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“And What Was There Accepted Us” – Landscape, “Stimmung,” and “Heimat.”

Environmental ethics is difficult territory. In the book I plan to write at the RCC I will first draw a *map* of this territory marking its main positions and arguments. My claim will be that one particular class of arguments, namely those for the *eudaimonic intrinsic value* of nature (as opposed to its moral intrinsic value and to its merely instrumental value), should be taken more seriously. Nature is eudaimonically important for us first in its *beauty*, second as a place with which we can *identify*, as “Heimat,” and third in its *sacredness*. We should protect nature not only for its obvious instrumental value but also for these aesthetic, psychological, and religious reasons.

The second and main part of my book will focus on just one aspect of the *aesthetic* reason for the protection of nature. My claim here will be that the aesthetic experience of beautiful landscapes makes us feel *at home*, “beheimatet,” in the world, safe and accepted, and that its great and irreplaceable value lies in this. This claim thus forges a link between the aesthetic argument and the psychological identity argument. To establish my claim I will clarify the concepts of landscape and “Stimmung” or atmosphere, and show how “Stimmung” is infused into landscape and how we respond to it aesthetically.

In the third and last part I will indicate how art can help us to better appreciate natural beauty. I will do this by way of examples, first from poetry, Michael Donhauser’s *Variations in Prose* (2013), which begin with “And what was there accepted us,” and followed by novels by Peter Kurzeck, especially his last masterpiece, *Vorabend* (2011). It is my belief that philosophy with its concern for clear concepts and stringent arguments should go hand in hand with art and its power to make things present. If the aesthetic argument for nature conservation is to have any effect in the real world, philosophy and art must join forces.