THE UNIVERSITY OF PARDUBICE
FACULTY OF ARTS AND PHILOSOPHY

CLARIFYING NATURE PROTECTION

THE ROLE OF ATTITUDES TOWARD NATURE IN SHAPING ITS FORMS

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DOCTORAL THESIS

2025

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David Rozen

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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

Anotace

Tato disertace představuje filosofické projasnění ochrany přírody a probíhající debaty o její budoucnosti v současných podmínkách Antropocénu. Vychází z pozorování, že zavedené ochranářské přístupy – v ochraně stále rychleji *měnící se přírody* – selhávají a že diskuse o patřičném směřování ochrany přírody je *zmatená* a *zaseklá*. Za účelem projasnění této diskuse a charakteru ochrany přírody tato práce systematicky rozvíjí wittgensteiniánskou myšlenku *postoje* do nové filosofické metody, určené k *projasňování bazálních praktických orientací*, které utvářejí prostor, v němž daný postojový objekt nabývá konkrétní podoby – a tím vymezují pole možného vnímání, chápání a jednání ve vztahu k takto konkrétně uchopenému objektu.

První část analyzuje zmatení kolem ústředního pojmu „příroda" a rozlišuje dvě dominantní chápání: příroda jako *mimo-lidské* a příroda jako *přírodní kapitál*. Ve druhé části je vypracována rozšířená koncepce postojů a metoda postojové analýzy. V závěrečné části je tato metoda použita k projasnění charakteru dvou dominantních postojů k přírodě – jako k *divočině* a jako k *zásobárně zdrojů* – a k trasování možného postupného vznikání nového postoje k přírodě jako k *domovům*. Projasněním praktických orientací, ze kterých ochrana přírody pramení, tato disertace odhaluje, o co v ochraně přírody ve skutečnosti jde a proč je diskuse o její budoucnosti zmatená a zaseklá, čímž otevírá prostor pro *přehlednější transparentní diskusi* o tom, jakou přírodu vlastně chceme chránit.

Klíčová slova:
Ochrana přírody, Wittgensteinovská etika, Etika ochrany přírody, Postoje k přírodě

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INTRODUCTION

Nature protection is at a crossroads. Despite growing awareness of the accelerating loss of biodiversity and the pervasive human transformation of the Earth's ecosystems, there is little clarity about how nature should be protected, by what means, and to what end. In recent decades, the practice of nature protection has been confronted with a deepening conceptual and practical crisis, as long-standing ideals—such as the protection of pristine wilderness—have come under increasing pressure in the context of what many now call the *Anthropocene*. Among conservationists, in conservation-related sciences, and environmental humanities, there is a growing awareness of a *need for change in nature protection* practice to accommodate the realities of *rapidly changing nature*. Yet the debate remains marked by *deep misunderstandings* and an *absence of shared direction*. What exactly shall be protected under the name of 'nature' is far from clear—and it is not *only the lack of clarity* regarding the mysterious concept of *'nature'* that lies at the heart of the current impasse. Beneath these disputes about which path to take from the crossroads where nature protection finds itself lie *divergent attitudes* that shape the very space in which nature protection operates.

This dissertation investigates the conceptual and practical confusions that shape contemporary nature protection and the debate about its future. While much attention has been paid to the ambiguity of the term 'nature' itself, the difficulty runs deeper. What is at stake is not merely a matter of competing definitions or contested philosophical theories, but the *underlying basal attitudinal frameworks* that shape how different actors perceive, understand, and value nature and engage in its protection. These divergent—mostly unreflected—attitudes structure the space in which reasoning about nature protection takes place. As a result of substantial differences in these attitudes, the debate about the future of nature protection is not only *confused* but also *stuck*: the arguments advanced by one side frequently fail to resonate with others because they arise from fundamentally different ways of relating to nature. The central aim of this dissertation is to *clarify these underlying attitudes and to show how they shape—and limit—the forms that nature protection takes*.

To clarify these underlying attitudes, my investigation builds on the philosophical approach inspired by the later work of Ludwig Wittgenstein. Rather than proposing a new definition of 'nature' or normative argumentation for a particular form of nature protection, my

dissertation adopts a clarificatory approach—its title states my overarching aim directly: *Clarifying Nature Protection*. My aim is not to resolve the debate through argument or empirical data, but to make visible the attitudinal orientations that shape how nature protection is understood and enacted. Central to this approach is the Wittgensteinian idea of *attitude* as a form of *practical orientation*: *a particular cluster of immediate basal reactions that outline ways of perceiving, understanding, valuing, and acting upon a particular kind of object*—thereby making certain ways of approaching it appear intelligible, appropriate, or even necessary. These attitudes are not individual beliefs—beliefs take place within the space already outlined by attitudes—but basal modes of relating to the world that incorporate structures of biological and cultural conditioning. By focusing on the clarification of these basal attitudes, I seek to bring to light the space within which different understandings of nature and its protection take on a particular shape.

The contribution of this dissertation lies in its philosophical mode of engagement with the debate on nature protection. While existing literature often focuses on *normative and practical tensions*—such as those between 'neo-protectionism' and 'new conservation'—as well as on *critiques of Anthropocentrism* and on conceptual debates over *which idea of 'nature' is the right one for nature protection*, this dissertation refrains from taking a position within these debates. Instead, it seeks to *illuminate the attitudinal backgrounds from which such positions emerge*. In doing so, it shifts the focus from evaluating particular arguments or proposals to clarifying the space within which they are formulated and operate. By treating attitudes not as optional perspectives but as structuring conditions for sense-making, my dissertation offers a novel conceptual lens through which the practical and theoretical impasses of nature protection can be grasped and clarified. Its contribution lies in *making explicit* what is typically left implicit: *the background orientations that govern how nature is perceived, understood, valued, and acted upon*—thereby shaping what can be said, thought, or justified within a given form of nature protection.

However, to be clear, this dissertation does not aim to account for all possible ways in which humans relate to nature across various cultures. Its focus is more specific: it investigates the space within which deliberate, often institutionalized forms of nature protection are justified, contested, and practiced. The analysis is grounded in Western traditions of thought and practice—not as a matter of methodological choice, but because nature protection itself, as an *established social practice*, mostly emerges from within those traditions worldwide. The task of the dissertation is thus to make visible the attitudes that shape how nature protection as a social practice is conceived and performed in a context increasingly defined by the challenges

of the Anthropocene. To this end, the dissertation is structured in three parts. *Part I: Confusions Surrounding Nature Protection* diagnoses the conceptual and practical disorientation that characterizes contemporary debates about the future of nature protection. *Part II: Wittgensteinian Method of Analysis* develops the idea of attitude as a methodological tool for clarification of basal practical orientations toward a particular kind of objects. *Part III: Clarification of Nature Protection* applies this tool to current nature protection to make visible how it is shaped by the basal practical orientations involved in it, and to offer a perspicuous representation of the current landscape within which nature protection operates.

In more detail, the dissertation unfolds its investigation in five chapters, each dedicated to individual steps on the path toward clarification of nature protection. Chapter 1, *Protection of Nature at the Crossroads*, identifies the crisis facing current nature protection in light of the Anthropocene and diagnoses the conceptual and practical disorientation that permeates contemporary debates over which path to take from this crossroads. Chapter 2, *Understandings of 'Nature' in Nature Protection*, delves deeper into these confusions by exploring two dominant families of understanding 'nature' within nature protection: section 2.1 investigates the character of protecting nature as *'non-human,'* revealing its problematic metaphysical and historical-mythological assumptions; section 2.2 investigates the character of protecting nature as *'natural capital,'* unpacking its theoretical commitments and economic underpinnings. Chapter 3, *The Wittgensteinian Idea of Attitudes as a Clarificatory Tool*, develops the dissertation's methodological framework centered on attitudes: section 3.1 explicates the Wittgensteinian notion of attitude as a basal practical orientation, while sections 3.2 and 3.3 further develop how attitudes shape perception and action, respectively; section 3.4 then presents attitudes as methodological tools for clarification and outlines the procedure of attitude analysis. Chapter 4, *Clarifying Established Nature Protection*, provides a detailed analysis of the two dominant families of nature protection approaches (identified in Chapter 2) through clarification of attitudes from which they stem: section 4.1 examines the *attitude toward nature as wilderness*, section 4.2 the *attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources*; section 4.3 reveals how these approaches to nature protection veil their implicit assumptions under the guise of objectivity, and section 4.4 exposes the fundamentally *ethico-political* character of nature protection. Finally, Chapter 5, *Emerging Attitude Toward Nature?*, explores the possible gradual emergence of a new *attitude toward nature as homes* and its potential entry into nature protection: section 5.1 assesses recent theoretical turns in broad environmental humanities that may reflect a new not-yet-fully-established attitude, while section 5.2 investigates recent proposal for a new nature protection approach—*Convivial Conservation*—suggesting that it

represents an entry of this emerging attitude toward nature as homes into nature protection.

To recapitulate, this introduction has outlined the troubles surrounding contemporary nature protection and set the stage for a philosophical investigation that aims not to resolve disputes through normative argumentation or conceptual stipulation, but to clarify the underlying attitudes shaping these disputes. By making visible the basal practical orientations that shape how nature is perceived, understood, valued, and protected, *I seek to illuminate the deeper sources of confusion and deadlock in contemporary debates about the future of nature protection*. With this aim now clearly articulated, the following chapter begins the task of clarification, starting from the crossroads at which contemporary nature protection finds itself.

(I) CONFUSIONS SURROUNDING NATURE PROTECTION

Φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ

Heraclitus

[B 123]

(1) Protection of Nature at the Crossroads

> Biodiversity conservation is at a crossroads. A number of trends are converging with the potential to transform our understanding of nature and how we conserve it. […] conservation is at an ontological and epistemic moment during which the meaning of biodiversity, how to know it, how to conserve it, and who should conserve it is being fundamentally transformed.
>
> [Catherine Corson & Lisa Campbell][1]

Nature protection has gained significant traction in discourse, politics, and societies at large, profoundly impacting multiple spheres of human lives and, above all, nature itself. The objective of protecting nature is a primary concern shared by numerous entities, including conservationists, ecologists, environmental activists, non-governmental organizations, green political parties, and others, and is reflected in many intergovernmental initiatives such as the *Paris Agreement* and the *European Green Deal*. Moreover, the commitment to (or at least support of) nature protection is pronounced in mass among individuals, institutions, and companies. *But what does it mean to protect nature?* How, with what objective, and mainly, *what nature* shall be protected?

There is no clear consensus on the answers to these questions, not even across what could be labeled as the broad environmental movement, whose primary goal is precisely the protection of nature. Particularly in conservation ethics, political ecology, and environmental humanities in general, and in conservation biology and other conservation-related sciences—that is, in the fields that inform that broad environmental movement and shape the theoretical framework within which nature protection takes place—there is an *intense debate about the future of nature protection*. The debate has been particularly heated over the last two decades, especially because of the increasingly significant impacts of climate change and general transformation of many planetary ecosystems, in the context of which conservation goals and methods, willy-nilly, simply need to be rethought. Many current studies are arguing that nature protection is at a crossroads, that for a variety of reasons—as more and more conservationists are realizing—we have reached a point where it is no longer possible to continue in the current

[1] Catherine Corson and Lisa M. Campbell, "Conservation at a crossroads: governing by global targets, innovative financing, and techno-optimism or radical reform?," *Ecology and Society* 28, no. 2 (2023): 1. https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-13795-280203.

way and it is necessary to find a new way forward.[2]

Simply put, traditional nature protection focused on the protection of *pristine nature*, which typically meant the protection of *aesthetically attractive areas* with an emphasis on the *aesthetically attractive species* living there ('charismatic' species) and, more generally, simply on the protection of *biodiversity*. In this endeavor, the protection of nature has achieved some success for a long time in that it has prevented major transformation of protected areas and has thus largely preserved their appearance, considered to be pristine, and habitat for desired species. These successes were possible as long as the transformations that the protectionists were trying to prevent were taking place primarily by axe, rifle and excavator, but over time the anthropogenic transformation of entire planetary ecosystems through changes in the composition of the Earth's atmosphere, soils and waters has been escalating, and these kinds of transformations have become increasingly difficult to stop at the edge of the protected areas, until we have reached a point where it is virtually *impossible*. Indeed, these kinds of transformations of planetary ecosystems are reaching geological proportions, leading many authors to proclaim that we have entered a new geological era, the *Anthropocene*,[3] an era in which human activity is visibly transforming global planetary ecosystems. Indeed, despite the best efforts of conservationists—the amount of protected areas has been rising dramatically since the 1970s,[4] reaching an astonishing roughly 17% of terrestrial and inland water, and 10% of coastal and marine areas by 2020[5]—there has been a rapid decline in biodiversity to such an extent that many consider it to be the *Sixth Mass Extinction*,[6] and the human impact on nature—protected or not—cannot be further unseen. It was precisely the *shocking visibility* of the all-encompassing human transformation of nature that led to a new wave of questioning of the ideal of pristine nature as something that could be aspired to at all.[7] Thus, a critical mass of

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[2] For a brief summary of the main twists and turns in nature protection, see: Corson and Campbell, "Conservation at a crossroads," 1–10.
Otherwise, the entire Chapter 2 is concerned with this topic, and virtually all of the secondary literature cited therein, published in the last two decades, presents nature protection as being in crisis, stemming, among other things, from the ambiguity of the very objectives of nature protection.

[3] Paul J. Crutzen and Eugene F. Stoermer, "The 'Anthropocene'," *Global Change Newsletter* 41 (2000): 17–18.

[4] Paige West, James Igoe, and Dan Brockington, "Parks and Peoples: The Social Impact of Protected Areas," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 35 (2006): 252–253, https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.35.081705.123308.

[5] UNEP-WCMC and IUCN, *Protected Planet Report 2020* (2021), https://protectedplanetreport2020.protectedplanet.net/. See the first chapter.

[6] Anthony D. Barnosky et al., "Has the Earth's Sixth Mass Extinction Already Arrived?," *Nature* 471, no. 7336 (2011): 51–57, https://doi.org/10.1038/nature09678.
See also the influential book that popularized the topic: Elizabeth Kolbert, *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History* (Henry Holt and Company, 2014).

[7] The first big wave of criticism started in the 1990s and concerned primarily the theoretical problems of the idea

authors among conservation ethics, conservation biology, political ecology, and in the broader environmental movement *began to seek a new path for nature protection in the Anthropocene era*.

The debate became particularly heated in early 2010s, when two prolific publications came out, a book by environmental writer Emma Marris *Rambunctious Garden: Saving Nature in a Post-Wild World,*[8] and an article by conservation biologists Peter Kareiva, Michelle Marvier, and Robert Lalasz "*Conservation in the Anthropocene: Beyond Solitude and Fragility*,"[9] both of which criticized the objectives and methods of traditional nature protection stemming from what they saw as a misguided conception of nature and *called for a new direction for nature protection that would match the realities of the Anthropocene* by drawing on the recognition of the *irreversible interconnectedness of humans and nature which should not be denied but embraced*.

> We are already running the whole Earth, whether we admit it or not. To run it consciously and effectively, we must admit our role and even embrace it. We must temper our romantic notion of untrammeled wilderness and find room next to it for the more nuanced notion of a global, half-wild rambunctious garden, tended by us.[10]

> In answering these questions [posed by the realities of the Anthropocene], conservation cannot promise a return to pristine, prehuman landscapes. Humankind has already profoundly transformed the planet and will continue to do so. What conservation could promise instead is a new vision of a planet in which nature—forests, wetlands, diverse species, and other ancient ecosystems—exists amid a wide variety of modern, human landscapes. For this to happen, conservationists will have to jettison their idealized notions of nature, parks, and wilderness—ideas that have never been supported by good conservation science—and forge a more optimistic, human-friendly vision.[11]

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of wilderness; I will focus on some of these theoretical problems in section 2.1.
The debate on wilderness is summarized in the two following volumes: J. Baird Callicott and Michael P. Nelson, eds., *The Great New Wilderness Debate* (University of Georgia Press, 1998). And: Michael P. Nelson and J. Baird Callicott, eds., *The Wilderness Debate Rages On: Continuing the Great New Wilderness Debate* (University of Georgia Press, 2008).

[8] Emma Marris, *Rambunctious Garden: Saving Nature in a Post-Wild World* (Bloomsbury, 2011), 1–210.

[9] Peter Kareiva, Michelle Marvier, and Robert Lalasz, "Conservation in the Anthropocene: Beyond Solitude and Fragility," *Breakthrough Journal*, no. 2 (2012): 29–37, https://thebreakthrough.org/journal/issue-2/conservation-in-the-anthropocene.

[10] Marris, *Rambunctious Garden*, 2.

[11] Kareiva, Marvier, and Lalasz, "Conservation in the Anthropocene," 30.

The human-friendly vision of this growing nature protection stream labeled as *'new conservation'* could be summarized as an effort to skillfully manage nature, taking human presence and needs into account as an integral part of the picture. It is a turn away from protecting mythical pristine nature to *building nature as a—partly rambunctious—garden that benefits the widest number of people*, which should be achieved *in cooperation with capitalist development*. In the author's own concluding summary:

> instead of scolding capitalism, conservationists should partner with corporations in a science-based effort to integrate the value of nature's benefits into their operations and cultures. Instead of pursuing the protection of biodiversity for biodiversity's sake, a new conservation should seek to enhance those natural systems that benefit the widest number of people, especially the poor. Instead of trying to restore remote iconic landscapes to pre-European conditions, conservation will measure its achievement in large part by its relevance to people, including city dwellers. Nature could be a garden—not a carefully manicured and rigid one, but a tangle of species and wildness amidst lands used for food production, mineral extraction, and urban life.[12]

This new conservationist's vision for nature protection in the Anthropocene era is seen by many more traditional nature protectionists and conservation biologists as a betrayal of nature and provokes a strong passions.

According to Michael Soulé, one of the founders and chief proponents of the field of *conservation biology,* the 'new conservation' "does not deserve to be labeled conservation."[13] Together with Brian Miller and John Terborgh, he wrote an influential response to this rapidly growing nature protection stream *'New conservation' or surrender to development?,*[14] in which they criticize the idea that we can manage nature as we please as *anthropocentric*, *ethically dubious* and *factually impossible*, and above all they *reject the idea that capitalist development can go hand in hand with nature protection*.

> [T]he assumption that managing nature for human benefit will preserve ecological

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[12] Kareiva, Marvier, and Lalasz, "Conservation in the Anthropocene," 35.
[13] Michael Soulé, "The New Conservation," *Conservation Biology* 27, no. 5 (2013): 895, https://doi.org/10.1111/cobi.12147.
[14] Brian Miller, Michael E. Soulé, and John Terborgh, "'New conservation' or surrender to development?," *Animal Conservation* 17, no. 6 (2014): 509–515, https://doi.org/10.1111/acv.12127.

integrity is ungrounded and does not address the root causes of biological destruction, such as the paradigm of unlimited economic growth, unabated consumption and ever-increasing human numbers.[15]

In general, these authors, who represent another important current in contemporary nature protection labeled *'neo-protectionism,'* defend the traditional idea of nature protection based on the *establishing of protected areas in order to protect biodiversity for its own sake*, which consists in *preventing human interaction with nature*. This illustrates well the key difference between 'new conservation' and 'neo-protectionism'—neo-protectionists are rooted in the dualistic notion that nature is something external to humans, and by interacting with humans it ceases to be what it was and should remain, that is: *pristine nature*. And if nature has already been transformed, as the new conservationists claim, then this does not mean for the neo-protectionists, that the 'real' nature—in the sense of not altered by humans—that they seek to protect is some kind of social construct which matches nothing real in the world, and that we can continue to transform it for our purposes—on the contrary: "Nature is real, no matter how battered,"[16] and if it is battered we should seek to protect it all the more.

Thus, neo-protectionists are trying to invent and promote new ways (or perhaps rather accelerate the 'old good methods') to achieve the old goals (the protection of nature as it would have been if it had not been transformed by humans), in particular, they strive to increase the size of protected areas and their interconnection. It is based on the belief (which the new conservationists contradict)[17] that protected areas are the best way to protect biodiversity, and that the fatal loss of biodiversity, which accelerates at about the same time as the creation of new protected areas, stems simply from the fact that there are still too few protected areas and that they are isolated islands that need to be connected to preserve biodiversity. The ultimate vision of neo-protectionists for nature protection in the Anthropocene era is therefore Edward Wilson's 'Half-Earth project,' that is, the establishment of protected areas on half of the Earth that should ideally all be connected[18]—and thus *finally fulfilling the radical human–nature dualism by leaving half of the Earth to each*.

Besides these two distinct nature protection currents that are trying, each in a different

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[15] Miller, Soulé, and Terborgh, "'New conservation'" 512.

[16] Miller, Soulé, and Terborgh, "'New conservation'" 511.

[17] Marris, *Rambunctious Garden* is full of concrete examples of how human interaction with nature has ultimately led to an increase in biodiversity in a given location; see, e.g., the chapter "Weeding the Jungle," 1–15.

[18] Edward O. Wilson, Half-Earth: Our Planet's Fight for Life (Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2016), 1–272.

way, to respond to the realities of the Anthropocene there is also what could be labeled as ‘mainstream conservation’ which represents business as usual without any more comprehensive vision of how to protect visibly transforming nature; one could say that this group does not realize that nature protection is at a crossroads and consequently is not part of the debate about where to move forward. In addition, part of the debate about the appropriate character of nature protection that would fit with the realities of the Anthropocene, there are a number of other authors who criticize ‘new conservation,’ ‘neo-protectionism’ and ‘mainstream conservation’ from different positions, and who have not yet been systematically grasped as a unified group presenting some kind of a shared vision—which is something I will attempt to do in the final Chapter 5 of my dissertation. However, until then, I will only address these three established and unified streams of contemporary nature protection in my analyses: ‘neo-protectionism’ (which I will due to their shared core tackle as a variant of ‘preservationism’ or more generally of ‘traditional conservation’ which I will analyze in section 2.1), and ‘new conservation’ with ‘mainstream conservation’ (which I will despite their significant differences group together and analyze in section 2.2 to show, that from the perspective critical for clarification of nature protection, they share a specific core which is fully expressed in ‘new conservation’ and rather implicit in ‘mainstream conservation’).

Now, let’s summarize the current state of the art. *Nature protection is at a crossroads*, and ‘mainstream conservation’ continues the business as usual. ‘*New conservation’ proposes a complete change of objectives and methods for nature protection* in the Anthropocene era while building on the critique of human–nature-dualism-based nature protection consisting in the separation of the two poles through the establishment of protected areas, and instead *embracing a skillful interaction of humans with nature* that need not be some imaginary wilderness, but may well be shaped and protected as a rambunctious garden with an eye on human purposes. *‘Neo-protectionism,’* on the other hand, *defends the traditional goals* of nature protection, that is, *protecting nature from being transformed by humans*, and proposes an even *greater acceleration of the traditional practice* of establishing protected areas and interconnecting them as a solution for nature protection in the Anthropocene, and in the extreme case they see as a solution the fulfillment of a dualistic vision of the world in the final separation of humans and nature in the ‘Half-Earth project.’ Generally speaking, the debate about the future of nature protection is (a) *confused* and (b) *stuck*, the two main currents that are aware of the need to respond to the realities of the Anthropocene are entirely at odds, the arguments put forward by one side do not fall on fertile ground on the other side and vice versa, so that the *debate does not develop and a consensus on which way to go from the crossroads*

is not in sight. I will first focus on the conceptual dimension of why the discussion is *confused* (in the remaining part of this chapter and mainly in the following Chapter 2), and then I will focus on deeper roots of why the debate is *confused* and *stuck* (starting from the methodological Part II, and mainly in Chapter 4).

* * *

For a careful reader of the preceding paragraphs, it is perhaps not so surprising that the confusion in the debate about the future of nature protection has much to do with the ambiguity of the term 'nature,' which has an almost magical power and exerts profound passions. The point is that what kind of nature, how, and with what objectives one advocates protecting, is closely related to how one understands the term 'nature,' which is why, as Bram Büscher and Robert Fletcher aptly summarize in their analysis of nature protection discussions:

> First and foremost among the issues of contention within the great conservation debate has always been the meaning of the term 'nature'. It would, perhaps, not be an exaggeration to say that this is the key foundational issue around which the whole discussion pivots.[19]

The problem is that the concept of 'nature' is indeed ambiguous and contradictory, which is often not realized or not sufficiently reflected by those discussing nature protection, and so it happens that *there is a consensus on the need of protecting nature but no longer on what the object of protection actually is*, and then the individual arguments logically do not fall on fertile ground, because in the eyes of the other camp they are at odds with what they understand as nature and its protection. This is why the *confusions surrounding the ambiguous concept of 'nature' translates into confusion in the great conservation debate*.

And that is also why these discussions *need philosophical reflection*. Not to decide once and for all what nature actually is, and thus to lay a solid foundation for discussions about how to protect it—this would be the foundationalist approach that I will be defining myself against in the course of my investigation—but to bring to light what conceptions of nature various streams of thought in nature protection are operating with, what the limits of these ways of

[19] Bram Büscher and Robert Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution: Radical Ideas for Saving Nature Beyond the Anthropocene* (Verso, 2020), 54.

thinking about nature are, and what conservation practices they tend to lead to. In short, a philosophical reflection on nature protection is needed to *clarify varying approaches to nature protection* and thus to *facilitate mutual understanding*, which often fails primarily because various authors—unaware of this fact—use the enchanting notion of 'nature' in different ways and thus with different meanings. By making these assertions, I commit myself to the Wittgensteinian approach to philosophy as a clarificatory endeavor.[20] Accordingly, *the overarching objective of this dissertation is to clarify nature protection*. In doing so I will start from a clarification of various understandings of nature in nature protection, on which one can trace the core of the various approaches to protection of nature, since as I mentioned above what kind of nature, how, and with what objectives one strives to protect, is closely related to how one understands the term 'nature.'

It remains to be specified *in what sense* the way 'nature' is understood is related to the character of protection of nature, so that it is clear what and how we can gain by clarifying the various understandings of nature in nature protection and what the analysis of understandings of nature in nature protection should actually focus on. Therefore, let us first focus on the very notion of 'protection,' which will serve as a starting point for understanding the general structure of nature protection. To protect something implies care, perhaps even love, definitely some kind of concern with regard to what is protected, in other words, the protector values in some way what they strive to protect. Protection also implies that what is protected is perceived as being threatened in some way, therefore protection is always protection *from* something but at the same time also protection *toward* something. In order for something to be perceived as a threat to X, there must be a particular desired state of X toward which the protection is oriented; the fact that one perceives Y as a threat to X implies that one cares that X has the character X^z, which is perceived as a desired state of X, while Y is perceived as threatening that characteristic X^z in some way: *protection thus has the structure of protecting* X *from* Y *toward being* X^z. The first step of my clarification of the protection of nature will, therefore, in the following chapter, take the form of *revealing from what the different currents of nature protection seek to protect nature and what state of nature they perceive as desirable*. And already from the very structure of protection, one can clearly see that *the character of protection hinges on how the protector understands the subject of protection and its desired state*, in our case, how they understand *nature*.

[20] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, P. M. S. Hacker, and Joachim Schulte (Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 46–57 (§§ 89–133).

But with various understandings of nature in nature protection, it is not easy. For one thing, they are mostly implicit, but above all, 'nature' is a multifaceted concept, and in nature protection discourse, it is used in many different ways (often within the same text without being reflected). And then there is nature protection practice itself, in which the character of how nature and its desired state are understood within different approaches shows through. However, conservation practice does not take place in an ideal world and is subject to a number of trade-offs, so it is not possible to derive the actual form of understanding nature and its desired state purely from realized conservation practice, but one must also examine intended practice, the motivations for it, and various other related factors. My attempt to clarify the character of protection of nature will therefore not only have the character of elucidation of the various understandings of nature involved in nature protection—although this will be the primary focus of the following Chapter 2—but it will generally be about the clarification of the often complicated dynamics between various aspects of nature protection theory and practice: *what is nature, what is the desired state of nature, what is harming the desired state of nature, what should nature protection achieve, by which means, which values are involved, which hidden presuppositions are involved, what nature protection actually achieves and mainly what are the discrepancies between these levels of nature protection*.

Exploring these questions will help clarify the character of various streams of nature protection: grasping of what they consider as harming nature vis-a-vis which they define themselves against provides the clue for grasping what is the desired state of nature that they seek to protect, which in turn provides the key to clarifying what understanding of 'nature' one or the other approach—usually implicitly—operates with. In general, the analyses contained in the following Chapter 2 will have the character of exploring and problematizing *what it actually means to protect nature under varying understandings of 'nature'* and pointing out various ambiguities concerning the scope of protection of nature understood this or that way by which I will show what limits and problems different clusters of understandings of 'nature' bring to nature protection.

Lastly it should be made explicit what I mean by the 'protection of nature' that I strive to clarify throughout my dissertation: I am focusing on the protection of nature *as a cultural phenomenon*, and that is why the perspective of the actors themselves involved in *what they perceive as nature protection* is crucial for me; not an external or retrospective perspective. Nature protection perceived in this way is thus a relatively recent enterprise, emerging as *a reaction to perceived nature destruction*, which is also a relatively recent phenomenon. Retrospectively, one could say that people all around the world who, for example, burned

forests to create fields long before our era were destroying nature; however, from the perspective of the time, this has been seen rather as a form of cultivation. What I mean is that the destruction of nature *perceived as such* could only occur when nature began to be perceived as something that could be destroyed at all, and that shift was brought about by Romanticism. Only with Romanticism does, for example, the felling of trees come to be perceived as a destruction of nature in the sense that *protection of nature as an established practice* is responding to and that is the subject of this dissertation. When various indigenous peoples defended forests, for example, from being cut down by a newly arriving civilization that started to occupy the territory they used to live on, they were protecting their territories or perhaps a sacred grove rather than some abstract idea of nature as such that stands in opposition to humans, which is arguably a Western invention.[21] But conservationists are protecting precisely nature as such or, more accurately, *a particular state of nature*, which corresponds to how they understand what nature as such is—which is a relatively new type of activity. In general, in my dissertation, *I will focus on exploring the character of conscious, systematic nature protection understood in these terms*.

[21] Philippe Descola, *Beyond Nature and Culture*, trans. Janet Lloyd, foreword by Marshall Sahlins (University of Chicago Press, 2013), 57–88.

(2) Understandings of 'Nature' in Nature Protection

This chapter consists of two sections, in which I will distinguish and present two dominant ways of approaching the protection of nature, emphasizing precisely their different ways of understanding the concept of 'nature' that lead them to different ideas about how, with what objective, and mainly, *what kind of nature* shall be protected. Specifically, (in section 2.1) I will focus on *protecting nature understood as non-human* (characterizing the 'traditional conservation' including the 'neo-protectionism'), and (in section 2.2) on *protecting nature understood as natural capital* (characterizing contemporary 'mainstream conservation,' and 'new conservation'). These are the two clusters of understandings of 'nature' in nature protection I have identified and distinguished for the purposes of achieving clarification of current debates about the future of nature protection. I note that the dividing lines between the different ways of understanding 'nature' in nature protection could also be drawn in other ways, and that there are significant differences even between the approaches that I group together, which I nevertheless consider appropriate to understand as differences of emphasis rather than differences of kind. In other words, I have chosen to highlight certain connections and distinctions that I have found to be revealing for the purposes of clarifying nature protection, which of course entails the neglect of others. In short, I am presenting a kind of Wittgensteinian *surveyable representation*[22] of understanding 'nature' in nature protection that is useful insofar as it brings clarity to nature protection and insufficient insofar as it fails in this aim. To put it another way, there is no other criterion of validity of my following surveyable representation than its telling value.

I will seek to clarify, characterize, and suitably classify the significant existing understandings of 'nature' *in nature protection*—not the concept of 'nature' itself in general—that can be *traced behind* the various approaches to nature protection. The two understandings of 'nature' in nature protection that I have identified as dominant in nature protection represent certain idea clusters that can be revealed through analyzing how these approaches to nature protection operate, but they do not represent any explicit conception of nature to which each camp subscribes. Herein lies the difficulty of trying to clarify, characterize, and classify the understandings of 'nature' in nature protection, namely that individual authors generally do not work with any explicit and specific characterization of nature, and many use the term in

[22] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 54–55 (§ 122).

inconsistent ways. The analysis presented below should thus be seen primarily as an attempt to elicit and conjecture ways of understanding ‘nature’ that are—often only implicitly—present in nature protection discourse and practice. I will draw on canonical texts of conservationists, environmentalists, and environmental philosophers and will interpret and infer various understandings of ‘nature’ that are present in them, and analyze how targets for nature protection are set in practice and what the methods of achieving them imply. I will be concerned primarily with capturing the core of these two understandings of ‘nature’ in order to roughly mark out the most significant territories of the idea map of nature protection. I will investigate and clarify *what it actually means to protect nature, understood as non-human and as natural capital*.

(2.1) Protecting nature as non-human

> I shall be using the word 'nature' in one of its narrower senses—so as to include only that which, setting aside the supernatural, is human neither in itself nor in its origins.
>
> [John Passmore][23]

The fundamental and perhaps most prevalent understanding of nature that conservationists seek to protect is that of nature as *non-human*; that is, nature in opposition to humans: nature understood in a negative sense as that *what is neither human nor of human origin*, as the opening quote from the *Man's Responsibility for Nature*, a significant contribution to the early environmental philosophy's discussion, so aptly captures. This way of understanding nature is suitable when—in response to human destruction of nature—one seeks some normatively binding conception of nature, some vision of how nature should look, in contrast to which human destruction of nature stands out as negative, undesirable, and ultimately immoral, one is tempted to say that nature should look as it did before humans began to destroy it, that is, as it is *in itself as non-human*, the desired state of nature is thus *natural*, it is about protecting the *naturalness of nature*, which (as I will show below) can be understood in different ways. To appropriate this meaning of 'nature' for the purposes of nature protection makes perfect sense; however, it is not quite clear what it means—and my aim is this section will be to clarify it. The ambiguity arises from *the lack of clarity regarding the character of this reversal*, i.e., when nature ceases to be as it is in itself—natural—due to human interference. In other words, what kind of human interaction with nature results in its destruction, i.e., its transition away from its inherent non-human state? This is—as I will show throughout this section—difficult to determine, which is why some lines of reasoning, in their attempts to develop this understanding of 'nature' seriously, has gravitated toward the following extreme: all human interaction with nature is a destruction of nature in the sense that nature, as non-human, ceases to be purely non-human through that interaction, since it is mixed with the other pole—human—and thus no longer as it was in itself before that contact. Consequently, the protection of nature perceived this way tends to slide toward protecting what is perceived as untouched from being touched.

Let us look at the reasons for this conclusion in more detail. The notion of nature as non-

[23] John Passmore, *Man's responsibility for nature: Ecological problems and Western traditions* (Gerald Duckworth & Co., 1980), 207.

human is radically dualistic, with its origins lying in Christian metaphysical anthropocentrism, which asserts that God created: (1) humans in his image, who alone have a soul whose salvation is at stake, and (2) the world, which is the scene of this game of salvation. Within this conception, humans are regarded as being fundamentally different from all the rest of creation.[24] That the wind blows from here can be clearly seen in the quote with which I began this section:

> I shall be using the word 'nature' in one of its narrower senses—so as to include only that which, setting aside the supernatural, is human neither in itself nor in its origins.[25]

Leaving aside the supernatural, all reality can be divided into three sets: (H) humans, (HO) that which is of human origin, and (N) nature, i.e., what is human neither in itself nor in its origins.

$H = \{x \mid x \text{ is human}\}$
$HO = \{y \mid y \text{ is of human origin}\}$
$N = \neg(H \cup HO) = \{z \mid z \notin H \land z \notin HO\}$

It is evident that this perspective represents a purely negative understanding of nature, wherein (H) humans are regarded as the starting point, followed by (HO) entities of human origin. Nature, then, is defined as the negation of the union of these two sets ($N = \neg(H \cup HO)$). The most significant challenge pertains to the extent of the set of entities of human origin.

There are clear cases of direct human origin, for example, people build a city, establish a dumpsite, plant a forest or build a dam; it is clear that the city, the dumpsite, the forest and the pond are of human origin. But what about, for example, plants and animals that—without humans *directly* originating it—begin to thrive in a city, a dumpsite, a forest, or a pond? Do these entities fall into the first or second set? What about rats, pigeons, mosses, and invertebrates in the city or on the junkyard? And what about a forest that people have systematically cut down and replanted over the centuries and then left fallow. What about the fish, water birds, cyanobacteria, and willows that thrive in or around the pond? It is a grey area,

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[24] Bina Nir, "Pro-dominion attitudes toward nature in Western culture: First cracks in the narrative," *Genealogy* 4, no. 3 (2020): 1–13, https://doi.org/10.3390/genealogy4030068
Lynn White, "The historical roots of our ecologic crisis," Science 155, no. 3767 (1967): 1203–1207, https://doi.org/10.1126/science.155.3767.1203
[25] Passmore, *Man's responsibility for nature*, 207.

and such cases could be characterized as entities of second-order human origin (HO_2) in the sense that if it were not for the original human intervention, i.e., if it were not for entities of first-order human origin (HO_1), they would not exist in the form they do. Thus, if it is a matter of protecting nature as it is by itself as non-human, such entities of second-order human origin fall aside from such protection. In other words, within this view, nature can be characterized as:

$$N = \neg(H \cup HO_1 \cup HO_2) = \{z \mid z \notin H \wedge z \notin HO_1 \wedge z \notin HO_2\}$$

This radical way of understanding nature is particularly characteristic of early nature preservation, with its emphasis on wilderness to which the understanding of nature as non-human tends to gravitate. If one wants to protect nature in its natural state, as it is in itself as non-human, then one inclines to focus on nature that is pristine, i.e., *untouched by humans*, that is, on *wilderness*: the only true pure nature, which needs to be protected from being mixed with those other types of entities—($H \cup HO_1 \cup HO_2$)—through whose negation one have defined what nature is and which, thus, fall on the other side of this dualistic framework. This radical variant of understanding nature as non-human gave rise to traditional 'fortress' preservation, whose primary goal is to prevent any interaction of humans and of what humans have originated (either directly or indirectly) with what is supposed to be untouched nature.

But over time, it turned out that strictly speaking, *there is no such untouched nature*. Not only that, the areas that were perceived as untouched nature were often inhabited by indigenous peoples long before conservationists declared them national parks (which ironically led to their expulsion so that they would not disturb the untouched nature).[26] But most of all, it is clear that we live in a time—we can keep calling it the Anthropocene era—when humans have already affected sort of everything in many different ways. Sure, it is a matter of degree, but when one seeks pure, unmixed nature, then the grey area is not what they are looking for. The anthropogenic change in the composition of the Earth's atmosphere and the resulting global warming are particularly significant in this respect. Humans have extracted and burned fossil fuels thereby producing greenhouse gases that are of human origin (HO_1) and the warming that these greenhouse gases have caused has then to some extent affected everything on planet Earth—in other words, everything today is, strictly speaking, either human (H), of direct

[26] William Cronon, "The trouble with wilderness: Or, getting back to the wrong nature," *Environmental History* 1, no. 1 (1996): 15, https://doi.org/10.2307/3985059

human origin (HO_1), or partially of second order human origin (HO_2). The set of entities defined as $\neg(H \cup HO_1 \cup HO_2)$ *is empty*. This is the 'end of nature,' famously proclaimed by the profound environmentalist Bill McKibben in 1989 in what is considered the first book on global climate change for a broader public, aptly named *The End of Nature*.[27]

> We have produced the carbon dioxide — we have ended nature.[28]
> We have changed the atmosphere, and thus we are changing the weather. By changing the weather, we make every spot on earth man-made and artificial. We have deprived nature of its independence, and that is fatal to its meaning. Nature's independence *is* its meaning; without it there is nothing but us.[29]

According to McKibben, we have ended nature; nothing in the world is in its *original pristine natural state* anymore, everything is at least to some extent influenced by humans and, therefore, in his understanding, *man-made* and *artificial*. This is because he understands the defining feature of nature to be its independence ($N = \neg(H \cup HO_1 \cup HO_2)$), which has been taken away from it by enclosing it in a greenhouse: "We have built a greenhouse, a *human creation*, where once there bloomed a sweet and wild garden."[30]

McKibben is aware that this is a certain idea of nature; he writes that humans used to see themselves as part of nature, and that from these positions it could be argued that the current crisis is also somehow 'natural' because it was caused by humans who are part of nature. This, he argues, we can claim, but we cannot feel it, because for us, as modern humans, nature is precisely that which is not man-made.[31] In some places, McKibben even writes that what has ended is a certain idea of nature, a certain set of human ideas about the world and humanity's place in it,[32] but it would be more accurate to say that what he thinks has ended is nature as non-human. After all, the idea of nature as non-human is the starting point of his entire book, and this idea has not ceased to exist to this day; rather, the point is that, within the strict understanding of this idea that McKibben represents, the idea of nature as non-human characterizes the empty set; this is what McKibben is trying to say, and this is what he despairs of throughout the entire book. When, at times, he uses that misleading formulation that what

[27] Bill McKibben, *The End of nature* (Viking, 1990).
[28] McKibben, *The End of nature,* 44.
[29] McKibben, *The End of nature,* 54.
[30] McKibben, *The End of nature,* 84.
[31] McKibben, *The End of nature,* 59–60.
[32] McKibben, *The End of nature,* 7, 43–44, 65.

has ended is a certain idea of nature, he wishes to imply that by the end of nature, he does not signify the termination of natural processes, but rather the end of nature as independent from humans.

> When I say that we have ended nature, I don't mean, obviously, that natural processes have ceased — there is still sunshine and still wind, still growth, still decay. Photosynthesis continues, as does respiration. *But we have ended the thing that has, at least in modern times, defined nature for us — its separation from human society*.[33]

Thus, McKibben's *The End of Nature* can be regarded as a sincere contemplation of where adopting of such a radical understanding of nature—as what is entirely uninfluenced by humans—leads. That is, into the claim that humans are everything.

> We can no longer imagine that we are part of something larger than ourselves – that is what all this boils down to. We used to be. […] But now *we* make that world, affect its every operation.[34]
> There is no such a thing as nature any more – that other world […] is now not another world, and there is nothing but us alone.[35]

But then, what does the protection of *nature* mean in such a world where there is no such thing anymore? What are we to protect if nature, as a set of entities not influenced by humans, is an empty set? Is there anything left to protect for the stream of nature protection that strives to protect the *naturalness of nature understood as its pristine condition*? Of course, not everyone agrees with McKibben that there is no longer pristine nature; one can say it is a matter of scale and draw a dividing line somewhere, however, within this essentialist understanding of nature, any dividing line is arbitrary and ultimately dubious. However, the main problem with this approach to nature protection is that after we draw such an arbitrary dividing line somewhere, there is no other way to protect what lies beyond it than to guard that border to prevent contact. This could only work in times when the destruction of nature was primarily done with saws and rifles, but in the era of the climate crisis, it is literally impossible—one cannot keep changes in climate beyond the borders of nature preserves. And so, such a notion

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[33] McKibben, *The End of nature,* 60.
[34] McKibben, *The End of nature,* 77-78.
[35] McKibben, *The End of nature,* 83.

of nature protection would be left with only slowing down the decline of what they have labeled *pristine nature* by drawing that arbitrary dividing line. A more reasonable way to deal with these problems, therefore, seems to be to understand the naturalness of nature in a different way than its pristineness—which is provided through the emphasis on the processual character of nature.

* * *

In this subsection, I will focus on the variant of understanding the *naturalness* of nature in nature protection that is rooted in the emphasis on the processual character of nature, on *natural processes*; generally speaking, it is about the *protection of the natural way of functioning of natural processes*. Let's start from the obvious fact that natural processes—like photosynthesis or succession—as such cannot be destroyed or damaged, and consequently, nor protected. Protection of nature focused on the processual character of nature must therefore seek to protect a certain way of functioning of natural processes, which is typically understood precisely as the 'natural' one. In the course of the exposition, I will gradually clarify what is meant by this and show that behind this understanding of naturalness of nature there is—kind of sneakily—again the understanding of nature as non-human, that such a 'natural' way of functioning ultimately means a *non-human way of functioning*—that is, the way as natural processes functioned by themselves before humans made them somehow 'unnatural.' Thus, the basic characterization of how nature *should* look like, and the destruction of nature are very close to the previous case when the naturalness of nature is understood as its pristineness. Destruction of nature means the disruption of natural processes from their 'natural' way of functioning, and the protection of natural processes thus means helping them to keep their 'natural' way of functioning—which represents the desired state of nature in this understanding—or to reach it back. Whereby the desired 'natural' functioning of natural processes is derived from the state of a particular ecosystem that is understood as 'natural' and usually further specified as *normal*, *healthy*, or *balanced*, or—in the words of Aldo Leopold, whom I will use as an illustrative example to demonstrate the structure of this understanding of nature protection—as the state of *integrity*, *stability*, and *beauty*.[36]

However, a similar problem arises here again, namely that it is not easy to determine the

[36] Aldo Leopold, *A sand county almanac: And sketches here and there* (Oxford University Press, 2020 [1949]), 211.

point at which human interaction with an ecosystem constitutes a disruption of its 'natural' functioning, namely a disruption of the 'naturalness' of natural processes, and thus not even what it means to protect nature understood this way. Protection of naturalness of nature understood as the natural functioning of natural processes, therefore, comes with some arbitrarily selected baselines which are proclaimed to be *the desired state of an ecosystem* and the aim of the protectionists is then to either safeguard this 'normal' state or to accommodate current 'unnatural' natural processes to be 'natural' again, i.e., to be alike those which are presupposed to be involved in the presupposed 'normal' state of an ecosystem which is precisely what *restoration* approach in protecting nature attempts to achieve. Here we can already see that when the focus is on a certain desired state of natural processes in contrast to pristineness, it leaves the door open to human interaction with nature—when the focus is on natural processes, whose desired modes of functioning we define through a certain desired state of the ecosystem, it seems that humans can both disrupt these natural processes from their desired way of functioning but also support them in functioning the desired way, in contrast, when the focus is on the untouched state of nature, it seems that any human touch can only harm.

So, what is the desired—'*natural'*—way of functioning of natural processes? Let us take a closer look at what it actually means to protect the naturalness of nature perceived in this way. The natural functioning of natural processes is derived from a certain desired state of an ecosystem that is considered somehow objectively good (whether viewed as normal, healthy, or balanced), and that the protection of nature understood this way is supposed to seek to maintain or achieve. This is a good illustration of how humans have tried to find in nature some external normative standard to guide their own actions.[37] In the pursuit of the protection of nature, then, the proper way of functioning of natural processes is the first thing to be determined. This process and how to achieve it have already been clearly described and advocated for by the conservationist's icon, American forester and ecologist Aldo Leopold.

> A science of land health [proper nature protection] needs, first of all, a base datum of normality, a picture of how healthy land maintains itself as an organism.
>
> We have two available norms. One is found where land physiology remains largely normal despite centuries of human occupation. I know of only one such place:

[37] As elaborated in detail by: Raymond Williams, "Ideas of Nature," in *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (Verso, 1980), 67–85.

> northeastern Europe. […] The other and most perfect norm is wilderness. Paleontology offers abundant evidence that wilderness maintained itself for immensely long periods; that its component species were rarely lost, neither did they get out of hand; that weather and water built soil as fast or faster than it was carried away. Wilderness, then, assumes unexpected importance as a laboratory for the study of land-health.[38]

Leopold lays out two ways to determine what is the normal state of a particular ecosystem: (1) the most perfect norm is *wilderness*, (2) another (less perfect) norm is where the ecosystem remains *largely normal* (i.e. close to the most perfect norm) *despite* centuries of human occupation. The central criterion of normality is the *health* of the ecosystem that conservation is supposed to promote, which Leopold defines as the capacity for *self-renewal*.

> Health is the capacity of the land for self-renewal. Conservation is our effort to understand and preserve this capacity.[39]

What such a healthy ecosystem looks like can be inferred either (1) directly from the wilderness, which is a kind of etalon of health as the ability to maintain itself, as paleontology demonstrates, according to Leopold, or (2) from ecosystems that are largely normal, i.e., largely healthy. Protection of nature in this understanding thus means finding out what the healthy state of this or that ecosystem is, establishing it as the norm, and supporting the natural processes that lead to or represent that healthy state (i.e. the 'natural' natural processes that are understood as contribution to the self-renewal of that ecosystem), in contrast to those natural processes that are identified as somehow wrong because seen as harming the health of the ecosystem (i.e. those which lead to some kind of transformation of an ecosystem, in contrast to its self-renewal). But what does it mean that an ecosystem still remains largely normal/healthy—that the natural processes that characterize it lead to its self-renewal rather than to its transformation? And how can it be that natural processes cease to function in a 'normal' way? These are the questions that need to be addressed.

Leopold defends the idea of "biotic pyramid" in contrast to "the balance of nature"—the biotic pyramid starts with the soil, continues with plants, insects, birds, and rodents, and ends with large carnivores, each lower layer representing food for the higher one.[40] However, a

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[38] Leopold, *A sand county almanac*, 184–185.
[39] Leopold, *A sand county almanac*, 208.
[40] Leopold, *A sand county almanac*, 202–203.

healthy ecosystem, for him, is first and foremost a stable ecosystem, i.e., an ecosystem whose pyramid is somehow balanced and which therefore has the capacity of self-renewal;[41] thus, it can be argued that it is a variant of the problematic idea of 'balance of nature.' However the protection of nature as the 'natural' functioning of natural processes is not just about the self-renewal—to understand what it means that natural processes deviate from their 'natural' way of functioning and hence what they need to be protected against, we need to focus on another key criterion that Leopold works with: the *complexity* and *diversity* of the biotic pyramid toward which he believes evolution is moving[42]—that is, what we would today call the term *biodiversity*. On this basis we can grasp, how it happens and what it means for Leopold that an ecosystem ceases to be normal (or largely normal), that the natural processes that characterize it deviate from their 'natural' way of functioning: disruption of the normal state of an ecosystem occurs as a result of violent man-made changes that are "*of a different order than evolutionary changes*,"[43] which are manifested by "various stages of disorganization" (disruption of stability), and by a "reduced level of complexity" (decrease in biodiversity) of an ecosystem.[44] A well-known example of the disruption of stability and reduced level of complexity of an ecosystem—discussed by Leopold, in what has become perhaps the most famous section of his writings, 'Thinking Like a Mountain'—is the culling of wolves: humans have shot all wolves in many places during his lifetime to increase the number of deer to hunt and facilitate grazing, but as a result, deer have overpopulated and grazing has increased, which has gradually led to forest degradation, forest retreat, and soil erosion in many areas.[45] This is an example of an ecosystem that, according to Leopold, is not (largely) 'normal' anymore because it has lost its original stability and level of biodiversity, and is unable to renew itself to this original state—that is, to its state before human intervention, which is of a 'different order.'

However, over time, the ecosystem stabilizes again, but—in this view, somehow necessarily—at a lower level of complexity.[46] Such a state may be considered the 'new normal,' but it is not the 'normal' healthy state of an ecosystem that conservationists seek to protect—such an ecosystem is considered degraded even though it has regained its ability of self-renewal. Here, then, it becomes apparent that *it is not only about the health in the sense of the capacity to renew itself*—as it appeared in the objective-sounding formulation above—but also

[41] Leopold, *A sand county almanac*, 203.
[42] Leopold, *A sand county almanac*, 203.
[43] Leopold, *A sand county almanac*, 205.
[44] Leopold, *A sand county almanac*, 206.
[45] Leopold, *A sand county almanac*, 120–123.
[46] Leopold, *A sand county almanac*, 206.

about a certain degree of complexity, and this degree of complexity is defined through *wilderness*, that is, it is derived from the state of the ecosystem before human intervention: the ecosystem *should* look as evolution created it, before humans—stepping out of the evolutionary order—degraded the ecosystem through the changes that are of 'different order.' Normativity here, thus, is taken from the evolutionary process, which tends toward *complex*—that is, multiple-pyramid-layers-involving—and *healthy*—that is, stable, i.e., self-renewing—ecosystems, and such ecosystems are representing the 'normal' state, which at the same time represents the *norm* for our actions, which is why Leopold argues that "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."[47]

Now, let us focus on the problems into which the attempt to protect nature as a 'natural' way of functioning of natural processes slips. First of all, as mentioned already when dealing with naturalness understood as pristineness—it is not easy to determine when an ecosystem is still largely normal (in the sense of undisturbed by humans) and when it is already degraded. Respectively, determining the point in time that we set as a baseline and that we understand as 'normal' is largely arbitrary, not in the sense of being entirely random, but in the sense of being based on particular decisions that could have been reasonably made otherwise and are being made otherwise throughout all the history of conservation until today—this is the frequently analyzed and criticized 'shifting baselines.'[48] For example, among contemporary conservation biologists and paleoecologists there is a heated dispute about whether the traditional idea of primeval forests type of landscape or rather an open and semi-open pastures, and wood-pastures type of landscapes (influentially argued for by Frans Vera)[49] should be considered as the baseline for the post-glacial temperate Europe—leaning to one side or the other of this controversy implies a radically different idea of what is the 'normal' state of temperate Europe's ecosystems and, thus, what kind of functioning of natural processes should nature protection strive to achieve. It is hard to say whether this dispute will one day be definitively

[47] Leopold, *A sand county almanac*, 211.

[48] This notion has been coined in the context of how human memory is changing in terms of what is considered a normal state of nature in: Jeremy B. C. Jackson, Karen E. Alexander, and Enric Sala, eds., *Shifting Baselines: The Past and the Future of Ocean Fisheries* (Island Press, 2011).

For a broader analysis of how conservation ideas have shifted about what constitutes a baseline in diverse localities, see the pioneering piece of environmental history: William Cronon, ed., *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (W. W. Norton, 1996).

[49] Frans Vera, *Grazing Ecology and Forest History* (CABI, 2000).

For criticism, see: H. John B. Birks, "Mind the Gap: How Open Were European Primeval Forests?," *Trends in Ecology & Evolution* 20, no. 4 (2005): 154–156, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tree.2005.02.001.

resolved, but even if it is, why should the state of ecosystems some twelve thousand years ago affect nature protection today? Moreover, more recent human interventions in natural processes in Europe arguably led to an increase in biodiversity in some regions because deforested areas—which became grasslands—used for grazing provided suitable habitat for many plants and associated insects and birds;[50] should we, therefore, use this new and more complex state of the European landscape as a baseline? But in what century? Probably before the Industrial Revolution, when the power of human intervention was not yet so great and perhaps not yet of a so much 'different order' than evolution. But where to draw that line, moreover, we do not have much reliable information on the state of the landscape from before the Industrial Revolution either. So, what about the 19th century? Well, yes, that's ideal, that's when romanticism comes to the fore, and there is a boom in natural science, and we finally have a lot of information about how natural processes were functioning, especially in areas that have been declared wilderness and protected as national parks. Great, that's a good idea, so let's use these 19th century wilderness records as a benchmark for the normal functioning of ecosystems that we should be working toward in protecting nature. Yes, it is an exaggerated simplification, but it should suffice to illustrate the different levels of arbitrariness involved in establishing a baseline for the 'normal' functioning of natural processes.

There is also a problem with the idea that greater biodiversity goes hand in hand with greater stability. Today, we can see that, in at least some cases, the opposite is true. Some of the most complex ecosystems (e.g. tropical rainforests containing huge amounts of pyramid layers) are among the most vulnerable in the context of current climate change, as they contain large quantities of highly specialized food chains that can be disrupted by the extinction of a single species that is fundamental for many others. In contrast, less complex ecosystems, such as deserts, are very stable. It can, therefore, be assumed that, at least in some cases, a human-degraded ecosystem that stabilizes at a lower level of complexity will be more stable than the original—more complex—ecosystem. However, such a more stable ecosystem would not be a target for nature protection in this view. This brings us to the fact that the *desired norm* cannot be obtained in any objective way from the *stability* (health) of the ecosystem—it cannot be deduced ecologically from the internal structure of the ecosystem. To obtain normativity, we need something more, which is why Leopold emphasizes that we should also strive for the

[50] The following study shows the importance of grasslands—whether man-made or not—in terms of biodiversity in contrast to the typically lower biodiversity in forested areas: Angelica Feurdean et al., "Biodiversity-rich European grasslands: Ancient, forgotten ecosystems," *Biological Conservation* 228 (2018): 224–232, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2018.09.022.

integrity and *beauty* of the ecosystem. Integrity in this context means that the ecosystem should be as it was in itself before it was degraded by changes of a 'different order' than evolution—by humans, which, in the end, means that the ecosystem *should be in the state of the wilderness* (or at least close to it), which is the benchmark not only of the health (stability), but also of the proper complexity of the ecosystem in question. I will get to a more detailed discussion of the motif of 'beauty' in nature protection later (in section 4.1), but for now I just want to note that beauty has been the central motivation for nature protection since the origins of this practice, and it was again wilderness seen as balanced and complex that was considered beautiful.

We see, therefore, that protection of nature, understood as the protection of the 'natural' way of functioning of natural processes, also tends to lead to the protection of nature as wilderness, which serves as an etalon, and that such protection is, therefore, ultimately about *the protection of natural processes as they are in itself undisturbed by humans*. Compared to the protection of naturalness of nature understood as its pristineness there is however a significant shift in emphasis, it is not about nature as a set of entities untouched by humans, which could be somehow mixed with humans and thus vanish, but about a certain way—the 'natural' way—of functioning of natural processes, which can be derailed by humans but which humans can also put on the track again. In both cases, what is to be protected—the 'naturalness' of nature—is defined in contrast to humans, however, in the first case humans are somehow external to nature by definition, but in the second only insofar they disrupt nature by changes that are 'of different order than evolutionary changes' or to put it more vividly only *insofar humans stand out from evolution*. This is not some outdated Leopoldian idea, but a fairly common belief among conservationists and environmental philosophers to this day; for example, Eric Katz clearly states that "All human activity is not unnatural, only that activity which goes beyond our biological and evolutionary capacities."[51] It appears, then, that in this variant—in which the 'naturalness' of nature is understood as the 'natural functioning' of natural processes—'naturalness' means something other than simply 'non-humanness' (as in the first case, where 'naturalness' has no intrinsic positive content), that the 'different order' of human action which disturbs the 'naturalness' of nature has some specific property which stands out from the normal natural order shaped by evolution, and which is not reducible simply to 'being of human origin.' Thus, it is now necessary to examine what this property is and in what respect this 'different order' of changes humans make into nature differs from changes of

[51] Eric Katz, *Nature as Subject: Human Obligation and Natural Community* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1997), 104.

nature that are of normal evolutionary order—that is, by 'natural' natural processes (i.e. processes not derailed by humans) and 'natural' natural entities (i.e. entities that haven't been originated by humans).

* * *

What does this 'different order' of intervention into nature—that only humans are capable of and that leads to the destruction of nature—consist in? In what respect is the beaver dam 'natural' and the human dam 'unnatural'? Does the 'different order' consist in a different—larger—scale? The scale seems to be important here but there must be something else in which the distinctiveness of that 'different order' of interventions into the 'natural' course of nature lies because some of the changes into course of natural processes whose naturalness would nobody dispute were of much larger scale than sum of all human interventions—think about, for example, organisms that live on the basis of photosynthesis, they changed the shape of planet Earth, including its atmosphere, very radically since they originated and spread. So, what then makes the human dam 'unnatural'? *Does 'unnatural' mean something else than 'of human origin' here?* It would seem so, after all humans have also evolved through evolution and many of the things they do are commonly called 'natural,' but not all of them—some are considered 'artificial' and these are, in this view, the activities through which humans stand out from evolution. To grasp what protection of 'naturalness' of nature means, we, thus, have to reveal, which human activities are 'natural,' and which stand out from nature and constitute 'artificial' interventions of a sort of 'different order'—that is, the destruction of nature that protection of nature is trying to prevent.

Stephen Vogel in his powerful analysis of where the boundary lies shows that that boundary cannot be convincingly drawn through the widespread motif mentioned above that the 'unnatural' is that which somehow stands out from evolution—what transcends our biological and evolutionary capacities, what transcends what we are evolutionarily adapted to—because that, what we do is by definition necessarily within our (biological and evolutionary) capacities, otherwise we would not be able to do it, and furthermore, from the Darwinian perspective individual species are not adapted for something particular, rather they are adapted simply to whatever they do which varies depending on their surrounding environment, and which, in the end, leads to their being able to reproduce better in some

environments and worse in others, that is what their adaptation consists in.[52] *From an evolutionary perspective, it is simply not possible to explain what this 'different order' of human interventions into nature consists of*. In the course of evolution, humans have clearly acquired the abilities to invent and construct cars, to find and extract fossil fuels, to pump them into cars, and to move cars around the world. The difference between the 'naturalness' of emitting carbon dioxide through breathing and the 'unnaturalness' or 'artificialness' of emitting carbon dioxide through driving a car must lie in something else, since our biological and evolutionary capacities allow us to do both.

The difference seems to be that we simply have to do the former (it is a biological necessity), but not the later. We do not have to make cars and drive them, that is a matter of our choice and intention—we breathe sort of spontaneously, mindlessly without intention, but making cars and extracting fossil fuels comes from a long and complex chain of thought and various intentions—this seems to be the central difference that offers itself as a starting point for exploring what makes some human actions 'artificial' in this view. Vogel, in his effort to find out where the line between 'natural' and 'unnatural' or 'artificial' lies, argues—and I agree with this point—that the starting point for understanding this distinction must indeed lie in human *intentionality*, or more generally in the human *capacity to think*.[53] But, even this notion is vague and misleading, for while we must eat and sleep, what, where, and how we eat or when and where we go to sleep is subject to our decision-making, and we certainly would not want to claim that the children of parents who have made an intentional decision to have offspring are somehow 'artificial,' just like cars, which are the result of a decision, and after all, many animals also act intentionally, and their creations—beaver dams or bird nests—are not considered artificial.[54] Moreover, far from all human action that is the result of deliberation and intentionality is commonly regarded as 'unnatural'; I will develop this line of argument a few paragraphs later.

But now let us leave these problems aside and focus on what would the 'different order' of human behavior characterizing its 'unnaturalness' and 'artificiality' understood in this way actually mean. Clearly, the abilities to think and act intentionally are also not something that somehow stands out from evolution, they are human—and arguably not only human—evolutionary and biological capacities. And indeed, as Vogel shows, to understand what is at

[52] Vogel, *Thinking like a Mall*, 16–18.
[53] Vogel, *Thinking like a Mall*, 19–24.
[54] Vogel, *Thinking like a Mall*, 19.

stake here, it is helpful to go back before Darwin to widely popular reading of Descartes.[55] For at the core of the 'different order' of human interventions into nature, it is a *metaphysical claim about human beings* (that can be clarified through a lay interpretation of Descartes) *who operate, as it were, in two realms*: *res extensa* and *res cogitans*. Or to put it through simplification of Kant's distinction: in the *realm of nature/necessity* ('Reich der Natur/Notwendigkeit') and in the *realm of freedom* ('Reich der Freiheit'). To put is plainly: nature belongs to the order of *res extensa* or *realm of necessity* and so do humans as human bodies including their biological processes, however humans also transcend this natural order and, as thinking beings endowed with cognitive capacities, freedom and will, they are also at the same time somehow super-natural, that is, beyond (or rather above) the natural world of *res extensa* or *realm of necessity*. And it is precisely through these special mental capacities of theirs—that is, through operating in this 'different order' of being of *res cogitans* or *realm of freedom*—that humans are able to take things out of nature and make them 'artificial.' That 'different order,' which we have been looking for, and which is the source of human 'unnaturalness' and 'artificiality' of their products, is the order of *res cogitans* or *realm of freedom*.

Let's leave aside the fundamental differences between Descartes' and Kant's metaphysics, which are irrelevant to further proceeding—conservationists and environmental philosophers almost never explicitly subscribe to Descartes or Kant anyway. On the contrary, both authors are frequent targets of criticism in these circles because they are interpreted as advocating for a dualistic anthropocentric division of the world, in which humans stand on one (more important) side and nature on the other. Unfortunately, it is rare among environmentalists, conservationists, and even environmental philosophers to find an authors who—in their advocacy for the protection of nature as non-human from destructive, unnatural human behavior, and in their critique of anthropocentrism—reflect that this very framing of protecting nature presupposes precisely such a kind of a dualistic and anthropocentric ontology that is philosophically difficult to defend. This is why Vogel's analysis is so vital in demonstrating that *if we start from an understanding of nature as non-human we cannot find ontologically significant differences between 'natural' and 'artificial.'*

> [T]his dualistic conception of nature begins by assuming the existence of such a difference—begins, that is, by assuming that humans are distinct from nature, typically

[55] Vogel, *Thinking like a Mall*, 21.

> because of their rational/mental/conscious capacities—and then uses that assumption to justify the claim that that which humans have made or done (the "artificial") can be ontologically distinguished from the "natural." The position does not (although it often claims to) posit a species-neutral criterion of naturalness and then notice with regret that the actions and products of one particular species, our own, fail to satisfy it. Rather, it starts by assuming that humans are (partly) unnatural and then looks for a criterion that confirms the assumption. Far from being a discovery about nature, I would argue, the claim that certain acts and products are unnatural is in fact the expression of a certain a priori metaphysical view about human beings. The dualism here is presupposed, not argued for. That's why beaver dams will never be described as unnatural—not because they possess some fundamentally distinctive character compared to the dams humans build but simply because humans do not build them.[56]

The discovery that the distinction between 'natural' and 'unnatural' or 'artificial' *cannot be drawn on the basis of the characteristics of individual entities or processes*, but that it is our distinction that we put into the world means that we have again failed to find some objective criterion of 'naturalness' of nature that we have been looking for throughout this section, and that 'naturalness' again means nothing other than 'non-humanness.' However, it turns out that in this case it is not simply about 'non-humanness' as such (in the sense of everything that is not 'human' or not 'of human origin'), but only about a certain kind of 'non-humanness'—the 'naturalness' of nature understood as the 'natural' functioning of natural processes means that what has not been disturbed by changes of 'different order,' which is indeed specifically 'human order' (characterized through human mental capacities), but it does not simply include all actions that are 'of human origin.' Indeed, it is clear that not all intentional action that results from human thinking is understood as the destruction of nature that nature protection seeks to prevent. It would be absurd to imagine the protection of nature understood as non-human as seeking to protect nature from all human behavior resulting out of thoughts and intention—after all nature protection itself is a conscious practice resulting out of thought and applying various methods and technologies that are also an outcome of thought. While human 'unnaturalness' stems from human rationality, not all human interaction with nature involving human rationality is considered problematic and destructive within the framework of protecting 'naturalness' of nature understood as the 'natural' functioning of natural processes. This

[56] Vogel, *Thinking like a Mall*, 22–23.

reveals that *the protection of nature from its destruction by humans, understood this way, does not suffice with the criterion derived from some distinctive character of human action as such. It must work with some additional criterion—that outlines the distinction between human action that is in harmony with the 'natural order' of nature in the sense that it does not constitute its destruction, and human action that goes against that 'natural order' and represents the problematic action of 'different order'—and this criterion must be clarified.* Grasping, in what kind of human action, the destruction of nature consists of, is utterly crucial to clarifying the character of the protection of nature that seeks to counteract such action and that defines itself in contrast to it. In order to clarify the character of protection of nature understood as the protection of the 'natural' functioning of natural processes, it is therefore necessary to clarify where the dividing line lies between human action that is somehow in order and human action that is of 'different order' and constitutes the destruction of nature. And here we come to the last motif, which is crucial for the clarification of the protection of nature understood as non-human: *human alienation from the natural order of nature*.

* * *

Although mental capacities typically represent the core of that 'different order' that *allows* humans to act unnaturally and destroy the 'naturalness' of nature, few would argue that the problem are mental capacities per se; humans *do not have to* use their mental capacities to destroy nature—the problem is that they do, and this is usually framed in pro-environmental thinking in terms of *human alienation from the 'natural order' of nature*. Humans can use their mental capacities in harmony with nature or in contradiction to nature, and it is the behavior that is somehow in conflict with nature that is typically considered problematic and destructive, and that is what is typically considered 'unnatural' or 'artificial.' By contrast, behavior that is considered to be in harmony with nature is often referred to as 'natural' even though it is the result of human mental capacities. What then characterizes that problematic 'different order' of human action through which the 'naturalness' of nature is being disrupted? The line of reasoning that seeks to protect 'naturalness' of nature from the destructive actions of humans, and which, as we have seen above, cannot reliably ground the meaning of the destruction of nature in an *objective naturalistic way* neither form nature (i.e. from the very ways of the functioning of natural processes as such) nor from humans (i.e. from some exceptional distinctive quality of their action as such) resorts (mostly implicitly) to a *historical way* of grounding the meaning of the destruction of nature. This occurs by the (mostly implicit)

assumption of a kind of *original* 'natural order' which includes humans, and of a sort of *breaking point*, when humans began to alienate from that original 'natural order' and started to act 'unnaturally' in the sense of not in accordance with the original 'natural order'—that is, to perform actions of 'different order' whereby disruption of that original 'natural order' began to occur. In this way, the protection of 'naturalness' of nature acquires a criterion for distinguishing between the problematic 'unnatural' human action of 'different order' that destroys nature in the sense that it disrupts the original 'natural order' and that nature protection tries to prevent, and human action that is unproblematic in the sense that it is consistent with that original 'natural order' (no matter, whether this behavior is 'natural' or 'artificial' in the sense of the output of human thought). In order to determine what human actions, constitute the destruction of nature, nature protection understood in this way needs to *somehow identify the moment* when this alienation occurred, and we, in order to clarify such nature protection, need to reveal how such determination is being carried out.

Let's start with the motif of the 'natural order' of nature. This is an idea that we might say, with some hyperbole, is itself 'natural' in the sense that it appears—though in different forms—across eras and cultures in many mythologies and shared social narratives. It presupposes something given, a certain state of the world and the processes that govern it, and also a certain place for all the parts of the world that together, according to their nature, *in a particular way,* co-create that given state of the world. This given state of the world is considered to be inherently good, and is further specified in different ways, but in the narratives that (mostly implicitly) permeate the advocacy for nature protection, it is typically understood as *harmonious*.[57] Let us now consider a few prominent variants of the idea of a harmonious 'natural order' of nature from antiquity to contemporary environmental thought: The ancient idea of a harmonious cosmos,[58] the medieval Christian idea of divine order,[59] the idea of the Great Chain of Being popular especially in Renaissance,[60] the Enlightenment idea of nature as a harmonious mechanism governed by universal natural laws,[61] the Romantic idea of organic

[57] Which is itself a very problematic notion, see: Daniel Simberloff, "The 'Balance of Nature'—Evolution of a Panchreston," *PLoS Biol* 12, no. 10 (2014): e1001963, doi:10.1371/journal.pbio.1001963.
[58] Francesco Pelosi, "Eight Singing Sirens: Heavenly Harmonies in Plato and the Neoplatonists," in *Sing Aloud Harmonious Spheres: Renaissance Conceptions of Cosmic Harmony*, ed. Jacomien Prins and Maude Vanhaelen (Routledge, 2018), 15–30.
[59] Marilyn M. Adams, "Powers versus Laws: God and the Order of the World According to Some Late Medieval Aristotelians," in *The Divine Order, the Human Order, and the Order of Nature*, ed. Eric Watkins (Oxford University Press, 2013), 3–26.
[60] Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study in the History of an Idea* (Harvard University Press, 2001 [1936]).
[61] Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, trans. Fritz C. A. Koelln and James P. Pettegrove (Priceton

unity,[62] the idea of balanced and interconnected web of life in deep ecology,[63] the idea of Gaia as a single organism,[64] and the idea of balanced reciprocal relationships of all nature's entities represented by some of the approaches in the influential 'non-human turn.'[65] I am not concerned with any one particular of these variants, but with a kind of general notion of the original 'natural order' of nature that has been popularized and, I dare say, is a common part of a folk wisdom—especially among conservationists—to this day, and which represents a kind of seedbed in which the argumentation for the protection of nature understood as non-human—consciously or unconsciously—takes place. Among different authors, this general notion of the natural order of nature contains, to varying degrees, the combined residues of these and sometimes other grand narratives, and since they rarely work with any of them explicitly, it would be difficult (though probably not impossible) to try to elucidate their core. But I am not concerned with the interpretation of any particular author; I want to point out the problem inherent in a way of arguing for nature protection based on any combination of different variants of the notion of the original 'natural order' of nature, and so I will make do with such a vague notion. This problem is—as the wide range of variants of the idea of an *original* 'natural order' of nature already suggests—*the overlooked arbitrariness of the determination of such an original 'natural order' of nature*. Which goes hand in hand with the arbitrariness of defining the *breaking point* that is supposed to be the defining feature of that problematic 'different order' of human action; let us look at it in more detail.

The delineation of the problematic, destructive, 'unnatural' interventions of humans into nature within this line of reasoning needs to be understood precisely in the context of the various breaking points that represent the beginning of human deviation from that 'natural order' of nature. There are also a number of these, starting with original sin in Christian mythology, which is worth mentioning above all as the prototypical model of this departure from the original 'natural order' of nature in the Western tradition of thought, but which is not, for obvious reasons, much invoked in the argumentation for nature protection. Typically, the tipping points that are referred to tend to be major ideological or material upheavals that are situated in a more or less specific historical period. Jean-Jacques Rousseau sees the emergence of private property and civilization as the beginning of the departure from the state of harmony

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University Press, 1951 [1936]), 37–92.

[62] Charles I. Armstrong, *Romantic Organicism: From Idealist Origins to Ambivalent Afterlife* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

[63] George Sessions, ed., *Deep ecology for the twenty-first century* (Shambhala, 1995).

[64] James Lovelock, *Gaia: A new look at life on Earth* (Oxford University Press, 2000 [1979]).

[65] Richard Grusin, ed., *The Nonhuman Turn* (University of Minnesota Press, 2015).

and natural equality.[66] Erazim Kohák considers modern technology to be the source of the deviation from the original ecological harmony, which, according to him, alienates people from the direct moral and experiential connection to nature.[67] Lynn White considers anthropocentrism associated with the rise of Christianity, that have resulted in industrial modernity, to be the source of the deviation that has led to the disruption of the natural way of functioning of natural processes.[68] In indigenous thought, primarily colonialism followed by capitalism are seen as tipping points leading to the disruption of the original state of reciprocity, kinship, and relational coexistence with nature.[69] In ecofeminism, the tipping point is often considered to be the interplay between modern reductionist science and capitalist-patriarchal development models, which have led to the domination and exploitation of nature and women, and thus to a disruption of the original ecological harmony.[70] In nature protection discourse appear various mixtures of these and other causes of human alienation from the 'natural order,' and depending on the *choice* of the breaking point—that is the core source of human alienation from the 'natural order' of nature—the destructive 'unnatural' behavior that damages that 'natural order' of nature is then characterized.

So, how is the breaking point typically determined? First of all, in the typical argument for the protection of 'natural' functioning of natural processes, it is not possible to trace any *one particular point* at which human alienation from the 'natural order' occurred and nature began to be destroyed by human intervention of 'different order,' but rather this way of reasoning operates with a gradual process of alienation, with a kind of scale of gradual human alienation from nature, the beginning of which is somehow implicitly assumed, but its precise articulation—which would help to determine the character of those problematic interventions of 'different order' that we are trying to grasp—is not considered important. What is important—and what is typically assumed simply as fact, not worth mentioning—is that humans today are at the opposite end of this scale, at the point of the greatest human alienation from nature in world history. So, the implicit motto is "the further back in time we go in establishing the baseline for nature protection, the better," because the further back we go, the

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[66] Jean Jacques Rousseau, *A Discourse on the Origin of Inequality and A Discourse on Political Economy*, trans. G. D. H. Cole (Digireads.com Publishing, 2006).

[67] Erazim Kohák, *The Embers and the Stars: A Philosophical Inquiry into the Moral Sense of Nature* (The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 3–26.

[68] White, "The historical roots of our ecologic crisis," 1203–1207.

[69] These motifs appear repeatedly, for example in the following volume:
Melissa K. Nelson and Dan Shilling, eds., *Traditional Ecological Knowledge: Learning from Indigenous Practices for Environmental Sustainability* (Cambridge University Press, 2018).

[70] Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, *Ecofeminism* (Zed Books, 2014).

less nature has been disrupted by changes of a ‘different order.’ The question then, in the end, is: how far can we go? This line of reasoning can take on quite an anecdotal character in some extreme cases, as in the famous Dutch nature reserve *Oostvaardersplassen*, which represents an attempt to fulfill this motto as thought through to its ultimate outcome.

> What if we take the idea of the pristine prehuman baseline to its logical conclusion, proposing that we restore not to 1491 (when Columbus landed in the Americas) or to 1778 (when Cook landed in Hawaii) or to 1872 (when Yellowstone became a park) but to 13,000 or more years ago, before humans drove any species extinct? The result is a new idea called Pleistocene rewilding. […] [B]y reaching back to a deeper past, the scientists behind the concept [of Pleistocene rewilding] have begun to erode the notion that historical dates linked to colonial contact are the obvious go-to baselines.[71]

My point is that there is *no obvious* baseline. The decision to determine that point on the scale of presumed human alienation from nature-which still represents a tolerable degree of human intervention of ‘different order’ in nature—by which we obtain a baseline for nature protection is highly arbitrary, and the baseline for nature protection in this or that locality can thus be set to virtually any period—although it is of course true that in different localities some periods offer themselves more than others. In Europe, as I mentioned above, the baseline for nature protection is typically set somewhere in the 19th century, which stems primarily from two reasons: first, there are usually not many reliable pieces of information from earlier times, and second, from the decision that human actions from earlier times, about which we have reliable information, were not yet of a ‘different order’ than the ‘natural order’ and thus did not disturb the ‘naturalness’ of nature that we are seeking to protect. Needless to say, both of these, i.e., what historical information is available about the site in question and what level of human interference of ‘different order’ with nature we determine to be tolerable, are largely arbitrary.

In the conclusion of this section, I would like to demonstrate this and illustrate how the delineation of the object of protection—of the ‘natural’ functioning of natural processes—takes place in practice on the example of the largest and most famous national park in the Czech Republic: the *Šumava National Park*. The following quotations come from the official document “Zásady péče o Národní park Šumava”[72] (Principles of care for Šumava National

[71] Marris, *Rambunctious Garden*, 57–58.

[72] Správa Národního parku Šumava, *Zásady péče o Národní park Šumava* (2021), https://www.npsumava.cz/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/20210820_zasady_pece_o_nps_web.pdf.

Park), issued by the Šumava National Park administration, from which one can read out—sort of between the lines—how they indicate the *desired state of nature* they strive to protect, and which sets out priorities for the protection of such desired state for the period 2022–2040. According to the *Czech Nature Conservation Act*, the main long-term objective of a National Park is:

> preservation or gradual restoration of natural ecosystems, including ensuring the *undisturbed course of natural processes in their natural dynamics* in the predominant area of the National Park.[73]

Here we can clearly see that the desired state that nature protection is supposed to strive for consists in *the undisturbed course of natural processes in their natural dynamics*—but what does it mean, what does the 'disturbance' of this 'natural dynamics' of natural processes consist of? Not in the extent of the transformation of those natural processes, but in their human origin.

> Among the more significant effects on these ecosystems that *may have been caused by human activity*, there are records of fire episodes that create a relatively significant trace in the period 7,000 to 10,000 years ago (for which *direct human influence is not demonstrable*), 2,500 years ago (*human influence cannot be ruled out* and is linked to the increase in cultural artefacts in the surroundings of Šumava and exceptionally also in Šumava), and in the last period about 300-600 years ago (modern colonization).[74]

Although the fire episodes have demonstrably had a large effect on the functioning of the Šumava ecosystems, their human origin cannot be proven, and thus cannot be considered a change of 'different order' that would represent a disturbance of the 'course of natural processes in their natural dynamics' and thus there is no need to establish a baseline for the site to the period before these fires. The first reason for the arbitrariness of establishing a baseline for nature protection, mentioned above, is well illustrated here: the further back we go, the less reliable information we have about the state of the ecosystem, its transformations, and their causes. The search for the breaking point before which to determine a baseline for nature protection that will define the desired state to strive for, therefore, continues.

The document is available only in Czech, all following translations are mine.

[73] Správa Národního parku Šumava, *Zásady péče o Národní park Šumava*, 12. *Emphasis added.*

[74] Správa Národního parku Šumava, *Zásady péče o Národní park Šumava*, 34. *Emphasis added.*

> From the 16th century onwards, local impacts on natural forests (especially around glassworks niches or in connection with temporary glassworks) by logging, charcoal production, potash extraction, and resin tapping cannot be ruled out. Some stands have been affected by cattle grazing for a long time. In the forests of the Volarsko region, localized timber extraction by selective felling of valuable timber, lopping branches, and raking forest litter for bedding *has been described*. […] As the forests used in this way were not artificially restored, *the described interventions basically only imitated minor disturbances or increased pressure from large herbivores and did not fundamentally change the ongoing natural processes*.[75]

Here we can see that not all human action is of 'different order' in the sense that it constitutes a disturbance of the 'course of natural processes in their natural dynamics.' From the 16th century onward, some human interventions in what is today the Šumava National Park are relatively well documented, however, these are compared to the interventions of large herbivores—humans in this period had not yet crossed the acceptable level of alienation from the 'natural order' of nature in the sense that their interventions in nature were not yet of 'different order' capable of disturbing the 'course of natural processes in their natural dynamics.' So, when did that breaking point occur in which human interventions began to be of 'different order', and before which the baseline for nature protection, establishing the desired state, must be set?

> Human impacts on the natural ecosystems of the Šumava region are undoubtedly long-term, *yet the intensity capable of changing their structure and dynamics and substantially disrupting the ecosystems' ability to spontaneously return to their original developmental trajectory only occurred during the 19th century*. […] Modern-era colonization, initially associated with creating enclaves of agricultural land at the beginning of the 18th century, shifted in the 19th century toward timber exploitation alongside gradual efforts to convert forests into productive forest plantations.[76]

And here we go—the 19th century is the breaking point. In the 19th century, human interventions in the Šumava ecosystems began to be of 'different order' in the sense that they

[75] Správa Národního parku Šumava, *Zásady péče o Národní park Šumava*, 37. *Emphasis added.*
[76] Správa Národního parku Šumava, *Zásady péče o Národní park Šumava*, 34. *Emphasis added.*

led to “changing their structure and dynamics” to such an extent that they disrupted “the ecosystems’ ability to spontaneously return to their original developmental trajectory”—that is, the very ‘undisturbed course of natural processes in their natural dynamics’ that was being sought from the beginning of this paragraph and which is now defined precisely by the decision to consider human interventions in the 19th century as of ‘different order.’ This is a kind of trick, because it appears as if the ‘undisturbed course of natural processes in their natural dynamics’ is somehow already given, and we are merely identifying the point at which the course was diverted. But in fact, the definition of the ‘undisturbed course of natural processes in their natural dynamics’ occurs only through the establishment of that breaking point. The baseline for nature protection is determined by the *decision* to treat a certain kind of human action, situated in a particular historical period, as an action of ‘different order’ that disturbs the ‘natural order’ of nature—and there may be better and worse reasons for this, but such a decision is inherently arbitrary in the sense that it could be made—and is made—otherwise.

* * *

I will conclude this section by summarizing its main outcomes. I have shown that in nature protection, understanding nature as non-human leads to protecting the ‘*natural’ state of nature*—that is, the ‘naturalness’ of nature. Throughout this section, I have tried to clarify what exactly this desired natural state of nature is that nature protection strives for, and that is characterized by its ‘naturalness.’ 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.’ (1) 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, strictly speaking—since humans have interacted to some extent with virtually everything—it does not, in fact, exist. (2) I therefore turned to the second case, where the ‘naturalness’ of nature is understood as the ‘natural functioning’ of natural processes, and I attempted to identify what this means (i–iii).

(i) I first attempted to derive a definition of the ‘natural functioning’ of natural processes from their internal structure, from some specific character of this ‘natural functioning’ itself, which is typically described using various terms—out of which those with an inherent positive content can be reduced to two: *healthy* (stable, balanced, self-renewing) and *complex* (high

biodiversity, involving multiple pyramid layers). However, closer analysis revealed that nature protection does not derive the desired 'natural functioning' of natural processes purely from these two criteria (which, moreover, do not always go hand in hand: a decline in biodiversity can make an ecosystem more stable and vice versa)—in cases where this would be possible, nature protection generally does not seek to increase these two criteria *in their ecological sense* (e.g. by implementing entire communities of non-native species that would lead both to an increase in the health and complexity). What is key to determining the 'natural functioning' of natural processes in nature protection is a third criterion: their *integrity*—and this is again defined solely in contrast to humans. The desired level of health and complexity of a given ecosystem—its 'natural functioning' of natural processes—is thus ultimately characterized as such that is undisturbed by changes of 'different order,' which can be caused only by humans. At this point, it has become clear that the 'naturalness' of nature understood as the 'natural functioning' of natural processes once again amounts to a form of 'non-humanness,' and that the identification of the 'natural functioning' of natural processes must therefore be approached, so to speak, from the opposite side.

(ii) I therefore examined what constitutes the 'unnaturalness' of human actions that makes them of 'different order' than the 'natural functioning' of nature, and it became clear that this 'different order' cannot be characterized by the scale of human action, nor can it be defined evolutionarily, but that it rests, at its core, on a problematic metaphysical assumption that humans—through their mental capacities—participate not only in the 'natural order' but also in some special 'different order' that grounds their 'unnaturalness.' However, even this problematic metaphysical assumption does not suffice to define the 'natural functioning' of natural processes negatively, since further analysis of this line of thought revealed that not all action resulting from these special mental capacities—which are supposed to constitute the 'different order'—is itself considered of 'different order' from the perspective that is decisive for identifying the 'natural functioning' of nature. That is, not all human actions that are an outcome of human mental capacities are, in the context of nature protection—being itself such an outcome—considered to be a disturbance of the 'natural functioning' of nature. The problematic 'different order' of human action—in contrast to which nature protection defines itself, and in contrast to which the desired state of the 'natural functioning' of nature can be identified—must therefore be characterized in some other way within the logic of nature protection itself.

(iii) In the final part of this section, I revealed that this problematic 'different order' of human action is, in the end, grounded in a historical-mythological way. What is (mostly

implicitly) presupposed is an inherently good *original* ‘natural order’ of nature and a gradual human alienation from it. And the delineation of human action that is of ‘different order’ then consists in *setting* a more or less specified breaking point beyond which human action has deviated from this original ‘natural order’ of nature to such an extent that it constitutes action of ‘different order.’ This, finally, defines the desired state of the ‘natural functioning’ of nature—representing the baseline for nature protection—which is simply identified as the state prior to this breaking point. I have shown that there may be a range of better and worse reasons for determining this breaking point, but such a *decision* is, on multiple levels, inherently *arbitrary* in the sense that it could be made—and is made—otherwise. What actually lies *behind* this decision and what often goes unnoticed in the arguments for establishing a baseline for nature protection will be analyzed and revealed in Chapter 4. But first, we need to explore the second dominant way of understanding ‘nature’ in nature protection.

(2.2) Protecting nature as natural capital

> The first duty of the human race on the material side is to control the use of the earth and all that therein is. Conservation means the wise use of the earth and its resources for the lasting good of men. Conservation is the foresighted utilization, preservation, and/or renewal of forests, waters, lands, and minerals, for the greatest good of the greatest number for the longest time.
>
> [Gifford Pinchot][77]

Understanding nature as *natural capital* (a contemporary term encompassing both *natural resources* in the narrower sense and *ecosystem services* that nature performs) is often considered to be the reason why the destruction of nature that nature protection seeks to prevent occurs in the first place, but this way of understanding nature (in its original form, focusing only on natural resources) was also at the origin of nature protection as an established social practice. Within the framework of understanding nature as natural resources, *over-extraction* is considered to be the destruction of nature, which destroys nature as a rich reservoir of natural resources and the goal of nature protection understood in this way was *to preserve this rich reservoir of natural resources for continuous sustainable extraction of natural resources for human purposes* or in the words of historically a key advocate for this nature protection approach, Gifford Pinchot: "Conservation means the wise use of the earth and its resources for the lasting good of men." To put it more generally, the aim of nature protection understood in this way is *to maintain nature in a state in which nature bountifully and continuously provides its resources and services for human use—the state of sustainable bountifulness.*

This approach is anthropocentric and gives nature only *instrumental value*, i.e., nature has value insofar as it is useful to humans as natural resources or—in the newer broader understanding, which I will get to in the course of the explanation—as ecosystem services. This approach to nature protection is fairly straightforward and at first glance seems philosophically unproblematic; by this I mean that there are typically no disputes about what natural resources are, as opposed to the (above analyzed) intractable disputes about what is the natural state of nature. Moreover, this approach to nature protection is in line with the omnipresent capitalist economic system that promotes the commodification of everything, which is why the protection of nature, understood as natural resources, has always been a very

[77] Gifford Pinchot, *Breaking New Ground* (University of Washington Press, 1972 [1949]), 505.

influential approach to nature protection, especially in national and international policies, where it currently pervades in terms of *sustainability*. In the following passage, I will present the development and variants of the protection of nature understood as natural capital and the problems into which nature protection based on this understanding of nature runs.

Humans have been protecting natural resources from over-extraction since before the emergence of the protection of nature as an established practice. In Europe, the first largely no-touch areas were established on aristocratic estates to preserve abundant game for estate hunts long before the Industrial Revolution. These and similar undertakings in line with the above-mentioned outline of protection of nature—as an established, organized, and in nature protection terms articulated practice—I do not call nature protection. However, it is often in these locations that prototypical no-interference national parks were later established. This is also the case of the famous Polish forest primeval Białowieża, which "did not just happen to escape the ax. Białowieża was intentionally preserved in recent centuries—often as a game preserve for royals and other elites."[78] The establishment of protected areas at the end of the 19th century until about the 1970s was mostly in the spirit of the protection of nature as non-human for its own sake, discussed in the previous section—it was primarily the protection of nature from its extraction by humans. This was what became known as the 'fortress conservation' model, which John Muir was arguing for against Gifford Pinchot in the so-called 'preservation–conservation debate.' Preservationism (the fortress conservation paradigm) focused on pristine wilderness and has been predominant in national parks and activist movements, but at the level of state policy, conservationism (sometimes called also resourcism), characterized by the opening quote, has generally prevailed.[79]

In the 1970s, fortress conservation began to be criticized in the context of decolonial studies, as this nature protection paradigm led to the displacement of large numbers of indigenous peoples and the creation of millions of conservation refugees.[80] Subsequently, in the 1980s and 1990s came a significant critique of the idea of an original pristine state of nature and the connected concept of 'wilderness' that are fundamental to preservationism, and there was a boom in 'community-based conservation,' which emphasizes the active involvement of local communities in protecting and managing natural resources in the spirit that development

[78] Marris, *Rambunctious Garden*, 39.

[79] J. Bard Callicott and Robert Frodeman, *Encyclopedia of Environmental Ethics and Philosophy Volume 2* (Macmillan, 2009), 180.

[80] As canonically analyzed on the case of Africa in: Roderick P. Neumann, *Imposing Wilderness: Struggles over Livelihood and Nature Preservation in Africa* (University of California Press, 1998).

and conservation must be conjoined.[81] Community-based conservation is grounded in the assumption that if local communities have not only a cultural but also an economic interest in nature protection, they will actively support it, which will, ultimately, be more beneficial for both the people and nature. This provoked a backlash from traditional preservationists, who understand nature as non-human and strive to protect it from being touched by humans (especially in the protected areas), which resulted in what became known as the 'people versus parks debate' that reverberates even today. In nature protection there has always been a debate between protecting nature as non-human and as natural resources, however, over the last half century or so there has been a gradual shift in the way nature protection is framed in the conservation mainstream toward a more dominant protection of nature as natural resources and the debate has gradually taken more of a form of whether to protect natural resources *from* humans or *for* humans with the latter dominating today: "In the twenty-first century, many conservationists are no longer articulating PAs [protected areas] as means to protect resources *from* people, but rather as means to protect resources *for* people."[82]

This progression can be well elucidated as the gradual integration of nature protection into capitalist framework, as Bram Büscher and Robert Fletcher show when they trace the development of mainstream conservation in interaction with capitalism, highlighting how it gradually adapted and connected to capitalism in different ways at different stages of its development until conservation was fully integrated into capitalist framework in what they call 'accumulation by conservation.'[83] In their work Büscher and Fletcher distinguish four movements that represent a simplification of an otherwise complex development in order to clarify it. (1) In the first phase, conservationism functioned as a bulwark against environmental and social consequences of capitalist development (fortress conservation). (2) At the same time, in this way conservationism also partially safeguarded as well the capitalist development itself by helping the upper classes—who had a dominant influence in industry but also in conservationism—to deal with the negative consequences of over-industrialization through wilderness recreation and to further develop capitalism as part of the colonial project. In this first phase, which lasted roughly until the 1960s, the opposition between conservationism and capitalism was strongest, although it also arguably had the character of removing some

[81] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 15–16.
[82] Catherine Corson et al., "Everyone's Solution? Defining and Redefining Protected Areas at the Convention on Biological Diversity," *Conservation & Society* 12, no. 2 (2014): 191, https://doi.org/10.4103/0972-4923.138421.
[83] Bram Büscher and Robert Fletcher, "Accumulation by Conservation," *New Political Economy* 20, no. 2 (2014): 273–298, https://doi.org/10.1080/13563467.2014.923824.
Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 105–109.

protected areas from the standard functioning of capitalism so that capitalism could function in a standard way somewhere elsewhere. (3) Consequently, from the 1960s onwards, conservation became increasingly understood as a form of economic development for rural peoples, for example, through ecotourism; a movement that developed fully, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s, in the context of community-based conservation. (4) These developments gradually graded and conservation ceased to be framed as a mere development opportunity, but as the basis for a new 'sustainable' model of capitalist development, as such centering on the economic valuation of ecosystem services provided by natural capital—this is what Büscher and Fletcher call 'accumulation by conservation.'[84] The evolution of the convergence of conservation and capitalism had thus, in the author's own summary, roughly had the following character: "(1) conservation as a *bulwark* against development; (2) conservation to *safeguard* development; (3) conservation *as* development; and (4) conservation *is* development."[85]

In the era of accumulation by conservation when the mainstream conservation tends to be literally equal to capitalist development, more and more attempts to commodify nature as natural resources and ecosystem services in order to protect them are emerging that are sometimes achieving and sometimes failing to achieve a partial successes with respect to capital accumulation and what they understand as nature conservation. In any case, these attempts are gradually achieving a certain notable change:

> they change how we think about nature, wilderness and ecology more generally, namely as a nature in capital's own image; a nature that does what capital wants, and that 'needs' what capital needs. The nature that capital conserves, in short, is *natural capital*.[86]

Under capitalism nature, originally understood as natural resources, gradually become understood as natural capital, and thus protection of nature understood as natural resources reached the form of protection of natural capital which should enable a new '*sustainable*' model of capitalist development. The problem with the protection of nature understood as natural capital that should be protected for the sake of sustainable capitalist development lies primarily in the fact that capitalist development is inherently unsustainable as it is based on endless growth, which by definition cannot be sustainable in a finite world. Thus, for example,

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[84] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 102–103.
[85] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 104.
[86] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 109.

the currently increasingly dominant tendency of establishing conservation as a new 'asset class' (e.g. carbon markets and species banking) as a means of raising the necessary finance for conservation activities would require the continued growth of financial markets, which—as mostly stemming from environmentally destructive industries—would at the same time put even more pressure on the natural capital that is supposed to be protected through them.[87]

Despite this internal contradiction, the *sustainable development framework* is the breeding ground for intergovernmental climate negotiations and agreements such as the Paris Agreement, which aim to stabilize the planetary climate and keep warming below a certain level. Perhaps the most important line of reasoning in these negotiations is that an appropriate amount of capital invested in natural capital will lead to greater development of economic capital in the long run, since a significant increase in temperatures across the globe would result in decreased gross world product—due to consequences such as reduced agricultural production across the world and a greater number of more destructive natural disasters—for capital it is therefore profitable to invest in the natural capital and thus create conditions for ongoing growth of production. This is, in a nutshell, what is called *sustainable development in capitalism*. The problem is that capitalist attempts for decoupling of environmental harm and growth of GDP have so far succeeded only at the local level, i.e., they have managed to outsource environmental harm to the so-called global south and produce growth of GDP in the so-called global north; needless to say, this is not real decoupling because the Earth is just one. There are a number of studies that show that capitalism is inherently unsustainable and that the input of capitalist 'sustainable' development logic into nature protection fails to achieve what is expected of it,[88] however, this topic is not the subject of my dissertation; at this point of my research, I am concerned with elucidating the various streams of nature protection through an analysis of the varying ways of how they understand subject of protection—nature—and, thus, capitalism is relevant to me primarily in terms of its impact on the way nature is understood in conservationism. The critique of the idea of capitalist sustainable development is significant for me mainly insofar as it shows that it is not at all clear, what the protection of nature as natural capital for its sustainable everlasting use should actually mean *within the framework of capitalism*, which is currently all-encompassing, but of course, in principle, not the only one possible. By this I mean to suggest that in other frameworks, perhaps for example in a degrowth

[87] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 106.
[88] Robert Fletcher, *Failing Forward: The Rise and Fall of Neoliberal Conservation* (University of California Press, 2023).
Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*.

framework, the idea of sustainable development might make a clear sense; but at this stage of my thesis, my point is to clarify what protection of nature understood as natural capital means under current—capitalist—circumstances and thus I leave this line of reasoning aside. I will now look in more detail at the *sustainability framework* and other related problems with protecting nature, understood as natural capital.

* * *

Let's start again with the narrower scope of understanding nature as *natural resources* and look in more detail at how it has evolved and what it actually means at its core. Similarly, as in the previous case (in section 2.1), the protection of nature understood as natural resources does not mean the protection of natural resources *as such*. What would that even mean? It is about the protection of a certain *state* of nature, namely: a state of nature *in which it will be possible to continuously extract particular natural resources*—that is, a state of nature in which new natural resources will continuously reproduce themselves at a rate that they can be extracted without disturbing the emergence of new natural resources. At the very heart of the protection of nature as natural resources is therefore the idea of 'sustainability'—let us now see where it comes from. Whole this framework of sustainability ('Nachhaltigkeit') originally comes from forestry, where it was introduced by Hans Carl von Carlowitz in the early 18th century Germany. Carlowitz was the mining administrator in Saxony and was concerned that the surrounding forests would be logged and there would not be enough timber for the mining industry, so he proposed to manage forests in such a way as to guarantee continuous yields of timber without depleting the natural resources.[89] This approach—'sustainable yield forestry'—gradually spread across Europe where it was learned by Pinchot who in the late 19th century studied forestry in Germany and other parts of Europe[90] and who successfully promoted this approach in forestry in America, where in the early 20th century he founded the Society of American Foresters and U.S. Forest service, which he subsequently managed in this spirit.[91] Pinchot was also influenced by Jeremy Bentham and the spirit of the credo of 'the greatest good for the greatest number,'[92] advocated for the sustainable use approach also in conservation

[89] Jeremy L. Caradonna, *Sustainability: A History* (Oxford University Press, 2014), 32–37.
[90] Caradonna, *Sustainability*, 37.
[91] Caradonna, *Sustainability*, 86.
[92] Jeremy Bentham, *A Fragment on Government*, ed. J. H. Burns, intro. Ross Harrison (Cambridge University Press, 1988), 3.

in general, and this approach to natural resources was indeed gradually applied in other areas such as wildlife management, fisheries, and water resource management. In the second half of the 20th century, sustainability gradually became *a global movement* backed by United Nations conferences and global environmental initiatives; thus, the sustainability framework has become conservation mainstream.[93] Whereby conservation has fitted nicely into the broader intergovernmental negotiations on climate change mitigation, which are taking place within the general framework of sustainable development—as illustrated also in the latest IPCC report on mitigation, the final chapter of which is entitled "Accelerating the transition in the context of sustainable development"[94] aptly characterizes its overall spirit.

The detailed development of the extension of the sustainable use approach in conservation is not necessary for our purposes; what is significant is that it originally developed from forestry, where it has a relatively straightforward and comprehensible meaning. The basic principle is to harvest only as many cubic meters of timber as the area can grow each year and to systematically replant new trees in place of the harvested ones, in this way, *the desired state of the ecosystem*—in which natural resources can be continuously extracted—is maintained; in contrast, harvesting more than the annual growth rate—over-extraction—means disturbance of this desired state, which should be prevented. In forestry, therefore, protecting the desired state of natural resources and disturbing this state have relatively clear criteria. However, the moment the sustainability framework enters nature conservation in general, the criteria for defining the desired state, which we should strive to protect and whose disturbance we should try to prevent, become much more complicated. In the current nature conservation oriented toward the continuous sustainable use of nature, the talk is mainly about *ecosystem services,* of which the provision of renewable natural resources for their continuous extraction represents only one part. These ecosystem services have been differentiated and standardized in the *Millennium Ecosystem Assessment* as follows: (1) *Provisioning services* (products obtained from ecosystems such as food, water, biochemicals and genetic resources), (2) *Regulating services* (benefits obtained from regulation of ecosystem processes, such as climate regulation, water purification and pollination), (3) *Cultural services* (nonmaterial benefits obtained from ecosystems, such as spiritual, aesthetic, and recreational) and (4) *Supporting services* (services necessary for the production of all other ecosystem services, such as soil formation, nutrient

[93] Caradonna, *Sustainibility*, 136–175.

[94] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), *Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change — Contribution of Working Group III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (2022), https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg3/.

cycling and primary production).[95] The concept of 'natural capital' is even more general and includes both the *ecosystem services* that nature performs and *non-renewable natural resources* (such as oil and metals).

Methods to protect ecosystem services are varied and include primarily 'Payments for Ecosystem Services,' which at its core means payments to natural resource owners that perform some ecosystem service for keeping those natural resources in a desired state (for example, for not harvesting a forest that captures water and acts as carbon storage). Then there are '*Market-based Conservation Tools*,' such as 'carbon markets,' 'biodiversity offsets,' and 'habitat banking,' which work by assigning a specific financial value to certain ecosystem services, which are then traded on the market, thereby creating a market incentive to support these ecosystem services—these are methods of the aforementioned *conservation by accumulation* model in which nature protection means wise management of *natural capital* and is to be achieved through operation with that capital. The great advantage of this way of understanding of nature protection is—especially under the realities of the Anthropocene, when the idea of a kind of 'original nature' (so important for the way of understanding nature protection analyzed in the previous section 2.1) seems extremely dubious—that nature understood as natural capital can grow, i.e., the desired state in which nature bountifully and continuously provides its resources and services for human use—the state of sustainable bountifulness—can be through wise management of natural capital improved and, in this manner natural capital can be enlarged to be even more bountiful. This is precisely the line emphasized by 'new conservation':

> rambunctious gardening is proactive and optimistic; it creates more and more nature as it goes, rather than just building walls around the nature we have left.[96]

This is in sharp contrast to the protection of nature understood as non-human, under which, in the more radical variant where the 'naturalness' of nature is understood as its 'pristineness,' nature can only remain in its original state (whose existence is being questioned even within this camp itself) or diminish, or in the variant where the 'naturalness' of nature is understood as its natural functioning could only stay function naturally (which is mostly not the case from the perspective of this camp), be disrupted, or be restored to that 'natural' way of functioning

[95] Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, *Ecosystems and Human Well-being: A Framework for Assessment* (Island Press, 2003), 57.
[96] Marris, *Rambunctious Garden*, 2–3.

which (leaving aside the theoretical problems of what this should actually mean revealed in the previous section 2.1) does not seem like a viable path under the realities of the Anthropocene. Thus, the vision of 'creating more and more nature' is indeed optimistic.

But there are also serious theoretical problems with nature protection understood as protection of natural capital, above all, it is not clear how to balance between various segments of natural capital—that is, what exactly counts as protection of sustainable bountifulness of nature and what as its disruption. How to balance between the protection of different ecosystem services? The point is that often different ecosystem services are at the expense of each other; typically, provisioning services (especially material and food extraction) come at the expense of other ecosystem services and there is no clear criterion with regard to which segments of natural capital should be prioritized in protection. In effect, by introducing market mechanisms into nature protection, this *criterion becomes the market*, which inherently tends to prioritize provisioning services to the detriment of others, as these are the easiest and quickest to capitalize on and the market tends to prioritize short-term gains. The main task of nature protection, understood as the protection of the state of sustainable bountifulness of natural capital, thus becomes to appropriately set the value of individual ecosystem services—so that the market guided by the value of individual components of natural capital is directed toward the growth of natural capital. However, such an attribution of value to individual components of natural capital, although based on a variety of analyses and calculations—similar to the determination of baselines of the original state of nature criticized in the previous section—is highly arbitrary. For example, in the context of the key carbon market, there is no general agreement among scholars on what value should be assigned to carbon credits (permitting the holder to emit one ton of CO_2), respectively on how many carbon credits should be issued annually and how this should develop, which determines the value of carbon credits on the market and, thus, it is also not clear what value should be assigned to the ecosystem service of carbon capturing that natural capital performs.[97] The determination of the value of carbon credits depends primarily on the determination of the *discount rate* for the future generations—about the appropriate level of which there is a well-known dispute between Nicholas Stern

[97] See the following attempt to approach some aspects of this question: Zack Parisa et al., "The Time Value of Carbon Storage," *Forest Policy and Economics* 144 (2022): 1–7, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.forpol.2022.102840. And also more general analysis of IPCC expert meeting: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), *Expert Meeting on Carbon Dioxide Removal Technologies and Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage: Report of the Expert Meeting* (January 2025), https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2025/01/2407_CDR_CCUS_Report.pdf.

(low discount rate)[98] and William Nordhaus (high discount rate)[99]—which cannot be calculated but must be determined for the purposes of the calculation, which makes any such analysis arbitrary, in the sense of based on a particular choice that others could reasonably have made and do make otherwise. Notwithstanding the fact that there are a number of variables in such calculations which are unknown in principle and must also somehow chosen. This is not to say that such a type of analyses and the associated determination of the value of various ecosystem services that natural capital performs is meaningless—a large part, probably most, of the various analyses are arbitrary in this limited sense; I just want to emphasize that the desired state of nature cannot be calculated and determined in an objective way (as with the previous case of protection of nature understood as non-human). And things get even more complicated in trying to determine the value of cultural services of a particular segment of natural capital in relation to other services of other segments of natural capital—often it is simply not clear what exactly counts as protection of sustainable bountifulness of nature and what as its disruption.

The issue of balancing the protection of ecosystem services provided by natural capital is well illustrated by the following example. In the northern Czech Republic, in a mountain range called 'Cínovec,' there is Europe's largest deposit of lithium, containing a full 3% of the world's reserves of this metal, key for battery production. Lithium batteries appear to be the best type of battery at the moment and will therefore play an important role in the transition to electricity from renewable sources (such as solar or wind power) as it needs to be stored somewhere due to its uneven generation. Lithium batteries are also essential for the production of electric vehicles, which—when powered by renewable energy—have a significantly smaller carbon footprint over their life span than cars powered by an internal combustion engine. Lithium mining under Cínovec also offers the promise of development in a former coal region that is among the poorest in Czechia, or so it is framed by the state and the semi-state energy company ČEZ, which is expected to launch the mining project in the coming years. From the point of view of the protection of nature as natural capital, it is necessary to consider all the components of natural capital that will be affected by the implementation of this project and to evaluate what course of action will bring the greatest benefits for the sustainable development of natural capital and therefore which components of natural capital should be protected.

Cínovec is an important local biological hotspot and therefore also a popular recreational

[98] Nicholas Stern, *The Economics of Climate Change: The Stern Review* (Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[99] William D. Nordhaus, "Estimates of the Social Cost of Carbon: Concepts and Results from the DICE-2013R Model and Alternative Approaches," *Journal of the Association of Environmental and Resource Economists* 1, no. 1 (2014): 273–312, https://doi.org/10.1086/676035.

area, and it is obvious that lithium mining under Cínovec—which will turn the entire forested and sparsely populated hill and its immediate surroundings into a mining site—will come at the expense of virtually all the ecosystem services that the ecosystem currently provides. This is why the lithium mining project under Cínovec is facing quite significant criticism and protests from many local residents and environmental activists. On the other hand, the cash value of natural resources that could be extracted in Cínovec region is simply enormous and the money earned by the destruction of this relatively small region can be invested to improving natural capital somewhere else—which is also planned. This is exactly what the method of biodiversity offsets is for—a project that damages natural capital somewhere and invests in natural capital somewhere else, so that it (difficult to say by what criteria) increases the value of the other part of natural capital more than it decreased the original one, is overall beneficial from the point of view of the protection of nature as natural capital, because natural capital as such has been increased. This is how many current conservation initiatives believe conservation should be funded—this is the case for much of the conservation mainstream, and especially for the 'new conservation.' In our example, moreover, it is crucial that the lithium extracted should—and this is the core of the overall framing of the whole project and the reason why the European Commission has added it on the list of strategic ones—make a relatively significant contribution to the decarbonization of European energy sector, and therefore to reducing the amount of greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere and hopefully to slowing down global warming, which is one of the main priorities of nature protection globally. In other words, lithium mining under Cínovec can—in case the natural capital found under Cínovec will be converted into lithium batteries, which, in combination with, e.g., solar panels, will facilitate the decarbonization of the energy sector—significantly contribute to climate regulation which is one of the most important regulating services provided by natural capital and, thus, increase the value of natural capital significantly.

How to decide, from the point of view of protection of nature as natural capital, which management of natural capital in Cínovec would lead to the state in which nature would bountifully and continuously provide its resources and services for human use—to the state of sustainable bountifulness? Which proceeding would in this case represent "the wise use of the earth and its resources for the lasting good of men"[100]? This is, after all, for the market to decide whose authority is not questioned in the accumulation-by-conservation line of reasoning and which—after carefully setting the value of individual segments of natural capital—determines

[100] Pinchot, *Breaking New Ground*, 505.

what management of natural capital will lead to the overall growth of natural capital. The case of lithium mining under Cínovec, despite the problems with determining the value of individual segments of natural capital, does not seem to be too controversial, as would be, for example, the case of gold or diamond mining, which by themselves do not increase the value of natural capital (and which would have to be substantially compensated), or as would be the case of oil and coal mining, which by themselves, or respectively their burning, reduce the overall value of natural capital (and which would have to be very heavily compensated, if acceptable at all). From the perspective of protecting nature as natural capital, this is a clear gain in natural capital—turning a relatively small hill into a mining hole will quite probably yield a huge increase in total natural capital in the long run.

* * * * *

We are now at the end of Chapter 2, but also at the end of the entire Part I of my dissertation, the conclusions of which I would now like to briefly summarize before moving on to the following methodological part. In Chapter 1, I presented the current discussion on nature protection as being at a crossroads—in the context of the *realities of the Anthropocene*, established practices of nature protection are failing by their own standards, and it is evident that the *protection of changing nature will itself have to change* in order to adjust to these new realities—nature protection is thus facing a major and fundamental challenge. Unfortunately, the debate over which direction to take from this crossroads is both (a) confused and (b) stuck. In this first part of my dissertation, I have examined the conceptual dimension of why this debate is *confused*. In the second part of Chapter 1, I showed that this has much to do with the ambiguity of the concept of 'nature,' whose *opacity* translates into *confusion* in debates about the protection of nature. It is because the character of protection hinges on how the subject of protection and its desired state are understood, and for that reason, it was necessary to clarify how 'nature' is understood in nature protection.

This was the focus of Chapter 2, in which I identified and described two main families of ways of understanding 'nature' in nature protection. (1) First, the *understanding of 'nature' as non-human* (in section 2.1), which aims at the protection of the 'naturalness' of nature, which—leaving aside the blind alley focused on 'pristineness'—takes the form of protecting the *'natural' functioning of natural processes*, delineated as their state before human intervention of 'different order' than the 'natural order'—and this state represents, within the understanding nature as non-human, the *desired state* which nature protection informed by this

understanding of nature strives to protect and reach. (2) Second, the *understanding of 'nature' as natural capital* (in section 2.2), which aims at the protection of natural resources and natural services in the state in which they would be bountifully and continuously provided for human use—that is, the state of *sustainable bountifulness*—which represents, within the understanding of nature as natural capital, the *desired state* which nature protection informed by this understanding of nature strives to protect and reach. Over the course of the analysis of these families of understanding nature dominant in nature protection, I showed that within both—despite their shared *general* understanding of nature and its protection—*there is no agreement on the particular delineation of the desired state*, since this necessarily depends on decisions that are *inherently arbitrary* in the sense that they could be made—and inside both camps are made—also otherwise. (1) In the first case, it is the decision of what *exactly* is to be considered human action of 'different order,' which determines the *particular* character of the 'natural' functioning of natural processes; (2) in the second case, it is the decision of what *exact* value is to be assigned to various segments of natural capital, which determines the *particular* character of sustainable bountifulness. This means that even *within* the two dominant ways of understanding nature in nature protection, there exists a *confusion* about the understanding of their subject of protection—nature—about what *exactly* 'nature' is.

This clarified the theoretical layer of (a) the *confusion* in the discussion about the future of nature protection. To summarize: this confusion occurs on two levels—(i) *between* the two families of *different general understandings of 'nature'* in nature protection, (1) as *non-human*, and (2) as *natural capital*, and (ii) *within* these two families, between different *particular* realizations of these general understandings of 'nature.' By clarifying the general characteristics of these two different understandings of 'nature,' I clarified (i) the general confusion in disputes *between* the two families, and by clarifying the character of the way in which a *particular* desired state of nature is *determined*—and by revealing its *inherent arbitrariness*—I clarified (ii) the confusion in disputes *within* each family.

If this were a *technical* problem, the task of philosophy—understood in a Wittgensteinian sense as a *clarificatory endeavor*—would end at this point, and we could justly hope that *clarification of the confusion* about the understanding of a concept that is key to resolving a certain technical issue, and whose opacity caused confusion in discussions about that issue, *would lead to the unlocking of that stuck debate*. In other words, in the case of an issue of a technical character, the (a) *confusion* would be the reason why the debate is (b) *stuck*, and the clarification of the (a) confusion would also be a clarification of why the debate about this issue is (b) stuck—that is, assuming the reason for its being stuck was not the lack of scientific

knowledge of the issue in question (in which case it would no longer be the task of philosophy). However, the very existence of the *two divergent families of different general understandings of 'nature,'* and of the *wide variety of particular ways of understanding 'nature,'* none of which—apart from the extreme version of understanding 'naturalness' as 'pristineness'—can be dismissed as irrelevant in the context of nature protection, and between which cannot, in principle, be decided in a technical way (through more scientific knowledge), shows that *the dispute about the future of nature protection is not a technical issue*. In other words, it turned out that the reasons why the debate over which path to take from the crossroads at which nature protection finds itself *stuck* do not lie *solely* in the confusions surrounding the pivotal concept of 'nature' (though that certainly plays an important role), or in need of more knowledge about nature (though it can undoubtedly help significantly in making decisions about nature protection). Therefore, the effort to clarify nature protection must go further and examine *what is actually behind the delineation of a particular desired state of nature as the target of nature protection*—which will finally reveal the core reason why the debate about the future of nature protection is both (a) *confused* and (b) *stuck*. This will be the focus of my inquiry, starting from the following methodological Part II, and mainly in Chapter 4.

(II) WITTGENSTEINIAN METHOD OF ANALYSIS

We feel as if we had to see right into phenomena: yet our investigation is directed not towards phenomena, but rather, as one might say, towards the 'possibilities' of phenomena. What that means is that we call to mind the kinds of statement that we make about phenomena.

We're used to a particular classification of things.

With language, or languages, it has become second nature to us.

These are the fixed rails along which all our thinking runs, and so our judgement and action goes according to them too.

A main source of our failure to understand is that we do not command a clear view of the use of our words. — Our grammar is lacking in this sort of perspicuity. A perspicuous representation produces just that understanding which consists in 'seeing connections'. Hence the importance of finding and inventing intermediate cases.

The concept of a perspicuous representation is of fundamental significance for us. It earmarks the form of account we give, the way we look at things. (Is this a 'Weltanschauung'?)

Ludwig Wittgenstein

[PI § 90, RPP 2 §§ 678–679, PI § 122]

(3) The Wittgensteinian Idea of Attitudes as a Clarificatory Tool

In the previous chapter, I clarified the two dominant ways of understanding nature in nature protection, which was the first step in my effort to clarify nature protection. It could be said that this clarified the conceptual dimension of the *confusion* of the current debate about the future of nature protection that I described in Chapter 1, but it did not yet clarify the *character of the dispute* that is ongoing between and within the families of the two dominant ways of understanding 'nature' in nature protection. It might seem that the dispute about the future of nature protection is *technical* at its core, that it is necessary to examine what nature really is, and from this to deduce how it should be protected, and then to present convincing arguments that will convince the other side of what is really going on with nature and its protection and thereby remove the dispute so that ideally everyone will happily participate in the protection of the 'real' nature. This would be the foundationalist approach, i.e., to find out how things really are, to free nature from culturally and otherwise conditioned ways of relating to it, and to objectively found our knowledge of nature and subsequently decide how to protect it on that basis. And this is indeed what much of the discussion about which path to take from the crossroads at which nature protection finds itself stuck looks like—examining various baselines, what species do and do not belong in different habitats, what are key to the health of ecosystems, what benefits them, what ecosystems capture the most carbon or water, how to help that, what trees grow fastest in different habitats, what value to assign to different habitats—which then serves to argue for a particular mode of protection of nature.

However, these are *technical* questions, the resolution of which simply *cannot* answer the question of what nature *should be*—what the desired state of nature is—which simply cannot be inferred from what nature *is* (from *facts* about nature), precisely because *in nature protection there is no broad agreement on what exactly nature is* (what the *relevant facts* about nature are). This is what I revealed in the previous Chapter 2, where I identified and clarified two dominant families of understandings of 'nature' in nature protection, each of which defines its object of protection in a fundamentally different way, and I also showed that neither of these ways can provide an objective delineation of its object of protection, since such delineation involves (often implicit) decisions—when natural processes ceased to function 'naturally' (section 2.1), and what value is assigned to different components of natural capital (section 2.2)—which then determine which facts are relevant, and, therefore, these decisions are not

made *purely* on the basis of facts about nature. In other words, the desired state of nature in nature protection cannot be determined in a technical way. Of course, there are a number of technical disputes within nature protection, the significance of which I do not wish to diminish, but I want to emphasize that the core of the disputes that fuel the current debate about which path nature protection should take from the crossroads at which it finds itself stuck is not *technical* but—in a specifically Wittgensteinian sense that I will explain throughout this chapter—*ethico-political*: it consists in the difference of—what, in reference to the Wittgensteinian ethics, I call—*attitudes toward nature*, and more broadly in the difference if *attitudes toward life*. The point is that the ways of understanding 'nature' in nature protection analyzed in Chapter 2—within which these attempts to sort of objectively and technically resolve the disputes about nature protection take place—are part of more general attitudes toward nature, and so in trying to clarify nature protection it is not enough to stay at the level of different ways of understanding nature, but *it is necessary to focus on these attitudes toward nature and on how they are interwoven with more general attitudes toward life, which will allow us to grasp where the disputes, about which path to take from the crossroads at which nature protection finds itself stuck, stem from.*

In claiming so I am getting ahead of the curve and these claims and conclusions have yet to be explained and substantiated, however, it was necessary to indicate to the reader the direction of the exposition and now it is necessary to justify why I choose the Wittgensteinian approach to clarify the disputes regarding conservation ethics, and why I consider the Wittgensteinian idea of attitudes as a suitable tool for such a clarification. Given that Wittgenstein is known primarily as a philosopher of language, it may not be obvious in what respect Wittgensteinian methodology might be appropriate for clarifying the disputes I claim to have ethico-political character. When I announced the Wittgensteinian clarification of nature protection in the introduction to my dissertation, the reader probably expected that Wittgensteinian methodology would greatly inform the analysis of ways of understanding the term 'nature' in nature protection and is now surprised that a systematic presentation of Wittgensteinian methodology is occurring only now, and in a different (and perhaps unexpected) context. The reason for this proceeding is that I did not want to burden the explanation of the problem (Part I of my dissertation 'Confusions surrounding nature protection'), which I deal with in my thesis with a particular method, so that it could not appear that the problem occurs only from a particular methodological perspective. I have simply described the confusions in nature protection as it is perceived by many—that is, as stemming from the ambiguity of the concept of 'nature'—which I now want to develop to show that even

though the differences between the two dominant ways of *understanding* 'nature' that I have identified and described indeed play a crucial role in the overall *confusion*, they are not its root cause, and *they are not the root cause of the dispute*, of which they are rather a symptom. And precisely in this respect it will be helpful to use the Wittgensteinian wholistic approach and the Wittgensteinian idea of attitudes, which go against the rationalistic image that our practices are the result of reasoning on the basis of knowledge of pure sense data, in which framework it would be tempting to identify the dispute within nature protection at the level of knowledge or reasoning, that is, as technical.

In contrast, the main features of the Wittgensteinian method of investigation are the emphasis on the *primacy of practice* and on the *broad context of the phenomenon under investigation*. I will now outline what I mean by Wittgenstein's well-known notions of 'language game' and 'form of life,' then move on to how that is connected with the notion of attitudes, the elaboration of which will follow throughout this chapter. When we seek to understand a concept, we must focus on how the concept is used in the context of the practices in which it is commonly *used*.[101] This is because these establish its meaning, which lies precisely in the way it is commonly used in the context of the practice that constitutes its common environment.[102] This is why Wittgenstein introduces the notions of 'language games'[103] and 'forms of life'[104] (I will use the less technical translation—'ways of life'—that is not so encumbered by the vast, divergent interpretive tradition),[105] in order to stress the interconnectedness of language with practice, in the context of which alone our words make sense. As trivial as this observation may sound, it is an absolutely crucial change in philosophical perspective with far-reaching implications for the method and goal of philosophy.[106] The emphasis on the rootedness of concepts in settled practice marks a departure from the traditional philosophical effort to achieve, so to speak, 'pure' (free from the sediments of contingent practice) knowledge of 'things-in-themselves.' It is a rejection of *foundationalism*, i.e., the idea that our access to the world is somehow inadequate because it is only haphazardly mediated in one way or another, and that we have to scrutinize those modes

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[101] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 25 (§ 43).
[102] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 5–46 (§§ 1–88).
[103] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 8 (§ 7).
[104] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 11–12, 14–15 (§§ 19, 23).
[105] Wittgenstein authorized the translation of 'Lebensformen' to English as 'ways of life' proposed by Rush Rhees, and also suggested specification 'of human beings.' Nicholas F. Gier, "Wittgenstein and Forms of Life," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 10, no. 3 (1980): 251, https://doi.org/10.1177/004839318001000301.
[106] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 46–57 (§§ 89–133).

of mediation to check that they do not accidentally mislead us, and to eliminate the deviations that those modes of mediation cause and get at the world as it 'really' is, and so to found our knowledge about it. The problem with foundationalism is that in its attempt to rid itself of the sediments of contingent practices of mediation, it also deprives itself of meaningfulness, because our terms through which we grasp the world are meaningful only in the established practice in which they are used and from which we therefore cannot simply abstract when we examine them.[107] We cannot step out of our practice-related language, which constitutes the conditions for the meaningfulness of our expressions and in which we are always already before any attempt to lay new foundations for our access to the world, so these attempts necessarily lead us out of the realm of meaningfulness.

The point of Wittgensteinian anti-foundationalism is not only that it is impossible to lay new foundations, but more importantly that there is no need to do so—what the foundationalists were looking for was right in front of their eyes all along: we have an approach to the world and there is nothing wrong with it, it is adequate just as it is within the framework of our language games anchored in our ways of life.[108] The task of philosophy conceived in this way, therefore, is no longer to discover the true essence of this or that (of 'nature,' for example), but to clarify what is unclear precisely in the context of the with-language-interwoven-practices in which this or that is anchored.[109] In doing so, it is important to emphasize that these language games and ways of life are not some entities, some new foundations that serve as a new basis for our relation to the world. They are a methodological tool to help us get rid of foundationalism. Ways of life and language games are 'objects of comparison,'[110] they are like a kind of map that we attach to reality in order to get a better understanding of it, and we create this map for certain purposes, to clarify a certain area of our lives which is troubling us—in this sense, it is a kind of therapy.[111]

I created a sort of such map in Chapter 2, where I identified and characterized two clusters of ways of using the term 'nature' in the context of nature protection practice. Not to show that these ways of understanding 'nature' are in any way wrong—they are just the way they are with all their contradictions and limitations—but to clarify them, to show in what they consist, what they are related to, and what they imply. And since they turned out to be indeed two

[107] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 94–95, 129 (§§ 240–242, 402).
[108] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 55, 129 (§§ 126, 402).
[109] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 46–57 (§§ 89–133).
[110] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* 56 (§§130–131).
[111] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* 56–57 (§133).

divergent ways of understanding 'nature'—if you prefer the Wittgensteinian terminology, it can be said, that they are embedded in different language games intertwined with different ways of life in which 'nature' is indeed used differently and takes on different meanings—and since these different ways of understanding 'nature' significantly shape the crucial debate about the future of nature protection, the effort to clarify nature protection needs to be pursued further and explore the broader context of these ways of understanding nature, to reveal what is actually *hidden* behind them—and it is precisely the lesser-known Wittgensteinian idea of attitudes that will be useful for this. I take the idea of attitude also as a kind of *methodological tool for clarification* of the context of the phenomenon under investigation, namely *of the character of various ways of relating toward a particular kind of phenomena*—which is crucial precisely for the clarification of ethical matters.

In a somewhat similar way, the idea of attitudes—or more precisely, the idea of the *attitude toward a soul*, which I will examine in the following section 3.1—has been used among Wittgensteinian ethicists as a fundamental and irreducible ethical relation to human beings, one they have attempted to clarify in various ways and from which they have drawn ethical conclusions. A pioneering article that seeks to systematically develop what this *attitude toward a soul* actually is, is "Eine Einstellung zur Seele"[112] by Peter Winch, from which he later draws ethical implications in "Who Is My Neighbour?"[113]. This work was influentially responded to by Dewi Zephaniah Phillips in "My Neighbour and My Neighbours,"[114] pointing out the *diversity* of responses that are all, characteristically, responses specifically to human beings. The most prominent work of this kind is arguably *Good and Evil: An Absolute Conception*[115] by Raimond Gaita, who uses the idea of the attitude toward a soul to develop an entire systematic conception of ethics. Other significant attempts to systematically elaborate the characteristics of the attitude toward a soul include the study *Other Human Beings*[116] by David Cockburn, and the articles "An Attitude Towards a Soul: Wittgenstein, Other Minds and the Mind"[117] by Edmund Dain, and "Human Beings and Automatons"[118] by Simo Säätelä—all of

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[112] Peter Winch, "Eine Einstellung zur Seele," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 81, no. 1 (1981): 1–16.

[113] Peter Winch, "Who Is My Neighbour?," in *Trying to Make Sense* (Basil Blackwell, 1987),154–166.

[114] Dewi Z. Phillips, "My Neighbour and My Neighbours," *Philosophical Investigations* 12, no. 2 (April 1989): 112–133.

[115] Raimond Gaita, *Good and Evil: An Absolute Conception*, 2nd ed. (Routledge, 2004).

[116] David Cockburn, *Other Human Beings*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 1990).

[117] Edmund Dain, "An Attitude Towards a Soul: Wittgenstein, Other Minds and the Mind," in *Moral Foundations of Philosophy of Mind*, ed. Joel Backström, Hannes Nykänen, Niklas Toivakainen, and Thomas Wallgren (Springer International Publishing, 2019), 159–177, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-18492-6_6.

[118] Simo Säätelä, "Human Beings and Automatons," in *Persons – An Interdisciplinary Dialogue: Papers of the*

which also concern the dissolving of the apparent 'mind–body problem,' which was probably, after all, Wittgenstein's main intention in developing the idea of the attitude toward a soul. Most importantly, however, the idea of the attitude toward a soul, but also more generally the idea of *attitude* as such—though not very systematically—has been used in *ethics* in efforts to clarify various particular issues, such as in writings by Rush Rhees on topics like *Euthanasia*,[119] *Abortion*,[120] *Sexuality*,[121] and *Animals*.[122] Various attitudes toward animals and the ways in which they shape our relation to them were significantly explored by Cora Diamond in "Eating Meat and Eating People,"[123] a paper that became an important and influential contribution to *animal ethics*. Another particular topic analyzed through the perspective of the attitude toward a soul is *Slavery*, which has been addressed especially by Gaita[124] and also touched upon by Winch.[125] As far as the use of Wittgensteinian idea of attitudes in *environmental ethics* is concerned, there is only one article so far, and that is my earlier work "Attitudes Toward Nature as a Key for Understanding the Current Lack of Adequate Environmental Behavior: Overstepping the Dialectic of Extractivism and Romanticism,"[126] which I build upon in my dissertation. In this context, it is worth mentioning Rupert Read, who is rooted in the Wittgensteinian tradition and has written a number of works concerning environmental ethics,[127] nevertheless he does not develop the idea of attitude. Furthermore, the idea of attitude—though often only implicitly building on the Wittgensteinian line—has also made a notable entry into *virtue ethics*, where some authors reformulate the central question "What would a virtuous person do in this situation?" into the question "What is the right (virtuous) *attitude* toward this situation?"—this is the approach taken, for example, by Rosalind Hursthouse in her influential analysis of the issue of *Abortion* in "Virtue Theory and

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25th International Wittgenstein Symposium, ed. Christian Kanzian, Josef Quitterer, and Edmund Runggaldier (The Austrian Ludwig Wittgenstein Society, 2002), 214–215, https://wab.uib.no/ojs/index.php/agora-alws/article/view/2478/2680.

119 Rush Rhees, *Moral Questions*, ed. D. Z. Phillips (Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 109–127.

120 Rhees, *Moral Questions*, 131–135. *Though not explicitly mentioning attitudes.*

121 Rhees, *Moral Questions*, 139–158.

122 Rhees, *Moral Questions*, 167–173.

123 Cora Diamond, "Eating Meat and Eating People," *Philosophy* 53, no. 206 (1978): 465–479, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0031819100026334.

124 Gaita, *Good and Evil*, especially 166–167.

125 Peter Winch, "Who Is My Neighbour?," 166.

126 David Rozen, "Attitudes Toward Nature as a Key for Understanding the Current Lack of Adequate Environmental Behavior: Overstepping the Dialectic of Extractivism and Romanticism," *Ethics, Policy & Environment* (2024): 1–24, https://doi.org/10.1080/21550085.2024.2398980.

127 See, e.g.: Rupert Read, *Why Climate Breakdown Matters* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2022).

Abortion."[128] Recently, the idea of the attitude toward a soul has also been used to critique the idea that treating AI chatbots as thinking beings depends on what they are capable of, as developed by Ondřej Beran in "An Attitude Towards an Artificial Soul? Responses to the 'Nazi Chatbot'."[129]

This would roughly summarize the use of the idea of attitudes among authors influenced by Wittgenstein, who represent a frame of reference for me. My primary aim, however, is to go beyond the existing discussion and to develop the idea of attitudes into a *general methodological tool for clarification*—I will attempt to systematize the idea of attitudes and to develop a kind of *general extended conception of attitudes* that could be used as a tool for the clarification of any sphere of human life when ethics comes to play. I have already attempted something similar on a small scale in my above-mentioned article,[130] but much of what I will present below has remained unnoticed or undeveloped—besides that, no one has attempted to develop a *general* Wittgensteinian conception of attitudes. This is likely because such an endeavor appears to run counter to the generally anti-theoretical spirit of the Wittgensteinian tradition—although, in my view, it need not be perceived this way. Nevertheless, my aim will not be to demonstrate that the *general extended conception of attitudes* I propose, or my dissertation as a whole, is fully in line with the Wittgensteinian tradition. Although, it can be broadly stated that the entire project of my dissertation is Wittgensteinian at least in the sense that I am primarily concerned with a *clarification* of the issue under investigation and also insofar as the entire following methodological Part II is deeply informed by the ideas of the later Wittgenstein—particularly in the use of Wittgensteinian terminology and in the development of Wittgenstein's idea of attitudes. However, in the following section (with the exception of the first section 3.1, in which I present the core of the idea of attitude), my goal will not be to provide a faithful interpretation of Wittgenstein's work—in essential respects, I will go (in sections 3.2–3.4) beyond what could be *sufficiently* textually supported within Wittgenstein's writings. In other words, Wittgenstein's philosophy serves for me as the point of departure for my own thought effort, which pursues aims other than its faithful interpretation, and this chapter should therefore be read as an distinct philosophical enterprise, the value of which does not stand or fall with how faithfully it adheres to the texts from which it draws, but rather with the degree of insight my *extended conception of attitudes* is able to

[128] Rosalind Hursthouse, "Virtue Theory and Abortion," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 20, no. 3 (1991): 223–246.
[129] Ondřej Beran, "An Attitude Towards an Artificial Soul? Responses to the 'Nazi Chatbot'," *Philosophical Investigations* 41, no. 1 (2017): 42–69, https://doi.org/10.1111/phin.12173.
[130] Rozen, "Attitudes Toward Nature," 1–6.

offer as a *methodological tool for the clarification of ethical matters*.

(3.1) The idea of attitude

Wittgenstein works with the idea of attitudes unsystematically and very broadly, but the Wittgensteinian ethicists influenced by it have narrowed the idea down and focused almost exclusively on the relationship to people, on the 'attitude toward a soul,' i.e., on the 'attitude toward a human.'[131] This chapter aims to go beyond the existing discussion of Wittgenstein's idea of attitudes, systematize and develop this thought figure to its full extent, and thus present the explanatory potential it offers. Nevertheless, I will begin my exposition of the Wittgensteinian idea of attitudes with the most famous example of the attitude toward a soul to which the vast majority of the scholarship is linked, lay out what is at stake, and gradually abstract to a more general notion of attitudes, so that it becomes a useful tool for clarifying ethical disputes.

One of the questions to which Wittgenstein returns repeatedly in his philosophical investigations is where the thought comes from that other beings have sensations, and criticizes the idea that it is something we have to figure out, that it is a particular belief that we could and should somehow ground.[132] Thus, he argues against the tradition in which it was customary to understand other human beings as objects between other objects[133] to which certain predicates are ascribed based on experience. Wittgenstein wants to show that this is not the case because our very attitude toward other human beings is entirely different from attitudes toward objects.

> "I believe that he is suffering." – Do I also believe that he isn't an automaton?
> Only reluctantly could I use the word in both contexts.
> (Or is it like this: I believe that he is suffering, but am certain that he is not an automaton? Nonsense!)
>
> Suppose I say of a friend: "He isn't an automaton." – What information is conveyed by this, and to whom would it be information? To a *human being* who meets him in ordinary circumstances? What information *could* it give him? (At the very most, that this man

[131] Wittgenstein sometimes uses these phrases interchangeably, and they mean basically the same for him, see: Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology, Volume II: The Inner and the Outer, 1949–1951*, ed. G. H. von Wright and Heikki Nyman, trans. C. G. Luckhardt and Maximilian A. E. Aue (Wiley-Blackwell, 2004), 38.

[132] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 104–105 (§§ 283 –286).

[133] Cockburn, *Other Human Beings*, 6.

always behaves like a human being, and not occasionally like a machine.)

> "I believe that he is not an automaton", just like that, so far makes no sense.
>
> My attitude towards him is an attitude towards a soul. I am not of the *opinion* that he has a soul.
>
> [PPF §§ 19–22][134]

To say about someone, "I believe that he is not an automaton." is no fundamental belief that grounds my relation to him—under ordinary circumstances it is simply nonsense. The point is that our relation to other human beings is not at all built on some general beliefs about them. This is precisely the mistake that both behaviorists and dualists make when they try to ground their regarding others as conscious beings on specific claims about them.[135] For Wittgenstein, to regard others as conscious beings means having a certain attitude toward them: *the attitude toward a soul*. And precisely, such attitude—a particular way of relating—is what is primary and what enables us to have any opinions about others at all. This is a revolutionary turnover in dealing with the question of 'other minds,' which has significant and far-reaching ethical and epistemological consequences that will be gradually developed throughout this chapter—and precisely these ethical and epistemological consequences will be of interest to me in terms of the problem I am investigating in my dissertation, rather than the question of 'other minds', which will only serve to explain them.

Wittgenstein argues against the foundationalist urge to ground our relation to other human beings by some fundamental beliefs by showing that all the reactions (including beliefs) we can meaningfully have toward others are already taking place in and therefore presuppose the relation—the attitude toward a soul—which foundationalists try to ground.

> I tell someone I'm in pain. His attitude to me will then be that of belief, disbelief, suspicion, and so on.
> Let's suppose he says, "It's not so bad". – Doesn't that prove that he believes in something behind my utterance of pain? – His attitude is proof of his attitude. Imagine not merely the words "I'm in pain", but also the reply "It's not so bad", replaced by

[134] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* 187.
[135] Winch, "Eine Einstellung zur Seele," 2.

instinctive noises and gestures.

[PI § 310][136]

The idea of attitude helps us to get rid of the foundationalist urge that our relation toward other human beings has to be grounded on some beliefs, expressed here by the question, "Doesn't that prove that he believes in something behind my utterance of pain?"; it does so by highlighting that we are always already in a particular relation to other human beings, and this relation—the attitude toward a soul—determines the scope of meaningful reactions one can have toward others, and all the attempts to ground this relation on some beliefs necessarily overstep this scope of meaningful responses and, thus, end up as nonsense (e.g. "I believe that he is not an automaton."). In other words, *the attitude toward a soul is transcendental with respect to all the beliefs we can meaningfully have toward others*. The critical insight is not only that the grounding of our relation toward others is not possible, but also the realization that it is not necessary: "His attitude is proof of his attitude."

One does not have to go any further—nothing is hidden; if one wants to grasp our relation to other human beings, one has to focus on and clarify the attitude toward a soul that is observable directly around us.[137] For this purpose, it is often helpful to imagine primitive pre-linguistic reactions—as suggested already in the previous quote and developed more in the following one—because the linguistic reactions tend to lead us astray since their conceptual form tends to indicate some grounding belief from which they spring.

> It is a help here to remember that it is a primitive reaction to tend, to treat, the part that hurts when someone else is in pain; and not merely when oneself is – and so to pay attention to other people's pain-behaviour, as one does *not* pay attention to one's own pain behaviour.
>
> But what is the word "primitive" meant to say here? Presumably that this sort of behaviour is *pre-linguistic*: that a language-game is based *on* it, that it is the prototype of a way of thinking and not the result of thought.

[Z §§ 540–541][138]

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[136] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* 110.
[137] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* 54–55 (§122).
[138] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, ed. G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (University of California Press, 2007), 95.

This is another way to show that our relation to other human beings is not based on some kind of foundational belief. When someone feels the urge for foundational beliefs, one should imagine *primitive pre-linguistic reactions* of people to the pain of other human beings, which should help to see that the specific relation toward other human beings we have is something that is not a result of thought but has deeper pre-linguistic roots in our primitive reactions toward each other. It could be argued that this is also some kind of foundationalism,[139] but these thought experiments should not be understood as a *call for grounding* our relation toward other human beings through empirical research on newborns and their primitive pre-linguistic reactions, but as an attempt to say that no grounding is necessary. It is rather a *call to observe* the complex web of basal—often unreflected and not only pre-linguistic—reactions people have toward other people. This is what Wittgenstein wants to bring to light with the notion of 'attitude toward a soul,' which describes *the cluster of basal reactions that people have toward other people* that constitute the specific way of relating to other human beings, e.g., paying attention to their pain-behavior or, generally, sensations (the notion of 'attention' is important here and I will come back to it later when connecting the idea of attitude with ethics).

The key point stands out, especially when we contrast the attitude toward people with the attitude toward things. Since an essential part of what Wittgenstein is trying to show is precisely that we do *not* approach people as objects among other objects. In the quotations above, he shows how misleading it is to approach other people's sensations as a matter of investigation, and in the following passage, he approaches the same issue, so to say, from the other side and shows how absurd it would be to ascribe sensations to things and investigates various differences in our attitudes regarding ascribing sensations.

> Look at a stone and imagine it having sensations. – One says to oneself: How could one so much as get the idea of ascribing a *sensation* to a *thing*? One might as well ascribe it to a number! – And now look at a wriggling fly, and at once these difficulties vanish, and pain seems able to get *a foothold* here, where before everything was, so to speak, too *smooth* for it.

[139] I leave this question open because it is not relevant for my dissertation project. For more regarding this see, Winch, "Eine Einstellung Zur Seele", 11, where the notion of "natural history of mankind" is developed in this context.

> And so, too, a corpse seems to us quite inaccessible to pain. – Our attitude to what is alive and to what is dead is not the same. All our reactions are different.
>
> [PI § 284][140]

Here, we can distinguish an attitude toward a thing, an attitude toward what is alive, and an attitude toward what is dead, and Wittgenstein invites us to *observe* how these attitudes determine *our reactions* in various cases so that we can better understand how recognition of sensations works. When looking at an—evidently alive—*wriggling* fly, one can (with a certain level of uncertainty)[141] see the pain in it and perhaps react, e.g., with pity.[142] But, with regard to both a stone and a corpse, it usually would not make any sense to ascribe sensations, however, in a wholly different manner. Regarding the stone, it would be genuinely absurd, like ascribing sensation to a number, but it is different in the case of a corpse. What is dead—before it died—had sensations; the corpse does not have sensations *anymore*, but the stone is and always was *sensation-free*. Therefore, under ordinary circumstances, our reactions to a stone cannot include, e.g., pity, but we can feel pity for what is dead even though (or maybe precisely because of) it does not have sensations anymore. One, of course, usually also has a plentitude of other reactions in all these cases—when encountering, e.g., a corpse, one can react, e.g., with aversion, horror, fear, and maybe even fascination and thoughts of the death of beloved as in Baudelaire's famous poem[143]—and various reactions would be relevant for clarification of various phenomena in various contexts. The point is that *within a certain attitude, only certain particular reactions usually occur, while others usually do not*; thus, e.g., in the scope of an attitude toward a thing, reactions to pain behavior simply usually do not occur and, therefore, ascribing pain to a stone would be under ordinary circumstances meaningless, on the other hand, in the scope of an attitude toward a soul a whole pallet of reactions to all kinds of sensations of other human being comes into play and, therefore, doubting under ordinary circumstances whether a person isn't by a chance an automaton would be meaningless. In this manner, focusing on various attitudes can be helpful for clarification of philosophical quarrels (such as the status of other minds), but also, as I will gradually elaborate, for the clarification

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[140] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* 104.

[141] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology, Volume 1*, ed. G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (University of Chicago Press, 1988), 113 (§§ 659–661).

[142] However, common reactions to insects that people see as vermin usually do not include pity. For attitudes toward vermin and other animals, see, Diamond, "Eating Meat and Eating People," 474–479.

[143] Charles Baudelaire, *The Flowers of Evil*, trans. James McGowan (Oxford University Press, 1998), 59–62 (A Carcass).

of ethical disputes. It is because the notion of attitudes has much more to tell, especially about *perception* and *behavior*. These lines of thought shine already through Wittgenstein's above-quoted remarks, but they were developed only later by authors inspired by his ideas. Here, I will submit only a brief sketch of these links and some terminological clarifications, and throughout the subsequent sections, the connections of attitudes and perception (in section 3.2) and behavior (in section 3.3) will be elaborated in more detail.

* * *

The critical insight involved in the notion of attitude that has not yet been adequately emphasized is that the already discussed basal reactions to certain phenomena go *directly* with recognizing in it a particular object; in other words, the idea of attitude should highlight the *interconnectedness of objects and basal reactions toward them*. Recognizing the other as a human being brings *directly* certain specific reactions toward them. It is not the case that we would first have a piece of knowledge about their sensations and then, as it were, interpret it in a second phase and, based on it, choose an appropriate reaction. The knowledge that the other is, e.g., in pain, is not something that can be characterized independently of a particular reaction, usually especially pity—pity is the usual direct reaction to recognizing the other as a human being in pain (not to our knowledge that the other is in pain).[144] Our knowledge about other human beings is, thus, conditioned and shaped by the cluster of basal reactions—the attitude toward a soul—that has always been in play since recognizing her as such. The same is true, and this is perhaps the most essential message of the notion of attitudes, of our behavior toward other human beings: *the attitudes we have toward various attitudinal objects*[145] *correspond to our possibilities of acting toward them*. Therefore, it is helpful to understand the attitude—the cluster of basal reactions toward a particular object—as a specific 'practical orientation'[146] toward that object. Thus, the attitude toward a soul can be understood as a particular practical orientation toward human beings, from which certain actions seem to follow naturally, while others do not appear as a real possibility at all. For example, the basal reactions arising from recognizing human being in pain (e.g. pity and concern) orient our actions toward helping to relieve their pain; depending on the particular circumstances, we can,

[144] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* 105 (§287).
Detailed exposition in: Raimond Gaita, *Good and Evil: An Absolute Conception* (Routledge, 2004), 176–179.
[145] An 'attitudinal object' is an object of an attitude.
[146] Cockburn, *Other Human Beings*, 7.

of course, do a variety of other things, but *particular ways of acting seem to offer themselves as if they are a smooth outgrowth of the practical orientation* in which we find ourselves immediately upon recognizing human being in pain.

It is now necessary to make a further distinction to eliminate the seeming ambiguity that might arise from the characteristics attributed to the notion of 'attitude' in the previous paragraphs. First, it was said that an attitude toward something is a label for a cluster of basal reactions toward it, and then it was noted that within a certain attitude, only certain particular reactions usually occur, while others usually do not. Or in other words, that attitude *is* that cluster of basal reactions, and that attitude is something within which scope particular basal reactions *occur*, which gives rise to an ambiguity that the following distinction will dissolve. There are two levels to be distinguished: (i) when speaking on the general level, the attitude toward X is a label for a set of *potential* typical basal reactions that are characteristic in relation to X; however, (ii) in a particular situation, only *some* of these potential reactions usually occur, and these then constitute the particular practical orientation of the person in question (they *are* this practical orientation). For example, (i) at a general level, the attitude toward a soul is the label for the cluster of *potential* typical basal reactions that usually occur in relation to human beings. However, (ii) in a particular situation in contact with a human being, only some of these typical basal reactions become dominant, resulting in a *particular* practical orientation that could be understood as one of a plentitude of possible realizations of the attitude people have toward other human beings.

This was developed already by Phillips who, in response to Winch, highlighted that basal reactions toward other human beings are of various kinds and that the attitudes of the priest and the Levite in the *Parable of the good Samaritan* are also variants of the attitude toward soul, not just the merciful attitude of the good Samaritan[147]—a dismissive attitude toward another's suffering is also one of the possible realizations of the attitude people have toward other human beings. And there is a plentitude of them—think about the differences among the basal reactions toward a friend, an enemy, a child, elderly, a stranger, an officer, a politician, a slave, etc.; these all are possible particular instances of what can be on the general level characterized with the umbrella term 'an attitude toward a soul.' Thus, when speaking generally, analyzing an attitude (e.g. comparing it to other attitudes), I will sometimes talk about *the scope* of an attitude in which certain specific basal reactions are *enabled* (e.g. in contrast to a different attitude)—by which I mean the set of *potential* typical basal reactions

[147] Phillips, "My Neighbour and My Neighbours," 124–128.

that are characteristic in relation to the object of that attitude—but from which different concrete constellations may arise (different basal reactions may become dominant) resulting in varying particular practical orientations, that are, nevertheless, useful (for analytic purposes) to understand only as different realizations of the same general attitude. Hence, the conceptual ambiguity that the attitude toward X is something that *enables specific basal reactions* to X and, at the same time, at a particular level, *is constituted by these basal reactions* (it is nothing more than these basal reactions).

In order to avoid this ambiguity, in cases where this distinction will be significant, I will work with the distinction between *an attitude* and *an adjustment* (which is another possible way of translating the original German term 'Einstellung'). In these cases, I will use the term *attitude* to refer to basal reactions to something at the general level and the term *adjustment* to refer to basal reactions in relation to something at a more particular level. I could thus talk, for example, about an 'attitude toward a soul' in which scope various particular adjustments are enabled, such as, 'an adjustment toward a friend,' 'an adjustment toward an enemy,' 'an adjustment toward a child,' etc., and these can be understood as particular instances of attitude toward a soul.

This distinction represents a crucial elaboration and clarification of Wittgenstein's idea of attitudes, which will make it possible to develop it into a dexterous analytical tool that will be able to capture and clarify the significant differences we can observe at the level of basal reactions and all that goes with them. This distinction will prove useful, especially for the purpose of comparing various basal reactions toward the same attitudinal object. In any case, it is important to keep in mind that these 'attitudes' and 'adjustments' are not some mysterious entities but only tools for analysis that denote certain clusters of basal reactions toward something, either in general or in particular cases. In any case, the distinction between general and particular levels is not a clear one, and more importantly, it will often not be relevant in the following exposition; in these cases, I will simply speak of attitudes. I will use this distinction only in those cases where it will have some explanatory value, in these cases, I the term 'attitude' will be used rather generally to denote typical basal reactions toward a certain rather general type of phenomenon, and the term 'adjustment' to highlight certain basal reactions that are dominant in approaching something more specific.

* * *

After the initial exposition of the idea of attitude, I will now summarize what has been

said and sketch the direction in which the idea of attitude will be further developed. The idea of attitude was introduced as a kind of explanatory tool that Wittgenstein used to show the absurdity of attempts to base one's relation to other people on certain beliefs, based on the image that we relate to other human beings as objects among other objects, which Wittgenstein rejects precisely with reference to the attitude toward a soul—the specific relation that people have toward other people, which is different from the relation toward things. Then, it was outlined how authors influenced by this Wittgenstein's idea developed the notion of attitude toward a soul in a broader epistemological and ethical context, with emphasis on its importance for understanding human perception and behavior; an attitude was tentatively defined as *a cluster of basal immediate reactions toward a certain object that constitute a particular practical orientation toward that object*. I will follow this line of thought and focus on human perception (in section 3.2) and behavior (in section 3.3) through the lenses of the idea of attitude, and I will develop it even further and elaborate a general conception of attitudes that can be used as a clarificatory tool practically in every sphere of our life, in doing so, I will use other Wittgenstein's ideas, but in general I will go beyond Wittgenstein, and in the pursuit of a general systematic conception also partly against him. I will also go beyond the authors mentioned above, who focused almost exclusively on attitudes toward the soul and the realm of interpersonal behavior and never tried to elaborate a more systematic conception of attitudes as a clarificatory tool. In the following section, I will (1) connect the idea of attitude with Wittgenstein's analyses of 'ways of seeing' and argue for understanding attitudes as *correlative with ways of seeing* and (2) claim that a particular object of seeing—phenomenon—can be approached through the scope of various attitudes (seen in multiple contexts) and that, therefore, *people can have various attitudes toward the same phenomenon.* To develop this characteristic of my extended conception of attitudes, I will focus on Wittgenstein's analyses of 'ways of seeing' and of 'aspect-seeing,' which he, on several occasions, explicitly connects with attitudes, although he never systematically elaborated this connection and, surprisingly, neither did the authors mentioned above who worked with his idea of attitudes.[148]

[148] The only explicit connection of Wittgenstein's idea of attitudes with aspectual vision I have come across is in: Reshef Agam-Segal, "Moral Thought In Wittgenstein: Clarity And Changes Of Attitude," in *Wittgenstein's Moral Thought*, ed. Reshef Agam-Segal and Edmund Dain, (Routledge, 2018), 82.

(3.2) Attitudes and ways of perceiving

> We find certain things about seeing puzzling, because we do not find the whole business of seeing puzzling enough.
>
> [PPF § 251][149]

The various analyses of 'seeing' are the subject of much of Wittgenstein's extensive notes on the philosophy of psychology, and the many studies written on the subject correspond to this. However, since the aim of this chapter is not a comprehensive exposition of Wittgenstein's work but an independent elaboration of the Wittgensteinian conception of attitudes as a clarificatory tool, I will focus in the following exposition only on introducing lines of thought that are relevant to this purpose. I will work selectively with passages that constitute an inspirational source for my Wittgensteinian conception of attitudes, and the subsequent claims should, therefore, be understood as the development of a particular line of thought rather than a rigid interpretation of Wittgenstein's work as a whole.

Late Wittgenstein rejects the sharp distinction between sensory perception and thinking, and in his writings, he often uses concepts that have traditionally stood on one side or the other in a way that extends them to both sides. Especially 'seeing' and 'thinking' are used very broadly; thinking is often connected with imagination, and seeing with rational tasks.[150] Subsequent authors who were influenced by him further emphasized this connection and developed (especially in the context of ethics) a broad conception of seeing that can be characterized *as a sensory-intellectual grasping of an object of perception*.[151] In what follows, I will adopt this perspective, and furthermore, I wish to explicitly note that, although I will be following the Wittgensteinian tradition in primarily utilizing the—most vivid—notion of *seeing* and related examples, I believe that the main points of my reasoning can also be developed for the other senses. In other words, I will be concerned with *perception* in general. The key idea that will be gradually developed in this section is that we do *not* perceive 'pure' sensory data that we would, as if in a second step, interpret in order to reach some

[149] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* 224.
[150] For detailed elaboration, see: Judith Genova, *Wittgenstein: A Way of Seeing*, 55–83.
[151] This is also a significant feature of many authors influenced by him, see, e.g.:
Gaita, *Good And Evil*, 164–188.
Iris Murdoch, "Symposium: Vision and Choice in Morality," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volume 30*, no. 1 (1956): 32–58, https://doi.org/10.1093/aristoteliansupp/30.1.14.

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,"[152] we approach them as something particular.[153]

In the previous section, it was shown what is involved in perceiving another human being, namely a specific cluster of basal reactions that constitute a specific practical orientation toward her, which could also be expressed in terms of understanding, e.g., understanding her as having sensations (without doubting whether she is an automaton). Now, it is necessary to take the next step and highlight that a particular object of perception can often be perceived in several ways—*under different descriptions*—and, thus, be understood in a different way. Human beings can also be perceived under many different descriptions. Still, as shown in the previous section, under ordinary circumstances, it is hardly conceivable not to recognize them as human beings. Hence, I will present several other examples that will allow me to push this line of thought in this direction.

> A hare runs across a path. Someone doesn't know it and says: "Something strange whizzed by" and he proceeds to describe the appearance. Someone else says "A hare!", and he cannot describe it so precisely.
>
> Now why do I still want to say that the person who recognizes it sees it differently from the person who doesn't?
>
> […]
>
> Does someone who doesn't recognize a smile as a smile see it differently than someone who does? He reacts to it differently.
>
> [LWPP 2, p. 16][154]

Here, we have two objects of seeing: a hare that runs across a path and a smiling face. In the

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[152] The phrase "under a certain description" is taken from G. E. M. Anscombe, who argues for a similar thesis in: G. E. M. Anscombe, "The Intentionality of Sensation: A Grammatical Feature," in *Vision and Mind: Selected Readings in the Philosophy of Perception*, ed. Alva Noë and Evan T. Thompson (MIT Press, 2002), 55–75.
And in: G. E. M. Anscombe, *Intention*, 2nd ed. (Harvard University Press, 2000), 11–12 (§6).
And who elaborated this notion in detail in: G. E. M. Anscombe, "Under a Description," *Noûs* 13, no. 2 (1979): 219–233, https://doi.org/10.2307/2214398.

[153] For a systematic elaboration of this line of thought in relation to listening, specifically in relation to listening to music, where it is shown that, so to speak, we also hear "under a certain description," see: Martyn Evans, *Listening to Music* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1990). I am not acquainted with similar studies concerning the senses of touch, smell, and taste. However, I hypothesize that when I present my argument that we do not perceive 'pure' sensory data during this section, the claim that it is similar for all the senses will not seem controversial.

[154] Wittgenstein, *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology, Volume II*, 16.

first case, someone recognizes the hare, and someone else just sees something strange. In the second case, one person recognizes the smile on the face, and the other does not. The first thing to note here is that for seeing, it is characteristic that we see something; in the act of seeing, we *recognize* something, which goes together with certain specific reactions. This happens, so to speak, automatically without any interpretation (which can come subsequently). Even the first example is a case of recognizing something, though not something very specific, namely "something strange what whizzed by"; such a person would probably react with startle, focused attention, and caution, but the other person who recognizes a hare would after initial startle likely respond with a relief recognizing that a hare poses no danger. The second example will be more vivid if I develop it; let's imagine that one person recognizes a smile on a face and the other recognizes a smirk instead. The reactions will be very different; the reaction to another's smile is likely to be warm and friendly, but the reaction to a smirk is likely to be distant and cold because the one who recognizes the smirk could feel offended. To sum up, recognition of something in the object of seeing is manifested in specific reactions toward the object of seeing, and these can differ among people, and the cases when they differ significantly suggest different ways of seeing.

At this juncture in the exposition, it is necessary to elucidate the relationship between 'ways of seeing' and 'attitudes.' Wittgenstein has not developed the connection between attitudes and ways of seeing systematically, but there are three passages in his writings[155] where he clearly connects these two notions, which all point in the same direction, from which I take inspiration for my elaboration of the idea of attitudes.

> I tell him: "Change the way you are adjusted like this:..." [Ändere deine Einstellung so:…]—he does so; and now something is altered in him. 'Something'? His attitude is altered; and one can describe the alteration. Calling the attitude 'something in him' is misleading. It is as if we could now dimly see, or feel, a Something, which has altered and which is called "the attitude". Whereas everything lies open to the light of day—but the words "a new attitude" do not designate a sensation.
>
> What does the description of an 'attitude' look like?

[155] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Letzte Schriften über die Philosophie der Psychologie / Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology, vol. 1*, ed. G. H. von Wright and Heikki Nyman, trans. C. G. Luckhardt and Maximilian A. E. Aue (Basil Blackwell, 1982), 84–85, 97–98 (§§ 662–670, 765–773).
And the third occurrence is the following quote.

> One says, e.g., "Look away from these little spots and this small irregularity, and regard it as a picture of a ...".
> "Think that away! Would it be unacceptable to you even without this...?" I shall be said to be altering my visual picture—as I do by blinking or keeping a detail out of view. This "Looking away from..." plays a role quite like that of the construction of a new picture.
>
> Very well,—and these are good reasons to say that through our attitude we made a change in our visual impression. That is to say, these are good reasons for delimiting the concept 'visual impression' in this way.
>
> [RPP 1 §§ 1110–1112][156]

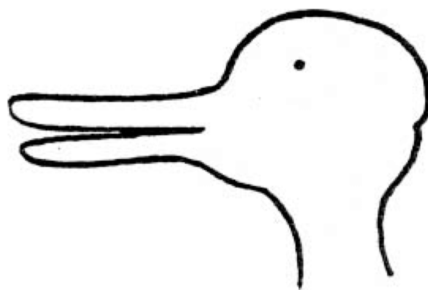
First, I want to highlight what has already been said, namely, an attitude is not some mysterious entity in a person but a label for her basal reactions toward an object of an attitude, the way she approaches it, i.e., her basal reactions that constitute a practical orientation toward an attitudinal object. We always have certain basal reactions toward the phenomena around us, which lead to seeing them a certain way. But in many cases, the attitude toward a particular object of seeing may vary among people and may also be transformed; we can, e.g., look away from something and focus on something else. Thus, for example, the persons from the previous example (imagine them as observing and discussing da Vinci's Mona Lisa) could change their attitude toward her impression in the course of their discussion and recognize in her face not a smile or smirk but absent-mindedness. Through their attitude, they can change their visual impression. The relation between attitudes and ways of seeing can be, thus, understood as being correlative: *a certain attitude is reflected in a particular way of seeing*.

Here, it is necessary to elaborate on the distinction between attitude and adjustment, which has been sketched at the end of the previous section and is also relevant in this context. We can distinguish an attitude (basal reactions) toward a specific type of phenomenon that leads to recognizing a particular object in them, in our case, a face. This can be understood as a part of the above-mentioned attitude toward a soul, which we all share; it is hardly imaginable that someone would not recognize a face when encountering a human being or her picture. Seeing a face involves focusing on its expression, this is a standard practical orientation toward it; we, so to speak, automatically care about her impression. And here, among various people, different particular adjustments toward the same object of seeing can occur; the *shared general*

[156] Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology, Volume 1*, 194–195.

attitude toward the face can, so to say, *result in different particular adjustments* toward it (different realizations of the attitude toward a soul) and, thus, in seeing a different facial expression (in a sense a different object), e.g., smiling face, smirking face, or absent-minded face. In this sense, I will talk about *the scope* of a certain attitude toward something in which particular ways of seeing are possible (and others are not)—and when it comes to several different ways of seeing, which, for the purposes of analyzing a given situation, it will be suitable to treat as being in the scope of one attitude, I will speak in my terminology of different adjustments. Our attitude, thus, plays a substantive role in what kind of object we recognize in what we perceive. In the previous section, an attitude was defined as *a cluster of basal immediate reactions toward a certain object that constitute a particular practical orientation toward that object;* now, it can be added that *our basal reactions provide the scope, within which certain objects can be recognized in perceived phenomena, and guide us toward recognizing some particular*.

Let me now clarify and develop the notion of ways of seeing with reference to 'aspect-seeing,' a phenomenon that Wittgenstein discusses quite extensively in his remarks on the philosophy of psychology and whose analyses are quite conspicuously reminiscent of how he discusses the attitudes in the previous quote. It will be illuminating because 'ways of seeing' are hard to detect without thinking of their various alternatives—what they are is best shown in their changing, and here the aspect-seeing is relevant. Wittgenstein begins his analyses by pointing out that under ordinary circumstances, it makes no sense to claim that someone sees something *as* something; one simply sees this or that, for example, a fork and a knife, not the two objects *as* a fork and a knife.[157] The character of the extraordinary cases of seeing something *as* something can be well illustrated on picture-objects such as the famous duck-rabbit head.[158]



[157] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* 205 (§122).

[158] Many examples including this one are developed in: Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* 203–240 (A Fragment xi).

One, e.g., sees a rabbit and, after a guiding question, suddenly also the aspect of a duck lightens up. Here, we can see that the lighting up of an aspect takes place against the background of the ordinary way of seeing.[159] There is a common way of seeing objects in certain phenomena shaped by our basal reactions toward them, but under specific circumstances, it can also be changed, and we can see the phenomena, so to speak, in a different light, and an aspect that we did not notice before can come to the foreground. The important point is that this does not happen just through a different interpretation of a particular property of the object of seeing but through *making different connections*, so to say, through *putting the object of seeing into a different context* (in relation to a different set of objects); that is, according to Wittgenstein, the reason why the lightening of an aspect does have the character of seeing a different object (and not the same object differently).[160]

These exceptional cases of aspect-seeing can illuminate the general characteristics of seeing and of change in the way of seeing. A few paragraphs back, it was shown that a certain attitude correlates with a particular way of seeing and that by changing our attitude, we can change our visual perception (remember the Mona Lisa example). Now it has been added that our way of seeing (and its eventual change) is primarily conditioned by the context in which we see the object of seeing, and it remains to be supplemented that the context is to a large extent determined precisely by our basal reactions that associate the object of seeing, so to speak, with other similar objects. Thus, here in the philosophical text, deliberating about aspect-seeing, the duck-rabbit head—which you surely haven't seen for the first time—is seen simply as a duck-rabbit head (in the context of other pictures that encourage different ways of seeing). But against the background of bushes in the field, one would likely see the head of a rabbit, and against the background of a pond, one would probably see the head of a duck. These particular contexts of a forest or a pond would determine our way of seeing the picture-object this way because we are used to representing rabbits and ducks this way, similarly as we are used to representing philosophical ideas regarding aspects with the use of the famous duck-rabbit head and, thus, your basal reactions resulted in that you simply saw a duck-rabbit head. In other words, these particular contexts are themselves embedded in the larger context of our ways of life, of our everyday praxis (more on this in the following section 3.3), in this case, of our praxis of pictorial representation of ducks and rabbits that we learn as children and our praxis of aspect-seeing demonstration that some of us learn later on, e.g., as philosophy

[159] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* 206 (§130).
[160] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* 223 (§§247–249).

students. It is essential to keep in mind that this happens automatically all the time; we always have certain basal reactions toward the phenomena around us, resulting in seeing them in a particular context, without consciously examining the context. There is a simply a common way of seeing something, and with regard to trivial cases such as cutlery, it does not make much sense to contemplate other possible ways of seeing but, as I will develop later, with regard to more complicated cases—such as 'nature'—and especially when ethics comes into play, precisely this becomes essential. And as should be already clear, our attitudes play a crucial role in this—through our basal reactions toward a certain phenomenon, the context is determined, in which they are perceived, both on a general and particular level: *our attitudes determine our way of seeing certain phenomena by placing them in a specific context*.

* * *

It has been shown that through our basal reactions, we place phenomena we encounter into a particular context, and thereby recognize certain objects in them. It remains to develop and specify what is meant by recognizing something in what we see, and in this respect, I will draw on the following idea of Wittgenstein.

> It is as if one had brought a concept to what one sees, and one now sees the concept along with the thing. It is itself hardly visible, and yet it spreads an ordering veil over the objects.
>
> [RPP 1 § 961][161]

We perceive phenomena, so to say, under particular descriptions; we grasp them by associating them with various concepts, and thus, we spread an ordering veil over them. Often, it is the case that certain phenomena can be described in various ways, through different concepts, and thereby placed into a different context. As has already been shown, in a face, various expressions can be recognized; certain basal reactions in relation to a face can lead, for example, to recognizing it as smiling, *as it were* to attach the concept of 'smiling' to it—to place it among other smiling faces. Of course, this is rarely articulated; most of the time, we simply perceive the phenomena around us in a certain way—*as if* under a particular concept, under a specific description—which manifests itself by reacting to them in a certain way

[161] Wittgenstein, *Remarks On The Philosophy Of Psychology, Volume 1*, 169.

(without necessarily making the concept explicit). This is a kind of metaphor to clarify what is characteristic of seeing, not the strong and often disputed thesis that *all* (normal adult) perception is necessarily conceptualized,[162] the validity of which is irrelevant to my purpose. What is relevant to my investigation is the fact that many phenomena can be seen in different ways—as different objects—and that this is primarily influenced by our basal reactions toward them, which *can be characterized as* responses toward them *under a particular description* (e.g. mistake, or fraud), which, *so to say*, put what is seen into a particular context (e.g. in relation to various other mistakes or frauds) in which are such reactions meaningful.

It is true, that my exposition of this point relying on analogies such as 'as it were,' 'as if,' 'can be characterized,' and 'so to say' in the previous paragraph does not add much to the technical discussions about the degree of conceptuality of our perception that has been the subject of unceasing debate at least since the publication of the *Critique of Pure Reason*[163] and that later moved to the more specialized fields such as philosophy of perception, philosophy of mind and cognitive sciences. However, it is not the aim of this dissertation to contribute to these technical discussions, for I do not believe that resolving them will do much to clarify what I am investigating, namely, the character of conscious, systematic nature protection understood in these terms. And because I'm not seeking some external explanation of nature protection, but to illuminate it from within, the key for me is how those involved in it themselves *perceive* nature and its protection—under which terms they understand it, what those terms mean for them, and how those terms orient them to action. And for this purpose, it is not crucial, for example, what the 'real' relationship between the so-called 'qualia' and the neural stimuli in the cognitive center of one's brain is. What is crucial is to provide an insight into the various, often overlooked connections and differences regarding how nature and its protection are usually perceived in various relevant contexts. And precisely for this purpose, I develop the idea of attitudes; thus, it cannot be considered as its weakness that it does not go beyond examples and analogies and does not explain the relationship between conceptual and sensory realms at the technical level. That is not its aim; it is a model—a tool for clarification—and for clarification, various examples and analogies often help most.

This is not to say that there is no need to elaborate more on the role that the conceptual level plays in my extended conception of attitudes, on the contrary, I just wanted to explain

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[162] For critique of this thesis, see: Avner Baz, *Wittgenstein on Aspect Perception, Elements in the Philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein* (Cambridge University Press, 2020), 10–19.

[163] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge University Press, 1998).

why I will not burden the exposition with technical discussions and instead stay at the level of examples and analogies in the following attempt to eliminate potential misunderstandings. The role the conceptual level plays in attitude analysis is essential since—as has been emphasized already by Winch, and later developed by Gaita,[164] Säätelä,[165] and Dain,[166] who all highlight that—there is "an internal relation between the *Einstellung* and its object. In other words,– we need the concept of *Seele* in order to characterize the *Einstellung* for what it is."[167] Note that we need a concept that captures what the attitude is oriented toward in order to *characterize* the attitude. There are, simply put, certain basal reactions in relation to a particular type of attitudinal objects that are usually grasped by a specific concept, and we then use that concept when we try to characterize those basal reactions. This does not mean that a person whose practical orientation to some phenomenon is characterized by the concept 'X,' and we speak of an attitude toward X, must necessarily have the concept 'X' in mind when relating to that attitudinal object. Nor does it mean that it is necessarily adequate to characterize that phenomenon by the concept X. In some basal cases, it does not even mean that the person must necessarily possess concept 'X,' whatever that could mean (e.g. the attitude of infants toward other human beings certainly exhibits typical features of the attitude toward a soul/human before they have grasped those concepts). All this means is that the basal reactions that constitute the practical orientation to X in which the person in question is in relation to a particular attitudinal object exhibit the typical features of the basal reactions that people typically have with regard to phenomena that they typically grasp with the concept of 'X.'

In what sense, then, is there an internal relation between the attitude and the attitudinal object? Let me now elaborate on this by going back to the example mentioned already several times. It has been shown that an attitude toward a soul is a particular practical orientation toward other human beings that involves that we directly see them as conscious beings; it is not the case that we would first observe their bodily movements, interpret them, and based on it infer that they have feelings, intentions, and so on—we directly see them so. And, in this sense, "the attitude is constitutive of the object"[168]; this is what is meant by the internal relation between the attitude and its object—*what is seen is shaped through our basal reactions we have toward it,* and these can be characterized as basal reactions toward object X where X

[164] Gaita, *Good And Evil*, 188.
[165] Säätelä, "Human Beings and Automatons," 214.
[166] Dain, "An Attitude Towards a Soul," 170.
[167] Winch, "Eine Einstellung Zur Seele," 8–9.
[168] Säätelä, "Human Beings And Automatons," 214.

stands for concept through which such phenomena are typically grasped toward which people usually have such kinds of basal reactions.

To avoid the misunderstanding that it goes a direction toward a variant of radical idealism (in the sense that objects depend on how we conceptually grasp them), it will be useful to return to the basic opposition between attitudes and opinions that underlies the idea of attitudes ("My attitude towards him is an attitude towards a soul. I am not of the *opinion* that he has a soul."[169]). Because what is meant by an internal relation between an attitude and its object can be further clarified by contrasting it with opinions that only have an external relation to their objects—they do not transform what the object itself is;[170] one can have various opinions about other human beings without their being humans (or one's perceiving them so) would be anyhow affected. In this sense, the concepts we use, for example, to describe various objects of seeing, do not constitute these objects. Still, all the conceptual grasping of certain phenomena takes place in the scope of our basal reactions toward them that shape what concepts can be meaningfully used for grasping them, and *these basal reactions can be characterized as reactions toward a particular object grasped through a particular concept*. The concept of 'soul' or 'human' in the phrase 'attitude toward a soul/human' serves to highlight and make intelligible certain characteristic features of the basal reactions that people typically have toward attitudinal objects they typically grasp through these concepts, i.e., human beings, and therein lies its explanatory value. It is not significant whether people might have one of these concepts in mind when they encounter a person or whether they actually believe in the existence of souls (whatever it could mean); they simply approach them as human beings, and this is constitutive of what they perceive, i.e., they see behavior, feelings, intentions and not just movements (as it would be, e.g., in the case of an automaton). This manifest itself even in the case of slavery, as Gaita demonstrated in context of the notion of an attitude toward a soul throughout his critique of the idea of rationally based slavery, i.e., the idea that the slave owner does not treat his slaves as human beings because he somehow does not recognize their humanity (otherwise, it seems, he could not enslave them). But the reality is different: a slave owner may, for example, have the *opinion* that his slaves are not humans, but this does not change his attitude toward them; the slave owner, of course, sees their behavior, feelings, and intentions (not just their movements), and on this basis, for example, he guards or punishes them (which would not be the case with an automaton).[171] In other words, the attitude toward

[169] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* 187 (§22).
[170] Säätelä, "Human Beings And Automatons," 214.
[171] Gaita, *Good And Evil*, especially 166–167.

slaves is a variant of the attitude toward the soul/human, no matter what opinions about slaves the slaveholder has. The attitude is constitutive of its object, not the opinion. This limiting case thus shows that, in terms of an analysis of the attitude toward X, it may not even matter whether the person in question would actually consciously designate the attitude object by the concept 'X'; what matters is whether his basal reactions exhibit the features of basal reactions typical in relation to X.

It should already be clear in what sense an attitude is constitutive of its object, and I will now clarify the significance of concepts in this regard. In the case of the attitude toward a soul or a human, the key point is—as repeatedly shown above—that it is barely conceivable to approach other people in any other way. But when we consider concepts such as 'cheating' or 'pretending,' it becomes clear that these are socially conditioned. They characterize rather nuanced practices that take on various particular forms in the context of specific, mostly implicit, social norms established by the entire web of diverse social practices to which they are bound—and which may differ considerably across societies. What particular kinds of practices are captured by the concepts of 'cheating' and 'pretending' will vary across cultures, historical periods, and contexts; but on the other hand, it is likely that some shared features can still be traced—or rather, if that were not the case, *we* would not describe such kinds of practices under these terms.

> Could we imagine that people might have a concept of pretence that doesn't coincide with ours? — But would it then be the concept of pretence? — Well, it could be a concept related to ours.
> But aren't some of the traits of (such) a concept more essential, others less so? That is: If one changes *this* trait it will still be named "pretence" — but if *this* one is changed that word will no longer be used. And here *naming* means an attitude.
>
> [LWPP 1 §§ 224–225][172]

We have a particular concept of 'pretending,' and we can imagine that in other cultures people might have a similar concept that would be *related* to our 'pretending,' and through it they would describe similar kinds of actions as we would describe under the concept of 'pretending,' though with various minor deviations. If these were minor deviations that would not disrupt the traits that are fundamental for our concept of 'pretending,' then we would still understand

[172] Wittgenstein, *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology, vol. 1*, 33. *Slightly adjusted*.

that concept as related, perhaps as a form of 'pretending.' However, if, in addition to those similar cases, they would use the concept also to refer to a type of practice that, in a fundamental sense, would not be a case of 'pretending' for us—say, if it were not an intentional action—and it would therefore be a case of a change to a trait that is fundamental for our concept of 'pretending,' then we would no longer call that concept a form of 'pretending,' because we simply would not name unintentional action as 'pretending.' And it is precisely *in what we would and would not name 'pretending' that our attitude toward pretending becomes visible*.

Our attitude toward pretending delimits what we tend to grasp under the concept of 'pretending,' and once this happens—when someone grasps a certain action under the concept of 'pretending'—they simply see pretending. And in this sense, the attitude is constitutive of what they perceive—of what the attitudinal object is for the person in question—but this does not mean that it actually is pretending. For instance, the person may be mistaken, and the action they perceive as pretending is not pretending—in other words, *in a particular situation, the attitude is not constitutive of what the phenomenon actually is, even though it is constitutive of what the person perceives it to be*. On the other hand, it is not possible for an entire society to be mistaken about what pretending is, because *their practices*—in which their attitude toward pretending and their related concept of 'pretending' (through which this attitude can be characterized) are embedded—*form the background* against which it is possible to recognize pretending. And in this sense—*on the general level—the attitude toward pretending that guides the recognition of what is to be grasped under the concept of 'pretending' is constitutive of what pretending actually is in a given society*. Our attitude toward X delimits what kinds of phenomena we tend to grasp under the concept of 'X,' and (as already emphasized above) it is through the concept 'X' that we can characterize the attitude that constitutes what the attitudinal object X is—thus, from the character of our use of the concept 'X,' we can also indicate what kinds of phenomena are of the kind X for us. And this is precisely the significance of concepts for the analysis of attitudes—for the analysis of our ways of relating to the world—some of which are quite universal (such as the attitude toward a soul), some somewhat culturally conditioned (such as attitudes toward pretending), and some very strongly culturally conditioned (such as attitudes toward nature, which will be analyzed in greater detail in the Part III of my dissertation).

* * *

Now, gradually moving into the next section dedicated to the influence of attitudes on

action, I would like to elaborate on the relationship between the *particular situation* and the *general social context*, and clarify what I mean when I say that the *attitude toward pretending* and the related concept of 'pretending' are embedded in social practices that form the background in which they operate and against which it is possible to recognize pretending.

> How could human behaviour be described? Surely only by sketching the actions of a variety of humans, as they are all mixed up together. What determines our judgment, our concepts and reactions, is not what *one* man is doing *now*, an individual action, but the whole hurly-burly of human actions, the background against which we see any action.
> Seeing life as a weave, this pattern (pretence, say) is not always complete and is varied in a multiplicity of ways. But we, in our conceptual world, keep on seeing the same, recurring with variations. That is how our concepts take it. For concepts are not for use on a single occasion.
> And one patten in the weave is interwoven with many others.
>
> [Z §§ 567–569][173]

The point is that it is precisely "the whole hurly-burly of life" that determines "our judgment, our concepts and reactions"—including the basal ones: *attitudes*.[174] The ways in which we live are the ultimate point of reference when we attempt to clarify something—this is precisely the emphasis on the *primacy of practice* and on the *broad context* of the phenomenon under investigation that I stressed in the introduction to this chapter. In order to understand why we tend to grasp a certain type of action under the concept of 'pretence,' we need to place this type of action—and our attitude toward it—within the *overall context of common ways of life* in which it takes place in the given society. For it is precisely and only *within* these ways of life that it acquires the very meaning we are attempting to clarify. Jakob Meløe writes in this context about the "fit between seeing and doing"[175] and the *embeddedness of concepts in ways of life*,[176] and insightfully elaborates on the fundamental interconnectedness of Saami concepts with their ways of life on which we must focus when attempting to grasp their meaning and

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[173] Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, 99–100.

[174] With an important exception of primitive rather biologically determined attitudes such as the attitude toward humans, the adoption/absence of which is typically not a function of the presence/absence of a particular context.

[175] Jakob Meløe, "The Two Landscapes of Northern Norway," *Inquiry* 31, no. 3 (1988): 390, https://doi.org/10.1080/00201748808602163.

[176] Meløe, "The Two Landscapes of Northern Norway," 398.

understand how they shape what is seen through them.[177] Wittgenstein sometimes speaks of "the whole hurly-burly of human actions," sometimes of "the weave of life,"[178] and sometimes of "the bustle of life"[179] (which is the term I will be using)—in all cases, it refers to a kind of ultimate reference point in whose context something particular can be clarified, whether it be a particular attitude, a particular concept, or a particular type of action—for instance, pretence, which can only be clarified precisely in the context of the ways of life with which it is interwoven.

And this is also the place to elaborate a bit on the notion of 'ways (forms) of life,' which has been, and still is, interpreted in various ways, and is surrounded by numerous extensive disputes.[180] However, it can be argued that Wittgenstein uses it in a fairly similar manner as I suggested already in the previous paragraph, with focus on the 'bustle of life'—that is, *ways of life represent the given context of our investigation, the background against which we clarify a certain phenomenon that is unclear to us*.[181] When something is unclear to us, Wittgenstein urges us to focus on the *context of ways of life* in which the phenomenon under investigation takes place—while these *ways of life* are not something that should be *explained* and thus provide the foundations of our knowledge, but rather something *through which* we clarify an unclear phenomenon. *Ways of life* need not be grounded—they are simply given and represent the *given framework of our investigation*—we are to observe them carefully and clarify the unclear phenomenon in their context. In this sense, Wittgenstein's method is *anti-foundationalist*, and I understand the notion of 'ways of life' as a kind of *tool for such philosophical clarification*. In this respect, I align with the interpretive line of 'ways (forms) of life' recently developed by Anna Boncompagni[182] and Olli Lagerspetz.[183]

To conclude this excursus, I would like to relate the two notions that I will continue to

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[177] Meløe, "The Two Landscapes of Northern Norway," 387–400.

[178] Wittgenstein, *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology, Volume I*, 111 (§§ 861–862).

[179] Wittgenstein, *Remarks On The Philosophy Of Psychology, Volume 2*, 108 (§ 625–626).

[180] See the summary of existing discussion in: Anna Boncompagni, *Wittgenstein on Forms of Life* (Cambridge University Press, 2022).

[181] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* 94–95, 238 (§§ 241–242, PPF §345).
Wittgenstein, *Remarks On The Philosophy Of Psychology, Volume 1*, 116 (§ 630).
Compare with: Ludwig Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, ed. G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, trans. Denis Paul and G. E. M. Anscombe (Basil Blackwell, 1969), 28 (§ 203). And with: Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* 91 (§ 217).

[182] Anna Boncompagni, "Elucidating Forms of Life. The Evolution of a Philosophical Tool," *Nordic Wittgenstein Review* 4 (2015): 155–175, https://doi.org/10.15845/nwr.v4i0.3319.
And more recently: Boncompagni, *Wittgenstein on Forms of Life*, 57–64.

[183] Olli Lagerspetz, "Wittgenstein's Forms of Life: A Tool of Perspicuous Representation," *Nordic Wittgenstein Review* 9 (2020): 107–131, https://doi.org/10.15845/nwr.v0i0.3560.

work with: I will use the notion of *'ways of life'* simply to designate particular common ways in which people live, and the notion of *'bustle of life'* more generally to refer to *all* the ways in which people live—for example, in a given society or epoch. This distinction, which is unusual in Wittgensteinian scholarship, allows me to operate with both the narrower and the broader context of the phenomenon under investigation, so that I may, for instance, clarify a *particular attitude* in the context of *particular ways of life*, which can be then further situated within the broader context of the *whole bustle of life*. This will be further developed in section 4.4, where I introduce my method of attitude analysis.

But for now, let us return to the discussion of attitudes. I will conclude this transitional part with a brief summary of the main outcomes of this section dedicated to *attitudes and ways of perceiving*. To sum up, in a particular society, we have simply adjusted in a certain way, so that through our basal reactions, we tend to grasp and approach a particular phenomenon in a particular way that is characteristic of a certain class of phenomena in the context of which we perceive the given attitudinal object—we, so to say, *bring a concept to what we perceive, and grasp the phenomena under a particular description*. This happens immediately already on the level of perception, and it is so natural that it usually goes unnoticed even in various philosophical analyses of human action, which tend to focus on the process of deliberation, which—same as action—takes place in the scope that is always already shaped and delimited through our basal reactions—attitudes. This is the reason why it was first necessary to carefully elaborate on how our attitudes shape our perception, so that the significance of attitudes for the clarification of ways of acting can be properly developed in the following section.

(3.3) Attitudes and ways of action

> We judge an action according to its background within human life, and this background is not monochrome, but we might picture it as a very complicated filigree pattern, which, to be sure, we can't copy, but which we can recognize from the general impression it makes.
> The background is the bustle of life. And our concept points to something within *this* bustle.
>
> [RPP 2 §§ 624–625][184]

I stated already at the beginning that I am engaging with the Wittgensteinian idea of attitudes because it allows to grasp and clarify human practice—specifically the practice of nature protection (but the method I am developing has a general explanatory value and could be used also for other cases)—at a level that is often overlooked, even though it structures its character in an important way and, thus, to clarify the character of disputes in the investigated practice that are ethical in core. I have already touched on action repeatedly in my general exposition of the Wittgensteinian idea of attitudes (in section 3.1) and in my analysis of the influence of attitudes on our ways of perceiving (in section 3.2). Now it is time to summarize what has already been said, elaborate on the relation of attitudes and action, and present the advantages of a Wittgensteinian holistic understanding of human action by contrasting it with the traditional approach, in which action is understood as if broken down into discrete steps.

Attitudes are clusters of immediate basal reactions that people typically have in relation to a certain type of attitudinal object, i.e., a certain type of *phenomenon*: this ambivalent word (as the examples used above suggest) can cover practically anything: a physical object, a living being, a feeling, an action, a situation, a process, a sound, etc. These *basal reactions in relation to the attitudinal object represent a certain grasping* (or pre-grasping) *of the attitudinal object in question, which we can imagine as conceptual* (or proto-conceptual)—*the attitudinal object is grasped as if under a concept* (stone, human, pity, walking, injustice, rainbow, music, …), *that is, in a particular context* (as if among objects of a certain kind). These immediate basal reactions to the attitudinal object grasped in a certain way define and shape the framework in which we approach the phenomenon in question, and thus—which will be the central theme of

[184] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology, Volume 2*, ed. G. H. von Wright and Heikki Nyman, trans. C. J. Luckhardt and M. A. E. Aue (University of Chicago Press, 1988), 107–108.

this section—also define and shape the palette of possibilities of our action. In this sense, *attitudes are certain practical orientations toward the attitudinal object that guide our actions in a certain direction*—some ways of acting are, as it were, the natural outcome of a particular practical orientation, while others are not on the palette, they are not among the possibilities that the practical orientation opens.

The important thing is that attitudes are immediate; in other words, *we are always already in a certain practical orientation before we begin to evaluate the situation*, and therefore, any (eventual) evaluations of our possibilities take place already within the palette of the possibilities opened to us within this or that practical orientation. However, in most cases, the evaluation does not happen at all; most of the time, our actions are a kind of natural outcome of our practical orientation. The situations in which some evaluation does occur are exceptional, and the emphasis traditionally placed on them has led to their being seen as prototypical—and in ordinary cases, where evaluation does not usually occur, it has simply been assumed to occur implicitly. I will argue against this traditional rationalist model of action as typically decision-based below and show that *to understand action, it is necessary to understand the practical orientation from which it springs*. This will, among other things, allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the differences in various people's ways of acting, which often stem precisely from different practical orientations and not necessarily from different interpretations and different decisions, as they are frequently understood—which leads to mutual misunderstanding and frustration at the failure of rational arguments in various disputes. Indeed, *at the heart of disputes, there are often varying attitudes representing different ways of perceiving the contentious attitudinal object, and these need to be focused on when clarifying a practice*.[185]

In this context, I will also touch on ethics in this section since this Wittgensteinian model of action has been developed especially in the field of ethics as part of a critique of legalistic ethical theories that propose rules on which one should make decisions, as in Kantian ethics and utilitarianism, which are based on the traditional rationalistic model of action. To this, the following exposition will be adapted, highlighting the explanatory value of the Wittgensteinian holistic model precisely in contrast to the traditional rationalist model of action. I will choose examples that typically fall within the field of ethics because they are particularly illustrative and also highlight the critical role that attitudes play in people's lives. In doing so, my aim will

[185] Cora Diamond presents a similar line of argument, though not in these terms, in her critique of the emphasis on rational argument in moral philosophy. Cora Diamond, "Anything but Argument?," *Philosophical Investigations* 5, no. 1 (1982): 23–41, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9205.1982.tb00532.x.

not be to provide normative statements about what types of action are right in an ethical sense in these exemplary cases, but to clarify varying actions by means of clarification of attitudes involved in them—by describing the structure of the practical orientations from which the examined actions typically stem. Nevertheless, as will be argued below, the practical orientations are not value-free since the very way of grasping a certain situation highlights some of its aspects and thus represents a kind of evaluation.

* * *

In the previous sections, I have already touched upon the traditional foundationalist epistemological model of perception, which proceeds as if in separate steps—first, by obtaining pure sensory data and, second, by interpreting them to reach an understanding—and thereby invites the rationalistic model of human action, against which I will argue in this section. The rationalistic model of action can be summarized in the following way: people occur in, so to speak, a 'pure' situation, in which they interpret and evaluate all the potential possibilities, based on which they decide what to do, and for various internal and external reasons they either succeed or fail in accomplishing what their intention.[186] In the scope of such a model, analyses of human behavior usually tend to focus on the interpretation phase, evaluation phase, decision phase, and acting phase and tend to locate the reasons for certain ways of acting in various internal and external factors, such as motivation, knowledge, market, society, and so on, that influence individual phases of the model. Even though the original version of this rationalistic model of behavior has been no longer mainstream for decades, the core of this model is still often unreflectively taken for granted. This can also be observed with regard to most of the contemporary analyses of environmental behavior, especially in environmental psychology, which—despite being much more complex than the one I will criticize below—still have not left the core of the rationalistic model of action in the following respect: they still take the form of analyzing *what factors cause the gap between knowledge and behavior*. This is clear from the highly quoted meta-analysis and summary of basically all of the models of environmental behavior that occurred since the very emergence of environmental psychology as an independent field by Anja Kollmuss and Julian Agyeman aptly titled "Mind The Gap: Why Do

[186] Wittgenstein criticizes the picture that action consists of clearly separated stages of decision-making leading to an intention, and of realization of that intention in the world in: Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* 168–171 (§§ 611–632).

People Act Environmentally And What Are The Barriers To Pro-Environmental Behavior?”[187]. I do not want to question the relevance of knowledge and the factors that are mentioned in these studies—on the contrary, human behavior is extremely complex, and no model can cover all the factors that play a role in it—but I do want to highlight an often neglected fact, namely that *the decisive moment usually happens even before knowledge and all these factors come into play, specifically, the particular ways of perceiving the very situation manifested in a particular practical orientation that shapes all the rest*. And in this sense, the gap is rather between the attitudes—in the above-developed Wittgensteinian sense—and the ways of action considered to be in accordance with knowledge; in other words, knowledge usually does *not* stand at the beginning of behavior. And this is what the Wittgensteinian holistic approach allows us to grasp by focusing precisely on the structure of the situation in which investigated ways of acting take place.

The significance of ways of perceiving situations for understanding the actions that follow from them is not immediately evident with regard to the illustrative cases I used in the previous section. However, once we move to the more complicated cases in which something that matters to us is at stake, the significance of ways of perceiving situations will become apparent. This is why these ideas have been developed mainly in the ethical context because when we reject the idea that we perceive pure sensory data that we then evaluate and realize that we always perceive phenomena already grasped—and, thus, evaluated—in a certain way and that these ways differ between people, then of course there are significant implications for ethics, namely that we need to focus primarily on these ways of perceiving. This line of thought was in the proximity of the Wittgensteinian tradition was developed by Peter Winch,[188] and most significantly by Iris Murdoch, who, in her critique of the rationalist (in her terms behaviorist-existentialist-utilitarian) model of action based on evaluations of shared facts emphasizes the primacy of vision over choice and argues for interwovenness of facts and values as always already present in what we see. This is another essential dimension of the Wittgensteinian holistic understanding of action and of my extended conception of attitudes, which I will introduce more closely with reference to her work.

Murdoch criticizes the picture of morality, which is focused only on moral choice and

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[187] Anja Kollmuss and Julian Agyeman, “Mind the Gap: Why Do People Act Environmentally and What Are the Barriers to Pro-Environmental Behavior?,” *Environmental Education Research* 8, no. 3 (2002): 239–260, https://doi.org/10.1080/13504620220145401.

[188] Peter Winch, “Moral Integrity,” in *Ethics and Action*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), 171–192, see especially page 177 onwards.

arguments, and she compares this to a visit to a shop. One enters a shop in a position of absolute freedom, objectively estimates the features of the goods, and chooses.[189] This picture of morality is behaviorist in its emphasis on observability, existentialist in its emphasis on solitary omnipotent will, and utilitarian in its assumption that morality is concerned only with public acts.[190] In this view, it is presupposed that we all share similar criteria for the application of moral terms and the same world of facts, which we sometimes only evaluate differently due to our different levels of rationality and free will.[191] Therefore, in such a model, the moral aim is to be a sincere 'realist'[192] and choose, so to say, the objectively best goods for the objectively best price. Moral theories based on such a model of behavior then supply arguments in order to merge given facts with given moral terms in order for one to choose the better option when it comes to a decision. The problem with this idea (as shown in the previous section) is that we do not have access to 'pure facts'—we simply always already perceive phenomena somehow; through our basal reactions, we perceive them in a particular context, and this context often carries a certain moral charge before we can even begin moral reasoning. A typical situation looks like this:

> if we picture the agent as compelled by obedience to the reality he can see, he will not be saying, 'This is right', i.e., 'I choose to do this', he will be saying, 'This is A B C D' (normative-descriptive words), and action will follow naturally.[193]

The very grasping of the situation, the way it is described, often contains a particular ethical standpoint—a particular evaluation of the situation. However, Murdoch goes one step further and turns the criticized notion in which values are added to facts on its head by claiming that moral concepts are "deep moral configurations of the world"[194] which present us with different Gestalts.[195] In other words, it is not that moral concepts are added to given facts, but that the ways we understand moral concepts (what values we have) shape what facts we see, and in this sense, facts for Murdoch are not just imbued with morality but are directly shaped by it and, therefore, "We differ not only because we select different objects out of the same world but

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[189] Iris Murdoch, "The Idea of Perfection," in *The Sovereignty of Good* (Routledge, 2014), 8.
[190] Murdoch, "The Idea Of Perfection," 8–9.
[191] Murdoch, "Symposium: Vision And Choice In Morality," 40.
[192] Murdoch, "The Idea Of Perfection," 8.
[193] Murdoch, "The Idea Of Perfection," 40–41.
[194] Murdoch, "Symposium: Vision And Choice In Morality," 55.
[195] Murdoch, "Symposium: Vision And Choice In Morality," 40–41.

because we see different worlds."[196] Moral disagreements, thus, do not primarily arise from different evaluations of the same facts and/or different decisions but often occur directly at the level of grasping the very situation, i.e., on the level of attitudes from which actions follow naturally. Hence, for Murdoch, it is our way of seeing the world shaped by our "complex attitudes to life"[197] that is crucial in ethics.

Let me demonstrate the decisive role of ways of seeing with the example of abortions, toward which our attitudes are notoriously ambivalent,[198] which is reflected in the fact that they are perceived in many ways, most commonly perhaps as 'the removal of an embryo' or as 'the murder of a baby.' Consider the vast difference between these two attitudes. For a woman who sees abortion as the removal of an embryo, abortion—under certain (typically complicated) life circumstances—may be an option for what to do in an unwanted pregnancy. In contrast, for a woman who sees abortion as infanticide, it is—regardless of life circumstances—completely unacceptable. This illustrates well that the nature of the situation in which one finds oneself, and therefore the possibilities of action open to one, are largely determined already at the basal level of attitudes, simply by what and how one perceives. It is therefore essential to see that the controversy over abortion (which can be observed for several decades, and which has recently been actualized by the change of legislation in the Poland and the USA) already occurs directly at the level of perception, i.e., the main difference—besides the political issue of control over women's bodies—between the two camps lies in their perceiving different facts. The main dispute does not arise from different evaluations of the same facts and/or different decisions—there is no discussion of the circumstances under which it is acceptable to murder a baby, this is simply no way—*the dispute is about the ways of perceiving, about what facts should we see*. Beyond that, of course, there are also discussions about the circumstances under which it is permissible to have an embryo removed among people who share this general way of seeing things, but this discussion (which involves a whole range of other factors) is of a very different character from the debate with people who see abortion as infanticide, which essentially allows no discussion about its permissibility. Disputes between people who share a general attitude (for example, perceiving abortion as the removal of an embryo) could then be seen in terms of a different adjustment within the shared general attitude in which different aspects of what is perceived (for example, the rights of the woman in question, her life situation, or the biopolitics

[196] Murdoch, "Symposium: Vision And Choice In Morality," 41.
[197] Murdoch, "Symposium: Vision And Choice In Morality," 40.
[198] See, e.g.: Rhees, *Moral Questions*, 131–135.
Hursthouse, "Virtue Theory and Abortion," 223–246.

of the state in question, etc.) come to the fore.

This example is illustrative in that it shows how different ways of seeing present to us different facts—it would deform the complexity of the issue to say that both sides simply differently evaluate the same objective fact. Which fact would it be? We always have to take a position by the very seeing under particular terms—'a removal of an embryo' is something very different than 'a murder of a baby'—and the facts we see are straightforwardly intertwined with values, and in this sense, there are no objective facts 'behind' the values.[199] It is not about questioning the existence of a shared external reality; of course, we can examine, e.g., our retinas and maybe find out that the photons hitting our retinas are basically the same, but that is not what is important here. What is decisive is our experience, how we grasp the reality, and what facts we see as a result. Thus, an ethical dispute about the proper ways of acting can often be, at the core, linked to a dispute about the adequate way of perceiving, grasping, and describing of the given issue—about the adequacy of our attitudes—because its evaluation, connected with patterns of action adequate to the particular way of grasping the situation, is already embedded in them. And here for clarificatory purposes, we can distinguish disputes springing from a difference in a general attitude and that springing from a difference in adjustment within a shared general attitude. In the cases of the first kind, the discussion is barely possible because both camps speak about different facts; in the cases of the second kind, the debate could be understood as being about the same type of facts, but differently highlighted. The borderline is, of course, blurry, and even in cases of a difference in a general attitude, often it would be possible to find a different (perhaps even more general) attitude that could serve as a ground for some kind of discussion. In any case, *for the proper understanding of ethical disputes, we have to, first of all, understand the attitudes and/or adjustments from which they spring*. It is because a careful analysis often reveals that our ethical and also the political discussions are, in fact, more about the ways of grasping the issue in question, that is, *about the concepts through which we should perceive it* (which facts do we see) than about arguing whether this or that is right or wrong (differing evaluations of the facts).

This is not just a specifically Wittgensteinian idea, a similar insight clearly motivated Isaiah Berlin to write what became the most influential paper in 20th century political philosophy—his famous essay "Two Concepts of Liberty."[200] Berlin starts with making a

[199] Murdoch, "Symposium: Vision And Choice In Morality," 55.
[200] Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," in *Liberty: Incorporating Four Essays on Liberty*, ed. Henry Hardy (Oxford University Press, 2002), 166–217.

distinction between political (ethical)[201] and technical issues[202]—similar to the one I used to introduce this chapter—and argues that:

> to understand such [political] conflicts is, above all, to understand the ideas or attitudes to life involved in them [...].[203]

Berlin, of course, does not use the notion of 'attitude' in the specific Wittgensteinian sense I have elaborated above (in particular, he does not address the level of perception in the context of his analysis), nevertheless, his use of 'attitudes to life' and 'attitudes to the ends of life' across the text is surprisingly close to the meaning of Murdoch's above-quote notion of 'complex attitudes to life' and her notion of 'attitudes and visions,' in the sense that it is something that is deeply intertwined with concepts under which we grasp various situations and with how those concepts orient us—what they mean for us and in which way we understand them.[204] This is something that is closely bound up with *ethics*—it concerns our overall orientation toward what matters in life and what human life should look like. It is precisely in this sense that I will use the notion of *attitudes toward life* in the analyses that follow—not in the narrow sense that *attitudes toward life* would determine what we perceive as *alive* and what not, but on a *basal ethical level*, which constitutes a kind of seedbed from which particular attitudes toward particular phenomena grow. Which, in the aforementioned case of abortion, for instance, may result in perceiving the embryo as *alive*—but such an attitude, within the terminology I have introduced, I would describe as an *attitude toward a baby*, or *toward pregnancy*, or *toward conception*, and so on, depending on the case. And these as embedded in what I will label *attitudes toward life*—they can be understood as *basal ethical orientations*, a kind of *embodied values* that come into play *prior* to conscious deliberation about values.

In any case, the structure of Berlin's exploration is very similar to mine. Berlin clarified the confusion in political philosophy as stemming from two distinct, mostly unreflected, ways of understanding the concept of 'liberty'—'negative liberty' and 'positive liberty'—and realized that this is not a technical dispute resolvable at the level of understanding, but a dispute of a political character.

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[201] For Berlin "Political theory is a branch of moral philosophy."—see: Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 168.
[202] Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 166.
[203] Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 168.
[204] Compare the following occurrences: Murdoch, "Symposium: Vision And Choice In Morality," 36–37, 39, 40. And: Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 168, 212.

> These are not two different interpretations of a single concept, but two profoundly divergent and irreconcilable attitudes to the ends of life.[205]

Therefore, in his analysis, he placed emphasis on examining the broader context of attitudes to life in which the two ways of understanding liberty are embedded—he examined the related divergent values and visions of the ideal society that are at the heart of the political dispute, which he thereby illuminated.

My aim in the upcoming Part III of my dissertation will be similar at the core, I will situate the two different ways of understanding nature—as non-human and as natural capital—in the broader context of the *different attitudes toward nature* of which they are manifestations, and these into broader context of *different attitudes to life* which they are interwoven with, and in this way, I will clarify the dispute in contemporary nature protection as essentially ethico-political. However, I will not claim that there is any correct understanding of 'nature' as Berlin claimed for the concept of 'liberty' when he thought it was conflated with other concepts from which he wanted to purge it.

> Everything is what it is: liberty is liberty, not equality or fairness or justice or culture, or human happiness or a quiet conscience.[206]

I find this notion dubious, and from a late Wittgensteinian position, I am inclined to argue that the meaning of a concept lies primarily in the ways in which it is used in the context of the practice in which it is embedded and from which it cannot be purged. Such embeddedness only needs to be clarified, and of course there may be many contradictions and problems that need to be understood in the wider context, which in the long run may lead to a gradual abandonment of a particular problematic way of using a given concept, but the idea of 'removing historical overlays' is not fruitful, the meanings of concepts evolve with the practice in which they are used, and a 'return to the roots'—however good to know them—is not possible. Moreover, especially in the case of 'nature,' Berlin-like statements such as "Everything is what it is: nature is nature, not wilderness or original order, or reservoir of resources, etc." would not really get us very far.

[205] Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 212.
[206] Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," 171.

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This brings me also to the question that has been hanging in the background of my exposition for a few paragraphs now, namely whether there is something like an adequate way of perceiving—whether a certain way of perceiving a particular phenomenon, as if through a particular concept, can be regarded as the adequate one and other ways of grasping it as inadequate. In most everyday situations, this question does not arise at all—we simply adequately perceive phenomena around us as if under the same terms in a common context of ways of life we share. But there are also cases of inadequate ways of perceiving, some could be outright incorrect in the sense of being incomprehensible; that would be cases of grasping something in terms which would not make any sense in the given context, but those are relatively rare and not very interesting in our context. Complicated and important are especially cases that could be in the above-mentioned sense labeled as *ethical* ones, which can sometimes be comprehensibly grasped under various terms. In such cases it is then sometimes possible to distinguish between adequate and inadequate ways of perceiving the particular situation. For example as in the case mentioned above, when someone perceives some action in terms of 'pretending' or 'cheating,' but in fact it is not the case, and thus, such a way of perceiving would be—though comprehensible—inadequate.

However, then there are also those particularly complicated cases which, within the society where they take place, could be adequately grasped under various terms and these are then the subject of *ethico-political disputes*. A good example is the aforementioned issue of abortion, where two different attitudes clash—'an attitude toward an embryo' and 'an attitude toward a baby'—which leads to the opposing sides literally perceiving different objects. In this instance, it seems that it is not possible to simply say that one of these ways of perceiving is adequate and the other inadequate, in a similar way to the previous case, where the one who perceived the action in question in terms of cheating was mistaken. What would it mean in this case to show that one of these attitudes is mistaken? Surely this could not be achieved in rational argumentation, since this already takes place on both sides within the different modes of reasoning that are inherent to both attitudes. One could say that the former attitude is scientific and the latter religious, and together with Winch, claim that they follow a different logic.[207] On the individual level, the realization that one was mistaken in her attitude would, in this case, probably have the form of a religious conversion or disaffiliation. On a social level

[207] Peter Winch, *The Idea of a Social Science and Its Relation to Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (Routledge, 1990), 100–101.

(speaking about societies of which both attitudes are a part), the becoming of one of those attitudes adequate, and the other inadequate, would mean quite a substantive transformation in their ways of life. But is there some kind of *absolute* adequateness of ways of perceiving in such ethico-political cases like this?

I cannot delve here into a detailed examination of what possibilities the above considerations would leave open for moral realism, but it is fair to state my own position: I do *not* believe in such an *absolute* adequateness of ways of perceiving. Here, I am following the late Wittgenstein in refusing the idea of some kind of matching of description (concept) with the object *in itself*, whether guaranteed by Tractarian logical form[208] or by Platonic ideas. Or, to put it another way, the concept is adequate to the object, not because we find out by careful attention and investigation what the object is *in itself*, but because in a certain society, a certain concept is used in a certain way in certain language games intertwined with certain practices, and it is this shared context—our ways of life—that guarantees the meaningfulness of the use of the concept, i.e., that on whose background the concept is adequate to grasp a certain type of phenomena. And there are many ways of life; thus, there are many meaningful ways of grasping phenomena in the world. On the other hand, these ways of grasping phenomena in the world are not entirely arbitrary, which is why Wittgenstein repeatedly explores in his later remarks the complicated connection of our concepts to what he calls 'facts of nature' and 'our nature.'[209]

This is a complicated subject, and I will not go into it in detail here, as it is not crucial to my research topic, but in general, it can be said that there are some basic—shared by all cultures—ways of grasping the world. This is, after all, the core of the idea of the attitude toward a soul, i.e., that there is a basic sort of universal way of relating to other human beings that is primary to the level of thinking about them. However, the concrete form of the practical orientation toward humans varies across different societies, which is already somehow related to that conceptual level, to what concepts like 'human' or 'soul' that characterize that practical orientation—attitude—toward them mean in a given society (e.g. the idea of universal human rights and freedoms, which is importantly formative for Western society, is certainly not universal in the sense of timeless). And then there are ways of grasping phenomena that are

[208] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness (Routledge Classics, 2001), 9–11 (2.1–2.18).

[209] Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, especially passage on pages 65–68 is instructive (§§ 351–375), and it continues further, see also pages 70, 78 (§§ 392, 439).

Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 62, 241 (boxed remark following § 142, and PPF xii).

Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology, Volume 1*, 11–12 (§§ 45–48).

obviously very culturally—conceptually—dependent, such as grasping something under concepts such as 'justice'—which may mean in some societies suffering for wrongs committed in a supposed past life and in others being treated appropriately based on real deeds (and what that means will again vary widely). And this diverse way of grasping phenomena in the world—as if under different concepts—occurs, of course, also within a single society and is related to the fact that different people understand these socially conditioned concepts in different ways, which on the one hand cannot be completely divorced from the common way of using a given concept in a given society, which establishes its meaning, but on the other hand is not completely determined by it. And it is here that we come to the realm of ethics—as understood from a Wittgensteinian perspective—which does not lie primarily in some set of (questionably-labeled 'universal') laws[210] or principles[211] (as in legalistic ethical theories) or in established social norms (as in conventionalism or cultural relativism), but at the individual level, in how an individual—within that socially shared ways of grasping the world—adjusts themself toward particular ethically relevant situations. In this respect, then, *ethics is an individual seeking of more adequate attitudes* toward various situations—connected with more adequate ways of perceiving them as if under more adequate and more adequately understood concepts—*within the socially established realm* of meaningful ways of approaching these situations, while what 'more adequate' means may vary between individuals. In this sense, I understand ethics as refining one's own attitudes.

In a similar vein, I also understand the core of politics as the search for more adequate ways of perceiving the world within the given realm of established ways of perceiving the world, only at the social level. That is, as a refining of society's attitudes, as a search for a better shared—way of perceiving—world in which we want to live together. I do not wish to claim that the whole field of politics can be characterized as an effort to refining of society's attitudes, I just want to highlight the fact that in political discussions that go beyond the realm of technical solutions to specific operational issues, different attitudes clash, and that in disputes of this character the main point is to show a certain attitude toward the issue in question as more adequate, and thus, ideally to refine society's attitude toward that issue. It could be said that in such disputes—which have the character of a clash of attitudes—*ethics* enters *politics*, and I will call these cases *'ethico-political' disputes*. As I mentioned above, in the upcoming Part III of my dissertation, I will focus precisely on showing the current dispute in

[210] Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge University Press, 1998).
[211] John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, ed. Roger Crisp (Oxford University Press, 1998).

nature protection as having the ethico-political character—as stemming from *diverging attitudes toward nature* interwoven with *different attitudes to life*. In doing so, as it follows from the above, I will not claim that any attitude toward nature or toward life is adequate in an absolute sense, but I will nevertheless address the adequacy of attitudes toward nature in relation to the realities of the Anthropocene. Before I do so, in the following last section of this chapter, I will briefly summarize the main features of my extended Wittgensteinian conception of attitudes and introduce in what respect it can serve as a methodological tool for clarification of ethical matters.

(3.4) Attitudes as tools for clarification

> Nothing is more difficult than facing concepts without prejudice. (And that is the principal difficulty of philosophy.)
>
> [RPP 2 § 87][212]

The key message that can be seen as a red thread passing through the whole of Wittgenstein's late philosophy could be summarized by the following words: *don't let yourself get astray by an isolated phenomenon, and pay attention to its context*. In the following paragraphs, I will demonstrate that the idea of attitudes could be used as a suitable tool for clarification of the context of ethical matters. I have already stated in the introduction to this chapter that in this respect, I consider the idea of attitudes as standing (as their often-overlooked sibling) alongside the well-known 'language games' and 'forms of life,' which Wittgenstein used in various contexts and with different emphases, but basically with the common objective of elucidating the context of the phenomenon under investigation. As far as language games are concerned, this is not a controversial claim, and Wittgenstein states it quite explicitly.[213] As for 'forms of life,' I already explained my interpretation above (in section 3.2). But my central claim, which I have attempted to defend throughout this chapter, is that the idea of attitudes could—and should—be similarly taken as a kind of *methodological tool for clarification* of the context of the phenomena under investigation, namely *of the character of various ways of relating toward a particular kind of phenomena*—which is crucial precisely for the clarification of ethical matters. Let me now summarize the main features of my extended conception of attitudes, and then present the method, how to use it as a tool for clarification that I have developed.

* * *

An 'attitude toward X' is a label for a particular cluster of immediate basal reactions that people have toward a certain kind of phenomena which they grasp as X—that is, as if under the concept 'X' that characterizes the 'attitude toward X'. While this particular cluster of basal reactions is interconnected with its object in the sense that phenomena of the X-kind are only

[212] Wittgenstein, *Remarks On The Philosophy Of Psychology, Volume 2*, 18.
[213] Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* 56 (§§130–131).

given to people as if through the attitude toward X, or more precisely, the attitude toward X constitutes them as being of the X-kind. In other words, there is no object of X-kind outside the attitude toward X. This has significant consequences regarding how to make sense of perception, understanding, and action, which I will now summarize—keeping in mind in advance that these are not separate stages but rather descriptions of the influence of the very same cluster of immediate basal reactions, which we have labeled the 'attitude toward X,' across various interconnected realms. The attitude toward X *provides the scope* in which phenomena of the X-kind are perceived, understood, and acted upon—and is manifested in a particular way of perceiving X, understanding X, and acting toward X. The 'attitude toward X' *orients* people to perceive particular phenomena as if in the context of objects of X-kind, and thus as an object of X-kind. Perceiving an object of X-kind always already brings in a particular understanding of that object and constitutes a particular practical orientation toward that object, and in this sense *outlines the space* of potential meaningful ways of thinking and acting toward the object of X-kind.

These immediate basal reactions that shape human relations to various kinds of phenomena are of multiple various kinds—ranging from inborn and universal through highly socially conditioned to rather individual. To clarify how these immediate basal reactions shape human relations to various kinds of phenomena, we arrange them into particular clusters, which we call 'attitudes,' where these clusters typically represent certain *mixtures* of basal reactions of all these kinds. However, some 'attitudes' can be said to be rather universal, others rather socially conditioned, and when attempting to clarify the particular situation of a specific individual, we can sometimes say that their attitude is rather individual, in the sense that it somehow stands out from the attitudes commonly encountered in similar situations within a given society—but we should keep in mind that, strictly speaking, all immediate basal reactions are individual in the trivial sense that they are simply various kinds of immediate basal reactions that different individuals have. Thus, when we label a certain cluster of immediate basal reactions—an attitude—as rather universal, we mean that relating to a particular kind of phenomena as an object of X-kind is somehow natural and has something to do with 'facts of nature' and 'human nature'; when we label a certain cluster of immediate basal reactions as rather social, we mean that relating to a particular kind of phenomena as an object of X-kind may differ among various societies and has something to do with human culture; and when we label a certain cluster of immediate basal reactions as rather individual, we mean that relating to a particular kind of phenomena as an object of X-kind is not entirely common in the given society and has something to do with the particular life of the given individual.

The task of analyzing attitudes is to clarify the character of how people relate toward a certain kind of phenomena which they grasp as an object of X-kind—their *practical orientation* toward X—that is, to clarify the scope of perception, understanding, and action provided by their immediate basal reactions toward an object of X-kind. For the purpose of such clarification, it is particularly useful to focus on various real as well as potential similarities and differences, because these immediate basal reactions are *immediate* and thus can easily be overlooked. Therefore, in analyzing attitudes, it is essential to become aware of what other ways of grasping the phenomena under investigation exist or could exist, which then brings the character of the cluster of immediate basal reactions we are examining—and which we label the 'attitude toward X'—into sharper relief. If we are dealing with an attitude, we consider universal, it is especially important to focus on immediate basal reactions that all people share toward objects of X-kind and to clarify their characteristics. Additionally, we may also imagine certain different 'facts of nature' and different 'human nature' to have a contrast in order to illuminate the attitude in question more clearly.[214] In the case of attitudes we consider social or individual, it becomes crucial to investigate differences and similarities between attitudes across different eras and societies, and also among individuals within them, which helps clarify the specifics of the attitude under investigation and thus elucidate the way in which the space outlined by it for perception, understanding, and action provided by the 'attitude toward X' is shaped.

Precisely in order to facilitate a clearer analysis of similarities and differences between the investigated clusters of immediate basal reactions at these different levels, I introduced the conceptual distinction between 'attitude' and 'adjustment.' By 'attitude' I refer to a certain cluster of immediate basal reactions that, for the purpose of clarifying these basal reactions, is suitable to understand as being shared at a more general level; and by 'adjustments' I refer to various particular constellations of these immediate basal reactions that exhibit substantial shared features, and therefore are more appropriately analyzed as divergent adjustments of the same attitude, rather than as distinct attitudes. In this sense, one can speak of universal attitudes and their adjustments at the social or individual level, and of general social attitudes and their adjustments at the individual level. While, these clusters of immediate basal reactions—regardless of whether labeled as an 'attitude toward XYZ' or an 'adjustment toward XYZ'—are interconnected with their objects, in the sense that these—to various extents universal,

[214] Wittgenstein does precisely this, for example, in: Wittgenstein, *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology, vol. 1*, 29–33 (§§ 203–225).

social, or individual—clusters of immediate basal reactions constitute them as being of the XYZ-kind, thereby providing the scope in which they are perceived, understood, and acted upon.

Clarification of the character of such a scope is essential because it outlines potential meaningful ways of thinking and acting toward an object of XYZ-kind, and grasping how this scope of potentialities—this practical orientation toward XYZ—is shaped can be useful in various cases that are unclear to us. It is particularly important, however, in cases where a *dispute* emerges over how a particular kind of phenomenon should be perceived, understood, and acted upon. Such a dispute does not necessarily arise from differences in attitudes or adjustments toward that particular kind of phenomena—though even in such cases, their clarification can help clarify the issue regarding that phenomena—but when the dispute arises precisely from the differences in the attitudes or adjustments toward that phenomena—which are disputes that I call *ethical in core*—clarifying those clusters of immediate basal reactions from which such disputes emerge becomes absolutely crucial. It is for this reason that I consider this *extended conception of attitudes*—as a methodological tool for clarifying the character of various ways of relating toward a particular kind of phenomena—as *particularly suitable for clarifying ethical matters*, though the possible applications of this analytical tool are broader.

* * *

Let me present what precisely such a clarification of the character of ways of relating toward a particular kind of phenomena entails. I have stated that an 'attitude toward X' refers to a particular cluster of immediate basal reactions that people have toward a certain kind of phenomena, which they grasp as X—that is, as if under the concept 'X' that characterizes the 'attitude toward X'—and that this particular cluster of immediate basal reactions is interconnected with its object in the sense that it constitutes it as being of the X-kind. People simply perceive, understand, and act upon a certain kind of phenomena as if grasped as X, while others perceive, understand, and act upon them as if grasped as Y, and the particular clusters of their immediate basal reactions constituting their practical orientation—outlining the space within which they do so—typically remain unnoticed under ordinary circumstances, and attitudes serve precisely as a tool to bring these practical orientations to light. Such efforts must focus on what is observable, that is, precisely on the particular ways of perceiving, understanding, and acting upon the particular kinds of phenomena grasped under the concepts 'X' or 'Y.' We ask: In which particular way do people usually perceive, understand, and act

upon objects of X-kind, and how does this differ from how they usually perceive, understand, and act upon objects of Y-kind? What are the specifics of relating to an object grasped under the concept 'X' as opposed to the concept 'Y'? And precisely from these common ways of perceiving, understanding, and acting upon objects of X-kind and Y-kind, we attempt to infer the character of the space outlined for ways of perceiving, understanding, and acting upon the phenomena under investigation—that is, the character of the particular clusters of immediate basal reactions constituting those practical orientations in which the ways of perceiving, understanding, and acting upon the phenomena under investigation we can observe are outlined. It is thus a kind of transcendental method—we observe common ways of perceiving, understanding, and acting upon objects of X-kind and Y-kind, and try to infer the character of their presuppositions. We ask how those practical orientations toward the phenomena under investigation look, within which such ways of perceiving, understanding, and acting are outlined.

The method I have developed for clarification of the character of various ways of relating toward a particular kind of phenomena consists of three steps, the first two of which practically unfold simultaneously in mutual interaction, though it is clearer to describe them as two distinct steps. Efforts to clarify practical orientations toward the phenomena under investigation begin with clarifying the concepts X and Y, which characterize that practical orientation toward objects grasped as of X-kind and Y-kind within which particular ways of perceiving, understanding, and acting are outlined—and which are inscribed in the meaningful ways of using the concepts X and Y.[215] This is because the practical orientation toward objects of X-kind and Y-kind—that is, the outlined ways of perceiving, understanding, and acting that are meaningful in relation to objects grasped as X-kind and Y-kind—is intertwined with how it is meaningful to talk about objects of X-kind and Y-kind, that is, with meaningful ways of using the concepts X and Y. Thus, the established ways of using the concepts X and Y reflect the practical orientation toward X and Y characterized by these concepts. Therefore, (1) the first step in clarifying the practical orientations toward the phenomena under investigation is to clarify the ways in which the concepts X and Y, characterizing these practical orientations toward the phenomena under investigation, are commonly used both in relation to the phenomena under investigation and in various other contexts. Such clarification can be carried out through careful attention to how the phenomena under investigation are being approached, combined with philosophical and genealogical methods, and consists in *uncovering and*

[215] Wittgenstein, *Remarks On The Philosophy Of Psychology, Volume 2*, 115 (§§ 678–679).

distinguishing various significant traits of using the concepts X and Y—both in relation to the phenomena under investigation and in other relevant contexts—which reflect established ways of perceiving, understanding, and acting upon objects grasped as of X-kind and Y-kind—that is how the space in which they operate is outlined. (2) The second step in clarifying practical orientations toward the phenomena under investigation involves *organizing and systematizing these significant traits into particular clusters whereby producing suitable attitudes and/or adjustments as 'objects of comparison'*—for example, contrasting an 'attitude toward an embryo' with an 'attitude toward a baby'—that enable us to grasp the core of the differing practical orientations toward the phenomena under investigation. To avoid confusion, I emphasize that those immediate basal reactions toward the phenomena under investigation reflected in these traits are revealed in the process (not produced); however, to clarify the practical orientations they constitute, it is necessary to organize these basal reactions elucidatively—to connect and grasp them as particular clusters labeled as a particular attitude (e.g. toward a soul), which can then be contrasted with another attitude (e.g. toward a thing) for clarification purposes.

(3) The third and final step in clarifying practical orientations toward the phenomena under investigation involves elucidating their character—that is, *identifying how these practical orientations labeled as particular attitudes and/or adjustments outline ways of perceiving, understanding, and acting upon the phenomena under investigation*. This step is the transcendental one: the first and second steps operate at the level of analyzing the ways of using the concepts under which the investigated phenomena are being grasped, which merely *reflect* the practical orientation within which they take place—in the last step, it is necessary to clarify the conditions of possibility of such particular ways of approaching the phenomena under investigation. This is precisely the point of attitudes as a tool for clarification of the character of ways of relating toward particular phenomena—emphasis on attitudes should replace the focus of investigation from the level of what one thinks about the phenomena under investigation to the basal level of the practical orientation that determines the terms in which one approaches the phenomena and thus the space within which one's thinking about them unfolds. Hence, *the very presuppositions for claiming this or that move to the center of investigation by examining the structure of the particular practical orientation that enables this or that way of approaching the phenomena under investigation*. This is done again through careful attention to how the phenomena under investigation are approached, *aiming to reveal the relevant context of this or that particular way of approaching them*—that is, aiming to reveal the particular ways of life they are interwoven with and how these ways of life relate to

other spheres of human life. Indeed, the character of a particular practical orientation can only be clarified within the overall context of life in which it is embedded. Thus, in this final step of analyzing the character of a particular way of relating to a particular kind of phenomenon, we ask: *with what are the attitudes toward X and Y, distinguished in the second step, interconnected*? *What particular ways of life do they represent, and how do they relate to the whole 'bustle of life'?* The result of such an analysis, which clarifies the characters of divergent practical orientations toward the phenomena under investigation, is simultaneously the clarification of disputes about how the phenomena under investigation should be approached—which, in cases of ethical core, stem precisely from these divergent practical orientations toward the phenomena under investigation.

* * * * *

The phenomenon under my investigation is *nature protection*, and in my attempt to clarify it, I have already, to a certain extent, completed the first two steps in Part I of my dissertation, although at that time I was not yet explicitly using attitudes as an analytical tool. (1) I carefully examined how the concept of 'nature' is used in nature protection, and through philosophical and genealogical methods, I have *uncovered and distinguished various significant traits of the broad spectrum of established ways of using the concept 'nature,' which reflect established ways of perceiving, understanding, and acting upon what is grasped as 'nature' in nature protection*. (2) I have also *organized and systematized these significant traits by subsuming them into two distinct families of understanding nature in nature protection: as non-human* (in section 2.1), *and as natural capital* (in section 2.2). Now, it is time to state that they do not represent *merely* different understandings, but that these understandings are only the most visible parts of more basal ways of relating to nature, which they reflect—and to *label them explicitly as two distinct attitudes toward nature*. I call the first attitude an *attitude toward nature as wilderness* because 'wilderness' is a more vivid notion frequently used in nature protection that better characterizes what approaching nature as 'non-human' means in nature protection, compared to the term 'non-human' itself, which is overly abstract due to its lack of positive content. I call the second attitude an *attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources* because I consider 'reservoir of resources' the most vivid way to characterize what approaching nature as 'natural capital' means in nature protection.

Now it is necessary to undertake the third and final step and (3) *elucidate the character of these two divergent attitudes* toward what both families grasp as 'nature.' It is necessary to

shift to a transcendental level and explore the presuppositions of such particular ways of approaching nature—that is, to *reveal their overall context within the whole 'bustle of life' within which they are embedded*. It is necessary to carefully examine the ways of life these attitudes are interwoven with, and how they relate to other spheres of human life—the time has come to reveal and clarify what the attitude toward nature as wilderness and the attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources are interconnected with and situate them within the overall context of life of which they are part. This will be my task in the following final Part III of my dissertation, whereby *I will reveal the core of the dispute about the future of nature protection as stemming precisely from the divergent practical orientations toward the nature they intend to protect—thus as ethical in core—which will simultaneously clarify why the debate on where to move from the crossroads at which nature protection finds itself is stuck*. I will focus on this in the following Chapter 4, and in the concluding Chapter 5, I will suggest a possible path forward from this crossroads.

(III) CLARIFICATION OF NATURE PROTECTION

Our values – what we think good and bad, important and trivial, right and wrong, noble and contemptible – all these are conditioned by the place we occupy in the pattern, on the moving stair. We praise and blame, worship and condemn whatever fits or does not fit the interests and needs and ideals that we seek to satisfy – the ends that (being made as we are) we cannot help pursuing – according to our lights, that is, our own perception of our condition, our place in 'Nature'. Such attitudes are held to be 'rational' and 'objective' to the degree to which we perceive this condition accurately, that is, understand where we are in terms of the great world plan, the movement whose regularities we discern as well as our historical sense and knowledge permit. To each condition and generation its own perspectives on the past and future, depending upon where it has arrived, what it has left behind, and whither it is moving; its values depend on this same awareness.

Isaiah Berlin
[Historical Inevitability, 102]

Contemporary ecological pronouncements about the ways 'we' value nature (or fail to do so), about 'our' alienation from nature, and about the attitudes 'we' should adopt in order to heal the rift [are vexed by the paradox of] the temptation to speak on behalf of all from a position of understanding and sensibility to nature that is itself, at least in part, the product of the theorist's specific positioning within society.

Kate Soper
[What is Nature?, 239]

(4) Clarifying Established Nature Protection

In this chapter, I will pick up where our inquiry left off at the end of Part I of my dissertation. I will now gradually describe, expand, and clarify its outcomes using the methodology I developed in Part II of my dissertation, and then use this methodology to further analyze nature protection, aiming to clarify disputes about the future of nature protection as essentially ethico-political. In Chapter 1, I presented the current discussion on nature protection as being at a crossroads—in the context of the realities of the Anthropocene, the protection of changing nature will itself have to change to adapt, yet the debate over which direction to take from this crossroads is both confused and stuck. I showed that this confusion has much to do with the ambiguity of the concept of 'nature,' whose opacity translates into confusion in debates about the protection of nature. In Chapter 2, I therefore examined the broad spectrum of established ways of using the concept 'nature,' uncovering and distinguishing various significant traits, which I then organized and systematized into two distinct families of understanding 'nature' in nature protection: as non-human (in section 2.1) and as natural capital (in section 2.2)—thus clarifying the conceptual dimension of why the debate is confused. By the end of the previous Chapter 3, I stated that *these divergent understandings of 'nature' are not merely different understandings but in fact spring from two divergent attitudes toward nature, which they characterize and of which they are integral parts*—I labeled them: *attitude toward nature as wilderness* and *attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources*. I also stated that during this chapter, *I would reveal these disputes about the future of nature protection as primarily arising precisely from these two different attitudes toward nature*, which is the main point I will attempt to demonstrate. More precisely, I will show that it has significant explanatory value to understand them as stemming from divergent attitudes and thus suitable to grasp them as such—in saying this, I emphasize again that I take attitudes as a methodological tool for clarification and do not deny that numerous other factors play an important role in these disputes. However, I will attempt to show that these other factors enter the game already within the space outlined by the attitudes toward the subject of nature protection.

Now it is necessary to specify what I mean when I say it is appropriate to grasp these two families of different understandings of 'nature' in nature protection as embedded in two divergent attitudes toward nature—*as wilderness* and *as a reservoir of resources*—and to grasp the *disputes about the future of nature protection as stemming from them.* This will now be

achieved by clarifying these attitudes, which will proceed on two levels. First, at the level of *how they outline the space for perceiving, understanding, and acting upon their object with which they are interconnected*, which goes hand in hand with the *clarification of what that object with which they are interconnected actually is—that is being grasped as 'nature' within both camps*. This level (steps 1 and 2 outlined above) has already been partially explored in Chapter 2, where I uncovered and distinguished various significant traits of the broad spectrum of established ways of using the concept 'nature,' which reflect how the space for perceiving, understanding, and acting is outlined within the two attitudes, but now it is necessary to explore all these spheres in more detail in using the developed methodology. The second level (step 3) at which these two attitudes must be clarified is *their overall context within the whole 'bustle of life' within which they are embedded*. Both these levels are crucial from the viewpoint of delineating the particular desired state of nature that nature protection should strive to achieve, which is at the center of current disputes about the future of nature protection and will therefore be my primary focus. My goal will be to show *how the delineation of the desired state of nature that nature protection should strive to achieve is outlined already at the basal level of attitudes*, and the structure of this chapter will correspond to these two levels of clarification of attitudes toward nature that must be undertaken in order to achieve this. First, I will explore how the attitude toward nature as wilderness (in section 4.1) and the attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources (in section 4.2) outline the space for perceiving, understanding, and acting upon the object they are interconnected with and the character of the attitudinal object they are interconnected with. Subsequently (in section 4.3), I will clarify their overall context, showing which other areas of life they are interconnected with and what that entails, thereby revealing what is truly at stake in disputes about delineating the desired state of nature that nature protection should strive to achieve. By elaborating on these findings (in section 4.4), I will clarify why the dispute about the future of nature protection is stuck—revealing it as being ethical-political at its core.

(4.1) Attitude toward nature as wilderness

Let us first briefly recap what the object of these two attitudes is, which they both grasp as 'nature.' The analysis of an attitude must begin with the *attitudinal object* with which this attitude is interconnected and which, within the scope of the attitude, becomes an object of a *particular kind*, toward which specific ways of perceiving, understanding, and acting are outlined. So, what kind of object is this 'nature' within these two attitudes toward nature? The objects are constituted by phenomena arranged in a particular way through these attitudes, and it is precisely this arrangement that makes them objects of a particular kind. What I intend to demonstrate now is that within the attitude toward nature as wilderness, the arrangement of 'the same phenomena' differs from the arrangement within the attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources, which makes them objects of different kinds—the two camps thus *already grasp different kinds of objects at the basal level of perception*. The reason this is complicated to disentangle is precisely that they both grasp their object as 'nature,' significantly complicating the situation we are trying to understand, in contrast, for example, with the previously mentioned issue of abortion, where the difference in grasping in the attitudes toward an embryo versus a baby is far more vivid. Additionally—and this is another complication—the ways of acting outlined in these two attitudes could, in some cases, lead in quite similar directions, but I will get back to this later.

Now, let us focus on how, within these two attitudes toward nature, different objects are grasped already at the level of perception within the same kind of phenomena. I will begin with clarification of the subject of protection—nature—and its desired state within the attitude toward nature as wilderness, and subsequently, in the next section, I will elaborate on the attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources while contrasting both. In the scope of the attitude toward nature as wilderness, *nature is understood as what is 'natural'*—that is, *uninfluenced by humans, either completely or to a certain extent*. The goal of protecting nature perceived in this way is thus the protection of the 'naturalness' of nature, taking the form either of protecting the 'pristineness' of nature or of the 'natural' functioning of natural processes, delineated as their *state before any human intervention or before human intervention of 'different order' than the 'natural order.'* This represents the *desired state,* which nature protection stemming from the attitude toward nature as wilderness strives to protect and reach. Let us now examine how this translates to the level of perception.

For instance, when protecting a particular forested area—let us say the above mentioned Šumava National Park—within the attitude toward nature as wilderness, the focus is on where

human interventions of 'different order' have occurred, in what respect the 'natural' functioning of natural processes has been disturbed, and how to help restore them to their original trajectory. The forest is perceived as if originally organized into a harmonious whole, which has somehow been disturbed, and *perception is guided toward recognizing this 'original natural order'*—which, as shown in section 2.1, is either identical to the ideal of wilderness or derived from it—thus, one could figuratively speak about '*seeing nature as wilderness*.' The individual species within the forest are perceived as fulfilling certain ecosystem functions within this originally harmonious whole, and perception is guided toward noticing deviations from this original 'natural order'—while the differences in what is perceived as a deviation from the original 'natural order' caused by human intervention of 'different order' will be referred to, in accordance with the established terminology, as *different adjustments* within the same attitude toward nature as wilderness. The area is seen *as if through the perspective of the original natural order—the ideal of wilderness*—which directs attention to specific species within the ecosystem, distinguishing: some as native, some as non-native, and others as invasive; some as endangered, others as in optimal condition, and yet others as overpopulated; some as keystone species crucial for maintaining the 'natural' functioning of natural processes, some as less important, and others as harmful. All this is significantly informed by the Romantic aesthetics of nature with its ideal of wilderness,[216] to which I now dedicate the following paragraphs due to its fundamental influence on the mode of perception within the attitude toward nature as wilderness.[217]

The influence of Romantic aesthetics of wild nature on the way of seeing nature in nature protection was so substantial[218] that one could, with mild exaggeration, even say it represents a *way of seeing nature as Romantic landscape painting*. To fully grasp the uniqueness and cultural conditionality of this way of seeing nature, one must realize that throughout most of human history, nature was not commonly considered an aesthetic object, and wild nature even less so. It may appear peculiar to the contemporary reader, but as observed with surprise already

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[216] See the following studies mapping the influence of Romanticism on the perception of Šumava National Park and how it translates into debates about its management:
Veronika Faktorová and Michal Hořejší, *Karel Klostermann a zrod Šumavy* (Nakladatelství Jihočeské univerzity, 2023).
Michal Hořejší, *Politika lesa: Debata o Národním parku Šumava v letech 1991–2010* (Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy, 2022).
[217] With regard to this, I draw from my earlier work, see: Rozen, "Attitudes Toward Nature," 10–15.
[218] Two big volumes are devoted to this topic a related issues in response to Cronon, "The trouble with wilderness," 7–28. See: Callicott and Nelson, *The Great New Wilderness Debate*, 1–697. And: Nelson and Callicott, *The Wilderness Debate Rages On*, 1–744.

by John Ruskin,[219] in antiquity and the Middle Ages, nature was rarely appreciated aesthetically. Furthermore, forests and mountains—the most common examples of aesthetically appreciated nature today—were considered rather ugly, dangerous, and terrifying.[220] Only in the 17th century do we observe a substantial increase in the interest in natural beauty in Europe, prompted by the development of secular science and secular art, which freed nature from religious associations and led to new ways of aesthetic appreciation of nature, combining scientific objectification with artistic subjectivization.[221] This significant shift was, to a large extent, initiated, carried, and amplified by *landscape painting*, which gradually influenced the ways how nature is seen so profoundly that in environmental aesthetics and cultural geography, many analyze what Allen Carlson calls "perceiving and appreciating nature as if it were a landscape painting,"[222]—later commonly labeled as '*seeing nature as landscape'*—which some understand rather as *"masking" of nature by the landscape*,[223] and which was criticized in length by Gina Crandell also with focus on other forms of pictorial representations in her *Nature Pictorialized: "The View" in Landscape History.*[224] 'Landscape' gradually became a certain way how to structure sensory perceptions—generally speaking, it refers to the *visually perceptible part of the predominantly terrestrial surface of the Earth, which has a horizon and is visible from a distance*.[225]

Initially, it was the utility landscape (pastoral and agricultural) that was aesthetically preferred, and only later, in the 18th and 19th centuries, with the rise of Romanticism, did wild nature become glorified, see the famous study on this shift focused on the paradigmatic case of mountains: *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory* by Marjorie Hope Nicolson.[226] In this era,

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[219] John Ruskin, "Modern Painters," in *The Works of John Ruskin*, Library Edition, vol. IV, ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (Longmans, Green, and Co., 1904; orig. 1856), 193–194.

[220] Karel Stibral, *Estetika přírody: K historii estetického ocenění krajiny* (Pavel Mervart, 2019), 149–158.

[221] Allen Carlson and Sheila Lintott, "Introduction: Natural Aesthetic Value and Environmentalism," in *Nature, Aesthetics, and Environmentalism: From Beauty to Duty*, ed. Allen Carlson and Sheila Lintott (Columbia University Press, 2008), 1–22.

[222] Allen Carlson, "Appreciation and the Natural Environment," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 37, no. 3 (1979): 270.

[223] Vlastimil Zuska and Ondřej Dadejík, "Landscape as a Mask of Nature: The Aesthetics of Subversion Versus the Aesthetics of Conformity," *Estetika: The Central European Journal of Aesthetics* 44, no. 1–4 (2007): 28–44. Stibral, *Estetika přírody,* 133.

[224] Gina Crandell, *Nature Pictorialized: "The View" in Landscape History* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).
For comparison also see: Denis Cosgrove, "Landscape and the European Sense of Sight: Eyeing Nature," in *Handbook of Cultural Geography*, ed. Kay Anderson, Mona Domosh, Steve Pile, and Nigel Thrift (SAGE Publications, 2003), 249–267.

[225] Stibral, *Estetika přírody,* 20–21.

[226] Marjorie Hope Nicolson, *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory: The Development of the Aesthetics of the*

several aesthetic concepts—*beautiful*, *picturesque*, and *sublime*—were elaborated in connection to nature so as to allow its more precise admiration.[227] Even though today we aesthetically appreciate both wild and utility landscapes, and clear distinctions between these aesthetic categories have gradually faded in everyday language, Romantic landscape painting, with its emphasis on the *sublimity of nature*,[228] had a very significant impact on the way of perceiving nature, which is so characteristic of the attitude toward nature as wilderness. The paradigmatic case of such depiction of nature is the paintings of Caspar David Friedrich, typically depicting wild forests, mountains, misty skies, rocks, or cliffs, sometimes with lonely observers gazing into the distance in silent awe, sometimes featuring ruins of sacred buildings or crosses in wild nature, suggesting that the true temple is nature itself.[229] Such wild nature is sublime because, in the face of its vastness and power, one simultaneously feels feeble and elevated. The wanderer, in solitude—free from the corrupting influence of alienated civilization—and through deep introspection in contact with nature, reaches God, or at least this was the Romantic ideal. Over time, the religious aspect of people's trips to nature gradually weakened; nowadays, one walks in nature mainly to relax, calm down, enjoy beautiful views, and perhaps take some pictures. Nevertheless, the views considered beautiful, what people tend to observe and photograph, and *what is in nature protection being perceived as the 'original natural order,' remain heavily shaped by Romantic landscape painting*, which has formed the core of the way of seeing nature that can be described as *seeing nature as wilderness*.

This peculiar way of perceiving nature, interconnected with the particular understanding of nature (which was the focus of section 2.1), goes hand in hand with particular ways of acting that are outlined in this specific practical orientation toward nature that I have labelled 'the attitude toward nature as wilderness.' Let us now examine what kinds of actions in nature protection this attitude typically leads to, and also by what ways of reasoning they are usually supported, because this will make it clear that these ways of reasoning in nature protection are not independent, but are deeply rooted in that practical orientation which is transcendental with

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Infinite (Cornell University Press, 1959).

[227] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. Adam Phillips, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford University Press, 1998; orig. 1757).
Uvedale Price, *An Essay on the Picturesque, as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful; and, on the Use of Studying Pictures, for the Purpose of Improving Real Landscape* (Cambridge University Press, 2014; orig. 1794).
Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, ed. Nicholas Walker, trans. James Creed Meredith (Oxford University Press, 2007; orig. 1790), 35–164.

[228] For developed account, see: Emily Brady, *The Sublime in Modern Philosophy: Aesthetics, Ethics, and Nature* (Cambridge University Press, 2013)

[229] See the following study of Friedrich's landscape depictions, including many reproductions: Joseph Leo Koerner, *Caspar David Friedrich and the Subject of Landscape*, 2nd ed. (Reaktion Books, 2009).

regard to them—in the sense that within its scope, certain facts emerge as relevant, and in a very specific way. This will be important in demonstrating that the dispute about the future of nature protection is not of a technical character, but that it is more appropriate to grasp it as springing already from the basal level of attitudes.

A distinctive feature of nature protection stemming from this attitude toward nature is its particular emphasis on the *protection of scenic landscapes*—that is, aesthetically appealing areas that evoke a sense of beauty and wonder through unique land formations, vibrant vegetation, captivating bodies of water, or dramatic skies: majestic mountain ranges, lush forests, untamed rivers, or rugged coastlines. It is precisely these diverse scenic landscapes that have been, and continue to be, the main focus of nature protection efforts rooted in the attitude toward nature as wilderness, because they most closely correspond to the dreamed-of ideal of wilderness, where nature still—at least to a significant extent—follows the undisturbed *original* '*natural order*.' The *beauty and sublimity of wilderness was explicitly used to argue for the establishment of the first national parks*—for example, in the famous case of Yosemite National Park, this came about through the efforts of John Muir, the essential proponent of wilderness, who wrote extensively about its aesthetic qualities in order to garner public support for its establishment—and succeeded.[230] Nature protection guided by the attitude toward nature as wilderness tends to overlook areas that are not aesthetically appealing and do not match the ideal of wilderness, for various reasons. Such areas are typically not perceived as worthy of protection and are, consequently, usually not protected.[231]

This explicit emphasis on the beauty and sublimity of wilderness was especially pronounced in early preservationism, which protected wilderness through what became known as *fortress conservation*—that is, enclosing what was seen as wilderness into guarded protected areas, with an emphasis on minimizing human interaction that could disturb its 'pristineness.' However, with the gradual incorporation of natural sciences into nature protection—which culminated in the 1970s with the emergence of the independent discipline of *conservation biology*—nature protection stemming from the attitude toward nature as wilderness began to promote its goals through a different line of reasoning, in which the beauty and sublimity of wilderness no longer played the central role; instead, it was *biodiversity*. This shift was

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[230] For analysis of Muir's argumentation, see: Christine L. Oravec, "John Muir, Yosemite, and the Sublime Response: A Study in the Rhetoric of Preservationism," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 67, no. 3 (1981): 245–258, https://doi.org/10.1080/00335638109383578.

[231] This has been criticized by many—for example, by Yuriko Saito, who develops an account of aesthetic appreciation of unscenic landscapes in: Yuriko Saito, "The Aesthetics of Unscenic Nature," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 56, no. 2 (1998): 101–111, https://doi.org/10.2307/432249.

completed with the essential critique of the very concept of wilderness, which began gaining traction in the 1990s. Shortly after the publication of William Cronon's breakthrough study "The Trouble with the Wilderness"—which convincingly demonstrated that 'wilderness' is a peculiar and fundamentally paradoxical Western construct that hinders nature protection because this radically dualistic vision reproduces and strengthens what its proponents strive to fight against: human alienation from nature[232]—the prominent environmental philosopher and proponent of Leopold's Land Ethic, J. Baird Callicott, proclaimed: "I suggest we rename wilderness areas 'biodiversity reserves.'"[233] The emphasis on biodiversity was, in fact, present in this way of approaching nature in nature protection from early on, as I have shown in the case of Leopold (in section 2.1), however, as I have already indicated—it is not just any kind of biodiversity, but a *kind of biodiversity once again derived from the ideal of wilderness*.

Nature protection stemming from the attitude toward nature as wilderness does not, for example, aim to increase biodiversity in a given locality by introducing new, non-native species. Rather, it aims to protect the same *original 'natural order' of nature*—this time *in terms of the biodiversity that characterizes this original natural order*. And what is considered to be the original natural order of nature is also often still substantively influenced by aesthetic ideals. It is above all charismatic biodiversity that is protected—that is, charismatic species (aesthetically attractive and emotionally appealing species, typically large mammals and birds), and the conditions for their flourishing—which happens at the expense of other, less attractive and less appealing species. Advocates of this approach defend it as a useful means for fundraising and gaining public support for nature protection—a suitable charismatic species from a given area is selected, such as the black bear, bald eagle, Eurasian lynx, or panda—and this species is promoted and protected as a 'flagship species,' which need not necessarily go against broader goals of nature protection.[234] Such an approach may be pragmatic, but even so, it shows how aesthetic preferences shape nature protection practice—and how areas that lack suitable charismatic species tend to be neglected. But this is not only a matter of pragmatism, because the strong focus on charismatic species is also reflected in conservation science.[235]

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[232] Cronon, "The trouble with wilderness," 7–28.

[233] J. Baird Callicott, "Should Wilderness Areas Become Biodiversity Reserves?," *The George Wright Forum* 13, no. 2 (1996): 35, https://doi.org/10.1177/0956247896003002064.

[234] Nigel Leader-Williams and Holly T. Dublin, "Charismatic megafauna as 'flagship species'," in *Priorities for the Conservation of Mammalian Diversity: Has the Panda Had Its Day?*, ed. Abigail Entwistle and Nigel Dunstone (Cambridge University Press, 2000), 53–81.

[235] Ivan Jarić et al., "On the Overlap Between Scientific and Societal Taxonomic Attention—Insights for Conservation," *Science of the Total Environment* 648 (2019): 772–778, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2018.08.198.

Critics of this approach argue for a focus on the protection and research of keystone species, which are fundamentally important for the stability of the entire ecosystem.[236] And these are often non-charismatic species, such as various invertebrates. A recent meta-analysis of the meaning of charismatic species for conservation biology by Frédéric Ducarme, Gloria M. Luque, and Franck Courchamp concludes with the proclamation:

> It would probably be better if more knowledge of nature influenced our way of seeing biodiversity rather than our emotions affect biodiversity […].[237]

This seems to be a more reasonable approach—but the question remains: what knowledge? The point is that within the scope of the attitude toward nature as wilderness, only certain kinds of knowledge are relevant—*the perception is guided in a particular way, highlighting particular facts that may become part of the reasoning about the future of nature protection*. Even when we focus on the protection of keystone species, which are fundamentally important for ecosystem stability, questions still remain: what is meant by stability? And more importantly—what is the desired state of the ecosystem? What should it look like, beyond being 'stable'? After all, any ecosystem can reach a certain form of stability over a given period of time, in many different configurations—so which configuration is the one that nature protection should aim to achieve? *Keystone species are keystone only in relation to a particular state of an ecosystem*. And this *desired state*, in the scope of the attitude toward nature as wilderness, *is the state of the ecosystem prior to human intervention of a 'different order'*—as it was uninfluenced by humans, either completely or to a certain degree—in other words, *it is a state derived from the ideal of wilderness*.

This becomes especially clear in the case of wolf protection in many European countries—where public support for nature protection is certainly not the goal, because wolf protection arouses considerable controversy. Wolves are explicitly protected as keystone species—leaving aside the well-known fascination with wolves among protectionists which surely plays its role—the argument centers on their key role in maintaining ecosystem stability.

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236 Daniel Simberloff, "Flagships, Umbrellas, and Keystones: Is Single-Species Management Passé in the Landscape Era?," *Biological Conservation* 83, no. 3 (1998): 247–257, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0006-3207(97)00081-5.

237 Frédéric Ducarme, Gloria Luque, and Franck Courchamp, "What Are 'Charismatic Species' for Conservation Biologists?," *BioSciences Master Reviews* 1 (2013): 6, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/302596828_What_are_charismatic_species_for_conservation_biologists.

But this raises the question: were the ecosystems of Central Europe—or, to be more specific, in the Šumava National Park, where wolves were absent for the entire 20th century and returned only in the last two decades—truly *unstable* throughout this period? And if so, in which sense? Which stability are we looking for? Would they be more stable if wolves were present, and are they more stable now in the 21st century? Of course, I do not mean to suggest that it makes no sense to speak of ecosystem stability and biodiversity, what I am trying to show is that this is not the whole story—these scientific criteria enter into nature protection in a very specific way, and it is this specificity that must be understood if we are to grasp the full story that is hidden beneath their *veil of objectivity*. In this case, it seems that the core of the story lies rather in the fact that, during the 19th century (once again), wolves were eradicated *by humans*, and the notion of stability comes only later as a way to support a return to the time before that human intervention of a 'different order.' *In the scope of the attitude toward nature as wilderness, nature protection is perceived as if through the filter of an original 'natural order' from which we have deviated and which represents the desired state to which it seeks to return*.

(4.2) Attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources

Let us now turn our attention to the attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources and its contrast with the attitude toward nature as wilderness. I will begin this analysis, once again, with the *attitudinal object* with which this attitude is interconnected and which, within its scope, becomes an object of a *particular kind*—toward which specific ways of perceiving, understanding, and acting are outlined. So the question is: what kind of object is this 'nature' within the scope of the attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources? Within this scope, *nature is understood as natural resources and ecosystem services beneficial to humans*, and the goal of protecting nature perceived in this way is protecting them in the *state in which they are bountifully and continuously available for human use*—the state of *sustainable bountifulness*—which represents the *desired state* that nature protection stemming from this attitude strives to protect and reach. Let us now examine how this translates to the level of perception, and in what sense different kinds of objects are perceived within the same kind of phenomena, when viewed through the lens of the two attitudes under analysis.

Take, for instance, the case of protecting a particular forested area—imagine again Šumava National Park. Within the attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources, the focus is on the value of the natural capital—the natural resources and ecosystem services—present in the forested area, and on imagining what its value could be. Perception is guided toward identifying what benefits humans and how this could be enhanced and protected from overexploitation, so that the natural resources and ecosystem services can be provided continuously. The area is perceived as if organized into various segments of natural capital, each of which possesses a certain value—and whose sum could increase if the individual components of that natural capital are appropriately managed. Perception is guided toward identifying what, under given conditions, is the maximum possible value of the natural capital in question—that is, what constitutes the desired state of sustainable bountifulness. We can label this *seeing nature as commodity*.[238] The ecosystem is perceived as delivering particular services: regulating services, such as capturing water and carbon; provisioning services, such as producing wood; supporting services, such as sustaining nutrient cycling and soil formation; and cultural services, such as aesthetic attractiveness and the potential for recreation. And perception is guided toward identifying how these and other ecosystem services could be

[238] Büscher and Fletcher analyze commodification of nature and talk several times about how this changes the way how nature is seen, though they do not use the phrase 'seeing nature as commodity,' see:
Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 75, 82, 84, 89, 108-109.

enhanced. The area is thus seen *as if through the perspective of sustainable bountifulness*, which directs attention to specific species within the ecosystem, distinguishing those that support these ecosystem services, those that are of little relevance to them, and those that hinder them—thereby establishing their value and priorities for nature protection in the given forest.

However, various ways of perceiving through the lens of sustainable bountifulness—different adjustments within the attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources—can take very different forms. These forms represent the highlighting of different particular objects from among the same kind of objects common to this attitude and correspond to quite different ways of acting. What matters is which components of natural capital in a given location are perceived as most valuable, which may significantly alter the resulting character of the nature protection practice stemming from this attitude. Let us suppose, in the case of the Šumava National Park example, that cultural services, such as aesthetic attractiveness and recreational potential, are perceived as offering the highest value. In such a case, the actions stemming from such an adjustment of the attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources—although motivated differently—will be quite similar to those stemming from the attitude toward nature as wilderness: the aim will be to preserve the appearance of wilderness, with emphasis on the protection of aesthetically attractive and emotionally appealing species. The main difference will likely lie in the extent to which the tourism industry would get space in the area, but otherwise, the idea of the desired state of the area will be quite similar. However, in cases where other natural resources and ecosystem services are perceived as offering the greatest potential for growth of natural capital in the given area, the nature protection practice stemming from the attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources will differ significantly. By contrast, the nature protection practice stemming from the attitude toward nature as wilderness—with the exception of extreme cases like Pleistocene rewilding—usually does not differ so dramatically in its various adjustments. For instance, if provisioning services like timber production are perceived as most valuable in the given forested area, then nature protection practice stemming from the attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources will take the form of sustainable yield forestry, and any potential loss in biodiversity will be compensated elsewhere. The aim, after all, is the overall gain in natural capital.

Nature protection practice stemming from the attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources has a *global character*. Natural capital is ultimately one—decline in value in one segment can be easily compensated elsewhere. Commodities are interchangeable; the goal is to manage the whole toward the state of sustainable bountifulness and not get stuck on any one of its particular components. Protection of nature stemming from this attitude focuses on the

whole—its goal is the growth of natural capital, not the preservation of any of its components in the form in which they currently exist, or once existed. Such protection of nature is inherently *forward-looking*. By contrast, protection of nature stemming from the attitude toward nature as wilderness is highly *local* and inherently *backward-looking*—it concerns the protection of a particular locality, aiming to bring it closer to the original 'natural order', which is derived from the past. From the position of the attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources, one could metaphorically say of the nature protection practice stemming from the attitude toward nature as wilderness that "they can't see the forest for the trees." And from the perspective of the attitude toward nature as wilderness, one could—more literally—say of nature protection stemming from the attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources that they see neither the forest nor the trees—only the value of the resources and services they provide.

Perhaps, after reading the preceding lines, you are wondering whether what I describe here as a nature protection practice stemming from the attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources even qualifies as nature protection. Is this not simply a description of capitalism? As I already mentioned in Chapter 1, some neo-protectionists argue that this is not nature protection at all,[239] and as I further elaborated in section 2.2, at its core, it is indeed a culmination of the integration of nature protection into capitalist structures in what Büscher and Fletcher call *accumulation by conservation*.[240] However, as I also stated in Chapter 1, it is not my aim to decide what counts as true nature protection and what does not—what would that even mean? Nature protection is what people perceive it to be. And from the viewpoint of clarifying nature protection and disputes about its future, what is crucial is precisely the perspective of the actors themselves—this is why I stated, by the end of the Chapter 1, that I will focus on exploring the character of conscious, systematic nature protection understood in these terms. And the new conservationists—who represent the clearest expression of the attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources—do perceive their proposals and actions as nature protection. It is important to realize that the goal of nature protection stemming from the attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources is not the growth of financial capital but the *growth of natural capital*. That the two realms somehow end up being intermixed—as Büscher and Fletcher demonstrate[241]—is another matter. But primarily, the new conservationists aim to improve the condition of ecosystems—including planetary ecosystems—toward sustainable

[239] Soulé, "The New Conservation," 895.
[240] Büscher and Fletcher, "Accumulation by Conservation," 273–298.
Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 105–109.
[241] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 109.

bountifulness, and financial capital is meant to serve as a means to this end. Thus, when a decrease in natural capital in one locality (e.g. loss of biodiversity due to sustainable yield forestry) leads to a gain in financial capital, which is then used to increase natural capital elsewhere (e.g. through biodiversity protection), such that natural capital grows overall, then a successful nature protection activity has taken place. The point is to carefully assess the value of the individual components of natural capital and protect, for example, biodiversity where it offers the greatest potential.

The new conservationists assume that such an approach will promote the flourishing of both human and non-human nature—the attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources is undoubtedly anthropocentric in the sense that it is humans who determine the value of the individual components of natural capital, but it is not only about humans. It is still about the protection of nature, and new conservation seeks to transcend the—within the attitude toward nature as wilderness absolutely fundamental—human–nature dualism by protecting one nature as a whole, which includes both human and non-human nature.

> In different places, in different chunks, we can manage nature for different ends—for historical restoration, for species preservation, for self willed wildness, for ecosystem services, for food and fiber and fish and flame trees and frogs. We've forever altered the Earth, and so now we cannot abandon it to a random fate. It is our duty to manage it.[242]

As already mentioned, the two attitudes toward nature are not necessarily in conflict—the attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources can also lead to the creation of nineteenth-century-style natural history museums, which also have value, but it emphasizes that a return to an imagined 'original natural' order of nature should not be the *general* aim of nature protection. From the perspective of the attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources, nature must be carefully managed as a *whole*. And if—for instance, as a result of climate change—it becomes impossible or impractical to maintain Šumava National Park in the form it had in the nineteenth century, then it no longer makes sense to continue pursuing this goal. Instead, it is desirable to manage it differently—perhaps for sustainable timber harvesting, or to transform it into a biological hotspot where other—non-native—species will thrive in abundance. We have forever altered the Earth, and now it is our duty to manage it—to manage it wisely. The key question, then, is: what does it mean to manage it wisely? How should the value of

[242] Marris, *Rambunctious Garden*, 171.

individual components of natural capital be determined—a question that directly corresponds to what state represents the desired condition of sustainable bountifulness?

In section 2.2, I have already noted that there are serious problems with such delineations, which stem from the fact that sustainable bountifulness is not an objective state that could be derived scientifically—just as in the case of the state of the original 'natural order.' Its determination involves a series of decisions that are arbitrary in the sense that they could be meaningfully made in many different ways. It is necessary to balance the various components of natural capital, which cannot be managed in such a way as to result in gains on all fronts—and moreover, it is not even entirely clear what should count as a gain. The tool for achieving this balancing is the market—which, in itself, is highly questionable (I will return to this point later)—but for the market to operate and balance between the various components of natural capital, the value of those components must somehow be established. I have already mentioned the complex decisions involved in assigning a value to the ecosystem service of carbon sequestration, and determining the value of biodiversity for the purposes of biodiversity offsets and habitat banking seems even more difficult. Within the scope of the attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources, such decisions are informed by *sustainability studies*—an interdisciplinary field that examines the interactions between natural, social, and economic systems to promote the sustainable development of each—which generate sophisticated forecasts of the future development of these systems based on various criteria. And on the basis of such scientific knowledge, the value of various segments of natural capital is inferred—yet again, to grasp what lies behind the *veil of objectivity* created by this scientific knowledge, it is crucial to understand that this knowledge enters into a domain of nature protection that is already oriented in a particular way at the basal level of attitudes, which in turn outlines what counts as *relevant facts*.

Before turning to the analysis of what lies behind the determination of the desired state in both attitudes toward nature, I want to conclude this section by emphasizing what should by now be clear—namely, that *the two camps grasp different kinds of objects within the same kind of phenomena, already at the basal level of perception*. Or, to put it more figuratively, they see the same phenomena in a different light, within a different context—which makes them, in an important sense, different objects, even though, strictly speaking, they are looking at the same place. It is similar to the aforementioned duck–rabbit picture: in the context of a field, it is seen as a rabbit; in the context of a pond, as a duck; in the context of a philosophical text, as a duck-rabbit picture—and all those ways of seeing it are adequate within their contexts. Analogously, within the scope of the attitude toward nature as wilderness, *Black locust* (Robinia

pseudoacacia) is seen—in the context of the imagined 'natural order' of nature in Central Europe—as a non-native invasive tree that should be eradicated. Within the scope of the attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources, by contrast, Black locust is seen—in the context of sustainable bountifulness—as a welcome component of Central European ecosystems, offering a range of benefits: fast-growing hardwood, nitrogen fixation, resistance to insects and fungi, soil stabilization, thereby it may suitably fulfill ecosystem functions of native tree species that, due to climate change, can no longer thrive in some localities.[243] And because the two camps perceive different kinds of objects, and because certain ways of reasoning about such kinds of objects are already outlined within these ways of perceiving, different kinds of facts (often even from different disciplines) are relevant to each camp with respect to these—physically identical—objects. And this is precisely why the question of what to do with Black locust in Central Europe is not a technical question that could be resolved by acquiring more scientific knowledge about this—by some despised and by some beloved—species of tree. Just like the above-mentioned dispute about the permissibility of abortions cannot be resolved by acquiring more scientific knowledge about the developmental stages of fetal organs. It is not that neo-protectionists do not know that Black locust grows quickly, has hardwood, is resistant to insects and fungi, fixes nitrogen, and can fulfill the ecosystem functions of other trees. Nor is it the case that new conservationists are unaware that it originates in North America and began to be planted by humans in Central Europe in the 18th century, a practice that accelerated in the 19th century in what is called "Black locust mania."[244] The point is that these facts are relevant in a different way within the opposing camps—they are oriented toward them differently, and they direct their nature protection practice in a different way. The fact that Black locust is resistant in certain respects will, for new conservationists, be relevant in deciding where to implement it, whereas for neo-protectionists it will be relevant in deciding how best to eradicate it in a given locality.

If we now return to the broader level of nature protection as such, it should by now be evident that—because of how differently the desired state of nature is perceived within the two camps—the dispute over where to go from the crossroads at which nature protection finds itself stuck in the face of the realities of the Anthropocene is not of a technical nature. *It is primarily a question of attitudes—and not just toward nature.*

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[243] For an analysis of the controversy surrounding Black locust in Central Europe, see: Vítková et al., "Black Locust (Robinia pseudoacacia) Beloved and Despised," *Forest Ecology and Management* 384 (2017): 287–302, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foreco.2016.10.057.
[244] Vítková et al., "Black Locust," 288–289.

(4.3) Revealing the Veils of Objectivity

It is now finally time to draw back these two veils of objectivity and reveal what is behind the delineation of the desired state of nature within the attitude toward nature as wilderness and the attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources. I will clarify their overall context within the whole 'bustle of life' in which they are embedded, and what this entails—thereby revealing what is truly at stake in the disputes over how to delineate the desired state of nature that nature protection should strive to achieve. This will also clarify the core reason why the dispute about the future of nature protection is *stuck*. Over the course of the analysis in Chapter 2, I showed that within both general attitudes toward nature, *there exists disagreement about the particular delineation of the desired state*—which I have, in this chapter, labeled as stemming from different adjustments within those two general attitudes toward nature. Let us now return to these disputes about *what exactly* the desired state of nature that nature protection should strive to protect and reach ought to be, since they lie at the heart of current debates about the future of nature protection, and they will help us reveal what is ultimately at stake in them. Within the scope of the attitude toward nature as wilderness, the delineation of the desired state depends on how one approaches the question of what kinds of human actions are of a 'different order,' which determines the *particular* character of the 'natural' functioning of natural processes—that is, the desired state of nature. Within the scope of the attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources, the delineation of the desired state depends on how one approaches what exact value is attributed to various segments of natural capital, which determines the *particular* character of sustainable bountifulness—that is, the desired state of nature. It is now necessary to examine what lies behind the differences in which types of human actions are perceived as being of a 'different order,' and which value is perceived in the individual components of natural capital.

Let me begin with the attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources, whose overall context within other spheres of human life is easier to show. The idea is that the value of various segments of natural capital somehow arises from scientific projections of the future development of natural, social, and economic systems, and then market mechanisms—once having the right inputs—will be set to work, leading to "the wise use of the earth and its resources for the lasting good of men."[245] Certainly, there are always multiple projections, and all of them work with a certain degree of uncertainty—but that is precisely why meta-studies

[245] Pinchot, *Breaking New Ground*, 505.

exist: to account for all available factors and calculate the most probable scenarios. And these are simply the most accurate pieces of information available to us, and it is wise to use them as a basis. This is, of course, true. But those most probable scenarios do not imply the value of natural capital in any unambiguous way. A good example is provided by the IPCC reports, which—being the output of arguably the largest scientific body in human history—must be taken with utmost seriousness, and their projections about climate warming and the plentitude of other interconnected developments must be taken into account when deliberating about nature protection. However, what exactly follows from this for nature protection—beyond the fact that it will need to respond in some way to new conditions—is not at all straightforward. The value of the individual components of natural capital does not arise somehow automatically from anticipated future developments—*the value is seen in the particular components within the context of a particular vision of human societies that gives 'sustainable bountifulness' its meaning.* For any given state of natural capital to be seen as bountiful and sustainable, it must be grasped as such in relation to specific societal arrangements that benefit from its resources and services—in the end, then, *it is about preserving or promoting a particular condition of society, so that it can continue to obtain what it needs for its functioning*. At its core, this is a question of *how, and in what kind of world, we would like to live*—which implies which natural resources and ecosystem services we want to continuously enjoy. And *such a question is fundamentally ethico-political*: answering it concerns our *attitudes toward life*.

Let us return to our example of lithium mining under Cínovec. I stated that *from the perspective of the attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources*, the realization of lithium mining under Cínovec represents a *clear gain in natural capital*—turning a relatively small hill into a mining pit will quite probably yield a major increase in total natural capital in the long run, thereby bringing us closer to the state of *sustainable bountifulness*. We now see that it is necessary to ask what kind of society is presupposed here, one that would benefit from such a state of sustainable bountifulness. What is being taken for granted? What way of life is presupposed here, and what does it entail? I said that in the end, this is a question of *how*, and in *what kind of world*, we would like to live. Yet for such a statement to have any explanatory value, it must be specified; on such a general level, one could say that everything is ultimately a question of *how*, and *in what kind of world*, we would like to live—and that would not say much. The method I have developed serves to clarify particular cases, and from these particular cases we may then abstract toward a general level and speak about a certain general vision of social organization and life within it—about general *attitudes toward life*—but it is not possible to form a precise *perspicuous representation* of the whole *'bustle of life.'* This is because this

bustle constitutes the background on the basis of which we can clarify a particular situation by embedding it within the whole of life and showing what it primarily concerns—even if every situation somewhat pertains to everything, it is still possible to trace its primary connections, situate it in the appropriate context, and thereby clarify it. In other words, it is necessary to identify specific *ways of life* that reveal the given example in the appropriate light.

So, what *ways of life* are presupposed as a given, in whose light the extraction of lithium under Cínovec represents a *gain in natural capital*, and therefore a *proper nature protection practice*? In this case, it is not hard to determine: the lithium mining project under Cínovec is meant to be linked with the construction of a gigafactory for batteries for electric cars. The overall framing is that lithium extraction necessary for electric cars production will reduce the overall carbon footprint of motoring compared to a situation in which people in EU countries continue to use internal combustion engine cars in such huge numbers—this is also the reason why the European Commission is planning a full ban on the sale of cars powered by combustion engines (possibly with the exception of synthetic fuels). The *ways of life* presupposed as given here, in whose light lithium mining under Cínovec leads to an increase in natural capital, is thus a particular form of transport—namely, *individual car transport*. Such a *society,* in which such a mode of transport is an integral component, requires electric cars for *its sustainability*. I do not wish to dispute this—global fossil fuel reserves are limited, and more importantly, their combustion disrupts a range of *ecosystem services* that are absolutely crucial for *myriads* of other ways of life that human societies take as given and do not wish to change—and the significant transformation of these ecosystem services already makes human life impossible in certain localities. These are well-known facts, but what follows from them for our case of lithium mining under Cínovec is not straightforward. The point is that an *even greater* reduction in the overall carbon footprint would be achieved if people in EU countries simply abandoned car transport en masse and replaced it with public transportation. In such a case, it might not even be necessary to mine lithium under Cínovec to produce more cars—which itself also creates a considerable carbon footprint. But such an option is not even seen as a *possible* option, because the whole situation is perceived as if the *way of life* involving individual car transport *is given*, and we are merely seeking ways to make it *sustainable*.

Perhaps lithium mining under Cínovec would still appear as a gain in natural capital even if we viewed it in the light of a *different vision* of how and in what kind of world we would like to live, and of *other ways of life* associated with it—for example, it could turn out that lithium, as an essential component of batteries, is necessary for a broader transformation of the European energy infrastructure toward renewable sources, or for the production of electric buses. But it is precisely this key question—*for what kind of society this or that nature protection practice represents a path to sustainable bountifulness*—that we need to focus on and *discuss openly*. For it is an *ethical-political* question that cannot be resolved in a *technical*

manner by *experts*,[246] let alone by the *market*, as is typically the case. Experts define the limits for *sustainable development*—while already implicitly presupposing a certain general form of society in whose light a given condition of natural capital will appear as one that continuously provides it with necessary resources and services—and the market decides the concrete form of that *development toward bountifulness*. And since the market *under capitalism* must grow, the production of private automobiles becomes the evident conclusion—*thus saith the market*. The *particular desired condition of nature* that is to be protected as the state of natural capital, from which humans can continuously and sustainably draw resources and services, is therefore often ultimately determined by the market. But neither the—by experts presupposed—*general form of society* in whose light a particular state of natural capital appears as *sustainable*, nor the market as a tool for achieving a *particular kind of bountifulness* within these limits, is given—let alone *objective*.

We are dealing here with two non-obvious steps that are often unarticulated in discussions about *what particular form nature protection should take* in a given locality—and that obscure ultimately *ethical-political* decision-making beneath a *veil of objectivity*. First, an *objective-sounding sustainability of natural capital is proclaimed*, to which nature protection practice should be adapted—without articulating the fact that *this sustainable condition of natural capital is sustainable only in light of a particular ways of life*, or more generally in light of a particular *vision of human societies*—and thus *the much needed discussion about how and in what kind of world we want to live does not take place*. Second, this proclaimed sustainability of natural capital is presented as the guardrails within which the market is to operate, and the *market then determines the concrete form of development within this sustainability framework*—without articulating the fact that the *market is not a self-evident ultimate arbiter* that fully reflects people's ways of life and priorities, but that it also significantly *influences* them based on its internal mechanisms—and that these mechanisms *under capitalism* could arguably lead in an *inherently unsustainable* direction. In the scope of the attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources, then, *clear and transparent discussion and decision-making about nature protection is masked as if on two levels*. A *particular condition of sustainability is presupposed* (without discussion of the condition of society in relation to which this sustainability is defined), and then the *invisible hand of the market*, which within the framework of this given sustainability is meant to lead to the maximum possible bountifulness under the given conditions—thereby achieving the *desired state of sustainable bountifulness*. It has thus turned out that this family of nature protection approaches is, at the

[246] For further elaboration of critique of seemingly ideology-free environmentalism, see: Ondřej Beran, "'Environmentalism without Ideology' and the Dreams of Wiping out Humanity," *Philosophy and Society* 32, no. 3 (2021): 439–459, https://doi.org/10.2298/FID2103439B.

level of basal immediate unreflected reactions, significantly shaped not only by the *attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources*, but also by *certain attitudes toward life* within which it is embedded and within which its various adjustments take on a particular form.

* * *

Let us now turn to the *attitude toward nature as wilderness*—what lies behind the way the *desired condition of nature*, which nature protection should strive to preserve, is delineated in this attitude? Within the scope of the attitude toward nature as wilderness, the delineation of the desired state depends on how one perceives what kinds of human actions are of a *'different order'* which determines the particular character of the *'natural' functioning of natural processes*—that is, the desired condition of nature. In section 2.1, I showed that this problematic *'different order'* of human action is ultimately perceived in a *historical-mythological way*. What is (mostly implicitly) presupposed here is an *inherently good original 'natural order' of nature and a gradual human alienation from it*. And the delineation of human actions as being of a *'different order'* then consists in perceiving some more or less specified historical period as a *breaking point*, beyond which human actions began to deviate from this *original 'natural order'* of nature to such an extent that they are seen as actions of a '*different order.*' In this way, a particular condition of the functioning of natural processes is perceived as the desired state—serving as the baseline for nature protection—and this baseline is simply identified with the state prior to that breaking point.

I have also shown that there may be better or worse reasons for perceiving a particular period as the breaking point. In Europe, the 19th century is typically perceived this way—and for several reasons. Above all, because in the 19th century, a large part of Europe experienced accelerated industrialization and associated urbanization, which Romanticism—in which the *attitude toward nature as wilderness* is deeply rooted—perceived very negatively, in part due to the detrimental impacts of these processes on nature, to which the Romantics retreated for consolation from corrupted civilization. The Romantics depicted and described the beauty and sublimity of nature and, in doing so, created a specific image of what nature *should* look like and what constitutes its destruction. At the same time, the 19th century saw the rise of natural sciences and of literacy more generally, and thus in many localities, no reliable records exist about the state of ecosystems prior to the 19th century—making that period often the furthest point to which one can trace back the condition of a particular ecosystem. *Setting the baseline for nature protection to a pre-nineteenth-century ecosystem condition thus seems like an*

obvious choice across most of Europe. In most colonized territories—in the Americas, Africa, and Asia—the original *'natural order'* tends to be identified with the condition that preceded the arrival of colonizers. This again reflects a Romantic notion of the *noble savages* living in harmony with nature until the arrival of Europeans alienated from nature, who disrupted this original *'natural order.'* This notion has been criticized on two levels—factually, on examples such as the civilization on Easter Island whose collapse being attributed to overexploitation of timber by some[247] (though others dispute this interpretation),[248] and theoretically, as serving as a tool for colonialism, by facilitating to take various indigenous peoples as a part of the realm of nature to be cultivated by the 'different—human—order,' understood as the European order.[249] Nonetheless, in many cases, it is well documented that colonizers radically transformed the lands they entered, and so *setting the breaking point prior to their arrival often seems like the obvious choice*. But what lies behind these obvious choices?

In section 2.1, I showed that the *disruption* of the *'natural order'*—in the sense of the *'natural' functioning* of natural processes—*cannot be derived*, so to speak, *in a naturalistic way* from the *functioning* of the natural processes themselves. The *'natural' functioning* of natural processes must instead be inferred from *'unnatural'* human interventions into those processes. But these *'unnatural' human interventions* likewise *cannot be deduced*, so to speak, *in a naturalistic way* from the *character* of the human actions themselves. These are precisely the two *lines of reasoning* through which *nature protection* stemming from the *attitude toward nature as wilderness* provides a *veil of objectivity*—masking what is really at stake. In section 2.1, I offered an extended analysis of how various authors *try to justify their vision of the 'natural order' of nature in such naturalistic terms*, and why *such attempts fail in principle*. I have also shown that this '*natural order' of nature* is ultimately—typically implicitly—*perceived in a historical-mythological light*. But what remains to be uncovered is what this implies. Let us return again to the motif of *alienation* and focus on why some human actions are perceived as alienated from the *'natural order'* and thus as representing *'unnatural'* interventions of a '*different order*.' In section 2.1, I demonstrated that it is not simply *all* human actions of a *'different order'* in the sense of being outcomes of human mental capacities (which is also why I do not consider the Romantic idea of the noble savage, as it is used in nature

[247] Jared M. Diamond, *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed* (Viking, 2005), 79–119.

[248] Terry L. Hunt and Carl P. Lipo, "Ecological Catastrophe, Collapse, and the Myth of 'Ecocide' on Rapa Nui (Easter Island)," in *Questioning Collapse: Human Resilience, Ecological Vulnerability, and the Aftermath of Empire*, ed. Patricia A. McAnany and Norman Yoffee (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 21–44.

[249] Ter Ellingson, *The Myth of the Noble Savage* (University of California Press, 2001), see, e.g., 229-230; otherwise the whole book is devoted to a careful elaboration of this topic.

protection, to be implicitly racist)—but *only those forms of action that represent a disruption of the presupposed original 'natural order.'* These are perceived as consequences of *alienation*, situated within a more or less defined historical period, and perceived as *'unnatural.'* Let us now focus on where the boundary lies between this *alienated 'unnatural' kind of human action* and those *kinds of human action that are in harmony with the original 'natural order' of nature*—that is, those that are perceived as *'natural.'* What, exactly, does this alienation consist in—and from *what* is it actually an alienation?

The answer already lies within the very notion of the *inherently good original order of nature*, in which everything fits together to form a harmonious whole of nature. For this fitting together consists in the idea that the individual parts of this whole follow this 'natural order' by doing what is natural for *them*—they follow *their nature*. Thus, for humans, *being in harmony with the 'natural order' of nature ultimately means following human nature*. And human alienation from the 'natural order' of nature thus takes the form of a *twofold alienation*—at a certain breaking point, people began to alienate themselves from their own nature, from what is natural for them, which led them to alienate themselves from their place in the original 'natural order' of nature and thereby to disrupt that 'natural order.' Hence, the protection of nature rooted in the attitude toward nature as wilderness gains a criterion for distinguishing between the problematic 'unnatural' human behavior that destroys nature in the sense that it disrupts its original 'natural order'—the kind of behavior such nature protection seeks to prevent—and the human behavior that is unproblematic in the sense that it remains in harmony with that original 'natural order' (regardless of whether such actions arise from human mental capacities). In light of such 'unnatural' human actions of a *different—doubly alienated—order*, a particular condition of nature is then perceived as the 'natural order' of nature—that is, as the desired condition of nature that nature protection should aim to achieve. What lies behind such delimitation of the desired condition of nature is therefore a certain idea of human nature. Thus, in the end, nature protection stemming from the attitude toward nature as wilderness is all about *how humans should live*, about what is perceived as their nature—the 'natural' human way of life—by which they do not disturb the 'natural order' of nature, which is delimited in contrast to 'unnatural' human ways of life, i.e., in contrast to *how humans should not live*.

We are therefore once again dealing with a *certain unarticulated vision of how humans should live, tied to a vision of the kind of world in which they should live*. And it is a distinctly nostalgic vision, grounded in the idea of the good old times when humans were not yet alienated from their own nature or from nature itself. While the various *adjustments* within the scope of

the attitude toward nature as wilderness differ in which historical period they regard as those good old times—or more precisely, they differ in which *ways of life* they perceive as being in harmony with human nature and which as 'unnatural' for humans. And the desired condition of nature—the 'natural order' of nature—is then perceived as the way natural processes functioned before these 'unnatural' ways of human life began to interfere significantly with their functioning. Generally speaking, what is considered 'natural' is a simple, largely self-sufficient way of life, unburdened by the pursuit of luxury and the accumulation of wealth, which are seen as the main source of problems and the core of the twofold human alienation. This theme was philosophically developed by Rousseau,[250] but it entered the nature protection practice primarily through what could be called the preservationists' Bible—Henry David Thoreau's *Walden; or, Life in the Woods*. In the mid-19th century, Thoreau famously built himself a cabin in the woods near Walden Pond, where he lived for two years a simple and self-sufficient life in close connection with nature, which, along with his thoughts on life, he portrayed in this extraordinarily influential literary work. Thoreau writes that a person needs only four basic kinds of things—"Food, Shelter, Clothing, and Fuel"[251]—which suffice for a simple, free, and natural way of life, and that:

> most of the luxuries, and many of the so called comforts of life, are not only not indispensable, but positive hinderances to the elevation of mankind.[252]

Thoreau, therefore, criticizes a social arrangement that leads to the production and accumulation of such unnecessary goods and to the enslavement of people through division of labor and public opinion, and he argues for maximal possible self-sufficiency.[253] And it was precisely during the 19th century, across most of the then-industrialized world, that these unfortunate social features—representing the twofold human alienation—began to accelerate and disrupt the presumed original 'natural order' of nature.

Nature protection based on the attitude toward nature as wilderness, therefore, has inscribed in its genetic code—just like nature protection based on the attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources—a double task: *to protect a particular condition of nature and a*

[250] Rousseau, *A Discourse on the Origin of Inequality.*

[251] Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*, ed. J. Lyndon Shanley, intro. John Updike (Princeton University Press, 2004; orig. 1854), 12.

[252] Thoreau, *Walden*, 14.

[253] Thoreau, *Walden*, 7, 46, 57.

particular condition of humans. This is precisely what Thoreau's famous quote, which became the preservationists' motto, expresses: "In Wildness is the preservation of the World."[254] It is not only about the protection of wild nature *as such*, but about preserving the possibility of redemption for fallen human societies that have become alienated from the original natural order—but that can return to it, so long as it still exists, through contact with it, and thereby return to their own nature. This is the spirit in which Thoreau advocated for nature's wildness—and I do not hesitate to say that it is also the spirit in which many of today's neo-protectionists advocate for the protection of the presumed original natural order of nature, which they perceive as wilderness. This, of course, does not typically take the form of an explicit effort to restore society as a whole to its condition prior to the ruinous 19th century. This may, for instance, take the form of an argument in favor of a healthy lifestyle in close contact with nature, of rural living, and of a return to traditional self-sufficient small-scale farming, along with a ban on large-scale industrial agriculture. *Ways of life* deemed *'unnatural'* for humans may then be more specified as *unhealthy*—here we see the reemergence of the idea that 'unnatural' is what humans are not evolutionarily adapted to—like driving cars or sitting in front of computers, which are said to cause health problems, whereas it is assumed that humans are evolutionarily adapted to small-scale farming, and that the *ways of life* associated with it lead to robust health. Without wishing to deny the negative effects of arguably over-technologized ways of life in today's so-called developed societies, it is clear that, in terms of physical health, these are on the whole beneficial, and that people today live significantly longer and with significantly higher health standards than they did in the 19th century. In any case, it is evident that drawing boundaries around which *human ways of life* are '*natural'* and which '*unnatural'* is highly controversial—and thus these underlying assumptions of the argument for *restoring the 'natural' functioning of natural processes* remain largely implicit.

Nevertheless, by striving to restore the functioning of natural processes to how they operated before that turning point—when 'unnatural' ways of human life came to the fore—neo-protectionists also delimit the space for human life in the sense that only *some* ways of life are compatible with the presumed original 'natural order' of nature. And this presumed original 'natural order' of nature is not—just like the condition of sustainability—anything objectively given, but is derived from what is perceived as 'unnatural' for humans, and thus implies what is 'natural' for humans to do. And that is precisely what the confusing concept 'natural'

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[254] Henry D. Thoreau, "Walking," *The Atlantic* 110 (1862), https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1862/06/walking/304674/.

conceals, because here the meaning of ‘natural’ comes very close to the concept of ‘good,’ with the crucial difference that it is implicitly added that it is good *as it were by nature*—that it is not a matter of our choice whether something is good for nature or for humans, but that normativity appears already inscribed in the ‘natural order’ of nature itself. However, I have repeatedly shown that *there is no such original ‘natural order’ of nature to be found in nature, from which we could derive a ‘non-human’ normativity—this normativity stems from certain attitudes toward life*, from a particular vision of how and in what kind of world we should live. And that is a fundamentally ethico-political question—one we ought to discuss transparently in the context of nature protection—but which, within the scope of the attitude toward nature as wilderness, is obscured by the fog created by brandishing the concept of ‘natural’ in mystifying ways—so characteristic of this family of nature protection approaches.

(4.4) The ethico-political character of nature protection

I will now summarize and elaborate on the outcomes of the entire Chapter 4 and draw conclusions from them. I have shown that *nature protection* stemming from the two attitudes toward nature under investigation is deeply rooted in, and shaped by, particular attitudes toward life—that is, by a particular vision of how and in what kind of world humans ought to live. My aim was not to suggest that *nature protection* should be disentangled from such a vision and freed from these underlying attitudes, but rather to *disentangle these attitudes from their concealment* and bring them to light. My aim was to show and to clarify *how nature protection* is fundamentally entangled with the question of *how and in what kind of world humans ought to live*—on three levels.

(1) The first level is entirely evident—though still insufficiently articulated in the context of *nature protection* decision-making—namely, the simple fact that the *practice of nature protection shapes the spaces and ways in which humans live*. This happens most visibly through the forced displacement of people from particular areas (which was and still is a common practice in previously colonized regions, and one of the reasons why nature protection is often perceived by many locals as a form of colonialism), and through the prohibition of certain ways of life in particular areas (which often gives rise to conflict between people who happened to live in the area that nature protectionists decided to protect). This is neither new nor hidden—the emphasis on the *political implications of nature protection* is a routine part of the field of political ecology, which frequently centers on such analysis.[255]

(2) The second level is more hidden: the fact that *the protection of nature implies particular visions of how and in what kind of world humans ought to live*. This, too, is not a new idea. Already Raymond Williams, in his famous essay “Ideas of Nature,” convincingly demonstrated that the idea of nature is inseparably connected to the idea of the human, and that many disputes about the understanding of ‘nature’ mirror deeper disputes about the conception of the human and about what human society should look like.[256] In the context of *nature protection*, this theme was most thoroughly developed by Kate Soper in her influential book *What is Nature?*, which focuses primarily on the discourse surrounding ‘nature’ and *nature*

[255] See, e.g.: Stephen Dawson, Felix Haass, Carl Müller-Crepon, and Aksel Sundström, *The Ethnic Politics of Nature Protection: Ethnic Favoritism and Protected Areas in Africa*, QoG Working Paper Series 2024:4 (University of Gothenburg, 2024).

[256] Raymond Williams, “Ideas of Nature,” in *Problems in Materialism and Culture: Selected Essays*, ed. Raymond Williams (London: Verso, 1980), 67–85.

protection, and its political implications.[257] On the broader level of politics as such, the most significant development of how the concept of 'nature' is used to obscure political decision-making was offered by Bruno Latour in *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences Into Democracy*.[258]

(3) The third and most hidden level of the fundamental entanglement of nature protection with how and in what kind of world humans ought to live—whose clarification I consider the central contribution of my dissertation, and the main benefit of the extended Wittgensteinian conception of attitudes that I developed—is that *in nature protection, specific visions of how and in what kind of world humans ought to live already come into play on the basal level of attitudes*. That is, the very perception of particular nature protection situations and of nature protection practice as such is already deeply shaped by two divergent attitudes toward nature, which are themselves part of a broader picture of particular *attitudes toward life* that inform them and give them their particular shape—a shape that then outlines particular nature protection practices. This third level is transcendental in relation to the second level of various ideas and discourses about nature that are used in nature protection, in politics, and elsewhere—out of which the basal level of attitudes can be discerned by the method of attitudinal analysis that I have developed for these purposes and used in this chapter to clarify nature protection practice.

It is precisely *the hiddenness of this third attitudinal level of entanglement between nature protection and how and in what kind of world humans ought to live* that is—and this may be taken as my central thesis—*the core reason why the current discussion about the future of nature protection in the face of the realities of the Anthropocene is stuck*. It is not merely that the opposing camps understand the subject of their protection—*nature*—differently; it is that they perceive the whole situation differently already on the basal level of attitudes, and that this perception is deeply rooted in substantially different visions of how and in what kind of world humans ought to live. This had to be brought to light in order for the discussion about where to go from the crossroads at which nature protection now finds itself to have a chance to move forward. And it can do so only if the discussion turns *explicitly* to what is truly at stake—that is, to the *question of how and in what kind of world humans ought to live*. This is a fundamentally *ethico-political*—not expert—*question*, which concerns all of human and non-human nature, and must be approached as such.

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[257] Kate Soper, *What Is Nature? Culture, Politics and the Non-Human* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995).

[258] Bruno Latour, *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy*, trans. Catherine Porter (Harvard University Press, 2004).

This does not mean that expert knowledge has nothing to contribute—on the contrary, scientific understanding of the functioning of natural processes and predictions of their future development are absolutely key to the discussion about the *future of nature protection*. However, such knowledge is itself motivated and filtered by particular attitudes toward nature, whose character I have sought to clarify—and which cannot, as such, be proclaimed appropriate or inappropriate *on their own*. They can be seen so only within the context of a particular vision of human life—particular attitudes toward life—which give concrete shape to the desired condition of nature in which such life is meant to unfold. Only against the background of particular attitudes toward life can a particular attitude toward nature emerge as the appropriate one, in the sense that *it is aligned* with those attitudes toward life, whereas other attitudes toward nature can then be revealed as inappropriate *insofar as they contradict* those attitudes toward life.

But with grasping the attitudes toward life themselves as appropriate or inappropriate, it is more complicated. We may understand them as particular clusters of basal reactions representing a kind of embodied values that cast various phenomena in an ethical light—in our case, particular ways of human life and the associated condition of nature *as desired*. Particular attitudes toward life are rooted in a certain form of embeddedness in the entire 'bustle of life,' and they can be challenged only from within a *different* kind of embeddedness in the 'bustle of life'—that is, through *different* attitudes toward life. And in a pluralist society, there are typically several such attitudes coexisting, and new ones continually emerge as the 'bustle of life' itself transforms—for example, due to cultural, technological, or environmental changes. It is precisely the transformation of various ways of life within this bustle that puts pressure on established attitudes toward various kinds of phenomena and toward life as such, and leads to *disputes*—disputes that are *of the ethico-political character*.

The problem arises when we mask our attitudes toward life and the values embedded in them behind seemingly objective accounts of the desired condition of nature—whether cast as its 'natural order' or its sustainability—without making clear that this condition is desired *only* in light of certain particular attitudes toward life and the values connected with them. Once we set aside such ways of reasoning that obstruct the discussion about the future of nature protection, we open the way for a much-needed, *transparent discussion about what kind of nature, and what kind of life within it, we actually want to protect*. We must articulate, with precision, what ways of life and what values are at stake in this or that particular nature protection action, and more broadly in the dispute about where to go from the crossroads at which nature protection now finds itself facing the realities of the Anthropocene. Of course,

this does not mean that the discussion about *future nature protection* is thereby automatically unlocked—this is precisely where the specificity and complexity of *ethico-political issues*, as opposed to technical ones, lie—but it may represent a first step toward unlocking it, and it is undoubtedly a step in the direction of *fairness*.

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Let me reiterate that my central thesis is this: *the current dispute about the future of nature protection is stuck above all because the two main opposing camps fail to recognize that their very perception of the present situation of nature protection is vastly differently shaped—already on the basal level—by two divergent attitudes toward nature, which are themselves embedded in markedly different attitudes toward life that inform them and give them their particular form*. In other words, *they do not realize that they are operating within a space that is already, on the basal level of attitudes, outlined in a different way*—and therefore, the arguments of one side do not, so to speak, fall on fertile ground on the other, and vice versa. By offering this clarification, I have *hopefully facilitated* a situation in which future arguments will fall on fertile ground—that is, they will address *what is truly at stake*, and the discussion about *future nature protection* will take the form of an *open discussion* about *what kind of nature*, and *what kind of life within it*, we actually want to protect. However, this does *not* mean that the discussion about which path to take from the crossroads at which *nature protection* now stands will necessarily move forward. In such a transparent discussion that goes to the heart of the matter, it may become apparent that both dominant camps are unwilling to make compromises regarding their vision of *how* and *in what kind of world* humans ought to live. Or it may turn out that *nature protection* as tied to these visions simply does *not* offer a viable path under the *realities of the Anthropocene—which, I believe, is the case*.

This is my second thesis—this time, rather a speculative one—whose adequacy can only be confirmed or refuted by the future development of nature protection. Based on my analyses of the character of the two dominant attitudes toward nature in nature protection, and of their broader embeddedness in the whole bustle of life, I believe that neither of these two families of nature protection approaches is capable of providing—in the face of the realities of the Anthropocene—a viable path forward from the crossroads at which nature protection finds itself. In other words, I believe that the transparent discussion I have been trying to facilitate throughout this dissertation will reveal that *under current circumstances, nature protection based either on the attitude toward nature as wilderness or on the attitude toward nature as a*

reservoir of resources cannot reach its own aims—that is, the desired condition of nature as conceived within each: whether it be the 'natural' functioning of natural processes or sustainable bountifulness. I have touched on this from various angles throughout my analyses, but I will now clearly and simply state the grounds of this speculative claim: first, global planetary ecosystems are changing so profoundly that the possibility of maintaining, in selected localities, the condition of 'natural' functioning of natural processes will gradually tend toward zero; second, capitalism is arguably inherently unsustainable, and therefore the prospect of achieving sustainable bountifulness through its mechanisms appears to be a dead end.

This is why my dissertation continues with the following Chapter 5. I believe that a viable path out of the crossroads at which nature protection now stands can only be offered within a new attitude toward nature in nature protection—and I suggest that we can observe a gradual emergence of such an attitude, which has only recently begun to acquire distinguishable features, but is still not entirely established and has not yet entered nature protection fully. It could be said that under the realities of the Anthropocene, the 'bustle of life' is changing, and out of this transformation arise new forms of embeddedness in it—and with them, new attitudes—toward nature, many other kinds of objects, and toward life in general. However, this emerging attitude toward nature is not yet fully formed and mainly not yet fully established in nature protection, which is why I could not include it in my previous analyses, because I could not draw on established nature protection discourse and practice that would represent it. The final Chapter 5, thus, will have to take a different path than the analyses presented in Chapters 2 and 4. Since, with regard to this suggested emerging attitude toward nature, I cannot draw on an established understanding of 'nature' *in nature protection* that would reflect this attitude, I will instead draw on *significant motifs that have emerged from the critique of the two established families* of understanding 'nature'—those which represent the two opposing dominant camps in current nature protection—and I will *assume that these motifs represent particular significant traits of a new, emerging attitude toward nature from which they stem*. It is precisely their *emergence from a critique of the common adversaries*, their *shared emphasis on the realities of the Anthropocene*, and, above all, the *similar direction in which they point* that together *provide the reasons justifying my assumption* that these motifs *might* represent a new, not-yet-fully-established, emerging attitude toward nature—an attitude that might correspond to the realities of the Anthropocene and *could*, for that reason, *offer a viable path for the future of nature protection*.

(5) Emerging Attitude toward Nature?

Proclamations that we need a new attitude toward nature are not new—far from it. Such claims already appear in the famous pamphlet often considered foundational for *environmental ethics* as an independent branch of academic philosophy: "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis" by Lynn White.[259] He argues that the roots of the crisis lie in Western Christianity, whose ideas about the human relation to nature gave rise to destructive attitudes toward nature, and that the way out of the ecological crisis lies either in *rethinking Christianity* or in *finding a new religion*.[260] Of course, White does not use the concept of 'attitude' in the sense presented above; he uses it synonymously with 'relation,' and his analysis operates within the *rationalistic model of behavior* criticized earlier—meaning, at the level of how *ideas about nature* influence *environmental behavior*. Nevertheless, his emphasis on *human relation to nature* is significant because it stands in opposition to the then-dominant (and still popular) notion that environmental problems can be solved through more science and more technology. In contrast, White highlights that as long as such tools are employed *within the framework of a destructive relation to nature*, we cannot expect them to offer solutions to environmental problems—and that, therefore, attention must be paid to *human relation to nature* itself.[261] This is the idea that became the backbone of the entire field of *environmental ethics*, which may be understood precisely as the *search for an adequate—ethical—relation to nature*. Countless authors from a wide range of theoretical positions have since then argued that we ought to change our *relation to nature* in this or that way.

However, I will not follow this line of normative reasoning in this chapter. Not because I consider the exploration of an ethical relation to nature to be without value—on the contrary, such inquiry can provide many essential insights, including with regard to nature protection. Nevertheless, in my dissertation, I focus on the *basal level of attitudes*—that is, the level that is *transcendental with respect to normative argumentation* for a particular ethical relation to nature—and I conceive of my research as *descriptive*: I aim to *clarify* this level of basal attitudes toward nature. Of course, even in the way I present particular attitudes toward nature, and in what aspects I choose to emphasize, there is an element of normativity—and ultimately, my entire project is normatively motivated in the sense that *I care about nature protection* and

[259] Lynn White Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science* 155, no. 3767 (March 10, 1967): 1203–1207, https://doi.org/10.1126/science.155.3767.1203.
[260] White, "Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," 1204–1207.
[261] White, "Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," 1206–1207.

therefore seek to clarify the problems it faces, naively hoping that in doing so I may contribute to better nature protection practice, even if I myself do not have a clear sense of what *exactly* that would mean. The key difference lies in this: one can devise and propose a normative theory of the proper relation to nature, but things are more complicated with basal attitudes toward nature. Take, for example, the romantic attitude toward nature as wilderness—how did it come into being? One cannot say it was invented by any single individual; rather, it emerged through a gradual, complex, and multilayered cultural movement. What we can do is—after its emergence—retrospectively study its characteristics in various ways of life, clarify it, and try to identify the most significant ideas and cultural shifts that played a role in its emergence.

Likewise, I will not attempt to invent a new attitude toward nature here—I will attempt to *link certain motifs* that have emerged from the critique of the two established attitudes toward nature and to grasp them as representing individual *traits of a new—not-yet-fully-established—emerging attitude toward nature*. However, by linking traits that do not yet represent an *established whole* in nature protection, I am stepping onto tricky ground. For that reason, I understand this concluding chapter as *speculative*, in contrast to Chapters 2 and 4, which I consider careful descriptions of how two divergent attitudes toward nature shape nature protection.

(5.1) Recent turns as possible signs of an emerging attitude toward nature as homes

I will proceed from recent turns in environmental discourse—within *nature protection* and related policy-making, but also within the broader field of *environmental humanities*. This marks an important difference compared to the analysis of the two established families of nature protection approaches, where my investigation was able to draw on established traditions without needing to go beyond a systematic description of their character, and mainly without needing to move beyond the field of nature protection. In this chapter, by contrast, because what I aim to capture as an *emerging attitude toward nature* is not yet fully established within *nature protection* itself, I will—in some respects—need to turn to the broader field of *environmental humanities*, which is, of course, closely interconnected with nature protection, but not identical with it. In this section, I will attempt to show that it is suitable to *grasp these recent turns as, in fact, reflecting the emergence of a new, not-yet-fully-established attitude toward nature*. Subsequently (in section 5.2), I will attempt to show that this hypothesized *emerging attitude toward nature may indeed be gradually beginning to make its way into nature protection*. Let me outline how I intend to achieve this.

I have identified four general trends—significant turns—in environmental discourse, which concern the understanding of 'nature,' and which all emerge (1) from an explicit critique of the two established understandings of 'nature' that I analyzed in Chapter 2, and (2) from a reckoning with the *realities of the Anthropocene*, and which—as I will show—(3) all point in the same direction. And because these turns *go beyond the standard frameworks of established nature protection*—as delimited by the two dominant families of understandings of 'nature'—there are good reasons to assume that these four significant turns in environmental discourse could arise from the same—though as unclearly articulated—new way of understanding 'nature,' and that this might represent a *new, not-yet-fully-established, emerging attitude toward nature*. As a *unifying element* through which I will attempt to show that they do, in fact, point in the same direction, I propose a *trajectory* that was clearly outlined already three decades ago by William Cronon in his above-mentioned breakthrough study, but which has only recently begun to take on clearer contours.

> Idealizing a distant wilderness too often means not idealizing the environment in which we actually live, the landscape that for better or worse we call home. Most of our most

> serious environmental problems start right here, at home, and if we are to solve those problems, we need an environmental ethic that will tell us as much about *using* nature as about *not* using it. The wilderness dualism tends to cast any use as *ab*-use, and thereby denies us a middle ground in which responsible use and non-use might attain some kind of balanced, sustainable relationship. My own belief is that only by exploring this middle ground will we learn ways of imagining a better world for all of us: humans and nonhumans, rich people and poor, women and men, First Worlders *and* Third Worlders, white folks and people of color, consumers and producers—a world better for humanity in all of its diversity and for all the rest of nature too. The middle ground is where we actually live. It is where we—all of us, in our different places and ways—make our homes.[262]

Generally speaking, the *unifying element that shines through these four turns* in nature protection and in environmental humanities more broadly is, I suggest, the emphasis on what Cronon calls the 'middle ground'—a kind of *middle ground between using and not using nature*. That is, some kind of overcoming the motifs that are defining features of the two dominant families of nature protection approaches: on one side, the emphasis on the *continued use* of nature that characterizes the protection of nature as natural capital, and on the other, the emphasis on preventing interaction between humans and nature that characterizes the protection of nature as non-human (i.e. the *refusal of any use*). Following Cronon, I adopt the term *'homes'* as an umbrella designation for such approaches to nature, and I will speak of *understanding nature as homes*.

My proceeding in this section will be as follows. I will present four general trends in nature protection and broader environmental humanities, representing four—largely interconnected—lines of critique of the established understandings of 'nature' that are foundational for the current nature protection frameworks, whose common feature is striving to find the 'middle ground' and to offer an alternative to understandings of 'nature' either as *non-human* or as *natural capital*. I will explore the character of understanding nature that vaguely shines through these four lines of critique—I will attempt to extract from them the key traits of what I will grasp as a distinct emerging understanding of nature, which I will link together and bring to light under the heading of 'understanding nature as homes.' The feasibility of such a synthesis is enabled by the fact that *these four lines of contemporary*

[262] Cronon, "The trouble with wilderness," 21.

thought about nature and its protection, having the *same adversaries* and the *same grounding in the recognition of the realities of the Anthropocene*, are—as I will demonstrate—*all pointing*, albeit from different positions and with different emphases, *in a similar direction and could thus be understood as four strands of a broader current*. A current that, as I will show, represents a way of understanding nature that is new and that presents a distinctive alternative to the two analyzed above. This is indicated by the fact that, when applied within nature protection (which we can perhaps already observe, as I will suggest in section 5.2), it brings a distinctively new way of framing nature protection. That said, it should be acknowledged that this new emerging way of understanding nature in nature protection could also be grasped in a different way (by emphasizing other aspects of current turns in nature protection and connecting them in another way). My effort to connect the following four turns in recent nature protection and broader environmental humanities through the unifying element of the *middle ground* and by labeling them as expressions of an understanding of nature as 'homes'—a term that is not commonly used in any of the discussions I will draw on—should therefore be understood as a kind of suggestion, the appropriateness of which can only be confirmed or refuted by the future development of nature protection.

* * *

Let's begin by distinguishing what I will refer to as understanding nature as homes from the previous two ways of understanding nature, and by showing in which ways it represents a kind of middle ground in contrast to them. The notion of 'home' suggests a sharp opposition to nature understood as non-human, which is 'the other', that 'realm' to which humans do not belong, and which they typically destroy through their activity. Protection of nature understood as non-human takes the form of protecting the 'naturalness' of nature, which ultimately means its 'non-humanness.' In contrast, home is a place where its inhabitants do belong and whose shape is actively co-created by their presence. The plural is vital in understanding nature as home*s* because it emphasizes that nature has many different inhabitants—both human and non-human—who have homes in it. Understanding nature as homes thus also suggests a certain overcoming of the radical human/nature dualism inherent to understanding nature as non-human. The understanding of nature as homes also stands in contrast to the understanding of nature as natural capital—home is not something one wants to use for some further goals, but rather a place that is the very backdrop for our various goals, a place we build and care for, often at the expense of what we do not consider home. A home is useful, it provides shelter for

its inhabitants, but this does not capture its full value, which lies primarily in the relationship of its inhabitants to their home—understanding nature as homes thus also suggests a certain overcoming of the use–non-use binary and captures the recent shift toward relational frameworks characterized especially by the emphasis on relational values linked to nature, in contrast to intrinsic values connected to understanding nature as non-human, and also in contrast to instrumental values connected to understanding nature as natural capital. Related to this is the fact that home is unique to its inhabitants, and nature understood as homes is therefore non-interchangeable in contrast to understanding nature as natural capital, in whose scope individual resources and services that nature provides are easily interchangeable, just like commodities.

These are the basic contrasts indicating in what respect the understanding of nature as homes represents a kind of middle ground with regard to understandings of nature as non-human and as natural capital. Now I will finally introduce and elaborate on what I mean by understanding nature as homes in nature protection through four general trends in the current environmental discourse which all partly relate to what has become to be labeled as 'The Nonhuman Turn,'[263] and in the following section, I will present what the protection of nature understood as homes might look like.

(I) The first general trend in environmental discourse, philosophy, and policy that I want to highlight could be labeled as the 'Relational Turn' characterized by the rise of use and significance of *relational concepts* such as 'dwelling,' 'kinship,' 'stewardship,' 'embeddedness,' and 'belonging,' and by the emergence and establishment of *relational values* connected to nature as an integral part of why nature matters. The Relational Turn is an outcome of long-standing efforts of a large number of different authors, who from different perspectives attempt to turn away from established dualisms—human–nature, and intrinsic–instrumental—toward various *relational frameworks of understanding nature* which I take to be the core of what I want to group under the label understandings nature as homes.

Relational concepts—such as 'dwelling,' 'kinship,' 'stewardship,' 'embeddedness,' and 'belonging'—are usually traced to a diverse indigenous worldview, which often center on reciprocal relationships between human and non-human nature and by which environmental philosophy and the environmental movement in general have been continuously inspired since their beginnings. It would be interesting to trace the roots of particular relational concepts, their

[263] Richard Gruzin, "Introduction," in *The Nonhuman Turn*, ed. Richard Gruzin (University of Minnesota Press, 2015), vii–xxix.

entry into the broader nature protection discourse, and to discuss their meaning in the appropriate context of particular traditions.[264] However, for the purposes of my exposition, I will suffice with the fact that relational concepts have been rather marginal in environmental discourse, philosophy, and policy for a long time, and only in the last decade or so have they started to gain importance and to figure in global environmental policy documents. This, in my view, is related to the fact—although such a claim cannot be substantiated—that a suitable framework for them has finally been found that is understandable to the academic environmental philosophy and Global-North policy-makers: *the relational values framework*.

The emergence and rise of relational values in environmental discussions and policy is quite recent. As I mentioned above, it is an attempt to break away from the insufficient conceptual framework that has been dominant in environmental discourse for a long time, which differentiates the values of nature only into intrinsic and instrumental. The problem is that this binary distinction of nature's values does not correspond to common experience, and descriptions of individual situations of nature protection limited only to these concepts are therefore leading to distortions, as Kai Chan and colleagues point out in their paper, which is usually understood as foundational for bringing relational values into environmental philosophy.

> Few people make personal choices based only on how things possess inherent worth or satisfy their preferences (intrinsic and instrumental values, respectively). People also consider the appropriateness of how they relate with nature and with others, including the actions and habits conducive to a good life, both meaningful and satisfying. In philosophical terms, these are relational values (preferences, principles, and virtues associated with relationships, both interpersonal and as articulated by policies and social norms).[265]

Chan and colleagues do not argue for abandoning intrinsic and instrumental values in nature

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[264] For more on the gradual integration of indigenous worldviews into environmental philosophy see:
Workineh Kelbessa, "Indigenous and Modern Environmental Ethics: Toward Partnership," in *Thought and Practice in African Philosophy*, ed. Daniel Smith, Oriare Nyarwath, Pamela A. Abuya, and Gail M. Presbey (Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2002), 47–61.
Workineh Kelbessa, "Indigenous Environmental Philosophy," in *The Oxford Handbook of World Philosophy*, ed. Jay L. Garfield and William Edelglass (Oxford University Press, 2011), 574–581.

[265] Kai M. A. Chan et al., "Why protect nature? Rethinking values and the environment," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 113, no. 6 (2016): 1462, https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1525002113.

protection discourse but for supplementing them by relational values, which we should always focus on, because grasping a particular situation in relational terms often makes it much clearer.

> Although intrinsic and instrumental values are critical to conservation, thinking only in these terms may miss a fundamental basis of concern for nature. Whereas intrinsic and instrumental values are often presented as stark alternatives, many important concerns may be better understood as relationships with both aspects. Consider a tree or grove deemed sacred, associated with collective histories, ancestors, or sustenance of many kinds. Is it valuable intrinsically (independent of human valuation) or instrumentally (for preference satisfaction)? Whereas the former might feel sterile or dismissively quaint, the latter seems to mistake symptom for cause: satisfaction does not produce sacredness, but rather is produced by the sacrosanct collective relationship. Thus, relational values link and enliven intrinsic and instrumental considerations.[266]

It is precisely the high explanatory value of the relational values framework that has brought it to the forefront of nature protection discourse in the last decade.

The rise of relational values in nature protection discourse is convincingly demonstrated by Himes and colleagues in their recent highly quoted systematic review of intrinsic, instrumental, and relational values, aptly titled "Why nature matters."[267] For most of the studied period, from 1985 to 2019, relational values were either completely absent or marginal compared to the occurrences of intrinsic and instrumental values in the investigated literature; since 2016, there has been a sharp increase of the occurrences of relational values, reaching a point in 2018 and 2019 where all three types of values are more or less equally represented in nature protection discourse.[268] Furthermore, the relational values framework has also been increasingly emphasized in environmental policy-making in recent years, mainly thanks to the new *Methodological Assessment Report on the Diverse Values and Valuation of Nature* of the *Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* (IPBES),[269] which works systematically both with relational values and concepts, and shows

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[266] Chan et al., "Why protect nature?,"1463.

[267] Austin Himes, "Why nature matters: A systematic review of intrinsic, instrumental, and relational values," *BioScience* 74, no. 1 (2024): 25–43, https://doi.org/10.1093/biosci/biad109.

[268] Himes, "Why nature matters," 28.

[269] IPBES, *Methodological Assessment Report on the Diverse Values and Valuation of Nature of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* (2022), ed. Patricia Balvanera, Unai Pascual, Michael Christie, Brigitte Baptiste and David González-Jiménez.

their relevance for concrete decision-making in nature protection. Let me close this section by quoting the definition of relational values proposed by Himes and colleagues, which emerged from their systematic review: relational values are "values of meaningful, and often reciprocal human relationships—beyond means to an end—with nature and among people through nature, where *nature* is often specified as a particular landscape, place, species, forest, etc."[270]

(II) The second general trend in environmental discourse is what could be labeled as 'Habitability Turn,' characterized by the gradual replacement of the problematic anthropocentric and purely utilitarian notion of 'sustainability' by the broader notion of 'habitability.'[271] These two notions illustrate well the contrast between understanding nature as natural capital and understanding nature as homes. Nature protection based on understanding nature as natural capital is integrally connected to the sustainability framework—if nature is understood as natural capital, the aim of nature protection is to maintain nature in a state in which it is possible to continuously benefit from its resources and services, which is what the sustainable use framework is supposed to guarantee. In contrast, if nature is understood as homes, the focus of nature protection is on the state in which nature is habitable for its various inhabitants. To inhabit nature, to be at home there is, of course, also a certain way of benefiting, but it is a different kind of benefiting, which might be captured rather by a formulation 'benefiting with' or 'benefiting as a part of' in contrast to 'benefiting from.' Furthermore, the contrast of habitability to sustainability is that the focus is not purely on humans but on life in general, as highlighted by Iwona Janicka in her recent study:

> habitability's main concern is life—all life—and the ways in which we can maintain both human and nonhuman life that is inherently entangled on Earth. Habitability does not privilege human interests alone. It emphasizes instead building life-affirming coalitions with nonhumans that cohabit the planet.[272]

The Habitability Turn is thus a turn from an emphasis on the sustainable use of nature—represented by the question 'How can we use natural capital so that future generations can still

https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6522522

[270] Himes, "Why nature matters," 31.

[271] Iwona Janicka, "Habitability: Planetarity vs Cosmopolitics," *Migrating Minds* 2, no. 1 (2024): 4, https://doi.org/10.57928/pfqt-0t16.
Harald Sterly et al., "Habitability for a connected, unequal and changing world," *Global Environmental Change* 90 (2025): 2, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2024.102953.

[272] Janicka, "Habitability: Planetarity vs Cosmopolitics," 5.

meet their needs?'—to the concern with creating and sustaining conditions that would allow different life forms to (co)inhabit nature—that is, to the question 'Under what conditions can all life flourish in particular contexts?' Such a question represents a nexus of all aspects—relational, intrinsic, and instrumental—of valuing nature.

The concept of 'habitability' came into the environmental discourse from astronomy,[273] where it is defined as "the ability of an environment to support the activity of at least one known organism"[274] and where the discussion is primarily about what conditions must be met on a planet to make it habitable.[275] The entry of this concept into the environmental humanities can therefore also be seen as a response to the Anthropocene, to the realization that human activity has impacts of planetary proportions and that it affects the very habitability of planet Earth. However, in the environmental humanities the term 'habitability' is typically used in a different way—although not yet fully established here, it can be said that in the environmental humanities it is not primarily about describing the assumptions of life on the planet as in astrology, but about exploring and thinking through the different possibilities of co-habitability of various forms of lives in a particular place they inhabit or could inhabit. It is therefore not a binary distinction 'habitable–inhabitable,' but a continuum of diverse possible variants of co-habitation of multiplicity of various organisms in a particular place. Habitability must therefore be understood from the perspective of a particular species as expressing the character of the relationship of the particular species and the place it inhabits, and as such habitability can be defined as *the emergent property or quality of the relationship between a particular species and a place that provides them with the capabilities to pursue and sustain flourishing lives*.[276] Given that there is a huge range of modes of co-habitability of different species in a particular locality, it is crucial to understand decisions affecting habitability as normative (as opposed to decisions concerning sustainability, which pretend to be expert descriptions of an objective situation).

(III) The third general trend in nature protection and broader environmental humanities is *decentering the human*, connected with a greater emphasis on the entanglement of human and non-human and on not overlooking the activity of the non-human. Understanding nature as homes represents a change in the perception of humans' place in nature—instead of the

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[273] Sterly et al., "Habitability," 2.

[274] Charles S. Cockell et al., "Habitability: A Review," *Astrobiology* 16, no. 1 (2016): 1. https://doi.org/10.1089/ast.2015.1295.

[275] Cockell et al., "Habitability," 89–117.

[276] Here I'm basing my definition on the one provided by Sterly et al. which I'm modifying to include all life, see, Sterly et al., "Habitability," 3.

dualistic idea that humans stand somewhere else, that nature is not their home, that it is something in opposition to them where they do not belong—it emphasizes the deep interconnectedness of human and non-human nature. *Humans co-constitute nature understood as homes*—and they are doing so on several levels. First, nature becomes what it is within this understanding—home—precisely through being inhabited; that is, the *inhabitation* and the associated interactions of species—including humans—with nature is *constitutive* for nature's being *homes*—that is, for what it is within this understanding (which is in sharp contrast to the understanding of nature as non-human, in which nature literally ceases to be through interaction with humans). Second, humans constitute nature as homes by shaping its habitability, either directly, for example, by creating habitats for themselves and other species (such as domestic, liminal, or non-native) or indirectly, through various impacts of their multiple actions (most notably through climate change). Third, humans co-constitute nature as homes, so to speak, literally in the sense that they themselves constitute homes for various life forms (humans are themselves inhabited, e.g., by bacteria in their guts). In this way, nature as homes is constituted by all the life that inhabits it, with particular inhabitants themselves constituting home from the perspective of other inhabitants. This brings us to the fact that this interconnectedness goes in the other direction as well—nature understood as homes is understood not only as the common work of all its inhabitants, but also as shaping the ways of lives of its inhabitants—*nature as homes is itself active* (this is in strong contrast to the traditional image of nature as passive, as the environment in which human activities take place).

This is the motif most prominently argued for by Bruno Latour, according to whom we find ourselves in the *New Climate Regime*, in which nature can no longer be seen as 'out there,' as a passive scene of our activities but as an *actor*—"As if the décor had gotten up on stage to share the drama with the actors."[277]—who co-creates what is 'right here' where all life takes place. It is this turn that is characterized by the notion of the 'Critical Zone'—designating "layers from the top of the canopy to the mother rocks, thus foregrounding the thin, porous and permeable layer where life has modified the cycles of matter by activating or catalyzing physical and chemical reactions."[278]—that Latour popularized, and that stands in contrast to abstract perception of human situatedness as living on a huge blue planet in the vast universe.[279]

[277] Bruno Latour, *Facing Gaia Eight Lectures on the New Climatic Regime*, trans. Catherine Porter (Polity Press, 2017), 3.
[278] Alexandra Arènes, Bruno Latour and Jérôme Gaillardet, "Giving depth to the surface: An exercise in the Gaia-graphy of critical zones," *The Anthropocene Review* 5, no. 2 (2018): 121, https://doi.org/10.1177/2053019618782257
[279] Arènes, Latour and Gaillardet, "Giving depth to the surface," 120–135.

The notion of Critical Zone, on the contrary, is shifting focus on the particular thin and vulnerable layers, that are of crucial importance for all life, because it is precisely there where life finds its homes which *inhabits*, *shapes* and *is shaped by*, and to which, according to Latour and his colleagues, we must find our way in the current New Climate Regime.

> We need to develop a new relation to the ground, to understand it as the thin skin of the Earth — the Critical Zone — that we inhabit, and at the same time affect, and are affected by.[280]

Decentering the human, this move away from the abstract notion of nature as 'out there' and toward the places where we actually live—homes—that we coinhabit with a plentitude of various life forms, and that we at the same time affect and are affected by, is the core part of the broader shift in nature protection that I want to capture here, but it is crucial to realize that there is no universal human, that the 'we' and 'us' is very diverse.

(IV) This brings us to the fourth general trend, which is a strong appeal to the *politicization* of nature protection. The emphasis on politicization stems from the revelation that I have elaborated in Chapter 4, namely that both major families of nature protection approaches hide at their core political decisions behind something that masquerades as objective and universal—in the case of understanding nature as non-human as scientific knowledge of the 'natural' functioning of natural processes and in the case of understanding nature as natural capital as scientifically grounded sustainable development governed by independent laws of the market. I will now introduce another important level of the current emphasis on the politicization of nature protection and, in particular, how understanding of nature as homes relate to the politicization of nature protection.

I want to focus briefly on the current wave of decolonization of nature protection. As already mentioned, protection of nature is originally a Western enterprise, an initiative deeply rooted in Western thought, that has been imported into virtually every colony and has gradually become a worldwide global endeavor supported by large Western NGOs. Nature protection in the colonies often took a rather harsh form—typically, the colonial powers established a protected area and drove out indigenous peoples who had lived in the area for generations, in such a gentle way that Europeans saw it as pristine wilderness from which people had to be

[280] Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel, eds., *Critical Zones: The Science and Politics of Landing on Earth* (Center for Art and Media &The MIT Press, 2020), 314.

driven out to avoid damaging it.[281] However, even after the change of flags, nature protection has not changed much in the former colonies, as the new states took the form based on European models and traditions, and the original nature protection structures, continue the established practices rooted in the Western values and understandings of nature that represent the core of global nature protection framework itself.[282]

As I mentioned throughout Chapter 2, the intertwining of nature protection with colonialism and the wrongs done in the name of nature have been visibly criticized already since the 1970s, but the current decolonial wave goes further. It does not criticize just the impacts of nature protection but it aims at the very character of the global nature protection framework in terms of the knowledge on which it is based and with which it works. Global mainstream conservation works with a Western theoretical framework—often simply referred to as 'science'—that embodies a distinctive dualism of humans and nature, which often does not correspond to Indigenous understandings of the human relationship to non-humans; in this respect, the Decolonial Turn goes hand in hand with the Relational Turn. But there is also a problem with Western science itself, which produces knowledge on the basis of which nature protection decisions are made and which does not take seriously other modes of knowledge production—whose outcomes, in its framework, often do not qualify as knowledge at all—making it difficult to move beyond the current dominant nature protection framework.[283] The current Decolonial Turn thus seeks to enforce:

> conservation knowledge-production and decision-making based on negotiation among diverse ways of knowing and relating with nature, rather than only on the Western scientific knowledge generated and valued by most conservation biologists.[284]

I consider this emphasis to be another important aspect of understanding nature as homes, which highlights the *plurality* of these homes. If we start from the premise that nature protection is about finding ways of *flourishing cohabitation* of different life forms, then we

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[281] Cronon, "The trouble with wilderness," 15.
[282] William M. Adams and Martin Mulligan, "Introduction," in *Decolonizing nature: strategies for conservation in a postcolonial era*, ed. William M. Adams and Martin Mulligan (Earthscan Publications Ltd, 2003), 5–7.
[283] Mazhar Ali Jarwar, Stefano Dumontet and Vincenzo Pasquale, "The Natural World in Western Thought." *Challenges* 15, no. 1 (2024): 1–16. https://doi.org/10.3390/challe15010017.
[284] Robert Fletcher, "Towards a Collective 'Whole Earth' Vision for the Future of Conservation?," in *Decolonize Conservation : Global Voices for Indigenous Self-Determination, Land, and a World in Common*, ed. Ashley Dawson, Fiore Longo, and Survival International (Common Notions, 2023).

cannot forget that there are also different forms of *human* life—there is no universal human—and thus we must allow into play different ways of knowing nature and relating to it, including different spiritual traditions that may seem trivial to scientists of the global North. This does not mean that this or that approach of indigenous peoples must necessarily be accepted and applied, but it must be allowed into the nature protection debate as a legitimate perspective on the issue. In the current wave of decolonization of nature protection, there is therefore a strong call for its *politicization.* This is very strongly in line with what I was arguing for in Chapter 4—namely, that the ethico-political character of nature protection must not be overlooked, because nature protection is not a purely expert matter and certainly not an expert matter of a few scientific disciplines. Nature protection is intrinsically related to the lives of humans and non-humans, and just as non-humans are not uniform, neither are humans, and therefore it is crucial that different voices are heard in nature protection decision-making.

With the decentering of the (universal Western) human in nature protection—who pretended making objective expert decisions on nature protection advancement reached through the universal natural sciences—thus goes hand in hand with the *emphasis on environmental humanities*, which explore a wide range of interactions between humans and nonhumans often much more sensitively with an emphasis on the plurality of possible perspectives on coinhabiting nature as homes. The problem is that for a long time, the environmental humanities have been virtually displaced from nature protection decision-making by a dominant self-proclaimed 'hard' science that has not taken them entirely seriously.[285] It is only in the 21st century that the significant rise of environmental humanities can be observed, but their influence is still marginal at the level of nature conservation policy-making.[286] Therefore, in an era, due to the geological dimensions of human activities often called the Anthropocene, many authors in the context of nature protection point to the importance of examining these *anthropoi* and their various activities and call for:

> deeper, more numerous and more radical connections between the sciences, particularly those natural and social sciences dedicated to the big environmental questions of our time.

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[285] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 133.
Sverker Sörlin, "Environmental Humanities: Why Should Biologists Interested in the Environment Take the Humanities Seriously?" *BioScience* 62, no. 9 (2012): 788–89. https://doi.org/10.1525/bio.2012.62.9.2.
[286] On the emergence and development of environmental humanities, see:
Robert S. Emmett and David E. Nye, *The Environmental Humanities: A Critical Introduction* (The MIT Press, 2017), 1–22.

> [M]aking radical connections is about much more than planning, implementation and management. It is, most importantly, about creating (more) effective political alliances that challenge vested (capitalist) power structures and interests.[287]

Bringing multiple perspectives into dialogue with each other is a key aspect of understanding nature as homes, which should help nature protection not to fall into a singular, totalizing narrative, as tends to happen within the nature protection stemming out of the attitude toward nature as wilderness and out of the attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources. How the different life forms are to coinhabit their homes is an essentially ethico-political question.

But how to give voice to the voices of non-humans? This is an absolutely crucial issue into which all four of the current general trends in nature protection flow. When we focus on relational values, co-habitability, interconnectedness and activity of all life, and relevance of all perspectives on how their homes should look like, with whom and in which way they should be co-inhabited, the question of how to give voice to non-human voices comes to the fore. This is a pressing and complicated issue that a number of authors have systematically thought about in recent years. For example, Janicka talks about co-articulation[288] in this context and analyses possible frameworks for more-than-human politics such as Planetarity and Cosmopolitics.[289] Others, such as Vogel, argue that nature is silent and that politics is a uniquely human affair,[290] but nevertheless stress that non-humans should be taken into account.

> The fundamental environmental question would be a political one: *What sort of environment ought we to live in?* What kind of world would be the best for us—and not just us, but also the many creatures, animate and not, with whom we share it—so that all of our lives can be flourishing ones, and the world we inhabit can be as beautiful as possible? And what practices ought we to engage in, as a community, to help bring that sort of world into being?[291]

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[287] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 133–135.
[288] Iwona Janicka, "Coarticulation: Mutual Transformation in Human and Nonhuman Relations," *SubStance* 53, no. 2 (2024): 38–58, https://doi.org/10.1353/sub.2024.a934261.
[289] Janicka, "Habitability: Planetarity vs Cosmopolitics," 4–25.
Iwona Janicka, "The Janus Face of Cosmopolitics in Advance," *Philosophy Today* 68 (2024): 129–145, https://doi.org/10.5840/philtoday2024125518.
[290] Vogel, *Thinking like a Mall*, 167–197.
[291] Vogel, *Thinking like a Mall*, 237.

In any case, the discussion on this topic is far from conclusive outcomes and consensus on which path to take, and thus the appeal of including non-human into nature-protection-policymaking remains very vague. It can be summarized, that the distinctive feature of understanding nature as homes is that in making decisions about nature protection, the interests of all stakeholders that cohabit particular locality are to be taken into account—although who counts as a stakeholder and the ways in which this is to be achieved differ substantively. On one side of the spectrum would stand Vogel with his emphasis on only humans' politics that takes into account non-humans, and on the other side, Latour with his idea of the parliament of things, where literally all the entities should have a political representation or even be attributed political agency.[292] It is precisely the lack of clarity about how non-humans or their interests should enter into ethico-political discussions—about what the state of flourishing co-habitation should look like—that I consider to be the greatest weakness of this emerging understanding of nature as homes.

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What I labeled the *understanding of nature as homes* has four main highly interlinked manifestations: (I) an *emphasis on relational terms and relational values*, (II) an *emphasis on co-habitability*, (III) an *emphasis on the entanglement of human and non-human*, and (IV) an *emphasis on hearing all voices in the nature protection debate*. Such an understanding of nature, as far as I am aware, has not yet been explicitly formulated—and my proposal is to grasp it as reflecting a *distinct emerging attitude toward nature as homes*. We can characterize it as follows: within attitude toward nature as homes, *nature* would be *perceived as what is inhabited and co-constituted by all life right here, all around us*. The *desired condition* of nature for nature protection stemming from an attitude toward nature as homes would be the *condition that allows a flourishing co-habitation of nature by a multiplicity of life forms across generations*. *Delimination* of the desired condition of flourishing co-habitation within nature protection stemming out of the attitude toward nature as homes would *involve a continuous, never-ending transparent discussion on how nature should be co-habited* (i.e. on what exactly is the desired *flourishing* co-habitation), *which includes the interests of all parties that find their homes in the area in question*, and—based on outcomes of such transparent discussion—*the protection of nature as homes would strive to support the chosen flourishing way of co-*

[292] Bruno Latour, "Esquisse d'un Parlement des choses," *Ecologie Politique* 56, no. 1 (2018): 47–64.

habitation and its continuous renegotiation.

By explicitly articulating this *emerging understanding of nature* and grasping it as *reflecting an emerging attitude toward nature as homes*, and by suggesting what *nature protection* might look like *within the scope of such an attitude toward nature*, I aim to *clarify current proposals for where to go from the crossroads* at which nature protection now finds itself—proposals that go beyond the framework outlined for nature protection by the two dominant attitudes toward nature, and some of which—I suggest—*might stem from a new, not-yet-fully-established attitude toward nature as homes*. I will now attempt to demonstrate this on what is arguably the most significant recent proposal for a *new approach to nature protection in the Anthropocene era*—one that clearly oversteps the boundaries of the two established nature protection frameworks.

(5.2) On the possible entry of the attitude toward nature as homes into nature protection: the case of Convivial Conservation

The approach that is only a few years old and is beginning to take hold is called *Convivial Conservation* and I would like to present it as linked to the understanding of nature as homes and clarify it as stemming from what I labeled emerging attitude toward nature as homes, although its authors, Bram Büscher and Robert Fletcher, do not work with the concept of 'home/s.' First, I will briefly introduce the core principles of Convivial Conservation and a set of concrete proposals for how to translate these principles into nature protection as elaborated by the authors of this nature protection approach, and then I will show how they mirror what I described above as understanding nature as homes. The suggestion on how to move forward from the crossroads at which nature conservation finds itself—described in Chapter 1—that Büscher and Fletcher have developed is particularly valuable because they are one of the few who realize what I clarified in detail through the attitude analysis that I developed, namely, that these contradictions in nature protection are characterized by radical differences in the very way people understand what nature is and what its protection consists in, and that these are rooted in "different ways of understanding, seeing and knowing the world around us,"[293] that cannot be denied and seemingly resolved in some universal (e.g. scientific or market) way, but must be openly discussed politically, which should ideally lead to the emergence of a political platform that allows these radical differences to be overcome. This is why Büscher and Fletcher explicitly articulate the following four basic principles of their Convivial Conservation.[294] However, precisely because their clear recognition of the roots of the quarrels in current nature protection it is quite surprising that they themselves do not explicitly defend any alternative understanding of 'nature' to contrast with the approaches to nature protection that they criticize. As I suggested above, I believe that *implicitly* they do indeed draw on some different understanding of nature—specifically, nature as homes—and I will try to infer this from the principles of their Convivial Conservation and particular proposals for how to implement them in nature protection.

(1) First principle "Reality is constructed, but this does not mean that 'everything is

[293] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 136–137.
[294] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 136–137.

relative'"[295] tries to capture the outputs of the previous discussions in political ecology and nature protection concerning the construction of nature. At the core, they argue that nature is both socially constructed and real, by which they mean that, despite the fact that our ways of understanding nature are influenced by a multitude of different configurations, this does not mean that nature and the environmental problems that nature protection seeks to address are not real. But it is about the way we grasp them and the context in which we place them, and this is what needs to be approached with humility, as it is this context that often indicates the direction to take. Therefore, when analyzing specific problems within the framework of nature protection, the social context of the production of knowledge about what is the case and how to approach it must also be taken into account.[296] (2) This is elaborated by the second principle, "'Nature' and 'society' are dialectically integrated,"[297] which seeks to overcome the dualism between humans and nature; it is not the case that societies merely in different ways interpret some society-independent nature, but that the two are dialectically intertwined. By this they mean both the categories—'nature' and 'society'—are certain abstractions that:

> are co-constituted every step of the way. Hence, we somehow need to preserve a sense of an independent reality without equating this with nature, while at the same time describing the relationship between this reality and human thought and action not as dualistic but as dialectical. Simply put, in a dialectic, things, processes and systems are […] always part of broader sets of relationships whereby patterns of unification and differentiation are bound in perpetual struggle.[298]

And this struggle is inherently political—it stems from the different interests of different groups. (3) It is therefore crucial to realize that nature protection does not stand somehow on the sidelines, but is part of this struggle. Büscher and Fletcher elaborate on this in their third principle: "Conservation is an element within a broader process of 'uneven geographical development.'"[299] Nature conservation is part of the development of dialectically integrated natures and societies, and this development has been largely shaped by capitalism since the emergence of nature conservation as an established practice (as I developed in section 2.2, also

[295] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 138.
[296] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 138–140.
[297] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 141.
[298] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 142.
[299] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 143.

in reference to their work). However, it is crucial to recognize that nature protection could also enter into this development on the basis of other values, especially as capitalism's ways of valuing nature are at odds with many of the declared aims of nature protection.[300] (4) Therefore, the fourth principle is "Value matters."[301] The value systems themselves need to be thought about and openly discussed; thus, the authors for convivial conservation suggest a shift toward what they call *embedded values*: "instead of asking how conservation can lead to more (necessarily monetized) 'value' in the future, we should start by asking how a (necessarily non-monetized) value is embedded in the here and now and in which contexts this value receives local and extra-local meaning."[302]

The key term 'convivial,' which characterizes their entire approach to nature protection, aims to capture the two main levels on which they define themselves in contrast to the established nature protection approaches that I have characterized in Chapters 2 and 4. The etymological meanings of 'con' (with) and 'vivire' (living) characterize the attempt to overcome the dualism of humans and non-humans from which the protection of nature as non-human emerges. And as for overcoming the market understanding of nature as natural capital, convivial refers to Ivan Illich's conceptualization of convivial society which would be in their paraphrase "the result of social arrangements that guarantee for each member the most ample and free access to the tools of the community and limit this freedom only in favor of another member's equal freedom"[303] from which they take for the tools and practices used in nature protection, that they are "of value only to the extent that they allow for more conviviality between humans and between humans and the rest of nature"[304] and since this is not the case with the current mainstream tools and approaches in nature protection embedded in the capitalist development framework, Convivial Conservation seeks to come up with new practices that would fulfil this maxim.[305] Convivial Conservation is thus fundamentally non-dualistic and post-capitalist, and Büscher and Fletcher propose the following five concrete proposals for how to implement the above-mentioned principles into nature protection.

(i) From protected to promoted areas.

(ii) From saving nature to celebrating human and nonhuman nature.

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[300] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 143–144.
[301] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 144.
[302] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 144–145, 173.
[303] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 161.
[304] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 162.
[305] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 162.

(iii) From touristic voyeurism to engaged visitation.

(iv) From spectacular to everyday environmentalisms.

(v) From privatized expert technocracy to common democratic engagement.[306]

In more detail, (i) since the goal is not separation but conviviality, "the principal goal of special conservation areas should not be to protect nature from humans but to promote nature for, to and by humans."[307] (ii) And since it is about conviviality between humans and between humans and the rest of nature, both of which are dialectically intertwined, it is necessary to do away with the traditional framing of nature protection as saving only non-human nature from humans: "We need to start focusing on saving and celebrating both human and nonhuman nature equally."[308] (iii) Convivial Conservation also represents a shift in the way we see nature, away from the voyeurism associated with the ideal of wilderness that crowds of tourists on commodified trips drive or fly to photograph toward an emphasis on "long-term democratic engagement," meaning primarily longlasting engagement with natures closer to where we live focused on social and ecological justice.[309] (iv) Related to this is a turn away from the current mode of imagery and communication of nature protection based on the 'spectacle of nature,' which is both artificial and anti-political toward a "focus on 'everyday nature,' in all its splendour and mundaneness" where the most meaningful engagement with nature can be found.[310] (v) And this meaningful engagement with nature must be available to all; it is a radical ecological democracy, a turn away from expert decision-making on nature protection to democratic political decision-making based on embedded values.[311]

What, then, is *nature* for Convivial Conservation? Büscher and Fletcher tread carefully around this question, asserting that *nature is both socially constructed and real*, meaning that (1) even though our ways of understanding nature are always socially constructed on multiple levels, nature—and the environmental problems that nature protection seeks to address—is real. (2) Although 'nature' and 'society' are dialectically integrated, *we must preserve both levels without conflating them*—"we somehow need to preserve a sense of an independent reality without equating this with nature."[312] What should we make of this? This response to

[306] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 163–174.
[307] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 163.
[308] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 165.
[309] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 168–169.
[310] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 171.
[311] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 172–174.
[312] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 142.

constructivist critiques has been substantially elaborated by Kate Soper, whom Büscher and Fletcher refer to in this context.[313]

> It is true that we can make no distinction between the 'reality' of nature and its cultural representation that is not itself conceptual, but this does not justify the conclusion that there is no ontological distinction between the ideas we have of nature and that which the ideas are about: that since nature is only signified in human discourse, inverted commas 'nature' is nature, and we should therefore remove the inverted commas.
> In short, it is not language that has a hole in its ozone layer; and the 'real' thing continues to be polluted and degraded even as we refine our deconstructive insights at the level of the signifier.[314]

Soper argues that on the conceptual level, it is not possible to make a distinction between (a) the 'reality' of nature and (b) the cultural representation of nature, simply because what counts for us as the 'reality' of nature inevitably blends with how we understand nature within our culture, and any such distinction can only occur within this culturally conditioned understanding. Nonetheless, on the ontological level, the distinction between (a) the 'reality' of nature and (b) its cultural representation is crucial—because regardless of our cultural representation of nature, "the 'real' thing continues to be polluted and degraded."

To be sure, at a certain level, 'reality' simply *goes on*, irrespective of how we represent it—but at that level we cannot claim that it "continues to be polluted and degraded." Once we do so, we are already introducing our way of perceiving the phenomena, our basal attitudes toward nature, and we are certainly not invoking anything universal. For example, spraying a field with antifungal agents may be perceived as pollution—but also as purification; the transformation of a swamp into fertile farmland may be seen as degradation—but also as cultivation. In both cases, the perception depends on our attitudes—on our way of grasping what nature is. As elaborated by Olli Lagerspetz:

> our conceptions of nature and of pollution or soiling are two sides of a coin: *what* we would count as absence of pollution and soiling indicates, by the same token, what we would count as a 'natural' process in the environment under consideration.[315]

[313] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 141.
[314] Soper, *What Is Nature?,* 151.
[315] Olli Lagerspetz, *A Philosophy of Dirt* (Reaktion Books, 2018), 182.

What I am trying to say is that we simply cannot step outside our attitudes, and what will count for us as the 'reality' of nature will always be outlined by our basal attitudes toward nature. Or to reframe this using the terminology of Büscher and Fletcher—not only 'nature' and 'society,' but also 'reality' and 'society,' are dialectically integrated.

This is not to say that there is no reality independent of human ways of grasping it—as I addressed already in section 3.2. The point is that humans do not have access to reality beyond their ways of grasping it, and thus, for humans, independent reality will always be what they grasp *as* independent reality—and this has changed significantly throughout history and will continue to change. And it is precisely the investigation and clarification of various alternative ways of grasping various kinds of phenomena that can help us shed light on our current ways of grasping this or that kind of phenomenon. Büscher and Fletcher seem aware of this, even though their invocation of 'independent reality' is misleading because it evokes that we can turn to some independent arbiter. But their emphasis on (2) the dialectical interwovenness of things, processes, and systems in broader sets of relationships in which patterns of unification and differentiation are bound in perpetual struggle[316] points in the right direction. It is for this reason that they stress that this struggle—over how nature is co-constituted with this or that society—is at its core (3) political,[317] and that, ultimately, it concerns (4) values that must be openly debated in nature protection.[318] If I return to my terminology and the conclusions I reached in Chapter 4, we might say that beneath this struggle over how nature and society should be configured lie divergent attitudes toward nature embedded in divergent attitudes toward life. My question is, therefore: *from within which attitude toward nature does Convivial Conservation stem—what way of perceiving nature and nature protection does it reflect?* Out of which attitude toward nature do those five (i–v) proposals for implementing the four (1–4) principles of Convivial Conservation arise?

Based on the analyses presented throughout my dissertation, I would argue that those four (1–4) principles—after clarifying (1–2) in the preceding two paragraphs—are not merely principles of Convivial Conservation; they describe the very space within which the practice of nature protection necessarily operates, whether consciously or not, and regardless of the particular approach it adopts. However, none of the five (i–v) proposals for Convivial Conservation follows necessarily from this—arguably universal—structure of the space within which nature protection operates. This is evident from the simple fact that the two established

[316] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 142.
[317] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 142–144.
[318] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 143–145.

families of nature protection approaches also operate within this space, yet they do not typically approximate any of the five (i–v) proposals. They simply (1–2) grasped nature in a particular way (which is itself part of the dialectical co-constitution of nature and society), and thereby (3–4) represent a particular ethico-political positioning (granted, not a particularly honest one, since they obscure it—but that does not mean they do not participate in the ethico-political struggle). This suggests that Convivial Conservation, too, springs out of a particular attitude toward nature embedded in a particular attitude toward life. It is not merely the logical conclusion drawn from those four (1–4) principles. Indeed, Büscher and Fletcher do not claim otherwise. They present their project as a proposal for a new overarching vision that could provide a shared framework for various emerging alternatives to the two established families of nature protection approaches,[319] but they do *not* think that the established approaches *follow* these principles. So what does it mean for Convivial Conservation *to follow* these principles? This is where we can begin to unpack the attitudes embedded in it.

After stating these four (1–4) principles, they argue for "the need to acknowledge both the lived reality and the political economy of the contemporary Anthropocene/Capitalocene/great acceleration moment, [and] the need to lay out differences on the table and openly discuss them."[320] These are precisely the two levels on which the established families of nature protection approaches fail—they do not respond to the lived reality and political economy of the contemporary Anthropocene/Capitalocene/great acceleration moment, and they do not engage in transparent debate about differing visions of how and in what kind of world we should live. This is precisely what the following of these principles means—being aware of the space within which nature protection operates, and being open about it—this is what Convivial Conservation strives for: a broad perspective on the overall context of nature protection, and fairness. So what is the vision of Convivial Conservation about how and in what kind of world we should live?

> Convivial conservation must be pursued within a broader *revolutionary* context of degrowth and sharing the wealth that promotes mixed landscapes in which humans and nonhumans coexist rather than being separated by promoting radical redistribution of resource ownership and control through reining in the power of global corporations (and their capitalist ways of producing 'value in motion') rather than appealing to them for

[319] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 146–162.
[320] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 146.

> leadership and funding. All this, in turn, must be grounded not in monetary valuation or even more general benefit–cost calculation but in an ethic of reciprocity, care and gifting supported by pursuing financing not from the private sector but from collective pooling of resources in whatever form, from state taxation through crowdsourcing. It is in this context that we believe our proposal for convivial conservation must be pursued and to which it should always be connected.[321]

This is a revolutionary vision of social organization *aiming toward degrowth and sharing the wealth*, which follows from their analysis that *under capitalism, nature protection cannot face the realities of the Anthropocene*. It is a vision of a society that will *promote human and nonhuman coexistence in mixed landscapes instead of separation*, based on an *ethic of reciprocity, care, and gifting*—supported by collectives, and not through monetary valuation of nature or benefit–cost calculations.

Büscher and Fletcher are much clearer about their vision of social life—in which we can recognize radically different attitudes to life than those represented by the two established families of nature protection approaches—than about their *perception of nature*, in which such a life should take place. This stands in stark contrast to the two established families of approaches, where the situation was reversed, and we had to work hard to uncover their underpinning visions of human life. This is because Bütcher and Fletcher proceed precisely from a critique of how the political character of nature protection is obscured, and they strive to be transparent on that front. It is also because they are acutely aware that perceiving nature is socially conditioned—'nature' and 'society' are dialectically integrated—and any particular way of perceiving nature would bring entail a certain framing of the space for nature protection—a framing they want to leave open to political discussion. But it seems they overlook the fact that *precisely because a particular vision of nature always brings in a particular vision of society*, their vision of society also necessarily brings in *a certain vision of nature*. When one says that society should be non-capitalist and just, and should democratically agree on how to perceive and approach this or that kind of nature, this already includes a *certain general perception of nature—stemming from a particular attitude toward nature*. The basal level of attitudes is always already present and cannot be stepped out of. In other words, Convivial Conservation—like any other nature protection approach—operates *within the scope outlined by a particular attitude toward nature*, and the ethico-political discussion about how

[321] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 156–157.

this or that kind of nature should be perceived and approached—on which Büscher and Fletcher rightly place so much emphasis—is, therefore, best understood as a discussion between divergent *adjustments within this attitude*. So: *what is the attitude toward nature from which Convivial Conservation stems?*

As I have already suggested, I believe that in order to clarify Convivial Conservation, it is useful to grasp it as stemming from what I labeled *the emerging attitude toward nature as homes*. It is now time to defend this claim. I believe that the five (i-v) aforementioned *proposals for how to put Convivial Conservation into practice indicate a perception of nature as homes*—to make this clear, I will connect the four (I–IV) general trends in environmental discourse I previously identified and grasped as reflecting an emerging attitude toward nature as homes with their five (i–v) proposals for implementing Convivial Conservation:

- (I) Emphasis on relational terms and relational values.
  - (iii) From touristic voyeurism to engaged visitation.
  - (iv) From spectacular to everyday environmentalisms.
- (II) Emphasis on co-habitability.
  - (ii) From saving nature to celebrating human and nonhuman nature.
  - (i) From protected to promoted areas.
- (III) Emphasis on the entanglement of human and non-human.
  - (i) From protected to promoted areas.
  - (ii) From saving nature to celebrating human and nonhuman nature.
- (IV) Emphasis on hearing all voices in the nature protection debate.
  - (v) From privatized expert technocracy to common democratic engagement.

The proposals for implementing Convivial Conservation reflect all the key features of what I labeled the *emerging attitude toward nature as homes*, and it seems convincing to me to say that the subject of these proposals is indeed *nature perceived as homes*—that is, as what is inhabited and co-constituted by all life right here, all around us—and that these proposals aim to achieve the desired condition of *flourishing co-habitation*, meaning a condition that allows for the flourishing co-habitation of nature by a multiplicity of life forms across generations. While what flourishing co-habitation should mean, must reflect ongoing careful negotiations with due regard for the interests of all parties that find their homes in the area in question. Moreover, the unifying element of what I have called the emerging attitude toward nature as homes—*striving to find the middle ground between using and not using nature*—is a strongly

present theme in Convivial Conservation:

> Convivial conservation is therefore about different *uses*, *frames* and forms of *embeddedness* of multiple natures. It is about *not* setting nature apart but integrating the uses of (nonhuman) natures into social, cultural, and ecological contexts and systems (i.e., re-embedding).[322]

The emphasis on *multiple natures* and the *many ways they might be co-inhabited*, along with the key concept of *conviviality*, all strongly evoke the perception of *nature as homes*. Büscher and Fletcher proclaim that on the path toward conviviality, "we need to start seeing 'nature' differently"[323]—*I propose they already do: they see nature as homes*.

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In this concluding Part III of my dissertation, I first *clarified the character of the two dominant families of nature protection approaches* by *illuminating* (in section 4.1) the *attitude toward nature as wilderness* and (in section 4.2) the *attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources*, which outline the space in which these established nature protection approaches operate, and by *showing how they cloak themselves in a veil of objectivity*. Subsequently (in section 4.3), I *uncovered what lies behind these veils of objectivity*—namely, that at their core lies a *certain vision of how, and in what kind of world, humans ought to live*, in which these attitudes toward nature are deeply embedded. On the basis of these findings, I (in section 4.4) *clarified the current debate on the future of nature protection* (outlined in Chapter 1) and formulated the central thesis of my dissertation: *the current dispute about the future of nature protection is stuck above all because the two main opposing camps fail to recognize that their very perception of the present situation of nature protection is vastly differently shaped—already on the basal level—by two divergent attitudes toward nature, which are themselves embedded in markedly different attitudes toward life that inform them and give them their particular form*.

Because the clarification of these attitudes toward nature, and the connected attitudes toward life that outline the space within which the two dominant families of nature protection

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[322] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 176.
[323] Büscher and Fletcher, *The Conservation Revolution*, 175.

approaches operate, led me to conclude that these approaches cannot offer a walkable path for nature protection in the Anthropocene era, my inquiry continued in this final Chapter 5. This chapter proceeded from the hypothesis that over the past two decades or so, we can observe the gradual emergence of a new attitude toward nature that is only very recently gradually beginning to make its way into nature protection. First (in section 5.1), I *identified four recent significant turns in grasping nature* in nature protection and the environmental humanities more broadly, and attempted to present them as *individual traits of a new understanding of nature as homes*—an understanding *that reflects a not-yet-fully-established, emerging attitude toward nature as homes*. Subsequently (in section 5.2), I *sought to demonstrate the entry of this hypothesized attitude into nature protection* through an analysis of what is arguably the most significant recent proposal for a new approach to nature protection in the Anthropocene era—*Convivial Conservation*—which I *grasped and clarified as stemming from* what I labeled the *attitude toward nature as homes*.

By clarifying the structure of what I believe is indeed a new emerging attitude toward nature, I have *aimed to shed light on current proposals for how to proceed from the crossroads* at which nature protection now finds itself—proposals that move beyond the framework outlined by the two dominant attitudes toward nature, which, in my view, do not offer a walkable path forward. I believe that, in doing so, I have *contributed to grounding these emerging proposals for the future of nature protection within the realities of the Anthropocene and helped them better understand the position from which they speak*. Only the future development of nature protection can show whether what I have labeled the attitude toward nature as homes will indeed gain traction and come to constitute another influential family of nature protection approaches—and whether it will in fact be able to offer a walkable path for the protection of a rapidly changing nature. What remains is to continue reflecting on what such a walkable path could look like—and to hope.

CONCLUSION

The aim of my dissertation was to clarify contemporary nature protection and the debate about its future. My starting point was the observation (elaborated in Chapter 1) that contemporary nature protection finds itself at a crossroads, facing crucial theoretical debates and practical dilemmas arising from its clash with the realities of the Anthropocene—which vividly reveal the limitations of established nature protection frameworks and the need for finding a new path forward. Unfortunately, the debate about the future of nature protection is both *confused* and *stuck*, and a viable path out of the crossroads remains out of sight. These are the reasons why current nature protection and the debate about its future are in need of philosophical reflection, which I have provided throughout my thesis. I began my investigation (in Chapter 2) by focusing on the *confusions* stemming from the ambiguity surrounding the central concept of nature protection theory and practice—'nature'—and analyzed how it is *used* in nature protection. This led me to distinguish two main families of understanding 'nature' in nature protection—as *non-human* and as *natural capital*—and, by unpacking their fundamental differences and the inherent problems with delimiting the desired state of nature in both, I clarified the *theoretical confusion* surrounding contemporary nature protection and the debate about its future. But as the investigation unfolded, it became clear that the confusion surrounding nature protection is not merely terminological or definitional, because the dispute about its future is not just a *technical* one. While the ambiguity of the concept of 'nature' does contribute significantly to the disorientation of the current debate, the reason why it remains *stuck* lies deeper—in *divergent, unreflected basal ways of relating to what both opposing camps grasp as nature*, of which the different understandings of 'nature' are merely manifestations.

This is why (in Chapter 3) I elaborated on the *Wittgensteinian idea of attitudes* to develop my extended conception of attitudes as a *methodological tool for clarifying the character of various ways of relating to particular kinds of phenomena*—an approach especially suited for clarifying issues that stem from divergent ways of relating to (what might be considered) the same kind of phenomena and are therefore not technical in core. I defined *attitude* as a methodological label for *a particular cluster of immediate basal reactions toward a certain kind of object, which together constitute a specific practical orientation toward that kind of object*. I further explained that these immediate basal reactions *shape perception* by situating

the attitudinal object *within a particular context*, in which it is perceived as if *under a particular concept*—thereby introducing a *particular understanding* already at the basal level of perception, along with *particular possibilities for acting* toward the attitudinal object that appear as a smooth outgrowth of this *practical orientation*. Thus, much is already settled before conscious reasoning can even begin. And while people can have various attitudes toward the same kind of phenomena, when attempting to clarify issues within which they do so, it is absolutely crucial to clarify how the basal practical orientations of the opposing sides—within which their reasonings take place—are outlined. The point is that in such disputes—which I labeled as *ethico-political*—the failure of arguments to gain traction across opposing positions is not primarily due to a lack of understanding of various related facts, but due to a lack of shared attitudinal space, causing the facts relevant to one side not to fall on fertile ground on the other, and vice versa. And precisely for the purposes of clarification of such ethico-political disputes, I developed what I consider the first major contribution of my dissertation: the *general extended Wittgensteinian conception of attitudes* and the related *method of attitude analysis*, whose explanatory potential is not limited to the scope of my investigation—though in the case of nature protection, it has proved particularly fruitful.

By analyzing nature protection using attitudes as a clarificatory tool (in Chapter 4), I revealed that the dispute about the future of nature protection is indeed of such an ethico-political character. It stems primarily from a *fundamental differences between divergent practical orientations* toward what both established families of nature protection approaches grasp as nature—between the attitudes toward nature *as wilderness* and *as a reservoir of resources*—that are themselves embedded in markedly different *attitudes toward life*. This is the core reason why the current dispute about the future of nature protection is *confused* and *stuck*. This is why the debate does not move forward: because the vast majority of its participants—*hidden behind dubious veils of objectivity*, focusing on various baselines, indicators of ecosystem health, sustainability predictions, values of ecosystem services, and the like—*fail to recognize and openly address what is truly at stake*: namely, *what kind of nature, and what kind of life within it, we actually want to protect*. Therefore, the arguments of one side do not fall on fertile ground for the other—because the ground is not shared, but already deeply fractured at the basal level of divergent attitudes. Each side inhabits a different practical horizon, shaped by different basal reactions toward their subject of protection—nature—and by different visions of how, and in what kind of world, humans ought to live. Precisely this *perspicuous representation of the current landscape of nature protection*—allowing us to see clearly *why* the debate about the future of nature protection is *confused* and *stuck*—is what I

consider the main contribution of my dissertation. By presenting this clarification, I facilitated the arguments in the dispute about the future of nature protection to fall on fertile ground—that is, to address *what is truly at stake.*

However, even if a *transparent discussion* about *what kind of nature*, and *what kind of life within it*, we actually want to protect indeed gets going, this *would not automatically mean its unlocking*—the two opposing visions could simply turn out to be nonnegotiable—nor would it mean that a viable path forward for nature protection will necessarily be found, because this is not only a question of shared attitudinal backgrounds, but above all the question of whether nature protection—stemming either from the attitudes toward nature as wilderness and as a reservoir of resources, or from some modified version of them—can in fact offer a viable path under the realities of the Anthropocene. These are two different questions, and I leave the first open. But with regard to the second, I dare to go beyond my expertise and state that, based on my analyses of the current situation of nature protection, *I believe that nature protection, as tied to these visions, simply does not offer a viable path under the conditions of the Anthropocene*. Against this backdrop, I turned (in Chapter 5) to examine whether a new attitudinal orientation might be emerging—one that departs from both the wilderness-based and resource-based ways of relating to nature. I identified four recent turns across environmental thought and I suggested them—as having common adversaries, shared roots in realities of the Anthropocene, and pointing similar direction—to be individual traits of a potential, not-yet-fully-established, emerging *attitude toward nature as homes*. I then examined a recent proposal for *Convivial Conservation*, suggesting that it might represent the entry of this potential emerging attitude toward nature as homes into nature protection. Grasping these traits as potentially reflecting a new attitude toward nature as homes, characterizing it and clarifying how it would outline the space for nature protection, is—despite its speculative character—what I consider the third mayor contribution of my dissertation.

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I will close the conclusion by elaborating a bit further on the three main contributions of my thesis. The first—methodological—contribution 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 this thesis contains.

The second contribution of my dissertation 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 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*.

SUMMARY

Having clarified the overall progression of my dissertation and its general contributions, I will now summarize my thesis in more detail, going through the individual steps that led to these contributions and highlighting all its significant outcomes, Chapter by Chapter and section by section. I begin by recapitulating the structure, which follows a conceptually simple but methodologically deliberate sequence: it begins with a diagnosis of the *problem*—namely, the confusion and paralysis of contemporary nature protection in the face of Anthropocene realities (Part I); proceeds to the development of a *method* suitable for clarifying disputes that stem from divergent basal attitudinal orientations rather than technical disagreements (Part II); and culminates in the *clarification* of the current debate about the future of nature protection through the application of that method, including a speculative exploration of a possible emerging alternative (Part III).

In *Chapter 1*, 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*, 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*, 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*, 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.

In *Chapter 3*, 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*, 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*, 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*, 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*, 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.

In *Chapter 4*, 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*, 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*, I turned to the second dominant attitude toward nature: the *attitude toward nature as a reservoir of resources*. Drawing on the previous conceptual and genealogical analysis of the concept of 'nature' understood as *natural capital*, I showed how, within this attitude, 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*, 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*, 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*, 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*, 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*, 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*.

* * *

This dissertation began as an effort to clarify the present and ended as a cautious gesture toward the future. Its guiding conviction was that if the space of current disagreements about nature protection remains opaque, no viable way forward can emerge. But if we manage to shed light on the basal attitudinal orientations that shape our perception of what is at stake, we may come to see not just why we disagree, but also what kind of alternatives might be forming—perhaps already around us. The aim was never to resolve the debate or to prescribe the future of nature protection, but rather to make visible the practical orientations that give rise to its dominant framings, and to show that these framings are neither exhaustive nor necessary. By bringing into view a possible third attitudinal orientation toward nature—as homes—I have sought to open a space for thinking otherwise. Whether this space will be taken up, and what might grow within it, remains to be seen. But if this work helps to make such reflection more possible—more attuned to what we already live with and within—then its purpose will have been fulfilled.

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