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"The Silence of Nature"

Vogel, Steven

Vogel, Steven. "The Silence of Nature." *Environmental Values* 15, no. 2 (2006): 145–71. doi:10.3197/096327106776678898 .

In claiming that 'nature speaks', authors such as Scott Friskics and David Abram implicitly agree that language use is linked to moral considerability, adding only that we need to extend our conception of language to see that non-humans too use it. I argue that the ethical significance of language use derives from its role in dialogue, in which speakers make truth-claims, question and potentially criticise the claims of others, and provide justifications for the claims they raise themselves. Non-human entities (as a contingent matter) seem not to engage in dialogue in this sense, and none of the examples Friskics and Abram offer suggest that they do. Thus the conception of language such authors employ is too weak to support the ethical conclusions they implicitly wish to defend.

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