# Creation, Environment and Ethics

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Edited by

Rebekah Humphreys and Sophie Vlacos

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# FOREWORD

## MARY MIDGLEY

How many philosophers are there who can manage to write all the time about something interesting? Leafing through the list of Robin Attfield's works, my eye is continually caught by topics that I want at once to hear more about—wildernesses, animals, euthanasia, Thomas Traherne, unfathomed caves, secular humanism, biocentrism, efficiency in universities, the Continental Shelf, the Precautionary Principle, International Justice and the Third World, Aldo Leopold and Humpty Dumpty. All this on top of the Good of Trees, which is one of those discussions that one never forgets about, so that every oak and beech must surely still be thanking him for bringing the matter to the public attention.

It is really remarkable how Attfield has resisted the deadly tribalism of our age which shuts academic subjects up in separate cells in case they might infect one another. And his feat in doing this is especially surprising since that quarantine is imposed with special zeal over religion, which is thought to be particularly infectious. Long ago, when he (and I) first started writing, philosophers used to police these frontiers pretty sternly. The reproach of being "not real philosophy" hung over every topic that had not been mentioned during the last year in *Mind*. Philosophers did indeed know that some partly civilized territories existed on the borders of philosophy proper, notably philosophy of science and philosophy of religion. But prudent graduate-students were warned to avoid these places and their inhabitants were not supposed to intrude into serious, central business. Certainly nobody was expected to let loose, not just one of them but two simultaneously by using a title like *Creation, Evolution and Meaning*. This sort of combination might not have surprised Spinoza, Aristotle, Kant or indeed most of the mighty dead who are still named in our current syllabuses. But it was held that the times had become sterner and such laxness could no longer be tolerated.

These regulations, however, never deterred Attfield. By flatly ignoring the vetoes he has played a great part in bringing down some of the walls, so that travel between topics has become a good deal easier today. Indeed, with the mixed courses that are now so common, "philosophy of" this, that

and the other is now quite widespread, and even sometimes gets departments and courses of its own. But of course, since academic tribalism is endemic, this can be a mixed blessing, leading to the building of new walls enclosing new enclaves… In fact, it is certainly not time for Attfield to stop writing. His spirit is going to be needed for a long time yet.

# INTRODUCTION

REBEKAH HUMPHREYS
AND
SOPHIE VLACOS

Environmental ethics rose to prominence in the socially committed atmosphere of the early 1970s, an era beset by social and political uncertainties quite different from our own, and yet an era which has proved instrumental to the ongoing tenor of much of our social, political and ethical debate today. Since the time of its inception, when activists began to demand a philosophy of the environment, environmental ethics has naturally laid its emphasis upon practice, upon the need for practical solutions to the very real and present ecological dangers we now know so well; pollution, the depletion of our natural resources, our treatment of nonhuman species and overpopulation to name but a few. At the same time however, the challenges posed by environmental damage and the call to positive action have instigated a number of challenges at the theoretical level, compelling the renegotiation of a number of longstanding meta-ethical and indeed broader epistemological attitudes, towards rights and entitlements, the nature of humankind's moral responsibilities to the nonhuman world for example, and towards the philosopher's relation to empirical research, the bearing of scientific enquiry, and the very nature of ethical discourse. To this extent environmental ethics has proved itself a resolutely open and mixed discourse, one which has welcomed the challenges of global politics and scientific research as much as it has the general moral support of the wider intellectual community. The temptation of course, is to suppose that it could never have been otherwise, since environmental ethics must by its very nature be a reflective discipline, to an extent dependent upon the economic and ecological scrutiny of hard science and the shifting allegiances of the international community. Still, the blueprint for environmental ethics today cannot not be associated with the spirit of the age in which it first came to prominence, or with the overriding commitments of its founding voices. It is surely this overwhelming consensus which has enabled otherwise partisan representatives,

theists and atheists for example, to participate in fruitful exchanges—regarding the compatibility of evolution and creation, or the compossibility of a beneficent God, of natural suffering and human wrongdoing—that are of equal principled import to all philosophers, regardless of one's environmental or ethical credentials?

A uniquely engaged, responsive and diverse branch of philosophy then, environmental ethics has developed whilst maintaining the usefulness and the purposefulness of its distinction within wider ethical discourse. To this extent Robin Attfield, a stalwart of the environmental-ethical community from the very beginning and a guiding voice in the development of the field, can be seen as something of an exemplary figure in this most exemplary of philosophical branches. One imagines that he would characterise himself as an environmental ethicist first and foremost, but he is a specialist of plural interests, with a distinguished career in ethics punctuated by some first-rate aesthetic, linguistic and theological reflections as well. For the non specialists among us, one of the most striking elements to emerge from Attfield's career and our contributors' reflections upon his work is the prevailing sense of restrained and rigorously garnered optimism underlying his intellectual journey and the philosophical positions he defends. It is with this sense of optimism and, if we may hazard, wonder for the natural world, that Attfield's environmental, aesthetic and theological interests are combined. In the first chapter Attfield writes in some detail about his career and the paths which led him to the ethical positions he adopts. Naturally, there is no competing with this personal testament and so we leave it to Attfield to elaborate upon this journey.

Given the tenor and indeed the duration of Attfield's career it was not hard to find an appropriately varied, willing and furthermore impressive list of contributors for this book. Wishing to celebrate Attfield's career and most importantly, to provide an accurate representation of his impact, we think it of particular advantage to be able to present our contributors' work with accompanying responses from Attfield. These comments follow individually as separate chapters between the works of our contributors. Once more we leave Attfield to present his thoughts and arguments on these matters. What follows therefore is a brief précis of our contributors' arguments.

In Chapter Two Nigel Dower tackles Attfield's ethics of climate change, emphasising the latter's hallmark commitments to the ethical considerations of both future generations and non-human species. Attfield's

biocentrism and consequentialism do not however undermine his overwhelming conviction that climate change and the discourse of environmental ethics must be treated in conjunction with questions of human suffering and poverty in the developing world. For Attfield, and indeed for Dower, human development and environmental action are complimentary discourses; the alleviation of poverty and the alleviation of an increasingly choked and depleted planet are the aspirations of a common ethic with shared aims and goals. Such a desideratum leads both Attfield and Dower to reject the possibility of a single-handed approach to climate change (Dower, 19).

In the first part of his paper Dower examines the unilateral proposals for climate change represented by the Kyoto Protocol of 1990 (whereby a country's historical emissions were calculated upon the basis of their output in 1990 and a projective forecast for reductions made upon that basis), and by the aggregate emission proposal (wherein industrialised nations are penalised relative to their historical culpability). Dower explains why Attfield largely rejects the principle of historical indemnity as a means to calibrating future entitlement, aligning it to Attfield's wider preference for non-historical ethical principles. On the pragmatic level, historical approaches would inevitably lead to disagreement amongst countries as to their relative measures of past emissions. More generally, past emissions would set the benchmark for future goals irrespective of future demands and a changing global demographic, presently evident in the rapid industrialisation of nations such as China and India.

Whilst Attfield accepts the general principle of the Atmospheric Commons and the need to apportion these commons relative to national needs, and whilst in principle he accepts the idea of carbon trading amongst nations—given their relative industrial capacities and demands and the relative poverty of those less industrialised countries—, Attfield asserts a sage note of caution with regards the real practical and indeed moral advantages of carbon trading. The latent danger of carbon trading is the risk it poses to the very necessary future development of poverty-stricken countries. The reduction of Third World debt is of no benefit whatsoever to the poverty-stricken individual if it comes at the cost of real, positive development on the ground. The worry is that developing countries will trade their emissions rights at the expense of necessary developmental emissions. Attfield's line is that the kind of emissions involved in raising standards of living for the world's poorest must be secured against carbon offsetting.

With these considerations in sight, Dower presents three alternative means of apportioning environmental atmospheric entitlement in which both he and Attfield find some more or less propitious approaches. These include Meyer's "Contract and Convergence" approach, wherein the primary goal is a gradual contraction of global emissions and a progressive convergence of national emissions entitlements, and the proposals of Greenhouse Developments Rights, where greenhouse gas mitigation and development for the satisfaction of basic needs in poorer countries are deemed the shared responsibility of all people at or above a certain level of financial security. The great benefit of this approach, emphasised by Attfield and later developed by Dower, is the shift in moral responsibility from the conglomerate nation to the individual agent. Herein one finds the kind of loop-hole whereby wealthy residents of poorer countries are shielded from the limitations imposed upon citizens of wealthy, carbon profligate countries helpfully curtailed (Dower, 19).

Drawing upon Attfield's arguments, Dower provides compelling justification for Attfield's approach to environmental ethics, but in the second part of his discussion Dower moves towards a more reflective consideration of the ethical and the pragmatic considerations at work within these different principles. From here Dower presents a minor, albeit more than academic distinction between Attfield's thinking and his own. Earlier on in the paper, Dower recognises Attfield's astute exemplification of the way in which different ethical commitments determine the tenor of one's practical solutions (Dower, 17). But whilst Dower recognises the ethical coherence behind Attfield's mode of theorising, he is wary of over-discriminating between attitudes which are practically, but not necessarily theoretically sympathetic to one's own ethical position. Proving himself a keen pragmatist, Dower's point is that we must prioritise the common practical goals of disparate ethical positions in spite of possible disagreements concerning the theoretical rationales behind them. Whilst we cannot disregard these ethical rationales altogether, we cannot afford to alienate sectors of the environmental conversation or to foreclose dialogue and co-operation amongst the disparate but more or less practically united community of environmental ethicists (Dower, 21-24). In short, different ethical positions may foster convergent practical benefits, and it is practical consensus alone which promises the brightest future for our environment. For this reason, Dower affirms the need to draw-out the pragmatic convictions reflecting our ethical distinctions at the theoretical level, all the while developing this argument in the context of two

"quintessential 'Attfield'" commitments, namely to non-human species and to future generations (Dower, 18).

In the final instance, Dower draws our attentions to Attfield's treatment of "mediated responsibilities", to the fact that morally significant, in this case environmentally compromising actions, are very often carried out on our behalf at a remove, by the power companies who provide our electricity say, or the governments who establish enabling contracts and statutes with these companies or indeed other nations (Dower, 26). Touching upon the issue of democratic representation and the paradox of the undemocratic electorate—is the undemocratic policy in fact democratic if democratically sanctioned?—Dower ends by addressing the ethical responsibilities of the individual, specifically in relation to national governmental policies. Finally he makes what he calls a "constructive amendment" to Attfield's practical, and in Dower's opinion overly state-centric stance, arguing for the ethical benefits of a more individualistic, less nationalistic or centralised approach to the environment (Dower, 31). For Dower it is the vanguard minority of individually committed agents, groups often deemed radical in contrast to the prevailing majority, who possess the greatest power to transform public opinion and effect the swiftest and most profound change to environmental attitudes and habits of consumption.

In Chapter Four, Alan Holland analyses some of Attfield's key claims in *Creation, Evolution and Meaning* (Attfield, 2006). In Part I, Holland discusses what he calls "[Attfield's] re-working of the cosmological argument" (Holland, 41); a re-working which involves an appeal to the principle of sufficient reason (as outlined by Nozick, 1981, 140-142), which, for Attfield, states that "there is a sufficient reason for whatever could have been otherwise, except where there is a sufficient reason to the contrary" (Attfield, 2006, 57, quoted by Holland, Part I, 41). Holland interprets Attfield as follows: if one takes into account the principle of sufficient reason, an explanation is required for the existence of the material world; for this existence is something that could have been otherwise (there could have been nothing rather than something), and God as the creator stands as an explanation for the existence of the material world. Holland's focus in this section is on the supposition that an explanation really is needed for the existence of the material world. In line with Nozick's principle, Holland suggests that there may be sufficient reason for supposing the contrary, and after clearly setting out the premises of his argument he concludes that "there is no reason for

supposing, and every reason for not supposing, that the existence of material objects, per se, requires explanation in terms of something other than themselves" (Holland, Part I, 42).

Holland goes some way with Attfield in accepting that belief in creation and evolution are compatible. However, Holland makes a distinction between two senses of Darwinism: Darwinism as the belief in evolution, and "methodological Darwinism" as a method of science which places significant importance on the providing of evidence. Holland questions whether methodological Darwinism is compatible with belief in a creator. It would seem that methodological Darwinism would require "the admitting of evidence" (F. Darwin 1902, 57, quoted by Holland, Part II, 44), and it is not clear that there is sufficient evidence of a creator.

In Part III, Holland discusses Attfield's re-working of Keith Ward's "argument from value" (Ward, 1982, 89-120), and in particular discusses the claim that "design on the part of a purposive and loving creator is a reasonable interpretation of the immense amount of value in the world" (Attfield, 2006, 151, quoted by Holland, Part III, 45). Holland analyses what he sees as two assumptions underlying this claim: firstly, that value judgments are objective and, secondly, that the amount of value in the world is something which can be estimated. In relation to the first supposed assumption, Holland offers a preferred perspectivist account of value (Holland, 45-46). In respect of the second supposed assumption, Holland draws our attention to (among other things) the difficulties involved in weighing up the value in the world and involved in the claim that there is an immense amount of value in world (Holland, 47-48).

Holland praises Attfield's response to a related objection against the belief in a good God; the objection being that the evil in the world casts doubt on the plausibility of such a belief. Attfield claims that "we have no reason to believe that a world with a better balance of good over evil than the actual world is possible, or that the actual world is not a world that a good God would create" (Attfield, 2006, 141, quoted by Holland, Part III, 47). While Attfield does not necessarily have to show that the world as we know it is the best possible world (something Holland recognises), Attfield does indeed try to show this by pointing out that some evils could be seen to be necessary parts of a natural world that generates value. Although Holland believes that Attfield's case here is convincing, he argues that "the belief in a beneficent creator does require us also to believe both that there is a preponderance of value in the world, and that no greater preponderance could possibly have been brought about" (Holland, Part III,

47), and that we have no adequate reason to believe that this is indeed the case.

Holland criticises Attfield's claim that evolution is purposive in its creation of value in the world (a claim which may further suggest that the value in the world can be seen to be the purposive result of a creator). In contrast to Attfield, Holland argues that it is possible that the world and all its value came about in a non-purposive way; such as by chance and random events and, if this is the case, the value in the world cannot be explained by reference to design (Holland, Part IV, 49).

Finally, Holland discusses Attfield's view that meaningful life could be best achieved through belief in a creator; a creator that has generated the valuable states of affairs that exist in the world. In particular, recognition of ourselves as stewards of all that has value in the natural world can enhance the prospects for a fully meaningful life. Holland objects to Attfield's view here and argues that, in the light of objections outlined in Part III, the prospects for a fully meaningful life are "hostage to a value calculus of cosmic proportions"; a calculus which is "beyond… human capacities" (Holland, Part V, 50). Holland further argues that belief in a creator, far from enabling us to achieve a fully meaningful life, "casts the possibility of such a life into the greatest of doubt" (Holland, Part V, 50).

Creation, ethics and environment are the dominant themes of this book and it is in the sixth chapter by Christopher Southgate that creation, invested with its full theological resonance, comes to the fore. It is important to note straight away that neither Attfield nor Southgate question the fundamental coherence of divine creation and evolutionary development; such is the nature of evolutionary theodicy named in Southgate's title. For the sceptic of course, there is no greater challenge to the presumed benevolence and clemency of God than the endemic suffering of the Darwinian order; disease, predation, famine, and in the most extreme cases total species extinction, are the necessary conditions of evolutionary flourishing on a global scale. The beauty, ingenuity and diversity of creation feeds upon the carcass of an incalculable and irrepressible suffering, does it not? What God, whose God, could warrant such misery? To discourse upon evolutionary theodicy is thus to discourse upon natural ethics, upon the existence of natural evil and the potential balm of a greater good. But natural suffering, of which Southgate treats in the earlier sections of his paper, is no longer the full story. To this difficulty we must add the more timely evils of man-made environmental damage. No longer is it possible to pose the question of divine creation

without due consideration of man's role within the course of natural history. If creation involves design, and is a theme of theodicy, where does humankind's destructive impulse, its propensity for environmental evils, fit within the divinely sanctioned natural order? Southgate's proposals concerning the problems of natural, evolutionary suffering and human defilement are sympathetic to Attfield's approach but they are not however identical.

To emphasise the common ground between Southgate and Attfield we may begin by emphasising their shared criticism of the kind of "dualistic" interpretations of evolution and divine creation, whereby God would represent a power extrinsic to evolution itself, and a power moreover that is only present at certain critical and apparently inexplicable junctures within the evolutionary process. Both thinkers reject the notion of God as a kind of supernumerary catalyst or information encoder, opting instead for a vision of God's consistent reciprocity with nature. But this reciprocity, in Southgate's own words, "greatly intensifies the problem of theodicy" insofar as it "makes God not only the author of a process to which vast quantities of suffering and extinction are intrinsic, but it also posits that God is efficiently active in the process without commuting that disvalue" (Southgate, 63). Attfield's and Southgate's respective handling of the matter forms the common ground from whence their opinions begin to diverge.

There is a great deal of nuanced argumentation within Southgate's paper and he draws upon a compendious knowledge of other people's arguments within the field. For the sake of brevity however, it is as well to emphasise the two critical pivots upon which the paper turns. The first of these, alluded to in the "Pangloss" of Southgate's title, concerns Attfield's "only way" argument; this is the thesis that whilst no evidence exists to the contrary, we must assume the actual laws of nature and the less than ideal conditions of evolutionary development to present the only possible means for creation. In fact, Attfield's argument extends to the existence of moral evil, to the evil of human actions within the world as well as the natural evil of evolutionary suffering. We are told that according to Attfield, the "only possible way" view does not contravene the argument for moral agency amongst individuals. That the world could not be otherwise does not mean that there is not free-will amongst God's creatures. It follows for Attfield that moral evil is a consequence of free will, whilst natural evils present "systemic preconditions of the flourishing of billions of creatures

across the ages, as well as of human capacities and of the human endowment" (Attfield, 2006, 143, quoted by Southgate, 64).

Southgate's discussion of Attfield's "only possible way" thesis, and of his own reservations regarding it, enables him to delineate their respective modes of enquiry with economic clarity. This is because the questions occasioned by the "only possible way" thesis cut to the very heart of Attfield's ethical commitments as a philosopher. What is more, they help to disclose something of the continuity between Attfield's philosophical biocentrism and his theological position *vis á vis* evil and suffering.

It is Southgate's ultimate conviction that the validity of Attfield's position would be best served within the wider, and he claims "richer" context of eschatology; within the purview of an as of yet unrealised divine redemption or salvation, wherein Attfield's prescription of the "only possible way", and all wider defences of God's justice, can be placed within the context of future good. Attfield, Southgate claims, provides a "thin defence" of God's justice, focussed the latter feels, rather too much upon God's disposition as a kind of "consequentialist calculator of values against disvalues" (Southgate, 66). Attfield may not agree with this characterisation certainly, but it is true to say that Southgate's emphasis upon redemption, and what is more, upon the co-suffering and co-redemption of God and humans—God's co-suffering with humans and humans' co-redeemerly responsibilities to God—endows the question of divine justice, of God, suffering and necessary evil, with a singularly immediate, and if one is allowed to use such terms in this context, humane or humanistic countenance. By drawing attention to the divergence of their theodicies, Southgate proceeds to elaborate the different environmental ethics arising from this difference of opinion concerning the status of moral and natural evil. Where Attfield's biocentrism and "thin defence" of God's justice leads him to adopt an ethic of stewardship or guardianship with regards the natural world, a position focussed upon humankind's duty to protect the natural environment as God's "trustees", Southgate states his preference for what he terms a "co-redeemerly" ethic. Here the emphasis rests upon the shared work of God and humankind, and the latter's role within that work. Here God's call to His people is evinced squarely in terms of humankind's responsibility to the planet, not for the revival of a lost Edenic ideal, but in the prospect of future hope. But this distinction by no means marks an irreconcilable difference between Attfield and Southgate on the ethical and environmental plane. Southgate accordingly

ends by confirming the validity of stewardship discourse within the context of climate change.

Concentrating on Attfield's *Value, Obligation and Meta-Ethics* (1995), in Chapter Eight Roger Crisp examines Attfield's view about the scope of moral standing extending to non-sentient living individuals such as plants, and analyses Attfield's idea of the good of beings, understood in terms of their flourishing or wellbeing. Crisp's focus is on what he sees as Attfield's perfectionist idea of the good. Attfield's view, he claims, is perfectionist in so far as "the good of any being consists in its "perfecting" those essential qualities that make it the kind of being it is" (Crisp, 88). Crisp claims that a cultural evolutionary explanation may account for some intuitions about the view that moral standing extends to non-sentient beings: "Plants are invaluable for human beings. Without them, we could not exist, since they contribute essential elements to our environment and our health. We gain great enjoyment from eating them and in some cases from contemplating them. So it is easy to see how a group of beings that placed special value on plants might do better than a group which did not and was prepared to sacrifice them for any short-term benefit. An account of cultural evolution, in other words, may have the resources to debunk the intuitions underlying Attfield's perfectionism" (Crisp, 90). Partly by virtue of an adapted hypothetical scenario, Crisp proceeds to demonstrate why he believes talk of the good of non-sentient beings to be insupportable, and argues for a welfarist conception of the good as a notion which involves talk of what is "good for" some individual being; a notion which rests on "what it would be like to be such a being" (Crisp, 91). Thus Crisp presents an idea of the good which, unlike Attfield's, rules out non-sentient beings as candidates for moral standing.

Crisp proceeds to pose a problem for perfectionist positions (one of which he attributes to Attfield). As he claims "According to the perfectionist, we should first seek an impartial, "value-free" account of a being's essential and species-specific nature. But there is a serious danger of the perfectionist allowing her conception of well-being to guide her account of nature. Consider, for example, the remarkable number of perfectionist philosophers over the centuries (Aristotle among them) who have claimed that it is part of our nature to philosophize!" (Crisp, 91-92). He is then wary of the claim that one's good or well-being depends upon fulfilling what is thought to be in one's nature (Crisp, 92). Crisp suggests that a hedonist theory of value, which could be seen as one in which the good is seen in terms of that which increases pleasure, or diminishes pain

and suffering, should be considered as a preferable alternative to a non-hedonistic one when approaching questions about the extent of moral considerability and the idea of the good.

Finally, in Chapter Ten Clare Palmer discusses Attfield's views in respect of sentient animals and their moral standing, and what she calls Attfield's consequential "capacity-oriented" approach to animal ethics: "Attfield's view… is essentially *capacity-oriented*. Moral standing, and what constitutes ethical practice, is based on the flourishing that can flow from the intrinsic capacities that living beings have, independently of these beings' relations to others" (Palmer, 108). Palmer argues that a capacity-oriented approach to animal ethics poses problems for the consequentialist and that this approach does not take sufficient account of relational concerns in determining our moral obligations to sentient animals. There are some relationships that are morally significant, particularly where humans have created relations between themselves and animals in which the animals concerned are dependent on humans for their flourishing. She argues that in considering such relationships and the responsibilities they create, capacity-based consequentialism falls short, partly because of the forward-looking nature of consequentialism and partly because properly considering relational responsibilities requires recognising factors other than consequential ones. But in Chapter Eleven, Attfield suggests that consequentialism, forward-looking as it is, can underpin backward-looking practices such as caring for animals for which one has assumed responsibility.

The recognition of the interests of present, future and prospective individual creatures and the good of all sentient and non-sentient living beings; such are the hallmark traits of Attfield's consequentialist biocentrism. It is nonetheless reassuring to find our contributors presenting Attfield with the range of critical counterpoints that they do. For it confirms that whilst mainstream society may falter over past assurances to safeguard the environment—in spite of an increasingly gloomy and complex picture of environmental damage—the discourse of environmental ethics itself shows no signs of abating or retrenching from the positive commitments, enthusiasms and convictions of its early adherents.

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# CHAPTER ONE

# CREATION, ENVIRONMENT AND ETHICS: SOME CARDIFF-BASED CONTRIBUTIONS TO PHILOSOPHY

ROBIN ATTFIELD

I have been asked to say a little about my research contributions to Philosophy, and am attempting here to comply with that request. (References in this chapter to writings of my own correspond to the list of publications presented elsewhere in this volume. A short bibliography of works of others referred to in this chapter can be found at its end.)

Philosophy students often think of their lecturers as teachers only, rather than as researchers too. My very first students would not have been too far out to think of me in this way, as I had until then published nothing in philosophy, although I had been doing philosophy research in the previous few months at the University of Manchester. That research was continued as my doctoral dissertation, which was entirely composed when I was already in post at Cardiff, having been appointed in January 1968. It was inspired by the work of Dietrich Bonhoeffer on secularisation, and concerned secularisation among philosophers from Bacon to Kant, with some amount of philosophy of religion and history and philosophy of science thrown in. The main theme was that theists can welcome secularisation (for example, critiques of religious claims, together with the practice that generates them) as opposed to secularism (a case of which would be the claim that science explains everything and thus leaves no room for religious belief). A second theme was that the critiques supplied by Hume and Kant of defences of theism from contemporary writers such as Samuel Clarke were inconclusive.

After the doctorate had been awarded in 1972, I tried for several years to find a publisher for a book that would be based on it, but succeeded only when University College Cardiff Press came into being in 1976. With them I published *God and The Secular* (1978), a slightly scaled-down

version of the doctorate; UCCP insisted that the text be shortened by one sixth. Some thirty years later I was able to publish one of the omitted sections, on secularising critiques made of each other by Leibniz on the one hand and Clarke and Newton on the other (2005, actually published 2007). *God and The Secular* received several reviews, including a strongly adverse one from M.A. Stewart, who was understandably annoyed by shoddy work on the part of the publishers, who had sent out a review copy parts of which were printed upside down. Stewart, however, had a reputation for astringent reviews, and a few years later, when I met him, he retracted his adverse remarks, although only in a private conversation. Many years later, David Lamb arranged the republication of this book in 1993 under an Ashgate imprint called Gregg Revivals.

By this time, I had published some ethics articles in prominent journals, including 'On Being Human' in *Inquiry* (1974), 'Against Non-Comparabilism' in *Philosophy* (1975), and 'Towards a Defence of Teleology' in *Ethics* (1975). ("Teleology" was the term then in use for consequentialism.) I had also published shorter pieces on Berkeley (1970) and on Hume (1971) in *Philosophy*, and on religious language in *Sophia* (1970, 1971, 1972) and *Religious Studies* (1973, 1977), which happened to catch the eye of a later referee, Frederick Ferré, but the ethics articles served as the initial steps towards a later and larger project in that field. The following year, a reply was published to my consequentialist account of justice in *Ethics* (1975) by one Louis Kort, and my colleague Barry Wilkins called round and encouraged me to compose a response, telling me at least what kind of thing I should say. So I took him up on this, and published a short rejoinder, 'Racialism, Justice and Teleology' also in *Ethics* (1977), explaining how justice and consequentialism could be reconciled.

Around this time I had two short pieces in *Analysis*, one on collective responsibility (1971), and the other on the analysis of existence on the part of my former teacher, G.E.L. Owen, who used to write about the presocratics, Plato and Aristotle. This was, for a long time, my only published contribution to Ancient Philosophy, and it was an indirect one at that. It was called 'How Things Exist: A Difficulty' (1973). (Michael Durrant tells me that he later came across a reply to it in someone's doctoral thesis.) Michael Durrant also collaborated with me in a joint article, published in *Noûs*, called 'The Irreducibility of 'Meaning'' (1973), which was my only foray into that field until the publication of *Creation, Evolution and Meaning* (2006). In this paper, we resisted analyses of meaning in terms of use, or more specifically of illocutionary act potential, on grounds of their circularity. Michael was very much the senior partner

in this enterprise, but showed great fortitude both in face of repeated requests for revisions from the editor of *Noûs*, Hector-Neri Castañeda, and of intrusions on his time and attention from me, one of them when he was in hospital.

I spent the academic session of 1972-3 teaching at the University of Ife in Nigeria, taking with me not only a wife and a young family but, more relevantly to research in philosophy, a document called 'Forty Related Views'. These forty theses were positions in and around ethics, such as naturalism and consequentialism, which I would have liked to write up in book form. But at that stage I had so much difficulty finding a publisher for *God and The Secular* that this project had to be deferred for several years. Instead I wrote up a by-product of my dissertation, the paper 'Clarke, Collins and Compounds', published in *The Journal of the History of Philosophy* (1977), which later made me one of their readers. There was also an article in *The Journal of Religion* on 'Science and Creation', concerning the paradoxical relations between science and that doctrine (1978). In the late seventies I had a paper on supererogation accepted by *Mind* (1979), and submitted with similar success a paper on moral relativism to *The Monist* for one of their special numbers (1979). There was also a paper on inter-generational reparations, published in the Nigerian journal *Second Order* (1979), and earlier presented to the Cardiff Philosophy Seminar.

While in Nigeria I composed a calypso about De Morgan's Law, suitable to be sung to the tune of 'Immortal, invisible, God only wise'. It runs:

Not either, so neither,
De Morgan he say,
And also vice versa;
It works either way.
Not both, so one only
At most, this he teach;
And also conversely
Just one, so not each.

The Nigerian students, at least, seemed to like this and were seen and heard singing it lustily.

By the late 1970s I had become interested in environmental philosophy, and soon wrote my first paper in that field, 'The Good of Trees', first published in *Journal of Value Inquiry* (1981), and later much anthologised. Sources of this new interest included the influence of Henry Odera Oruka, a colleague at the University of Nairobi, where I spent four

months teaching in 1975. Oruka had attended the World Congress of Philosophy at Varna, Bulgaria, at which he came across one of the earliest papers ever written in this new field, Richard Routley's 'Is There a Need for a New, an Environmental Ethic?' (Routley, 1973); this whetted my appetite. Another source was my reading (on my return to Cardiff) of John Passmore's book *Man's Responsibility for Nature* (1974), to an earlier draft of which Routley had been replying. While endorsing Routley's rejection of anthropocentrism, I was attracted by Passmore's approach to Western ethical traditions vis-à-vis nature. Yet more compelling a source was being asked to teach in 1977 one term's worth of lectures towards the Cardiff course 'Philosophical Aspects of Social and World Problems' in place of Vernon Pratt, who had moved to Lancaster University in 1976. (This course had been approved on a split vote in the Faculty of Arts in 1973, while I was still in Nigeria, and marked the first stirrings of a Cardiff involvement in applied ethics.) Having to teach a field fosters both puzzlement and the adoption of stances within it. And so, before long, deferring plans for writing a work on ethics, I began composing what became *The Ethics of Environmental Concern* (1983), which, as I correctly guessed, was more likely to find a publisher.

This book combined distinctive contributions to the field of environmental ethics, including a defence of a consequentialist version of biocentrism, with a discussion of population ethics owing much to Derek Parfit's (as yet unpublished) work (later published in his *Reasons and Persons* (Parfit, 1984)), together with a critical survey of Passmore's account of Western religious and ethical traditions. In this connection I followed up Passmore's favoured source, Clarence Glacken's *Traces on the Rhodian Shore* (Glacken, 1967), and rapidly found that it supported an account far removed from that based on it by Passmore. At the same time, I was able to redeploy Passmore's classification of what he regarded as "minority traditions" such as that of stewardship, and to cite many of Glacken's sources to show that it was far from the recessive tradition of Passmore's account. At one point I planned an even ampler book, which was to have included a section on environmental politics, but my colleague Professor Thomas McPherson advised me to treat the book as complete as it then stood; and no one has ever objected to this omission. Reviewers ranged from those claiming that this was a survey book (admittedly part of the truth, for it was effectively the second overview of the field, Passmore's having been the first) to those hailing it as deserving an "environmental Oscar". It soon led to my being invited to chair a section of the Montreal World Congress of Philosophy of 1983, and in 1984 to my

being invited to join the Environmental Ethics Working Party of the Ian Ramsey Centre at Oxford University.

There were three substantial papers published separately as by-products of this book. 'Christian Attitudes to Nature' (1983) was a reply to White, who had ascribed anthropocentric and despotic attitudes towards nature to Christianity in a paper in *Science* called 'The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis', and also to Passmore, who had rejected some of White's views and accepted others. It was published in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, and was apparently made prescribed reading in some universities. Jan Decker told me recently that reading it had saved him needing to look up the sources at the time. (Much more recently I published an essay about White in *Environmental Ethics* (2009), which delved into 'The Roots of Roots' (as one section is called).) A second essay was 'Western Traditions and Environmental Ethics' (1983), and discussed historical attitudes to animals. It was published in an Australian collection, but was badly mangled by one of the editors, as emerged from the University of Queensland version. However, I managed to persuade the Open University Press, which published the British version, to include an acknowledgement of the *errata*. The third was 'Methods of Ecological Ethics' (1983) in which I defended reasoning outwards from agreed cases, an approach that most environmental philosophers condemned as "extensionism". This was published in *Metaphilosophy*. (All three essays later appeared together in my Ashgate collection *Environmental Philosophy: Principles and Prospects* (1994).) Another related talk, 'Christianity and the Ecological Crisis', related this research and the themes of *God and The Secular*, and was broadcast on Radio 3 in 1981.

Other papers of the 1980s concerned very different themes. I wrote on the analogical nature of theological predicates in 'Religious Symbols and the Voyage of Analogy' (1980), which somewhat over-used the theme of Scylla and Charybdis, but was still published in the *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion.* My interest in this topic was kindled by my former colleague Humphrey Palmer's book *Analogy* (1973). Some years later I published a second (and more readable) essay in this field in the *Scottish Journal of Religious Studies* (1996). Several papers about Leibniz appeared in *Studia Leibnitiana* (1980), reflecting themes from my dissertation, which were differently echoed in articles and reviews about religious language that appeared in *New Blackfriars* (1980, 1983, 1984); I don't know whether any other Quakers have ever written for that journal. There were also some papers on ethics, such as 'Optimific, Right but not Obligatory' (1982), published in the *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 'Work and the Human Essence' (1984), which appeared in the first

number of *Journal for Applied Ethics*, and another joint paper with Michael Durrant, critical of the communitarianism of D.Z. Phillips and H.O. Mounce, which appeared in *Philosophical Papers* (1981). (Most of the credit for this paper belongs to Michael, who supplied most of the ideas; my role was to make their presentation more reader-friendly.) Another applied philosophy paper was 'Development: Some Areas of Consensus' (1986), which the editor of *Journal of Social Philosophy* declared, in accepting it, "almost the ideal paper" for that journal. In this period I was also able to resuscitate and revise some research on the impacts of secularisation on the history of witchcraft, that I had done at Manchester before coming to Cardiff, which was now published in the journal *Annals of Science* (1985).

A light year of teaching now gave me the opportunity to write up 'Forty Related Views' as a book which Croom Helm agreed to publish as *A Theory of Value and Obligation* (1987), covering value-theory, normative ethics and meta-ethics. It was probably a mistake to cover all these areas together, but that had long been the whole idea. There were quite a number of reviews, some of them quite favourable, but tending to say that, since nothing I or anyone else could say would persuade non-consequentialists to become consequentialists, its main interest consisted in the modifications to ethical theory that environmental ethics seemed to require. There was also a scathing review from Frederick Feldman, and an extended and largely favourable one from David O. Brink in *The Philosophical Review* (1991). These and the other reviews were among the factors that impelled me to rewrite the book, which re-appeared from Rodopi of Amsterdam and Atlanta as *Value, Obligation and Meta-Ethics* (1995). That book received fewer reviews, but responses eventually included some largely favourable coverage from Alan Carter, effectively itself a review, presented in a review of a later book of mine in *Mind* (2001).

Meanwhile I had been rather distracted from philosophical research for parts of the 1980s because of the struggle to reform the structures of University College Cardiff, and limit the powers of the then Principal, C.W.L. Bevan. From 1984 I was also spending one day a month with the Environmental Ethics Working Party of the Ian Ramsey Centre at Oxford. Eventually I became the joint editor of its report, *Values, Conflict and the Environment* (1989 and 1996). That report advocated a method for environmental decision-making called "Comprehensive Weighing", an environmentally enhanced version of cost-benefit analysis, which I agreed to support as a compromise, although I spent some of the next few years presenting papers explaining my reservations and objections (1995). As

for the report, it was published (1989) by the Cardiff Centre for Applied Ethics (together with the Ian Ramsey Centre, which was at that time out of funds); the report was republished a few years afterwards (1996) by a more established publisher, Avebury (the present Ashgate). Another result of my participation in this enterprise was that in the dark days of the late 1980s, when the future of the Cardiff Philosophy unit was in the balance, Lord Bullock, the co-chair of the Oxford Working Party and former Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University, wrote to the Cardiff Principal, Aubrey Trotman-Dickenson in our support.

In the early nineties, some of the participants in the Working Party arranged a conference at the University of Kent at Canterbury in which we applied this method to an actual planning decision (about road-building in Dorset), coming up with the conclusion that a different decision from the one reached by the Inspector would have been better, as also would have been doing nothing at all. The report continued to be discussed occasionally, but otherwise fell into oblivion. Meanwhile the view shared by Alan Holland and John O'Neill that cost-benefit analysis was incapable of being reformed prevailed, at least among philosophers.

In the early nineties, Barry Wilkins and I jointly edited for Routledge *International Development and the Third World: Studies in the Philosophy of Development* (1992), each contributing an essay. Mine was 'Development and Environmentalism' (1992 and 1994), which argued that developmentalists (that is, supporters of social and economic development) should support environmentalism, the cause of environmentalists, and also vice versa. This essay won high praise from Susan J. Armstrong and Richard G. Botzler in one of their survey books (Botzler and Armstrong, 1998, 93). Then, in 1993, Andrew Belsey and I organised in Cardiff the Annual Conference of the Royal Institute of Philosophy, on the theme 'Philosophy and the Natural Environment', and the next year edited the conference proceedings under the same title. My own paper was entitled 'Rehabilitating Nature and Making Nature Habitable' (1994). Andrew and I wrote the Introduction. However, I was distracted from composing articles through serving a stint as Chair of the Philosophy Board of Studies, from 1991 to 1994, until I was granted a year's study leave in compensation. It was in that year that *Value, Obligation and Meta-Ethics* (1995) was prepared.

Across the nineties, a steady flow of invitations came my way to present papers, some in Kenya, some in Malaysia, one in Austria, one in the then Czechoslovakia, and several in Scandinavia. (The invitations to Kenya were from Henry Odera Oruka, now a Professor, and a prolific organiser of conferences until his untimely death in the later part of 1995;

his 1991 Conference was a World Conference of Philosophy, sponsored by FISP, though lacking the status of a World Congress.) There was also a trip in 1994 to present a paper at the American Philosophical Association (Pacific Division) at Los Angeles, which somehow generated invitations to present other papers at Corvallis in Oregon and at Fort Collins and Boulder in Colorado. Most of the invitations were in the field of environmental philosophy, but I continued to give papers in other fields too, such as the history of philosophy (1993, 2004) (a field in which I served on the Committee of the relevant British Society) and the ethics of genetic engineering (1995, 1998). But there were still opportunities to give talks about most of the range of topics in environmental philosophy, from historical and religious themes, via aesthetic ones, to issues of population policy, sustainable development and the compatibility of environmentalism with democracy. There is no space to cover them all here.

In 1998, after taking part in Nigel Dower's Aberdeen-based global citizenship project, I was awarded a semester of study leave to write a book for his series on Global Ethics for Edinburgh University Press, which emerged as *The Ethics of the Global Environment* (1999). Most of the issues just mentioned were discussed, together with some thought experiments about human extinction, and an updated account of the stewardship approach; this latter I was also asked to present at a colloquium of the John Ray Initiative, held at Windsor Castle (of which I contributed to the proceedings volume (2006)). The book on the global environment was reviewed for *Mind* by Alan Carter (2001), who (as mentioned above) obligingly reviewed *Value, Obligation and Meta-Ethics* at the same time, as conveying its theoretical basis. Carter regarded this theoretical approach as being as good as any, but regarded all such approaches as defective on pluralist grounds. I published a reply in *Utilitas* (2003), to which Carter responded there at length; I was then allowed the last word (2005), albeit a fairly short one. (There is a further unpublished contribution of mine to this debate; but the Paris conference where it was presented has not yet managed to publish the proceedings.)

Discovering that John White had published in a 1997 book a reply to my earlier paper 'Work and the Human Essence', I now published a rejoinder in the first number of *Reason in Practice* (which now carries the title *Philosophy of Management*) (2001). This allowed me to resuscitate a long-standing argument from essential human capacities, which he had misconstrued. This paper was apparently regarded by one of the editorial board as the corner-stone of their first number. But since then, this argument seems to have returned to oblivion.

In 2000, together with Johan Hattingh of Stellenbosch University, I managed to secure funding from the Association of Commonwealth Universities for a project on sustainable development, with reference to South Africa. There followed two visits in 2001 and 2002, one to the Northern Province, and the other to Stellenbosch, to which I was returning, having earlier held a Research Fellowship of the National Research Council, which had sponsored lectures at Stellenbosch, Cape Town and Pretoria. This time my wife Leela became an officially funded member of the research team. Johan also visited Cardiff more than once. The upshot was two papers on sustainable development, one published in *International Journal of Human Rights* (2002) and the other in *Third World Quarterly* (2004). The second of these papers was jointly authored by Johan, myself and Manamela Matshabaphala, an academic at Witwatersrand who had participated in the project. A related (overlapping and therefore unpublished) paper was presented at Addis Ababa in 2005, where Leela and I were visiting the University at the invitation of my former doctoral student, Workineh Kelbessa.

During 2002, with the help of another semester of study leave, I composed a textbook for Polity Press of Cambridge called *Environmental Ethics* (2003). At the suggestion of Patricia Clark I included a glossary, portions of which have often been quoted back at me by student essayists since the book was published. This book includes a further defence of biocentric consequentialism, and applications of it to, for example, global warming. Soon afterwards, I began presenting papers on that topic, one of them at San Diego, which was recently published in a special number of *Journal of Social Philosophy*. It is entitled 'Mediated Responsibilities, Global Warming and the Scope of Ethics' (2009), and stresses the enlarged scope of human impacts that, because of technology, ethics needs to consider nowadays, as not in the past.

Several other papers on global warming have followed, partly because of my participation in a UNESCO Working Party on environmental ethics (2006), and also in preparing the *White Paper on the Ethical Dimensions of Climate Change*, authored largely by Donald Brown of Pennsylvania State University (2006). This seems to have generated an invitation to address an international conference of Fondazione Lanza in October 2008 at Padua, another to address the Toda Foundation conference at Honolulu the next month (to which I contributed electronically), and another to address a conference in March 2009 at the National Leonardo Da Vinci Museum at Milan. A further such paper was presented at the World Congress of Philosophy at Seoul (Korea) in August 2008. (The relevant papers are all forthcoming.)

In 2004, I read an editorial by Alan Holland in *Environmental Values* which came across as a challenge to myself, and composed a reply that was published (2005) in the same journal. Since the challenge concerned the poetry of John Clare, the reply used passages of poetry in an attempt to illustrate that not all talk of value is to be regarded as a projection of human sentiments. I am grateful to Christopher Norris for some of the ideas, particularly a relevant passage from Gray's *Elegy*.

In 2005, I was awarded research leave by Cardiff University and by the Arts and Humanities Research Board (one semester from each) for a book on creation and Darwinism. One of the referees was Frederick Ferré, one of few philosophers able to remember my much earlier writings on philosophy of religion. After planning the structure during a holiday in 2004 to visit a nephew and his family in Vietnam, I managed to compose *Creation, Evolution and Meaning* (2006) by the end of 2005. The front cover design is a photograph that I once took of the Eden Project in Cornwall. The book was published in December 2006, and has so far received several favourable reviews, plus a less favourable one in *The Times Higher*, to which I managed to publish a brief reply by way of a letter to the editor. In this work, philosophy of religion is combined with philosophy of biology and environmental philosophy. The opening chapters result from reflection on the work of Alexander Miller and Christopher Norris on realism and anti-realism, as well as some longstanding interests in verificationism and in falsification. Clarification of belief in creation (and of how to distinguish it from creationism) and arguments for the existence of God are present, as is a discussion of the varieties of Darwinism, its relation to varieties of teleological argument, and its relation to the problem of evil. Later parts discuss Daniel Dennett's account of how the story of evolution culminates in language and then, supposedly, in science, adding how a stewardship approach coheres with the account of creation given earlier. One indirect effect has been an invitation from Christopher Southgate to write reviews for *Reviews in Science and Theology*. I hope to develop further some of the themes about evolution and psychology in a project funded by the Oxford University Ian Ramsey Centre for the year 2009-10.

Once this book was out of the way, I was able to turn to a contract with Ashgate to edit a collection of readings on environmental ethics. My main role was to write the introduction, which occupied much of the summer of 2007; the book (much the longest that I have published) appeared under the title *The Ethics of the Environment* (2008), and has not yet been reviewed, as far as I am aware.