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Unity among Environmentalists?

Debating the Values-Policy Link in Environmental Ethics

Introduction: A New Ethics for Environmental Protection

Environmental ethics emerged from the thickets of applied philosophy in the early 1970s as a rebuke to anthropocentrism, the human-centered outlook embedded within the Western ethical system. The anthropocentric worldview was singled out by the first generation of environmental philosophers for its failure to extend the boundaries of moral considerability—and the attribution of intrinsic value—to nonhumans (including animals and plants) and to larger ecological communities. These new *non*anthropocentric philosophers argued that the mainstream ethical traditions of the West—for example, Kantian ethics, utilitarianism, virtue ethics, and so forth—were not only insufficient as foundations for a new environmental ethic but also philosophically hostile to developing a more respectful relationship to nature. The conventional ethical theories, they argued, only considered human interests and harms worth recognizing. Nature itself was accorded only *instrumental* value; it was not deemed worthy of *direct* moral concern.

One of the earliest expressions of the desire to launch a new nonanthropocentric ethics of the environment appeared in a 1973 essay published by New Zealand philosopher Richard Routley, "Is There a Need for a New, an Environmental Ethic?"[1] There, Routley (who later changed his name to Sylvan) introduced what has since been referred to as the "last man" scenario, which he proposed as a kind of moral litmus test to separate the anthropocentrists

from the nonanthropocentrists. According to the traditional ethical frameworks of the West, Routley argued, the last man surviving the collapse of the world system would be committing no wrong if he set about destroying every species of animal and plant on Earth. Since only humans have ultimate value in mainstream ethical theory, and since nature is therefore viewed as essentially valueless (in itself), Routley asserted that we have no established ethical principles that will allow us to condemn the destruction of nature on the grounds that it destroys intrinsic natural value. His essay was thus a strong rebuke of traditional ethical theorizing, particularly the "human chauvinism" Routley found in its exclusive concern for the interests of humans. We *do* need a new environmental ethic, Routley argued, and it should be nonanthropocentric in character.

Routley's indictment of anthropocentrism was shared by a growing number of environmental philosophers in the 1980s and 1990s. While some, such as Paul Taylor, advocated *biocentric* projects promoting the inherent worth of individual living organisms, most nonanthropocentric philosophers preferred to ground moral considerability and significance in more holistic understandings of natural populations, communities, and systems (an *ecocentric* position).[2] Also, during this same period, deep ecologists such as Arne Naess advanced a parallel critique of the dominant anthropocentric and industrial worldview, proposing as an alternative a nonanthropocentric cosmology and ethical curative to the "shallow" anthropocentric approach to environmental concern and protection.[3] In very short order, nonanthropocentrism (and the rejection of anthropocentrism) became the dominant, if not foundational, ethical commitment and philosophical move of academic environmental ethics and philosophy—its chief intellectual and political justification. Today, more than three decades removed from the academic founding of the field, the primary philosophical task for most mainstream environmental philosophers remains largely unchanged: the articulation of a new nature-centered or nonanthropocentric worldview and an alternative set of moral principles able to account directly for the good of nonhumans and the natural world as a whole.

This mandate to combat unbridled anthropocentrism via the philosophical platform of environmental ethics has, of course, always harbored a serious policy ambition, even if the practical implications of their theories and arguments did not receive as much attention from environmental philosophers as one might have expected. Indeed, by raising the flag of nonanthropocentrism, philosophers were also hoping to advance a persuasive moral justification for a robust environmental policy regime and a general rationalization of proenvironmental practices independent of the instrumental (i.e., human-serving) values of nature. If such a knockdown ethical defense could be successfully mounted, then public policies directing the protection of endangered species, wetlands, wilderness areas, and so on would appear to rest

upon reassuringly solid, perhaps even unassailable foundations. Many environmental philosophers, in fact, became so convinced of the truth and necessity of the nonanthropocentric worldview that they insisted environmental policies and practices, to be truly principled and justified, *must* be underwritten by strong biocentric or ecocentric arguments.[4]

In making such arguments, however, nonanthropocentric philosophers were in many respects swimming upstream. A strong case can be made, for example, that most environmental activism, policy, and law in the United States (as well as in many other parts of the world) has been and continues to be motivated and explained by its advance of various *human* interests, especially health, welfare, and safety (but also property rights, aesthetics, and cultural/historical values). As Steve Cohen, a prominent environmental policy and management scholar at Columbia University puts it, "The environmental ethic that has had the greatest impact in the last three decades, at least in the United States and other Western countries, has been a form of enlightened self-interest."[5]

As a case in point, consider the cornerstone of U.S. environmental statutes: the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969.[6] Often described as purely procedural in nature due to its requirement that federal agencies prepare Environmental Impact Statements for proposals expected to have significant environmental consequences, NEPA is also notable for its more substantive emphasis on environmental values and its ambitious statement of vision. "What ought to be generally understood (and is not)," writes Lynton K. Caldwell, the dean of environmental policy scholars, "is that NEPA is basically legislation *about* values."[7] This is most obvious in the declaration of legislative intent in the Act's Section 2:

> The purposes of this Act are: To declare a national policy which will encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment; to promote efforts which will prevent or eliminate damage to the environment and biosphere and stimulate the health and welfare of man; to enrich the understanding of the ecological systems and natural resources important to the Nation.[8]

The Act goes on to pronounce that it is the "continuing policy of the Federal Government" to use all available means "in a manner calculated to foster and promote the general welfare, to create and maintain conditions under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony, and fulfill the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generations of Americans."[9]

The values expressed in the text of NEPA are clearly anthropocentric, pertaining to the health and welfare (economic and physical) of humans, including

future generations. As written, NEPA does not state or even seriously imply that the environment itself has any "interest" independent of human welfare, or that it might have a moral claim against human agents who wish to alter or destroy natural features, wild species, and the like. Moreover, the "harmony" with the environment described in the Act is modified by the term "productive," which—although it could possibly be stretched to refer to biological productivity—is surrounded here by references to human ownership ("man's environment") and anthropocentric designations of nonhuman nature ("natural resources"). In other words, the natural environment in NEPA is viewed instrumentally (though broadly, i.e., ecologically); it is not characterized as an intrinsically valuable entity apart from its contribution to human well-being.[10]

This broadly anthropocentric rationale is, moreover, not peculiar to NEPA. Indeed, if we examine the language of some of the other major U.S. environmental laws, we find that their value statements are overwhelmingly human-centered in character, emphasizing the myriad contributions of the environment to human health, safety, and economic welfare. Even the ostensibly "preservationist" natural resource laws advance primarily anthropocentric interests—including those trumpeted by environmentalists for providing strict and (seemingly) quasi-nonanthropocentric expressions of environmental concern. Take, for example, the federal wetlands policy outlined in Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, which regulates the physical alteration or destruction of wetlands.[11] As legal scholar Alyson Flourney observes, Section 404 itself is viewed as "one of the brightest stars of the environmental law constellation."[12] And yet the values expressed in Section 404, as with NEPA, may be generally described as anthropocentric in character, emphasizing economic productivity, property ownership, flood hazards, recreation, navigation, water supply, and the overall needs and welfare of the people.[13] Although these values do reflect a larger ecological context and thus go beyond narrow calculations of efficiency abstracted from natural systems, at the end of the day they still terminate in human interests and therefore are anthropocentric rather than biocentric or ecocentric in nature.[14]

The upshot is that many of the environmental protective policies set down in major U.S. environmental laws and regulations—concerning air and water quality, waste disposal, the release of toxic chemicals, and so on—reflect broadly anthropocentric concerns about human health, safety, welfare, and related social benefits. This normative trend, moreover, goes beyond the statutory language of policy. Anthropocentric (and, frequently, utilitarian) values also appear to be the dominant motivational elements of the major international environmental advocacy groups, at least to the degree that these are reflected in their vision and mission statements.[15]

Of course, just because the value expressions of environmental policy and regulation appear to be primarily anthropocentric in nature does not mean

that these values are easily harmonized, or that they are even roughly compatible or mutually consistent. Philosopher of public policy Mark Sagoff has long argued, for example, that there are considerable tensions between, on the one hand, prudential or efficiency-driven norms supporting the reliance on economic analysis in environmental policy making and, on the other, "moral" (in the Kantian sense, i.e., deontological) principles pertaining to human health and safety that resist aggregation and comparison in any sort of utility calculation.[16] However, Sagoff's utility versus rights axis in U.S. environmental policy still rests upon a solidly anthropocentric foundation: The welfare, health, property, and safety of *humans*—not the interests of wetlands, wildlife, and wilderness—are recognized and promoted.

"Every idea about policy draws boundaries," writes Deborah Stone in her influential book, *Policy Paradox*. "It tells what or who is included or excluded in a category. These boundaries are more than intellectual—they define people in and out of a conflict or place them on different sides."[17] And nonanthropocentrists might argue that they define not just people but also environmental entities and processes. While species, habitats, and the like may "count" in environmental policy in the sense that their recovery and conservation are the codified targets of policy, they do not appear to count morally in the sense that policy and law codifies their moral standing or status.[18] In other words, environmental policy at best seems to only reflect an *indirect* regard for the environment; of *direct* ethical concern are the many *human* interests served by the provision of clean air and water, species conservation, and so forth.

Nonanthropocentrists, though, want more than this. Philosopher Eric Katz summarizes the general nonanthropocentrist position on the relationship between moral principle and environmental policy goals in the case of biodiversity protection: "The real solution to problems in environmental policy lies in a specific transformation of values—the transcendence of human-based value systems of ethics . . . Policies that ensure the preservation of planetary biodiversity must express values derived from a nonanthropocentric moral system."[19] For theorists like Katz and J. Baird Callicott, even the broad anthropocentrism expressed in NEPA and similar environmental statutes and policies is not sufficient. As Callicott puts it, "Conservation policy based on anthropocentrism alone—however broadened to include potential as well as actual resources, ecosystem services, and the aesthetic, epistemic and spiritual uses of nature by present *and future* people—is less robust and inclusive than conservation policy based on the intrinsic value of nature."[20]

Clearly, a major fear of the nonanthropocentrists regarding the anthropocentric defense of environmental policy—regardless of how enlightened it may be—is that in the long run such rationales for policy choice will end up

supporting actions that do not adequately protect endangered species from harm or safeguard protected areas from encroaching development. Nonanthropocentric environmentalists presumably do not wish to see NEPA and the other pillars of environmental policy toppled because they reflect an anthropocentric pedigree. But they do want to argue that nonanthropocentrism is a *superior* moral foundation for environmental protection, and that it also supports, in many cases, a more ambitious policy agenda than a traditional, human-regarding moral outlook.

An illustration of this last point is the current "Rewilding" campaign to restore the wilderness values of North America by actively recolonizing the landscape with biological analogues—for example, elephants, cheetahs, and lions—of its long-lost charismatic megafauna of the Pleistocene Era.[21] Going well beyond the stated policy goals of the Wilderness Act and the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the proposed rewilding effort is, its authors assert, justified on "ethical" as well as ecological, aesthetic, and economic grounds. By "ethical," the rewilding advocates clearly mean to evoke the nonanthropocentric duty to restore biodiversity and wildness to the continent. Indeed, the Rewilding Institute, the umbrella organization for the Pleistocene Rewilding proposal, describes itself as driven by unabashedly biocentric values. As their Web site states, "We strive to protect and restore wild Nature and wild species for their own sake, not just because they are of use to humans."[22]

The upshot is that for many nonanthropocentrists (both within and outside academic environmental ethics), an alternative ethical system requiring deep value transformation—the shift from instrumental valuation of nature to seeing it as an end in itself—is necessary to motivate and justify sufficiently suitable environmental policy. Only assertions of the intrinsic value of nature, they argue, possess the kind of "trumping power" in environmental decision making that can defeat traditional, and traditionally powerful, economic arguments for the exploitation and liquidation of environmental assets. Without such moral authority, nonanthropocentrists worry that environmentalists will have to compete directly with economic interests in environmental decision making, a battle they fear is hopelessly lopsided but ultimately avoidable—that is, if there is recourse to nonanthropocentric arguments.[23]

Norton's *Toward Unity among Environmentalists* and the "Convergence Hypothesis"

Although it is still the dominant stance in the field, not all environmental ethicists have embraced the nonanthropocentric position and the view that it

is essential to good environmental policy argument. For decades, the philosopher Bryan Norton has advanced an intellectual counteroffensive, arguing that the nonanthropocentric worldview is both conceptually flawed and pragmatically unnecessary within environmental ethics.[24] Specifically, Norton has challenged the popular notion that anthropocentrism is anathema to environmental protection by proposing an alternative and less-aggressive version of human-centeredness, what he termed "weak anthropocentrism." In its original formulation, Norton had in mind a kinder and gentler vision of humanist environmentalism that departed from the exploitative and economistic readings of the anthropocentric worldview within environmental ethics.[25]

For weak anthropocentrists, Norton wrote, nonhuman nature held an important, noneconomic instrumental quality, a good he later described as "transformative" value.[26] The direct experience of nature, he suggested, had the potential to transform selfish human preferences into more enlightened ones: Nature could in effect be "used" as a means to criticize ecologically irrational desires (such as destructively consumptive views of nature). This transformative experience could in turn encourage the formation of higher ideals that affirmed human harmony with the environment, now and in the future.[27] Among other things, Norton's argument demonstrated how the normative "widening" of anthropocentrism to countenance the full array of human goods in nature beyond narrow market values, and the temporal extension of these values so that they are properly understood as constraints imposed by the obligation to ensure resource sustainability for future generations, could put environmental humanism on much more solid ethical footing. It also showed that nonanthropocentric arguments were not necessary to criticize economistic views of nature; the latter could be shown to be deficient by appeal to other instrumental (but noneconomic) values in a reformed anthropocentric framework.

Norton's liberal humanism in environmental ethics was articulated in his influential 1991 book *Toward Unity among Environmentalists*, in which he broke new ground with his broadly pragmatic approach to environmental philosophy, a methodological orientation wherein the practical policy goals of environmentalists took center stage and ethical theorizing moved to the justificatory background.[28] Noting that environmentalists had not been able to rally around a consensus position about the ultimate value of endangered species, wetlands, wilderness, and so on, Norton's approach emphasized an important but frequently ignored distinction between the *values* of environmentalists and their policy *goals*:

> I will pursue a different strategy and look first for the common ground, the shared policy goals and objectives that might characterize the unity of environmentalists. To support this strategy, I will employ a useful, if

> somewhat arbitrarily drawn, distinction between *values* and *objectives*. An objective will be understood as some concrete goal such as a change in policy or the designation of a particular area as a wilderness preserve. Values will be understood more abstractly as the basis for an estimation of worth, which can serve as a justification and explanation for more concrete objectives. Thus two environmentalists might work together to achieve the objective of prohibiting strip mining in a wilderness area, while justifying their activities by appeal to quite different values. One of them might, for example, value the wilderness as sacred, while the other wishes to perpetuate its recreational value for the use of the community. Differences in value may, therefore, lead to shifting coalitions regarding objectives; once strip mining is effectively prohibited, supporters of recreational values may find themselves allied with the local Chamber of Commerce in supporting a larger parking lot for the access to the wilderness, while their former ally opposes both, insisting that ease of access will cheapen and degrade the sacred place.[29]

Norton's focus on the "unity of environmentalists" at the level of policy preference—a view shaped by his analysis of key environmental decisions as well as interviews with leaders in the advocacy and policy-making communities—is the organizing principle of his 1991 book, a motif that resonates through a wide-ranging discussion of the values and objectives of population, energy, pollution control, land use, and biodiversity policy. It is also what led him to make the provocative claim that what had long been presented as *the* foundational rupture in the moral bedrock of environmental concern—that is, the deep chasm separating anthropocentrism and nonanthropocentrism—was greatly exaggerated. Norton wrote instead that nonanthropocentric claims and his own pluralistic, liberal reading of anthropocentrism should, in practice, actually "converge" on the same set of environmental policy goals. While he had advanced earlier versions of this idea in several publications, in *Toward Unity* Norton provided a robust expression of the argument, which by now had taken on a rather grand designation: the "convergence hypothesis."

Although he described the convergence hypothesis (CH) as an "article of environmentalists' faith," Norton suggested that it was also an empirical hypothesis that could be falsified by subjecting it to experimental text.[30] Logically, the CH is a hypothetical conditional: It predicts, for example, that if individual A is a consistently weak anthropocentrist (i.e., he or she embraces the full range of human values in the environment—aesthetic, spiritual, recreational, educational, etc.—over time) and if individual B is a nonanthropocentrist who endorses a consistent notion of the intrinsic value of the

environment, then both A and B will end up supporting the same environmental policy positions. Norton predicted this convergence because he believed that, despite their different philosophical starting points, the weak anthropocentrist and the nonanthropocentrist embraced values that were ultimately dependent upon the long-term health or ecological sustainability of natural systems. The maintenance of multigenerational ecological processes, he argued, was the only way to protect ecological health, integrity, and biological diversity over the long run, whether these ends were justified by the comprehensive good of present and future generations of humans (the weak anthropocentrist position) or for the value that ecological health, integrity, biological diversity, and the like possesses in or for itself (the nonanthropocentrist position).

Norton briefly illustrated the CH in *Toward Unity* by referencing environmentalists' efforts to protect wetlands (as discussed above), a policy objective that he described as uniting advocates of a variety of ethical hues, including sportsmen and traditional conservation organizations (e.g., Ducks Unlimited, the National Wildlife Federation), as well as nature/wildlife appreciation societies like Audubon and Defenders of Wildlife.[31] As he wrote:

> Information about the crucial role of wetlands in absorbing nutrients and limiting algae growth, information showing the crucial role of submerged aquatic vegetation in supporting migrating waterfowl, and facts about the importance of wetlands for migratory patterns generally—all focus attention on the policy goal of wetlands protection. Ecology therefore directs environmental concern to the *systematic* level, focusing attention on protecting whole complexes of wetlands. National and local groups espousing a wide variety of values and worldviews are therefore focused on the importance of habitat protection, even while some are polishing their field glasses and others are cleaning their shotguns.[32]

While Norton's prediction of the policy convergence of nonanthropocentric and anthropocentric positions was clearly a bold move in an environmental ethics field gripped by the view that these moral positions were polar opposites and thus irreconcilable, Norton soon drew a further conclusion in his argument that ensured the CH would become a lightning rod for criticism in the field. Since he believed in the empirical validity of the convergence thesis and he also believed that there were a number of thorny and insurmountable philosophical and practical problems afflicting nonanthropocentric theory, Norton concluded that it was more effective to argue for environmental policy goals from the weak anthropocentric point of view, that is, from the standpoint of the maintenance of options for future generations.[33] Norton's convergence

thesis thus took a pragmatic and consequentialist line on value debates in environmental ethics. He favored those normative arguments—such as the claim that we should protect the environment for its ability to provide a harvest of cultural values for present and future generations—that he believed would most effectively lead to the resolution of actual environmental controversies. The CH's turn to naturalistic methods and empirical testing to resolve value disputes in environmental ethics, and Norton's work in the field more generally, have become fixtures in the pragmatist movement in environmental ethics and philosophy, an alternative set of approaches emphasizing value pluralism, experimentalism, and the search for policy consensus despite value differences.[34]

Norton's hypothesis with its implications for environmental ethical theorizing has generated a good deal of heat in the field since the early 1990s. In the years following the publication of *Toward Unity*, prominent nonanthropocentric philosophers such as J. Baird Callicott and Laura Westra came out strongly against Norton's convergence argument, declaring his prediction of the policy junction of weak anthropocentric and nonanthropocentric positions to be deeply suspect, or, in Callicott's words, "dead wrong." Along with Callicott and Westra, others of this persuasion insist that it makes a great practical difference whether one argues from anthropocentric or nonanthropocentric principles in real policy and conservation discussions. These "divergence" proponents in environmental ethics argue that humanist and nature-centered moral stances will ultimately lead to very different environmental policy agendas and practices.

Yet if Norton is right, the sharp value dualism—the anthropocentric-non anthropocentric cleavage—that has shaped the field of environmental ethics and much of the discourse of environmental advocacy has been for the most part unnecessary, and ethicists and environmental activists might do well to cease our internal squabbling over issues of moral purity and the misguided search for a final or universally "correct" expression of environmental values. We could then look toward building an integrative and pluralistic model of environmental ethics that places human and natural values within a more inclusive and commensurable value system, and devote more energy to the serious and more practical tasks of environmental policy analysis and political coalition building.

If, however, the "divergence" proponents are correct and it does indeed make a huge practical difference whether environmental policies are ultimately justified by nature-centered or human-centered principles and motivations, then maybe they are right to draw lines in the sand and hold fast to nonanthropocentric positions. Indeed, if the nonanthropocentrists are on target in the convergence debate, and the interests of humans and nature do not overlap in any appreciable sense, then environmental theorists and prac-

titioners would seem (at the very least) irresponsible not to acknowledge the moral distinctiveness and practical significance of intrinsic-value-of-nature claims in environmental policy and conservation contexts. More significant, and as many of Norton's critics have argued, the failure to make strong nonanthropocentric defenses of environmental policy goals may even result in a serious weakening of environmental protection as the moral authority of "nature first" environmentalism is surrendered for less-absolutist anthropocentric justifications grounded in the shifting sands of enlightened human interests. The philosophical and practical stakes, in other words, are high.

A Brief Tour of the Book

Nature in Common? deepens and expands this important debate over the policy implications of environmental ethical theory. It does so by bringing together an ideologically diverse group of environmental ethicists and policy scholars to engage Norton's convergence argument and the issues it raises about the foundations and practical mission of environmental ethics as a branch of applied philosophy. Its contributors are among the most distinguished and influential writers in environmental ethics and policy studies today; collectively, their work has shaped and continues to shape the larger environmental philosophy agenda.

Given such philosophical breadth, it is probably not surprising that the authors of this volume are not of one mind regarding Norton's thesis and the policy import of environmental ethical arguments more generally. Chapters 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, and 11 provide a spirited defense of the nonanthropocentric tradition in environmental ethics and its necessary place in environmental policy argument. Others, however, including Chapters 3, 5, 8, 10, 12, 13, and 14, argue that a broad, pluralistic anthropocentrism is a legitimate approach to environmental ethical theorizing and an effective (if not the most effective) rationale for sound environmental policy goals. And while all of the contributors to this volume engage the convergence idea in one manner or another, many authors also use the debate over Norton's thesis as a mechanism to explore a number of additional themes and issues in environmental ethics and policy studies, ensuring that the following discussion is both philosophically interesting and politically vital.

The chapters in Part II, "The Convergence Hypothesis Debate in Environmental Ethics: The First Wave," lay out the original debate over Norton's thesis that emerged in the mid-1990s. Chapters 2 and 3 contain an interchange between Brian Steverson and Norton on the convergence idea, particularly its application to species conservation policy and Norton's attempt to operationalize his arguments via a contextualist decision procedure. Steverson claims that Norton's contextualism dooms his convergence argument because it violates

the commitment of deep ecologists to preserve all species. For his part, Norton defends his convergence model and the contextualist method against Steverson's criticisms, elaborating in the process the logic and normative force of the "safe minimum standard" principle of conservation policy. The Steverson-Norton exchange was originally published in the journal *Environmental Ethics*.[35]

In Chapter 4 (also first published in *Environmental Ethics*), Laura Westra argues that both Norton's weak anthropocentrism and the convergence model are shaky foundations for environmental ethics and the shaping of environmental policy. Challenging in particular Norton's claim that there is little at stake in the debate between the anthropocentrists and the nonanthropocentrists for environmental policy choice, Westra argues that a strong nonanthropocentric holism (as expressed in her own "ethics of integrity") is required in order to fully protect natural systems and populations, and that intrinsic value claims are necessary to and effective in legislative and policy debates. In Chapter 5, Ben Minteer and Robert Manning respond to some of the assertions of Westra, Steverson, and others regarding Norton's theory by presenting the results of a social scientific study of the CH. Noting that many of his critics have not attempted to falsify what Norton originally intended to be a testable hypothesis about the actual policy implications of environmental ethics, Minteer and Manning argue that their inquiry into Vermont residents' environmental values and attitudes toward forest management policy provides empirical evidence for Norton's convergence claim. The chapter was originally published in *Ethics, Place and Environment*.

In Chapter 6, the final chapter in Part II, Mikael Stenmark keeps the debate over ethical convergence going by critically examining Norton's argument across a range of policy areas, including population policy, wilderness protection, and wildlife management. Stenmark suggests that, contrary to Norton's proposal, nonanthropocentrists (including both biocentrists and ecocentrists) and weak anthropocentrists do *not* share the same policy goals (both generally and in these specific domains) and that the value differences between nonanthropocentric and anthropocentric approaches are in fact highly relevant to the shaping and advocacy of general and specific policy agendas of environmental ethicists. Stenmark's chapter was originally published in *Environmental Ethics*.

Whereas Part II assembles important arguments in the first wave of the convergence-divergence debate in environmental ethics, Part III, "Expanding the Discussion: The Convergence Hypothesis Debate Today," brings together a new set of chapters written expressly for this volume. Authors in this section were tasked with exploring the contemporary relevance of Norton's thesis—including the questions it continues to raise for the discourse of environmental ethics as well as its status as normative policy argument.

In Chapter 7, Holmes Rolston, one of the founding figures of academic environmental ethics, argues that Norton's reformed anthropocentrism and the CH actually reflect the extent to which weak anthropocentrists—and Norton in particular—are moving closer to the nonanthropocentric position. The biocentrists and ecocentrists, according to Rolston, are the ones enlightening the moral sensibilities of the anthropocentrists, and Norton's argument for convergence expresses (unconsciously, Rolston believes) the pull of the nonanthropocentric worldview. Rolston suggests that there is a convergence of values, and not just policy, taking place under the surface in Norton's work.

Douglas MacLean takes a different approach to the debate over environmental value theory and environmental policy, focusing in Chapter 8 on the linkages between environmental and intergenerational ethics. Specifically, MacLean identifies several issues of normative concern within economists' approach to intertemporal environmental valuation. In doing so, he provides one possible elaboration of the long-sighted anthropocentrism that stands as a counterpoint to nonanthropocentric ethics. He also calls for more caution among philosophers in making arguments about policy based on general metaphysical views. Even though MacLean is deeply critical of the reliance on narrow economic reasoning in environmental decision making, he concludes his chapter by suggesting that intrinsic-value-of-nature arguments do not add much to the process of coming up with good reasons to protect the environment either today or in the future.

This conclusion is not shared by J. Baird Callicott, an ardent defender of intrinsic-value-in-nature arguments and their role in justifying environmental policy. In Chapter 9, Callicott argues that a careful interpretation of the ethical dimensions of legal decisions involving the ESA since its passage in 1973 effectively "falsifies" Norton's convergence hypothesis. According to Callicott, while the ESA does not explicitly reference nonanthropocentric values, its citizen suit provision confers "implicit" intrinsic value and operational rights on listed threatened and endangered species. Had the Act only accommodated anthropocentric reasoning, Callicott argues, it would be a different policy than the one we currently have. Therefore, he concludes, Norton's hypothesis is not valid: Intrinsic value of nature arguments *do* make a practical difference in environmental policy formulation and environmental decision making.

In Chapter 10, Paul B. Thompson focuses on how the CH has led Norton toward a more explicit philosophical pragmatism in the years following the publication of *Toward Unity*. Thompson considers the ways in which Norton's engagement with the ideas of Dewey, Peirce, and the rest of the pragmatist thinkers shaped his subsequent embrace of adaptive management and overall approach to environmental philosophy since the early 1990s. Thompson then builds a convergence argument of his own by tracing some of the connections between pragmatism and agrarian thought, illustrating how this general

philosophical orientation influenced land-use policy via the administrations of Thomas Jefferson and Theodore Roosevelt. Contrary to Thompson, Eric Katz (Chapter 11) argues that the CH departs from pragmatism in its rendering of philosophical ideas as meaningless in the face of common policy goals posited to exist among environmentalists. Katz also believes that the convergence thesis is refuted by the case of ecological restoration policy. Only anthropocentrists, he argues, will support restoration efforts; nonanthropocentrists will condemn them because restoration only creates "artifacts"; that is, landscapes diminished by the imposition of human intention and technology (and, more broadly, culture) on natural systems.

Andrew Light (Chapter 12) provides another spin on the relationship between pragmatism and Norton's convergence argument, suggesting that the latter has an important role to play in the development of environmental ethics into, as Light puts it, a more "public environmental philosophy" able to translate the disparate and often arcane moral languages of philosophers into a lexicon more hospitable to the justification of shared public policy goals. Light suggests that the CH is most powerful when conceived as a "thin" or methodologically pragmatic tool for environmental coalition building and problem solving, and he counsels against tethering it and the wider pragmatist approach in environmental ethics to any particular substantive arguments made by Peirce, Dewey, and the other "historical pragmatists."

Although Chapters 1–12 are certainly not written from the philosopher's mountaintop inasmuch as they are concerned with engaging practical implications of environmental ethics for policy argument, the final two chapters in Part III come directly from the policy trenches. The authors are not environmental philosophers, but rather environmental law and policy scholars with extensive experience and expertise in environmental policy and politics. In Chapter 13, Donald Brown reflects on the failure of environmental ethics to make inroads into environmental policy making, suggesting that this is due in part to the abstract nature of much environmental ethical analysis—especially its neglect of the economic, scientific, and legal issues that are contested in particular policy disputes. Brown argues for a more applied environmental ethics that can address these concerns and offers the case of the ethical evaluation of climate change policy as an illustration of the potential of concrete ethical analysis in environmental decision making. He concludes that Norton's convergence thesis is "more frequently right than wrong" in the climate policy example, though Brown emphasizes that the primary ethical conflict there is not anthropocentrism versus nonanthropocentrism, but rather tensions between anthropocentric ethical principles (e.g., rights-based and utility-based ethical considerations).

Science policy scholar Daniel Sarewitz makes a similar point in his "open letter" to Norton in Chapter 14. Arguing that nonanthropocentric rationales

in environmental policy are politically impotent, Sarewitz suggests that, rather than devoting so much energy to the anthropocentric-nonanthropocentric dispute, we should acknowledge that the business of environmental policy making is more about the political struggle between various human interests; for example, aesthetic and cultural values of nature versus survival-based welfare values. The real challenge for normative convergence in environmental policy, Sarewitz believes, concerns the political task of aligning the major anthropocentric interests in resource conservation and biodiversity protection so that these outcomes are achieved, not building policy bridges with the nonanthropocentrists. It is an important point, especially given that environmental philosophers have strangely devoted comparatively little attention to understanding the moral and political motivations of those pressing anti-environmental agendas.[36]

In the concluding chapter of this book, "Convergence and Divergence: The Convergence Hypothesis Twenty Years Later," Bryan Norton replies to many of the criticisms raised in the preceding chapters while also providing deeper historical and intellectual context for his convergence argument. Although Norton hopes that the emergence of a less-dualistic form of environmentalism will ultimately reduce the need for the CH (which is premised on the value dualisms of environmentalists), he continues to think that it will remain a useful device for directing attention to areas of common ground and policy action and away from divisive and irresolvable philosophical contests over moral foundations and ideological purity in environmentalism.

Nature in Common? Environmental Ethics and the Contested Foundations of Environmental Policy provides a wide-ranging and philosophically balanced treatment of the dispute over the moral foundations of environmental ethics and the role of anthropocentric and nonanthropocentric values in shaping and supporting the environmental policy agenda. Although we can expect the debate over the practical consequences of environmental ethics, and Norton's convergence hypothesis in particular, to continue, the ideas and arguments in the following pages sharpen and expand our understanding of these vital issues. The chapters collected in this volume also signal, perhaps, the rise of a more engaged model of philosophical inquiry in environmental ethics, a particularly timely development given the growing concern that the field has not fulfilled its potential as a normative discourse for environmental policy making.[37] Hopefully, then, this book will encourage environmental philosophers to devote more serious attention to the complex intersection of environmental values and policy outcomes, a line of inquiry that can only render the concepts and arguments of environmental ethics more legible and relevant to intelligent environmental decision making.