

# Recognizing the Autonomy of Nature

Theory and Practice

Thomas Heyd

In contemporary times, anthropogenic changes in the natural environment have become so considerable that a rethinking of our theory and our practice with regard to nature has become imperative. This book explores the idea that this rethinking of our relationship to nature calls for the recognition of the autonomy of nature.

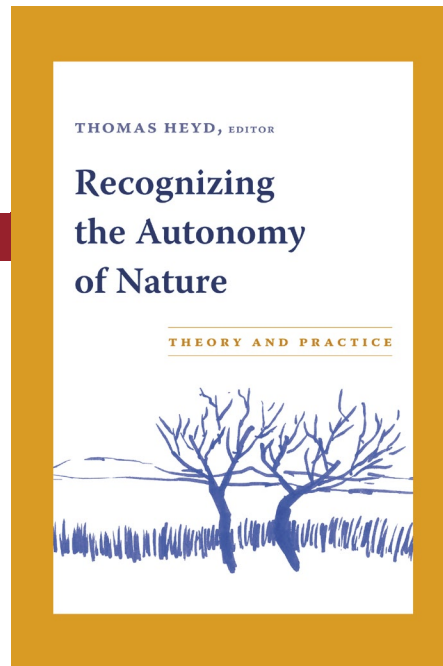
The contributors begin by addressing the question whether it makes sense to speak of nature and in what sense it can be seen as autonomous. In the following section, they consider how one might respect the autonomy of nature, given that human beings have needs and interests which cannot be satisfied without certain interventions in nature. They wonder, among other things, whether human beings can be considered as participants in ecosystems in such a way that their activities may be seen to contribute to nature's autonomy. The essays in the final section turn to management and restoration practices and investigate whether these practices promote the autonomy of nature or represent further ways to dominate nature.

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"Each essay in this book shows, in clear language and concrete examples, why mindless domination and exploitation must give way to respect for the other than human world. This is the best book of environmental philosophy and ethics I have read in a long while."—Donald Worster, University of Kansas, author of *A River Running West: The Life of John Wesley Powell*

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