal observers in ideal conditions. So, for example, an object is green if and only if it would appear green to a perceptually ideal observer in perceptually ideal conditions.²⁴ It is consistent with this characterisation of secondary qualities that an object possesses that quality even though it may never actually be perceived by an observer. Thus, while in the strong sense of the term secondary qualities are not real properties of objects—one cannot characterise the properties without referring to the experiences of possible observers—in the weak sense of the term they are.²⁵

This point opens up the possibility of an inversion of the Humean analogy between secondary and evaluative qualities which has been recently exploited by McDowell and others.²⁶ Like the secondary qualities, evaluative qualities are real properties of objects. An object's evaluative properties are similarly dispositional properties that it has to produce certain attitudes and reactions in ideal observers in ideal conditions. Thus, we might tentatively characterise goodness thus: *x* is good if and only if *x* would produce feelings of moral approval in an ideal observer in ideal conditions. Likewise, beauty might be characterised thus: *x* is beautiful if and

only if *x* would produce feelings of aesthetic delight in ideal observers in ideal conditions. Given this characterisation, an object is beautiful or good even if it never actually appears as such to an observer. The evaluative properties of objects are real in just the same sense that secondary qualities are. Both sets of properties are independent of observers in the sense that they persist in the absence of observers. The first premise of the argument outlined above should therefore be rejected. Furthermore, in rejecting this premise, one arrives at a far more convincing case for the reality of evaluative properties than that provided by excursions into quantum mechanics.

However, the promise of this line of argument for environmental ethics is, I believe, limited. There are a variety of particular arguments that might be raised against it. For example, the Humean might respond by suggesting that the analogy between secondary and evaluative properties is imperfect. The arguments for and against the analogy I will not rehearse here.²⁷ For even if the analogy is a good one, it is not clear to me that any point of substance about the nature of values divides the Humean and his opponent. The debate is one about preferred modes of speech, specifically about how the term 'real property' is to be read. For the Humean such as Mackie, the term 'real property' is understood in its strong sense. It is a property that can be characterised without reference to the experiences of an observer. Hence neither secondary qualities nor values are real properties of objects. The opponent of the Humean in employing the analogy to establish the reality of evaluative properties merely substitutes a weak interpretation of 'real property' for the strong interpretation. There may be good reasons for doing this, but nothing about the nature of values turns on this move.²⁸ Moreover, there seems to be nothing about evaluative utterances concerning the natural environment which adds anything to this debate. Nothing about specifically environmental values tells for or against this argument for objectivism.

2. *Strong Objectivity*

A more interesting question is whether there are good reasons for believing that there are objective values in the strong sense: are there evaluative properties that can be characterised without reference to the experiences of human observers? I will now argue that there are and that uses of evaluative utterances about the natural world provide the clearest examples of such values.

Consider the gardener's use of the phrase '*x* is good for greenfly'. The term 'good for' can be understood in two distinct ways. It might refer to

what is conducive to the destruction of greenfly, as in 'detergent sprays are good for greenfly', or it can be used to describe what causes greenfly to flourish, as in 'mild winters are good for greenfly'. The term 'good for' in the first use describes what is instrumentally good for the gardener: given the ordinary gardener's interest in the flourishing of her rosebushes, detergent sprays satisfy that interest. The second use describes what is instrumentally good for the greenfly, quite independently of the gardener's interests. This instrumental goodness is possible in virtue of the fact that greenflies are the sorts of things that can flourish or be injured. In consequence they have their own goods that are independent of both human interests and any tendency they might have to produce in human observers feelings of approval or disapproval.²⁹ Such goods I will follow Von Wright in terming the 'goods of X'.³⁰

What is the class of entities that can be said to possess such goods? Von Wright in an influential passage offers the following account:

A being, of whose good it is meaningful to talk, is one who can meaningfully be said to be well or ill, to thrive, to flourish, be happy or miserable . . . the attributes, which go along with the meaningful use of the phrase 'the good of X', may be called *biological* in a broad sense. By this I do not mean that they were terms, of which biologists make frequent use. 'Happiness' and 'welfare' cannot be said to belong to the professional vocabulary of biologists. What I mean by calling the terms 'biological' is that they are used as attributes of beings, of whom it is meaningful to say they have a *life*. The question 'What kinds or species of being have a good?' is therefore broadly identical with the question 'What kinds or species of being have a life'.³¹

This biological use of the terms 'good for' and 'good of' is at the centre of Aristotelian ethics. The distinction between 'good for' and 'good of' itself corresponds to the Aristotelian distinction between goods externally instrumental to a being's flourishing and those that are constitutive of a being's flourishing.³² And the central strategy of Aristotle's ethics is to found ethical argument on the basis of this broadly biological use of the term 'good'. I discuss this further below.

The terms 'good' and 'goods' in this biological context characterise items which are real in the strong interpretation of the term. In order to characterise the conditions which are constitutive of the flourishing of a living thing one need make no reference to the experiences of human observers. The goods of an entity are given rather by the characteristic features of the kind or species of being it is. A living thing can be said to flourish if it develops those characteristics which are normal to the species to which it belongs in the normal conditions for that species. If it fails to realise such characteristics then it will be described by terms such as 'defec-

tive', 'stunted', 'abnormal' and the like. Correspondingly, the truth of statements about what is good for a living thing, what is conducive to its flourishing, depend on no essential reference to human observers. The use of the evaluative terms in the biological context does then provide good reasons for holding that some evaluative properties are real properties on the strong interpretation of the phrase. Hence, evaluative utterances about living things do have a particular relevance to the debate about the objectivity of values. Specifically biological values tell for objectivism.

However, while the use of value terms in the specifically biological context provides the clearest examples of the existence of objective goods, the class of entities that can be meaningfully said to have such goods is not confined to the biological context. Von Wright's claim that the question 'What kinds or species of being have a good?' is identical with the question 'What kinds or species of being have a life' should be rejected. The problem case for this identity claim is that of collective entities. Von Wright is willing to entertain the possibility that such entities have their own good but only if they can also be said to have their own life in a non-metaphorical sense.

But what shall we say of social units such as the family, the nation, the state. Have they got a life 'literally' or 'metaphorically' only? I shall not attempt to answer these questions. I doubt whether there is any other way of answering them except by pointing out existing analogies of language. It is a fact that we speak about the life and also the good (welfare) of the family, the nation and the state. This fact about the use of language we must accept and with it the idea that the social units in question *have* a life and a good. What is arguable, however, is whether the life and *a fortiori* also the good (welfare) of a social unit is not somehow 'logically reducible' to the life and therefore the good of the beings—men or animals—who are its members.³³

This passage conflates two distinct issues: whether collective entities have a life and whether they have their own goods. It does not appear to me that we can talk of collective entities having a life in anything but a metaphorical sense. They clearly lack those properties typical of living things—reproduction, growth, death and such like. However, it does make sense to talk about the conditions in which collective entities flourish and hence of their goods in a non-metaphorical sense. Correspondingly, we can meaningfully talk of what is damaging to them. Furthermore, the goods of collective entities are not reducible to the goods of their members. Thus for example we can refer to the conditions in which bureaucracy flourishes while believing this to be bad for its constituent members. Or to take another example, what is good for members of a workers' cooperative can be quite at odds with what is good for the cooperative itself: the latter is constituted by its relative competitive position in the market place, and members of

cooperatives might find themselves forced to forego the satisfaction of their own interests to realise this.³⁴ The question 'What class of beings has a good?' is identical with the question 'What class of beings can be said to flourish in a non-metaphorical sense?' The class of living things is a proper subset of this class.

This point is central to environmental questions. It makes sense to talk of the goods of collective biological entities—colonies, ecosystems and so on—in a way that is irreducible to that of its members. The realisation of the good of a colony of ants might in certain circumstances involve the death of most of its members. It is not a condition for the flourishing of an individual animal that it be eaten: it often is a condition for the flourishing of the ecosystem of which it is a part. Relatedly, a point central to Darwin's development of the theory of evolution was that living beings have a capacity to reproduce that outstrips the capacity of the environment to support them. Most members of a species die in early life. This is clearly bad for the individuals involved. But it is again essential to the flourishing of the ecosystems of which they are a part. Collective entities have their own goods. In defending this claim one need not show that they have their own life.³⁵

Both individual living things and the collective entities of which they are members can be said, then, to have their own goods. These goods are quite independent of human interests and can be characterised without reference to the experiences of human observers. It is a standard at this juncture of the argument to assume that possession of goods entails moral considerability: 'moral standing or considerability belongs to whatever has a good of its own'.³⁶ This is mistaken. It is possible to talk in an objective sense of what constitutes the goods of entities, without making any claims that these ought to be realised. We can know what is 'good for X' and relatedly what constitutes 'flourishing for X' and yet believe that X is the sort of thing that ought not to exist and hence that the flourishing of X is just the sort of thing we ought to inhibit. The case of the gardener noted earlier is typical in this regard. The gardener knows what it is for greenfly to flourish, recognises they have their own goods, and has a practical knowledge of what is good for them. No moral injunction follows. She can quite consistently believe they ought to be done harm. Likewise one can state the conditions for the flourishing of dictatorship and bureaucracy. The anarchist can claim that 'war is the health of the state'. One can discover what is good both for rain forests and the AIDS virus. One can recognise that something has its own goods, and quite consistently be morally indifferent to these goods or believe one has a moral duty to inhibit

their development.³⁷ That Y is a good of X does not entail that Y should be realised unless we have a prior reason for believing that X is the sort of thing whose good ought to be promoted. While there is not a logical gap between facts and values, in that some value statements are factual, there is a logical gap between facts and oughts. 'Y is a good' does not entail 'Y ought to be realised'.³⁸

This gap clearly raises problems for environmental ethics. The existence of objective goods was promising precisely because it appeared to show that items in the non-human world were objects of proper moral concern. The gap outlined threatens to undermine such concern. Can the gap be bridged? There are two ways one might attempt to construct such a bridge. The first is to invoke some general moral claim that linked objective goods and moral duties. One might for example invoke an objectivist version of utilitarianism: we have a moral duty to maximise the total amount of objective good in the world.³⁹ There are a number of problems of detail with such an approach: What are the units for comparing objective goods? How are different goods to be weighed? However, it also has a more general problem that it shares with hedonistic utilitarianism. Thus, the hedonistic utilitarian must include within his calculus pleasures that ought not to count at all e.g., those of a sadist who gets pleasure from needless suffering. The hedonistic utilitarian fails to allow that pleasures themselves are the direct objects of ethical appraisal. Similarly, there are some entities whose flourishing simply should not enter into any calculations—the flourishing of dictatorships and viruses for example. It is not the case that the goods of viruses should count, even just a very small amount. There is no reason why these goods should count at all as ends in themselves (although there are of course good *instrumental* reasons why some viruses should flourish, in that many are indispensable to the ecosystems of which they are a part). The flourishing of such entities is itself a direct object of ethical appraisal. The quasi-utilitarian approach is unpromising.

A second possible bridge between objective goods and oughts is an Aristotelian one. Human beings like other entities have goods constitutive of their flourishing, and correspondingly other goods instrumental to that flourishing. The flourishing of many other living things ought to be promoted because they are constitutive of our own flourishing. This approach might seem a depressingly familiar one. It looks as if we have taken a long journey into objective value only to arrive back at a narrowly anthropocentric ethic. This however would be mistaken. It is compatible with an Aristotelian ethic that we value items in the natural world for their own sake, not simply as an external means to our own satisfaction. Consider

Aristotle's account of the relationship of friendship to human flourishing.⁴⁰ It is constitutive of friendship of the best kind that we care for friends for their own sake and not merely for the pleasures or profits they might bring. To do good for a friend purely because one thought they might later return the compliment not for their own sake is to have an ill-formed friendship. Friendship in turn is a constitutive component of a flourishing life. Given the kind of beings we are, to lack friends is to lack part of what makes for a flourishing human existence. Thus the egoist who asks 'why have friends?' or 'why should I do good for my friends' has assumed a narrow range of goods—'the biggest share of money, honours and bodily pleasures'⁴¹—and asked how friends can bring such goods. The appropriate response is to point out that he has simply misidentified what the goods of a human life are.

The best case for an environmental ethic should proceed on similar lines. For a large number of, although not all, individual living things and biological collectives, we should recognise and promote their flourishing as an end in itself.⁴² Such care for the natural world is constitutive of a flourishing human life. The best human life is one that includes an awareness of and practical concern with the goods of entities in the non-human world. On this view, the last man's act of vandalism reveals the man to be leading an existence below that which is best for a human being, for it exhibits a failure to recognise the goods of non-humans. To outline such an approach is, however, only to provide a promissory note. The claim that care for the natural world for its own sake is a part of the best life for humans requires detailed defence. The most promising general strategy would be to appeal to the claim that a good human life requires a breadth of goods. Part of the problem with egoism is the very narrowness of the goods it involves. The ethical life is one that incorporates a far richer set of goods and relationships than egoism would allow. This form of argument can be made for a connection of care for the natural world with human flourishing: the recognition and promotion of natural goods as ends in themselves involves just such an enrichment.⁴³

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NOTES

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1. A. Naess, 'A Defence of the Deep Ecology Movement', *Environmental Ethics*, 6 (1984), 266. However, Naess's use of the term is unstable and he sometimes uses the phrase 'intrinsic value' to refer to objective value. See n4, below.

2. G. E. Moore, 'The Conception of Intrinsic Value' in *Philosophical Studies* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1922), p. 260.

3. D. Worster, *Nature's Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. xi.

4. Thus, for example, Naess and Rothenberg in *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) initially define 'intrinsic value' as value which is 'independent of our valuation' (*ibid.*, p. 11) but then in the text characterise it in terms of a contrast with instrumental value (*ibid.*, pp. 74-75). In his own account of deep ecology Naess employs the term in the sense of non-instrumental value (see n2 and A. Naess, 'The Shallow and the Deep: Long Range Ecology Movement' *Inquiry*, 16, 1973). Others are more careful. Thus, while Attfield is committed to both an objectivist meta-ethics and the view that the states of some non-humans have intrinsic value, in *A Theory of Value and Obligation* (London: Croom Helm, 1987) ch. 2, he defines intrinsic value as non-instrumental value and distinguishes this from his 'objectivist understanding of it'. Callicott in 'Intrinsic Value, Quantum Theory, and Environmental Ethics', *Environmental Ethics*, 7 (1989), 257-75, distinguishes non-instrumental value from objective value, using the term 'inherent value' for the former and 'intrinsic value' for the latter. However, the use of these terms raises its own problems since there is little agreement in the literature as to how they are to be employed. For example, P. Taylor, *Respect for Nature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986) pp. 68-77 makes the same distinction but uses 'inherent value' to describe Callicott's 'intrinsic value' and 'intrinsic value' to describe his 'inherent value', while R. Attfield in *The Ethics of Environmental Concern* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983) ch. 8, uses the term 'inherent value' to refer to something quite different. Another exceptionally clear discussion of the meta-ethical issues surrounding environmental ethics is R. and V. Routley, 'Human Chauvinism and Environmental Ethics' in D. Mannison, M. McRobbie and R. Routley (eds.), *Environmental Philosophy* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1980).

5. This kind of argument is to be found in particular in the work of McCloskey. See H. J. McCloskey, 'Ecological Ethics and its Justification' in Mannison *et al.*, *op. cit.*, and *Ecological Ethics and Politics* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1983).

6. Cf. D. Gauthier, *Morals by Agreement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986) pp. 46-49 and J. B. Callicott, 'Intrinsic Value, Quantum Theory and Environmental Ethics', *Environmental Ethics* 7 (1985), 257-75, who make this point quite emphatically.

7. C. L. Stevenson, *Ethics and Language* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1944).

8. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
9. I take the operators from S. Blackburn, *Spreading the Word* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p. 193ff.
10. Cf. R. and V. Routley, 'Human Chauvinism and Environmental Ethics' in D. Mannison, M. McRobbie and R. Routley (eds.), *Environmental Philosophy* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1980).
11. See *ibid.*, pp. 121–23.
12. W. D. Ross, *The Right and the Good* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930), p. 140. Ross held four things to have intrinsic value—'virtue, pleasure, the allocation of pleasure to the virtuous, and knowledge' (*ibid.*, p. 140).
13. G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), pp. 28, 83ff. and 188ff.
14. G. E. Moore, 'The Conception of Intrinsic Value', *Philosophical Studies* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1922), p. 260.
15. I do not follow Moore's own discussion here. Moore's own use of the term is closer to the weaker than the stronger interpretation. Thus, for example, the method of isolation as a test of intrinsic value proceeds by considering if objects keep their value 'if they existed *by themselves*, in absolute isolation': G. E. Moore *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), p. 187.
16. A similar argument is to be found in A. Gunn, 'Why Should We Care about Rare Species?', *Environmental Ethics*, 2, 1980, pp. 17–37, especially pp. 29–34.
17. J. Thompson partially defines intrinsic value and hence an environmental ethic in terms of a contrast with such values: 'those who find intrinsic value in nature are claiming . . . that things and states which are of value are valuable for what they are in themselves and not because of their relation to us . . .' (J. Thompson, 'A Refutation of Environmental Ethics', p. 148, *Environmental Ethics*, 12 (1990), 147–60). This characterisation is inadequate, in that it rules out of an environmental ethic positions such as that of Muir who values certain parts of nature because of the absence of the marks of humans. I take it that Thompson intends a contrast to the third set of values—values objects can have in virtue of being instrumental for human satisfaction.
18. Cited in R. Dubos, *The Wooing of Earth* (London: The Athlone Press, 1980) p. 135.
19. A relatively sophisticated version of the argument is to be found in Holmes Rolston, III, 'Are Values in Nature Subjective or Objective?', pp. 92–95 in *Philosophy Gone Wild* (Prometheus Books, Buffalo, NY: 1989). Cf. J. B. Callicott, 'Intrinsic Value, Quantum Theory and Environmental Ethics', *Environmental Ethics* (1985) 7, pp. 257–75.
20. M. Jammer, *The Philosophy of Quantum Mechanics* (New York: John Wiley, 1974) remains a good survey of the basic different interpretations of quantum theory.
21. It should also be noted that the view, popular among some Green thinkers (see, for example, F. Capra, *The Tao of Physics* [London: Wildwood House, 1975]), that the Copenhagen interpretation entails a radically new world-view that undermines the old classical Newtonian picture of the world is false. The Copenhagen interpretation is conceptually conservative and denies the possibility that we could replace the concepts of classical physics by any others (see N. Bohr, *Atomic Theory and the Description of Nature* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934], p.

94. Cf. W. Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy* [London: Allen and Unwin, 1959] p. 46. I discuss this conservatism in J. O'Neill, *Worlds Without Content* [London: Routledge, in press], ch. 6.

22. D. Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (London: Fontana, 1972), Book III, §1, p. 203.

23. J. Mackie, *Ethics* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1977) p. 42.

24. Cf. J. McDowell, 'Values and Secondary Qualities', p. 111 in T. Honderich (ed.), *Morality and Objectivity* (London: Routledge, 1985).

25. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 113 and J. Dancy, 'Two Conceptions of Moral Realism', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Supp. vol. 60, 1986.

26. See J. McDowell, 'Values and secondary qualities' in T. Honderich (ed.), *Morality and Objectivity* (London: Routledge, 1985) and J. McDowell, 'Aesthetic value, objectivity and the fabric of the world' in E. Schaper (ed.), *Pleasure, Preference and Value* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). Cf. D. Wiggins, *Needs, Values, Truth* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), Essays III and IV. For critical discussion of this approach see S. Blackburn, 'Errors and the Phenomenology of Value' in T. Honderich (ed.), *Morality and Objectivity*; J. Dancy, 'Two Conceptions of Moral Realism', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Supp. vol. 60, 1986; C. Hookway, 'Two Conceptions of Moral Realism', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* Supp. vol. 60, 1986; C. Wright, 'Moral Values, Projections and Secondary Qualities', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Supp. vol. 62, 1988.

27. For such a Humean response see Blackburn, 'Errors and the Phenomenology of Value' in T. Honderich (ed.), *Morality and Objectivity*.

28. Cf. Hookway, 'Two Conceptions of Moral Realism', p. 202.

29. Hence I also reject Feinberg's claim that the goods of plants are reducible to those of humans with an interest in their thriving: 'The Rights of Animals and Unborn Generations' in *Rights, Justice and the Bounds of Liberty* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 169–71. For a similar argument against Feinberg see P. Taylor, *Respect for Nature*, p. 68.

30. G. H. von Wright, *The Varieties of Goodness* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), ch. 3.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 50. Cf. P. Taylor, *Respect for Nature*, pp. 60–71.

32. See J. Cooper, *Reason and Human Good in Aristotle* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), p. 19ff.

33. Von Wright, *The Varieties of Goodness*, pp. 50–51.

34. I discuss this example in more detail in J. O'Neill, 'Exploitation and Workers' Councils', *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 8 (1991), 263–67.

35. Hence, there is no need to invoke scientific hypotheses such as the Gaia hypothesis to defend the existence of such goods, as for example Goodpaster does (K. Goodpaster, 'On Being Morally Considerable' p. 323, *Journal of Philosophy*, 75, 1978 pp. 308–25).

36. R. Attfield, *A Theory of Value and Obligation* (Beckenham: Croom Helm, 1987), p. 21. Cf. Holmes Rolston III, *Environmental Ethics* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), K. Goodpaster, 'On Being Morally Considerable' and P. Taylor, *Respect for Nature*.

37. This point undermines a common objection to objectivism, i.e., that objectivists cannot explain why value statements necessarily motivate actions. If values

were objective then 'someone might be indifferent to things which he regards as good or actively hostile to them' (S. Blackburn *Spreading the Word*, p. 188). The proper reply to this is that not all value statements do motivate actions, as the example in the text reveals.

38. Compare Wiggins's point that we need to discriminate between 'the (spurious) fact-value distinction and the (real) is-ought distinction' (D. Wiggins, 'Truth, Invention, and the Meaning of Life' in *Needs, Values, Truth: Essays in the Philosophy of Value* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1987] p. 96). Cf. P. Taylor, *Respect for Nature*, pp. 71–72.

39. See R. Attfield, *op. cit.*, for this kind of position. For a different attempt to bridge the gap between objective goods and moral oughts see P. Taylor, *Respect for Nature*, chs. 2–4.

40. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. T. Irwin (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1985), Books viii–ix.

41. *Ibid.*, 1168b.

42. This would clearly involve a rejection of Aristotle's own view that animals are made for the sake of humans. (Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. J. Warrington [London: J. A. Dent and Sons, 1959], 1265b.)

43. This line of argument has the virtue of fitting well with Aristotle's own account of happiness, given an inclusive interpretation of his views. Happiness on this account is inclusive of all goods that are ends in themselves: a happy life is self-sufficient in that nothing is lacking. It is a maximally consistent set of goods. (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1097b14–20; see J. L. Ackrill, 'Aristotle on *Eudaimonia*' in A. O. Rorty (ed.), *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980) for a presentation of this interpretation.)