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NEITHER USE NOR ORNAMENT:
a consumers' guide to Care

by

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Abstract

Whether an object has value 'in itself' or merely as a means to some end, a question can be raised about the way in which it is valued. I introduce a category of 'cherishing' which focuses attention on the activity of valuing and the history of valuing. Examination of the interactions between subject and object, and the way both are changed in the process of coming to value, supports and elucidates the phenomenological claim that to distinguish for separate scrutiny the value of an object and the interests of a subject involves an abstraction from the 'lived-world'. By focusing attention upon this lived-world, the essential inter-relatedness of subject and object, we may come to appreciate our environment better, to cherish it and restore to our treatment of it what Heidegger called 'Care'.

Introduction

There has been much debate about whether the environment has intrinsic or instrumental value, value in itself or value as a means to our, and possibly other creatures', ends. There is further debate about whether a proper respect for the environment requires that we recognise that it has intrinsic value or worth. There is also debate on the meta-level about whether the intrinsic value of something depends upon, or is independent of, our interests. Those debates are not ones with which I shall engage.

What I shall look at is human centred values. There are commonly thought to be two kinds of these: instrumental and non-instrumental. Things with instrumental value include consumables, raw materials and, literally, instruments, equipment, whether natural or artifactual. Such things serve as means to our ends, they serve our purposes, we use them to satisfy our wants or needs. This class includes luxuries of the kind we consume or use, such as quail's eggs or dish-washers which we consume or use but do not need. Things with non-instrumental value are things in which we have an interest, but which we do not use. We rather enjoy having them around, we contemplate them, they have value for us because of the way they are, the specific properties they have, we value them 'for themselves'.

If an object has instrumental value, its value does not depend upon its specific categorical properties but rather upon its disposition or capacity to fulfil a function or serve a purpose. Anything which serves the purpose equally well will have the same value, can replace the original without loss of value. So, if the instrumental value of the oak tree is to provide shelter from the rain, then a bus shelter may

serve equally well, different though its actual properties are. Similarly, the heavy, blunt weapon or the light hand gun, arsenic or a landmine, different though they are in themselves, may serve equally well as instruments of death.

The crucial feature of non-instrumental value, in contrast, is that the object has value because of the specific properties it has. A change to those properties would affect, or at least require a re-assessment of, its value. To value an oak tree for what it is or to recognise its non-instrumental value is to recognise that replacement by a horse chestnut or a bus shelter, would involve a loss of value, though it might, if the replacement had value, also involve a gain.

Instrumental value, then, is a disposition. It depends upon the thing's actual properties, but alternatives are possible. Non-instrumental value, in contrast, depends more closely on the actual properties of the thing. It follows from this, and we can take this as a criterion of instrumental value that something with only this sort of value is, in principle, replaceable, without loss of value, by a qualitatively different thing. The criterion of non-instrumental value, in contrast, is that the object with such value is not replaceable, except perhaps by something exactly similar.

It is, of course, possible that an instrument or consumable may be so specifically geared to its particular use, that there is in fact no adequate replacement. For certain purposes, the surgeon's scalpel or Parmesan cheese may fall into that category. Equally, it seems possible that something valued for itself, for the way it is, is so common that replacement by exactly similar ones is very easy. There are an awful lot of near identical mass produced ornaments, or red roses, hence one can order a dozen by phone. It would be neurotic or irrational to find deciding between numerically different ones a problem once one had decided that they were exactly similar. One might have difficulty in ensuring that they were exactly similar; but, once that decision is made, which one to prefer or purchase is not a sensible issue. If two or more things appear just the same, how could their ornamental values differ?

Clearly this is not straightforwardly a distinction between kinds of objects. It is rather a distinction between two kinds of ways of valuing or appreciating something. One can value a picture purely as a doorstop, or an investment, a river purely as a source of fish. Alternatively, one can appreciate an instrument, a spinning wheel or grand piano, purely as an object of contemplation, a fashionable ornament.

Part 1

If different ways in which we value objects are distinguished with reference to conditions of replaceability, then clearly there is a third kind of human centred value. This is where things are valued, but are not replaceable at all. Such things are not replaceable without loss of value even by exactly similar things, 'dead

ringers': and this is not because there happen to be no dead ringers, but because, even if there were, they would not be valued.

If this seems odd, look at examples. In chapter 7 of Environmental Ethics,1 Des Jardins gives the example of a shop keeper who has kept the first dollar bill he ever took in his shop. He would not, Des Jardins, says, accept two fifty cent coins in exchange. My point, however, is that he would not accept another dollar bill in exchange. Even if the dollar bills were completely indistinguishable, bore exactly the same marks of wear and tear, it is the original one which he values. He will not, of course, be able to detect the difference. Suppose he were offered two bills side by side, one of which was the original, and asked which one he valued more. He cannot pick the valued one out; but he can 'tell' the difference between them: he values the one, whichever it is, which he has kept all these years. Someone could effect the switch without his knowledge, but that would be to impose a loss upon him, and the loss does not lie only in the deception. Like infidelity, the deception is an additional injury. Whether the shopkeeper knows or not, he has lost his treasured first dollar bill. This we might call 'cherishing' or 'treasuring' things: they have 'sentimental' value.

Such value can attach either to instruments or to non-instruments. Consider a chef's favourite knife, a cricketer's bat, a musician's 'cello. Cherished things with non-instrumental value might include one's childhood teddy bear, one's wedding ring, gifts, souvenirs, one's own paintings. A replica is an extremely inadequate replacement. All these are artifacts. So, a replica could be produced. If, and this is precisely the case I am considering, it really was a dead ringer, signs of wear and tear included, even the cherisher could not tell the difference, could be fooled into thinking the replacement was the original one. It seems clear, that to trick someone in this way is to impose a loss on them. If they discovered the switch, they would surely feel a loss; and the loss lies not in the discovery, but in the substitution.

In what does this irreplaceability of cherished objects consist? There is characteristic behaviour: objects which one cherishes one takes care of, uses with care, regrets their destruction etc. But cherishing cannot be characterised in terms of behaviour. One would, if one did not know, treat the dead ringer in just the same way, and one might treat non-cherished objects in that way.

The difference between the cherished object and the dead ringer lies in the past inter-actions between the cherishing subject and the object. All the cases I have considered involve essentially the past, one comes to cherish, to value such things. That one cherishes and what one cherishes is a significant fact about one: it would, or should, get into one's autobiography. Cherished objects often come to show signs of one's interactions with them. The torn ear on the teddy bear, the thinning of the knife-blade from countless sharpenings, the moulding of the handle resulting from the frequent grasping by a particular hand. Those marks of wear on one's own treasured possessions were made by oneself over the years. These features are

implicit in one's valuing the thing, they make up what the thing means to one. Actual physical marks are not necessary: the thing still has special significance because of those past interactions. Of course any actual marks could be replicated, though the cherishing subject might be harder to fool than the replicators can cater for. However, when they are replicated, the signs of wear are no longer signs of that subject's past interactions with the object. They might put one in mind of those interactions; but the replica object is not the object one has in mind.

What gives these things their specific value for a subject is past interactions between the subject and the object. Hence, in order to understand the value the thing has, why it is irreplaceable, one needs to understand how it came to be valued.

I have introduced the notion of cherishing via examples which I trust are not contentious, that is, it is uncontentious that there are cases of the kind I have described. Cherishing, I have claimed, has three aspects: what one cherishes, one takes care of; what one cherishes is irreplaceable, and there is a history of past interactions with the cherished object.

It looks as if cherishing is too rare a human practice to be of much significance for environmental philosophy. Attachments to cherished objects are very particular ones, and there are not very many of them. It is hard to see how this unusual sort of case can have any serious implications for how we are to care for the planet, though the planet is, as far as we know, irreplaceable and we all have past interactions with it or some parts of it. Furthermore, this kind of valuing looks unpromising environmentally. Such working attachment, for example, to the land may be a feature of certain cultures - bio-regionalism may be based on it; but, since such attachment tends to exclude others from one's land, it seems clear that there is not now enough land for everyone to be attached to it in that way. Cherishing would seem to involve the need for close interaction with the environment. But that is likely to have an adverse effect on the environment, certainly it would be bad news for wilderness.

I have focused on cherishing not in order to recommend wholesale interactions with wilderness; but to throw light on a, possibly the, fundamental notion in phenomenology: the interrelatedness of subjects and objects in the world. This, I believe, does have significance for environmental philosophy. In Heidegger's work, this is the notion of Care.2 Heidegger believed that Care, which I hope to show has points in common with cherishing, is our fundamental relation with, among other things, our environment. One point it might seem not to share with cherishing is the element of anxiety. However, while anxiety is not part of the meaning of cherishing, it does naturally attend it: we are anxious that what we cherish should not be threatened, lost or destroyed.

I am not aiming to do full justice to Heidegger's notion of Care. In this section, I shall indicate links between it and other fundamental notions in Heidegger's

philosophy. The rest of my paper will seek some measure of fairly free interpretation and application of Heidegger's notion, supplemented by certain themes in the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty.

One difference between cherishing and Heidegger's notion of Care is that Care is much more widespread. It is, according to Heidegger, present in all our dealings with the world of objects; though it is 'covered up' by modern life and modern philosophy. The proper task of philosophy, according to Heidegger, is to uncover it. It is also clear that Heidegger thought it an ill of modern life that it covers up Care. So the scope of application of Care and cherishing are different; but, I believe, the concepts have similarities. Indeed, it may be that such cherishing as occurs in modern life is the precise point at which, Heidegger would claim, Care is not covered up.

What similarities are there between cherishing and Care? All three elements of cherishing are present in Heidegger's notion of Care. First, the behavioural element is surely there: the practical consequence of uncovering Care would be that we would take care of things. Second, what we cherish is irreplaceable, one cherishes the particular object. Appreciation of the irreplaceability, the particularity, of things is, I believe, part of what Heidegger means by Care, part of what is largely covered up by modern life. He recommends that we should 'let things show themselves'. One thing which would be revealed would be that all things that 'show' themselves are in fact particular things: that is the character of the world and our ways of encountering it. This is part of what Heidegger meant when he bemoaned our loss of Being behind meaning. We have lost sight of the particularity of things, we concentrate on the kinds of things they are and not on the particular things they are.

A related feature which Heidegger believes would be 'revealed' would be the raw materials out of which things are made. Regarded as raw materials, the objects we consume, use or contemplate are not so obviously replaceable. In some sense, everything, regarded as raw material, is irreplaceable: once you've burnt that particular shovel full of coal, that's it; you cannot burn it again, you have to find some other particular pieces of coal. In this, perhaps peculiar, sense, everything is irreplaceable. We can replace it with some more of the same which will suit our needs equally well, but once that particular hunk of raw material is used up, it cannot be replaced. We regard things as replaceable because we are interested in their role in satisfying our needs. But, in themselves, though they can be replaced by other things, they cannot, once used up, literally be put back in place.

The third common feature of cherishing and Care is that, just as cherishing involves past interactions, so does Care. These are covered up; but they are still implicit in our ability to operate in the world. Heidegger holds that our way of being is Dasein, or 'being there'. We are 'thrown' into our place in the world and we become as we are because of where we are. Our skills and our perceptions are

moulded by our environment. We are an 'openness' to the world, and it should be a source of wonder that the world is amenable to our perceivings, it is significant to us and we have learnt to act in it. We become the subjects we are and objects have the significance they have because of our past encounters with the world in which we live.

According to Heidegger, if we were to recognise these two features of our encounters with the world: their particular character and their history, then we would take care of the world, be mindful of it, mind it in the sense of looking after it, as we do with objects we cherish.

Of course, there is a difference between cherishing and Care. It is part of our adaptability that we do not need to stick with any given set of particular objects. That is a crucial difference between cherishing and Care. I am not claiming that we need to cherish everything in my original sense. What I am claiming is that we might look at how we value things and how we come to value things with a view to revealing how we fundamentally relate to our environment and how this is covered up, how this cover up involves both our losing sight of the true significance of objects and our becoming alienated subjects, and how the cover up maybe exacerbates the environmental crisis.

Part 2

How does modern life cover up Care? Heidegger could find some measure of support for his claim from familiar criticisms of modern Western society. The criticism, rightly or wrongly, is that it is a society of mass consumption and selfish individualism. This would certainly support the claim that modern society lacks care. It leaves it open as to whether care is absent or merely covered up. Many would want to draw a more radical contrast than would Heidegger between our careless culture and more mindful ones in which caring for the environment is or was the norm.

Leaving aside that issue for the moment, there would seem to be some plausibility to the claim that care is not an obvious feature of modern culture. If cherishing is the place in modern life where Care is apparent, then modern society requires it to be a rather rare occurrence. Cherishing is bad for business. The more people cherish the things they have, the less will they want to replace them. The market depends on people wanting to replace things. There have even been efforts to 'market' cherishing, to make money out of people's desire to cherish, to possess cherished objects. Mass produced souvenirs are intended to be cherished, as mementos of holidays. There has even been an attempt to hi-jack the word: there is a lively trade in so-called 'cherished' number plates. Note the difference between this sort of newly purchased status symbol and an actually cherished number plate, the very object taken from one's first car, a sign of continuity, of attachment to the

original car.

Modern society, it is claimed, encourages us and depends on our being encouraged to consume, to use up what we can and to replace what we do not actually use up long before it is useless. Many manufactured goods are made to wear out in a relatively short time. Mass production has no place for individuality and so masks the particularity of things. Manufacturing increasingly disguises the raw material, whether this be pre-prepared food, nylon shirts or plastic furniture. A wooden chair, much more obviously than a plastic one, has its origin in trees. Manufacturing increasingly distances the consumer from the history of the raw material. We are encouraged to desire the new. We regard signs of use, of wear and tear, as an indication that we ought to replace something. Even recycling, introduced for environmentally good reasons, has been claimed to be a mixed blessing: it makes throwing things away easier, apparently more justifiable.

Contrast this consumer attitude to instruments with cases where there is care, where instruments are cherished. The sportsman, the gardener, the musician, the cabinet maker may all become genuinely attached to their instruments. They treasure the signs of past wear, bemoan the eventual wearing out.

Modern culture, it is further claimed, interprets non-instrumental value in an essentially consumer way. The very special place, or the very beautiful place, is assessed for its heritage or tourist value. Our countryside and its history are thereby treated as, turned into, commodities, resources, their value translated into measurable economic value. As commodities, they are in a sense treated as replaceable, their particularity is ignored. With respect to valuing something for contemplation, our culture tends to be dismissive of the valued thing which lacks market value: it has mere 'sentimental' value, the antique trade's euphemism for worthless.

This commodification extends also to the world of art. Inflated prices in the art world turn paintings into 'investments', distracting from their aesthetic qualities. Fakes are a problem because they threaten market value. But, given the widespread view that aesthetic qualities are perceptible properties, it is unclear how a perfect fake can differ from the original in aesthetic value.

Environmentally, this attitude towards aesthetic qualities leads to the plausibility of the claim that there can be no possible loss of aesthetic value if a stretch of land is mined, or undermined with pipes or cables, providing it is put back to be perceptibly the same. If importance attaches to what has happened to something in the past, how it came to be the way it is, then that importance is marginalised, disguised, ignored by our culture.

The phenomenological claim would be that, in covering up Care, we lose sight both of the world of objects and ourselves. We lose sight of the individuality and the origins of objects, and of the fact that our desires, purposes, actions and

perceptions are moulded by these objects.

It could also be claimed that our language reflects our lack of care for the environment and our detachment from it. The word 'goods' has arguably lost any value implications; it has become, whether or not preceded by the word 'consumer', a generic name for material objects. We speak of 'replacing', 'throwing away' of 'disposable' items; but with no implication that what we throw away, literally away from us, ends up in another place. 'Waste' becomes a name for what we throw away. It has lost the implications of wastefulness, wasting things being a bad thing.

Advertising puts great emphasis on the new, the better, the improved. It has come to be taken for granted that a later model is a better model, that change is progress. All is geared to the future, not the past. The language we use reflects a certain loss of sight of origins, of raw materials. Where the origin of goods is acknowledged, as it increasingly is in our environmentally aware times, it suggests a falsehood, covers up the fact that nature is all we have. Consumer goods are labelled, advertised, as coming from 'natural' sources, as if there were some other source of raw material. Products are said to be 'man-made', as if they were totally made out of nothing. Thereby, we lose sight of raw materials none of which are, ultimately, or more properly, initially, man-made.

The language of economics is widely used of nature as something to contemplate. We speak of natural beauty as an asset a tourist resource. In describing the beauties of nature, not only is the focus on perceptible properties, as opposed to historical ones, but it is usually the visual properties which are prominent. We speak of a spectacular view, an eye-catching scene, the photogenic, the vantage point, the picturesque, scenery. This might be thought to reflect a tendency to experience nature from the security of one's car: the sounds, smells, tastes and feels being, from that viewpoint, irrelevant. It might also reflect the prominence in modern society of the camera. One might go further, with Susan Sontag, in claiming that the camera has an essential role in consumerism, in turning things into commodities. To have a photograph is to possess the thing photographed.

Overall, our language might seem to suggest that, like Oscar Wilde's critic, modern man, the consumer, knows the price of everything and the value of nothing.

Perhaps the most obvious place where Care is covered up or absent is in our culture's favoured decision making procedure: cost benefit analysis. The underlying principle is that the correct policy to pursue is the one which has the greatest balance of benefits over costs. In order to assess which one that is, all benefits and costs need to be presented in numerical, strictly monetary, terms. Many attacks have been made on this way of determining policy. In an environmental context, the challenge is that there is no clear way of presenting environmental damage as a cost compared with the obvious financial benefit of, for example, developing a shopping complex. Further, it is argued that, even if environmental costs could be precisely measured, it is unlikely that they would

often win the day. In this context, the criticism is of the underlying assumption that everything is saleable, all things have their price. But what one cares for or cherishes is not of that sort. Modern society recognises that some areas of life are not amenable to this sort of analysis: even the staunchest proponent of cost benefit analysis would not, undisguisedly at least, invite people to evaluate their grandmothers in this way. However, the natural world, the only one we have, the only one which makes sense to us and where our lives make sense is regarded as being adequately represented in financial terms.

Phenomenology claims, not only that modern life 'covers up' Care, or in Husserl's[3] terms has 'lost sight' of values, but that modern philosophy, too, has lost sight of values.

The theory that most obviously presents itself as in accord with modern consumer society as just sketched is Utilitarianism. Whether Utilitarianism is regarded as giving rise to or as reflecting such society is not at issue here. Nor shall I consider how faithfully Utilitarianism in its late 20th century guise reflects the thought of J.S.Mill. Utilitarianism is a theory about what is of value and how the right action or policy is to be decided upon. It holds that what is valuable is utility or happiness. Since happiness is what everyone wants or prefers, policy is to be decided on the basis of individuals' preferences concerning the consequences of the policy.

Once this moral theory is accepted as the basis for policy, it is clear in general terms, that specific policy decisions are to be made by some version of cost benefit analysis. Policies are assessed on the basis of their consequences. Consequences are assessed according to their costs and benefits. Costs are what are not preferred; benefits, what are preferred. Such assessments are allegedly democratic, respect the freedom of the individual to choose and avoid élitism and tyranny, except by the majority.

Phenomenology does not explicitly criticise Utilitarianism. Its critique of philosophy goes much deeper. In brief, phenomenology holds that it is not our theories of values alone which are responsible for our having lost sight of value; but the underlying metaphysics. Only a change there could make possible a suitable change in theories of value. In this, phenomenology clearly has points in common with Deep Ecology, for example the thinking of Arne Naess.[4]

The heart of the phenomenological critique is that, at least since Descartes and Locke, philosophy has been too much influenced by the natural sciences. Its chief task has been seen to be that of constructing a world view consistent with the findings of, especially, physics. So, Descartes' dualism was an attempt to reconcile the purely mechanical character of matter with the fact that human beings are not purely mechanical, they have consciousness and freedom. Locke's division of properties into primary and secondary ones was an attempt to reconcile Galilean theories of material objects with our perceptions of them. The phenomenological

charge of having lost sight of values is not a criticism of science, but of philosophy.

Indeed, it would seem hard to criticise the natural sciences for losing sight of value, since they simply do not address issues of value. More, they specifically exclude value; and they do so in two ways. First, value freedom is an ideal of scientific enquiry. Part of what this means is that the scientist must not bring his or her own values to the enquiry; the enquiry must be objective, impartial, neutral. Second, the aim of scientific investigation is to discover what the universe is like and how it operates. Whether it, any part of it, or any of its operations are good or bad, of value or worthless, is a different and separate issue.

At one level, phenomenology is entirely happy with this. Science explicitly focuses on certain features of the world to investigate, and explicitly excludes other features. Physics selects areas of investigation; and it does so with certain purposes in mind. Phenomenology need not, and does not deny the usefulness of these selections for these purposes. If Galileo had claimed that one language of nature is mathematics, that, for purposes of measuring nature, mathematics is the best language, there would be no complaint. The complaint is against the claim that the language of nature is mathematics. The phenomenological criticism of that can best, perhaps, be put as raising the possibility that nature is multi-lingual.

This, however, still does not get us to the heart of the issue, not to say matter! The physicist can happily accept the multi-faceted character of nature, from which it is precisely the aim of the physicist to select. For purposes of measurement and prediction, certain selections are vital. The physicist need not deny the selectivity underlying his or her enterprise. In so far as Galileo did deny this, if he did, he was going beyond his brief as scientist, dipping into the philosopher's territory, making claims about the metaphysical status of his findings.

The phenomenological criticism is of philosophers who have interpreted science as revealing what the world is really like, and taken scientific reasoning as the only form of reasoning. What is the relation between this and the loss of sight of values? One obvious connection is that, if the only form of rationality is scientific rationality, and if that is geared to giving knowledge of facts, then reasoning is not appropriate for questions of value. It was seen, originally, as a great virtue of Utilitarianism that it gives a decision procedure for determining what ought to be done. Once preferences, which are deemed not rationally assessable, have been registered, they can be balanced, weighed, measured, using precise, scientifically approved techniques.

However, the influence that phenomenologists would claim orthodox metaphysics has on value theory goes deeper than this. Because philosophers have held the view that the natural sciences tell us how objects really or fundamentally are, and because science limits its enquiries to matters of fact, no object can 'really' or 'in itself' have value. Value can at best be a secondary property, residing in the object

only as a power to have an effect on us, the subjects. In short, once philosophy has adopted the scientific world view, it must regard values as dependent upon a valuing subject.

Against this philosophical backdrop, anyone who tries to establish that natural objects, eco-systems or species, have intrinsic value, will be taken to be seeking to establish that the value is a primary property of the object, discoverable by certain favoured techniques. But these techniques are geared to finding facts, and to derive values from facts, supposedly involves a fallacy. Hence, their enterprise is doomed to failure.

Moreover, there are problems with the claim that values are secondary properties. Again, any such view inherits from metaphysics an account of the nature of the subject. The valuing subject is not the pure Cartesian consciousness, nor the neutral scientific investigator. The valuing subject is a free subject. It is seen as having interests in what it values, and these interests are seen as, if not necessarily selfish, at least individual. Selves are individuals, in their reason they might agree, but in their interests they can legitimately differ, at least to some extent.

Since subjects' interests can differ, values are not even secondary properties of objects, powers to affect all normally equiped conscious subjects in certain ways. They are at best tertiary, emergent or supervenient properties, detectable only by certain kinds of subjects, or they are 'projections' onto objects by subjects. How, precisely, the properties 'emerge' or are 'projected' is problematic; but, however either thesis is elaborated, it is clear that value properties will stand in contrast to 'real', knowable properties of objects.

To sum up the phenomenological critique of orthodox philosophy, philosophers have accepted from physics a world of objects possessing primary qualities and having powers to produce perceptual effects on conscious subjects. Subjects are rational and conscious individuals, and are logically distinct from objects. This ontology invites the question whether value is in the object or the subject.

The phenomenological critique would claim that this is the wrong question to ask about values. The modern world view essentially problematizes values, raises, about them, questions which are unanswerable because they presuppose a framework which, from the beginning, has no proper place for values. The subject and the object are defined in a particular way, independent of each other. This rules out of court the very area of enquiry which, according to phenomenology, is the area where values arise: the essential relationships between subjects and objects.

As long as subjects and objects are seen as logically distinct, any attempt to introduce intrinsic relatedness between subject and object will meet with scepticism, conflict with the orthodox world view. If intrinsic relations between subject and object are characterised as relations which enter into the definition of the subject or object, the orthodox response will be to reject any such definition on

the grounds that it does not capture what is essential to the subject or the object. Phenomenology, in contrast, claims that the orthodox view involves an abstraction from the 'lived world' where subjects and objects are essentially related, and it focuses its enquiry on those essential relations.

This central tenet of phenomenology, the essential relatedness of subject and object, can appear mysterious. It might seem less so if, with Merleau-Ponty, we focus on the subject as agent rather than as thinker, the role of the body in that agency, and the role of habit and skill in action, and the necessity for a certain sort of context in which those skills and habits operate.

The phenomenological enterprise is, then, to uncover and explore activities, in this context, the activity of valuing which is held, in Heidegger's case, to underlie or be involved in all other interactions between us and the world. Such an enquiry will provide the basis of, rather than being dependent upon, an account of what subjects and objects 'really' are.

Phenomenologists, then, criticise orthodox philosophy for taking from science an account of how objects 'really' are, and regarding objects and subjects as logically distinct. They would also criticise, and on similar grounds, the modern philosophical orthodoxy concerning the nature of subjects. The favoured current model of the mind is the computer program. Perception is construed as input, action as output. The mind is informed by the input and directs the output. We can learn about how the mind works by investigating artificial intelligence.

It is perhaps no accident that in two areas of artificial intelligence progress has been slow. In object-recognition and robotics, the performance of artificial intelligence falls woefully short of even the least intelligent human subject. The phenomenological diagnosis of this slow progress would be that it is due to being based on fundamentally mistaken theories of perception and action. These theories, in turn, depend on the orthodox ontology and epistemology.

The orthodox theory of action and perception clearly does not obviously cohere with the phenomena. The orthodox philosophical task would be to engage in a Lockean sort of enterprise to bridge the gap between how we perceive and act, according to this theory, and how it seems to us that we perceive and act. In the case of perception, the character of the input is taken to be as it must be given the nature of the object and the nature of our sense organs. In the case of vision, the basic data are two-dimensional complexes of colour. The question is then: how do we 'construct' three dimensional objects out of these? In the case of action, it is taken from science that the body is a mechanism to be directed by the mind. The question is then: how can the mind give sufficiently detailed and precise instructions to the body to produce intelligent action?

Douglas Adams captures the prima facie implausibility of such models of human skills:

"A ball flying through the air is responding to the force and direction with which it was thrown, the action of gravity, the friction of the air which it must expend its energy on overcoming, the turbulence of the air around its surface, and the rate and direction of the ball's spin.
And yet, someone who might have difficulty consciously trying to work out what 3x4x5 comes to would have no trouble in doing differential calculus and a whole host of related calculations so astoundingly fast that they can actually catch a flying ball. (Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency"5.

This is perhaps part of what Descartes himself was geting at when he wrote "I am not in my body as a pilot in a ship".

Merleau-Ponty puts forward radically different theories of percepton and action.6 Where orthodox theories would have it that one takes in sense data and 'constructs' objects out of them, and formulates purposes, works out how to achieve them and puts the body into action, Merleau-Ponty focuses on the occasions or situatons where we do consciously operate in this way. He invites us to consider how 'unnatural' this is. The orthodox theory, he claims, is a theory of how one would operate in an alien, unfamiliar world, with a set of unfamiliar artificial limbs. Its plausibility derives entirely from the fact that, if Descartes' ontology is right, that is how perception and action must be. If, instead of being dominated by that ontology, we look at how it is, a different picture emerges, suggesting different theories of perception and action and a different underlying ontology. Only with such theories can Care emerge. In the orthodox theories of perception and action, Care has no place.

Part 3

Phenomenology recommends that we should look at how we as subjects relate to, interact with, the world of objects. This will give a different view of the nature of the subject and the object from that which has dominated modern philosophy at least since Descartes.

In the case of values, then, phenomenology recommends that we should look first at the activity of valuing, rather than at the object and the subject to ask where value lies. It also holds that the character of the subject and of the object is dependent on the activity of valuing, not prior to it. What is involved in valuing something as an instrument? In the typical case, and phenomenology recommends that we proceed from the typical case, this will involve actually using the object, or at least being able to use it, to satisfy one's aims, ends, purposes. What is involved in using something as an instrument? Crucially, one must have the appropriate skills or habits. These skills have to be learnt, the habits acquired. So, using an instrument essentially has a past.

Moreover, it is the body, not rational consciousness, which has to learn these skills.

An intellectual grasp of the perfect golf swing, planing wood or playing the clarinet does not, alas, get one very far. One needs the skills and habits to get anywhere when faced with the implement. An intellectual grasp of hammering, as many intellectuals learn to their cost, is no guarantee against bruised thumbs and bent nails. Merleau-Ponty puts great weight on this aspect of the subject. The subject is first and foremost a bodily subject, not a rational consciousness. The body is not the mechanical body of Cartesianism, but an intelligent operator in the world. The phenomenological account of action, skills and habits emphasises that we do not use our own bodies as instruments, instruments are often part of the body or part of the act. Contexts are necessary to 'call forth' our habits. Bodily intelligence and the significance of objects are internally related.

So, exploring the use of instruments reveals a past aspect, we have to acquire appropriate skills to use instruments. It also reveals the body as what uses these instruments. Skills are learnt, habits acquired in the presence of objects. Skills, in part, constitute the subject. They are what Merleau-Ponty calls 'sedimentation', and they form a necessary backdrop for more complex, considered, consciously directed activity, and also for reflective thought.

Similarly with using things as instruments, it is not only the subject's past, the body learning to use, which is involved; but the past of the instrument. There must have been that instrument or similar instruments in the past for the present one to have the significance it has, for it to call forth certain skills or habits. This is what Heidegger calls the 'ready-to-hand' aspect of objects. This significance is not something which the user is fully, consciously, aware of. It is often easier for a third person to detect the significance of objects for others. This is a feature of phenomenological method which is often misinterpreted. Husserl did operate from a first person standpoint, albeit a transcendental one; not so Heidegger or Merleau-Ponty. They rarely write in the first person. Moreover, it would serve their purposes ill to do so, since they are both at pains to deny what Sartre called the 'translucency' of consciousness, and to introduce an alternative to the Cartesian conscious subject.

The phenomenological picture, then is of a subject and object internally, intentionally related in the 'lived world' via past interactions. Skills constitute the body subject, the object too gets its significance from those interactions.

This involvement of the body is of vital importance in the context of the environment. It is the body which gives rise to the environmental problem. the body needs and uses the environment. Without bodies, pollution would not be a problem: we would neither produce it nor suffer from it. It is bodies, our bodies, which, as it were, confront the environment. They are an important cause of the problems: it is bodies which consume. They are the recipients of the problems: it is bodies which suffer from pollution.

It might seem that the body is less involved in contemplation, in non-instrumental

valuing. Contemplation might seem to be more a matter of the intellect, spirit or soul. However, contemplation of nature, as opposed to ideas, does involve the body. It involves perceiving the natural environment, and that requires sense organs. Further, the sense organs need to be in a body which has mobility, at least if walking through the countryside, feeling grass or leaves under the feet, seeing a view unfold, having one's vision directed to a bird by hearing it, feeling the physically restorative effects of the wind on one's face, are all part of contemplating nature.

The past is involved in contemplation in two ways. The contemplating subject has to learn skills of contemplating nature. These are of two sorts. First, one has to learn to notice what is there to be seen. These may be a matter of 'scientific' distinctions or aesthetic ones. Contemplation involves appreciating detail; but also appreciating drama. Also, typically, one needs to learn to negotiate one's way through the natural environment, or even learn survival skills in a harsh environment in order to be able to appreciate it.

Second, the past is involved in contemplation in that what one contemplates has a past, and awareness of that past is a vital factor in one's contemplation. The age of the sea, the cliffs, the rocks, the trees, impinge on one's awareness of them, are an essential part of that awareness. Much of nature is redolent with its past, it has a certain significance. The phenomenological thesis is that these significances are not over and above the primary and secondary qualities, but are what we notice first, a necessary condition of the world being a world of objects for us, making sense to us. They are what the scientist abstracts from, not what the aesthete projects onto the world.

Just as it is argued that the age of a work of art, the culture in which it was created, matters, forms an essential part of one's appreciation of it, and constitutes what the work is, so, the phenomenologist would argue, for the natural world. It is first and foremost our home, it makes sense to us and our lives make sense in it. These significances are an essential part of what we contemplate, what our interest is in having such a world to contemplate. There is a vast difference between contemplating nature as nature and contemplating it as made. A mined and restored landscape, like the dead ringer of the cherished object, is a fake. One may not be able to detect the difference but the way one is contemplating it is wrong, one is misled by the signs of age. One is not contemplating the thing one is perceiving.

So far, we have looked at use and contemplation. It has emerged that the past is essentially involved in both. The past of the subject and of the object is involved. The subject is a bodily subject; the object is a significant object, and the two are as they are because of how they are related, their past interactions.

This, it seems, though, is not the whole story about valuing. Not all useful things are valued in any ordinary sense of value. Ask the average restaurant diner if they value their knife. The response will likely be: well it's nice to have something to

cut the food with but what's so special about this knife? Compare that with the lone explorer, or the master chef. They clearly value their knives in a way which goes beyond just using them. Part of what this extra element in valuing is might be, or involve, pleasure: one takes pleasure in using something one values.

Similarly for non-instrumental value, the phenomenologist would say that, typically, valuing something in this way would involve activities which we might broadly, for convenience more than accuracy, call activities of 'contemplation'. But these activities are not the whole of valuing. We have all seen the thirteen year old child staring in blank apathy at the scene which so entrances its parents, kicking the ground and wondering what the point of it all is. It is, in a sense, contemplating; but not valuing. Again, the extra element may involve pleasure.

But any easy introduction of pleasure here seems to me to reflect the prevalence of Utilitarian thinking more than a sensitivity to valuing. Pleasure, in any ordinary sense, is not obviously present in all cases of valuing. Nor is pleasure sufficient for valuing: one can take great delight in somethng without especially valuing it. If pleasure is crucial here, then a further account of what taking pleasure is would be needed, and it would need to throw light on the character of valuing and not, as with Utilitarianism, simply quantify value.

What is extra in valuing over and above using or contemplating? And, whatever it is, is it implicit in our interactions with the world and covered up, or is it a recommendation about how we should change not just our practices but our values?

To value consumables or raw materials involves not just enjoying using them, but using them well, making good use of them, using them economically, sparingly, not wasting them. To value instruments involves not just enjoying using them but using them skillfully, for the purpose for which they are intended, taking care of them, using them carefully, treating them well, not destructively, mindlessly or brutally. It involves a willingness to learn to use them properly, so as to get the best out of them, not to break them. To overload the washing machine, neglect to service the car, or kick the television, indicates a lack of valuing these instruments.

We also have notions of good and bad habits of use. We admire in others and take pride in ourselves when we use things well. We admire, not only skillful human subjects, but animals for their efficiency, adaptedness, economy of movement.

To value contemplation is not just to enjoy experiencing. There is, I want to claim, such a thing as contemplating well. This involves bringing knowlege, skills of observation, discrimination, sensitivity to what one contemplates and is a richer experience for that.

Does this conform with Heidegger's notion of care? Care involves not just certain sorts of behaviour, taking care, but also it allows the thing to show itself, and it involves past interactions between the subject and the thing which contribute to

making the subject what it is.

Does using well allow the thing to show itself? There are two ways in which one might think that it does. To use an instrument skillfully is to reveal what that instrument can do, what it is good for, what it was intended for, its fittedness for use. Second, and this obviously relates to Heidegger's emphasis on raw materials, using many instruments well involves respecting the character of the raw materials out of which they are made. Driving well involves respecting the limitations of the car, as well as displaying its capacities, both as the machine it is, and as made of metal parts liable to overheat, fracture etc.

In so far as using well involves not wasting, this might seem to be a recognition of the finiteness of our resources. If they were not finite, waste would not be a bad thing.

Using well also has a past. One must have acquired the appropriate skills and habits. And skills and habits of using well are extra to just being able to use somehow or other. The craftsman must learn to respect his or her raw materials, know their capacities and develop skills of working with them. In the experienced craftsman, this is, as we say, 'second nature'. The craftsman gets a 'feel' for the wood. It goes against the grain, of both wood and craftsman, to work it badly. Skills are, in Merleau-Ponty's terms, 'sedimented' in the body. Misuse of tools or raw materials just is not a possibility, and not just because of pride in performance, but because the inexpert, clumsy habits have gone, they are no longer part of the subject's repertoire. Further, one is the particular subject one is because of those skills and habits. They are sedimented in one. In certain situations, they are activated, the subject acts.

Contemplation also is surely very much to do with letting the thing show itself, getting to the heart of it. Literature and art seek to do this, even if writers disagree about what the heart is. Even Petrarch, notoriously, stopped himself from contemplating nature, but only because he had the Platonic notion that the actual world was a distraction from contemplating ideal reality. The goal of contemplation is the true nature, the significance of what is contemplated. This is, in essence, what is wrong with mining and restoring a tract of land to look just the same as it originally did. One who contemplates it, bringing to it the belief that it is untouched nature, is deceived, for it is not.

As to the subject, clearly there are skills and habits of contemplation. These clearly serve to constitute the subject, and they need to be acquired in the presence of the sort of thing contemplated. A skilled observer of nature must have a history of observing nature. He or she must have acquired knowledge and sensitivity.

So, we do have a notion of valuing which is comparable to Heidegger's notion of Care. Value resides not in the object nor in the subject but in interactions between them in which the objects show their significance and the subjects can exercise

their abilities, realise their dispositions, be or become themselves.

Is there a theoretical, philosophical basis for these values which I have claimed we hold? I suggest that we might learn here from classical wisdom, in particular from Aristotle. Aristotle put forward an ethic of virtue. According to an ethic of virtue, an action is good, not because of its consequences, nor because it obeys a general moral principle, but because it involves the exercise of a virtue. To be virtuous is to behave appropriately and moderately; to be vicious is to be inappropriate and extreme. Central in this ethic is the notion of character: to have a good character is to possess the virtues.

It is easy, these days, to be sceptical about the notion of good character. We tend to think of it as something rather fragile, a poor guarantee of good action. However, if we take a more bodily view of the subject, focus on bodily skills and habits, what we might call 'the bodily virtues', scepticism seems less appropriate. Habits and skills stick, they are sedimented in us. Situations and contexts activate them without our conscious assessment or decision.

In general terms, it is clear that good habits are appropriate ones. It seems at first sight less plausible to claim that good habits, bodily virtues, are means between extremes. However, if we look at examples of bad habits, we can, I believe, detect extremes. It is quite hard to characterise in a general way what good habits are. It is much easier to spot when things have gone wrong, when habits are bad or inappropriately operative. If, as I have suggested, we still have rather clearer notions of misuse than of good use, can we establish extremes of misuse and get from there to a fuller characterisation of the mean?

Care may be concealed in that it is hard to find, identify examples as such or explain why they are examples; but we may retain some vestige of contact with it in that we can identify extremes where it is lacking. Such cases may be more frequent, easier to identify since only a slight exageration reveals the comic in them, and easier to expose, to tease out, what is wrong with them.

What do we regard as bad habits towards our environment? To allow one's garden to go wild is perhaps to care too much for the natural; to manicure one's lawn and cut one's trees to the shape of peacocks is to care too little. To refuse ever to drive because it pollutes the air is one extreme; to drive everywhere at top speed in an uneconomical car is another. Similar dislike of extremes is apparent in our use of resources. To discard every possession at the first sign of wear strikes us as excessive; but so too does making do and mending beyond all hope of efficiency. At some point, the virtuous course is to relegate the old socks to the rag bag. We encourage, at least in our children, moderation in eating. We deplore those who pile onto their plates food they will not eat; but equally we have a notion of the indecently small helping.

There are also extremes in the use of instruments. To refuse all technological

assistance, to refuse ever to speak to answer phones for example, is one extreme. To be able to do nothing without the most sophisticated technological intermediary, for example, to be unable to beat an egg without an electric food processor, is another.

Cases where contemplation has gone wrong are also possible. To contemplate nature as if it were a science museum or laboratory in which, alas, the labels are absent is one extreme. To contemplate nature as if it were a work of art, to dismiss the sunset as 'just a rather poor Turner' (see Oscar Wilde - On Nature Imitating Art) would be another.

If these are the extremes, is there a route from them to the mean? The mean, it must be clear, is not merely a compromise, or a mixture of the extremes. There is clearly something wrong with someone who lurches between over-indulgence and frugality. Similarly, to take a moderate path by way of compromise, feeling thwarted in both directions is not to be mistaken for taking the virtuous course. How then can we arrive at the mean?

What is wrong, for Aristotle, about the extremes is their inappropriateness. Perhaps we can get to the mean by exploring this notion further, and with some input from Heidegger. It seems plausible to speculate that inappropriate, extreme, practices cover up Care: they do not allow the thing to show itself, nor the subject to be at home in the world. The mean involves letting the things show themselves, and the subject acquiring habits which allow the thing to show itself.

(from here on, I need an ending which isn't specifically geared to conservation)

How might this sketch be applied in practice, in particular to the practice of conservation? Bodily skills and the use of instruments are for the under-labourers of conservation, not the strategists. So, much of what I have said about them is not of direct relevance. What we have, I think, is a procedure to follow which might be of use in devising policy. It is not for philosophers to devise specific projects for conservationists; but to provide things for them to look for, directions to follow. Which policies actually do this is for conservationists to decide.

The procedure is this. First spot the extremes. Then ask why they are extreme: how do they fail to let the thing show itself? what is the thing? How would it show itself? Then ask what habits we should have, what subjects we should be.

What are the extremes in nature conservation? One extreme would be to seek to leave nature totally wild, to protect it against all human intervention. The other extreme would be to seek to plan and manage, control it completely. Of course, neither of these extremes is achievable in practice; but as extremes of character, bad habits in the conservationist, they may well be real.

Moreover, these are not simply fictional characters I am inventing. Our history displays both extremes. Up to, roughly, the Renaissance, nature was to be shunned,

to be left to itself. Interaction between man and nature was regarded as a bad thing. To be sure, this was then thought to be bad for man not for nature; but the habits of separateness are still there in both pictures. Following upon that in our history, we have the exploitation of nature for our use. All fruitful intervention is welcomed as good. Again, this is historically not for the sake of nature but for man; but the underlying dispositions seem comparable. Nature is to be managed, controlled.

Underlying the historical attitudes, we can perhaps detect, fear of nature, in the modern attitudes fear for it; but still fear.

Do these extremes involve a failure to let the thing show itself. What is the thing with which conservation deals? It is, presumably, nature, life. Things having a life of their own. Natural processes go on without us. the tree will go its own way, the violin will just sit there. But also nature is our context. It has dramas and poetry. Conservation should respect the integrity of the object.

As well as having to decide between preserving wildness and managing, conservationists are faced with decisions about whether to conserve bio-diversity or eco-systems, and whether to conserve the countryside as it would be without human habitation or as it is with its signs of human habitation, past and present.

Does the instruction to let the thing show itself have any bearing on these decisions?

I don't have conclusions, only some observations.

If the decision between bio-diversity and eco-systems is presented in scientific way, the decision will be seen as one between preserving the gene pool and preserving energy flow systems. This seems to me not obviously to be the sort of framework for letting the things show themselves. So, if wild nature is presented in these terms, it looks as if, whichever value takes precedence, it will fall short of the Heideggerean ideal.

Alternatively, if the ideal of preserving the cultural dimensions of the countryside, the vernacular landscape, puts emphasis upon preserving signs of previous cultures, of preserving a certain heritage, then this too will not allow the object to show itself, at least to us. We will be preserving past significances, for other subjects, not for us.

What is the present significance of nature for us, in our culture? How do our lives gain significance from and in the natural world? I don't know; but I don't see how conservationists can get by without thinking about such issues.

Conclusion

I have argued that, underlying our explicit values, instrumental and non-

instrumental, are our fundamental ways of interacting with the world. These have a history and are particular in character, and so are somewhat like cherishing. They make us the subjects we are and give the objects the significance they have. These both involve a mix of nature and culture. If we recognised these fundamental interactions, we would come to 'cherish' nature more, and to recognise that many of our dealings with it are extreme and inappropriate to our present circumstances.