Caring for the Land: Wainwright, The English Lakes and an Ethic of Care

Clare Palmer, Lancaster University

Abstract

"Caring for the land" is an expression increasingly widely used and approved. This chapter looks more closely at the idea of caring for the land, suggesting that it is neither straightforward in meaning nor necessarily always desirable in actuality. It is argued that "caring for the land" is usually embedded in a nexus of values, commitments, attitudes and perceptions, and that its meaning and desirability in any particular case can only be understood by considering such contexts. To illustrate this, the work of Wainwright, a well-known writer of guidebooks to walking in the English Lake District, is explored and the complex nature of his understanding of what it is to be a "human in the land" and to care for that land is critically discussed.

Introduction: the idea of caring for the land

"Caring for the land" seems at first sight to be both straightforward in meaning and desirable in actuality. As an expression, it has been increasingly widely adopted in political and environmental discourse. The United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USDAFS), for example, uses as its motto "Caring for the Land and Serving People", while the New Zealand Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry proclaims its concern as "Living with the Land, Caring for the Land". Indeed, in recent years children, supporters of environmental organizations, planners, landowners, farmers, and members of a number of religious traditions – most especially Christianity – have all been urged to care for the land.[1] My purpose in this chapter is not to debunk the idea of caring for the land. I do, however, want to inject a note of caution, both with respect to its *straightforwardness of meaning* and to its *inevitable* desirability in actuality. In most general terms, my argument here is that caring for the land can mean very many things, that different interpretations may be in conflict, and that a careful consideration of meaning in any particular case is required in order to make an assessment of its desirability in actuality.

To begin this kind of discussion of "caring for the land", some distinctions concerning possible context must be made. At one end of a spectrum (as with the USDAFS) "caring for the land" is used fundamentally as a slogan, perhaps conveying a general nod in the direction of some form of environmental-friendliness. (One might still, though, look at the environmental policies and practices of an organization bearing such a slogan, taking the view that these fill out the meaning of "caring for the land.") At the other end of a spectrum, "caring for the land" may have a more philosophical context, forming one aspect of a broader "ethic of care" approach to moral theory. An emphasis on care in ethics often (though neither exclusively nor necessarily) emerges from feminist philosophy, and an ethic of care for the land frequently features in ecofeminist philosophy - in the work, for instance, of Karen Warren.[2] This more philosophical use will be of some significance in this chapter, though it is not the direct focus of my concern. Somewhere between these two contexts fall more popular and less reflexive uses of "caring for the land", though uses that go far beyond mere slogans. Journalism, popular environmental and agricultural

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[1] See, for instance, the children's book by Carole Green (1991) *Caring for our Land* (Enslow); John Scull *Caring for the Land* at http://www.ecopsychology.org/gatherings3/land.html; Hendler (1977)*Caring for the Land* (APA Planning Advisory Service); Hilts, Stewart and Mitchell, Peter *Caring for your Land* (Centre for Land and Water Stewardship, University of Guelph); Wirba, Norman (1999) "Caring and Working: An Agrarian Perspective" *Christian Century* Sept. 22-29 – among many others.

[2] See for instance Warren "The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism" and Plumwood, Val (1993) *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (London: Routledge)

writing, and gardening literature are instances of this kind of context; and, in the case I will be studying more closely, guidebook and travel writing. In these contexts the actual expression "caring for the land" may be used interchangeably with other expressions such as "loving the land", and what is meant may not be precisely outlined. To understand its meaning, then, it is necessary to consider to what the key terms "caring" and "land" refer, and the whole nexus of attitudes, emotions and practices in which they are located. "Caring" may, for instance, be used to refer to a feeling of positive affect; to a set of attitudes irrespective of affect; to particular practices; or may denote some combination of all three. "Land" may refer to the environment in a very broad sense; to land as opposed to the sea and the air; to specific kinds of environment (such as wilderness, forest or agricultural land) or to particular culturally important landscapes and places – local places, sacred places, iconic places. Only closer study can assist in determining which is meant in any particular case. But as well as knowing what is meant by care and what by land, we need to know what it is about the land that is being cared for, to get some sense of the reason for this caring, and to consider what would constitute *not* caring for it.

For instance, if X says that she affectively cares for a particular local piece of land, we need to know what it is about the place for which she affectively cares. Does she, for instance, care for particular *landscape properties* (such as height, ruggedness, afforestation) instantiated there? If some aspects of the place changed – say, for instance, the forests were felled – would X continue to care for the place? Are there some things about the land that are so defining, from X's point of view, such that without them the land would not be the same *place*, even though it continued to occupy the same *space*? It is only with closer knowledge of the anatomy of precisely what is being cared for that the parameters of acceptable - even desirable – and undesirable changes to the land can be mapped (though, it should be noted, recognition of particular changes as undesirable does not necessarily mean that they would be actively opposed). Similarly, in cases where the care is intended to be proselytizing rather than merely descriptive - that is, we are being urged to care for the land - we need to know more about what precisely is being thought of as deserving our care. What reasons are being given as to why we should care? Is this caring intended primarily to engage our emotions, minds or behaviors, and what might be regarded as neglectful or positively harmful with respect to the cared-for? Indeed (as this paper will illustrate) caring for the land is usually bound into a rich complex of perceptions, values, attitudes and commitments and it is only when these are examined that what might be meant by caring for the land becomes clear. So, in short, my suggestion is that "caring for the land" refers to no single easily-identifiable feeling, attitude or practice; and that without close examination of any particular case, we can have no clear idea of what is meant at all, other than that at the most slogan-like of levels. One particular reason to pay close attention to meaning here is that caring for the land understood in one sense need not incorporate nor even be compatible with caring for the land interpreted in other. Where caring for the same piece of land is understood in different ways, conflicting policies and practices can result – but such conflicts remain obscure as long as what caring is thought to entail is unexamined.

There are a number of ways in which one might examine the idea of caring for the land more closely. I have already suggested, though, that examining caring for the land in a general sense, detached from any specific setting, will be unfruitful because what is meant only becomes clear in considering particular instances. For this reason – and given the constraints of length here – I will, in the rest of this chapter, look closely at just one particular expression of caring for the land. In doing this, I hope to illustrate my claim that caring for the land can be bound into a whole complex of perceptions, values, attitudes and commitments (some of which might be problematic); that only closer examination can tell us what is being thought of as deserving care, the reasons for it, and what might count as uncaring; and that one interpretation of caring for the land may be very different from, and perhaps in conflict with, others.

The particular form of "caring for the land" I consider here is found in the work of A.Wainwright, arguably the best-known writer of guides for walkers in Britain in the 20th century.[3] His work centered on the English Lake District, a cultural landscape already widely known for its important role in Picturesque and Romantic art and writing. His 7-volume set of pen-and-ink walkers' *Pictorial Guides* to the English Lake District written in the 1950s and 1960s had sold a million copies by 1985, and still sell well; he also published a wide range of sketchbooks and heavily-used walking guides to the northern uplands of Britain. Wainwright's walking guides, beautifully produced and carefully illustrated with hand-drawn maps and sketches, described the northern fells for walkers in intimate detail unprecedented among guidebooks of their time. And this hugely popular work was infused with Wainwright's care for the land. It is explicitly discussed in his autobiographical *Fellwanderer* books, and is more implicitly, but still clearly, present in his guidebooks. Indeed, his care for the land, he claimed, motivated the whole, extensive corpus of his work on the Lakes and the British uplands. But in order to understand how Wainwright interpreted caring for the land, it is necessary to examine his texts very closely.

Wainwright and care for the land

To begin such a study, it is first helpful to specify how the terms "care" and "land" seem best to be interpreted in Wainwright's work. For Wainwright, the term "care" is interchangeable with love; indeed, his caring took the form of a deeply passionate affective commitment of a profound and unflagging nature. And the object of the care, the land around which this affection was centered, was the English Lake District. Wainwright tells us something about the development of this passionate affection for the Lake District in his autobiographical writing. When he first traveled to the English Lakes as a young man he tells us that he looked across Lake Windermere to the high fells and had an experience "as if a curtain had dramatically been torn aside" creating "a moment of magic, a revelation so unexpected that I stood transfixed". In comparison with the landscape art Wainwright had seen hanging on the wall in the town hall in his Lancashire hometown, Blackburn: "Here was no painted canvas; this was real. This was truth. God was in his heaven that day, and I a humble worshipper". (1993: 23) At first sight Wainwright was struck with surprise and awe at the landscape; and from a distance, not having seen such a view before, the obvious point of comparison was with landscape art. This comparison suggests a vivid *aesthetic* appreciation of the landscape experienced as powerful and inspiring (even spiritually inspiring) - more so than paint on a canvas. The *look* of the land, its beautiful and mysterious appearance, forms one fundamental strand of his care for the Lakes. But further, in this initial encounter, Wainwright also tells us that this landscape drew him irresistibly; his immediate concern was that he was an *alien* in it, and his desire was to find a way of *belonging* to it – "If only I could!"(1993: 24) The strength of this desire to belong illustrates the embeddedness and involvement (rather than, for instance, detached contemplation) that characterizes Wainwright's understanding of what care for a place entails.

Given this desire to be involved, to belong, it is not surprising that Wainwright subsequently walked in the Lakes whenever he could, and moved there at the first opportunity, fairly quickly regarding himself as, indeed, belonging. His knowledge of the Lakes became increasingly intimate and detailed, as his guidebooks reveal. But that first sense of wonder and awe never diminished, even as it became part of a more familiar, engaged devotion. Indeed, his devotion developed to the extent that he often described his works on the Lakes as being "love letters." At the end of his autobiographical *Memoirs of a Fellwanderer*, written shortly before he died,

[3] Wainwright did not like his first name, and did not use it in his work, preferring to stick just to the abbreviated letter "A."

Wainwright wrote: “Like a lover who can only keep on saying the same three words because there are no others that say more, I have found the pen in my hands no instrument for describing the captivating charm of Lakeland”. (1993: 203)[4] No other land ever came near to attracting the kind of devotion in Wainwright that he felt for the Lakes. He was certainly fond of other upland locations: he walked in, wrote about and sketched the Pennines, the Yorkshire Dales and most particularly the Highlands of Scotland where, in later life, he spent his annual holiday. He did, indeed, say that he loved the land of Scotland as the Scots did. But nonetheless, these places were not the Lakes, and he never felt for them what he felt for the Lakes (and I will consider the significance of this later). Wainwright offered various reasons for his passionate loyalty to Lakeland: the Pennines lacked rockiness and were, rather, characterized by smooth grassy hills and peaty bogs; the Scottish Highlands had majesty and grandeur, but lacked the “romantic charm” and “friendliness” of the Lakeland hills. (Wainwright 1993: 153) (He never traveled overseas -so was not able, unlike Wordsworth, to compare the Alps unfavorably to the Lakes!) Lakeland was the land against which all other places were measured; it could not be improved on; it was a “scene of perfection, of flawless beauty”. (Wainwright 1993: 37) However, to understand this more clearly,– inasmuch as it is possible – there is much more to consider about what Wainwright cared for so much in the Lakes.

We have already seen that Wainwright’s initial reaction was to the *visual* and *aesthetic properties* of the Lakes. His writing indicates the continued importance of the visual, and describes in more detail what these visual properties were. He emphasized the visual significance of *height,* and maintained that his “pet obsession” was with land above the line of cultivation. (1966: 1; 1993: 58) The look of uncultivated (though grazed) height was one important, desirable visual feature. Other visual properties in which he delighted include ruggedness and rockiness, especially rocky steps, gateways, towers and pinnacles. These added interesting features, variety and contrast to the landscape (it is in part, the variety and contrast of land types present in the Lakes that distinguished the Lakes, for Wainwright, from other, less precious, landscapes[5]). But these *visual* features – of height, lack of cultivation, roughness and rockiness, contrast and variety - though of huge importance to Wainwright, were not all he cared about in the Lakes. Other senses were also important – in particular the aural qualities of the land. He cherished the quietness of the Lakes (as opposed to the noisiness of the urban) and often discusses the pleasures of the sound of birdsong and the “happy and harmonious” sound of streams. (1987: 32)

Lakeland provided Wainwright with positive aesthetic and sense experiences; but alongside this he also saw the land as sensible and sensitive in itself. His care for the land was not based solely on an intense appreciation of its outward properties but also on his perception that it had inner relational qualities, both with respect to its natural features and its living creatures. His first sight of the Lakeland mountains revealed them to be “nameless strangers” but looking “exciting and friendly”.(1993: 24) Later, he frequently reiterated that one of the reasons for feeling safe while walking in the Lakes was that one was walking among friends (for instance 1993: 89, 1993: 114). Some mountains are attributed characters: Coniston Old Man, for instance, has been “cruelly exploited”; his “breast is pierced” with mineworkings, yet he “remains proud and dignified” while “shedding his tears quietly into a lovely tarn”. (1984: 126) Rivers may be sad and distressed when they run out into the sea, mountains may be affronted or shamed by quarrying or coniferous afforestation. Mountains and rivers are not just attractive to look at but fundamentally lifeless things; there is a sense, at least, in which Wainwright considered them to be alive. When shrouded in the mist of early dawn, Wainwright tells us, he was “attuned to the mountains” until

[4] Rather as Goethe commented after a climbing trip to the Alps in 1779 “words were inadequate to describe the nobility and beauty of this view”. Cited in Wood (2001: 104)

[5] This view is quite similar to that which Wordsworth puts forward in the 1835 *Guide* (1835 19xx: 69)

he “felt part of the living rock”. The rock, the rivers, the mountains were, on Wainwright’s account all friendly and responsive - though vulnerable to human actions and capable of being harmed. So Wainwright’s care for the land was not care for, as it were, land interpreted as a bundle of lifeless rocks and waters merely hosting living things. The form of the land and the running of the waters were, themselves, in some sense alive and in relation.

This liveliness is even more evident where individual living things – such as trees and animals - were concerned. Joining a chorus of voices in a long Lakeland tradition including Wordsworth in his *Guide to the Lakes* and H.H. Symonds' objections to Forestry Commission proposals in the 1930s, Wainwright opposed (most) plantation forestry. Although he shared the reasons for objecting to plantation forestry put forward both by Wordsworth and Symonds - the growing of exotic plants (to which I will return), the aesthetic unpleasantness of plantation forestry, the difficulties plantations present for walkers, the loss of open prospect - Wainwright had yet another objection. He was concerned about the “natural growth and development of trees”. Trees in these plantations “are grown as poles, closely packed and deprived of light - a million miserable cripples with withered arms and no joy in living. Here is battery forestry with all the attendant evils of mass production. Every one of those trees wanted to be a noble specimen but is condemned to a slow death from infancy.”(1987: 30) Even though Wainwright accepted that this was not *cruel* because trees have no feelings, nonetheless they have life and natural growth patterns of which the plantations deprive them.(1992a: 16) They cannot reach fulfillment in the plantation. Animals – about whom Wainwright was particularly concerned – were also regarded as lively, friendly beings; indeed, for Wainwright, one of the pleasures of being on the fells was being with the “friendly companionship of the animals and birds of the open spaces”. (1992b: 33) Fellwalking in the Lakes involved walking in a friendly, responsive environment; and the liveliness of this environment, along with its powerful impact on the senses, were some of the central reasons for Wainwright’s profound attachment to it.

One further reason concerns the *freedom* Wainwright associated with the Lakes, reiterated again and again in his work. The Lakes provided a physical, psychological and visual space for freedom. This account of the freedom of the fells was in imagined opposition to the oppression of everyday life and work, and to the directedness of movement in urban areas. The fells offered all the freedom that daily urban life did not – and (contrary to popular view) the fells were a much safer place to be. “You don’t go on the hills to break your neck. You go on the hills to get away from places where other people can break your neck” (1993: 105). In the fells, there is physical freedom to roam where you choose, on paths, off paths, along streams, up mountains. “The whole essence of fell walking…is freedom to wander along the paths on the fells, and freedom to plan a route as you go along, and freedom to change your mind”. (1993: 105) (Indeed, for Wainwright the desirability of this physical, spatial freedom was not only confined to humans: the caging of animals, the proliferation of fish farms and, as we have seen, the “battery farming” of trees also constrained the physical freedom of living beings, and aroused his disgust as a result.) The fells also provided psychological freedom from other people, and from working life. “Absolute freedom,” Wainwright insisted “includes freedom from the presence of others”.(1993: 106) When fellwalking, there is no need to account to anyone else for where you are going (especially if you go alone). And by wandering freely, it is possible to find distance from and perspective on the troubles of everyday life; fighting the wind on the fells, for instance, “frees the mind from worldly worries” (1993: 192). Further, the panoramas from the top of crags and peaks create a sense of visual freedom, unlike that of the enclosed streets of the urban world. For Wainwright, the close association of the Lakes with freedom in all these ways formed a part of his deep attraction to it. Lakeland was not only good to look at and to listen to, not only lively and responsive in itself, but also walking in the Lakeland fells was good for psychological health, strength and wellbeing. Wainwright considered that experiencing this kind of freedom constituted

part of what it is to live a good human life. As a place of stunning beauty and constant interest, lively responsiveness, and complete freedom, Wainwright cared for the Lakes with passionate intensity.

Wainwright, the Lakes and an ethics of care

Wainwright's care for the Lakes, then, was deeply *affective*, and his affections centered on the visual, aesthetic beauty, the relational quality and the possibilities for freedom offered by the Lakes. Close study of his texts suggests that flowing from this intense attachment – and helping us to understand its nature more precisely – is some form of an *ethics* of care. Wainwright was not, of course, a philosopher, and would not himself have used this language. However, his aim to protect those things about the Lakes for which he cared, and his strong positive and negative reactions and prescriptions with respect to particular kinds of behavior and land change, indicate an implicit, if informal, kind of ethics of care for the land. Indeed, despite its informal nature, Wainwright's ethic of care for the land in some ways resembles that outlined by the ecofeminist philosopher Karen Warren. Warren's much-reproduced paper "The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism" deploys a rock-climbing narrative to indicate how the practice of rock climbing may contribute to the creation of an ethic of care for the environment (rather than a desire to dominate and subdue it).[6] Certainly, a climber *may* climb as an attempt to dominate the rock and conquer it by reaching the top. But, according to Warren, a climber may also take the view that relationships are to be taken seriously (Warren 1993: 328), and that he or she is in relationship with the non-human environment around, including the rock. The climber may think of him or herself as being "friends with" or "caring about" the rock being climbed. This relation of care and friendship may result in the generation of an ethic of care and responsibility from the relationship; an ethic that is not the application of a pre-existing principle from a set of abstract rules; nor based on an attitude that emphasizes domination and conquest. (Warren 1993: 329) It is not difficult to see how this resembles Wainwright's narrative (even the first-person form is similar). Wainwright, too, sees the mountains around him in terms of friendship and responsiveness, and although he does maintain that reaching the summit when fell walking is important, summiting is not about conquest or domination of the mountain. Rather, it is about self-fulfillment and the experience of visual beauty, which may often best be observed from the summits.[7] And in Wainwright's work too, a sense of ethical responsibility emerges from his caring attachment to the land. Wainwright tells us that "this hallowed ground is small, a paradise in miniature, and because it is small it is precious indeed, like a rare jewel it should be treasured and guarded. We should all be vigilantes." (1993: 176)

This concern for the protection of the land - and the urging of others to do so likewise- is increasingly common in Wainwright's later work. But it is not straightforward. And although Wainwright's ethic of care does, in some sense, as in Warren's account, grow out of his relationship with the land, it also cannot be separated from other social and environmental views that he already held. That is to say, he did not arrive in the mountains a "blank slate", negotiating his ethical relationship with the hills from a position without pre-existing political and ethical commitments. Views he held, and continued to develop through his life, informed his ideas about

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[6] This idea of care as excluding domination contrasts interestingly with Yi-Fu Tuan's discussion of affection (care) and domination in the case of human relations with pets. See Tuan, 1984.

[7] It might be argued that Wainwright's emphasis on the panoramic gaze is, in some way, about domination, in the sense of making the landscape into an object for viewing and controlling, perhaps in a proprietorial way. While some forms of a landscape gaze may be like this, I am not convinced that Wainwright's is. This is not to say that it is not *selective*.

what *made* the Lakes a "rare jewel", and what would constitute protecting this jewel from desecration.

One such view was Wainwright's persistent, even obsessive, dislike of machines, mechanization and modern technology. Wainwright's sentiments here are close to those expressed in the work of the writers Veldman (1994: 39) calls the "romantic protesters" of the mid twentieth century – such as C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien (though Wainwright did not share their Christianity). Wainwright (as Lewis and Tolkien) viewed himself as essentially in opposition to the "modern age". This even extended to the machine printing of texts: his famous guidebooks were all hand written and sketched in pen and ink, not typed on machines – "not a single letter of printed type has ever appeared in any of them". (1966: 15)[8] "Machines" he commented "are monsters, and they produce little horrors". (1966, 2) The mechanized world, associated with the urban, contrasted for Wainwright with the fells. "The fells are honest; they have no gadgets" (1966, 30) Proper to the fells are the traditional arts that require skill and knowledge rather than mechanical assistance – stone-walling and cairn building, for instance. But these traditional skills have been undermined by technological advance and mechanization: "The golden age of building passed away with technical advances in the industry, and the craftsmen died when the machines came…. The tragedy of our age is that we are not ashamed".(1984: 41) Mechanical gadgets on or near the fells always caused Wainwright discomfort. Although in later life he accepted lifts in cars – and his book on Scotland required access to a car – he remained ambivalent about motor vehicles. The coming of the motor car, he thought, had heralded a slow decline in the Lakes, bringing "a few discordant notes…into the symphony".(1993: 176) The motor car had been at best a mixed blessing (in part, depending on who is driving it). Even in Lakeland farming, Wainwright thinks wistfully of the time before mechanization: "Surely this is life as it was meant to be lived, close to the good earth? One regret – gone from the farms are the fine horses, not the less noble for being servants. Tractors and machines have taken their place. This, we are told, is a sign of the march of progress…but nobody ever tells us where it's marching. It's time we found out. We might be losing more on the way than we are gaining."(Wainwright 1962: Bakestall 3[9]) One thread, then, that runs through Wainwright's care for Lakeland is an interpretation of the land as representing that which is traditional, enduring, simple and natural (as opposed to artificial).

A second, related, thread in Wainwright's work concerns that which is *proper* and *appropriate* in any particular place; that which we might call a kind of "place-appropriateness". He has a strong sense of Lakeland as having its own inner integrity and harmony. Occasionally, Wainwright observes natural features that seem not to fit well with the inner integrity of the Lakes (for instance, Little Mell Fell has "characteristics alien to Lakeland" [1955; Little Mell Fell: 1] being made of sandstone and vegetated by gorse and ling, uncharacteristic of Lakeland). But generally he views the features of the Lakes – those features he first observed when looking over Windermere as a young man – to display harmony and integrity; everything is in its place, and its place is the right place. And it is to the Lakes thus ordered that Wainwright's care attaches. He cares for the Lakes in part *because* for him the land has a particular form and appropriate order. The relationship of landscape features, water, rock and vegetation is flawless and hence is loved; anything, therefore, that enhances these relationships is to be welcomed as fitting and appropriate; anything that threatens it as inappropriate and out of place. These two threads then – a kind of

[8] Wainwright's *Fellwanderer* has no page numbers and no obvious alternative from which to indicate the location of quotations. I have numbered the pages roughly myself, but readers who wish to check quotations may have to search around several pages if their pagination system differs from mine.
[9] Wainwright's *Pictorial Guides* lack page numbers that follow through the book. However, the sections are titled and numbered, and I will refer to these titles and numbers in referencing; this should be sufficient to identify quotations.

romantic reaction against mechanization and a strong sense of place integrity and place-appropriateness – are inextricably part of his care for the land. It is impossible to understand the way in which Wainwright cares for the land – and what the implications of this caring may be – without considering how it is tightly bound up with other views he held and applied in the context of the Lakes.

So while the ethic of care for the land in Wainwright's work flowed from his attachment to the visual and aural properties of the landscape, the liveliness of the land and the freedom the land provided, it should also be understood in the context of his rejection of mechanization and his sense of land integrity and place-appropriateness. This complex mass of values, feelings and commitments that underpin Wainwright's ethic of care shape more precisely what Wainwright thought should, and should not, happen in the Lakes. Congruent with his understanding of the Lakes as a "precious jewel", Wainwright was suspicious of any anthropogenic change (on occasion, revealingly, describing the Lakes as "a living museum" [1993:179]). Large scale changes were particularly worrisome to him. Chief amongst these were dam projects, many other forms of industry and potential substantial tourist developments (such as new roads in wild areas, or a possibility that seems only to have emerged in Wainwright's imagination, a cable-car up Helvellyn). If we consider such construction projects in the light of what I have suggested to underpin Wainwright's ethic of care, it is not difficult to see why such projects are problematic.

First, they are aesthetically and visually intrusive, and thus place-inappropriate: Calder Hall atomic power station, seen intruding from the top of Crinkle Crags, for instance, is "out of place in a landscape that is constant and unchanging." (1960: Crinkle Crags 19). Further, such projects introduce artificial technology and mechanization to the simple and (in his view) timeless fells - fells that should be "gadget -free". Plantations change the aesthetic environment in several senses; the environment becomes less visually appealing; it also becomes less aurally appealing, as the birdsong once characteristic of the open slopes is lost. But plantations also threaten other foundational aspects of Wainwright's ethic of care. They drive away the companionable creatures of the wild and replace them with living trees that are prevented from growing and developing as they should. And they hinder the freedom of the walker, both making the walking less pleasant by closing off open prospects, and frequently entailing the blocking of paths and the introduction of fencing. In summary, all such projects, such as the proposed road over Sty Head Pass demonstrate a lack of sensitivity to the land, and a *failure of care* for it: "insensitive authorities planned to build a road…but were howled down by others who had more care and feeling for the environment."(1993: 186) With care and feeling for the environment – that is, if one had a sense of what was appropriate to that environment, and perhaps recognized the responsiveness of the land – such projects would be not be contemplated. Indeed, even thinking about such projects says something about those who would carry them out: they have "souls so dead, vision so clouded, appreciation of natural beauty so withered…". (1987: 174)

Wainwright's ethic of care for the Lakes extended further than his worries about development projects and those who would contemplate undertaking them. He also maintained that there were particular forms of individual behavior appropriate for individuals walking in and visiting the Lakes. These center on behaving respectfully with regard to the character of the land as Wainwright perceived it. Those walking in the Lakes, according to Wainwright, should walk quietly and preferably alone. Part of caring for the land involves listening to it and engaging with it. Talking to other people shifts the focus away from the land and prevents proper concentration and interaction with the living world around. Caring for the land not only involves being open to interaction with it, but also looking after it in a more definite sense – walking carefully on the paths; treating stone walls and cairns gently and certainly never vandalizing them; repairing any damage one sees and preventing any damage one suspects may be about to occur. Living beings

in the hills should be respected and cared for – and this rules out, in particular, shooting for sport. One cannot care for creatures one is shooting; in shooting on the hills one is killing defenseless beings that should be friends, neighbors and companions. Caring also involves thinking about the needs of other visitors and walkers, and not making their movements in the hills more difficult – in particular by not treating paths well, thus making it harder for other people to move around carefully and respectfully themselves.

Wainwright's idea of caring for the land, then, is rich and complex, based on a passionate love for the land, and informed by particular ideas about the modern and the appropriate. It issues in a kind of ethics of care for the land with both political and personal implications, the origins of which cannot be understood without a study of the breadth of his work and an understanding of the wider range of values and commitments that he affirmed. This, I think, serves as an example, at least, of the broader claim made earlier in this paper that "caring for the land" is not simple and straightforward, but embedded in, and inseparable from, a range of broader attitudes, commitments and values. I also suggested earlier that interpretations of "caring for the land" may conflict with one another, and can raise social or environmental questions. Wainwright's account - though not in itself profoundly troubling - does at least indicate places where accounts of caring for the land may raise such conflicts and potential difficulties.

Using Wainwright and "caring for the land": conflicts and questions

As we have already seen, Wainwright was awed and amazed at his first sight of the Lakes; indeed, we might say that it was "love at first sight". The fells, as he first saw them, were perfect and flawless. Of course, if somewhere starts off perfect, *change* is likely to be seen as *decline,* as a falling away from perfection, the introduction of flaws or of disharmony. And, as we have seen, this is precisely what Wainwright maintained to be happening in the Lakes.[10] But it is important to note that, for Wainwright, the objection to change is not the more modern environmentalist concern for *loss of wildness*. He is not under the impression that the Lakes now are, or recently have been, essentially wilderness areas, uninhabited and uncrossed by humans, and that this wildness is now under attack. He recognizes Lakeland as a thoroughly cultural landscape. Indeed, he has a sustained historical interest in the human history of the fells – in stone circles and flints; in old roman roads, drove roads, abandoned mines and quarries. Lakeland is, for Wainwright, essentially created by interactions between humans and the land, even if his special concern is for the uncultivated tops. The tops may be uncultivated, but they are grazed by sheep and marked by the feet of humans over thousands of years. Rather, Wainwright's concern seems to be for the maintenance of a *human-land order*, for *right relationship*, a set of traditional caring interactions that are respectful to the land, personal rather than mechanical, enduring rather than temporary, and that recognize what is appropriate to the nature of the place. These relationships, for Wainwright, seem to have been perfectly manifest in the land at the moment he encountered it; and so change threatens their persistence and integrity.

This kind of interpretation of what it is to care for the land is undoubtedly widely held. But it may also conflict with other interpretations of caring for the land, also widely held: in particular, those with a strong ecological focus. Much of Wainwright's work was written as the modern environmental movement gained in strength; but Wainwright's work is little influenced by it. He loves the look of the landscape, and the companionable individual beings in it, but never discusses ecosystems, rare species, ecological interactions between species, or issues such as the use of pesticides in farming. Some areas of land that may be of particular value from an

[10] In a way somewhat reminiscent of William's discussion (1973: 9-34) of the "escalator" effect, where, in pastoral writing, the Golden Age is always located in the past.

ecological perspective - in particular, wetlands - are those Wainwright likes least: marshes lack "interesting features" and the visual beauty characteristic of Lakeland; and they restrict the freedom of the walker to roam. Of the Lakeland valleys, he comments "Before man settled here these same valleys were dreary marshes.…Hard work and long perseverance has brought beauty from sterility. Rough hands have won a very rare beauty from the wilderness." (1960: Grey Friar 5) Wainwright, then, would not necessarily be inclined to the protection of areas of high ecological value, or at least not on the grounds of that value. Relatedly - although this is not an issue that arose during Wainwright's lifetime, to my knowledge - changes to the Lakes that might be of ecological value, but which would change the look and character of the landscape, are likely to be opposed from a perspective such as Wainwright's. In 2001, the sheep and cattle disease foot-and-mouth broke out in Britain, affecting the Lake District particularly severely; many herds of Lakeland sheep were culled. At the end of the outbreak, there was discussion about not returning sheep to some of the fells, with the eventual result that the fells would become scrub and eventually deciduous forest. This "wilding" of the fells would have some ecological benefits, including the provision of significant wildlife habitat.[11] However, it would have substantially changed the appearance of the landscape and reduced the prospects from the open fellsides. From Wainwright's perspective, the landscape perfection with which he was familiar, and the order manifest in the existence of this perfection, would be lost. Here, both Wainwright's view, and an ecological perspective that advocated leaving the fells to go wild, might both fall under the description of "caring for the land"; but what constitutes caring for the land is, in these cases, understood quite differently. These different, and conflicting interpretations of caring for the land illustrates the importance of, in each case, seeking to understand in what complex of values, attitudes and commitments caring for the land is embedded.

Interpretations of caring for the land such as Wainwright's may also raise questions when this care is understood to be rooted in a specific place, ordered in a particular way, and located in a set of relationships with identified groups of humans. In particular, such issues concern the ways in which *outsiders* (both human and non-human) are thought of, and how *other* places that are not the cared-for place are appropriately regarded. Of course, caring for a particular place - when that place is understood as being created and maintained by people in particular sets of relations with it, whose "roots go deep in their own soil" (1962: Personal Notes 5) - need not mean hostility to those from outside (or "off-comers" in the terminology with which Wainwright was familiar). Wainwright himself, as we have seen, was himself an "off-comer", though he regarded that status to have washed out very quickly as he became involved with the local community.[12] And as a guidebook writer, clearly he expected and encouraged visitors to the Lake District. Wainwright's attitude to outsiders, in fact, varied according to how far the visitors respected the existing *order* in the Lakes, and appreciated and cared for it in the ways he thought to be appropriate. So Wainwright welcomed those visitors who manifested caring behavior and practices when moving around the Lakes. His tolerance, though, of outsiders who were either indifferent to the order and beauty of the Lakes as he understood them, or positively did not accept such an order, was low. He comments in a later discussion "Lakeland, once a sanctuary from noise and fast traffic, is being opened up to types of people who wantonly destroy peace and quietness and good order, and are aliens in a place of natural beauty. We should be putting up barriers to keep them out, not facilitating their entry." His distaste for visitors who are noisy, who stay in the towns or who move around in groups is very clear; and his deep hostility to those who, for instance, damage paths is evident throughout his work. Such people are aliens, because

[11] This was discussed in detail by Paul Evans in *The Guardian,* April 11 2001.

[12] Ian Whyte (2002: 10), though, regards Wainwright as an off-comer, and hints (quite reasonably) that being an off-comer may have inspired Wainwright's work, as, indeed, it inspired so many others who came to the Lakes from outside.

they fail to fit in with the "natural order". In his later work, Wainwright began to be concerned about inward migration into the Lakes, prompted by tourists wishing to settle there or buy second homes there: "The situation is becoming reminiscent of the Highland Clearances, the newcomers not being sheep but strangers who know nothing of the customs and traditions of the valley, do not speak the same language, and take little part in the social life. Langdale is turning cosmopolitan. Tourism is the enemy". (1992a: 80)[13] The off-comers who are moving into the Lakes are, for Wainwright, unwelcome because of their lack of participation and their distance from the order of land and community, where people are rooted in their own soil. Wainright's own account - though he strikes a worrying note with his dismissive mention of the "cosmopolitan" - does not, however, exclude anyone who has the will and the desire to fit in with the traditional order of the Lakes. As he himself assimilated, so others could assimilate, provided that they accepted the traditional order and revered the beauty of the Lakes.

But it is not difficult to see how a similar view, intensified further, might move towards a geopolitical construction of *exclusive* regional identity, where those from outside are unwelcome just by virtue of being from outside, of being "foreign". And even Wainwright's work was mildly suspicious of the foreign. He could see no point in travelling to anywhere "foreign"; and he presented his insistence on sticking to English imperial measurements of feet and miles rather than "foreign" metres and kilometres gleefully as part of his "jingoistic" Englishness (1989: 9). Even in the non-human realm, one of his objections to coniferous plantations (and here again he is part of a long tradition) was to their foreignness. Of the plantation forests of Ennerdale on the mountain Pillar for instance, Wainwright comments: "Pillar is essentially masculine, all sinew and muscle, but has been shamefully forced, without option, to wear dark green skirts on the lower Ennerdale slopes and, even more offensive, they are clothes of foreign origin, and unsightly." (1991: 164) Their foreign origin adds to the offence of their being planted at all. Native trees are always to be preferred: not for ecological reasons, nor solely because of their superior aesthetic qualities, but just by virtue of their nativeness: they are, in origin, of this soil and of this place. Wainwright's perspective is one where caring focused on the local, native, rooted, natural and social order. While this may not, in Wainwright's own work, be deeply problematic, it at least suggests caution is advisable about versions of "caring for the land" that share these characteristics in more intense and developed form.

Wainwright's care for Lakeland also raises questions about how places other than the Lakes were regarded. Wainwright wrote about, and sketched, a number of other places (though usually in the northern uplands). As we have seen, these places lacked the flawless and perfect nature of the Lakes, although they still, at least, manifested many of the properties Wainwright admired. Perhaps his most interesting comments in this regard emerge in his discussion of a gliding center on the North Yorkshire Moors, encountered as part of the *Coast to Coast* walk (which he famously created). Wainwright considered that the construction of runways had "despoiled the landscape". But, on the other hand, it is not *his* landscape. “Well, there can be no comment from an off-comer except to say that if such an operation were to be planned for the top of Helvellyn, all hell would be let loose.” (Wainwright 1992a: 131) As on off-comer in North Yorkshire, Wainwright feels he can offer no protest. Were such a proposal to be in the heart of his own landscape – Helvellyn in Lakeland - then “all hell would be let loose”. Caring for the land in this sense establishes relations to a particular place, and generates a responsibility to protect; and in Wainwright's case, those responsibilities were felt intensely. But the affective, rooted nature of this care means that it is circumscribed. Even if, while in another place, it is possible to say that

[13] It is difficult not to comment on the irony of a phenomenally successful guidebook writer maintaining that "tourism is the enemy" - but such ironies are so widespread in travel writing that no more than an endnote is merited here!

the landscape is despoiled by some development, the affective intensity is absent. It is this that, in Wainwright's case, provides the motivation to act in protection of the land. Perhaps there is also the sense that it is not proper, it is "out of order" for one who is not local, not rooted, to comment on developments in that place. Only those who know the soil and the landscape can judge the appropriateness of any particular development and whether it reflects the traditional ordering of land and humans.

The circumscribed scope of caring for the land in this sense does not seem to be, in itself, necessarily a bad thing. One might (in a process rather like that discussed by Singer in *The Expanding Circle*) generalize out from the felt protectiveness towards one's own place to a reasoned recognition of the need for protection of other places with similar valuable properties but about which one did not *feel* the same. This, though, would only seem to work with places sufficiently similar to one's own (say, other upland places) and where the cared-for properties were not derived solely from their entanglement in one's own personal narrative (which would not seem easily generalizable). However, as with the case of outsiders in the land, stronger versions of this view could be problematic - if, for instance, it issued in an indifference to other places, in "nimbyism" and a willingness to exploit other places in order to foster the perceived good of the cared-for place.

In Conclusion

This chapter has endeavored to look more closely at the idea of "caring for the land". Initially, I suggested that the expression should be treated with caution, both with respect to its complexity and multiplicity of possible meanings, and in terms of some uses, with respect to its desirability. I then used the work of Wainwright as a way of beginning to illustrate both these points. Wainwright's understanding of "caring for the land" was rich and complex, emerging out of a range of values, attitudes and commitments relating both to the land and to human interactions with the land. I suggested that the values and commitments embedded within Wainwright's idea of caring for the land may conflict with other possible interpretations of the expression, and also that stronger versions of the kinds of views he expressed might raise both social and environmental questions. As I commented at the beginning of this paper, this study of the idea of "caring for the land" is not intended to debunk it. Rather, it is intended to encourage closer scrutiny of the expression, both by those studying texts in which the term appears, and by those tempted to adopt its use themselves.

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