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# "Health and Disease as 'Thick' Concepts in Ecosystemic Contexts"

Nelson, James

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In this paper, I consider what kind of normative work might be done by speaking of ecosystems utilising a "medical" vocabulary—drawing, that is, on such notions as "health," "disease," and "illness." Some writers attracted to this mode of expression have been rather modest about what they think it might purchase. I wish to be bolder. Drawing on the idea of "thick" evaluative concepts as discussed by McDowell, Williams and Taylor, and resorting to a phenomenological argument for a kind of moral realism, I argue that the project of developing a robust understanding of the moral significance of recognising the health or illness of ecosystems is definitely a starter.

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