

Anthropocentrism vs. Nonanthropocentrism: Why Should We Care?

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ABSTRACT

Many recent critical discussions of anthropocentrism have focused on Bryan Norton's 'convergence hypothesis': the claim that both anthropocentric and nonanthropocentric ethics will recommend the same environmentally responsible behaviours and policies. I argue that even if we grant the truth of Norton's convergence hypothesis, there are still good reasons to worry about anthropocentric ethics. Ethics legitimately raises questions about how to feel, not just about which actions to take or which policies to adopt. From the point of view of norms for feeling, anthropocentrism has very different practical implications from nonanthropocentrism; it undermines some of the common attitudes – love, respect, awe – that people think it appropriate to take toward the natural world.

KEYWORDS

Anthropocentrism, environment, ethics, Norton, value

For at least the last 30 years now, there has been a running debate among environmental ethicists about whether anthropocentrism can serve as an adequate foundation for environmental ethics. The most recent discussions of this issue have concerned Bryan Norton's 'convergence hypothesis' – the view that if we have a suitably sophisticated anthropocentrism, then in practice, anthropocentrism and nonanthropocentrism will converge.¹ That is to say, they will both recommend the same environmentally responsible behaviours and policies. If this is so, then one might think the dispute between them is merely academic – a matter for 'intramural philosophical debate', but nothing more.²

In this paper, I grant for the sake of argument that anthropocentric and nonanthropocentric ethics will converge when it comes to the policies and behaviours they recommend. I also grant that as practical ethicists, we should demand that there be an issue of practical importance at stake before we commit our time and energy (not to mention journal space, etc.) to addressing a theoretical dispute. If two theories have exactly the same practical implications, we shouldn't spend our time worrying about what other differences there might be between them. What I want to explore here is the question of what counts as a 'practical implication' of an ethical theory. In practical ethics, we often talk as though ethical questions are just questions about which actions to take or which policies to adopt. There is, however, a long history in ethics of being concerned with questions of how to feel, what attitudes to take toward different things in the world, which things to care about and how to care about them.³ The aim of this paper is to consider what significance the differences between anthropocentrism and nonanthropocentrism might have from the point of view of these questions.

I. BACKGROUND

First, some definitional clarity. Different authors have offered different definitions of 'anthropocentrism' and 'nonanthropocentrism', so let me make clear at the outset what I take these terms to mean. Anthropocentrism, as I understand it, is the view that the nonhuman world has value only because, and insofar as, it directly or indirectly serves human interests.⁴ Nonanthropocentrism is just the denial of this – i.e., the view that it *isn't* the case that the nonhuman world has value only because, and insofar as, it directly or indirectly serves human interests.⁵

One noteworthy feature of these definitions is that they remain silent on the issue of intrinsic value. There are two reason for this. First, there are quite a few different meanings of 'intrinsic value' in use, many of which seem to carry robust metaphysical implications. Since anthropocentrism is a normative view, not a metaphysical (or even metaethical) view, its definition should avoid a commitment to particular metaphysical positions as far as possible. But second, and perhaps more to the point, it is not true that the only way to deny anthropocentrism is

to claim that nature has intrinsic value. One could deny anthropocentrism but claim that the value of every organism depends on the contribution it makes to the health of its ecosystem; one could deny anthropocentrism but claim that the value of every nonconscious being depends on whether conscious beings happen to care about it; one could deny anthropocentrism and claim that there is no such thing as intrinsic value at all; and so on.⁶ Nonanthropocentrism, as defined above, denies that the centre of moral concern should be human interests, but this leaves it open whether the centre should be something else, or whether we should think there is a centre at all. While these are interesting questions, and while it could turn out that the best alternative theory is one that attributes intrinsic value to the natural world, the aim of the current paper is not to construct or defend a particular alternative theory, but rather to argue that adopting anthropocentrism would bring with it a significant cost.⁷

With this understanding of the concepts in mind, it may be useful to say something about what participants believe to be at stake in this debate. Proponents of nonanthropocentrism often claim that it is precisely the view that ‘it’s really all about *us*’ that got us into all of these environmental messes in the first place. In order to solve our environmental problems and avoid running into them again in the future, they claim, ethics needs to recognise the folly of such self-centeredness and develop an ethic of, as Tom Regan puts it, respect for nature rather than mere use of nature.⁸ Other nonanthropocentrists claim that the wrong-headedness of anthropocentrism is evident once we take seriously what ecology has taught us about our relationship to the rest of the natural world. The more we understand about how the world works, they argue, the more evident it is that we are but one species among many, that we live interdependently with other parts of the natural world, and that we aren’t as different from the rest of nature as we once might have thought. Getting clear about our ecological place in the world is humbling, and the claim is that this humility ought to carry over to claims about our moral place in the world.⁹

On the other side, anthropocentrists claim that insofar as environmental problems are due to ethical wrong-headedness, the mistake we’ve made isn’t in thinking that only human interests matter directly, but rather in being ill-informed and short-sighted about what our interests really are. If we take seriously the interests of future generations of humans and get clear about all of the ways in which the health of the natural environment improves the quality of human lives, we will have all the arguments we’d ever need to justify caring about the health of the environment, behaving in ways that are environmentally responsible, and adopting policies that are environmentally sustainable.¹⁰

Furthermore, anthropocentrists claim, anthropocentric approaches have a number of advantages over nonanthropocentric approaches. First, there are worries about whether nonanthropocentric ethics can be made philosophically viable. Though I won’t rehearse these debates here, the most well-known versions of nonanthropocentrism have been charged with metaphysical, epistemological,

and/or normative inadequacy.¹¹ Anthropocentric ethics seems to have a better track record in this regard. Second, most traditional ethical theories are roughly anthropocentric in nature, so adopting anthropocentrism makes available a wide variety of theoretical resources that have been developed to explain, defend, and apply these theories. This is not true for nonanthropocentrism. Third, as Bryan Norton has pointed out, most policy-makers and social scientists are anthropocentrists, and anthropocentric assumptions underlie most of the work that they do. By granting their assumption of anthropocentrism, environmental ethicists open the door for more productive collaborative relationships with people who have a significant impact on shaping environmental policies.¹² And finally, anthropocentrism might offer hope as a strategy for rejecting the ‘people vs. nature’ formulation that so many environmentalists find frustrating. If what’s good in nature is ultimately a matter of what’s good for people, then (we might think) there can’t really be any deep conflict here.

From the point of view of the anthropocentrist, then, our theory choice looks like this: We have on the one hand nonanthropocentrism, which recommends environmentally responsible behaviours, but is fairly radical, unpopular, and theoretically problematic. On the other hand we have anthropocentrism, which recommends the same environmentally responsible behaviours, but requires only minor changes in ethical beliefs that are already widely accepted, and is theoretically well worked out. If this is what we’re deciding between, the choice looks obvious – only a fool would choose the nonanthropocentric route.

Before jettisoning nonanthropocentrism, however, I think it would be useful to think carefully about what exactly we would be giving up. My suspicion is that we would be giving up more than this story suggests. In order to determine whether this is so, we should first get clear about how claims like those that constitute anthropocentrism and nonanthropocentrism fit into the structure of ethical theories in general.

II. THE CLAIMS OF ANTHROPOCENTRISM AND THE STRUCTURE OF ETHICAL THEORIES

Anthropocentrism claims that the nonhuman world and/or its parts have value only because, and insofar as, they directly or indirectly serve human interests. It is worth noticing that in the first instance, this is not a claim about how we ought to behave. It is a claim about which features of nonhuman things can make them matter in which ways. Anthropocentrism says that only one feature – serving human interests, directly or indirectly – can make a nonhuman thing valuable. Claims about why something has value are claims about why we, as moral agents, have reason to care about the thing.¹³ More precisely, they are claims about why the thing is worth caring about.¹⁴ Anthropocentrism says that when it comes to

the nonhuman natural world, the only acceptable reasons of this kind are those that show a connection to the satisfaction of human interests.

These claims about why we moral agents should care about a thing serve as the grounds for ethical norms concerning the thing. These ethical norms come in at least two flavours: norms for action (what we ought to do), and norms for feeling (how we ought to feel).¹⁵ The picture we have so far, then, is this: anthropocentrism limits the kind of claims we can (justifiably) make about why certain things are worth caring about. The worry about anthropocentrism can thus be understood as the worry that since these claims serve to ground our ethical prescriptions, limiting the claims we can make might limit the kinds of ethical prescriptions we can offer. The worry about Norton's convergence hypothesis, then, is a worry about what sorts of limits will be placed on our norms for action: if we accept anthropocentrism, will we still have a theory that can tell us to do the right things? The convergence hypothesis answers this question 'yes', and I will not challenge that claim here.¹⁶

But if anthropocentrism and nonanthropocentrism both tell us to do the same thing, and the right thing, how much is left for us to worry about? How different *are* anthropocentrism and nonanthropocentrism at this point? To see what differences remain, let's consider how the anthropocentrist can make her case for convergence when it comes to norms for action. Anthropocentrism tells us that the nonhuman world has value only insofar as it serves human interests. On this view, if I were to claim that some part of nonhuman nature has value in its own right, independently of human interests, I would be incorrect. Likewise, if I were to claim that some part of nonhuman nature has value because it serves the interests of another part of nonhuman nature, though these two parts don't serve human interests in any way, I would also be mistaken. But to say this isn't to say that anthropocentrism can't tell me to *act as if* parts of the nonhuman world had value in their own right. It might serve human interests, for example, to treat some part of the natural world as though it had a kind of value – sacredness, say – that doesn't depend at all on nature's furthering our interests. Perhaps if we treated some parts of our world as though they were sacred, we would all be better off for it. Anthropocentrism can wholeheartedly endorse such treatment.

To grant the truth of the convergence hypothesis is to grant that, when it comes to claims about what we should do, both anthropocentric and nonanthropocentric reasons will support taking the same actions – i.e., both types of theory will produce the same action-norms. The justifications that they offer for these action-norms – i.e., the reasons they give for why we should take these actions – will be different, of course. But do we have any independent interest in differences among reasons if they lead to the same recommendations for action? Perhaps we would if we thought that some of the reasons offered were morally unacceptable. So, for example, a theory that says 'be environmentally good citizens because Hitler would want you to' would be objectionable because

the reason it offers is itself objectionable. But nonanthropocentrists do not find appeals to human interests troubling in their own right; they just object to the claim that these are the *only* reasons to which one can appeal.¹⁷ So nonanthropocentrists would happily grant that reasons of human interest *are* reasons that justify environmentally responsible policies and behaviours; they just don't think these are the only reasons that do so. Nevertheless, anthropocentrists have given them good ethical recommendations on the basis of reasons they accept – what more could an ethicist want?

III. ANTHROPOCENTRISM AND QUESTIONS OF HOW TO FEEL

The answer, I think, is to be found when we consider what effect anthropocentrism might have on our norms for feeling. Questions of how to feel aren't as widely discussed in ethics as questions of what to do are, but they are clearly an important part of the ethical picture.¹⁸ While there isn't room here to rehearse all of the arguments for the moral importance of norms for feeling, I will briefly sketch a few of the most important considerations.¹⁹ First, and perhaps most obviously, how we feel significantly affects how we act – if I like you, I'm more likely to be nice to you, etc. If ethics cares about how we act, then it ought to care about how we feel.

Second, matters of feeling are an important part of what we care about in our social relationships, and not just because we think that how a person feels affects how she acts. For this reason, our interest in questions of how to feel isn't merely derivative of our interest in questions of what to do. I want my friends to like me, not just to act as though they do. And I don't just want them to like me because I think that their taking this attitude will make them behave more nicely toward me. My desire isn't that my friends adopt whatever attitude will produce the nicest behaviour; rather, my desire is that their behaviour express genuinely friendly feelings. As contemporary virtue ethicists have pointed out, our everyday moral judgments of people already take into account assessments of their feelings, not just their actions.²⁰ So, imagine someone who felt she was better than everyone else even though she didn't let this smug sense of superiority affect her actions, or imagine someone who hated people of other races but never acted on these feelings. While I'm sure we would be glad that these people's feelings didn't influence their actions, we'd probably still be concerned about the fact that they had these feelings at all. People can take attitudes toward the world that we find morally troubling even when these attitudes don't lead them to perform bad actions.

Third, questions of how to feel are also central in thinking about how to direct our own lives. When I think about what I'm aiming for in trying to be morally good, I don't just think about which actions to perform. I also think about how to feel about the world. I want to be emotionally oriented toward things in the

right way. I don't just want to know whether I should act in a more sympathetic manner toward my friends; I want to know whether I should be more sympathetic to them – and being sympathetic necessarily involves feeling sympathy. I don't just want to know whether I should act more proudly; I want to know whether I should be more proud – and being proud necessarily involves feeling pride. Our moral lives are lived from the inside, in the first person, and from this point of view we have an interest in more than just satisfying the claims that others legitimately make on us. We care not only about generating properly the ‘outputs’ (actions, behaviours, choices, etc.), but also about the inner life of the being who produces those outputs. We evaluate the moral goodness of our lives as lived from within. In the cases of both ourselves and others, then, norms for feeling are expressions of the independent moral interest that we take in the inner lives of human beings.²¹

Finally, questions about how we should feel about the world can't be reduced to questions about which ways of feeling best serve our interests, for questions about how to feel are also in part questions about which feelings are called for by their objects – which feelings are deserved, apt, or fitting. Discovering that it would be in my interest to feel admiration for my boss doesn't fully answer the question of whether I should admire her.²² There is also the question of whether she deserves admiration – of whether she really is admirable.

So we do have an ethical interest in answering questions about how to feel, and this doesn't just amount to wanting to know which actions to perform or which feelings it would be in our interest to have. But what effect would anthropocentrism have on the way that we answer such questions? To answer this, let's consider how the central claim of anthropocentrism might conflict with certain kinds of feelings.

IV. FEELINGS AND THE SOURCES OF VALUE

Some attitudes that we can take toward a thing are incompatible with thinking that its value is entirely dependent on its satisfaction of our interests. Take the case of love, for example. Suppose that I claim to love my friend, but I also claim that she only has value to the extent that she serves my interests. If she didn't serve my interests, I claim, she would have absolutely no value whatsoever. If I said this, you might well wonder whether I was being serious when I claimed to love her. Would it help my case if I told you a long and complex story about all of the ways in which she serves my interests? I could explain that she brings joy to my life, that she inspires me to be a better person, that she allows me to see the world in new ways, and that her friendship is essential to having my life go the way I had always hoped it would go. Still, the story I am telling is an entirely self-centred one, and that is precisely the problem. The love involved in friendship is an *other*-centred emotion.²³ To love something in

this way is in part to see it as having value that goes beyond what it can do for you. Certainly it does serve our interests to participate in loving relationships. But to love a friend is in part to deny that her value is just a matter of her serving your interests.²⁴

I think that there are other attitudes besides love of which this is also true. Respect certainly seems to work this way; awe (at least in some manifestations) might do so as well. To respect something is in part to see it as making a claim on your moral attention in its own right. It is to attribute to the thing a kind of independent standing in your scheme of ‘things that matter’. To be in awe of something is in part to see it as having a kind of greatness that goes beyond you – beyond your needs, interests, or attitudes. In fact, the awe that we feel toward some things (the might of the ocean, the power of a volcanic eruption, the size of the universe) seems to be enhanced by the fact of their utter indifference to our interests. Thus while it might be in our interest to live lives that involve feeling love, respect and awe for certain parts of the world, to take up these valuing attitudes is precisely to see the world as valuable in ways other than serving our interests.²⁵ If this is right, then at least some of the attitudes that we take toward things would be undermined by the belief that they only have value insofar as they serve our interests. Holmes Rolston makes a similar point about certain religious attitudes that one might take toward nonhuman nature. He says,

If nature is used as a hospital or school for character, that is clearly an instrumental use, but what shall we say when nature is used as a church? Is this too an instrumental use – to generate human religious experiences, nothing more? Perhaps. But some of these experiences will involve a recognition of God’s creation, or the Ultimate Reality, or a Nature sacred in itself. In fact, one profanes such experience and nature alike to see nature as merely instrumental and otherwise devoid of value.²⁶

It is worth noticing that this incompatibility is much more of a problem in the case of feelings than it is in the case of actions. While anthropocentrism can tell me to act as though something has value in its own right even when I know it doesn’t, it’s much less clear that anthropocentrism can tell me to feel as though something has value in its own right even when I know it doesn’t.²⁷ If I think that your only value is what you can do for me, I might be able to *act* as though I love you if I judge it in my self-interest to do so. But it’s not at all clear that I can actually *love* you, for loving you requires me to see you as having a value that is independent of me. The problem here is that because many emotions have a cognitive element, norms for feeling are more tightly connected to beliefs about value than norms for action are. I can act as if A matters even while believing that A doesn’t matter. But because part of what it is to feel that A matters is to think of A as mattering,²⁸ it’s not clear that I can feel that A matters while believing that A doesn’t matter. Perhaps I can; the human mind is complex enough that it may be psychologically possible to think of the world

as being one way while believing that it is another. But one thing is certain: the world can't *be* both ways. While philosophers of the emotions disagree on the precise nature of the cognitive aspect of the emotions, they agree on its direction of fit. Knowledge, belief, perception, discernment: all of these cognitive states aim to fit the world – that is, they aim to accurately describe the way the world is. The problem for the person who both thinks of A as mattering and believes that A doesn't matter is that she has two cognitive states, both of which aim to be correct descriptions of the world, and they can't both be right. What kind of a problem this is – whether it is a form of irrationality, logical impossibility, cognitive dissonance – will depend on one's overall theory of rationality. My only claim here is that most of us take these states to be a problem, and that if we do, we will have reason to worry about anthropocentrism.²⁹

The upshot of this is that the central claim of anthropocentrism is incompatible with certain kinds of attitudes we might want to take toward the natural world – love, respect and awe; perhaps others as well. Thus according to anthropocentrism, the way that these attitudes involve seeing the value of the natural world must be fundamentally incorrect. If to love something is to think of it as having a kind of value that doesn't depend on us and our interests, then according to anthropocentrism, to love the natural world is to make a mistake about its value.

So even if anthropocentrism doesn't change what we think it makes sense to do in the world, it might well change how we think it makes sense to feel about the world. In particular, if I am right that the central claim of anthropocentrism is incompatible with the attitudes of love, respect and awe, then insofar as anthropocentrism is true, we are making a kind of mistake when we love the land, respect nature, are in awe of the vastness of the universe, or take other attitudes that are incompatible with thinking that their object's only value is in serving our interests. On the other hand, if these attitudes are appropriate, then we have good reason to worry about the adequacy of anthropocentrism.

V. HOW DOES IT MAKE SENSE TO FEEL TOWARD NONHUMAN NATURE?

So is it appropriate to take these kinds of attitude toward the natural world? It seems that many of us, even after much thought and careful reflection, think so. In the case of love, for example, consider the ways people feel toward individual animals, particularly those who live with humans as companions. If loving something involves seeing it as having value that doesn't depend on its serving our interests, then anthropocentrism says that I'm making a mistake when I love my dog. To say that it's a mistake to love a dog would, at least for many people, constitute a *reductio ad absurdum* of anthropocentrism.

The harder cases may be things like ecosystems, species, and places. Does love of the land or respect for nature involve a kind of mistake? The phrases ‘love of the land’ and ‘respect for nature’ probably sound familiar, for the environmentalist literature has a long history of recommending these sorts of attitudes as appropriate ones to take toward the natural world. In fact, in its less policy-wonkish moments, the environmentalist literature has lots to say about how we ought to feel about the world we live in, about what sorts of attitudes toward it and its parts are appropriate, about what kinds of emotional orientation to the natural world would be good ones.

Consider the case of ‘love of the land’. In environmentalist literature, this phrase is used to denote not love toward any land whatsoever, nor toward land understood simply as soil, but rather the affection one feels toward a particular place – toward the nonhuman parts of the community to which one belongs. Aldo Leopold often spoke of the sandy flatlands of central Wisconsin with this kind of affection and compared loving and cherishing this land to loving and cherishing a friend.³⁰ Barry Lopez refers to ‘a kind of love – agape – between me and the place’, and laments that people today have missed ‘the more lasting, the more valuable and sustaining experience of intimacy with [the place in which they live], the spiritual dimension of a responsible involvement with this place’.³¹ David James Duncan describes how he fell ‘heart over head in love’ with the Blackfoot River, then later the grief he felt after witnessing the damage done to it by deforestation of surrounding areas.³² Other environmentalists talk of loving deserts, swamps, ponds, rivers.³³ In fact, this love of the land is cited by many prominent environmentalists (e.g., John Muir, Robert Marshall, Sigurd Olson, Paul Watson) as what motivated them to become activists in the first place.³⁴ These people aren’t just describing a heightened state of enjoyment when they talk about love, as one might be when saying that one loves chocolate. They are describing the kind of emotional bond that people often have with their friends or family, but also sometimes with dogs, trees, deserts, forests, and the like.

We can also find expressions of the attitudes of respect and awe in the environmentalist literature. While I won’t run through a list of examples for each of these, they aren’t difficult to find. If one reads through the environmentalist literature asking what attitudes the author is expressing toward the natural world (or some part thereof) and what attitudes the author is urging upon her readers, one will find a wide variety of attitudes, some of them compatible with anthropocentric claims about value but many of them not.³⁵

I don’t pretend to have given an argument for the claim that it is right to take the attitudes of love, respect, and awe toward the natural world and/or its parts. That would take more room, and perhaps different methods of persuasion, than are available here. But it is worth noticing that quite a few people do take these attitudes, and it isn’t clear what mistake they might be making in doing so. Of course, to say this isn’t to say anything that would persuade a committed sceptic. But insofar as we aren’t sceptics – insofar as we think it is at least

sometimes appropriate to take these attitudes toward the natural world, or even insofar as we want to avoid theories that reject this possibility out of hand, we have reason to worry about anthropocentrism. It's one thing to say that ethics shouldn't recommend love-of-nature to everyone; it's another thing to say that to love nature is to make a mistake.

Thus from the point of view of norms for feeling, anthropocentrism does have very different practical implications from nonanthropocentrism, and this is a difference about which we have reason to care. Even if anthropocentrism leaves us with good policy recommendations, it will constrain the ways in which we think it makes sense to care about the natural world. Specifically, it will rule out certain ways of caring as inappropriate to nonhuman objects. The environmentalist literature has at least given us some good reasons to worry about whether these are constraints we should be willing to accept.

Now, given the enormity of the environmental problems we currently face, I am not arguing that we should all just turn our attention inward and work on getting our feelings straight. Adopting good environmental policies and getting people to act in environmentally responsible ways should be a priority, especially given the urgency of many environmental problems. But there is room within (or perhaps alongside) that project for asking how we ought to feel about the world we live in. In that context, the differences between anthropocentrism and non-anthropocentrism are considerable and, I think, still well worth our attention.

NOTES

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¹ Norton's discussion of the convergence hypothesis can be found at Norton 1991: 237–43.

² This phrase is from Light 2002: 436.

³ It is feelings rather than actions, for example, that distinguish Aristotle's virtuous person from the merely continent person. See *EN* 1147b20^{ff}. For historical treatments of the role of feeling and sentiment in ethics, see Darwall 1995 and Bell 2000. For contemporary accounts, see Oakley 1992 and Nichols 2004.

⁴ While this is a claim about the value of the nonhuman world in general, it is (at least in environmental ethics) only controversial in the case of the nonhuman *natural* world.

Thus the discussion that follows will be focused on the case of nonhuman nature. It is an open question how many of these worries apply to artefacts.

The discussion that follows will also focus on claims about positive value, rather than negative or neutral value. Here I will follow most writers in assuming that the conclusions drawn about positive value will apply *mutatis mutandis* to neutral and negative value.

⁵ For reference, here are some definitions that others have given of anthropocentrism. J. Baird Callicott: the view that ‘regards all forms of life, as being only instrumentally valuable, i.e., valuable only to the extent that they are means or instruments which may serve human beings’, Callicott 1984: 299; the view that ‘there exists no value independent from human experience’, Callicott 1989b: 265; the view that nature does not have intrinsic value, Callicott 1999: 14–15; Eric Katz: ‘both the idea that human interests, human goods, and/or human values are the focal point of any moral evaluation of environmental policy, and the idea that these human interests, goods, and values are the basis of any justification of an environmental ethic’, Katz 1999: 377–8 (emphasis omitted); Bryan Norton: ‘the view that only humans are loci of fundamental value’, Norton 1984: 132; ‘the view that the earth and all its nonhuman contents exist or are available for man’s benefit and to serve his interests and, hence, that man is entitled to manipulate the world and its systems as he wants, that is, in his interests’, Norton 1987:136, quoting Routley and Routley 1979; Anthony Weston: the view that ‘human beings, or some particular and unique human characteristics...are the only ends in themselves’, Weston 1996: 286. See also Hayward 1997 for a discussion of the different meanings of this term.

⁶ An anonymous reviewer claims that any view on which the value of organisms depends on their ecosystemic contributions would require one to say that the whole planet has intrinsic value. The idea is that believing in the existence of extrinsic or relational value will commit us to believing in the existence of intrinsic value. However, I agree with Beardsley 1965 and others who have argued that this is not the case. It will only be true if we assume a foundationalist picture of moral justification, which we needn’t do.

⁷ But see McShane 2007, where I do defend a particular alternative theory.

⁸ Regan 1981; Regan 1992. See also Sylvan 1973 and Goodpaster 1979.

⁹ See, e.g., Callicott 1989a and Taylor 1980, part 3. For criticisms of this type of argument, see Holland 1996.

¹⁰ See, e.g., Norton 1984.

¹¹ See, e.g., Rolston 1988, which is criticised in Callicott 1992, as well as Rolston 1982 and Rolston 1983, which are criticised in Partridge 1986 (but see Preston 1998 for a defence of Rolston’s view). See also Callicott 1985, which is criticised in Norton 1995 and Donner 2002. Of such criticisms, I think the following can fairly be said: (1) many nonanthropocentric ethical theories have run into significant theoretical problems; however, (2) nonanthropocentric theories, or at least the environmentalist versions of them, haven’t been around for that long; and (3) many of these problems seem to stem from features of the theories other than their nonanthropocentrism.

¹² See Norton 1991 and 1999.

¹³ See Brentano 1969, Anderson 1993, D’Arms and Jacobson 2000, Gaus 1990 and McDowell 1997. Having reason to do or care, in this context, should be understood as having a *pro tanto* reason, not having an all-things-considered reason. That is to say, it counts as a reason, though one that could be outweighed, overridden, or undermined

by other reasons. The ‘shoulds’ and ‘oughts’ that are generated by such reasons should also be understood as *pro tanto*.

¹⁴This distinguishes them from other reasons for caring – prudential reasons, for example. It can, in some circumstances, be in my interest to care about things that aren’t worth caring about. For a further discussion of this issue, see D’Arms and Jacobson 2000 and Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen 2004.

¹⁵Anderson 1993; Gibbard 1990; Hursthouse 1999: 108; Oakley 1992, Ch. 6. (While there is fairly widespread agreement about this claim, there is less agreement about how we should understand relationship between these two kinds of norms and the role they play in ethics.) Above, and in what follows, I do not use the term ‘feeling’ in the sense it has taken on in the literature on philosophy of the emotions, where it has come to mean something like ‘sensation’. I use it in the more ordinary, colloquial sense to designate emotions in general. Of course, the distinction between doing and feeling I am employing here is a fairly crude one, and there isn’t room to work out an adequately detailed account of it here. I trust that there is enough content to our ordinary understanding of these concepts to make sense of the claims I wish to make involving them.

¹⁶But see Stevenson 1995, Stenmark 2002, and Saner 2000 for challenges to Norton’s claim.

¹⁷Thus I disagree with Andrew Light’s claim that nonanthropocentrists are committed to the view that ‘even a limited endorsement of anthropocentric forms of valuation of nature would necessarily give credence to those anthropocentric values that prefer development over preservation’ (Light 2002: 429).

¹⁸Both feminists and ecofeminists have been urging the importance of questions of how to feel for quite some time. See, e.g., Karen Warren’s discussion of Marilyn Frye’s distinction between ‘arrogant perception’ and ‘loving perception’ in Warren 1990.

¹⁹For a more extended discussion of some of these issues, see Murdoch 2001.

²⁰See, e.g., Baier 1995: 30–1; Slote 1992: 89.

²¹Many of those who think of people’s inner lives (including their feelings) as outside the scope of moral evaluation, I think, confuse the question of what we’re entitled to expect from others – i.e., what claims or obligations we can legitimately place on them – with the question of what it makes sense to evaluate in ourselves or others. (Thanks to Jeff Kasser for this way of putting the point.) As Iris Murdoch (citing Hume) points out, ‘good political philosophy is not necessarily good moral philosophy’ (Murdoch 2001: 79).

²²Whether it answers this question at all is a matter of some debate. Some claim that it answers the question of whether I should try to get myself to admire her, though not the question of whether I should admire her. For a discussion of this issue, see Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen 2004.

²³Notice that this claim is limited to a particular form of love, namely the love involved in friendship. The English word ‘love’ can be used to refer to a number of very different valuing attitudes, and I do not want to claim that all of them have the structure I describe here. My love of sweet potato pie or rock climbing, for example, may well be compatible with thinking that their value is entirely instrumental. Thanks to Simon Keller for urging the importance of this point.

²⁴For a discussion of the structure of attitudes such as this, see Anderson 1993: 8–11, 205–7; for a discussion of the kind of valuing involved in love, see Velleman 1999.

²⁵ Notice that here I do not make the further claim that the attitudes of love, respect and awe involve seeing their objects as having value in their own right. For a discussion of this issue, see McShane 2007.

²⁶ Rolston 1988: 25–6.

²⁷ This might depend on how distinguish actions from feelings. If we count ‘adopting an attitude toward something’ as an action, then the problems I raise here for feeling-norms will make trouble for some action-norms as well.

²⁸ Or to see A as mattering, or to believe that A matters, or to judge that A matters – how one construes this will depend on one’s theory of the emotions in general, and the relevant emotion in particular.

²⁹ An anonymous reviewer raises the following objection: ‘I think I am able to feel awe for some impressive piece of human engineering, say the Boulder Dam or the pyramids, while believing simultaneously that the Dam itself serves only an instrumental purpose and has no value other than that of providing energy for humans.’ In this case, the reviewer believes that while the Dam is awesome, its awesomeness makes no contribution at all to its value – it would be just as good if it was small, ordinary, not very well put together, designed by a few mediocre engineers, etc., just as long as it did its job of providing energy for humans. In this case, I am inclined to doubt that what the reviewer is feeling is really awe. Insofar as awe is a valuing attitude, it isn’t just the thought ‘My, what a large object!’ It’s *valuing* something in virtue of its greatness. But by hypothesis, this person thinks that its greatness isn’t a reason to value it – the only aspect of it that merits valuation is its energy-producing abilities.

³⁰ See Leopold 1970: 189–90. See also Sagoff 1991.

³¹ O’Connell 1998: 81.

³² Duncan 1998: 45–9.

³³ Abbey 1977: 12; Johnson 1998: 57; Hoagland 1999: 83; Duncan 1998.

³⁴ Vickery 1994.

³⁵ For discussions of respect and awe in particular, see Leopold 1970 and Naess 1973 on respect and Fowles 1983 and Muir 1987 on awe.

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