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"Goodwill Toward Nature"

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It is sometimes claimed that an ethical relationship with nature is analogous to Aristotelian friendship. Aristotle claims that friends are valuable principally in virtue of providing reflections of ourselves; yet extant accounts of environmental friendship do not explain how nonhuman organisms can satisfy this role. Recent work in neo-Aristotelian metaethics delineates a theory of value that underscores the similarities between the biological evaluations we make of living things and the moral evaluations we make of ourselves. I argue that these similarities help us make sense of the claim that nonhuman organisms can be reflections of ourselves and thus the object of a relationship akin to friendship. I conclude by suggesting that Aristotle's conception of goodwill may be even more appropriate than friendship as a model for a virtuous relationship with nature.

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