The Value of the Valuer

Towards an adequate environmental ethic

by

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Abstract

In the thesis I look for the conditions and characteristics of an environmental moral theory that would make it adequate, that is in accordance with the fundamental environmental intuitions. First I use Christine Korsgaard's classification of values to identify the types views within the field environmental ethics. I analyze anthropocentrism and non-anthropocentrism as the two main classes of views in the field. Then I investigate the fundamental intuitions behind the environmental moral philosophy and contrast them with the existing accounts. Finally I propose an alternative classification of environmental theories that reveals another possible type of view, a bottom-up non-anthropocentrism, and offer its first formulation.

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1 Introduction

What is environmental ethics?

Environmental ethics is a relatively new branch of applied moral philosophy. Environmental moral philosophers study the spectrum of ethical problems beyond the scope of classical moral theories, that is beyond what we owe to each other. They focus on things other than human beings like other animals, ecosystems or land. The field is concerned with questions like: is the world better off with more species or does biodiversity not matter? Do we have obligations towards other beings on the planet? If we destroy a piece of nature, does it make sense to restore it?

Traditionally, the discussion is nevertheless set against the background of classical moral theories. A substantial part of the debate touches on two problems: the distinctiveness of environmental ethics and the adequacy of anthropocentrism as an environmental view[1]. The question of distinctiviness, that is whether

> the standard categories of rights, interest, and duties of individual human beings are adequate to furnish ethical guidance in environmental decision

[1] Although they were often conflated in the literature (Norton 1984, p.132).

making (Norton 1984, pp.131-2),

had been less and less debated as the field was solidifying and gaining recognition since its conception in the 1980s. The usefulness of environmental ethics as a separate area of study is no longer a point of mass contention. Thus I am not going to address it.

The question if anthropocentrism could be an adequate environmental ethic is the main topic of this thesis. But what exactly is anthropocentrism? And what challenges does it face in the environmental context? These issues deserve separate treatment and are going to take the entirety of the first chapter.

2 Values in nature

Defining anthropocentrism

Precise definition of anthropocentrism is elusive. Even a working approximation can prove difficult to pin down. Authors engaging with anthropocentric theories in environmental ethics often take their classification more or less at face value. Broadly understood centrality of human beings in the world is usually seen as the main feature of anthropocentric propositions (cf. e.g. Westra 1997, p.283; De Lucia 2017, p.184). When a more detailed account is necessary, in their first reactions, authors tend to identify anthropocentrism with the position that value arises only in relation to human beings (Norton 1982, p.320). Consequently, on this account, if there is any value in the world beyond *Homo sapiens* it was created through reference to humans. This reference may take many forms: one may care about preferences, needs, ideals or other relations and beliefs people hold. Nevertheless, on all anthropocentric accounts, the central claim is that nature can be worth something only through humans. I think this feature is defining for the anthropocentric family of views in environmental ethics. Its most general formulation would look as follows.

[**Anthropocentrism**] Things in the world have value because humans stand

in a certain relation R to those things.

I believe that my definition of anthropocentrism picks out all formulations presented so far in the environmental literature as well as some views considered so far to have been non-anthropocentric. However, to make it clear how other accounts fit into this picture, first I need to include a discussion of types of values relevant to environmental ethics.

Types of value

Environmental ethicists understand the problem of value of non-human nature as a decision between intrinsic and instrumental value. As intuitive as it seems, there is a broader spectrum to choose from. Christine M. Korsgaard pointed out that these two features might actually concern different aspects of value and thus should not be presented as contrary options (Korsgaard 1983). In particular, the two dimensions of value are its *source* and *purpose*.

As to source, there are values that are intrinsic and extrinsic. An intrinsic value is one that does not need an external relation to occur. We usually think that people have intrinsic value. Extrinsic value has an externally relational property, namely that it stands in a particular relation to something else.

As to purpose, there are final (Korsgaard's „things valuable as ends" or for their own sakes) and instrumental (Korsgaard's „things valuable as means) values. Final values are defined as not serving any other purpose, appreciated for being what they are. Instrumental values are attached to things that serve as a means to another good.

x	**intrinsic**	**extrinsic**
final	final intrinsic	final extrinsic
instrumental	instrumental intrinsic	instrumental extrinsic

So from Korsgaard's classification we can get four combinations. Two of them, the final intrinsic and the instrumental extrinsic, rather obviously align with common intuitions. These are the two types of values discussed in environmental ethics as the contrasting examples of theoretical approach to the environmental issues in moral philosophy. Whenever I refer to an intrinsic value I mean a final intrinsic value. Whenever I mention an instrumental value I mean an instrumental extrinsic value. As to the instrumental intrinsic value, it is widely ignored. Virtually everyone believes that intrinsic values are always final (Rabinowicz & Rønnow-Rasmussen 2000, p.34). It seems self-contradictory to claim that something might bear value regardless of any relation it stands in to other objects in the world, and that it has it as a means to promote something else.

The revolutionary type of value is final extrinsic. According to this idea, something can be valuable for its own sake and yet derive its worth from another object. For instance, Leonardo da Vinci's *Lady with an Ermine* is extrinsically valuable. It takes its value from relational properties: because it was painted by da Vinci, because it is his only work exhibited at a Polish museum, or because people enjoy looking at it. It would have no value if there was no human in the world to appreciate its beauty or a tie to a famous painter. At the same time it is valuable as an end, for its own sake. We do not necessarily value it as a means to something else. If no one in the next generation enjoyed looking at da Vinci's works, they would still keep their value. Had the *Lady with an Ermine* been

destroyed in a fire there would be no way to substitute for the worth it held. The unique value deposited in the object would be gone with it. On the other hand, had something valued only instrumentally been irreversibly destroyed we could always replace it with an equivalent object at no loss of value. For instance, if your smartphone breaks into pieces you could be equally satisfied with a new one; no unique value would be lost on the way. Such destruction and replacement scenarios are a good test of final versus instrumental value.

Unfortunately, Korsgaard's claim that there are final extrinsic values does not seem to apply to utilitarian frameworks. In utilitarianism the only final and intrinsic value is pleasure. Everything else in the world, including a beautiful painting, may only contribute to the overall score of utility. Therefore everything else in the world can be interpreted as having only instrumental value. Thus utilitarianism would take us back to the classical opposition of the (final) intrinsic value of pleasure vs. the instrumental (extrinsic) values of things in the world that lead to pleasure. This thesis relies heavily on Korsgaardian value distinctions and so it will not satisfy a utilitarian. Nevertheless, I feel partially excused since accommodating utilitarianism is not too common among environmental writers anyway.

With these distinctions in mind let me take a step back and see what types of views are possible in environmental ethics with regard to values and how my formulation of anthropocentrism fits in that picture.

Anthropocentrism and non-anthropocentrism with regard to non-human value

Fundamental differences between types of views proposed in environmental ethics so far may be boiled down to different answers to one question: what kinds of value are you willing to ascribe to non-human world? According to Korsgaard's insight that values in ethics are actually described along two axes, that of source (intrinsic or extrinsic) and finitude (final or instrumental), there are four possible combinations. Since one of them, intrinsic instrumental, is self-contradictory we are left with three available types of value in nature.

In the environmental context the three kinds of value can be ordered in terms of how difficult it is to overrule a value when attributed to a non-human thing. By the difficulty of overruling I mean how strong must be a reason required to justify doing a harm to the value bearers of the respective kinds of value. I show the proposed gradient of ease of overruling a value in the table below.

Values in nature from the most to the least easily overruled

x	**instrumental**	**final**
intrinsic	x	least easy to overrule
extrinsic	most easy to overrule	somewhat easy to overrule

Consider again the scenarios of destruction and substitution mentioned above. It seems that no value has been lost after substitution of a broken mobile phone. Conversely, it feels that some unique value has been lost in the destruction of the *Lady with an Ermine*, even if a perfect copy can be put in its place at a the museum. Therefore destruction or damage done to the *Lady with an Ermine* should be more difficult to justify than dropping a mobile phone. A similar case can be made for an even stronger justification of harm to the things that hold final intrinsic value. For instance, if a fire broke out at Museo Reina Sofía in Madrid and firefighters had to choose between saving Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* and a visitor stranded in another room, we would scorn them if they came back with the painting.

Although suggestive, the scenarios involving destruction and substitution have a serious disadvantage. They cannot tell between the kind and intensity of a value. So from the firefighter example alone we cannot know for sure why we would prefer the visitor to survive rather than the painting. It does not show which factor was decisive: that a human being had some final intrinsic value not available to a painting, or that *Guernica* had less value in total, regardless of the kind. It is entirely possible in this scenario that the visitor has a priority over Picasso's piece because he or she had more final extrinsic, or perhaps even instrumental, value. Intrinsic value might have nothing to do with the visitor being more valuable overall.

As useful as it would prove, I do not have a satisfactory answer to the general problem of deciding between the kind and the amount when weighing the overall value of a thing. Nevertheless, I can add two thoughts to the discussion which can help alleviate some of the worry, at least for my purpose in this thesis.

Equivalents, utilitarians, and the final extrinsic value

First, I admit not to have a direct argument in favour of associating overall value with its position on the final/instrumental and intrinsic/extrinsic axes. However, it seems that one of the most compelling counterarguments that comes to mind does not apply to Korsgaard's framework as I use it here. Consider a reply along the following lines.

> [**Mill's Reply**] Perhaps instrumentally valuable things are always replaceable without loss. But can't at least some finally valuable things be similarly replaceable? Suppose I thought, with Mill, that pleasures are the only finally valuable thing? Can't I then replace one pleasure with another, without loss?[1]

Mill's reply presents us with the following two difficulties. 1. Are instrumental values always replaced without loss? 2. Can only instrumental values be replaced without loss?

As to the first one, it does seem so at a first glance. An instrumentally valuable thing is worth anything just because it enables, strengthens or otherwise leads to another value. It is the feature of serving some other good that matters. *What* is the subject holding that feature does not seem relevant.

Of course, in practice a replacement is not possible under all circumstances. If you break your phone you need to pay for a new one. If you cannot afford the purchase, you would not be able to replace it. So, clearly, some value *is* irredeemably lost. But it is not the value of the phone that is lost but of the resources and labour put into its construction and operation. Since we care about the value of the phone, we are interested in the situation

[1] A big thank you to Simon Rippon for presenting me with this problem. The formulation is his and came from our correspondence.

after the money has already been put in, when the new phone is already there. So the test of destruction and substitution is in fact a doubly conditional statement.

> [**The Destruction and Substitution Test**] If a functional equivalent, namely something that does the same thing, of an object can be produced in practice, then when that object is destroyed and replaced (with its functional equivalent), you can get as much value and of the same kind as before.

I would say that all merely instrumentally valuable things, by definition, pass this test.

Now, the main doubt that Mill's Reply casts on the destroy and replace scenarios is whether only instrumental values may be substituted without loss or could this also be a feature of some of the final values. Before I get to the utilitarian case of pleasures first let me briefly consider if a final value can satisfy the first conditional of the above test at all.

In the case of things that bear an instrumental value their functional equivalents are easy to determine. We look for things that serve the same good, usually in a similar fashion. You may argue about the efficiency or level to which the target good is promoted but the goal itself is in most cases clear. For example, an oven is instrumentally valuable and its purpose is to cook food. You can have a gas oven, an electrical one, an earthen oven or even a portable Dutch oven. The mechanical composition or the fuel used in a particular device may render it more or less easy to use in specific circumstances but, all in all, it does not affect the overall value of an oven terribly lot. After all, it is worth only as much as it enables you to bake food. This is a sample of instrumentality at its best.

But what could be a functional equivalent of final value-bearers? What good does a piece of art or a human being serve? To what other values might they be instrumental? It

sounds like an impossible question. Final values are defined by that their bearers are worthy for their own sakes, regardless of what good they might promote otherwise. They do do not need a purpose to make them valuable because their value does not arise in a relation. Then it follows that, with regard to their final value, these objects cannot have a functional equivalent because they do not have a function. For instance, *The Kiss* is treasured because it was painted by Gustav Klimt. That value is a final value and as such it does not promote any other good. There is no purpose to it and therefore there can be no functional equivalent.

Now, one could retort that I overly focus on the *functional* part. Suppose I conceded that final values cannot have the purpose-oriented equivalents I employ in the above formulation of the Destruction and Substitution Test, but claimed that they might have equivalents nonetheless. But what kind of *other* equivalence should it possibly be?

It is not purely physical since I could have commissioned a perfect copy of *Mona Lisa* immediately and, although budget wrecking, it would turn out perfectly worthless. At the same time, it seems rather intuitive that the physical identity is necessary. After all, what we value the most is the fact that the painting was brought into existence by a particular man.

Historical continuity might be the next contender. On this account, for two objects to be equivalent we would require them to have the same spatiotemporal history. It seems like a step up from mere physical identity because it explains why a perfect copy of *Mona Lisa* would not sell for tens of millions of Euro. Unfortunately, it it also extremely restrictive. Nothing else can have the same trail in space and time. This would only confirm that final values have no equivalents.

I do not have a better hypothesis of what an equivalence of final values might mean. Fortunately, the burden of proof here does not lie with me. As for the Mill's Reply, I believe it does not get into alternative definitions of what an equivalent thing could be whatsoever. I think the solution it suggests is a lot more simple and also cannot be reconciled with the way I framed final values in the first place.

Mill's Reply supposes, in the classical utilitarian fashion, that pleasures are the only things in the world that have final value. Every other thing in the world is then valuable only insofar as it contributes to a pleasure. So, with the source of value of all the things in existence so uniform, could not we replace anything with an amount of something else at no loss of value? This conclusion is more demanding than the explicit question in Mill's Reply, that is whether at least *one* substitution like that is possible. I will deal with the general statement first and attend to the version in Mill's. Reply next.

Every follower of Mill is aware that to John Stuart Mill himself not every pleasure can be substituted for some other pleasure. He makes a distinction between at least two kinds of pleasures, higher and lower, as early as in the second chapter of his „Utilitarianism" (Mill 2003, p.188). If you are a Benthamite this limitation does not apply to you but you have other difficulties. For instance, the famous case of the Utility Monster – a creature that finds immense pleasure in suffering of others and outweighs it in the utilitarian calculus. However, you could deviate from Bentham and insist that the subject of the pleasure in question matters, as we normally assume. Then, going back to our fine arts examples, I would present you with a following scenario.

> [**Klimt's Pleasure Swap**] Klimt painted more than just one piece. Assuming that his paintings are equally contributing to pleasure and their value derives

from the pleasure they contribute to[2], then it should be possible to replace without loss *The Kiss* by *Beech Grove I*, *Two Women Friends*, or any other of Klimt's works. And yet we would intuitively say that if *The Kiss* was destroyed or taken from a museum, putting another painting of the same artist in its place does not replace it fully.

Note that we could also have a utilitarian-agnostic version of this story, perhaps more suitable for our purposes.

> [**The Klimt Swap**] Klimt painted more than just one piece. Assuming that the value of *The Kiss* does indeed come from the connection to its maker, then it should be possible to replace without loss *The Kiss* by *Beech Grove I*, *Two Women Friends*, or any other of Klimt's works. And yet we would intuitively say that if *The Kiss* was destroyed or taken from a museum, putting another painting of the same artist in its place does not replace it fully.

The two scenarios above suggest that not all values could be replaced without loss by something else.

Consider Mill's Reply again. Let us assume that there is a pleasure that might be replaced without loss with another pleasure. In utilitarianism, how do we compare pleasures to make sure there is no loss after substitution? We need to assign them numerically representable values. But when we assign values we assume that they are of the same kind. It is a necessary assumption for any type of the utilitarian calculus to work: one unit of pleasure

[2]Note that this assumption does treat the value of the painting as instrumental but it is the only type of value available to the utilitarian, except for the finally and intrinsically valuable pleasure itself. I present this example to show that even if we play by the utilitarian rules we still encounter the phenomenon of irreplaceable values, whatever they might be.

must always be equal to another one unit of pleasure. We can add multipliers but, in the end, it is always the same thing, Pleasure.

Pleasures hold final value. But we have agreed in the earlier part of this chapter that there are two axes on which values are defined: final/instrumental and intrinsic/extrinsic. Pleasures as utilitarians usually see them are intrinsically valuable (Mill 2003, pp.212-3). If, on the utilitarian account, for anything to have value it needs to contribute to pleasure, then there are only two types of values on this view: final intrinsic (held by pleasures) and instrumental extrinsic (held by everything else). There is pleasure and things leading to pleasure.

If it is so, then final extrinsic values are not only absent in the utilitarian framework, they are impossible. It would mean that utilitarianism is not compatible with Korsgaard's distinction of values and we should not use it as an argument in debates involving final extrinsic values.

Back to the environmental ethics

With this gradation in place it is easier to conceptualize the differences between the kinds of views in environmental ethics. In the table below I present a revised nomenclature of positions in the field. I put the name of the view in the space of the table representing the type of value requiring the most justification among the values ascribed to the non-human world according to that view.

Value ascribable to non-humans according to different types of views in environmental ethics

x	**instrumental**	**final**
intrinsic	x	non-anthropocentrism
extrinsic	strong anthropocentrism	weak anthropocentrism

Therefore, in a strongly anthropocentric theory, the highest level of justification required to legitimize a damage to an animal or the environment is comparable to that from the scenario with a broken mobile phone. Effectively it boils down to what Bryan Norton calls untempered felt preferences of humans (Norton 1984, p.134). This is the naive anthropocentrism usually addressed in the literature.

Accordingly, a weakly anthropocentric theory would claim that some non-human things in the natural world should not be harmed without reasons sufficient to destroy the *Lady with an Ermine*. Although substantially more restrictive, this view favours human beings as well. In case of a serious conflict of interests, like in the fire at the museum scenario, a weak anthropocentrist sacrifices the non-human. This approach resembles John Passmore's argument for environmental protection invoking inherent aversion to vandalism (Passmore 1974, p.125). Also, this seems to be the general direction that Norton takes, albeit in a more controversial fashion (Norton 1984, pp.134-5).

Lastly, a non-anthropocentric view consists of a conviction that some non-human things in the world have final intrinsic value. Intrinsic value is by definition non-relational, and specifically in the environmental context, it does not come from a relation to humans. It

means that in a fire scenario there would be no obviously correct way to decide between saving a stranded visitor and a stranded deer.[3] It would be an individual assessment of two instances of the same type of value. This is the basic tenet of the fully egalitarian approaches to environmental ethics, like Tom Regan's extentionist programme (Regan 2015) or Arne Naess's so-called Deep Ecology movement (Naess 2015).

My definition of kinds of views through the types of value attributable to the non-human world according to the particular view is not a standard approach. Previously anthropocentrism and non-anthropocentrism used to be defined in terms of the *source* of value attributable to the non-human world, and the most progressive definition by Bryan Norton focused on *loci* of value (Norton 1984, p.133). On my account what defines a view is its commitment to whether the value in question is intrinsic or extrinsic, regardless of its source, and whether it is final or instrumental. Such a value-centric approach allows for more possible combinations and reflects the spectrum of views in the field more accurately. I discuss this matter in more detail in chapter three.

Challenging Anthropocentrism: values in face of fundamental environmental intuitions

The fundamental intuition behind environmental ethics can be summarized as follows. > [**Intuition of Non-Human Value**] Some things other than humans have value and thus deserve respect. This general statement of recognition has origins in more basic feelings. For instance, in one of the foundational texts of environmental moral philosophy Mary

[3] I deal with the question of the kind of value versus the amount of value later on.

Midgley (1993) points out human aversion to wanton destruction. She gives the example of Robinson Crusoe leaving his desert island. Although probably no human will need it ever again, most of us would find Crusoe blameworthy if, as a way of avenging horrors of the past, he sets the jungle on fire from aboard the vessel that had come to his rescue. Our reluctance to deem permissible a decision beneficial to an individual and neutral to the rest of humanity seems to suggest that there must be something more to our moral judgment besides dealings within our own species.

As it is hopefully clear from the classification of values I offered in the previous section, the Intuition of Non-Human Value is no challenge to neither weak nor strong flavours of anthropocentrism. All positions in environmental ethics attribute some kind of value to the non-human world. *Which* kind of value is the bone of contention, and it is not decided by the Intuition of Non-Human Value. Since there is a vivid controversy over whether an anthropocentric view could be a satisfying environmental ethic, there must be something more to our principal intuition about goodness in nature; something that would suggest a particular type of value present in the non-human world.

Indeed, there are thought experiments pointing in that direction. For instance, somehow a universe with animals seems preferable to a barren universe, even if the Cretaceous–Paleogene extinction was never to happen and thus *Homo sapiens* could have had no opportunity to emerge. Or, for a less exotic example, it seems reasonable to think that the world would be better if foxes did not get rabies, whether our species exists or not. Or a world in which a tsunami wrecks a forest seems worse than one where it does not happen. We have preferences for outcomes of environmental scenarios like these that do not involve our species at all. I call it an intuition about the humanless world.

[**Intuition About the Humanless World**] Had no human ever existed, there still would be better and worse ways for the world to be.

Now, this intuition, although equally basic, provides a real challenge to anthropocentric views in environmental ethics. Consider, if we have intuitions about the way the world should be even without the existence of our species, then there seems to be some kind of value in the world that is not limited to the usefulness of a thing to a human being. If we believe that it would be better if foxes did not get rabies, whether there are any humans or not, then the value of there not being rabies infected foxes has nothing to do with any benefit to the human race. Therefore it seems that the Intuition About the Humanless World outright excludes the extrinsic instrumental value as the maximum threshold available to the non-human world. According to my pairing of these thresholds to types of views in environmental ethics, this would also exclude Strong Anthropocentrism.

Nevertheless, ruling out Strong Anthropocentrism was an expected result. Anthropocentric solutions in the environmental literature are almost uniquely weak, final extrinsic value is usually attributed to some parts of nature. What new light does the Intuition About the Humanless World shed on views of this kind? Well, initially, not much. Laid down as it is, there is nothing in the most basic set up of environmental moral philosophy that could question the viability of Weak Anthropocentrism.

In the next chapter I probe the Intuition About the Humanless World a bit further to see if Weak Anthropocentrism will stand closer scrutiny and whether potential rejection of Anthropocentrism makes things any easier.

3 The shape of the Humanless World

In this chapter I take for granted that a world without humans may be valuable and set out to investigate in what ways. In particular, I explore what differences seem morally relevant in a humanless world. To flesh out the problem I will look at the extremities fist. Consider the following two cases: foxes getting rabies and the sun setting with pretty colours.

> [**Rabid Foxes**] All other things equal, we prefer a world where foxes are healthy to the world with rabid foxes.

It is a convenient intuition since it has some visible support in human practices in the actual world.[1] In many countries foresters leave rabies vaccines in the wild for animals to digest them or even spray the wild habitats with a cure from aeroplanes. Sure, there is a significant portion of precaution about human safety to these activities nevertheless it cannot be the only concern considering how low the risk is with the rate of infection of domestic animals as low as 0.9% in the developed countries and wildlife animals taking up

[1] Professor Rippon pointed out in a comment on a draft of this thesis that since we exist in the actual world our practices and preferences cannot give us any clues about the humanless world. First, I do not think that it is entirely correct: we do apply our actual-world intuitions all the time to the alternative and future scenarios, and quite successfully so. Thus when a possible world in question is similar enough to the actual one even the simple application of an actual intuition can be done. Nevertheless, my move in this paragraph is considerably more modest. All I say is that there is an intuition that applies to the humanless world and that it seems to be a commonly held conviction, which is a good start. To investigate the intuition further I consider more scenarios in the current and the following chapters.

over 92% of all cases of rabies (Birhane et al. 2017, p.1120). With the Humanless Intuition in mind, the difference between animals diseased and healthy does seem morally relevant as we have a clear preference for a particular way for the world to be regardless of our existence.

Now let us look at the other end of the spectrum.

> [**Pretty Sunsets**] All other things equal, we prefer a world where the sun sets prettily to the world where sunsets are bland.

Although true for a world with our species, pretty sunsets do not seem to matter as much in a humanless world. We do not have a clear preference for the world to have particular colours at the right time of the day in case the humanity is non-existent.

If you are an anthropocentrist, strongly or weakly, this difference must be rather confusing. Sure, intuitively sunsets are trivial and diseases are not but in the world without human beings what would be the basis for valuing one higher than the other? If all things non-human get their value in relation to humans, and there are no humans in the world, then the only source of value in the world is missing, thus nothing has value at all. If that is the case, how could an anthropocentrist accommodate intuitive differences in value attributed to the non-human things in the humanless world?

If the whole no-human thing feels like a theoretical stretch by now do keep in mind that this is not a practically impossible counterfactual situation but a description of most of the past and, very likely, of most of the future of the actual world. When I consider the humanless scenarios I also try to answer the question about the value of the world during 99.996% of its existence until this moment. If a view cannot account for the Humanless

Intuition then in fact it entails the claim that everything around was worthless for aeons, then a blink of an eye ago it just happened to have value and finally, after a blink or two more, it is most probably going to lose all of it and become worthless again, forever. It is a possible view but it begs plenty of questions that go beyond the concerns of the usual human-centred position. For instance, how does value arise in a valueless world? Or what is the reason to consider this particular, tiny moment in time more valuable than the immense period before humans emerged and probably after they will have ceased to exist? The environmental moral theories to date have been oblivious to these problems.

As to the Non-Anthropocentric views, the fact that some things in a humanless world are valuable and some are not is not an issue. Interestingly, the movements like land ethics (Leopold 1949, pp.203-5 and especially 225), a land-focused non-anthropocentric view, might be endangered. Comparing the geological or microbial states of a plot of land in a humanless scenario resembles the Pretty Sunsets case quite a lot.

The value of life

I assume that we value living things a lot more than inanimate matter. It is reflected in the Non-Anthropocentric literature which focuses on animals, species and ecosystems. The human-centred ethics acknowledges the significance of humans as living organisms as well by emphasizing the necessities of survival and the preferences shaping one's way of life in moral evaluation. If there is anything uncontroversial about environmental moral philosophy that would be the value of life.

However, we do not value all life equally. For an Anthropocentric theorist it is as clear

as a day but it applies to Non-Anthropocentrists as well. For example, although the Deep Ecology movement accounts for ecosystems (Boylan 2015, p.42) it does not care for individual microbes or microbial colonies as much as it is concerned with mammalian species. Consider a modified version of the Rabid Foxes scenario.

> [**Foxes With Leptospirosis**] All other things equal, we prefer a world where foxes are healthy to the world where foxes were infected with leptospirosis.

The intuition seems to stay decidedly with the foxes although the *Leptospira alstoni*, members of one of the pathogenic species of bacteria causing animal diseases, are clearly alive too. This preference applies to microorganisms considered helpful to the human race as well, even in cases that do not involve life and death choices. For example, there has never been any yeast liberation platform and there are no prospects for one in the predictable future. I think we can safely assume that animals like mammals are commonly deemed more valuable than single-cell organisms, even by Non-Anthropocentrists.

Now, valuing living organisms equally can mean two things: assigning the same amount of value or the same kind of value. Consider again the case of a fire at the museum: do we prefer saving the visitor because he or she holds intrinsic value or simply because he or she holds more value, regardless of the precise type composition of the mix? Do we prefer mammals over yeast because their value has some feature that the microbial values lack or simply due to the greater amount of value they hold? If we could establish that there is a change in kind then it would be possible to identify the class of things that are valuable in the environment more easily, because we would not need to compare amounts of value which are difficult to estimate and measure. So how do we tell between the kind and the amount? Actually, I do not think we would need to.

The amount vs. the kind of value

First let us take a look at instrumental values, those that we compare the most often. How exactly do we compare instrumental values? For a simple example, imagine you live by the river and need to bring enough water back home to fill a water tank. How do we know that a metal bucket is more valuable than an earthen jug? It can take in more liquid at once so you need to do less rounds. It is a lot more solid than a clay container so the risk of it breaking during the trip back is considerably smaller. It has a convenient handle so you could carry it around more easily than a pitcher. The ratio of the weight of a vessel to the weight of the liquid it stores is more favourable with a bucket because it can have thinner walls. All in all, a metal bucket serves the purpose of carrying large volumes of water better than a clay jug.

Of course, the example of a bucket vs. a pitcher is a bit too simplistic. We consider only one good at the same time and both objects serve the same good. In fact, in this case instrumental value seems equivalent to mere efficiency. In the real world we tend to compare very different things.

Say that we put a metal bucket and an earthen oven next to each other. Which one is more valuable? There are at least two goods involved in the scenario: having water to drink and preparing food to eat. Probably, it does not really make sense to compare efficiency of the two objects. If it did, however, assume that they are equally efficient in promoting their respective goods. How do we decide then?

My intuition is that the oven is more valuable than the bucket. If I had no oven, I could not bake a loaf of bread or my favourite pea pudding. If I did not have a bucket, I would

use a pitcher or drink straight from the spring. But you could have an opposite intuition. The bucket might be more valuable because it serves a more fundamental good: quenching thirst. Or because without water you cannot cook anyway. Or that metal is more difficult to obtain and prepare than dirt and clay used to make an earthen oven. This shows that instrumental value is very contextualized, often unique to the circumstances of an individual making the choice. We cannot decide universally in favour of a bucket or an oven, just as we cannot decide between quenching hunger or thirst. We need to do both and what is more instrumentally valuable at a given moment depends on the extent to which we have already fulfilled our needs.

It seems that the amounts of instrumental value can be compared meaningfully only when all the things compared are valuable with respect to promoting the same good: only efficiency can be measured in a reasonable way. That would explain why utilitarians have no theoretical trouble assigning numerical values to everything in the world. For a utilitarian there is only one good to which everything else is instrumental, pleasure. Utilitarian ethics revolves around the efficiency of achieving pleasure. But is it possible to make such definitive comparisons according to a moral theory that recognizes more than one final good?t

I do not see a way to do it on the instrumental level. Perhaps it could be done with a ranking of final goods. Since there are two factors we take into account, how well an object serves a particular good and the importance of the good itself, and we cannot compare the amounts of value in question, maybe we could put the final goods that instrumental values serve in an order and use it to decide between instrumental values. We tried to do it with hunger and thirst and it did not work. But we know for a fact that some final goods *are*

more important than others. For instance, think of the fire at the museum scenario once more: we would rather save a man than a painting.

So the problem is as follows: we are unable to reasonably compare any instrumental or final value with any other instrumental or final value. We can compare efficiency, that is amounts of instrumental value of things that serve the same good. Also, we know that some final values are more important than others. But at the same time we cannot make a ranking with each final good listed as better than some and worse than some other final values.

I do not think it is a coincidence that these categories fit Korsgaard's distinctions. The final values are more important than instrumental values, because the former give value to the latter, and there is an internal distinction in final values. If my argument from pages 8-13 of this thesis succeed, there are final intrinsic values, which we intuitively recognize as more fundamental, and the final extrinsic values. Instrumental values correspond to these two classes. Again, from my argumentation in chapter one, we cannot compare within the categories outside the context, with the exception of efficiency. In other words, it does not make sense to compare intrinsic values of two people or final extrinsic values of two paintings. You are not intrinsically more valuable than you neighbour and *The Kiss* does not hold more final extrinsic value than the *Lady with an Ermine*. They might have different instrumental values measurable with respect to a particular good, so they could be more efficient in promoting a particular final value. For example, you might be more useful to the community than your neighbour or Da Vinci's paintings might be more expensive than Klimt's. Nevertheless, in terms of the general, not context specific value there can only be three tiers: instrumental, final extrinsic and final intrinsic.

But what does it mean in practice? Consider a modified version of the fire at the museum scenario. What if the firefighters had to decide between a stranded visitor and all the works of art stored in the warehouses of Louvre[2]? From the tier system I developed above it follows that the number of works of art does not change the situation whatsoever, the visitor being a holder of intrinsic value should still be preferred over holders of final extrinsic values. It is a tough decision but the right one nonetheless. Now, you could have an opposite intuition and think it problematic. Why should a single man be put above the repository of mankind's finest achievements? Well, I am afraid this controversy is a bullet I need to bite.

What value for what life

Usually, we do not believe all of life to be equally valuable. Also, I argue that generally there are three tiers of value in the world, from the least valuable to the most valuable: instrumental extrinsic, final extrinsic and final intrinsic. How to tell what is the highest value tier of a species? In this section I will look at several thought experiments that might help classify life value-wise. I do not aim for precision just yet, I think we should try a rough approximation first.

From the two sick foxes scenarios we can infer that microorganisms do not fall into the tier of final intrinsic value. I think that with one more thought experiment we could satisfactorily classify microorganisms as instrumentally valuable at most. Consider the following destruction and substitution scenario involving a unicellular organism.

[**Overheated Yeast**] Charles set out to bake a bread. He put his yeast in

[2]Thank you to Simon Rippon for pointing out this case.

a bowl with some water next to the oven so they can bud up a little before introducing them into the dough. Unfortunately, he gets hooked on the latest episode of *Better Call Saul*, the yeast get too hot and die. Luckily, there is a piece of a block still left in the fridge. Charles uses it to make the bread instead.

We destroyed a portion of the yeast, replaced it and intuitively we find that no value was lost in the process. Thus, on the account of the findings from the first chapter we can conclude that yeast have instrumental value only. From similarity, I assume that this holds for all microorganisms. I would not say, however, that we could safely assume the same about all single-cell organisms. For instance algae fall into the grey area with sizes ranging up to four centimeters like specimens of *Valonia ventricosa*. On the other hand, they do seem similar to plants and bigger fungi. I am going to take a look at them now.

First, consider a version of the Last Man scenario and several destroy and replace cases to find out if plants, algae and bigger fungi might be holders of intrinsic value.

[USS Cambrian] Due to a malfunction of the transporter room, captain Robinson Crusoe of USS Cambrian became stranded on a planet in the recently encountered star system Friday-420. The crew ran out of landing modules during the previous expedition and a ship so big would be immediately torn to pieces in case of attempted descent. Luckily, Friday-420b was an Earth-like planet, one of many in this region of space. So not only the captain did not suffocate but also managed to find shelter under the trees and feed himself with game during the long weeks it took to transport spare parts from a nearby Starfleet outpost. Exhausted and ragged, Crusoe was beamed back onto the

vessel, straight to the medical bay. Except for minor dehydration his physical status was perfect and so he took over the duties from his deputy at once. However, he had grown to hate this piece of rock that recently was his prison and gave the order to ready the nuclear warheads and engage. The Tzar bombs puffed out the soil and rocks into the atmosphere and contaminated most of the planet's area for centuries to come.

Although no man dies in the scenario above, we have a sense that some harm has been done when a developed world with microbes, plants and the animal kingdom in place gets destroyed. It suggests that some kind of a final value was deposited there, even without humans.

USS Cambrian is a version of the original Robinson Crusoe example by Mary Midgley (1993). The difference is that it takes the scenario so far away from the rest of humanity that no indirect connection to another human can be traced. It prevents dismissing the intuition of non-human harm on the grounds that the burning of an island makes an influence on the environment that can reverberate through the ecosystem and, finally, harm a human being.

I believe, on account of the foxes and yeast scenarios, that microorganisms are not the key contributors to that value. Thus we are left with a choice between plants, animals, and both being holders of final extrinsic or final intrinsic value.

On the individual level, specimens of plants seem to be replaceable without loss in destruction and substitution scenarios.

[**Wilted rose**] A rose on Saul's balcony does not get enough water when he is

out on vacation and withers. His partner buys him a new one.

[**Diseased crop**] The entire crop of wheat gets infected and dies. The farmer receives a batch of grain for the whole year and the next sowing from an insurance company.

[**Hare's diet**] A hare in Lincolnshire area has a diet consisting mostly of Dwarf Ryegrass. Due to climate change it dies out in the area. The hare switches to Red Fescue for his daily intake of calories.

Examples like Wilted rose and Diseased crops suggest that plants can hold only instrumental value due to unproblematic substitution of arbitrary numbers of specimen of any species. As Hare's diet scenario shows, this number can be so high that in fact it covers the entire species in a particular area. On this account I argue that plants that occur naturally in the environment can hold instrumental value only. From similarity, I assume that algae and bigger fungi that occur naturally are capable of achieving the same level of value at most[3].

From the story of USS Cambrian we can infer that either microbes, plants (as well as fungi and algae), or animals hold final values. I ruled out microorganisms and plants (and fungi and algae) because of their unproblematic substitution in destruction and replacement thought experiments. This leaves us with animals.

[3]One could argue that an engineered plant or even a bacterium might hold final extrinsic value just like a painting. This does not relate to the main question behind environmental ethics since the value of such a GMO would have source in its human creator.

Conclusions

The Humanless World Intuition led many people of Non-Anthropocentric persuasion to wholesale rejection of the Anthropocentric style of ethics. This, however, leads to unwanted consequences like placing intrinsic value in unexpected places, for instance in pretty sunsets. At the same time, scenarios like USS Cambrian and multiple destroy-and-replace examples show that there is some final value, extrinsic or intrinsic, in the non-human world. I identify it in the animal kingdom due to the fact that other organisms are fully replaceable in our tests.

In the next chapter I investigate the scope and detail of final value attributions to animals. Also, I provide a new approach to the environmental ethics aimed at explaining the non-human value as well as the limited reach of the Humanless World Intuition, challenges with which non-anthropocentric views have difficulties.

4 The value of the valuer

From my version of the last man scenario, the USS Cambrian, as well as from several shorter thought experiments, I argued that animals are the most likely bearers of intrinsic value in the natural world. In this chapter I set out to figure out why.

First, where are we on the map of possible views in the environmental ethics? Since I admit that some non-human animals do bear final intrinsic value then, according to the table from the first chapter, such a position should be classified as non-anthropocentric. Nevertheless, it would be a very peculiar and limited kind of non-anthropocentrism, as compared to the egalitarian approach to rights of Tom Regan, the Deep Ecology's concern with the entire ecosystems, or Aldo Leopold's focus on the land. It does not attribute value to the land just as it ignores pretty sunsets. At this point we are not even certain how many animals might be capable of carrying the intrinsic value, all of them or just a few.

The view we are sketching is primarily concerned with individuals, so it cannot accommodate species-based discussion, it excludes plants and microorganisms, so it cannot cover the last two views, and it embraces fundamental differences in value between non-human organisms, thus making an egalitarian conclusion implausible. The scope of this position is heavily restricted and, on this account so far, most of the natural world remains morally irrelevant.

Thus, despite its non-anthropocentric classification based on the type of value ascribed to the non-humans, the view contending that some and only animals could be intrinsically valuable bears a surprising resemblance in practical value attributions to anthropocentrism.

It seems to me that this unexpected similarity has its roots in a misunderstanding about what makes the core of the anthropocentric style of ethics. Perhaps the categorization of views based entirely on the value ascribed to non-human beings does not paint the complete picture of positions available in the field of environmental moral philosophy. There might be a second axis of consideration here, just like it turned out there was a second dimension to take into account in Korsgaard's distinctions of goodness.

For some guidance in our quest for the second factor that defines positions in environmental ethics, think about what makes anthropocentrism an interesting view. Clearly, we are not convinced by mere handpicking humans as the only valuable beings in the world. The anthropocentric class of views does some things better than its competitors and this is why there are thinkers out there still spending their time developing it. For instance, consider the following.

1. Anthropocentrism explains why the rest of the world holds value in varying degrees. If only humans bear intrinsic value, and things in nature are of different use to humans, there is an obvious hierarchy of things in the world that explains why we perceive some objects and organisms as more valuable than others. Non-anthropocentrists face much more difficulty to deliver on that issue, as prove scenarios that involve microorganisms.
2. Anthropocentrism makes it very clear what has value and what does not. There is considerably less trouble with levels of consideration colliding when evaluating a case.

Non-anthropocentric egalitarians, on the other hand, are under constant threat of coming to a deadlock as they must consider the values of ecosystems versus species versus individual organisms. There is no clear understanding why something holds the value it has and how these different tiers relate to each other. Anthropocentrists are free from most of these worries with their very well defined measures of success: human welfare, human preference, or human need, depending on a view.

3. Anthropocentrism preserves the individual perspective in environmental ethics. It makes moral considerations simpler and more relatable. Conversely, non-anthropocentrists usually focus on species and ecosystems in their analyses.[1] In terms of human ethics that would be an equivalent of arguing for human rights on the basis of an efficient social arrangement, never touching upon a person. To a non-anthropocentrist it should be an upsetting deficiency of non-human centred views in the environmental moral philosophy.

To sum it up, what is so compelling about the anthropocentric style of environmental ethics is that it features a well defined group of value bearers, that it explains why other things in the world have value (and why they come in degrees) through a relation to the value bearers, and finally that it preserves an appealing characteristic of respect towards an individual.

In the remainder of this chapter I argue that this set of features is available to the not human-centred views as well and give a possible formulation of such a view.

[1] I do not examine the particular species or ecosystem-based non-anthropocentric views in detail because rather than arguing for or against a particular non-anthropocentric view I consider the whole class of environmental views and how it is founded in the value theory. I focus on the lower-level problems for environmental moral philosophy.

The third dimension of an environmental ethic

In the first chapter, following Christine Korsgaard, I identified two dimensions in which values are represented. Then I organized views in environmental moral philosophy accordingly, assigning a view to the highest type of value it ascribes to a non-human organism. However, above I have described three notable features of views in environmental ethics which are not covered by this two-dimensional distinction. I think we can do better than this. The model would look a lot nicer if we could represent these features as but a one more dimension of an environmental ethic. This would be possible if the three traits were consequences or manifestations of a single attribute. I believe they are precisely that. But the missing piece comes from an entirely different philosophical discussion. Note that I do not wish to get involved in this discussion, my only goal being to indicate a field of philosophy where this approach has already been established.

In the debate on property rights Robert Nozick proposed a fundamental difference between principles of distributive justice (Nozick 2001, pp.153-5). He distinguished end-result (or end-state) principles and historical principles of distributive justice. What he calls an end-result theory argues that if we strive for justice what we in fact have in mind is a particular arrangement of some things in the world. For example, a just economic system could be the one that guarantees that no one is richer more than three times than the poorest member his or her community. An end-state theorist evaluates the case based on the degree to which the desired state of the world has been delivered. In detail, it means that he or she has a template for an optimal state of affairs in mind and compares the way the world is to that model. Thus I will call it a top-down approach.

A historical theory, on the other hand, would claim that justice about property means ensuring that the individual property rights, gained through an original acquisition or a rightful transfer, are secured. A thinker focused on rights is more concerned with the entitlement and benefits, or value, for particular people and a just situation is defined as such that respects their individual rights executed in time. In detail, it means that a historical theorist observes the value bearers and evaluates the current state of affairs based on the process that caused it to arise. Because of that I will call it a bottom-up approach.

Now how does this translate to environmental ethics? I will call an environmental ethic top-down when its primary focus is not on individual organism. In particular, it means that the duties toward the value bearers are inferred from the considerations about their place in the ecosystem, their contribution to the genetic diversity, or other interspecies relations rather than the fact that they hold value. In other words, according to the top-down approach one should act upon an organisms value because of these higher-level reasons.

I will call an environmental ethic bottom-up when its primary focus is on individual organisms. Specifically, on this account all considerations about the value of the species, ecosystems, and the biosphere will follow from the considerations about the living value bearers.

Now, consider the three types of environmental moral theories on the new axis of top-down / bottom-up. As before, the value types displayed next to the types of theories represent the highest value attributed by a particular view to a non-human organism.

Theory | **fin/ins** | **int/ext** | **top-down / bottom-up** — | — | — | — : **Strong anthropocentrism** | instrumental | extrinsic | bottom-up **Weak anthropocentrism** |

final | extrinsic | bottom-up **Non-anthropocentrism** | final | intrinsic | top-down

In the table above, anthropocentrism seems equally attached to its bottom-up quality as it is to limiting the non-human world to extrinsic value. I believe that it is so because the three features we found gripping about anthropocentrism in the previous section all come down to the quality of being a bottom-up moral theory. Consider this: to be able to approach the world bottom-up, first one needs to define the *bottom*, the class of primary value bearers, and then establish what relations connect it with the rest of the world. A bottom-up theory needs to focus on individuals in the first place.

On the other hand, non-anthropocentric accounts tend towards being top-down theories. For instance, the idea of attributing value to genetic diversity is a good example of a top-down approach (Callicott 1988, p.149). High genetic diversity is a valuable end result fostered, for example, through the protection of endangered species. A non-anthropocentrist of this kind does not need to consider neither the species, nor the individual organisms when choosing a course of action.

Looking at the table above, clearly there are three possible combinations missing.

final / instrumental | **intrinsic / extrinsic** | **top-down / bottom-up** — | — | — :
instrumental | extrinsic | top-down final | extrinsic | top-down final | intrinsic | bottom-up

I will not discuss the top two. First, because I already came to the conclusion before (page 30) that the top-down characteristic seems less desirable. It has to deal with the frequent collisions of different levels of organization, for instance balancing the value of ecosystems versus the value of a species versus the value of an individual organism. Also, the bottom-up approach allows for a view more compatible with the traditional ethics of

what we owe to each other. Second, as I argued in the previous chapter of this thesis, the intuitions support a theory acknowledging that some non-human animals are capable of holding final value and that this value is most probably intrinsic, as we intuitively see from the USS Cambrian scenario. Thus I am going to leave the effort of expanding on these two possibilities to those convinced otherwise on both of these points.

In the next section I propose a take on the third missing combination, that is a bottom-up theory that could satisfy the intuitions we have that the final intrinsic value occurs in the natural world. I argue not only that it is possible but overall a better view than its alternatives in the field of environmental ethics.

Introducing the Valuer-centrism

I am looking for an environmental moral theory that is capable of attributing final intrinsic value to at least one object in nature and is of the bottom-up kind. Incidentally, a slightly generalized version of the anthropocentric principle satisfies both requirements.[2] This is what the original definition I formulated in the first chapter looked like.

> [**Anthropocentrism**] Things in the world have value because humans stand in a certain relation R to those things.

Breaking this principle down, there are two fundamental features crucial to this class of environmental theories.

[2] Once again, my inspiration for the way that anthropocentrism could be abstracted comes from Christine Korsgaard's idea that intrinsic value could be grounded not in particular acts of valuation, as it has been envisaged by subjectivists, but in the ability to perform valuations at all (Korsgaard 1996) – as suggested by my supervisor.

1. There is a set of organisms singled out as special and giving value to everything else.
2. The special organisms give value to other things by standing in particular relations to those things.

In other words, anthropocentric theories introduce a domain of beings, pick a subdomain responsible for bringing value to the world, and define a set of relations required for other beings to stand in towards beings in the special subdomain to have value. Combining these features together we obtain the following principle.

> **[Valuer-centrism]** Things have value because the creatures capable of conferring value stand to them in a relation R.

What gave anthropocentrism its name is, obviously, choosing humans as the special class of value-giving organisms. However, we do not need to settle for that. Nothing stops us from choosing a different subset of beings, both broader or more narrow. For instance, if one day we discover a technologically advanced species on another planet we would probably feel the need to include it in our list of value-giving creatures (let me refer to it as the Anthropocentrism with Aliens). Similarly the other way round, we do not even have to imagine a society built on racist principles which excludes some groups of members of our species from the class of value-giving organisms (called from now on the Racist Anthropocentrism). Either way, an ethical system does not need to be limited to the species of *Homo sapiens*, nor encompass all of the humans in the construction of its subdomain of special beings, to have the advantageous features of anthropocentrism, because they follow from its bottom-up characteristic. Therefore we can get creative with our rule for selecting the value-givers and obtain a similar ethical system satisfying our requirements

for a bottom-up theory attributing final intrinsic value to the parts of the natural world.[3]

In short, the valuer-centric principle is a blueprint for creating a bottom-up environmental theory of value. You can tune it to your liking by picking a particular set of creatures for the domain of special beings or choosing a particular set of value-conferring relations. Whether such theory is anthropocentric or non-anthropocentric relies entirely on the settings of these two parameters.

Thus when you limit your domain of special beings to humans, you get anthropocentrism. Whether it is of the strong or the weak variety depends on the value-giving relations you believe to be at work. For instance, if you think that the only reasonable way to confer value on the world is to stand in the relation of being useful to someone, then your theory is strongly anthropocentric from the environmental perspective, because on this account only an instrumental extrinsic value can be attributed to a non-human object. Conversely, if you think that some other relations should be included in the set, chances are that final extrinsic value could be conferred as well, thus making your theory weakly anthropocentric.

For a real life example consider Brian Norton's rendition of weak anthropocentrism. According to Norton an environmental moral theory is weakly anthropocentric when human preferences can be overruled by accepted ideals, as opposed to a strongly anthropocentric account on which a preference stands untempered (Norton 1984, p.134).[4] However, these

[3] Obviously, it does not need to be a good theory. A Nazi ethics, if there ever was one, would also be anthropocentric in the broad sense. All it means is that it would be consistent with the set of rules we abstracted from the way the term „anthropocentrism" is used in the literature. We may still reasonably argue for and against particular rules of selection of the subdomain of special beings. My own choice for the rule of selection will thus require additional support as well.

[4] He does not want to reduce ideals to preferences and sees it as a sine qua non condition for a satisfying environmental ethic (Norton 1984, p.138). This approach has some obvious problems, like defining ideals. Also, Norton's formulation of strong anthropocentrism is in danger of being a straw man fallacy. It is difficult to believe that anyone would agree to found an ethical theory on momentary likings. However, I will not discuss these issues in detail because I believe the account can be challenged en masse along

ideals are devised and chosen by humans as well. Instead of saying simply that whatever is useful is valuable too, he allows for creation of final extrinsic value through his concept of ideals, that is a sort of guiding principles which we hold and value for their own sake. Therefore, in the end, the only thing different from strong anthropocentrism is the complexity of the set of relations that humans can stand to the non-human world in the way that confers value. In Norton's weak anthropocentrism the relations at work are more sophisticated than a simple desire but the general structure of the theory remains untouched. It is still a version of valuer-centrism with the domain of value-giving beings limited to *Homo sapiens*.

To obtain a non-anthropocentric environmental theory from the valuer-centrist blueprint, obviously, we need to widen the domain of special beings so it includes some species other than our own. This can be done in many, many ways to very different ends. I was fiddling with several ideas for the domain's composition in the previous chapter when testing how common intuitions cope with comparisons between organisms and certain counterfactual scenarios. For a demonstration of an actual non-anthropocentric theory that could be analyzed using the valuer-centrist framework – although it does not follow the principle explicitly and lacks the definition of the set of value-conferring relations – consider Tom Regan's egalitarianism about animal rights (Regan 2015). His postulate that animals hold final intrinsic value can be interpreted as a claim that the domain of special beings in the valuer-centric sense should include animals. Unfortunately, no full-fledged theory has been yet proposed that would combine attribution of final intrinsic value to the natural world with the bottom-up approach as specified in the principle of valuer-centrism. I attempt to address this deficit provisionally in the next section.

with other naively anthropocentric theories just on the basis of its naively anthropocentric character.

A bottom-up non-anthropocentrism

Apart from the structure required by the valuer-centrist principle we need to keep in mind the principles that follow from the intuitions worked out in the previous two chapters. I put them in a list below for ease of reference.

1. There is some final intrinsic value in the natural world that is not held by human beings (from the Intuition of Non-human Value, the Humanless World Intuition and the Rabid Foxes scenario).
2. Things in nature are not equally valuable (from the Rabid Foxes and Pretty Sunsets thought experiments).
3. Animals are more valuable than plants and microorganisms (from the stories about Rabid Foxes, Foxes with Leptospirosis, a Wilted Rose, Diseased crop, and a Hare's diet).

It follows from the point #1. that there must be more species in the domain of special beings than just humans. It follows from the point #2. that the domain of special beings cannot include all things natural. The rule #3. points at a group of organisms, the animal kingdom, most likely to constitute the set of value-conferring beings. This is enough information to sketch a first version of the theory.

> [**Sketch #1 of a Bottom-Up Non-Anthropocentrism**] Things have value because animals stand to them in a relation R.

The set of animals seems too inclusive still. If we had a version of the Rabid Foxes scenario with sponges in the place of foxes, the intuition that the world would be better if they

were healthy does not seem as clear. We should narrow it down to a subset of the animal kingdom. This is a tricky task and I do not claim to have a well-founded solution. But I do have a suggestion, not far from the mainstream animal rights debate (Jones 2012): the criterion could be self-awareness. It has several advantages. One, as an emergent feature it is not strictly biological and saves us from simplistic reductionist arguments, like that from genetic complexity. Two, for the same reason, it is a binary requirement – you either are self-aware or you are not – which prevents troublesome comparisons of the degrees to which a particular feature is present in an animal. Three, it seems the least controversial common feature of all animals we suspect could belong to the domain of special beings, including ourselves. Four, it is a cognitive criterion and we tend to deem higher cognitive capabilities more valuable than advancement in other areas.

Now the sketch of our theory looks as follows.

> [**Sketch #2 of a Bottom-Up Non-Anthropocentrism**] Things have value because self-aware animals stand to them in a relation R.

The next step is to specify the set of relations that confer value. This matter brings about even more complications than approximating the domain of special beings. All the relations I listed as the criteria for self-awareness could be regarded as value-giving relations, each performing the task in its unique way. Thus, as I am aiming only for a proof of concept of a bottom-up non-anthropocentric theory, I will settle for the simplest workable solution. Fortunately, with our domain of special beings already in place the simplest set of value-conferring relations that can guarantee a satisfying environmental ethic has just one member, and the least sophisticated one. We have already seen it before in the breakdown of strong anthropocentrism, the relation of being useful to the valuer.

Mark the completed proposal of the theory.

> **A Bottom-Up Non-Anthropocentrism** Things have value because self-aware animals stand in the relation of finding them useful.

The relation of usefulness suffices to satisfy and explain the basic intuitions about environmental moral philosophy as well as many secondary intuitions. This views explains the USS Cambrian thought experiment and other Last Man scenarios as long as there are self-aware animals on the planet. More interestingly, it also gives reasons for our folk intuition to protect the endangered species, – even those not self-aware – keep the ecosystems intact, and protect the land. We should not destroy them because they are useful to the members of the domain of special beings other than ourselves. This framework can even provide and answer to the question about reasonable restoration of a damaged natural environment. It would make sense to restore it if it was irreplaceably useful to the self-aware animals, and it often is.

All of these issues can be accounted for making use of just one relation, applied many times over, to the end of a dense web of the valuers' interests. Not too bad for a proof of concept!

5 Conclusions

A summary

In chapter one I defined the field of environmental ethics as all the endeavours within moral philosophy studying problems beyond what people owe to each other and concerned with the rest of the world. Then I turned to anthropocentrism, the initial theory in reaction to which all other arose. The primary question of environmental moral philosophy is allocation of value to things other than humans. Thus I proposed a Korsgaardian distinction of values in two dimensions (final vs. instrumental and intrinsic vs. extrinsic) to help specify the views present in the discussion. Then I introduced a series of tests to determine whether a thing can be a bearer of a final value and classified the theories according to the highest, least replaceable level of value possible to assign to the non-human world. Then I set out to investigate the fundamental intuitions driving the environmental moral reasoning. I identified two: the Intuition of Non-Human Value and the Intuition About the Humanless World.

In chapter two I scrutinized the Intuition About the Humanless World to find out what things would be morally relevant in a world without human beings. I focused on the

value of life and considered intuitions about different parts of the world and organisms to approximate what could be morally relevant and why. In the process, I discovered that certain non-anthropocentric views, like Deep Ecology, may find it difficult to accommodate some of the basic intuitions about the world, like that the pretty sunsets are not morally relevant or that we find microbes less valuable than animals. Also, I proposed a solution to the problem of comparing amounts and kinds of different values. For the purposes of environmental considerations I suggested to use the tier approach which ignores the amount when a value from higher tier is involved. I conceded several bullets I needed to bite but, at the same time, noted that most of the controversial examples come from the fact that values are usually considered in context of the traditional ethics of what we owe to each other. The tier-based comparison is an attempt to strip them down from that additional layer of analysis. I finished this part by identifying animals as the most likely bearers of the final intrinsic value in the natural world, as suggested by the Humanless World Intuition.

In chapter three I introduced the third dimension of classification of environmental moral theories. In addition to defining the theory in terms of the highest tier of value attributed to a non-human thing I proposed to keep track of whether the theory does so in a top-down or a bottom-up manner. I found out that the most appealing features of anthropocentric theories lie in their bottom-up characteristics. I abstracted anthropocentrism to devise a sketch for a successful bottom-up theory. I called the resulting proposition Valuer-centrism. Then I put forward an application of the new template with self-aware animals as value-conferring beings. It was a proof of concept for a bottom-up non-anthropocentrism capable of satisfying the Humanless World Intuition and retaining the attractive features of the bottom-up theories, like anthropocentrism.

Concluding remarks

In the first stages of preparation for this thesis I was convinced that anthropocentrism could be an adequate environmental ethic. The initial idea was to fine-tune Brian Norton's weakly anthropocentric system of dependencies that generate the value of the natural world regardless of our fleeting individual preferences. However, when I systematically applied Christine Korsgaard's distinction of values it has quickly become clear that this project simply won't fly. I have come to the conclusion that a lot of the effort in the anthropocentric vs. non-anthropocentric debate has its roots in the fundamental confusion about the types of value at play from the times before the publication of the „Two Distinctions in Goodness". For Norton a final value equals an intrinsic value. Thus when he succeeded to attribute a final value to the non-human world he could be convinced that this solves the problem and non-anthropocentrism is not needed to address environmental concerns. But we now know that there are also final extrinsic values, and these are in fact the ones that Norton managed to generate using his approach. Since basic environmental intuitions concern the presence of final intrinsic value in nature, his weak anthropocentrism unfortunately cannot be the answer. We need a non-anthropocentric theory.

However, I found non-anthropocentrism underrepresented in the debate. The theories already *on the market* proved rather difficult to accept, either because of their sweeping statements (like full egalitarianism of the living things, or the systemic approach of the Deep Ecology), or very little to no explanation of the workings of this kind of ethics (like Tom Regan's egalitarianism about human rights). In particular, they did not provide any answer to the questions from chapter three, that is why there are different degrees of value in the natural world, what is valuable and what is not and why, are individual organisms

morally relevant and why. These things seemed important and they did not fall into the classification of theories based entirely on the types of values involved. Also, all these things are clear to anthropocentrists.

That is why I believe the third dimension, that is the top-down vs. bottom-up distinction, is useful. It explains what was missing from the non-anthropocentric accounts to date and why anthropocentrism seems so compelling and inspired this much further work put into its development despite being obviously environmentally inadequate at face value. Anthropocentric views are environmentally inadequate but they contain some features we care about a lot that non-anthropocentric accounts lacked so far.

Finally, respecting the third dimension provides a convenient framework to tweak the existing or devise new environmental accounts in response to the recent discussions of the underlying intuitions. All in all, I think that some version of the valuer-centrism will prove to be the most effective account of the state of non-human value in the world.

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