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"The Aesthetic Significance of Nature's Otherness"

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In this article I consider and reflect upon the aesthetic significance of Simon Hailwood's conception of nature as articulated in an earlier volume of this journal in his paper 'The Value of Nature's Otherness' (Hailwood 2000: 353–72). I provide a brief elucidation of Hailwood's conception of nature as other and I maintain that recognition of the value of nature's otherness and respect for nature's otherness requires as a necessary condition that one know and perceive that nature is other. I then go on to consider Hailwood's concerns over the possibility of locating nature's value as other in aesthetic responses to nature. I argue that such reservations are warranted insofar as they focus on an inadequate 'subjectivist' account of aesthetic experience but are not warranted for all accounts of aesthetic experience, in particular, I will argue that such reservations do not apply to the 'cognitive' model of aesthetic appreciation proposed by Allen Carlson as the 'environmental model' and developed in the work of Yuriko Saito. I conclude this paper by claiming that aesthetic value is a necessary component of otherness as a ground of nature's value and that this needs to be conceded if we are to be able to acknowledge the reality of something other than ourselves, to treat it appropriately and with respect.
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