

# Definition nature and the humanities



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Nature is the vague and elusive subject of millennia of thought. It is the tangible self evident life found in both backyards and expansive forests.

Nature is a container for and of life, created but uncreatable. It is thought by some to be the creation of deliberate intention but which is unable to be created by human efforts. Of all the elusive traits attributable to this vague object of thought, an important concept may be found behind all of the endless contradictions Nature so fervently thrusts upon its observers: Nature itself may actually be a symbol for something greater which poets and authors have alluded to.

The nature of Nature is living. Many descriptions can be attached but dead, lifeless, empty, exanimate are not among them. Often those words are readily employed to describe a place where Nature once was found but no longer resides. Reflecting the ever apparent principle of duality Nature exhibits its closeness to Divinity by being both the most accepting and the most rejecting of forces. Nature will accept any outcast and might very well be so rejecting as to kill anything that dares step into the expansive realm it dominates. Many inhabitants live in the home Nature creates but those creatures only reflect what Nature has given them: life. Yet the recipients are not Nature. Nothing in it can be taken and said to be Nature itself but without the creatures which inhabit it, Nature ceases to live.

The closer an object tends to be to the source of life of all that is living, the more it is subject to symbolic attribution. It becomes an archetype. In addition Nature is nebulous, which compounds the capacity for symbolic usage. And the authors who grasp this concept are only able to describe it in a nebulous manner, as they see it. The preceding three cardinal examples

lead up to the concluding example of why Nature is so conducive to symbolic attributions.

There is a cornerstone reason, more important than all the others as to why Nature holds so much meaning to humans, without which nothing else would matter in our understanding. It is a truth everyone knows but few truly know. This apparent self contradiction so characteristic of Nature gives another hint at what it is. If a person looking for red on a rainbow has found yellow then orange, red is not far off. This leads to the conclusion Nature is an objectively real, living entity given life by its observers.

Nature is living but apparently not conscious. Nature is objectively real but cannot maintain its separate existence without the life given to it by both its observers and inhabitants. Nature gives life to everything without which nothing would have life. These truths lead to understanding Nature is alive but might only have a collective unconscious for a mind. Depending on the reader's beliefs this may be due to the Creator of life not giving a single physical holding place for consciousness to function. Or it may be because Nature has not evolved enough to have developed an unconscious, let alone a conscious mind. But there may be a more sublime possibility, one which helps explain its symbolic and powerful nature.

Nature might be cognisant at the self conscious level of awareness but at a scale unobservable by humans, similar to how cells in a brain exhibit many characteristics of Nature but at a much smaller scale. This is a practical reason, as opposed to the more nebulous reasoning it might at first seem to be. Nature might be too big to be within the human realm of comprehension.

And humans might be so small they are outside of Nature's ability to grasp. Cells live and die, form into individual types and perform individual functions, attack and defend themselves from other cells, eat and breathe. If the cells veer too far into the expanse of the body they might die from conditions harsh compared to where it was formed. At this time so much space is allotted to the universe as to render numbers hardly meaningful in relation to it, allowing instead only the ruthless application of an equally incomprehensible symbol: the infinite. Beyond the realm of both human comprehension and mathematics, Nature's awareness might be found in the infinite. With archaic properties as powerful as these it is no surprise Nature is a strong a hook for symbolism.

Still, Nature might only be a symbol for something greater than itself, something that holds the true properties which Nature can only symbolize. Authors who write on the subject seem to allude to not only Nature itself but the power behind it. This seems to refer to a God or Creator. Or it may be a divinity from the complete composition of everything. Authors do not write in consensus of a single Creator but do seem to agree that there is something behind Nature. Not so much religious as spiritual, these writers lead the reader to the conclusion there is a force there. It is a force that Nature is both symbolic and reflective of. Similar attributions can be derived from both this Great Spirit and Nature: living, powerful, dangerous, accepting, and rejecting.

Nature may also at the same time, independent of spiritual symbolism, be a symbol of the self. People may go into Nature to reconnect to themselves. We might go to Nature to recharge and get away from artificial lifestyles. To

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project characteristics of the self onto a hook in psychology is called projecting. This allows for us to “hook” our own characteristics onto something that is outside us. So Nature could be either a powerful subjective hook which is similar to us in many ways or it might actually possess those traits. Either could be true or both at the same time and still lead people to seek out themselves in Nature as they have always done.

Nature dominates. It is a force to challenge the self, allowing for outside experiences representative of internal workings. It waits to dominate or be dominated. Ironically and again consistent in its self-contradictory nature, the dominator is waiting for domination. Either created or evolved, Nature remains a battleground to test the self against. It is a force to give meaning to the ability of anyone who puts themselves in its way. To survive a tornado, earthquake or even a night in a tent after roasting marshmallows at a cozy campfire with friends is a symbolic victory of the self over Nature. Nature fulfills a part of the soul which needs to dominate. By accepting this challenge and leaving a much safer civilized city, even for a short period, can give renewed vitality and meaning to life, if you survive.

The symbolism of Nature is too expansive to be reduced to a definition any paper is able to give but applied and reasonable thought leads to both some comprehension of Nature and of the divinity it may be a symbol of. People who go to Nature to find themselves will. And people who turn to Nature as a place to recharge their lives with meaning and power will succeed. As long as life exists so will Nature. Although Nature may be damaged by human pollution or other non-human events, Nature will live as long as life itself exists. A symbol for life, God and each every individual, it remains a powerful

subject for authors, poets and others who have always and will rightfully continue to attribute those symbolic characteristics to Nature.