

Globethics Repository



Respecting nature : focusing on values and reasons

This page was generated automatically upon download from the Globethics Repository.
More information on Globethics see <https://www.globethics.net>. Data and content policy of Globethics Repository see <https://repository.globethics.net/pages/policy>.

Item Type	Book chapter
Authors	Haaz, Ignace
Publisher	Globethics.net
Rights	Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International
Download date	2026-09-21 04:58:11
Item License	http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/4011251

RESPECTING NATURE: FOCUSING ON VALUES AND REASONS

*Ignace Haaz*²⁷³

Introduction

Everyone is aware that it is good, even a duty to protect nature. Doing ethically right could mean to accept the imperative of respecting or protecting our natural environment.

Caring about ethics could mean caring about nature, and anyone who cares about nature would be concerned about ethics. These are two similar, but also different propositions. How is it that we have come to form a double implication between these two propositions?

From a philosophical and *meta-ethical* point of view, it would be ethical and responsible to protect nature, as an absolute duty, if there were an absolute duty of existence inherent to nature. Nature in this sense could be considered an unconditioned being, which means a being without dependence on anything else. On the other side, coming back from philosophy to concrete life, awareness building around the environment, which assures that a sound message trickles down to concerned communities, respecting the nature means to implement specific values. Can we say that our duty of responsibility towards

²⁷³ Ignace Haaz, Managing Editor, Globethics.net.

nature is total and absolute or rather a reason among others? Should we balance among other reasons for ethical action an *eco-centric* view?

The object of this chapter aims to question a universal community with nature as *bio-* or *eco-centric* view, and engage by reasoning and philosophical understanding of values concerned by the environment. Caring about ethics implies caring for a *meta-ethical* level of understanding of the terms of environment related propositions. We shall see that a possible solution to an excessive or absolute duty to care about nature could be to say we should care mainly about the divine or “common earth”, “the ecological future of modern theology”, in a *theo-eco-centric* view (Moltmann, 2019; Stückelberger 2016, 2009)²⁷⁴. A philosophical approach to duty in times of ecological crisis invites us to reflect on some key notions such as: *respect*, *values* and *reasons* for action, concerned by the setting of some foundation to our ethical norms.

As a possible way of tackling the general interrogation “Who cares about ethics?”²⁷⁵ a straightforward answer could be: any person who cares for the respect of other persons. In real life, things are in some cases not so simple. Due respect to individuals can be part of a choice of different set of values. As when we have to decide between focusing on the value of the creation of employment, economic growth and wealth

²⁷⁴ Moltmann, Jürgen (2019): *Hope in These Troubled Times*, transl. by M. Kohl and B. McNeil, WCC Publications, 33ff. We should mention Christoph Stückelberger’s important work on faith and applied ethics driven environmental ethics (2016: *Global Ethics Applied: Environmental Ethics*. Vol. 2, Reader Series No. 2, Geneva: Globethics.net). His work on food and water ethics, based on an ethical and theological foundation of a human rights based approach shows the importance an *eco-theologico-centrist* view of responsibility (2009: *Das Menschenrecht auf Nahrung und Wasser: Eine ethische Priorität*, Geneva: Globethics.net).

²⁷⁵ See Globethics.net Foundation’s project *Who cares about ethics*, 2020, <https://whocaresaboutethics.com/>

on one side, and on the other the preservation of natural species and of natural territories, the possibility of accessing lake shores and natural parks, and pursuing recreational activities in the nature (Singer, 1993).²⁷⁶

Should we respect nature? The answer to this question is simple if we aim at a slightly different proposition: “Should we not give an overall positive value to nature as nature is condition for life?” Understanding the question of caring about ethics as respect for nature, which is source of life, resonates as rhetorical question, in the framework of the emotional debate around the inequality of natural resources necessary for life. Two examples can be presented as obviously underlining the weight of eco-centric views. The first, (a) concerns the question of a general access to drinkable water. Isn’t it obvious that if 800 million persons around the world don’t have access to drinkable water (OMS, 2011),²⁷⁷ hydric inequality, and the duty to assure access to drinkable water is an important issue? Drinkable water for all human beings cannot be done regardless of the water footprint of locally tapped water, and of goods grown with quantities of water and exported between regions, sharing different water scarcity (Globethics.net, *Water Ethics*, 2020). A value-oriented focus on water could be a vector of restoring the logical equivalence between self-respect, respect of others and in due consideration, respect for the value

²⁷⁶ Singer, Peter, *Practical Ethics*, Ch. 10: The Environment, Second edition, Cambridge: UP, 1993.

²⁷⁷ This OMS statistics and the corresponding and very complete analysis of the applied ethical implications of good water management, as focusing on extraction, allocation and recycling, all related to water scarcity, see: from : Fiechter-Widemann, Evelynne, *Droit humain à l’eau: justice ou imposture ? Éclairages juridiques, philosophiques et théologiques du nouveau droit humain à l’eau*, Genève : Éditions Slatkine, 2017, p.23. Girardin, Benoît / Fiechter-Widemann, Evelynne (Eds.), *Blue Ethics: Ethical Perspectives on Sustainable, Fair Water Resources Use and Management*, Geneva: Globethics.net, 2019.

of the nature. We see with this example, that as a whole *nature* is not only condition for individual life, it may be considered as life *tout court*: as a multidimensional integrity based ecosystem, aiming at the survival of the whole (Taylor, 1986).²⁷⁸ If we consider bio-centric or eco-centric views, which place the world or nature in the centre of a system of values, our assumption supposes from a practical ethical point of view, implementing an eco-centric system of rights, which should not be disorganized or unplanned. From the perspective of practically taking common good seriously there are no reasons why a human rights based approach should not work for plants and animals, provided ‘we’ recognize the importance of the good, including a collective view. Our second example shows the importance of managing rights in the context of natural environment based ethics of public goods.

International efforts to control the implementation of human rights in the field of nature conservation constitute our second example. It has been reported that some government rangers in remote landscapes abused their authority, tolerating questionable partnerships with paramilitary forces to fight poaching. To protect plants and animals

²⁷⁸ Life could be understood as a *biocentric* view with Taylor’s book *Respect for Nature*, 1986. Life should be accepted as the criterion of moral standing considering that all living beings aim toward ends, they have goals (telos) including the preservation of their own life, constituting a good for each living being as a good on their own or *intrinsic good*. Life could be seen as ecological collections as ecosystems, habitats, species and populations in an *ecocentric* view. Preserving the ecosystems as survival of the collective integrity of each system is viewed as more crucial than protecting lives of individuals or members of the ecosystem. Distinguishing between non-intentional goal orientation, intentionally-directed attitudes as spontaneous choices without clear reason and reason-based deliberate moral decisions may help us to answer to the challenges of the view considering all living beings and ecosystems as equally valuable normative poles for further reflections on normative foundation and metaphysical priority. Taylor, Paul Warren, *Respect for Nature: A Theory of Environmental Ethics*, Princeton: UP, 1986.

entails to prevent risks and harms but should not justify to contribute to the infringement of human rights as retaliation attitudes against those who do not respect nature²⁷⁹. There ought to be an equal respect for the value and claim of distinct rights as the rights of indigenous peoples for instance, since any rights holders deserve equal respect. In practice, the projects affecting indigenous peoples' lands or resources should be done along accepted standards and benchmarks in relation to indigenous rights²⁸⁰. Ultimately building interactions with remote local communities should be always related to the idea of forming an *informed consent*. Engaging with values as part of a consent-based scheme of collaboration is important as “promoting”, “communicating” and “engaging” are referring to different activities, the semantic of these terms needs theoretical scrutiny. The establishment of *rights based due-diligence* processes, including remediation of adverse rights affects the ensuring of a special attention to the rights of the *most vulnerable*, entails a focus on the priority of some rights or some grounding ethical principles. The special attention given in many cases to the local communities in relation to activities natural conservation organisations support shows one of the cultural challenges in conceiving ecology, as simply eco-

²⁷⁹ We think at the recent work of the World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF), which on the one hand shows the value of a rights based approach, as historically the organization has been initiator to embrace human rights principles, and gradually moved to embed human rights in conservation, with constancy and clear determination. There has been on the other hand, as the WWF's “Independent Review” notes explicitly, some hard cases in the implementation of these rights, across a wide eco-centric system. “Report of the Independent Panel of Experts of the Independent Review of allegations raised in the media regarding human rights violations in the context of WWF's conservation work”, *Embedding Human Rights in Conservation: From Intent to Action*, WWF, World Wide Fund For Nature, 17 Nov. 2020.

²⁸⁰ As the International Labour Organization (ILO) *Convention No. 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples* and the 2007 *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP).

centric²⁸¹. Balancing different ethical principles should not only be seen as a practical ethical matter, although normative ethics, applied ethics, soft laws and international conventions are the usual instruments. Theoretical reflections on rights are important because they investigate the priority and foundational layers of a set of norms, they set method of knowledge of values and, ultimately, invite to question the very (metaphysical) nature of our values and respect for nature.

In a nutshell, we can see from our previous examples that an absolute duty to care about nature is problematic (see also Stanguennec, 2014; Serres, 1995; Jonas, 1985).²⁸² Rights-based approaches are important, but should never be considered as the unique point of reference of all ethical norms. Caring about ethics concerns an ethical and moral reasoning on our decisions toward the way we value nature. Reason based motives should bring clarity in the way we are considering ourselves parts of the nature, and value nature as collective goods. Respecting nature is finding the balance of a good life, including the

²⁸¹ Cf. “Recommendation 8. Be more transparent”, WWF Report, *ibid*.

²⁸² From an absolutist point of view: it would be ethical and responsible to protect nature, as an absolute duty, if there were an absolute duty of existence inherent to nature. Nature would in many ways be an unconditioned being, without dependence on anything else. This type of reasoning that we find at the basis of the ethics of responsibility of H. Jonas, is very similar to the classical Cartesian argument that we find in Spinoza's work, for example, as the basis of our dependence on a completely perfect being and necessary God/Nature. A critical reading of the absolutist view as not constituting a *prima facie* answer to the anthropocentric dominant view can be found in Stanguennec (2014). Stanguennec, André, *L'humanisation de la nature*, Paris : Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2014, see p. 132ff. on Jonas, p. 147ff. on Serres. Serres, Michel, *The Natural Contract*, transl. Elizabeth MacArthur and William Paulson, Michigan Press, 1995 (orig. Ed. François Bourin, 1990). Jonas, Hans, *The Imperative of Responsibility: In Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age*, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1985 (German: *Das Prinzip der Verantwortung*, Insel Verl. 1979).

preservation of values, and the protection against life threatening risks, which is built on an autonomy-based approach. By focusing on the socio-economical availability of *decent options for actions*, we will try to show views proposed by Raz's philosophy of values: engaging with values, respect and reason for action (Raz, 1978, 2001, 2017).²⁸³ To stand up for rights to protect our nature and to share ethical principles in the way we do so, is not possible without an understanding of how we engage with values and move to action, and the advantage of reason based actions over overriding comparative motives.

Caring for the Other, Caring for Nature? A Meta-ethical Approach in Five Steps

Looking closer to this answer shows five possible perspectives from which respecting or caring for the other and for nature may be described and understood:

- Conceptual (real values by opposition to half realized but intended values)
- Metaphysical (foundation and priority of values compared to reasons – or the other way round, namely reasons founding our options for actions)
- Epistemological (method based description, hierarchy of methods)

²⁸³ Raz, Joseph, (2001): *Value, Respect, and Attachment*, Cambridge: UP. Raz, J. "Intention and value", *Philosophical Explorations*, 2017, Vol. 20, No. S2, pp.109–126, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13869795.2017.1356357> Raz, J. *The Morality of Freedom*, Oxford: UP, 1986. Raz, J. "Duties of Well-Being" in: *Ethics in the Public Domain, Essays in the Morality of Law and Politics*, revised edition, Oxford: Clarendon Paperbacks, 1994/1996. Raz, J. "Reasons for Action, Decisions and Norms", in: *Practical Reasoning*, Ed. by Joseph Raz, Oxford Readings in Philosophy, Series Editor G. J. Warnock, 1978, Oxford: OUP, pp. 128-152.

- Semantic (linguistic, cultural, identity based or universal, real)
- Psychological (motivation, desire, affect, object based facts)

1) *The conceptual perspective*: Following a conceptual line, we think about the concepts around the term “value” and see that respect is a property of valutors. I owe you some respect, as I know we both have some understanding of values. Being able to assess values entails having some value related concepts. For example, if I give you this book for your birthday, not only would you keep this book, but you may also offer commentary on the book to showing that you read it, as the value of the book is derived from the text printed in it. The concept of the value of a book, which passes through a process of discovering its content, is therefore very different from many other concepts such as doing a physical activity, listening to a musical work of art, etc. Any form of activity entails the subject’s capacity to enter into different practices such as to swim or to run, all requiring methods of engaging into some value-oriented activity. This is true with regards to some objects placed in the universe of natural things, and for which we say there should be a respect for the environment. There is value in mountains, in discovering a lake, in the lake’s shore, its water, the value of taking care of plants in our garden, or walking in a natural reserve. There are many different conceptual methods of engaging with natural environmental values, all dependent on the practice, as they differ. If I cannot approach the shore of a lake, not to speak about entering and feeling the joy of swimming in the water, I am not engaging with the value of a lake. Therefore, even though I may recognize that a lake has value, I don’t know the value, only that there is a possible value. This would be similar to not opening the book which I gifted you in the earlier scenario. I may have some indication of the existence of

something, without being able to attest of the value of the thing.²⁸⁴ To say we are norm driven beings doesn't mean that we all agree on all values, as there is diversity and universality, nor are we perpetually experiencing life positively as active persons. Our character may be structured in such a way that we might have strong tendencies toward specific sets of values, as most are emotion-driven values (philosophers call the way we develop dispositions based on some tendencies 'vices' and/or 'virtue'). Hence, to be exposed to doing physical activities in nature shows some disposition for being active and for caring for the environment. On the contrary, one may refuse to give access to waterways part of a property, which is touching a lake or a river, as owners often refuse access to the public arguing for risks on wealthy home properties.²⁸⁵ In remote places, such as natural parks and mountain regions, the issue is the opposite; the problem is the abandonment of human presence, socio-economic desertion of the production and residential abandonment (as in the Italian Apennines). The very notion of engagement with the value of nature entails the assessment of the growing presence of human activity. In the case of abandonment of these regions, the impoverishment of mountain settlements is observed, and attempts to limit the phenomenon don't seem to have appreciable effects. A normative focus on values and reasons for action shows a way

²⁸⁴ There are places in the world where the value of a lake doesn't depend directly on the practice of swimming into it, but lakes and lake shores have always been one of the main sources of food and the favorable conditions in the development of human civilization. Possible objections to the concept and value associate more universally with lakes related to swimming are possible. We shall return to the cultural dimension of the same, as semantical dimension on values under our fourth approach listed below.

²⁸⁵ According to the Swiss spatial planning law, "all lakes and rivers in Switzerland belong to the public. What's disputed, however, is whether that includes riverbanks and lakeshores. In 2001 the federal court said waterways and banks were an "inseparable unit"". Cf. Bundesamt für Raumentwicklung ARE.

in which education can contribute to sustainable mountain development, focusing on first world development as an important means for achieving the SDGs.²⁸⁶

2) *The metaphysical perspective:* The action of a subject engaging with some specific values, may in part only be value-oriented. As when we spontaneously decide for eating salad for lunch instead of taking the hot meal at the canteen, or taking a blue shirt instead of a green one, or listening to French music on the radio instead Anglophone pop, it is because we know both are good options. In these cases, we don't have a better reason to choose one over the other, but leave it as it comes, on a first-come-first-served basis. Preferential reason based actions are also likely to happen. An exemplary case is when a police car appears in our rear view mirror while stopping at the gasoline station. In this case, we know that the police car may stop to buy cigarettes, and not stopping to ask us about speeding, having the correct tyres, or reminding us of the importance on having our driving licence with us at all times. All of these are good reasons, and we may need to be prepared to answer the police officer in a polite and a reason focused way. The primacy or founding character of reasons over values, or on the contrary of values over reasons for actions, concerns a *metaphysical* dimension of the question "Who cares about ethics?" which also applies to the respect of nature and the environment. If *first-order reasons* for actions are equivalent to spontaneous and impressionist values (which we select on first-come-first-served basis), applying rule of the thumb, such as a 'balancing of interests in presence', may not be precise enough to explain why some reasons deserve particular attention. Let us see an example and draw the relation to the environment. We ask small primary school children to promise not to leave trash after eating their

²⁸⁶ See concrete cases and current research done in mountain development including the role of education in this process, published in *Mountain Research and Development* (MRD) journal. <https://www.mrd-journal.org/about/>

ice-cream. After all, agreeing that ‘I will throw my trash away and pick up trash when I see it’ cannot be gradually realized. Either, I refuse to pick up trash (and even shamefully litter), because I know that sweet liquid could attract wasps and there are no bin in sight, or, I follow my promise and don’t leave trash anywhere. We shall see below that promises should not be considered as simple *first-order reasons*, and that deciding to preserve the environment requires a particular and closer analysis of reason-based engaging with values – a metaphysical focus on reasons and values.

3) *The epistemological perspective*: Looking closer to the meaning of the proposition “Should we respect nature?” we might need to address a slightly more fundamental question. ‘How are nature and the environment part of a broader set of practical reasons for action and/or of a natural collection of valuable things? ‘This question can be addressed from the perspective of how we know, experience, and learn about this relation between values and reasons, from an epistemological perspective. In the following lines, we add the semantic analysis relates to the linguistic meaning of each word and sentence.

4) *The semantic and cultural perspective*: In different contexts, we might be considering the beauty of the rose, or the particular charm of the Swiss or Italian Alps, the sounds and impressions of African forests by dawn, the choice of attending the next ice-hockey match of my favourite team. I have better reasons to go and watch my team, than rather eat Hungarian food with my Hungarian relatives, or have a holiday in winter in the Swiss Alps. However, refusing to take these options is not wrong. My action may be weak-willed, lazy, and unwise, but not wrong as there is no normative exclusionary reason not to go to the most exciting sport, as there is no similar normative reason for eating Japanese, or visiting Paris during my annual leave. Taste, a strong identity attachment to my childhood and defining Hungarian culture, loyalty toward the particular hockey team of my children, my love of

African nature discovered during a travel, all these attachments present some normative common denominator. They are part of emotion based constituting values; they are not moral directive reasons for action. As Raz puts it in perspective, with the moral, psychological, and even religious dimension of self-overcoming and liberation:

How “we mature by transcending the particular and moving toward the universal; as we, individually, and as a species, grow up our horizons broaden, we come to understand more aspects of the world, and to understand better our situation in the world... We realise that there are other people like our parents, others like ourselves... We come to recognizes and to submit to the inescapable power of reason. It is a hard but necessary lesson to learn that we are not entitled to anything just because we are we, and our loved ones are not special just because they are ours. But reason also liberates us from the narrow confines of our birth. It opens the world, enabling us to move within it, free citizens of the universe, whose rights of passage are recognised by all those likewise possessed of reason.”²⁸⁷

The semantic layer of our values concerns the recognition, engagement with, and liberating factors of many positive aspects of life, asking the question: “what is wrong with the dream of a universal culture of high achievement?” Why should Hungarian Árpadian monuments not be considered aspects of a culture which are of intrinsic value, and not only instrumentally valuable? The archaeology of this historic and cultural area should be taught, if it has intrinsic values, not only in this particular country (Hungary), because Árpád was the head of the confederation of the Magyar tribes in the 9th Century. Our identity and attachment makes us who we are, and our identity is not identical

²⁸⁷ Raz, J. Attachment and uniqueness, *Value, respect, and attachment*, p. 13-14. Op. cit.

with our intrinsic value, but we are also the results of our free choices. I am a father, an editor, a philosopher, the son of two Hungarian immigrants, but I am also a citizen of both Hungarian and Swiss nationalities. Applied to the natural environment, some may say that “eating meat, or chicken bones is wrong”, when he/she actually means that eating “meat or chicken bones is surprising” in some countries in the global North, although very familiar in some countries in the South or on the African continent. Culinary habits are as diverse as cultural traditions and countries. Some vegan persons may think eating meat disgusting, but express the proposition: “eating meal is wrong”.

In similar cases, we may not use the language in an appropriate way, or have a different moral *semantic* understanding of the property of being wrong, which expresses *my relation to the object*, instead of describing a certain *reality of the object* (Desmons et alii, 2020).²⁸⁸ It seems that associating historical or archaeological interest opens a historical and hermeneutical dimension to the value we attribute to nature. This informs how we teach and educate on the existence and importance of the development of remote areas, such as mountains, sacred rivers or water sources, etc.

“Rivers never run alone. Every river as a watershed where it supports human life and interacts with the totality of living things. Every river is a kingdom. Rivers are where legends, religions and civilizations are conceived and flourish. They tell a story.”²⁸⁹

5) *The psychological perspective*: From a psychological point of view, if we come back to looking at the difference between values and

²⁸⁸ Desmons, Ophélie, Stéphane Lemaire and Patrick Turmel, Qu’est-ce que la métaéthique? In *Manuel de métaéthique*, Ch. 1, p. 13, Collection « L’avocat du diable », Paris : Édition Hermann.

²⁸⁹ *The Spirit of the Rivers*, Geneva: Editions Agora, Calendar of Religions, Sept. 2020-Dec. 2021.

reasons to act in ways positive to the environment or nature, we should start by looking at reasons as either internal or external. There is no general consensus about what *internal reasons* might be, but they are nearer to our psychological perception of reasons to act. We could understand them as *motivating reasons*, reasons naturally respectable for us, reasons including *desires* (for desire-based theorists). These are different from *external reasons*, as ‘facts about the what’ the agent wants, properties of the object of value (Chang, 2004),²⁹⁰ and in some cases it may include constraints. Should we not rather say then, that a valuable thing has a good-making-property, that it features which makes an action good *pro tanto*, but may also be subject of discussion.²⁹¹ We can therefore deduce that values are partially good, yet these values may still contain aspects, which do not conform to external reason. It can be assumed, for instance, to impose CO2 taxes on all heavily polluting cars, because we may expect better future prospects, as it is universally accepted and true that heavy CO2 emissions harm the environment. We might, on the contrary, say that there is a deliberative route, internal to the subject (called internal reasons), which balances reasons and values for paying CO2 taxes, considering the benefit and costs of pollution.

We cannot put aside the question whether and how far values are to some degree incommensurable and always depending on contextual social practices. For instance, paying 10 times the usual price of a bottle of drinkable water in a slum in India, as compared to the price on the

²⁹⁰ Chang, Ruth, “Can Desires Provide Reasons for Action?”, in: *Reason and Value*, R. Jay Wallace, Philip Pettit, Samuel Scheffler, Michael Smith (Eds.), pp. 86-89, Oxford: Clarendon.

²⁹¹ *Pro tanto* means not good as a whole, but to some extent. A good value might be to some extent bad. The universality and diversity of values, the possibility of values to change in time show that it is normal to be attracted and committed to something valuable for some people, to some other much less, and others may even be indifferent. Cf. Raz, J. Introduction, *Value, Respect, Attachment*, Cambridge UP, p. 3.

street of most Western big cities is a great difference. Although water is seen in many great religions as an inalienable right, as water is necessary for life, the absolute goodness of universal access to water opens a set of further questions, namely that no resource is there without some cost.²⁹² Looking at the question of the goodness entails relations between a good in the nature, and our reason to praise such thing. Water: a) is a public good and has economic market value; b) has a political dimension, and therefore brings reasons for conflict of interest regarding water access; c) has governance issues in regulation and management. Finally d), water has religious and spiritual dimensions and enters in dialogue and tension with values related to autochthon communities and their rights, which should not be neglected.²⁹³

The normative position, which defends a certain definition of the good at the foundation of reasons for action (Moore, 1903) constitutes a distinct philosophical position. This metaphysical point of view is contrary to the 1) which denies the importance of the primacy of the good over reasons (Scanlon), or 2) positions as Raz's which focus on a wide range of values, instead of a thinner perspective on the good. Although values have some priority over reasons, as in emotion related actions, we can deny that moral reasoning, as a perfectionist point of view, is happy about a factual priority of emotions over reasons. Only a minority of our reasons for action may be based on reasons as exclusionary reasons, to do or not to do a certain other action, i. e. reasons in the most solid sense of the word, reasons such as promises, second-order reasons, etc. Such ways of tackling the issue of the metaphysical relation, between reasons and the good, put values or the

²⁹² Shafer-Landau, Russ, "Moral Reasons", in: *Foundations of Ethics: An Anthology*, Ch 24, Blackwell Publ. Oxford: UP, p. 313.

²⁹³ We refer in this taxonomy to the different headings of the booklet *Water Ethics: Principles and Guidelines*, approved by Globethics.net Board, accessible for free in English, Spanish and French from: www.globethics.net/texts-series

maximum of good at the foundation rather than one absolute good, which remains conceivable as a universal value.²⁹⁴ If reasons should always be a matter of belief and choice, values may not. We may not choose to believe or not to believe certain values. Raz highlights that claiming for a wide range of life styles, which may well move from one set of values or norms to others, evolve partly in deterministic ways.²⁹⁵

On the other hand, a very pragmatic way of looking at the relation between reasons and the good, such as Thomas Scanlon's analysis, affirms the primacy of reasons over values, eventually reducing values to reasons (the so called "buck-passing-account of values").²⁹⁶

The advantage of normative reasons to favour or to act positively towards nature (as in the proposition respecting nature), can be defined as always requiring values with Raz, a property of being favourable or respectable in nature. Values are helping to constitute our life, by better understanding and carrying activities, in what we believe is good for us, and can embrace such notions as 'well-being', 'character', and even our own perception of ourselves as 'active persons' following Raz:

²⁹⁴ There are some prudential values, or values related to our well-being, but these values are denied the capacity to constitute our main overall reason for pursuing our goals for those who think the primacy of the good over reasons, which does not entail well-being having no more subjective kind of importance: Raz, J. *The Morality of Freedom*, Oxford: UP, 1986, 316.

²⁹⁵ Such type of axiology or hierarchy of values could be seen as self-developing from an unconscious side of the psyche, and be well embraced by Schopenhauerian philosophers such as E. von Hartmann. See our work: Haaz, Ignace. *The value of Critical Knowledge, Ethics and Education*, Ch. 5 (Geneva: Globethics.net: 2019), where we propose a structure of development of systems of values along similar lines.

²⁹⁶ This orientation has also a long history including F. Brentano, R. Chisholm. See: Rossi, Mauro (2020): Primauté des raisons ou des valeurs? In *Manuel de Métaéthique*, Dir. O. Desmons, S. Lemaire, P. Turmel, Paris : Ed. Hermann, p. 308.

“Well-being and personality or characters are the two most basic (and deeply inter-connected) dimensions by which people understand and judge themselves and others. How good and successful we are depends on who we are (character) and what sort of life we have (well-being). Evaluation of people’s well-being involves judgments about their lives, or periods of their lives, and the degree to which they do or did do well, were good or successful. In large measure, our well-being consists (1) in the whole-hearted and (2) successful pursuit of (3) valuable (4) activities. (...) the definition of well-being sees life as active.”²⁹⁷

Raz says in substance, that values or “morality” “is concerned with the advancement of the well-being of individuals”.²⁹⁸ To climb or walk on a mountain, instead of simply contemplate it without entering in some social practice, is the right way of engaging with such a natural thing as a mountain. Knowing that values relate to concepts means grasping the concept of a mountain as a tri-dimensional object and to distinguish mountains from paintings, which are bi-dimensional objects. Our engagement with things depends on the concept, or our capacity to perceive the reality of our object of experience. The preservation and respect of unanimated tri-dimensional things such as mountains are interconnected to the ways we engage with them:

²⁹⁷ Raz, J. “Duties of Well-Being” in: *Ethics in the Public Domain, Essays in the Morality of Law and Politics*, revised edition, Oxford: Clarendon Paperbacks, 1994/1996, p. 3. See also p. 5 for clarification of what whole-hearted means: “to contribute to one’s well-being one’s engagement in one’s activities has to be whole-hearted. Many activities require certain attitudes [understood as whole-hearted], for successful engagement in them. But not all do. [...] A good and dedicated teacher may hold himself in low esteem for being a teacher. The condition of whole-hearted engagement with one’s life is meant to exclude self-hatred, pathological self-doubt, and alienation from one’s life as they undermine well-being.”

²⁹⁸ Raz, J. *The Morality of Freedom*, Oxford: UP, 1986, 267.

“I have reason to engage with things of value in the appropriate way and reasons of respect, which serve to preserve the conditions of ‘engaging with’ (remember: recognition, preservation, non-destruction). And there is the entailment claim: every reason statement entails either a relativized or non-relativized ought statement, where a non-relativized ‘ought’ statement is true, just in case there is no defeating reason to do something else.”²⁹⁹

We shall not enter in details and expose views presented by Scanlon (Kraut, 2012), on the priority of normative reasons³⁰⁰. It is enough to mention that normative reasons can be logically both grounding relations and/or priority relations. Clarity in the use of the terms and related concepts of practical reason are important, as it enables us to show a philosophical method applicable to the part of human life which is concerned by our relation to our environment and the nature.

“Practical thought is reflection on, consideration of questions about what to do, how to live, about the point or value of objects or activities, or people etc. The aim is not to answer such questions but to understand their nature, what could count as answers to them and what vindicates such answers. More broadly, the aim is to understand the place and role of practical

²⁹⁹ Heuer, Ulrike, “Raz on Values and Reasons”, in: *Reasons and Values, Themes from the Moral Philosophy of Joseph Raz*, Edited by R. Jay Wallace, Philip Pettit, Samuel Scheffler, Michael Smith, Oxford UP, p.141.

³⁰⁰ Kraut, Richard, “Scanlon’s Buck-Passing Account of Value”, in: *Against Absolute Goodness*, Ch. 11, Oxford: UP, 2011/2012, DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199844463.003.0011

thought in the life of people and other beings who can engage in it.”³⁰¹

There are different layers of dimensions to the question why practical reasons for actions may be considered as central for us. Most of the layers are related to the idea that nature may be considered as valuable, eventually that many things and living beings part of the natural reign deserve our engagement, and some deserve an unconditional recognition of value or ‘respect’. Let us distinguish the elements of the ethical vocabulary about practical reasons with precision. Again, we might follow Raz’s realist account of values and practical reasons, and deny the contrary view that the values are only relays towards reasons:

- “(Political, ethical, aesthetical, taste-related) normative thinking is essential to our being: we are norm driven beings, but some parts of our life, which are norm related are passive, and other parts are active; choice: freedom as precondition of choice, or determinism? Action, motivation, intention
- Nature of practical reason based activity needs to be understood: notions such as conflicting reasons, the place of the will, desires and attachments with regard to reasons, interest. The notions of responsibility and integrity as response to thought and conduct
- Values, their objectivity, ontological perspective on values, pragmatism as reduction of values to reasons for actions. Gaining knowledge and understanding of values.
- Assessment and response to human thought and conduct (responsibility, negligence, blame)” (Raz, *Syllabus*, *ibid.*)

³⁰¹ Raz, J. Syllabus of the course L9094 in History and Philosophy of Law, Title: Foundations of Practical Thought, Fall 2018, <https://www.law.columbia.edu/academics/courses/23520>

The value of life and the place of nature, within a set of values or reasons for action, should be adapted in order to precise the meaning of the expression “respecting nature”. We should slowly read, word by word, each term used in these propositions and ask ourselves, if our semantic is precise enough? Raz’s analysis of the term “respect” is both very comprehensible and profound, reminding us of some the key distinctions that will bring clarity and build these notions closer to their conceptual layers, which is precious in order to see what respecting nature means.

Raz shows “reasons of respect” are (...) “reasons to preserve what is of value”.³⁰² To preserve what has value entails to engage with it, not necessarily to promote it. We shall first explain the difference between these two attitudes, and show why one may be mandatory for the experience of understanding, in the right way, the value of a thing (or a person). Engaging with the value entails not to harm this thing we call valuable, as gaining the rights, knowledge, and experience of what we value entails some preservation of it. The nature of what is of value in itself, shows that “the valuers are of value in themselves” (158), as “they don’t play the role of being of value in themselves in relation to goods which are good for others, but that they actually are of value in themselves”, “their good doesn’t matter simply because it is a good for someone or something else”. “People may be of value in themselves, even if they are of value to others, so long as their value or the value of their life is not due solely to the fact that they are of value to others” (156). Shared good is derived from this recognition of how we engage with value, and of what we do is valuable. Engaging with values is possible only for valuers, who do so by recognize that they are things that they good for them. There are counterexamples to the assumption that evaluative thoughts always entail a dependence to valuable things and creatures, which would have an intrinsic value. Reading a document

³⁰² Raz, J. *Value, Respect, and Attachment*, Cambridge: UP, 2001, p. 162.

could lead to the assumption that I recognize the realisations of value, but we need to engage with valuable things in the right way to arrive to this result (154). A document which is unread has only a potential for value.

“Goods whose value is realised are not wasted goods. [...] paintings are there to be seen and appreciated, novels to be read, oranges to be eaten, mountains to be looked at, or climbed, etc.” (ibid.).

This realisation of value entails attention and understanding, and the absence of some negative emotions (envy, resentment). “In climbing a mountain much more is involved than just recognition”. (Ibid.)³⁰³

To have some concept about a value, and not only an intention is a second aspect of the question. Children or animals, which have intentions, might lack adequate perception of value, even though they engage nevertheless with values (Raz, 2017).³⁰⁴ Since engaging with nature entails many different concepts of nature, for instance with regards to our attitude toward animals and food, we might intend to avoid harming nature, without a simple concept about what it entails not to harm nature.

A radically non-anthropomorphic view on animal life, as an exemplary case is called *anti-speciesism*. It pertains to not harming animals in a particularly wide sense. Anti-speciesism adopts the view, which considers the unjust and wrong treatment of individuals, with more or less care according to their species. Anti-speciesism might be seen as somehow extending intrinsic value to animals, which would be granted unconditional value (respect), and which would entail to find measures to efficiently protect animals against each other. Provided a

³⁰³ Raz, J. *Value, Respect, and Attachment*, pp. 154, 156, 158, ibid.

³⁰⁴ Raz, J. “Intention and value”, *Philosophical Explorations*, 2017, Vol. 20, No. S2, here p. 110, pp.109–126, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13869795.2017.1356357>

great part of animal suffering comes from other animals (predators, parasites), some prevention against particularly cruel forms of parasitism, provide intervention is done in a consequent manner, follows a logic of natural conservation, conceived as wider than only the conservation of wildlife. Interventionism would be justified only if it would do more good than evil. We should “assist the animal regardless of whether the victim is a victim of a congener or a predator, a parasite, hunger, thirst, disease or weather conditions” (Jaquet, 2019).³⁰⁵ From this perspective, “for every member of a given generation” we would need to make sure that, “one member of the next generation reaches reproductive age.” (ibid.)

We ought to respect people unconditionally, but respect for nature seems depending on the value of each of the parts of what we recognize as nature, and thus depends on particular methods of engaging with nature.

Comments and Application: Common Good and Decent Options for a Good Life

The respect of the environment should not be seen as proposing neither a return to the Stone Age, nor any unrealistic dream projects that nobody really wants. Stone Age is not the excellence of a simple way of life, which is caring about the correct engagement with nature in a complicated and fast changing world. The simple ways of life (as Diogenes of Sinope’s refusal of a sophisticated but superficial lifestyles, or Rousseau’s “return to nature” as Romantic preference of feelings over thinking, emotions over calculation, imagination over intellect) might capture some ecological aims. Escaping a state of constant flux on this

³⁰⁵ Jaquet, François « Faut-il intervenir dans la nature ? », *Antispéciste, Plateforme suisse d'information sur l'antispécisme*, 2019, <https://www.antispéciste.ch/post/faut-il-intervenir-dans-la-nature>. Accessed Sept. 2020.

earth, by finding natural “resting places” as paths into happiness could be seen as actively using our freedom, as an active person (without this being necessarily part of a political liberal agenda).

If the concept of sustainability shows that ecology should not aim to disqualify certain principles of the current economic system, sustaining some collection of rights and values might also appear redundant, since a value by definition, is a good that we are engaged in an informed, and life transforming way. Secondly, ecology can appear as a distrust of personal freedom, in the sense that some see these notions as fundamentally incompatible, in particular because of neo-liberal tendencies, strongly embedded in many political economical practices. By affirming that, part of our life can be based on very careful choices as deliberate decision-making, including some values aiming at the conservation of the natural world, as they do not need to invite to isolation, individualism and alienation. In doing so, we certainly approach a virtuous way of looking at our relation to the nature, which should focus on the relation of sustainability to autonomy.

Answering the question “who cares about ethics?” might lead, if we emphasise the relation between sustainability and autonomy, to affirm that caring about nature entails caring about ethics. In this sense, progress towards the engagement and protection of nature cannot be concretely realized in respecting nature alone, but should also be indirectly linked by caring for human resources, for decent work conditions, and good environmental conditions for work and living a good life.

As we have seen, one of the autonomy based (liberal) ways of defining why respect of nature is important is to show that it is intimately related to the exercise of our autonomy. We find Raz’s defence of autonomy important if environmental conditions change dramatically (as we see in the case of the COVID-19 pandemic), or discreetly suspect new economic and social crisis are likely to happen. It

essentially entails the options for acting in autonomous ways, and presents it as the key political and social question (Raz, 1986, 204). Environment and nature here are understood as circumstances of the life of an autonomous person, distinct from the range of capacities a person needs to fulfil to become author of his/her own life, in the primary sense. Circumstances relate to a second sense of autonomy,

“...a person is autonomous if the conditions of autonomous life are present. These have partly to do with the state of the individual concerned (that he/she is of sound mind, capable of rational thought and action, etc.) and partly to do with the circumstances of his life (especially that he has a sufficient range of significant options available to him at different stages of his life)” (Raz, *ibid*).

Green shows that Raz supports a kind of “un-American, non-individualistic, pluralist, and perfectionist form of liberalism”, which challenges the notion of neutrality, and the so-called liberal anti-perfectionist “exclusion of the ideal”, as theory of limited government, or the narrow role of state. This latest may be distinct from wider public concern from non-state actors (Green, 1988, 318).³⁰⁶ As we might expect more from liberal governance, non-interference from large corporations, bureaucracies, and mere security as early 17th century liberals (Locke) defined it. Governments “can create conditions which enable their subjects to enjoy greater liberty than they otherwise would” (Raz, 1986, 18). Liberal morality could be understood on non-individualistic grounds, against the view of moral individualism. The journey of the “I” implies a “we”, that is to say a notion of a group whose interests are common. The consideration of public goods or

³⁰⁶ Green, Leslie. “Un-American Liberalism: Raz's 'Morality of Freedom'.” *The University of Toronto Law Journal*, vol. 38, no. 3, 1988, pp. 317–332. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/825789. Accessed 9 July 2020.

collective goods, and a good definition of these notions are needed in order to shed some light on how respect of nature, as respect of nation entails large collective responsibilities.

There are broad ideals or conceptions of the good, which are excluded from political arenas, due to the doctrine of the neutral political concern, or the argument of the exclusionary doctrine, both acting as anti-perfectionist doctrines. Neutralist means that according to the principle of the neutrality of concern, “governments are to be even-handed between all rival moralities” (Raz, 1986, 135). Applied to the environment, neutrality would suspend any preference between “the model of excellence of life of the shepherd, living at close quarters with his animals, responding to the continuous changes in the natural world, providing his resolve and ingenuity in the face of many man-made and natural difficulties and crises” or the moral excellence tout court, as neither should be basis of government or collective public action. The exclusion of ideals concerns not only a veil of ignorance in the sense of suspending the judgment on two competing conceptions of the good (an ecologically committed spiritual life vs. living a prosperous life without much concern for the nature) but refusing that some of these conceptions of the good, become reasons for public action. But one thing is to say that there should be exclusion of forms of living in a society of a certain kind (devout, well-educated, prosperous etc.) as reasons for governmental action, ignoring that these are encompassing both private ideals (lots of leisure and sport, etc.) and societal conditions which contribute to them (general prosperity, general appreciation of the importance of physical activity, etc.).

We need not only a thin political and ethical definition on the line of the no harm principle, i. e. direct risks to health, as when we may suffer discernible health effects when pollution is important. On this line a Swiss initiative has been launched to revise the Constitution in order to reframe the definition of what a responsible business is in the art. Not

the respect of nature alone but “respect for human rights and the environment through business”. Companies should be obliged (if they have registered office in Switzerland, and principal place of business Switzerland, following the framework of the Swiss Initiative) to respect internationally recognized human rights and international environment standards, also abroad, including in companies under their control (Bueno, 2018, 12).³⁰⁷

Whether the conditions for my autonomy have really been significantly affected in such a case depend, in Raz’s terms, on whether my range of options has been reduced below adequacy. Recalling his formulation that the test of this adequacy is whether the available range of options is such as to “enable [me] to sustain throughout [my] life activities which, taken together, exercise all the capacities human beings have an innate drive to exercise, as well as to decline to develop any of them”.

We could mention recent Glencore’s environmental disaster in Chad, reported in March 2020, where chemicals from the petroleum production have been poisoning a river. This caused large burn blisters on the skin of both children and adults and livestock perished.³⁰⁸ If we were to apply Raz’s test based on autonomy options, and see how capacities are impaired, “and thus that my available range of options

³⁰⁷ Bueno, Nicolas, *The Swiss Popular Initiative on Responsible Business From Responsibility to Liability* in: L.F. H Enneking. I. Giesen. RGH. Krisen, Accountability and International Business Operations: Providing Justice for Corporate Violations of Human Rights and Environmental Standards, London, New York, Taylor & Francis Group, 2018.

³⁰⁸ Under the Swiss Responsible Business Initiative (2020), companies would have been “legally obliged to incorporate respect for human rights and the environment” in all their business activities. Application of this mandatory due diligence would have been also part of Swiss based companies’ activities abroad. The Swiss initiative obtained the popular majority but failed to convince the majority of the cantons on November 2020.

was indeed likely to have been reduced below adequacy”, we may move beyond a classical harm principle against direct risks, as in many case of pollution of the environment (Hannis, 2016).³⁰⁹ To look for legal action against those who deprive the individual of their *adequate range of options*, requires a little more than a principle of autonomy. “While autonomy requires the availability of any adequate range of options it does not require the presence of any particular option among them [provided they are] insignificant to the degree of autonomy enjoyed by that person (Raz, 410)”. Coercion may itself threaten the conditions for autonomy, but legitimate legal measures could be envisaged, with regard to environmental policy, as providing public goods by environmental legislation, and protection of autonomy as with clean air, water and epidemic prevention.

The concept of available decent options for good life is a valuable concept which allows to focus on life threatening issues as harming conditions. Drawing the attention to eco-centric phenomena which have ecological impact but which are not directly impacting human individuals’ autonomy, as zombie Tundra fires burning under the snow in winter, shows the need of some radical transformative principle.³¹⁰

The transformative principle could redirect the burden of the action to a place, better aligned with interest of the most vulnerable persons. The problem with liberal principle may come from those in power, including the higher education system, a system which in practice

³⁰⁹ Hannis refers to Raz in many helpful ways around the concept of collective good and of decent options for life. Hannis, Michael, *Freedom and Environment, Autonomy, Human Flourishing and the Political Philosophy of Sustainability*, Ch. Freedom and Flourishing, Routledge Research in Environmental Politics, Taylor & Francis, New York: 2016, pp. 72-73.

³¹⁰ The term is related to Tundra fires under snowpacks: “zombie fires” [...] can burrow into the rich organic material beneath the surface, such as the vast peatlands that ring the Arctic, and smolder under the snowpack throughout the frigid winter.” *Washington Post*, Andrew Freeman, May 2020.

follows the profit motives present in education as in other social economic sectors. Hidden behind terms such as “vocation”, professional cooption contributes reproducing the contradictions the liberal economic system ensures. Letting a wide range of options open supposes being able to see and conceive such options. In our days, it means *something more than being incapable of seeing anything apart from the own interests* or options (what Nietzsche calls “convictions”, Gadamer: “prejudices”). The media, arts, industry, government, etc. all sectors are equally exposed to the same bias. It is precisely to embrace a wide range of options that they are constitutionally incapable. *Standing up* on behalf of others, if one does not want to merely advocate on the behalf of others (of the plants, the animals, the planet) is an immense task. Without standing up, engaging with values risk to permit the continuation of exploitation, i.e. business as usual.

Caring for the Nature and Standing Up for Others

As Aristotle shows, in many cases reasons for action are not based on a criterion for good reasoning, but rather on our perception of facts and the commitment to avoid all excess:

“[...] up to what point and to what extent a man must deviate before he becomes blameworthy it is not easy to determine by reasoning, [...] that the intermediate state is in all things to be praised, but that we must incline sometimes towards the excess, sometimes towards the deficiency; for so shall we most easily hit the mean and what is right³¹¹.”

With Stückelberger’s ethical focus on a “globalance” (2020) the balance is deemed an important weight in the overall and perennial foundation of ethics. Ethics is defined by contrast to morality and other

³¹¹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (350 B.C.E), transl. by William David Ross.

values simply inherited from the tradition, without any explicit commitment to avoid all excess³¹². Ethics for Stückelberger refers to our proper reconstruction of our own values and norms, moderated by our own critical distance towards some of these collective values. Do we ever do what God approves as such, when we take a positive comparative approach related to the weight or relative strength of two or more alternatives? We should, and it is the case if we take a *theo-eco-centric view* on the respect for the nature. We go to church if we think that God would approve our way of implementing a divine perspective. Ethics is by definition in application, and we are by definition facing positive comparative alternatives.

The assumption of balancing alternatives can be done by analysing the way concretely we can find a solution in a context, it does not give us a constituting rule of the type: “Do what God would approve” (Jackson, Smith, Lord, Raz, 2016³¹³). This distance between an implementation procedure and a first predicate of practical reason for doing something (Do what God...), shows that we should not assume that the value of options of this first kind constitutes the proximate reason for pursuing them.

In the following section we want to defend the idea that what God approves cannot be wrong for theism but theism can also consider reason based arguments, provided theism is based on a perfectionist account of ethics. In order to first 1) explain in terms of reasons for action precisely the critical power of ethics, which in order to be starting point and guiding reason by contrast to explanatory reason, entails some

³¹² Stückelberger, Christoph, *Globalance: Ethics Handbook for a Balanced World Post-Covid*, Globethics.net Focus Series No. 57, Geneva: Globethics.net, 2020.

³¹³ Jackson, Frank; Smith, Michael, “The Implementation Problem for Deontology”, *Weighing Reasons* Errol Lord and Barry Maguire (Eds.), Ch. 14, Oxford: UP, 2016, pp. 279-280. Also: Raz, J. “Value and the Weight of Practical Reasons”, in: *Weighing Reasons*, op. cite, Ch. 7, 141ff.

exclusionary reasons, called second-order reasons for action or refrain from action. Second 2) we would operate in the universe of discourse of environmental ethics and question, given the existence of exclusionary reasons for action their value for our proper understanding of ecology, not only as a kind of “imbalance”. If we say we want to answer to problems such as the “unregulated globalization”, the “trends to extremisms”, and see as plausible solution the correlation of a new virtuous “dynamic of world order and dynamic balances”, are we not missing the proposition of a constituting ground engagement with values? Balancing better comparative choices functions as ways of better implementing ethics, and this is what applied ethics is about after all. Engagement with respect and values, and standing up for others values is it not entailing an engagement, both deeper in our self-understanding and a transformative power, beyond a diplomatic dialogue between comparative options.

From a meta-ethical point of view, we focus on the constituting aspects of things, rules and actions. We position ourselves in a world where there cannot be any balance, because a balance entails always two realities, which are on the same level, whereas constituting rules and reasons evolve on different levels. There are conceptually two things that we call conflicting reasons, paraphrasing Raz’s views: 1) the way we try to resolve them, 2) the way in which such conflicts should/ought to be resolved.

In the first case, we are aware of conflicting reasons to prevent some ecological disaster, but these reasons simply override all other considerations. To qualify a reason as overriding reason, we are on the ground of applying comparatively sound options on one level, we don’t need to imagine different levels beyond or above these reasons. In the second case, conflicting reasons could also mean the way in which such conflicts *should/ought to* be resolved. Practical reasons for actions may concern *exclusionary reasons*, two levels of reasons instead of a simple

balancing of competing first order reasons to act³¹⁴. If we say Paul resists the temptation of killing voluntarily animals, if killing is not necessary to his survival, Paul makes a decision which is based not only on the choice of considering a wide range of reasons for action, “as first order reasons to act” (Raz, p. 132), assessed by considering the “relative strength” or “weight of the conflicting reasons.”

Exclusion based reason is easy to present in a familiar example. If my judgement may be affected when I take a decision in such a way that I think my mental state doesn’t allow me to simply decide between two conflicting reasons (Raz, 1978), it shows that I may well continue to correct my judgement without succeeding to make it better. In this case, the rule of the balancing of reasons does not apply. It is not the case that given two conflicting reasons, I am always in the position to say that one of the two reasons will end up being a conclusive reason for me to act in such and such way. When I think about the situation of being super tired and not knowing if I can rely on my judgement, *I am not any more in the position to base my choice on some reason*, on the contrary I have a reason *to disregard other reasons for action*. I form a reason based on exclusion.

Having the right reasons allows me to engage in value-based actions. A further difficulty is to understand and accept the next step, of *standing up for others rights or values*. Thinking again on what respecting nature means, and how vulnerable our world in ecological crisis has become, we would need a subversive power to change the world. To be honest with ourselves, we may realize that we lack by simply being engaged in the right set of values and respecting the right range of creatures some further capacities to empower large and partly unknown natural areas, on a wide scale. Probably the work of Illich and Žižek on “changing the

³¹⁴ Raz, Joseph, “Reasons for Action, Decisions and Norms”, in: *Practical Reasoning*, Ed. by Joseph Raz, Oxford Readings in Philosophy, Series Editor G. J. Warnock, 1978, Oxford: OUP, pp. 128-152.

world” may give us the missing tools (Babich, 2017). To answer would entail a totally new research.

Conclusion

We have seen that without us becoming nature *à la Spinoza*, we need to make our promise to respect nature meaningful in comparison to other reasons for action. It is not possible to enter in pseudo-contractual relations with nature, as we do with our children when we ask them to keep good progress at school if they want to have nice options for further personal and professional development, or to have good walks during the vacations.

Raz’s comprehensive account of notions, such as value, respect, reason for action, second-order reasons, collective good, and decent options for decision are promising philosophical notions. These notions are adapted to meta-ethical, normative and applied ethical perspectives on nature and the environment. We might respect others’ values, respect others, value the environment for being an important part of our world of ethical valuator. From a semantic point of view, we should not “respect” nature, as nature cannot either enter in a social contract with us. Nature as partly unanimated is lacking a telos, reasons understood as second-order reasons for action, or refraining to act. We continue to be attached to the needs for natural resources, we love animated creatures, and study hidden threats and challenges regarding natural conservation. The more we can add an applied ethical and moral reasoning on the top of such experiences, the better we can serve and manage our environment, and address questions of social and economic justice on a global scale.

Not harming living creatures, protecting human beings from environmental risks, thinking corporate responsible attitudes imply first engaging with values, and gradually engaging with reasons in our practices, which are good basis for respecting values and others,

including nature as a whole. A further chapter of this research is unachieved: *standing for the values of others* qua non-autonomous beings. If we consider equally important to protect and engage in the conservation of all sorts of natural species, as *anti-speciesist* claim worth to do, we would need to move beyond self-engaging with values and reasons. If to protect the human being and to value the environment goes beyond what brings a collective good to humans, a new path needs to be discovered. The *anti-speciesist* evolution of our engaging with nature could entail, as we conclude, far more than what we attempted to demonstrate. Namely putting mother earth in the middle of our values entails *changing the world for the good*, and not only acting in a reasonable and consequent way, within the actual framework of the Anthropocene. It means decentring slightly the focus on *homo sapiens* and the *person* and placing some heavier attention to the natural conservation of species, at the crossroad of our main values.

Bibliography

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (350 B.C.E), transl. by William David Ross.

Babich, Babette, “Tools for Subversion: Illich and Žižek on Changing the World”, in *Making Communism Hermeneutical, Contributions to Hermeneutics* 6, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-59021-9_13, Springer Int. Publ., 2017.

Bueno, Nicolas, The Swiss Popular Initiative on Responsible Business From Responsibility to Liability in: L.F. H Enneking, I. Giesen. RGH. Krisen, *Accountability and International Business Operations: Providing Justice for Corporate Violations of Human Rights and Environmental Standards*, London, New York, Taylor & Francis Group, 2018.

Chang, Ruth, “Can Desires Provide Reasons for Action?”, in: *Reason and Value*, R. Jay Wallace, Philip Pettit, Samuel Scheffler, Michael Smith (Eds.), pp. 86-89, Oxford: Clarendon.

Desmons, Ophélie, Stéphane Lemaire and Patrick Turmel, Qu’est-ce que la métaéthique? In *Manuel de métaéthique*, Ch. 1, Collection « L’avocat du diable », Paris : Édition Hermann.

Enoch, David. Moral Luck, *International Encyclopedia of Ethics*, 10.1002/9781444367072, (2013).

Fiechter-Widemann, Evelyne, *Droit humain à l’eau: justice ou imposture ? Éclairages juridiques, philosophiques et théologiques du nouveau droit humain à l’eau*, Genève : Éditions Slatkine, 2017.

Girardin, Benoît / Fiechter-Widemann, Evelyne (Eds.), *Blue Ethics: Ethical Perspectives on Sustainable, Fair Water Resources Use and Management*, Geneva: Globethics.net, 2019.

Green, Leslie. “Un-American Liberalism: Raz's 'Morality of Freedom'.” *The University of Toronto Law Journal*, vol. 38, no. 3, 1988, pp. 317–332. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/825789. Accessed 9 July 2020.

Hannis, Michael, Freedom and Environment, Autonomy, Human Flourishing and the Political Philosophy of Sustainability, Ch. *Freedom and Flourishing, Routledge Research in Environmental Politics*, Taylor & Francis, New York: 2016, pp. 72-73.

Heuer, Ulrike, “Raz on Values and Reasons”, in: *Reasons and Values, Themes from the Moral Philosophy of Joseph Raz*, Edited by R. Jay Wallace, Philip Pettit, Samuel Scheffler, Michael Smith, Oxford UP.

- Jackson, Frank; Smith, Michael, “The Implementation Problem for Deontology”, *Weighing Reasons*, Errol Lord and Barry Maguire (Eds.), Ch. 14, Oxford: UP, 2016, 279ff.
- Jaquet, François, « Faut-il intervenir dans la nature ? », Antispéciste, Plateforme suisse d'information sur l'antispécisme, 2019, <https://www.antispeciste.ch/post/faut-il-intervenir-dans-la-nature>. Accessed Sept. 2020.
- Jonas, Hans, *The Imperative of Responsibility: In Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age*, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1985.
- Kraut, Richard, “Scanlon’s Buck-Passing Account of Value”, in: *Against Absolute Goodness*, Ch. 11, Oxford: UP, 2011/2012, DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199844463.003.0011
- Raz, Joseph (2010), “Being in the World.” *Ratio*, 23: 433-452. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9329.2010.00477.x
- , “Value and the Weight of Practical Reasons”, in: *Weighing Reasons*, Errol Lord and Barry Maguire (Eds.), Ch. 7, 141ff., Oxford: UP, 2016.
 - , “Duties of Well-Being” in: *Ethics in the Public Domain, Essays in the Morality of Law and Politics*, revised edition, Oxford: Clarendon Paperbacks, 1994/1996.
 - , “Intention and value”, *Philosophical Explorations*, 2017, Vol. 20, No. S2, pp.109–126, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13869795.2017.1356357>
 - , “Reasons for Action, Decisions and Norms”, in: *Practical Reasoning*, Ed. by Joseph Raz, Oxford Readings in Philosophy, Series Editor G. J. Warnock, 1978, Oxford: OUP, pp. 128-152.

- Syllabus of the course L9094 in History and Philosophy of Law,
Title: *Foundations of Practical Thought*, Fall 2018,
<https://www.law.columbia.edu/academics/courses/23520>
 - *The Morality of Freedom*, Oxford: UP, 1986.
 - *From Normativity to Responsibility*, Oxford Handbook, Oxford:
UP.
 - (2010) *Human Rights in the Emerging World Order*,
Transnational Legal Theory, 1:1, 31-47, DOI:
10.1080/20414005.2010.11424500
 - (2001): *Value, Respect, and Attachment*, Cambridge: UP.
 - “Reasons for Action, Decisions and Norms”, in: *Practical Reasoning*, Ed. by Joseph Raz, Oxford Readings in Philosophy,
Series Editor G. J. Warnock, 1978, Oxford: OUP, pp. 128-152.
 - *The Morality of Freedom*, Oxford: UP, 1986.
 - “On Respect, Authority, and Neutrality: A Response.” *Ethics*, vol.
120, no. 2, 2010, pp. 279–301. JSTOR,
www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/651426
 - “Responsibility and the Negligence Standard.” *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, vol. 30, no. 1, 2010, pp. 1–18. JSTOR,
www.jstor.org/stable/40660428
 - “On Normativity and Responsibility: Responses”, *Jerusalem Review of Legal Studies*, Volume 8, Issue 1, December 2013,
Pages 220–234, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrls/jlt034>
- Saelid Gilhus, Ingvald, *Animals, Gods and Humans: Changing Attitudes to Animals in Greek, Roman and Early Christian Ideas*, Abingdon, Oxon, New York: Routledge, 2006.

- Santiago Amaya, John M. Doris, “No Excuses: Performance Mistakes in Morality”, *Handbook of Neuroethics*, 10.1007/978-94-007-4707-4, (253-272), (2015).
- Serres, Michel, *The Natural Contract*, transl. Elizabeth MacArthur and William Paulson, Michigan Press, 1995 (orig. Ed. François Bourin, 1990).
- Shafer-Landau, Russ, “Moral Reasons”, in: *Foundations of Ethics: An Anthology*, Ch 24, Blackwell Publ. Oxford: UP,
- Singer, Peter, *Practical Ethics*, Ch. 10: The Environment, Second edition, Cambridge: UP, 1993.
- Stanguennec, André, *L’humanisation de la nature*, Paris : Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l’homme, 2014.
- Stückelberger, Christoph, *Globalance*, Geneva: Globethics.net, 2020.
- . *Global Ethics Applied: Environmental Ethics*. Vol. 2, Reader Series No. 2, Geneva: Globethics.net
- . *Das Menschenrecht auf Nahrung und Wasser: Eine ethische Priorität*, Geneva: Globethics.net.
- Weichold, Martin “The Cognitive Boundaries of Responsibility” (Die kognitiven Grenzen der Verantwortung), *Grazer Philosophische Studien*, 10.1163/18756735-000014, 94, 1-2, 226-267, 2017.