

## Chapter-V

### Conclusion

In the previous chapters, as we have discussed, the concept about intrinsic value and its ascription to nature that has been acknowledged from normative perspectives, leads us to a situation where multiple options have been queued for further examination- both in western and Indian traditions. However, our limitation, when perused to investigate the debates and dimensions of intrinsic value in nature, is only to find out these multiple options from where more research works may be undertaken. These multifaceted outcomes will have a positive imprint and has notable impact in the philosophical arena especially in environmental ethical theories.

The debates began with the theoretical analysis of the terminology starting from G. E. Moore. We have already discussed how philosophers try to clarify the concept of intrinsic value- from consequentialists' perception and deontologists' perception as well. Being a consequentialist, as already been discussed, Moore's argument is to distinguish "good" from "duties" and "right" and "duties" and "right" are reducible to "good" – to a higher value which has been considered as intrinsic value. Furthermore, we have also examined Moore's argument that "duties" and moral rules are not direct matter of intuition rather they are objects of empirical investigation such that intuition does not reveal rightness and badness of specific actions, it only reveals what is good in themselves or as *ends to be perused*. The conception of good as intrinsic, therefore, is misunderstood such as the kind of impression that good is having some sense of right or wrong or some sense of aesthetic feeling like beauty or ugly which are subjective in nature. When Moore talks about the sense of intrinsic value he makes it clear that intrinsic nature is different from intrinsic properties and that intrinsic nature is objective. Moore's status regarding the intrinsic nature of a thing is ontological, that intrinsic value is trans-worldly valid and he is handling the problem directly without much emphasis on epistemic and linguistic antiquity. However, there are varieties of senses of the

conception of intrinsic value as Neill has introduced.<sup>111</sup> These senses of intrinsic value are used interchangeably and because of this, environmental ethics suffer from a conflation from these varieties of senses. We will concern here only the sense of intrinsic value that means having a sort of intrinsic properties. This means that value is used to refer to the value of an object which has merely because of its intrinsic properties. This concept is developed by G. E. Moore. The question about non-relational properties of intrinsic value may be undertaken in two different ways i.e. (i) the non-relational properties of an object are those that continue to exist regardless of the existence or non-existence of other objects. This view is considered as a concept of weak interpretation. (ii) The non-relational properties are those that can be characterized without reference to other objects and this is a concept of strong interpretation. Without humans the world might have some, but only insignificant value and hence Moore falls under the category of weak interpretation.<sup>112</sup> Again, to be ‘objective’ does not mean not subjective, in fact, people tend to argue for objectivity from the intrinsic nature, of those properties. Intrinsic nature, the ‘*internality*’ as Moore coined, is something unique what distinguishes it from intrinsic properties, however, what is that something need to be elaborated to clarify the conception of intrinsic value in which Moore perhaps failed. When we talk about the intrinsic properties belonging to an object, we talk about the instrumental value of the object and this is significantly different from the intrinsic nature.

In the line of Moore, with certain differences, Chisholm defined intrinsic value in terms of *qualification* that makes value intrinsic. The bearers of intrinsic value, as Chisholm holds, are states of affairs, which qualify something as intrinsic. The state of affairs reflects all the good and evil that there is in the possible world. To say, *p* is intrinsically good is to say that *p*'s goodness does not require that there be some other good state of affair which neither includes *p* nor is included within *p*. Chisholm holds that the state of affairs is not “intrinsic nature” or “intrinsic properties”, it is the possible world in which “intrinsic value states” reflect. What makes Chisholm treatment different from Moore is that 1) intrinsic value is relative to

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<sup>111</sup> Neill, O' John,(1992), The Varieties of Intrinsic Value; The Monist, Vol. 75, No. 2; Oxford University Press,p. 119-137

<sup>112</sup>Moore, G. E,(1903), Principia Ethica, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p 28.

a particular world and he restricts intrinsic value to the limits of possible world only  
 2) intrinsic value reflects all good and evil in a possible world. So sum total of all good and evil are manifested in the *intrinsic value states* not in the transcendental world.

To examine the traditional approaches towards intrinsic value, as discussed so far, Lemos, in clarifying the concept of intrinsic value, criticizes that both Moore and Chisholm adopt an “isolation approach”<sup>113</sup>, even though they differ in some vital issues. Chisholm approach may be called as “intentionally isolationist” because it stresses the intentional attitude (*ethically fitting attitude of love, hate and preferability*) of considering and preparing state of affairs as such, in isolation from the inspection and ranking of other, wider states of affairs. We may contrast this form of isolation approach with what we may call “deontological isolation”<sup>114</sup>. Along with W. D. Ross, Moore suggests that “by calling a thing intrinsically good we mean that it would be good even if nothing else existed.”<sup>115</sup> Lemos rejects this type of isolationism as adopted by Moore because there are certain sorts of things that are intrinsically good but simply could not be the only thing that exists. For example, Dhruvad is happy and that is intrinsically good. If there are certain abstract entities such as numbers or properties or states of affairs that necessarily exist, it would be impossible for Dhruvad’s being happy to be the only thing that exists. More important, though, is the fact that Dhruvad’s being happy could not exist without Dhruvad’s existence. At the same time it may be that Dhruvad’s having certain pleasures and certain desires satisfied and his having certain beliefs to the effect that he had those pleasures and that his desires were satisfied. It is to be noted, in spite of different approaches, that both Chisholm and Moore hold that if a thing has certain intrinsic value, then it must have that value whenever it occurs. As such Moore’s and Chisholm’s definitions of intrinsic value imply the thesis of universality. It would be penetrating to say that the definitions of intrinsic value as Moore and Chisholm have adopted, have the thesis of universality in terms of logical explication. If P’s being intrinsically better than Q is a

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<sup>113</sup>Lemos, Noah M,(1994), *Intrinsic Value: Concept and Warrant*, DePauw University , Cambridge university press, P. 10

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, p. 10

<sup>115</sup> Moore, G. E, (1930), *Ethics*, p. 38; W. D. Ross, *The Right and the Good* ( Oxford University Press), p.73

matter of P and Q necessarily such that the inspection of both requires one to prefer P to Q, then P would be intrinsically better than Q whenever P and Q occur. Hence for both Dhruvad's being pleased is intrinsically better than Angshruta's being suffering, and the former will be always better than the latter whenever the two occur. This thesis of universality, however, has been challenged in many ways and we will consider this in the latter part of this chapter. Lemos, therefore, considers that intrinsic goodness and badness, and other related value concepts are explicated in terms of the notion of "ethical requirement."<sup>116</sup> For him we can explicate intrinsic goodness and intrinsic badness, and other related value concepts, in terms of such concepts "being intrinsically worthy of love" and "being intrinsically worthy of hate." So being intrinsically good may be understood in terms of its being correct or fitting to love or like that thing in and so far itself for its own sake. It means, if a fact is intrinsically good, then the scrutiny of just that obtaining state of affairs requires that one not hate it in and for itself. To say that something is to be intrinsically good or intrinsically bad requires ethical attitudes like love, hate or preference. This explication leads Lemosto defend Chisholm's definition of intrinsic value and also defends that facts or states of affairs are the bearers of intrinsic value and at the same time rejects Moore's intrinsic properties. For Lemos, Moore's explication is such that there are intrinsic properties but do not exemplified in the possible world. For example "x is a property" and "it is possible that there is something that exemplifies x." This means that there are no properties that cannot be exemplified. Thus, although there is a property of being round and square, there is no property of being round and square together. However, there are also properties which can be the objects of certain intentional attitudes, which can be conceived, considered and attributed. There are also states of affairs ,that exists but do not obtain, there are states of affairs that necessarily obtain and that necessarily do not obtain, there are states of affairs that is impossible, there is fact as a state of affairs that obtains and lastly there are states of affairs that can be the intentional attitudes.

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<sup>116</sup>Lemos, Noah M,(1994), *Intrinsic Value: Concept and Warrant*, DePauw University , Cambridge university press, P. 12

To speak on Lemos reasonably, we find a serious problem when we consider intrinsic goodness or badness in terms of “ethically fitting” or “correct emotion.” Lemos suggests that intrinsic value, in the sense of something being valuable in and of itself, be explicated in terms of ethically “fitting” or “required” emotional attitudes of love, hate and preference. Lemos has taken this concept of intrinsic value from Brentano, Broad, Ewing and Chisholm. But a question arises, what is it about the “ethical fittingness” of love, hate or preference that makes something as intrinsic? While we may reasonably grant that emotional attitudes of love, hate and preference enable us to focus upon the intrinsic, it does not demonstrate us why intrinsically valuable “in and of itself”, is valuable. What makes that intrinsically valuable, valuable? It seems that we are given the tools to distill the intrinsically valuable from the instrumentally valuable from a set items that we know to have value, but we are left without the way to differentiate, from a group of items whose value status is unknown, which, if any, are intrinsically valuable. If something is intrinsically valuable in the sense of being valuable “in and of itself”, then by its very nature, its value cannot be explicated by reference to any relationship, let alone any attitudinal relationships- that it may have with persons. Central to the notion of something being intrinsically valuable “in and of itself” is that its value is thoroughly independent of any personal connections. Ethically fittingness explication leads us to a situation where we have only ordinary understanding of intrinsic value without making any difference it from instrumental value. To make it clear let’s refer again to instrumental value that we have discussed in the second chapter. We characterize instrumental value as that value an object has in virtue of its service to us. In a nutshell, an object has positive value or good, if it serves what we desire, and has negative value, or is bad, if it thwarts our desire. It is the service of the object that makes it valuable. This is why we have no difficulty of conceiving intrinsic value, different from instrumental value, that is, value as an end- as valuable, for it is simply that which satisfies or frustrates our desire for nothing other than itself. It is also unlikely that Emotivists’ conception of intrinsic value can be accepted as it inducts only human beings having it and also being subjective. In the same way, objectivists’ position is also questionable if it accepted such that evaluative properties of objects

are real properties of objects - evaluative properties exist independently of the evaluations of evaluators (humans). In this case, perhaps, Neill perception is clear and sound if embodied in the strong sense of intrinsic value i.e. the evaluative properties of objects can be characterized without reference to evaluating agents. Or we can say a real property is that which can be characterized without reference to the experiences of an individual. As per Neill analysis Moore's sense of intrinsic value cannot attribute intrinsic value to wilderness, because it commits a fallacy of equivocation. Neill's contention is strong in the when he states that an emotivist can express his joyous mood in saying "Wilderness exist after the extinction of human species". By this way, in fact, subjectivism can establish non-anthropocentrism by attributing intrinsic value to nature.

Jonathan O'Neill has isolated three distinct definitions of intrinsic value (O'Neill, 1992) while Dale Jamieson has isolated four in chapter three of his book "Ethics and the Environment: An Introduction" (Jamieson, 2008). For the purposes of this dissertation, however, I will address the three varieties of intrinsic value discussed by Sandler<sup>117</sup>. In formulating an environmental ethical theory one must be sensitive to these distinctions and be prepared to apply their preferred definition consistently. O'Neill identifies three senses of intrinsic value which are different from Sandler's. They are (1) "non-instrumental value", (2) "non-relational (Moorean) value" and (3) "objective value". O'Neill's second sense of intrinsic value, non-relational (Moorean) value defines intrinsic value as, value an object has solely in virtue of its 'intrinsic properties'. G.E. Moore believed that intrinsic properties were non-relational. (see O'Neill, 1992, p. 123). These properties come from the intrinsic nature of the object in question. The link between the thing's intrinsic value and its intrinsic property (ies) is immediate and does not depend on any relations between that entity and other things outside of it. Such relations might be, for example, those between the psychological states of valuers and the thing being valued. That is, this value can be characterized without reference to other objects and any of their states.

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<sup>117</sup>Sandler, Ronald, (2012), "Intrinsic Value, Ecology, and Conservation", *Nature Education Knowledge*, 3: p.4.

Being the turning point of environmental ethics, the debates between anthropocentrism and non-anthropocentrism is more crucial which dilutes the subjective-objective dichotomy. These debates are basically debates of Kantian and Moorean approaches towards environment, debates between *means* and *ends*. These tend us to whether nature should be preserved for *its own sake* or whether it is a pseudoscientific approach if they are applied to natural phenomena. The debates also enlarge from anthropogenic to biocentric or ecocentric forms. But so far as intrinsic value is concerned, even though they have their own status, all differ ontologically as well as epistemologically. Moore's argument is sound enough ontologically but without epistemic concern. Most of the philosophers who fall under biocentric and ecocentric domain maintain an egalitarian approach, adhering that nature needs to attribute intrinsic value to the flourishing of life in all its richness and complexity, having an obligation to protect nonhuman, having engagement with and care for nonhuman and others, and sometimes even to go beyond and grant universal moral consideration. Except to grant universal moral consideration, remaining views are more or less accepted here and there, universal moral consideration may create practical challenges. If we turn into the epistemic concern then perhaps Partridge argument is worthy when he says that justification of intrinsic worth of wilderness may be of the experiences of wilderness. When the debates about anthropocentrism and non-anthropocentrism are gearing up, it has been stated that the central point of this bifurcation is because of the subjective/objective concern of intrinsic value. Anthropocentrism advocates subjective as well objective approaches and non-anthropocentrism advocates objective approaches. Any theory ascribing intrinsic value makes two claims as has been discussed so far i.e. (i) Nature is valuable because of what it is, not because of its relation to us. (ii) The value of nature is objective in the sense that it is not a matter of individual taste or personal preference.

To answer the question about epistemic concerns let us look into an epistemological aspect related to the objectivity of intrinsic value. When we say "how things are", we pursue a kind of objectivity and hereby tread on controversial

philosophical ground. There are three forms of realism which dwells on this issue.<sup>118</sup> The Moderate Realism admits that something exists objectively, that is, logically and causally independent of someone's conceiving that thing. The Ordinary Realism advocates that the token of most ordinary psychological and physical types exist objectively. And the Scientific Realism proposes that the tokens of most scientific types exist objectively. Our concern in this context is the logical and causal independence of someone's conceiving a particular thing. This argument can help us in establishing that intrinsic value is objective without depending logically and causally on someone's conceiving of. To put bluntly about objectivity of intrinsic value, let us just talk of how that value is independently of what any conceiver takes to be. Some opponents of talk of objectivity of intrinsic value have overlooked an important distinction between (i) the conceiving dependence of one's conceiving of something, and (ii) the conceiving dependence of what one's conceiving represents. For example one's conceiving that 'X is wet' plainly represents 'X' is wet. It follows that one's conceiving of 'X is wet' depends on conceiving, but it does not follow that 'X is wet' depends on someone's conceiving. The same is applied in case of objectivity of intrinsic value. Some philosophers have questioned the intelligibility of any notion of objectivity of intrinsic value relying on a concept "how intrinsic value really is" or "how intrinsic value is independently conceived of". This group of philosophers often speaks on that the sterility of attempts to give sense to phrases like 'the world in itself' is completely unspecified and unspecifiable. For them conceiving existence of independent intrinsic value makes no sense. But the objectivity of intrinsic value is more than conceiving of. The epistemologists' concern basically is not the truth of objectivity of intrinsic value rather the kind of epistemic support available for it.

Most of our fundamental beliefs about intrinsic value are in direct conflict with the anticipated changes in environment/nature. This, in fact, is a big challenge in any discussion on intrinsic value. Thus, the debates on the concept and warrant of intrinsic value go right from the consequentialists' form to the deontologists'

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<sup>118</sup>Moser, K Paul; (1999), Realism, Objectivity, Skepticism, *The Blackwell Guide to Epistemology*; Edited, Greco, J and Sora, E; Blackwell Publishers Inc, Malden, Massachusetts, p.71

structure that leads to the root of our basic thinking. In Environmental ethics ethicists have tendency to substitute our anthropocentric thinking with ecocentric thinking. Anthropocentric philosophy considers everything from the point of view of mankind, and the absolute right to pursue his fortune as he sees fit. The egocentric person thinks only of himself in a social context as opposed to an ecocentric philosophy, which advocates respect for all nature and all creatures' basic rights. This issue is at the very heart of philosophy and religious beliefs. European philosophy and Christianity is founded on anthropocentric concepts. However, philosophically speaking this is the anthropocentric thinking which was the driving force of the approach to life. There was little concern for nature and other creatures as equal partners. This is seconded in European philosophy by our Greek heritage. This started with the sophistic thinking, which took its starting point in the human being and his ability to think as opposed to a competing concept of the human being in an all-embracing cosmos. From this developed the roots of logic and scientific thinking. In this regard, environmentalists in particular are antagonistic to Descartes, for his statement: "Cogito ergo sum". Everything starts with man and his ability to think. All values, all concepts are derived from man. It is thought provoking that the most basic and scientifically fundamental considerations of the renaissance were devoted to something as "useless" as astronomy. Galileo Galilei proved that the earth circled the sun and not the other way around and was condemned by the Church. He introduced experiments and applied mathematics, further developed by Isaac Newton, Pierre de Fermat, G. W. Leibniz and many others to follow. Science became one of the pillars in European philosophy and formed the basis for the industrial revolution of the last century. In this context, the result was the western concept to conquer the world-not only the world in a geographical sense, but also in the sense of mastering the universe. Man can shape his own destiny without constraints. This anthropocentric attitude is quite understandable in view of what has been achieved. But that becomes one sided doctrine and has equally (rather more strongly) been criticized. The antipode to anthropocentric thinking is frequently associated with philosophers like Arne Neass, Homes Rolstom III and many others which have already discussed in chapter three. In Indian philosophy, man is intermingled with nature and must live in

harmony with it. The spirits are the nature in all forms. However, in both the theories it is assumed that environmental ethics is grounded by intrinsic value.

Now the prime question of importance in environmental ethics is whether intrinsic value can be ascribed beyond sentient beings that too in equal degree? In this context what I try to forward the idea of Peter Singer about the moral disagreement referring to the kinds of beings ought to be considered in our moral deliberations. To extent an ethic beyond sentient beings is a difficult task. Sentient creatures have wants and desires. In reaching moral decisions affecting sentient creatures, we can attempt to add up the different actions on all the sentient creatures affected by the alternative actions open to us. This will provide us at least some guidelines to take a moral decision like what might be the right thing to do. But there is nothing that corresponds to what it is like to be a tree dying because its roots have been flooded. Once we abandon the interests of the sentient creatures as our source of value, where do we find value? What is good or bad for non-sentient creatures, and why does it matter? Therefore, limiting ourselves only to living things is not too difficult to answer.

Some may argue, however, that a person can still believe that they have moral obligations to protect the environment for anthropocentrically-oriented utilitarian reasons. But many environmentalists think that utilitarian reasons of that kind are not enough of a warrant for real moral obligations to protect the environment. For instance, a biocentrist thinks that *all* living organisms are due moral consideration. But since at least some organisms do not appear to have any substantial utilitarian value for human beings, most biocentrists think that anthropocentric utilitarian concerns aren't enough of a warrant for the protection of all of life either. However, should it turn out that *all* living organisms have at least some utilitarian value; an instrumentalist could claim that we would have an obligation to protect them as one would protect a useful instrument. Under those conditions a person could embrace an instrumentalist take on value and also be a biocentrist.

Arguments have also been produced that there is something "flourishing as good in itself", we may refer to Albert Schweitzer and Paul Taylor's 'reverence of life' and 'pursuing its own good in its own unique way' respectively. To defend both

Schweitzer and Taylor is difficult in the sense that rather arguing literally, they use metaphorical language. It seems, therefore, that the way they arguing is spiritual than epistemic. It is, of course possible to give a physical explanation of what is happening about tree, rivers etc. in absence of their consciousness and we may have respect towards wilderness or the ecosystem but at the same time it is also argued that they will not be equally treated having value as such sentient beings have.

To absorb the debates whether intrinsic value in nature depends on human's perspective or it is independent of human judgment, ethicists have diverse opinions as has been discussed so far. Broadly speaking non-anthropocentrism has two basic forms i.e. ecocentrism and biocentricism. These two forms focus many questions of environmental issues. Non-anthropocentrism in ethics is basically the claim that there are things beside human beings and their states such as living organisms, species, or ecosystems that have intrinsic value.

There are two basic positions within biocentrism, (1) Biocentric individualism and (2) Biocentric Holism. Biocentric individualism claims that *individual living organisms* are directly morally considerable. Biocentric holism, on the other hand, claims that groups of individual organisms, most notably *species*, are the objects of direct moral consideration. A species is a collective unit of individual living organisms that typically are reproductively isolated.<sup>119</sup>

A biocentrist could embrace individualism, holism or both. An ecocentrist claims that entities above and beyond mere individual biological organisms and species have value. For the ecocentrist, the domain of value should encompass ecosystems, communities, and habitats, etc. A community is an association of different species of individual organisms that usually inhabit a common location or habitat. A habitat includes both biotic *and* abiotic factors which vary on the basis of things like soil type, vegetation type, salinity, altitude, availability of water, climate, temperature, etc. Another somewhat perplexing aspect of the distinction between biocentrism and ecocentrism lies in differences over what it means for something to be "alive". For many ecocentrists the land, habitats and ecosystems themselves simply

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<sup>119</sup>B.G.Norton *The Preservation of Species: The Value of Biological Diversity*, 1986, Princeton University Press.

are alive just as much as individual organisms are. This claim, however, is quite controversial and not universally accepted.

Given that specific habitats are often home to specific organisms, most biocentrists have an interest in habitat protection as well. They do not see biological interests as being all that separate from ecological or ecosystem-level interests.<sup>120</sup> Respect for the organism means respecting its habitat and surroundings. Also, the dividing line between biocentrism and ecocentrism is not precisely clear cut. An individual animal can also serve as a host to a number of other species that live either in it or on it. So, is the animal in question an ecosystem? Or is it a single biological organism?<sup>121</sup> A deep ecologist stress human's place in an interconnected web of ecological relations and of human's oneness with nature.<sup>122</sup> Gaia theorists think that the Earth itself is one living organism with perhaps its own consciousness and one of the key figures in Gaia theory is James Lovelock.<sup>123</sup>

Environmentalists are concerned with what *kind* of value that living organisms, species, and ecosystems possess. Many of them maintain that the kind of value they have is *intrinsic*. Biocentrists, for example believe that life has intrinsic value while many ecocentrists believe that ecosystems have such value. Some may even go so far as to claim that the universe as a whole is an object of value.<sup>124</sup> Also, Mark Lupisella, a NASA scientist, has argued that the cosmocentric perspective might also serve us well in the endeavor to communicate with extraterrestrial life forms. Both humans and extraterrestrials could communicate over something they value in common, namely our "ultimate shared cosmic origins".<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>120</sup>To that end see, Philip Carafo's discussion of the connection between the preservation of species and preservation of habitat or communities in "For a Grounded Conception of Wilderness and More Wilderness on the Ground", *Ethics and the Environment*, 2001, 6:1-17

<sup>121</sup>For this view see Aldo Leopold's "The Land Ethic" in *A Sand County Almanac*. Deep ecologists such as Arne Naess and George Sessions also hold this view.

<sup>122</sup>The term "Deep Ecology" was first coined by Arne Naess (1973) in "The Shallow and the Deep Ecology Movement", *Inquiry*, 16:95-100.

<sup>123</sup> For an interesting discussion on the connection between Gaia theory and environmental ethics see Anthony Weston's (1987) "Forms of Gaian Ethics", *Environmental Ethics*, 9:217-230.

<sup>124</sup> Frank Lunger defends the intrinsic moral value of the cosmos in "Anthropocentrism vs. Cosmocentrism: Groping Towards a Paradigm Shift", *The Newsletter of the Philosophical Discussion Group of British Mensa*, 2000, 102, (<http://theotodman.com/c10208.htm>).

<sup>125</sup>See M.L. Lupisella, "Cosmocentrism and the Active Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence", *Astrobiology Science Conference*, 2010.

One of the motivating reasons for the biocentrist's endorsement of the claim that living organisms have intrinsic value is that they feel that a proper attitude of respect for nature should move us away from construing things such as non-human living organisms as being only instrumentally valuable for human purposes. Thinking that nature has such value also encourages movement away from radically subjectivist notions of what has value ("I know that *you* think that butterflies are non-instrumentally valuable, but that's just your opinion from your perspective!"). Embracing nature's intrinsic value moves us towards an attitude of evaluation that considers nature and the objects found in nature as morally valuable regardless of how useful or instrumental they might be for us and regardless of whether they happens to be valued merely on the basis some individual's personal opinion. Intrinsic value is usually put in contrast with either radically subjective views of value or strictly instrumentalist value for human beings. Environmentalists think that we should move away from thinking that the natural world only has these kinds of value. First, environmentalists think that if we continue to believe that nonhumans, species or ecosystems only have instrumental value then we will not have the proper attitude about the environment that we should. Instead of regarding nature as a mere collection of useful instruments, we should regard it as being good in itself. For example, the biocentrist thinks that *all* organisms are valuable, not just the ones that happen to be useful to *Homo sapiens*. They think that a person who believes that all nonhuman moral value is merely instrumental doesn't really have any good reason (apart from those instrumental values themselves) to adequately respect living things that aren't useful for us.

Second, many environmentalists want to avoid radically subjective views about the value of the natural world. They think that if environmental value should turn out to be just a matter of personal preference or opinion, then there wouldn't be any objectively right or wrong answer as to what our moral obligations are towards nature. For instance, should a person choose to regard the red-cockaded woodpecker to be without moral value (as a result of her own personal taste) then that person isn't necessarily committing any moral oversight by having that preference or of thinking

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that she had no moral obligations toward that species or an individual of that species. Consequently such a person's ethical view cannot be criticized as inadequate. Her view of the moral status of the bird is simply different from, but not inferior to, the biocentrist's view. And since no one preference is inherently better than any other, a preference for non-biocentrism isn't necessarily wrong or inferior to biocentrism according to this type of subjectivism. Holmes Rolston III, a significant contributor to environmental ethics, has argued that this kind of subjectivity in environmental ethics must be challenged. He writes, "With the environmental turn, so surprising and pressing in the final quarter of our century, [this] subjectivism in values needs review..."<sup>126</sup> Rolston is wary about the prospect that subjectivism may hold for an environmental ethic. He believes "value is (in part) provided objectively in nature". But he also holds that "value arises only as a product of subjective experience, albeit relationally in nature..."<sup>127</sup> Rolston claims that the objective properties in nature bring about in a perceiver the (admittedly) subjective experience of morally valuing the thing perceived. While some environmental philosophers may want to claim that this view is ultimately a form of value subjectivism, Rolston maintains that it can still avoid a subjectivist meta-ethic.

Some may argue, however, that a person can still believe that they have moral obligations to protect the environment for anthropocentrically-oriented utilitarian reasons. But many environmentalists think that utilitarian reasons of that kind are not enough of a warrant for real moral obligations to protect the environment. For instance, a biocentrist thinks that *all* living organisms are due moral consideration. But since at least some organisms do not appear to have any substantial utilitarian value for human beings, most biocentrists think that anthropocentric utilitarian concerns aren't enough of a warrant for the protection of all of life either. However, should it turn out that *all* living organisms have at least some utilitarian value, an instrumentalist could claim that we would have an obligation to protect them as one would protect a useful instrument. Under those conditions a person could embrace an instrumentalist take on value and also be a biocentrism.

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<sup>126</sup>Rolston, Holmes III (1982). "Are Values in Nature Subjective or Objective?" *Environmental Ethics*, 4: 125-151, p. 126.

<sup>127</sup>Ibid, p. 144).