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"Intrinsic Value: A Modern Albatross for the Ecological Approach"

Morito, Bruce

Morito, Bruce. "Intrinsic Value: A Modern Albatross for the Ecological Approach." *Environmental Values* 12, no. 3 (2003): 317–36. doi:10.3197/096327103129341342 .

The idea and use of the concept of intrinsic value in environmental ethics has spawned much debate in environmental ethics/axiology. Although for many, it seems fundamental and necessary for formulating an ethic for environmental protection, it seems to confuse and even undermine such efforts. "Intrinsic value" is, I argue, a concept born in the Western intellectual tradition for purposes of insulating and isolating those to whom intrinsic value can be attributed from one another and their environmental context. This is especially true from the Modern period onward. When used as a basis for determining moral considerability, these Modern foundations engender contradictory and self-defeating ways of thinking about the individual/ecosystem relationship. As a result, formulations of moral sensibilities and principles become self-defeating and, vis-a-vis the ecological context, incoherent. On the critique of this Modern residue, an alternative axiological framework is built, using Anthony Weston's idea of interdepending values as a preparation for a more ecologically coherent approach to environmental protection. This approach is dialectical and attempts to formulate an ecological foundation for moral considerability.

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