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**CLARIFYING NATURE PROTECTION:
THE ROLE OF ATTITUDES TOWARD NATURE
IN SHAPING ITS FORMS**

Theses of the Dissertation

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation offers a philosophical clarification of nature protection and the ongoing debate about its future under the current realities of the Anthropocene. It begins from the observation that established conservation approaches are failing to protect increasingly rapidly *changing nature*, and that the debate over the appropriate direction of nature protection is both *confused* and *stuck*. In order to clarify this debate and the character of nature protection itself, the thesis systematically develops the Wittgensteinian idea of *attitude* into a new philosophical method, designed to *clarify basal practical orientations* that shape the space within which a given attitudinal object takes on a particular form—thereby delineating the scope of possible perception, understanding, and action in relation to the object grasped in this particular way.

The first part analyzes the confusions surrounding the central concept of ‘nature’ and distinguishes two dominant understandings: nature as *non-human* and nature as *natural capital*. The second part elaborates an extended conception of attitudes and the method of attitude analysis. The final part applies this method to clarify the character of the two dominant attitudes toward nature—as *wilderness* and as a *reservoir of resources*—and traces the possible gradual emergence of a new attitude toward nature as *homes*. By clarifying the practical orientations from which nature protection springs, this dissertation reveals what is truly at stake and why the debate remains confused and stuck—thus opening space for a *clearer* and *transparent discussion* about what kind of nature we actually want to protect.

Keywords:

Nature Protection, Wittgensteinian Ethics, Conservation Ethics, Attitudes Toward Nature

SUMMARY

(I) CONFUSIONS SURROUNDING NATURE PROTECTION

In **Chapter 1, *Protection of Nature at the Crossroads***, I opened the investigation by situating contemporary nature protection at a conceptual and practical crossroads. I argued that the unprecedented conditions of the Anthropocene expose the limitations of established approaches to nature protection, forcing a confrontation with realities for which the inherited frameworks are no longer adequate. This has given rise to a growing debate about the future of nature protection, in which two dominant positions have arisen: ‘New Conservation’ and ‘Neo-protectionism.’ ‘New Conservation’ proposes a complete change of objectives and methods for nature protection, giving up the traditional ideal of wilderness and embracing a skillful interaction between humans and nature—shaping it and protecting it as a rambunctious garden with an eye on human purposes. ‘Neo-protectionism’ defends the traditional goals and methods of nature protection—protecting nature from being transformed by humans—and as a solution, proposes a greater acceleration in establishing protected areas and interconnecting them. I showed that this debate is both confused and stuck: the two main currents, while aware of the need to respond to the realities of the Anthropocene, are completely at odds. The arguments put forward by one side do not fall on fertile ground on the other, and vice versa, so that the debate does not develop, and a consensus on which path to take remains out of sight. I identified the central issue as a tension between increasingly evident failures in practice and a theoretical discourse that lacks the conceptual tools to grasp its own predicament and underlying backgrounds. This diagnosis set the stage for the philosophical task of the dissertation: not to propose a new conservation framework, but to clarify precisely these underlying backgrounds and confusions that obstruct

meaningful deliberation and action. In doing so, I established the motivation for the inquiry and the need for a different kind of philosophical intervention.

In **Chapter 2, *Understandings of ‘Nature’ in Nature Protection***, I began the first step of my clarification by turning to the pivotal concept of ‘nature’ as used in nature protection, arguing that the ambiguity and internal contradictions of this concept are among the primary sources of *confusion* in the current debate. While there is widespread agreement on the need to protect nature, there is far less clarity about what exactly is being protected—and this lack of shared *understanding* often prevents arguments from gaining traction across opposing camps. My aim in this chapter was not to determine what nature *really is*, nor to offer a fixed conceptual foundation for the debate. Instead, I adopted a Wittgensteinian approach and sought to reveal how the concept of ‘nature’ is *used* among various streams in nature protection—how they *understand* ‘nature’—what they perceive as its *desired condition*, and what forms of protection this entails. This analysis also required attention to the structure of protection itself: protection is never neutral, but always protection *from* something *toward* something—guided by concern, shaped by perceived threats, and oriented toward the desired condition. Because a particular understanding of ‘nature’ embeds a particular vision of harm and of what ought to be preserved, the scope and character of nature protection stemming from it depend fundamentally on how ‘nature’ is conceived. Yet these understandings are often implicit, fluid, and embedded not only in theory but mainly in practice, which is also not easily graspable because shaped by various contextual trade-offs. The task of Chapter 2 was therefore to trace the complicated dynamics between theory and practice and to clarify the different ways in which ‘nature,’ its threats, and its desired states are understood. I approached this task by analyzing what I identified as two main families of understandings of ‘nature’ in nature protection: nature understood as ‘non-human’ and nature understood as ‘natural capital.’ In doing so, I aimed to clarify not only what it means to protect nature under each understanding, but

also what ambiguities and limitations such understandings bring to the very practice of nature protection.

In **section 2.1, *Protecting nature as non-human***, I examined the first dominant family of understandings of ‘nature’ in nature protection—nature as *non-human*. I have demonstrated that in nature protection, this understanding of nature leads to protection of the *natural state of nature*—that is, of ‘naturalness’ of nature—and I clarified what *exactly* this means. I have identified two main ways of understanding such ‘naturalness’—(1) *pristineness*, and (2) *natural functioning*—and I have shown that both are understood as a certain kind of ‘non-humanness’—meaning that this ‘naturalness’ of nature can only be corrupted (i.e. made ‘unnatural’) by humans: in the first case simply by any interaction, and in the second by human action that is ‘unnatural.’ In the first case, it turned out that this ‘naturalness’ understood as ‘pristineness’ has *no positive content* of its own—that it is *pure* ‘non-humanness’—and that such an ideal is *untenable* in the Anthropocene. I therefore turned to the second case, where the ‘naturalness’ of nature is understood as the ‘natural functioning’ of natural processes, and drawing on foundational work of Aldo Leopold, I attempted to identify what this means. (2-i) I first examined whether the ‘natural functioning’ of natural processes can be defined internally—through intrinsic features such as ecological *health* (stability, balance, self-renewal) and *complexity* (high biodiversity). But I showed that these criteria alone do not suffice, since they do not always align and are not pursued for their own sake; instead, closer analysis revealed *integrity* to be the decisive criterion, which defines what is considered to be the desired level of health and complexity of a given ecosystem—its ‘natural functioning’ of natural processes. And while integrity is defined exclusively by the absence of human-induced change of a ‘different order,’ it became clear that this ‘naturalness’ in this sense ultimately amounts, again, to a form of ‘non-humanness’ and that the identification of the ‘natural functioning’ of natural processes therefore had to be approached from the human side of the coin. (2-

ii) Thus, I investigated what this ‘different order’ of human action consists in, and I showed that it cannot be explained by its *scale*, nor *evolutionarily*, but instead rests on a *metaphysical assumption* that humans, by virtue of their *mental capacities*, act from *beyond the natural order*. However, even this assumption does not suffice to identify the ‘natural functioning’ of natural processes, since not all rational or intentional human actions are seen as problematic within this framework—nature protection itself, after all, is such a kind of practice. The ‘different order’—in contrast to which the desired state of the ‘natural functioning’ of nature can be identified—thus cannot be grounded in human mental capacities alone and must be further specified in some other way within the logic of such nature protection itself. (2-iii) In the final part of the section, I demonstrated that this ‘different order’ of human action is ultimately implicitly understood in a historical-mythological way: by presupposing an inherently good *original* ‘natural order’ of nature and a gradual human *alienation* from it. Within this framework, the ‘different order’ of human action is identified as any action that deviates beyond a certain *breaking point*, and the *desired condition* of nature becomes *whatever existed before that rupture*—yet the determination of such a breaking point is always, to some degree, arbitrary. On the example of Šumava National Park, I showed how such *baselines* for nature protection are constructed in actual conservation policy and practice, and argued that, while often practically motivated, these decisions remain deeply underdetermined and rest on a largely unacknowledged mythical-historical narrative.

In **section 2.2, *Protecting nature as natural capital***, I examined the second dominant family of understandings of ‘nature’ in nature protection—nature as *natural capital*. I showed that this approach understands nature as a *reservoir of natural resources* and *ecosystem services*, and that it aims to maintain nature in a state of *sustainable bountifulness*—a condition in which nature continuously and abundantly provides for human needs. In contrast to the understanding of nature as non-human, this understanding of ‘nature’ was

easier to grasp analytically, as it tends to be more explicit and internally coherent. However, despite this, I demonstrated that it too rests on problematic theoretical assumptions and involves significant arbitrariness when it comes to identifying the desired state of nature to be protected. I traced the development of this family of nature protection approaches from early ‘wise use’ conservationism—most famously formulated by Gifford Pinchot—as a strategy to preserve natural resources for long-term human use, toward its current form, in which the protection of nature is reframed as *the management of natural capital for sustainable development*. I showed how the meaning of ‘sustainability’ in this context evolved from its origins in forestry, where it denoted a clearly defined harvest equilibrium, to a much broader and more complex application in mainstream conservation policy, centered around ecosystem services. These services include provisioning, regulating, cultural, and supporting functions—each assigned a particular value to incentivize their protection through instruments such as payments for ecosystem services, biodiversity offsets, and carbon markets. I described how such conservation has increasingly become integrated into capitalism, culminating in the idea that conservation *is* development. I then examined the key problems that arise from this integration, focusing on the difficulty of balancing competing ecosystem services and the lack of objective criteria for valuing different components of natural capital. Because ecosystem services often conflict—for instance, provisioning services tend to undermine regulating or cultural ones—determining which configuration of nature counts as the desired state is necessarily selective, and ultimately often decided by the market, whose invisible hand is assumed to make the right pick. As I illustrated through the example of lithium mining in Cínovec, this becomes especially pronounced when ecosystem degradation in one location is justified by promised gains elsewhere. While such trade-offs may be framed as net benefits from the perspective of protecting natural capital, they reveal that the desired state of sustainable bountifulness is not objectively given. Thus I concluded that the

understanding of nature as natural capital also entails its own form of arbitrariness—namely, in the valuation and balancing of natural capital, and in the trust to market mechanisms. Thereby, by end of Chapter 2, it became apparent that the disputes about the future of nature protection—both *between* these two families and *within* them—are not of a technical character.

(II) WITTGENSTEINIAN METHOD OF ANALYSIS

In Chapter 3, *The Wittgensteinian Idea of Attitudes as a Clarificatory Tool*, I therefore shifted from analyzing the conceptual confusions surrounding the term ‘nature’ to developing a method that would allow me to clarify a dispute of this kind—which I labeled *ethico-political*—which stems primarily from *divergent basal practical orientations* toward what is at the center of such an issue, and of which the different understandings are only reflections. To this end, I turned to the Wittgensteinian philosophical method, which conceives of clarification not as the discovery of hidden essences, but as the task of achieving a *perspicuous representation* of the investigated phenomena within the fabric of our everyday practices. Drawing on the later Wittgenstein’s idea of *attitude*, I sought to develop an *extended conception of attitudes as a clarificatory tool*, capable of making visible the basal practical orientations that inform ethico-political disputes. This general methodological framework, grounded in the Wittgensteinian tradition yet departing from it where needed, forms the basis for the clarification of nature protection through attitude analysis, which I subsequently apply in Part III.

In section 3.1, *The idea of attitude*, I introduced the foundational idea of *attitude* in the Wittgensteinian tradition, beginning with its most prominent use—the *attitude toward a soul*—which has been influential in ethical debates

surrounding our relation to other human beings. I followed Wittgenstein's argument that such an attitude is not grounded in belief or knowledge but constitutes a *practical orientation* toward others that precedes, and outlines reflected perception, understanding, and action. Such basal, often unreflected reactions (e.g. pity in response to pain) are not chosen based on cognitive assessments but arise immediately within a particular attitudinal frame. I then extended this concept beyond the interpersonal domain, proposing a general framework in which attitudes serve as labels for *clusters of basal immediate reactions that outline the space within which a particular attitudinal object is perceived, understood, and acted upon*. To avoid ambiguity, I introduced a distinction between *attitude* (as a general structure of response) and *adjustment* (as a particular situational realization of it). This allowed me to begin developing attitudes into a systematic clarificatory tool—not as fixed entities but as *methodological tools* for analyzing the character of various practical orientations. This initial step laid the groundwork for further elaboration of how attitudes structure perception (section 3.2) and behavior (section 3.3).

In **section 3.2, *Attitudes and ways of perceiving***, I developed the idea that perception is shaped already on the basal level of attitudes, which constitute a particular way of perceiving the attitudinal object. Drawing on Wittgenstein's remarks and examples such as aspect-seeing and the duck-rabbit figure, I showed that we do *not* perceive 'pure' sensory data that we would, as if in a second step, interpret in order to reach some understanding, but that *a particular understanding is always already present in the very way of perceiving*—in what is perceived—because we always perceive the objects of perception as if *under certain description*; we approach them recognize as something particular. This sensory-intellectual grasping of an object of perception—e.g. seeing a smirk rather than a smile—takes place before conscious reflection, through our basal reactions toward that particular attitudinal object, which situate it within a specific context in which it takes on a particular shape. Thus, in this sense, attitudes are constitutive of the objects

we perceive. I further argued that *attitudes are internally related to their objects* and that they can be *characterized* through the *concepts* under which their objects are being grasped. And while attitudes toward various kinds of phenomena can vary among people and societies, it is therefore important to clarify them in the context of particular *ways of life*, which are themselves embedded in the broader context of the whole *bustle of life*.

In **section 3.3, *Attitudes and ways of action***, I extended the concept of attitude to clarify how our practical orientations shape not only perception and understanding but also action. Drawing on the Wittgensteinian tradition and authors such as Iris Murdoch and Isaiah Berlin, I contrasted this holistic model of action with the rationalistic model that treats behavior as the outcome of isolated decisions based on prior evaluation of facts. Against this model, I argued that action typically follows directly from the way a situation is perceived, which is already shaped by immediate basal attitudes. These attitudes determine what is perceived as salient and meaningful in a given context, and thereby delineate the space of possible actions that appear viable. I illustrated this claim using ethically charged examples, showing how differing attitudes can lead to seeing different kinds of objects in the same phenomenon and thus to profoundly divergent patterns of action. This revealed the importance of analyzing the structure of practical orientations underlying actions, especially in cases when ethics comes to play. I also elaborated the distinction between general attitudes and particular adjustments, and distinguished between intra-attitudinal and inter-attitudinal disagreement. The gradual development of my extended Wittgensteinian conception of attitudes (presented in sections 3.1 – 3.3) made it visible how profoundly these clusters of immediate basal reactions shape human perception, understanding and action toward what they approach within their scope. This development made it possible to conceive of attitude analysis as a method capable of clarifying disputes that are ethical at their core by revealing the underlying differences in how the basal attitudinal spaces—within which various people approach a

particular issue—are outlined.

In section 3.4, *Attitudes as tools for clarification*, I synthesized the outcomes of the previous methodological sections, and I finalized the development of my extended Wittgensteinian conception of attitudes by presenting it as a general methodological tool for the clarification suitable particularly for the clarification of ethical matters. Building on the insight that attitudes—understood as clusters of immediate basal reactions—constitute the space in which certain kinds of phenomena are perceived, understood, and acted upon, I proposed a three-step method for analyzing these practical orientations. First, one must clarify the concepts (e.g. ‘X’ and ‘Y’) through which the phenomena under investigation are being grasped. Second, the significant traits of their use in the particular context are systematized into distinct attitudes and/or adjustments, serving as objects of comparison. Third, the presuppositions of these practical orientations are elucidated by situating them within the broader context of life—revealing the ways of life with which they are interwoven and their embeddedness in the whole bustle of life. Through this process, the practical orientations under investigation are brought to light which is especially useful for clarifying disputes that—being ethical at their core—are shaped primarily by divergences in these underlying attitudinal orientations and that cannot be properly grasped without revealing the seedbed out of which they grow. Having completed the development of the method of my investigation, I returned to the main subject of my dissertation: nature protection. In Part I, the first two steps had already been undertaken to a large extent. In Part III, it was necessary to build on this and to complete the third step by analyzing two divergent attitudes toward nature—which shape the space within which the two dominant families of nature protection approaches operate—and by situating them within the broader context of life.

(III) CLARIFICATION OF NATURE PROTECTION

In **Chapter 4, *Clarifying Established Nature Protection***, I applied this method to clarify the two dominant attitudes toward nature that underlie the current dispute about the future of nature protection. Drawing on the earlier conceptual and genealogical analyses from Chapter 2, I showed that the two families of understandings—nature as *non-human* and nature as *natural capital*—are not merely different interpretations of the same object, but instead *stem from divergent practical orientations that constitute different attitudinal objects*: nature as *wilderness* and nature as a *reservoir of resources*. I then proceeded to analyze these attitudes on two levels. First, in sections 4.1 and 4.2, I examined how each attitude outlines the space for perceiving, understanding, and acting upon its attitudinal object, and how this object is constituted through the attitude itself (first two steps of attitude analysis). Second, in section 4.3, I explored the broader context of life within which each attitude is embedded, and which gives it its distinctive form (third step of attitude analysis). This allowed me to show clearly *that—and how—the delineation of the desired state of nature*, which lies at the center of the current dispute about the future of nature protection, *is deeply shaped at the basal level of attitudes toward nature, which themselves reflect deeper attitudes toward life tied to different visions of how and in what kind of world humans ought to live*. It was thus revealed, and elaborated in section 4.4, that the dispute is of an *ethico-political character*, and that it cannot move forward without bringing these underlying attitudes to light. In doing so, *I clarified the core reason why the dispute about the future of nature protection is confused and stuck*.

In **section 4.1, *Attitude toward nature as wilderness***, I began the analysis of the two dominant attitudes toward nature by clarifying how the *attitude toward nature as wilderness* outlines the space for perceiving, understanding, and acting upon its attitudinal object. Drawing on the earlier genealogical

reconstruction of the concept of ‘nature’ understood as *non-human*, I showed how, within this attitude, nature is grasped as what is untouched by humans, and thus perceived as a harmonious whole that functions according to its own ‘natural order.’ The goal of nature protection is accordingly seen as the preservation or restoration of this ‘natural’ functioning, which serves as the desired state of nature. I demonstrated how this practical orientation *guides perception in specific ways*—directing attention to particular ecological features, privileging certain species, and construing particular kinds of human action as disturbance. I further examined the historically and aesthetically shaped structure of this orientation, focusing on the decisive influence of Romantic landscape painting and the *aesthetic ideal of wilderness*, which continue to shape perception even in scientific contexts. The resulting configuration constitutes nature as wilderness as a particular kind of attitudinal object, already delineated at the basal level of immediate reactions. This clarified how the understanding of nature as non-human, reconstructed in Chapter 2, is embedded within a broader practical orientation that gives it meaning—and that thereby shapes the domain of facts, values, and actions within this family of nature protection approaches.

In **section 4.2, *Attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources***, I turned to the second dominant attitude toward nature. Drawing on the previous conceptual and genealogical analysis of the concept of ‘nature’ understood as *natural capital*, I showed how, within the *attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources*, nature is perceived as a collection of resources and ecosystem services whose value is defined in relation to human benefit. The desired state of nature protection is accordingly grasped as sustainable bountifulness—a condition in which nature continuously provides resources and services beneficial to humans. I demonstrated how this attitude *guides perception and action toward value-bearing functions*: it directs attention to regulating, provisioning, supporting, and cultural services, and prioritizes species and interventions accordingly. I further showed how differing valuations of

particular components give rise to divergent adjustments within this attitude—ranging from ecotourism-focused practices to sustainable yield forestry. While appearing technocratic, these variations reveal that nature protection, even within this frame, involves decisions about which benefits to prioritize and how to weigh competing services. What emerged is a distinctive attitudinal object—nature as segmented, optimizable natural capital—seen and acted upon through a lens of future-oriented management. This clarified that, just like in the previous case, the understanding of nature as natural capital rests on a basal attitudinal structure that shapes which facts count and which goals are seen as desirable.

In **section 4.3, *Revealing the Veils of Objectivity***, I completed the attitude analysis by undertaking its third step: *revealing the broader context of life within which the two dominant attitudes toward nature are embedded*. I demonstrated that the delineation of the desired state of nature in both attitudes—whether perceived as ‘natural’ functioning of natural processes or as ‘sustainable bountifulness’—rests on *certain unarticulated visions of how humans should live, tied to certain visions of nature that correspond to such a kind of life*. The problem is that these deeply ethical seedbeds of these attitudes toward nature are masked by veils of objectivity. Within the scope of the attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources, scientific projections and market-based instruments present sustainability as a technical matter, while concealing the fact that any kind of sustainability only makes sense *in light of a particular vision of human society*. Using the example of lithium mining in Cínovec, I showed that the chosen course of action *presupposes specific ways of life*—such as mass individual car transport—*as given*, thereby defining the boundaries of sustainability within which the market ends up determining which particular version of it is pursued. Within the scope of the attitude toward nature as wilderness—where the desired state of nature is defined as its condition prior to interventions of a ‘different order’ resulting from human alienation from the ‘natural order’—*the vision of the desired human life is even*

more direct: it *concerns human nature*. It is because the historical-mythological narrative of an original ‘natural order’ implies a particular vision of human nature—from which humans have become alienated and have *thereby* also become alienated from nature itself, thus beginning to disrupt its assumed ‘natural order.’ In the end, human alienation from nature takes the form of a *twofold alienation*. What is perceived as the ‘natural’ functioning of nature reflects a particular vision of human nature and of a life that is natural for humans and ought to be pursued—grounded in a nostalgic image of a simple, self-sufficient existence unburdened by luxury or accumulation—as opposed to ways of life perceived as ‘unnatural’ and representing actions of a ‘different order’ that disrupt the desired condition of nature. But just as in the case of the attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources, these normative visions are concealed behind a veil of objectivity—this time through ecological categories such as health and complexity, which, as I already showed in section 2.1, acquire their precise form only in contrast to humans, and which, as I demonstrated in this section, ultimately depend on a particular vision of human nature.

In section 4.4, *The ethico-political character of nature protection*, I summarized the outcomes of Chapter 4 and articulated their broader implications, thereby clarifying the nature of nature protection and the dispute about its future. I argued that nature protection and the debate about its future are shaped by two dominant attitudes toward nature—wilderness and reservoir of resources—each of which is fundamentally rooted in a markedly different attitude toward life. That is, each reflects a specific vision of how, and in what kind of world, humans ought to live. I identified three levels of this entanglement: first, the *political level*, where nature protection reshapes human life by regulating space and behavior; second, the *conceptual level*, where differing understandings of nature reflect divergent ideas about the human; and third, most crucially, the *basal level of attitudes*, where these practical orientations silently shape ways of perceiving, understanding, valuing, and

acting from the very outset. This analysis led to the central thesis of my dissertation: that *the hiddenness of this attitudinal level is the core reason why the current dispute about the future of nature protection remains confused and stuck*. The two opposing camps grasp the entire situation differently, already at the level of immediate attitudinal orientations—and unless this is brought to light, the debate cannot meaningfully proceed. Thus, I revealed that the dispute over nature protection is not merely conceptual or technical, but *political*, and ultimately *ethical* at its core. And while scientific knowledge remains indispensable, it is filtered through these divergent orientations and cannot, by itself, determine which path to take. This recognition opens the space for a *much-needed transparent debate about what kind of nature, and what kind of life within it, we actually want to protect*. However, I concluded this chapter with a speculative thesis: that neither of the two dominant attitudes toward nature can, under the conditions of the Anthropocene, achieve the very aims they set for themselves. This was the point of departure for the closing chapter.

In **Chapter 5, *Emerging Attitude toward Nature?***, I pursued the possibility that, beyond the two dominant attitudes toward nature, a third attitudinal orientation may be gradually emerging—one that could provide an alternative framing for nature protection under the realities of the Anthropocene. Because of the unestablished emerging character of what I was following, I had to shift from descriptive clarification to a *more speculative mode of analysis*. My aim was not to invent a new attitude, but to *explore whether certain motifs present in recent developments* in thinking about nature protection—and in environmental humanities more broadly—*might indicate the formation of a new, not-yet-fully-established attitude toward nature*. To this end, I examined a set of contemporary turns in environmental discourse and attempted to draw out from them the shared contours of a possible emerging orientation. I then explored how this hypothesized attitude may already be beginning to enter nature protection practice. This final chapter thus extended the scope of my inquiry from the clarification of existing positions to the

tentative identification of a potential path forward.

In section 5.1, *Recent turns as possible signs of an emerging attitude toward nature as homes*, I investigated whether recent developments in environmental discourse might reflect the formation of a new, not-yet-fully-established attitude toward nature—one that could offer a third alternative to the two dominant orientations. Because this hypothesized attitude is not yet fully articulated within nature protection, I extended my analysis to broader currents in the environmental humanities. I identified four significant and interconnected turns: (I) the *Relational Turn*, marked by the rise of relational concepts and values; (II) the *Habitability Turn*, centered on the shift from ‘sustainability’ to ‘habitability’ as the guiding aim of environmental action; (III) a growing emphasis on the *entanglement of human and non-human life*; and (IV) the emphasis on *politicization of nature protection*, especially through calls for involving multiple stakeholders into decision-making. I proposed that these four lines of critique, though arising from different contexts, might in fact be manifestations of a single emerging attitudinal orientation toward nature as *homes*. This assumption rests on three shared features: they all (1) emerge from an explicit critique of the established understandings of nature; (2) arise from reflection on the realities of the Anthropocene; and (3) point in a similar direction. As I argued, this direction might be captured as following the trajectory suggested by William Cronon—that is, striving to find the *middle ground between use and non-use*, where nature is seen not as something to be either excluded from or exploited. It is through this shared orientation that these recent turns might be understood as reflecting the contours of an *emerging attitude toward nature as homes*—one that I characterized as follows: nature would be perceived as what is inhabited and co-constituted by all life right here, all around us, and its desired condition would be one that allows the flourishing co-habitation of nature by a multiplicity of life forms across generations.

In section 5.2, *On the possible entry of the attitude toward nature as homes into nature protection: the case of Convivial Conservation*, I explored

whether the hypothesized attitude toward nature as homes may already be entering the field of nature protection. To do so, I analyzed the recent proposal for *Convivial Conservation* by Bram Büscher and Robert Fletcher—arguably the most significant and theoretically informed attempt to formulate a new approach to nature protection under the conditions of the Anthropocene. I showed that, although the authors do not explicitly work with the concept of ‘homes,’ their principles and concrete proposals strongly reflect the four key features of the attitude toward nature as homes identified in the previous section: emphasis on relationality, habitability, human–non-human entanglement, and inclusive political deliberation. I thus argued that *Convivial Conservation* can be fruitfully interpreted as a practical articulation of this emerging attitude—and thus as its entry into nature protection. In *Convivial Conservation*, nature is not perceived as external (to be either preserved or used) but as something lived with and within—which is further implied in its *vision of human life*: highlighting *degrowth* and *sharing the wealth* to promote *human and nonhuman coexistence in mixed landscapes*—based on an ethic of reciprocity, care, and gifting—instead of separation. By linking this proposal to the broader turns in recent environmental thought I had identified, I completed the *perspicuous representation of the current landscape of nature protection* and, in doing so—especially by identifying a not-yet-fully-established but increasingly visible attitudinal space within which new directions for nature protection might take shape, and which may come to constitute a third influential family of approaches—I have hopefully contributed to *blazing a new path forward for future nature protection*.

MAIN CONTRIBUTIONS

The first main contribution of my dissertation is methodological and lies in the *development of an extended Wittgensteinian conception of attitudes and the associated method of attitude analysis*. Drawing inspiration from the later Wittgenstein and subsequent authors in the Wittgensteinian tradition, I have systematically refined the idea of attitude into a clarificatory tool suitable for the analysis of practical orientations. At its core, the method is designed to elucidate basal attitudinal structures: clusters of immediate reactions toward particular kinds of phenomena that delineate the space in which such phenomena are perceived, understood, and acted upon. Rather than treating perception, understanding, and action as discrete or rationally derived responses to a neutral object, I have shown that the attitudinal frame preconfigures the object itself—as an attitudinal object—through the way in which it is grasped ‘as something’ already at the fundamental level of mostly unreflected, immediate basal reactions. The method of attitude analysis enables the clarification of such practical orientations through a structured three-step process: (1) identifying the *concepts* under which an investigated phenomenon is being *grasped* in various contexts; (2) systematizing these uses into distinct *attitudes* and/or *adjustments*; and (3) elucidating them by revealing their embeddedness in particular *ways of life* within which they arise, and situating those within the broader context of the whole *bustle of life* of which they are part. As a result, the method provides a new philosophical means of clarification that is especially suitable for *elucidating issues* which—stemming from divergent practical orientations—are *ethical at their core*. However, in principle, this method is not limited to the field of ethics and may prove useful, for example, in the philosophy of perception, the philosophy of action, or the philosophy of language. In any case, I believe that, for the purpose of elucidating ethical issues, the explanatory value of the method I developed is

high—though this will need to be demonstrated in a broader range of case studies than my thesis contains.

The second main contribution is the *perspicuous representation of the current landscape of nature protection*. This clarification makes visible the *underlying attitudinal orientations* that shape the two dominant families of nature protection approaches—thereby demonstrating that these are not simply different nature protection strategies, but manifestations of profoundly different ways of relating to nature, namely as *wilderness* or as a *reservoir of resources*—each embedded in a *divergent vision of how human life ought to unfold within nature* perceived in this or that particular way. While these visions remain *largely implicit*, they are *practically decisive*: they define what is perceived as desirable, valuable, or even visible, and thereby determine what kind of nature we strive to protect, and what forms of action appear as appropriate or misguided. This means that the disagreement between the opposing camps is not just about specific strategies, but at the core, about the kind of world we ought to inhabit—a fundamentally *ethico-political question*. As such, the deadlock in the current debate about the future of nature protection cannot be resolved by technical fixes or appeals to better data, because what is at stake is not merely facts, but the frameworks within which facts acquire their relevance. This contribution thus *shifts the terms of the debate*: instead of asking which strategy is most effective, it invites us to ask *which attitudinal orientation we actually can, want to—and ought to—adopt under the conditions of the Anthropocene*. Making these orientations visible was therefore not just a theoretical exercise, but a practical and ethical necessity for rendering the debate transparent and enabling it to move forward.

The third main contribution of my dissertation lies in the *tentative identification of a possible emerging attitudinal orientation toward nature*—one that I characterized as the *attitude toward nature as homes*. While the two dominant attitudes toward nature do not seem to offer a viable path from the crossroads where nature protection is stuck under the realities of the

Anthropocene, I explored whether recent shifts in environmental thought may be signaling the formation of a new, not-yet-fully-established attitudinal orientation toward nature that could provide a viable alternative. Drawing on four significant turns in recent environmental thought—the *Relational Turn*, the *Habitability Turn*, the *growing emphasis on human–non-human entanglement*, and the *politicization of nature protection*—I proposed that these developments, though differing in emphasis, share a common direction and critical impulse. Together, they point toward an orientation that strives to *resist the dualisms of use versus non-use and human versus non-human*, and instead centers on the *flourishing co-habitation of nature by a multiplicity of life forms across generations*. I further suggested that this emerging attitude may already be beginning to enter nature protection practice, as exemplified by the proposal for Convivial Conservation. While still speculative, this contribution is not merely diagnostic—it opens conceptual space for thinking otherwise. Even the very possibility of the emergence of a new attitude toward nature casts new light on the current dispute about the future of nature protection: it suggests that the crossroads at which we stand is not necessarily a two-way juncture with two dead ends—we may instead be witnessing the gradual formation of a third path, and perhaps even *helping its passage by further clarifying the landscape of nature protection and rethinking what ought to lie behind the horizon*.