Taking Climate Change Seriously: The 'Values Approach'

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In contrast to ideal arguments whose 'just targets' reflect definable/ measurable metrics and/or impersonal corporate/national policies destined to mitigate climate change, this chapter proposes a nonideal approach for thwarting global warming. This chapter begins by demonstrating the limitations of ideal principles meant to mitigate climate change, whether distributive justice schemes (such as the polluter pays principle, beneficiary pays principle, emissions egalitarianism or ability to pay principle) or Simon Caney's forward-looking scheme that commits parties to 'just burdens' in order to achieve 'just targets'. Alternatively, the Values Approach, which requires us to outline identity-defining values, commits us to act in ways that cohere with our values, lest we be deemed hypocrites. Unlike virtues, the values that we 'make explicit' play normative roles since values are a subset of substantial self-knowledge. We thus adjust our habits to accord with how we see ourselves. Moreover, voters who value their environments are apt to pressure democratically elected leaders to implement appropriate policies.

1. Moving from Backward-Looking to Forward-Looking Schemes

To be congruent, a philosophical approach to climate change mitigation must assiduously persuade the greatest number of climate change contributors (both producers and consumers) to modify offending actions to achieve the public's environmental goals. As we shall see, citizens routinely articulate their desire for governments to implement strategies to mitigate climate change, yet too many consumers have failed to adopt the requisite lifestyle changes needed to reduce their carbon footprints, thus hindering governmental efforts to advance the public's environmental values. Consider that the continued rise in sport utility vehicle (SUV) purchases worldwide has caused gasoline consumption to far exceed carbon footprint savings earned by newly constructed energy efficient power plants and industrial factories (IEA 2021).

More worrisome still, transnational corporations tend to treat economic sanctions meant to deter them from degrading environments as the 'cost of doing business', rather than as prohibitions against undesirable actions or penalties befitting such actions. This is the well-known failure of backward- looking schemes such as retributive justice. Even if victims consider payouts fair (possibly enormous in terms of their economic standards), no amount of money can truly compensate inhabitants whose environments have been degraded and/or properties destroyed (Spaid 2020b, 146). This may sound outdated, but the Danish engineering firm FLSmidth and its funders, the Danish export credit agency and Danish Pension Fund, were blamed for developing an opencast mine in 2014 that they knew would cause severe environmental and agricultural losses in Teghut, Armenia (Malling 2019). Home to 32 metal mines, profits readily flow to foreign investors and Armenian oligarchs despite concerted efforts by the United Nations Human Rights Council and numerous non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to protect the townspeople from mining disasters.

Having learned that retributive justice schemes rarely provide adequate recompense, the UN implemented a different tack, which David Caron and Brian Morris (2002) call 'practical justice'. Following Iraq's seven-month occupation of

Kuwait in 1990, UN staff members worked extra hard to implement programs that delivered aid directly to victims, rather than enacting economic sanctions that are distinctly retributive (Caron and Morris 2002). Caron and Morris (2002, 188) define the UN Compensation Commission's notion of 'practical justice' as being the sort of justice whose delivery is 'swift and efficient, not rough'. On this level 'practical' refers to how justice is carried out, rather than a particular type of justice. The UN avoids retributive schemes, because they fail to persuade bad actors to reform and tend to encourage 'business as usual' practices so long as profits outweigh extant fines (Spaid 2020b, 149–150). In contrast to 'practical values', I use 'environmental values' to indicate inhabitants' environmental preferences and 'ameliorative values' to reflect tools available to boost human and nonhuman well-being alike, whereas 'explicit values' are those that value-holders regularly express. Not all environmental values are explicit and not all explicit values concern the environment.

Unlike the earlier Kyoto Protocol (1997/2005), whose signatories were primarily developed nations, the Paris Agreement (2015) and Katowice Climate Package (2018) gather the world's nations together in entirely voluntary agreements. Treating climate change as a shared problem is meant to motivate signatories to establish their own targets for reducing emissions in order to limit the rise in temperature by 2100 to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. 'Every five years, countries are supposed to assess their progress toward implementing the agreement through a process known as the global stocktake; the first is planned for 2023. Countries set their own targets, and there are no enforcement mechanisms to ensure they meet them' (Maizland 2021). Given each nation's varying per capita carbon footprints, the belt- tightening required to achieve this consensus-driven global target varies enormously. Moreover, noncompliant countries such as Australia, Brazil, China and the United States are sometimes called 'cheaters', but they have thus far escaped penalties.

No doubt, 'practical values' underlie the move to ensure that each nation's pledge remains voluntary. Unlike retributive and even most distributive justice schemes, practical justice focuses on redressing the offended parties, rather than offsetting offenses. Given the number of nations that have contributed nothing to climate change yet are regularly forced to weather its dramatic effects, it is no wonder their delegates regularly pressure the United Nations Framework Convention Climate Change (UNFCCC) to ratify loss and damage mechanisms meant to deliver practical justice. According to Dáithí Stone, '[Paris included] a very explicit statement that [loss and damage] is not liability or compensation. [But] it is still unclear, I think, coming out of Warsaw, Cancun and Paris exactly what loss and damage is under the UNFCCC process' (CarbonBrief 2017).

To compensate nations for costs accrued by mitigation and adaption strategies meant to 'ward off' climate change's impact on coastal cities, river cities, flooded farms, islands and rural villages, several philosophers have proposed distributive justice schemes. When framed such that polluters owe an 'ecological debt' (Hayward 2005, 193), wealthy nations have a 'responsibility' to help those less fortunate (Beitz 2005) or nations whose economies have directly benefited from greenhouse gas emissions owe a 'negative duty' (Pogge 2002, 178), such ideal principles as the 'polluter pays principle', the 'ability to pay principle' and the 'beneficiary pays principle' prove no less backward-looking than retributive justice schemes. Whether funds are paid out directly or pooled and distributed on a case-by-case basis, citizens inhabiting payer nations are rarely burdened by said sanctions and thus fail to alter their climate-warming lifestyles. Changing our bad habits requires constant reflection on the costs and burdens paid by others for our 'poor' choices. I imagine the act of empathising with animals inhabiting 'factory farms' prompts eaters to switch protein sources. Similarly, reflecting upon poorly paid miners slaving for hours in diamond pits or each gold band's having generated 20 tonnes of mining waste could lead people to purchase secondhand rings.

Such ideal principles, formulated by philosophers to compensate potential victims, extend John Rawls's notion of distributive justice, a socio-political and/or economic template available to shared language-users inhabiting a political community to select and implement their conception of fairness (Rawls 1971, 274–284). Not only are values implicit in each member's conception of fairness, but they play a central role in his original conception. 'All social values—liberty and opportunity, income and wealth, and the social bases of self-respect—are to be distributed equally unless an unequal distribution of any, or all, of these values is to everyone's advantage. Injustice, then, is simply inequalities that are not to the benefit of all' (Rawls 1971, 55). Additionally, 'the utilities represent the worth of the alternatives for this person as estimated by his scheme of values' (Rawls 1971, 150).

Environmental justice, which addresses inequitable conditions befalling environments that sustain both human and nonhuman inhabitants, is neither redistributive nor compensatory, since no amount of money can reverse environmental degradation. Distributive justice may remedy global injustices resulting from financial burdens, property losses or unequal resource allocations, but it makes a farce of climate justice since it fails to prevent consumers from actions that exacerbate global temperature rise. So long as backward-looking schemes fail to thwart bad actors, they fail to achieve global environmental justice, let alone climate justice. In 2018, Simon Caney introduced a forward-looking notion of distributive justice, yet as the next section demonstrates, the fact that climate change targets are global while burdens (and values) are local engenders asymmetries between targets and burdens, making his ideal principle unworkable. As we shall see, even the most disciplined actors reject burdens deemed onerous or irrelevant.

To diminish the asymmetry between local burdens and global targets, this chapter proposes the Values Approach, which builds upon the significance of 'nonhuman rights' whose 'articulation' empowers value-holders to acknowledge, monitor and safeguard values made explicit in word and/or deed ('Making Values Explicit' plays on Robert Brandom's *Making it Explicit*, 1994). Implementing the Values Approach requires value-holders to routinely reflect upon their lifestyles' immediate and long-term impacts in order to modify present habits and preferences – in tying our personal identity to our lifestyle choices, the Values Approach goes one step further than Kant's 'Categorical Imperative', for which adherents imagine the outcome were everyone to do what they are considering doing. According to the Values Approach, mitigating climate change depends on value-holders who view their every action as expressing core beliefs that indicate their particular identity. Non-inhabitants and those who claim contrary beliefs, such as 'foreigners' and 'climate deniers', are no less culpable for causing harmful outcomes elsewhere.

Since sound judgement is a universal value, harmful outcomes convey people's terrible choices and/or poor judgement. A nonideal principle, the Values Approach requires regular assessment of our ecological impact, independent of our lax attitudes. People whose actions indicate 'I don't give a damn' or 'I care little about others' effectively lack sound judgement. In motivating people to act on their environmental values, the Values Approach aims to safeguard agreed-upon commitments. Despite being voluntary, I envision people concerned by climate change finding it easier to adhere to the Values Approach, since people's choices reflect their identities, which is hardly the case for current mitigation strategies.

2. An Asymmetry: Just Targets vs. Just Burdens

Given the extraordinary income gap between wealthy and poor nations, Conference of the Parties (COP) delegates to the UNFCCC have implemented forward-looking variants of distributive justice, such that wealthier countries voluntarily incur greater burdens to offset the (opportunity) costs of burdens that prove unfair for poorer countries. What counts as a burden varies from situation to situation. Sometimes, poorer nations access the Green Climate Fund to offset expenses caused by implementing renewable energy projects or building factories that emit fewer greenhouse gases. Alternatively, wealthier nations have agreed to implement more expensive, greenhouse gas-reducing energy generators since their economies have benefited greatly from earlier, less-efficient energy-generating systems.

Needless to say, the results of the Paris Agreement, whose efficacy is largely a matter of self-policing, are disappointing. If current practices continue unabated, the average global temperature is predicted to rise from between 2.9–3.2°C above pre-industrial levels by 2100, nearly twice the internationally agreed-upon limit. Moreover, two German non-profits, Climate Analytics and the New Climate Institute, not only consider national targets insufficient, but their slow implementation rates are likely to drive average global temperatures 2.7°C above pre-industrial levels by 2100 (Maizland 2021). Since global citizens have already driven temperatures to 1.1°C above pre- industrial levels, leaving room for only a 0.4°C rise over the next 80 years, I worry that citizens either deem participation too burdensome or don't realize their options.

Therein lies the rub. How do nations with many millions of people motivate their citizens who not only can afford today's conveniences, but have worked extra hard to establish lifestyles built on convenience, to now adopt 'inconvenient lifestyles' (local burdens) such that they must limit air travel, forego online purchases, curtail

electronics, pay more for locally sourced food, opt for public transportation and heat/cool less in order to achieve global targets? Only a severe belt-tightening would enable nations to 'regularly adjust' their emissions-reducing pledges to meet goals established elsewhere. After all, strong economies are built on the principle that 'affordability' entitles one to 'the right' to purchase goods and services. How do we now redirect the attitudes of millions of people whose fundamental motivation to earn more money is to acquire previously inaccessible goods? This is no less difficult a prospect than placing a nation's citizens on a voluntary diet in order to achieve internationally agreed-upon healthy weights.

Covid-19's routine lockdowns, varying curfews and enforceable controls (social distancing, mask wearing, hand washing and testing requirements) have shed light on nations' citizens varying attitudes toward similar, if not identical, local burdens aimed at achieving a global target – the eradication of a deadly virus. One could say that each nation tacitly agreed to enforce whatever controls were needed to contain the virus and its variants. Varying outcomes reflected each nation's citizens' capacities to endure local burdens. One notable outlier was Sweden, whose Covid-19 deaths per million far exceeded those of other Nordic nations and actually put its neighbors on alert given its more lax approach to preventing community spread. Finland, Norway and Denmark kept their Swedish borders closed long after opening up borders to essential travelers. Swedish researcher Therese Sefton attributes Sweden's different approach to the dismantling of the welfare state in the late 1980s and the fragmentation of government responsibilities among federal, regional and municipalities (Jakobsen 2020). She adds, 'Swedish authorities have had major problems in formulating a strategy that is clear and unambiguous and that brings people together in solidarity' (Jakobsen 2020). Adding insult to injury, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development assigned Sweden the 'lowest possible grade' for its poor handling of Covid-19 (Jakobsen 2020).

Simon Caney's forward-looking approach to distributive justice identifies the potential harms (just burdens) people incur in order to achieve mutually agreed-upon outcomes (just targets) (Caney 2018, 666). The comprehensiveness of his ideal principle is admirable, especially his strong- integrationist approach that stresses gathering a plurality of burdens to identify some general principle of justice that can be used to distribute responsibilities aimed at both mitigation and adaption. He terms this approach holism, in contrast to atomism, which requires distinct principles to determine the distribution of responsibilities owing to the cost of each burden. What worries me, however, is the assumption that parties will voluntarily carry out their commitments to achieve their joint goals just because they have agreed to just targets and just burdens.

When it comes to climate change, Swedes have proven their willingness to accept costly burdens, such as taking long-distance international trains instead of flying, having Europe's smallest families (1.8 children on average) and paying fees for cars to enter cities, such as Göteborg, where Volvo's headquarters is located. Until 2022, Sweden consistently outranked every other nation on the Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI 2022). Such disciplined behavior articulates Swedes' environmental values. Moreover, their identity reflects their natural environment, so they clearly consider it imperative to defeat global warming before its effects reach Sweden. Extreme climes affecting the health of forests, lakes and agricultural lands elsewhere pose a huge threat to Swedes' fish and berry diet, if not their outdoor lifestyles.

In my view, pragmatic Swedes defied Caney's forward-looking model during the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic. Despite just targets (minimise community spread), they refused to endure just burdens (globally recommended measures) as if the opportunity costs far outweighed their advantages (saving lives, while minimising stress on healthcare workers, first responders and hospital supplies). To everyone's surprise, Swedes resisted confinement for months on end: they remained unmasked and kept childcare, primary schools, offices and restaurants and bars open, while neighboring nations enforced confinement. Numerous scholars have posed varying explanations for why Swedes initially refused practices known to minimise the spread of Covid-19. One view suggests that Swedes trust scientists and government officials more than citizens of other Nordic nations, who listen to politicians.

Another view suggests that the early 1990s economic reforms that destroyed the welfare state broke the system from top to bottom and destroyed communication mechanisms. I do not pretend to know what motivated Swedes to seriously delay confinement procedures enforced elsewhere. What interests me here is their pragmatism. When it comes to climate change, this chapter's primary concern, their incredible discipline must be motivated by perceived

opportunity costs (loss of berries, fishing and skiing) rather than conformity or rule-following. Sweden was not unique. Even when targets reflect consensus, there are outliers who either deem burdens ridiculous or seriously underestimate their risks. This is especially the case for global warming, since like the spread of Covid-19, CO2 concentrations rise geometrically, thus increasing everyone's ordinary risks (SkepticalScience 2011).

In 2002, Thomas Pogge remarked that it is difficult for societies to curb consumption and pollution when opportunity costs are perceived as exceeding long-term benefits, thus anticipating the way local burdens (lost opportunity costs) make achieving just targets exceedingly difficult. To counter such problems, he proposed the global resource dividend (GRD), a tax calibrated to each nation's resource extraction rate. He claimed that the 'GRD reform can produce great ecological benefits that are hard to secure in a less concerted way because of familiar collective-action problems, each society has little incentive to restrain its consumption and pollution, because the opportunity cost of such a restraint falls on it alone while the costs of depletion and pollution are spread worldwide and into the future' (Pogge 2002, 206). As already noted, pecuniary penalties that curb consumption and pollution cannot compensate citizens for degraded land. In 2018, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services described 75% of Earth's surface as already 'substantially degraded' (IPBES 2018).

One solution under consideration is to identify 'sector goals', rather than global goals, such that members of either geographic or economic groups (such as bilateral treaties, city or state initiatives and the Group of 20) or industrial sectors (such as energy, aviation, steel, forestry and technology) police their members' incapacity to achieve just targets. Such a view accommodates Carol Gould's 'common activity' principle, whereby 'people with shared aims and goals… have a valid claim to the participation in the decisions necessary to achieve those aims or goals' (Dahbour 2005, 610). While it may be easier for sectors to establish and achieve just targets than global initiatives, members can still abandon 'just burdens' when perceived opportunity costs outweigh the just target's advantages.

Moreover, behind every industrial sector are individual human actors who make decisions on behalf of their enterprises. Decision makers who value their transnational corporation's quarterly profits over protecting environments from degradation make a mockery of just burdens, while paying lip service to just targets. Fortunately, UNFCCC meetings regularly assemble thousands of delegates committed to protecting their own environment. These thousands of value-holders exemplify the view: 'How can you destroy a world if you're *hooked* into it?' which Jeremiah Day uttered during his improvisatory video *What Would You Do for Love and Country? (*The Sivens Example, 2020-21) on view during "Citoyenne Reprise' at NETWERK in Aalst, BE.

3. Articulating 'Nonhuman Rights'

Elsewhere, I have argued that one explanation for the limited success of the Paris Agreement and Katowice Climate Package is that both ignore the role of water in cooling the planet. Waterway and groundwater restoration remain crucial tools for cooling our planet and reducing sea-level rise, making hydrological justice an indispensable component of climate justice (Spaid 2020b, 144). My focus here, though, concerns what I consider the greatest strength of the pluralist COP process in generating international agreements. Since each COP delegate hails from a unique environment, attendees feel duty-bound to defend their particular territory in order to ensure their community's well-being and prosperity, as well as that of future generations and inhabitants (Andina 2020). By expanding the number of delegates well beyond that of the typical UN member-states' representatives, the COP process enables many more voices to be heard, which makes this process invaluable. As a result, many more stories are voiced, recorded and evaluated than would be otherwise. Moreover, such a diverse range of global witnesses increases conference attendees' capacities to empathise with and understand situations that differ from most delegates' personal experiences.

One of the implicit advantages of the COP process is the thunderous chorus of prevailing values, which has led the world's citizens to recognise increasingly and understand the importance of attributing rights such as 'liberty, autonomy, equality and fairness' to nonhuman actors such as waterways, plants and animals. Nonhuman rights are considered on par with the UN's 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, for which only 48 out of 58 UN members originally voted. Yet over 70 years later, it is widely accepted. Since 1948, additional conventions have been drawn up and signed to protect rights related to children, refugees and disabled persons, among others. No

doubt, the global community will continue adding more rights.

Nonhuman rights currently in play across the planet recognise and protect the rights of local environments such as forests, rivers, glaciers, mountains, ancient territories and even wild rice. The move to recognise nonhuman rights differs from the Nonhuman Rights Project, an NGO focused on animal rights. Meanwhile, communities in nations such as Australia, Bangladesh, Columbia, Ecuador, India, New Zealand and the United States have adopted laws, and in some cases constitutions, to protect nonhuman rights (Bresler 2020). Switzerland's constitution recognises the dignity of individual plants, while Colombia's supreme court ruled in 2018 that the Amazon River is a 'rights-bearing entity'. In adopting such documents, citizens have made their environmental values, which include nonhuman rights, explicit.

Consider the proposed World Water Law, which articulates a plan to protect waterways:

We, citizens of Earth, call for and commit to working together to ensure that a binding international law is put in place for the immediate and universal protection of all Water, as the first vital step towards global cooperation for effective, worldwide social and ecological healing.

The World Water Law requires: (1) the uncompromising protection and restoration of all natural water sources, watersheds, aquifers, rivers, lakes, wetlands, estuaries and oceans; (2) the rewilding of ecosystems, necessary for the restoration of the planetary watercycle; (3) the guaranteed free access of all humans and animals to natural, uncontaminated Water.

The *World Water Law* holds all governments, corporations, communities, and individuals, fully accountable for their impact on all waters everywhere. This one Law serves as a unifying foundation for all governments and citizens to work together with community-led wisdom and stewardship councils in ways that effectively serve the health and vitality of the whole (WaterCodes 2021).

No doubt, enacting nonhuman rights across the globe will be insufficient to curtail bad actors from profiting off of other people's cherished environments. Just as the citizens of nearly 90 nations have pushed their political representatives to draft constitutions that address human rights, locals will elect politicians whose platforms aim to defend popularly held environmental values, including nonhuman rights. Such rights publicise people's special appreciation for beings that are ordinarily overlooked and thus risk going unacknowledged. When environmental values are made explicit, local inhabitants' defense of nonhuman rights is warranted. Bound together in a joint venture, value-holders feel authorised to govern and protect invaluable beings in their shared care, granting special attention to particular places' nonhuman inhabitants. Even if such values are merely local, the value- holders' authority is rather universal, since outsiders will be forced to recognise such rights, however *outré*. Such values are likely to reflect obscure populations' peculiar proclivities, leaving transnational corporations no other option than to deploy corporate lobbyists to fight the popularisation of nonhuman rights, precisely because values made explicit empower value- holders to take legal action against harmful outsiders.

4. From Passions to Shared Values

One argument against granting non-human beings rights on par with human beings is that what drives us to value nonhuman rights is rather 'emotionally-infused', making such actions morally unjustifiable since we lack valid reasons. So long as our reasons remain out of reach, critics can claim that COP delegates who find others' testimonies persuasive or citizens who elect politicians because they promise to extend nonhuman rights are simply swayed by their emotions. As such, nonhuman rights advocates are merely responding to happy pictures of cute animals, sad stories regarding species loss or anger-prompting images of industrial wastelands. Politicians may even use such tactics to lure votes. As we shall see, we are right to worry that basic emotions such as sadness, happiness, fear, disgust, anger and surprise might influence our thoughts since they sometimes engender beliefs that inadvertently alter or conflict with our values. Moreover, images that catch our attention and trigger emotional responses rarely prompt us to take action. A picture or story may alert us to problems caused by nonhuman beings' lack of rights, but taking action requires firsthand knowledge of the environment's condition, the belief that what we

value demands protection plus an awareness of our options.

Even if 'emotional responses signal values, they are not *sine qua non*. What people go to bat for is what they truly value, and thus appreciate' (Spaid 2020a, 130). In *Valuing Emotions*, Michael Stocker (1996, 27) argues that emotions are extremely important for the good life, but they are not reducible to either desires or reasons. He does not consider awareness of our emotions key, since a person could feel shame but not be able to explain why (Stocker 1996, 22). Moreover, emotions can be misleading. Even if we fear bees, we are unlikely to lead a campaign to eradicate them. Despite our fears, we are just as likely to be passionate about preventing colony-collapse disorder. We do not simply pay lip service to our preferences and dislikes.

According to Bruun et al. (2009), 'It might be the case that although emotions do not themselves represent or present values, they are nevertheless associated with some sort of intentional relation to values… Emotions should therefore be described as reactions to felt danger, injustice or other values or to what seems to be the felt danger of objects, the felt injustice of situations, etc.'. This view seems right since emotions seem to signal values (Spaid 2020a). The problem is that some philosophers do not consider acting on feelings on par with acting for a reason. To sidestep this quagmire, Julie Tannenbaum (2002, 321) distinguishes between the manner of doing something (how) and one's motive (why) for doing something. In so doing, she demonstrates that emotionally infused actions such as 'compassionately comforting one's own child' can be considered acting from duty and are thus no less morally motivated.

Since our emotional responses can be misleading, it is imperative that we double-check them as we do our ordinary perceptions. For example, many people get nervous and agitated when a bee flies by. They obviously fear getting stung, but when asked what they think of bees, they typically recognise bees' importance as pollinators. Our fears are real, but our emotions are not veridical in the sense that they are not fool proof (reliable indicators of our thoughts). Similarly, people who find mouldy food disgusting tend to discard it straight away. Others find it no less disgusting, but they have little qualms about scraping mould off jam or rinsing it off peels prior to preparing marmalade. As we age, we learn when to distrust disgust (Spaid 2021) and how to substantiate our emotional responses.

One widespread complaint regarding websites that request 'likes' is that clicking 'like' merely conveys positive feelings. In fact, the term 'slacktavist' was invented to account for the way people click 'like', yet contribute nothing, or what Slavoj Žižek argues confuses 'interpassivity' with 'interactivity' (Spaid 2019, 674). It is no wonder that our emotional responses to the surfeit of images depicting catastrophic fires, hurricanes and desertification have yet to prompt changes to daily routines that admittedly exacerbate global warming. Consider that 70% of American voters (up from 48% in 2017) claim that the United States (US) government must 'take action to address climate change' (Milman 2020), yet SUVs still outsell cars at a rate of two to one. Despite this disconnect, the US's energy-related CO2 emissions fell in 10 of the past 15 years thanks to a greater reliance on renewable energies and the use of natural gas instead of coal-fired electric plants (EIA 2021b). Following a record 10% drop in 2020, greenhouse gas emissions rose by 6.2% in 2021 due to truck traffic and a rise in coal power, as higher natural gas prices caused a '17% spike in coal generation' (NPR 2022). Initially, this seems exemplary of citizens not accepting burdens required to meet targets, but in fact energy producers likely made this decision on behalf of their consumers in order to avoid profit losses that affect investors more than consumers. Were consumers given the chance to choose between paying 17% more for gas to avoid burning coal, as they do when they pay on average 42% more for organic produce, they could make their values explicit. So long as consumers lack opportunities to act on their values in order to make them explicit, fearing climate change's effects or grieving over species loss remain temporary, albeit spontaneous emotional responses that bear little weight on people's conscience.

5. Actions as Values

When we instigate harmful actions, we are either bad actors, whose actions align with our perverse values; or our terrible judgements facilitated events that have effectively betrayed our values. Destructive choices reveal far more about our values than rational pleas, let alone emotional responses, which are easily primed if not misleading. And primed emotions, especially fear, tends to pervert our judgements. Those of us who self-identify as doing our part to

mitigate climate change regularly engage in value-juggling, even if we do not literally weigh the impact of every choice versus our articulated values. In prioritising family safety over carbon emissions, most consumers deem SUVs safer than cars. Fortunately, our identities play selective roles, helping us to modify our actions, but only if we have made our values (backed by knowledge) explicit. Some consider climate change to pose a far greater danger to their descendants than the risk of head-on collisions, where cars are increasingly at risk of getting hit by larger vehicles. SUVs perceived safety mostly reflects their predominance.

Let us return to nonhuman beings' rights. Those of us who get wrapped up in advocating for particular environmental causes, such as nonhuman rights, are driven by our passions, which are what Stocker (1996, 153) calls 'enacted emotions'. In other words, even if we do not know the content of our beliefs, we soon discover the things for which we are willing to go to bat. No doubt, 'The fact of caring affects our judgements by making us recognise certain facts as reasons to act' (Bruun et al.). Similarly, feelings of love, admiration, disappointment or resentment effectively prompt direct action even though we may not be able to grasp, let alone explain, the actual causes or underlying reasons for said feelings and any resultant actions. On this level, our actions serve as evidence for our beliefs, which eventually guide us to articulate our values.

Emotions that are felt but remain unarticulated or unnoticed are not beliefs. By contrast, when we act on our passions, they become dispositional like beliefs. We, or perhaps our friends, glean our passions from our actions, enabling our passions to become belief-like (articulatable). Similarly, values that remain unarticulated become belief-like when we act on them. If we come for a less resource-exploitative and energy-intensive car but leave with an SUV since the salesperson stressed family safety, we are articulating different values even if the salesperson tricked us. When we do not exercise good judgement, we risk acting on beliefs coloured more by emotions than values. By contrast, those who are passionate about watersheds because they connect waterways, cool the planet and nourish living beings are acting on far more than mere emotions, such as surprise or delight.

In *Mind and World*, John McDowell (1996, 140) challenges Donald Davidson's view that only a belief can count as a reason for beliefs. McDowell offers perceptual experience as an alternative reason for beliefs. What gets lost in this debate is the way perceptual experiences alter our beliefs, making McDowell's insight pertinent, yet Davidson's assessment prevails. Our passions are typically the result of revelatory perceptual experiences that alter prior beliefs, making us even more committed to new beliefs than earlier ones. As a result, people who advocate for nonhuman beings' rights articulate beliefs that reflect shared values regarding living beings deemed worthy of protection, such as their very own children, which not only reflects their identities but commits them in ways that laws rarely do.

Conclusion: Virtue Ethics vs. Explicit Values

Virtue ethics posits ethics as a kind of long-winded checklist of virtues (Rachels 1999, 176) for which we relate to a handful, though certainly not all. For example, tolerance 'for the sake of tolerance' is rather indifference. Moreover, civility, dependability, industriousness and tactfulness can easily become vices. By contrast, values are 'personally held', idiosyncratic beliefs that reflect our character because they are infused with our personal identities. Values are a subset of what Quassim Cassam (2014, 29) terms substantial self-knowledge, which includes knowledge of our character, values, abilities, attitudes, reasons, emotions and what makes us happy. When framed as idiosyncratic beliefs, values appear to lack normativity, but in fact, their distinct relationship to our identity grants them normativity, because they reflect our commitment to bear witness to our identities. We (and our observers) discover our values through routine daily actions. When our actions do not cohere with the values we claim, we feel pressured to change one or the other, lest we be deemed hypocrites. The Values Approach also applies to politicians and corporations whose inconsistent policies and poor judgements harm environments and citizens alike.

While virtues belong to someone else (whichever philosopher assembled the list), our values are our own, which means that we can pass them to friends, fellow inhabitants and future generations to become shared values. Psychologists Rozin *et al.* note that values, rather than mere preferences, drive the social practices that get passed from generation to generation.

Moralization converts preferences into values and in doing so influences cross-generational transmission (because

values are passed more effectively in families than are preferences), increases the likelihood of internalization, invokes greater emotional response and mobilizes the support of governmental and other cultural institutions (Rozin *et al.* 1997, 67).

Similarly, Alexandra Plakias (2018, 198) argues that food ethics 'protect us from foods embodying toxic values – values that threaten, not our physical health, but our ideological integrity and therefore our very identity'. This notion coheres with research that shows that vegetarians who are vegetarians for moral, rather than health reasons, register stronger pangs of disgust towards meat (Rozin *et al.* 1997, 71). Being a 'moral' vegetarian reflects values that inform people's self-identities.

When we live according to our values, we feel pride precisely because our values are ours and not someone else's. Rather than worry what people will think if we do not own a car, public transport advocates take pride in their transportation choices. Activists working to make the World Water Law as common as the rights of the disabled or children are acting on their own values. Our original concerns regarding climate change may have been prompted by pictures or stories, but modifying our habits such that we actually reduce our carbon footprint requires that we grasp the situation at hand and commit to making our values explicit so that we are prepared to uphold ameliorative values, environmental values, nonhuman beings' rights or some combination thereof.

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