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Facts About Natural Values

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ABSTRACT: Some environmental philosophers believe that the rejection of anthropocentric ethics requires the development and defence of an objectivist meta-ethical theory according to which values are, in the most literal sense, discovered not conferred. It is argued that nothing of normative or motivational import, however, turns on the meta-ethical issue. It is also argued that a rejection of normative anthropocentrism is completely consistent with meta-ethical subjectivism. Moreover the dynamics and outcomes of rational debate about normative environmental ethics are not determined by any particular choice between meta-ethical subjectivism and objectivism. These different meta-ethical views sustain analogous moves in normative debate, although they offer rather different accounts of what underlies these moves. They also provide for analogous links between moral 'belief' and motivation, although again they offer rather different accounts of what underlies these links. In the course of defending these conclusions a subjectivist account of intrinsic value is developed and defended.

KEYWORDS: Anthropocentrism, environmental ethics, meta-ethics, value-theory

Some environmental philosophers believe that the rejection of anthropocentric ethics requires ultimately the development and defence of a certain kind of objectivist meta-ethical theory according to which values are, in the most literal sense, discovered not conferred.¹ But nothing of normative or motivational import for environmental ethics turns on the meta-ethical issue. The dynamics and outcomes of rational debate about normative environmental ethics are not determined by any particular answer to the meta-ethical issue; certainly not by a choice between broadly subjectivist and broadly objectivist meta-ethics. Meta-ethical issues need not be resolved in order to further the normative debate or to ground a thorough-going environmentalism. These matters are pursued in four stages. First, the notions of *objective value*, *subjective value* and *intrinsic value* are discussed. Second, the consistency of a thorough-going rejection of

anthropocentrism with meta-ethical subjectivism is demonstrated. Third, the impact of subjectivism and objectivism, respectively, on the dynamics and adjudication of normative debate is discussed. Fourth, the motivational impact of subjectivism and objectivism, respectively, is discussed. It should be emphasised that the argument of this paper is only indirectly, if at all, an argument for a subjectivist meta-ethic. Rather the argument is for the conclusion that nothing of normative, adjudicative or motivational significance turns on the choice between objectivist and subjectivist meta-ethics as such.

SUBJECTIVISM, OBJECTIVISM AND INTRINSIC VALUE

The claim that there are objective values is, in the first place, the claim that there are mind-independent value facts which are the truth makers for value judgements. The claim that value-facts are mind-independent amounts to the claim that something's being a value or something's having value is not dependent on some valuer approving of it, commending it or such like, even hypothetically.² The claim that there are objective values may also include the claim that values are intrinsically prescriptive; that is prescriptive independently of the contingent desires, attitudes and preferences of valuers. The thought is that they have, to paraphrase Mackie, to-be-valuedness built in to them. A further distinct claim, the internalist claim, is that objective values are intrinsically motivational; that to be acquainted with them is, without the mediation of desires, to be moved to at least some degree by them.³

These three components come apart. Endorsing the first but rejecting the second saves the objectivism while giving up one aspect of the metaphysical distinctiveness, associated with intrinsic prescriptivity, which makes objectivism startlingly interesting and, for some, so difficult to accept. Giving up the claim about intrinsic prescriptivity would seem to involve giving up internalism, since it is presumably the comprehension of intrinsic prescriptivity that internalism takes to be motivating.

Those wanting to retain objectivism while giving up intrinsic prescriptivity and internalism might find a more plausible alternative in objective naturalism.⁴ This view delivers the result, surprising to many, that talk about value facts is simply talk about natural, and not especially distinctive, non-subjective facts. Hopefully proponents of objective values in nature are not advocating objective naturalism but some more metaphysically extravagant, and so more interesting, variant of objectivism. Otherwise their meta-ethical views turn out to be not only false but uninteresting.⁵ Some advocates of objective environmental values, however, apparently are advocating objective naturalism. Holmes Rolston, for example, seems sometimes to reduce value facts to facts about what does or does not contribute to promoting an organism's, or even a system's, biologically determined goals.⁶ So, the claim, made by some environmental ethicists, that

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value attaches to an organism's successful struggle to maintain life and to flourish according to its kind might amount to no more than a pleonasm.

The notion of *subjective* value is best introduced in connection with those meta-ethical theories that can be categorised as subjective naturalisms. Subjective naturalisms, which reduce value facts to psychological facts, accommodate the prescriptive element that many think value-judgements crucially possess. On such views the prescriptivity is supplied by the desires, preferences or attitudes of subjects or valuers, and so is not intrinsic. Some environmental philosophers count this an unacceptable cost, arguing that it renders values in nature insufficiently mind-independent, too dependent on the contingent and widely varying psychological states of valuers. Subjective naturalisms thus imply relativism, inviting as they do the conclusion that the term 'value' is multiply ambiguous, being more appropriately indexed to particular valuers at particular times and at particular worlds. For example, Jill's assertion that wild nature has intrinsic value does not contradict, although it is likely to be in practical conflict with, Jack's assertion that wild nature has no intrinsic value. Put simply, the subjective naturalist will say that Jill is telling us what she values right now and that Jack is telling us what he values right now. So, their apparently contradictory assertions are in fact no more contradictory than Jill's assertion yesterday, 'It is raining now', and Jack's assertion today, 'It is not raining now'. Their value statements are differently indexed: Jill's to her attitudinal framework, and Jack's to his. Now some who resist subjectivism eliminate the contingency, the threat of relativism and so on, by recourse to objective naturalism. And that may have its own attendant costs; in particular that it removes the prescriptive element from moral judgements.

Consider the notion of *intrinsic value*. To say that something has intrinsic value is to say that it is valuable in itself, on its own account, for its own sake or some such. The appropriate contrast is with something's being valued instrumentally, on account of its uses, the ends to which it contributes or some such. Things, however, are not intrinsically valuable independently of their other properties. What intrinsic value they have, they have in virtue of their other properties. Properties may thus be value-adding, value-subtracting or value-neutral. So to say that something is intrinsically valuable is to claim that all things considered its various non-value properties give it positive value considered in itself. There is a small qualification; sometimes value-properties will be among the value-adding properties, as when the rightness of some action contributes to the goodness of some state of affairs which includes it. And given some variant of subjective naturalism, the property of being intrinsically valuable is to all intents and purposes the relational property of being intrinsically valued by me or, more abstractly, valued from the point of view of a particular attitudinal framework. And similarly for each valuer. So, 'intrinsically valuable' is multiply ambiguous because partly indexical, although the different senses are connected by similar functional roles in moral discourse and action.⁷ It is worth emphasising-

ing that this feature of intrinsic value does not imply either that what has intrinsic value from some point of view has intrinsic value for me, or that something's intrinsic value is somehow determined by the comparative numbers of those valuers who value it and those who don't.

Some environmental ethicists urge that the view that nature has intrinsic value cannot be combined with subjective naturalism or with the more general view that there are no objective values. While they do not seem to think that the rejection of objectivism entails that only subjective states can have intrinsic value, they do take the view that subjectivism rules out certain core environmentalist normative claims. The underlying thought seems to be that if the source or origin of value is a subjective point of view then the intrinsic value of something cannot be appropriately robustly possessed by the thing itself but is somehow too dependent upon the subject regarding and valuing it. They allow that the subjectivist can properly claim that she or he values items other than (her or his) subjective states but resist the conclusion that such items can be said genuinely to have intrinsic value.⁸

There are two related concerns here. One is the desire to avoid the conclusion that value-facts are contingent upon valuers having certain attitudes and the like. Some environmental philosophers do allow that values are or could be mind-dependent and, by implication, that the property of being intrinsically valuable would be a relational property. But they say that the intrinsic value here is 'truncated'.⁹ Or they say that the value, although not anthropogenic is nevertheless anthropogenic; that is, while value extends beyond the human domain it is nevertheless generated or projected from within the human domain.¹⁰ Moreover, they suggest that truncated intrinsic value or anthropogenic value is somehow inferior, because too weak or tainted, to be 'real' intrinsic value.

Underlying the concern about mind-dependence is a, perhaps more basic, concern to do with subjectivism's implication that intrinsic value is a relational property. Some might think that intrinsic value must be a non-relational, intrinsic property of the thing which has it. Since this view is inconsistent with subjectivism but consistent with non-natural objectivism, we apparently have an argument against the former and in favour of the latter. The issue would seem to be whether there are good reasons, independent of one's endorsement of subjectivism or objectivism, for accepting this view. Possibly some might urge that reflection on the meaning of 'intrinsic value' or analysis of the concept *intrinsic value* supports the view.¹¹ Nevertheless, whatever the term means in the mouths of some or whatever particular uses of the concept imply, there is a distinction that could be drawn between two senses of 'intrinsic value', the one requiring, and the other not, that the property of being intrinsically valuable is an intrinsic property. The two resultant conceptions are coherent and one of them is completely consistent with, and so available to, subjective naturalism. The crucial questions, pursued later, are whether the conception of intrinsic value

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available to the subjective naturalist sustains the core claims of environmentalism and whether it impacts interestingly, and in a way which differentiates it from the objectivist conception, on the dynamics of normative debate. It is contended that it does sustain the relevant core claims and that it has no interesting, differentiating impact on normative debate. This result would not, of course, show that objectivism is false.

It should be noted also that a subjectivist about values could quite consistently claim, just as the objectivist could quite consistently deny, that the value-adding properties are, or even must be, intrinsic properties. There is no inconsistency between the claim that value-adding properties must be intrinsic properties and the claim that intrinsic value itself is a relational property, just as there is no inconsistency between the view that intrinsic value is an intrinsic property and the view that relational properties can be value-adding. On the former view, the basis or ground of something's intrinsic value, would reside entirely within the thing itself. This might go some way to alleviate the underlying concern referred to above. It would likely not, however, go anything like all the way since it yields no profound detachment of values from valuers and no prescriptivity or to-be-valuedness independent of valuing. It would, incidentally, rule out some not implausible candidate value-adding relational properties, which might well be endorsed by objectivists as well as subjectivists; for example the property of being naturally evolved and the property of being rare.¹²

SUBJECTIVISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES

Consider a subjectivism which construes value judgements as judgements as to whether or not an approval relation obtains between some object, event or state of affairs and the attitudinal framework exemplified by the valuer making the judgement, at the time at which, and in the world at which, the judgement is made. The theory is subjectivist, obviously, because it makes value facts strongly mind-dependent: it constructs values out of attitudes. And it is theoretically relativist because it indexes value-judgements to attitudinal frameworks, times and worlds. The relativism becomes practical to the extent that attitudinal frameworks diverge, which they seem to do. This theory about value does not, by the way, imply that only I and others who are attitudinally like me are valuers. It allows that there are countless many other valuers, including, perhaps, some nonhuman valuers, who are doing something functionally proximate to what I do when I make evaluations.¹³ This subjectivism, incidentally, leaves it a completely open question whether the evaluations of these others are from my valuational point of normative significance.¹⁴

As noted, some environmental ethicists suggest that there are core environmentalist claims, distinctive of the deeper, greener variants of environmental-

ism, which cannot be supported by a subjectivist framework. So let us see how the subjectivism just now described might accommodate four such claim which, on the face of it, might be thought to pose a problem for subjectivism. They are:

- (A) Once upon a time there were trilobites which had intrinsic value.
- (B) At some time in the future, well after conscious organisms have become extinct, there will still be some biological complexity and it will have intrinsic value.
- (C) Had the course of evolution gone differently, resulting in no conscious organisms but some biological complexity, the world would have had intrinsic value.
- (D) Had the course of my psychological development gone differently, resulting in the development of no green values, then wild nature would nevertheless have had intrinsic value.

Since the intrinsically valuable states of affairs referred to in (A), (B) and (C) do not include the relevant valuer then they are, it is alleged, normative judgements disallowed by subjectivism. Subjectivism, however, accommodates them.

Take (A). According to the subjectivist, to say that the trilobites had intrinsic value is to say that I approve of their existence. The fact of their having intrinsic value is the fact of them standing in this approval relationship to my attitudinal framework. My relevant attitudinal response does not require anything approximating direct causal connection with trilobites; indeed not even an indirect causal connection is required. What is required is that I be able to represent to myself, propositionally in this case, the fact of the trilobites' past existence. Contemplation of this representation of the past state of affairs triggers or provokes in me the valuing response; that is, an affect or feeling which is characterisable as a pro-attitude or a positive attitude or an attitude of approval towards it.¹⁵ Perhaps, though, I have overlooked the tense in which (A) is cast. While my preferred meta-ethic allows me to say now that the existence of trilobites in the past has intrinsic value, does it allow me to say that that state of affairs then had intrinsic value? Clearly I did not then value it since I was not around, but my valuing it now entails that it had value then. Certainly it is their existence in that past state of affairs that I value. This response may be helped by emphasising a hypothetical element in my subjectivism. I can say that a thing has, and had, intrinsic value if, were I to contemplate it from the perspective of my present attitudinal framework, I would value it. The trilobites had, way back then, those properties in virtue of which my valuing response is now elicited and so they then had intrinsic value.

Take (B). It is straightforwardly analogous to (A). If the future state of affairs is such that I would value it were I to contemplate it, then it has intrinsic value. Moreover there is no requirement that I be able to causally interact with a state

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of affairs in order to value it. The valuing response can be provoked by some propositional or other representation of that state of affairs. And clearly it is possible thus to represent, although here it might be more accurate to say partially represent, a future state of affairs. Furthermore, my demise prior to the coming into existence of the valued state of affairs does not somehow entail that the state of affairs suddenly loses intrinsic value. It remains the case that the future state of affairs stands in the approval relation to my attitudinal framework at the time at which the judgement was made. Indeed the judgement would not even have to be actual, given the hypothetical twist that may be given to subjectivism. Thus I might never have noticed that the future state of affairs had intrinsic value, never having represented it to myself and contemplated it. Nevertheless the structure of my attitudinal framework at the time could have been such that had I contemplated the future state of affairs I would have approved of it.

Take (C), which is distinctive in that it involves a valuation of a world in which I do not exist at any time at all. The crucial question is: how can a subjectivism, which takes the valuer to be the source of value, allow that a world in which the relevant valuer never exists could in fact contain value? There is no difficulty. The relevant valuer makes the evaluation from his or her perspective in the actual world. From my perspective in the actual world, I can review and evaluate other possible worlds, including worlds in which I do not exist. To say that such and such a world, or something it contains, has value is just to say that a consideration of some representation of it would provoke the valuing response. And in evaluating other worlds in which I do exist I might judge that the values I hold in those worlds are corrupt, just as I might judge the human chauvinist values I held in the past, or the human chauvinist values of many of my contemporaries, to be corrupt. And this, of course, shows why the subjectivist has no trouble accommodating (D).

Some might say that this account of (C) is deficient; first, because merely possible states of affairs have value only because I exist, and, second, because had I not existed the merely possible state of affairs would not have had value. The first observation is correct: my preferred meta-ethic implies it and not only for the kind of evaluation involved in (C) but for every evaluation. So, (C) creates no *special* problem for subjectivism on this score. The second observation is not correct. Maybe some are troubled by the thought that the subjectivism I have sketched implies that had the relevant valuer not existed, nothing then would have had any value. But this thought is flawed. As a matter of fact, for better or for worse, I do exist. As a matter of fact I value both the trilobites and the future state of biotic complexity. Their having value is in one sense dependent on my valuing them but it does not follow that had I not existed they would have had no value. The reason is that my evaluations are not limited to past, present and future states of the actual world but pertain to the whole array of possible worlds.¹⁶ So, from my unavoidably human perspective in the actual world I can,

and do, judge that wild nature has intrinsic value in those worlds from which I and my species, indeed all sentient species, are completely absent. The thought that there could be values even if no valuers had existed is, according to the subjectivist, just the thought that there are possible worlds which contain no valuers but which are valued (by me) from the perspective of the actual world.¹⁷ So, a subjectivist theory of value can accommodate the greenest of environmentalist values.

SUBJECTIVISM AND NORMATIVE DEBATE

Despite subjectivism's capacity to accommodate environmentalist values there may be other reasons for thinking meta-ethical issues are relevant to normative environmental ethics. If, however, the subjectivism is sophisticated then there is, I hope to show, no practical implication flowing from its adoption that would not flow from the adoption of objectivism, and *vice versa*. For one thing, subjectivism does not entail the view that value conflict cannot be rationally resolved, that convergence of belief on value matters cannot be helped through a process of giving reasons, listening to reasons and considering reasons. The process is the same for the subjectivist and the objectivist, although they will give differing accounts of what the process aims at and involves. So, the objectivist may say that the process aims at discovering mind-independent moral facts, whereas the subjectivist will say that it involves something like working through the implications, and reviewing the contents, of an attitudinal framework.

Consider this case. Jack thinks that the rainforest has intrinsic value. Jill thinks so too. Moreover, Jack believes that there are objective values whereas Jill does not. So, Jack thinks that the rainforest has a certain objective value property. Jill disagrees. Both Jack and Jill believe that the rainforest has intrinsic value in virtue of other, value-adding properties it possesses, such as the properties of being biologically diverse, of being naturally evolved or of being aesthetically pleasing. And presumably Jack believes that the objective value of the rainforest is perceived not directly but is somehow mediated by a perception of its value-adding properties. Analogously Jill will, she believes, have the valuing response in virtue of noticing, perhaps subliminally, the value-adding properties. There is every reason to think that in this case Jack and Jill will not find themselves in any practical conflict.

The situation might have been different. Had Jack disagreed with Jill as to the intrinsic value of the rainforest, there would have been some practical reason for them to engage in normative debate, perhaps because each is in a position to contribute to policy. Had Jack disagreed with Jill's value-judgement, Jill might have invited Jack to consider those properties of the rainforest she took to be value-adding. And Jack might have consequently come to agree with Jill's value-judgement. Here Jill and Jack would give different accounts of the process. Jack

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would say, falsely I believe, that the consideration of the rainforest's biological diversity permits him to comprehend that it possesses the further property of being intrinsically valuable. Jill would say, correctly I believe, that when Jack's attention is suitably directed, when certain facts are drawn to his attention he begins to affectively respond as she has responded. Similarly, Jack might invite Jill to reflect again on the alleged value-adding properties of the rainforest in the hope that her attitudes of approval will diminish to indifference on such a reappraisal. And again each could give a straightforward account of the process in terms of her or his preferred meta-ethic. Jack would presumably give an account in terms of a better perception or comprehension of the moral facts leading to certain attitudinal adjustments. And Jill would give an account solely in terms of attitude modification. So, despite their different accounts of what is fundamentally going on, Jill and Jack make the same dialogical moves.

Or again, imagine that Jack's judgement, that the rainforest lacks intrinsic value, is intact after his reconsideration of the its allegedly value-adding properties. In this case there are other moves that Jill might make. She might look for inconsistencies in Jack's overall normative position, which inconsistencies might be resolved by Jack's endorsing Jill's judgement about the rainforest. Jill might think of herself as making use of Jack's presumed desire for normative consistency, whereas Jack would think of her as making use of the presumed impossibility of inconsistent value facts. Alternatively Jill might strive to alter Jack's attitudes by educating him and refining his sensibility; she might try to excite in him something of the appreciation she has of the rainforest, partly by bringing him to a position where he can comprehend those natural facts about the rainforest that underpin Jill's attitudinal response to it. Here Jill will think of herself as bringing Jack's attitudinal framework into alignment with hers, partly by improving his perception of nonmoral natural facts, whereas Jack will think of her as clearing away factors which had hitherto distorted his moral vision, his comprehension or perception of relevant nonnatural, objective value-facts.

It is possible of course that Jill will not persuade Jack to endorse her judgement about the rainforest. Jill might explain this in terms of Jack holding certain false non-value beliefs, which feed into, and distort, his value-judgements; cognitive disagreement at one level leading to affective divergence at another level. Or Jill might explain their value-disagreement in terms of basic attitudinal differences between herself and Jack, due perhaps to different patterns of enculturation and experience. Jack, however, is likely to see their disagreement as cognitive all the way down. He will think that there is some objective value-fact, which at least one of them fails fully to comprehend. He will think not just that Jill and he disagree but that at least one of them is mistaken. And here I discount the strange but interesting view that objective values are person-specific; there being objective values-for Jack and objective values-for Jill. Again these rather different views of what goes on when they disagree have no significant practical effects.

The dialogical moves sketched are standard moves in promoting convergence of moral belief, indeed all belief, and they are moves open both to the objectivist and the subjectivist. Although each would give a rather different characterisation of the process and its ultimate aims, there is no kind of move that either could make that is not practically or functionally equivalent to some move the other could make. Note too, that even if Jill, like Jack, were an objectivist, there would be no additional leverage provided for bringing their conflicting normative views into alignment. Belief in objectivism as such does nothing by way of resolving Jill's and Jack's disagreement. Presumably they each reach a point where they can only say to the other that she or he is misperceiving or miscomprehending the value facts. So far as the dynamics of normative environmental debate is concerned the contest between objectivism and subjectivism is idle.

There is another kind of difference that the choice between objectivism and subjectivism might be thought to make; a motivational difference. Consider the case where Jack and Jill are both objectivists. If they think that their disagreement is cognitive all the way down, they perhaps would be more likely to persist in the enterprise of achieving convergence of belief than they would if they thought their disagreement was in large part affective, and so did not threaten inconsistency or contradiction once the appropriate relativisations were signalled. What keeps the objectivists engaged, although what the continued engagement could amount to beyond a certain point except assertion and counter-assertion is not clear, is their commitment to uncovering a single truth. Something not too dissimilar, though, might likewise keep subjectivists engaged. Policy choices are guided by value judgements and often policies are mutually inconsistent. So strong preferences by different people for conflicting policies will, like the commitment to uncovering the truth, be likely to fuel continued engagement in the enterprise of achieving convergence of moral belief.

There is a related point. Imagine that Jack is an objectivist and Jill is a subjectivist and that they make different evaluations of the rainforest. Imagine that Jill is in a position to make policy and being of a liberal inclination has listened seriously to Jack's competing view. Given her subjectivism, she might conclude that there is no sense in which her evaluation is or could be objectively correct; she simply thinks of the situation as one in which her preferences conflict with Jack's preferences. She might think, being of a liberal inclination, that she should not disregard or discount Jack's preferences. Consequently the policy she institutes is not the one she most prefers on her own account but is some compromise with the preferences, as Jill sees them, that Jack has articulated. Had she not been so liberally inclined she might have allowed her preferences alone, especially if they were strongly held, to determine policy.

Now consider how things might be if it had been Jack who was in a position to determine policy. Imagine that Jack listens to what Jill has to say but that nothing she says persuades him that the rainforest has intrinsic value. It is possible that Jack thinks to himself that he appreciates the truth about this matter

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but that Jill does not. And this might well lead him to disregard or discount Jill's view. In other words, if Jack is an objectivist and believes there is some fact of the matter which adjudicates the conflict he has with Jill and if he believes that he better comprehends the moral fact than does Jill he might well institute policy in accordance with his view without making any compromises in Jill's direction. This is analogous to the action of the illiberal Jill. But there is nothing about his objectivist view, as such, that pushes or even encourages Jack into this line of action. What would do the pushing or encouraging, if anything, would be Jack's belief that he is somehow better epistemically placed, with respect to moral knowledge, than is Jill. Maybe he thinks he has a hot line to the divine being.

But the point is that Jack might just as likely, I would say more likely, conclude that he has no reason to think his angle on the value facts is any sounder than Jill's, although he thinks that Jill is mistaken in her account of what is occurring when she makes evaluations. This is especially likely if Jill and Jack have run through the various dialogic moves earlier mentioned. Since Jack cannot identify some point at which Jill has fallen into error, say on account of the value-adding properties on which intrinsic value supervenes, surely he will hesitate fulsomely to endorse the view to which he, but not she, is inclined and will be consequently hesitant to impose the policy he favours over the one she favours. To do so would be illiberal in that it would be to disregard without reason the competing views of others; it would be a kind of epistemic disrespect. There seems no scope here for any clear pragmatic differentiation of subjectivism from objectivism.

The focus so far in this section has been on the question of pragmatic differentiation between subjectivism and objectivism. It has been assumed that the overriding motive that disputants have for settling value conflicts is that such conflicts help to fuel practical disagreement concerning actions and policies. Some might think that, in addition, there is a more abstract or theoretical motivation which is relevant. For example, where Jack and Jill disagree about some value matter and where their disagreement has no practical consequence, Jack, the objectivist, might still want Jill, the subjectivist, to comprehend the truth. In other words, Jack may well be motivated to get Jill to agree with him, or get himself to come to agree with Jill, because he wants to get at the moral truth. This makes sense from an objectivist perspective. Moreover, there does not seem to be the same motivation for the subjectivist to secure agreement where nothing of practical significance is at stake. Perhaps it is where practical concern runs out that the differentiating characteristics of subjectivism and objectivism come into their own resulting in quite distinct normative dynamics. We should not, however, exaggerate the degree to which this might be so.

For one thing, Jill might be concerned that Jack's different value judgement may lead to some future practical conflict or she might think that it contributes to an overall value orientation which does lead to practical conflict. Or Jill may well be bothered by the fact that others are unlike her with respect to preferences she thinks are extremely important. She might therefore be motivated to bring at

least some of the preferences of others into alignment with her own. This will simply be a contingent fact about Jill's psychology with little in the way of a deeper explanation of it available. Perhaps one explanation would be that Jill sees disagreement in particular cases as a threat to her overall value orientation which orientation she prefers to maintain. More significantly, Jill might well take Jack's disagreement with her as *prima facie* evidence that she has perhaps not thoroughly reflected on the matter in dispute, something she prefers not to be the case. In the end she may accept that there is a basic disagreement, that neither Jack nor she is manifesting here any defect of rationality, but for a time at least she may be motivated to pursue their dispute in the absence of any practical upshot. There is a fourth, related, point to make. Many of our value conflicts with others result not from a fundamental conflict at the level of basic values but result from disagreements about various non-value background beliefs; for example different beliefs about the probabilities of leakages from stored radioactive wastes might contribute to conflicting value judgements about the nuclear generation of power. So, questions as to the truth will enter into the picture for Jill as well as Jack.

Jack, for his part, may not particularly care whether Jill has false value beliefs where nothing of practical consequence turns on their disagreement. His objectivism, of itself, seems to provide no motivation to pursue the dispute. What is likely to provide the motivation is his belief that Jill's disagreement with him is *prima facie* evidence that he is mistaken. The fact of her disagreement may encourage him to check the relevant non-value facts, to attend carefully to the situation he is evaluating and so on. Having done these things he may decide that he is, after all, correct. There may be some residual motivation, perhaps having to do with some special value Jack places on knowledge, to lead Jill to see the moral truth but, importantly, the only means available to him for accomplishing this are the analogous devices, earlier discussed, available to both the subjectivist and objectivist for normative adjudication. So, even where practical conflict is not involved, the choice between subjectivism and objectivism does not seem to lead to very different, if at all different, normative dynamics.

CONCLUSION

More than a few environmental philosophers have engaged in a meta-ethical debate about whether values in nature are objective or subjective. And some have seemed to take the view that significant normative questions turn on the resolution of the meta-ethical debate. This turns out not to be so. The core claims of environmentalism, that is, claims in the style of (A), (B), (C), and (D), can be accommodated by both objectivist and subjectivist accounts of value. Moreover the dynamics of normative debate concerning these claims and normative motivation are unaffected by the choice between objectivism and subjectivism as such.

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NOTES

¹ See, for example, Rolston 1994, pp. 12-15.

² There is an ambiguity in 'mind-dependence'. An objectivist who rejects naturalism will admit that mind-dependent properties could be among the set of value-adding properties. So, my experiencing pleasure is a mind-dependent fact upon which positive intrinsic value supervenes or otherwise depends. Indeed a possible normative theory, which could be combined with a belief in nonnatural objective value, claims that there is intrinsic value only where valuers approve of some state of affairs.

³ See Mackie 1977, pp. 30-5.

⁴ For a discussion of naturalisms generally see Pigden, 1991, and of subjective naturalism in particular, see Rachels, 1991.

⁵ Mistaken, because they cannot account for the prescriptive aspect of moral judgements and because they cannot account for the tight connection between moral belief and action. Note that objective naturalism might turn out to be in a certain way relativistic. The idea is that the extension of the central moral term might vary markedly from place to place, from time to time or from person to person; so eliminating subjectivism by embracing objective naturalism would not obviously eliminate relativism.

⁶ Such a view can be found variously put in Rolston 1994, pp. 16-19. It is also arguably evident in Rolston 1986, pp. 73, 113-4, 132, and in Rolston 1988, pp. 186-191. Unfortunately it is sometimes difficult to disentangle Rolston's meta-ethical from his normative views.

⁷ This claim is defended in Elliot 1992, pp. 138-48.

⁸ Examples are Rolston 1994, p. 15; Ferré 1994, p. 230; Attfield and Belsey 1994, p.2.

⁹ Callicott 1986, p.143.

¹⁰ Rolston 1994, p. 14.

¹¹ Korsgaard 1983 seems thus to argue for the view.

¹² See, for example, Elliot 1982.

¹³ I hesitate about nonhuman valuers because not all attitudes, preferences and desires are relevant to judgements about intrinsic moral value, only those that satisfy certain filtering requirements. These arguably include the requirement that the attitudes be such that they could be formed against a background of justifiable beliefs, the requirement that they not arise from defective inference, the requirement that they survive a more than cursory process of critical reflection and the requirement that they be attitudes one prefers to have and prefers to persist. These ideal requirements presuppose considerable cognitive sophistication. There is, however, certainly a looser understanding of what a valuer is, requiring only that a thing have preferences. Indeed the preferences required perhaps need not even be conscious, nor be associated in any way with conscious experience, amounting instead to biologically determined goals or tendencies. (See, for example, Rolston, 1994, pp. 16-19.) This loosening highlights some similarity between my preferring, subject to the requirements listed earlier, some state of affairs and a simple organism's tendency to secure nutrients. Both are plausibly instances of some generic valuing.

¹⁴ Maybe a specification of the ways in which other entities value will encourage me to respect, so to speak, their valuings. I might be led to accept that what is valued, in some generic sense, by another, has value in the narrower sense or that the generic valuing of another itself similarly has value. This tends in the direction of a very general preference consequentialism, extending well beyond the set of conscious creatures. The shift is

achieved by persuading us to see others (not necessarily only other humans or even other sentient creatures) as relevantly similar to ourselves. Such normative views arguably can be supported by subjectivism. All that is required is that my attitudes be appropriately generous, which they may of course turn out not to be.

¹⁵ The account offered here is close to the affective-cognitive theory developed in great detail in Gaus 1990, Part 1.

¹⁶ For a fuller account see Elliot 1985, 1992.

¹⁷ A point which is easy to overlook. See Attfield and Belsey 1994, p.2: ‘...[Elliot] shows that actual valuations made in our world could apply to worlds empty of valuers, but does not show how there could be values even if no valuers had ever existed or valued.’

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