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## **The Irreplaceability of Place: What We Lose When We Lose Our Homeland**

### *1. Introduction*

Anthropogenic climate change has already begun to alter our environment. In the coming years, this situation will only become more grave for small island states. Think of Tuvalu or Kiribati. These states will, in all likelihood, lose their supply of fresh water, experience increased flooding and erosion, decrease food production, and experience a worsening of the health of the population (Carr *et al.* 2013). Eventually, life in these places will simply become impossible. The sea could in time swallow these islands whole leaving those who have made their lives there stateless, homeless, and at the mercy of the international community. This is doubtless a tragedy. It is also a serious puzzle for normative political philosophers and theorists of sovereignty, responsibility, and compensation. This article makes two central claims. First, that a homeland is among a special set of irreplaceable goods based on ways of valuing both historically and personally. Second, that in light of this conclusion compensation may be impossible for such a good on either of the traditionally endorsed forms of compensation.

In making these claims, I will outline what I believe to be missing from accounts of the loss of a homeland, namely the idea of the homeland as an irreplaceable good. I will propose that a homeland is historically valuable, personally valuable, and sacred. For this argument, I will rely on theories of value from G.A. Cohen, Ronald Dworkin, and Erich Hatala Matthes. I then discuss proposals for compensation which focus on either individual rights, territorial rights, or the loss of the home. I

show that none of these proposals fully meet the burden of reparation. I next posit that it is perhaps the concept of compensation itself which fails and analyze Robert Goodin's theory of forms of compensation. I close with a discussion of restorative justice and look for ways to move forward in the wake of our significant moral failures.

## 2. *Ways of valuing*

Many of the things we use in our lives are instruments. That is, they allow us to attain some other good in life with their help. The computer with which I currently write for example is a tool which I use to research, write, and sometimes entertain myself. With that said, despite the inconvenience of replacing it (assuming my work is backed up somewhere) I would not regret its loss and subsequent replacement with a new one. In this way then, this computer and many other objects in our lives, are like Erich Hatala Matthes' umbrella (Matthes 2013, 37). An umbrella is used to keep us dry in the rain, and in the absence of certain features an umbrella may possess, such as historical significance, then we normally feel no regret if we need to find a new one. Most of this is obvious, but what is at stake here is the idea that sometimes an object's replacement can be: "[...] *just as good*, and specifically good *in the same way* (original italics)" (*ibidem*).

There are many ways that the places we live are also tools, or instrumental goods. A homeland for example is a piece of earth on which we can move our bodies, breath air, and sustain our lives. A home on that same land is a shelter where we can be safe from external elements, meet our basic needs, cook, and clean ourselves. When a homeland is lost or destroyed, these are important things to restore for the inhabitants. But homelands are also more than tools. There is of course a feature of homelands (at least for many or for most of us) that we would feel was not merely instrumental. We would perhaps feel an attachment to our places especially if those places have certain features.

I said earlier that what was at stake was when replacements of goods could be as good and good in the same way. But what is really at stake here is when an object's replacement can *never* be just as good or good in the same way. Matthes defines this as the irreplaceable for which he

provides a simple principle: “Irreplaceability (IR): An object is meaningfully irreplaceable if and only if *all* candidate substitutes would fail to be valuable in the same way as the original” (Matthes 2013, 38). This principle is intuitive in many ways but it demands further explanation. What is it exactly that makes something irreplaceable? And can we count a homeland as among those things? I will argue for a three-fold principle of irreplaceability. This will be comprised of historical value, personal value, and sacred value.

### 3. *Historical value*

For my purposes, I am inverting Matthes’ discussion. In his paper, he searches for what makes something historically valuable and on the way to doing so considers irreplaceability as a candidate feature. Looking at this from the other direction, we can see that historical value is also a way of rendering something irreplaceable. Matthes posits historical value as representing a connection to the past (Matthes 2013, 63). It is important on Matthes’s account that these objects are valued more so than would be simply reflecting on the past. He rightly points out that while it may be special to remember a place or a thing it is certainly better to possess it or to be able to visit again. Finally, Matthes importantly distinguishes historical connection from mere age. These items should be historically meaningful and thus any old thing does not quite meet the mark (*ibidem*). These features make a good case for a homeland being among these goods. They offer a connection to the past, are not trivial objects, and being able to return to them is better than their memory simply living on.

This connection to the past as it concerns a home is already present in Heidegger, who writes of the way that a home becomes a dwelling by creating a context for generations of people: “[...] and in this way it designed for the different generations under one roof the character of their journey through time” (Heidegger 1993, 362). This feels like a feature of irreplaceability and it applies just as well to homelands as it does to individual or family homes. Just as a home provides and colors this character so too does a homeland. Imagine for example a coastal society. It is plausible that they may feel a deep attachment to this specific place on

earth. They may even have traditions and symbolic ways of life that are bound up with the geographical space such as rites of passage involving the tides or the beach. They may have specific foods, which rely on a proximity to the ocean, that symbolically mark times of the year, major life events, or communal celebrations.

It strikes me that this is an obvious quality of a homeland that stands outside of its instrumental value. The land may be the repository of memories, and it may be important that certain sites are visited at specific times. There may be a sacredness surrounding the knowledge that one's ancestors walked and lived on exactly the patches of land on which one now stands. This too would be irreplaceable if lost and thus stands outside of the instrumental value of a homeland. This then is a first element of my concept of the irreplaceability of a homeland, a homeland is historically valuable and thus irreplaceable.

#### *4. Personal value*

There is also an element of individuality or particularity in the irreplaceability of homelands. For example, it seems intuitive that if you lost your homeland then mine would not be an adequate replacement for you. While mine would certainly have the historical and irreplaceable value for me, it would be merely instrumental for you. You would feel no attachment to your past being present on my homeland and it would simply afford you the instrumental value of a place to live. In this way homelands are not irreplaceable in the same way a Rubens painting is irreplaceable. It seems that the irreplaceability of the Rubens painting is not effected by who it belongs to at a given moment. Instead the historical irreplaceability of the painting is impersonal. This is disanalogous with a homeland, they are in some important sense then non-transferable goods.

With this in mind we should also incorporate G.A. Cohen's notion of "personal valuing" which encompasses an individual's relationship with a specific thing (Cohen 2011; Matthes 2013, 40). For Cohen, we do not simply want replacements or even full optimization in most situations. Typically we prefer what is ours, or what is already there as these things are personally valuable to us and have the history we are familiar with

(Cohen 2011, 221). This type of valuing relates back to a sense of belonging which we can participate in if we maintain contact with the good in question: "We want the past to be present among us. We do not want to be cut off from it. We rejoice in our contact with the culture of *our* past" (Cohen 2011, 223). Further, for Cohen this type of personal value also constitutes a reason to preserve the good in question even if it is not personally valuable to oneself. Personal value being present at all in an object is thus good reason to avoid its destruction (*ibidem*).

We could also refer to this as "unique value" following Christopher Grau (Grau 2004, 119). This type of value simply applies to our perception of the uniqueness of the object we value and its relationship to us. In Grau's case he speaks of a beloved person (*ibidem*). But Grau's theory can apply beyond people to even objects and animals. "In other words, there are objects that we attach to such that we are reluctant to accept a substitute, even when that substitute is an exact qualitative duplicate" (Grau 2004, 121). For my purposes, it seems like it is not such a far leap to include a homeland in this category. The point being that even a perfect replica, a "cloneland" if such a thing were possible, would still fail to offer a fully adequate replacement. There is something special about the place where I live which is similar to the way that my beloved is special. I would not, in the tragic circumstances of her death, accept an identical replica as replacement. This simply would not do for reasons that are more intuitive than logical. Similarly, my homeland has a specific personal value which is a case for its preservation on its own. Combining Cohen and Grau leads me to posit a second pillar of irreplaceability, that is homelands are personally and uniquely valuable.

## 5. *Sacred value*

Because of the way homelands are valued as personally and historically significant, as irreplaceable and uniquely valuable, I also want to say that they are sacred on the conception of sacred offered by Ronald Dworkin (Dworkin 1994, 73). For Dworkin, the sacred is born of his distinction between incremental and intrinsic value, incremental meaning we aim to have as much of the good as is possible. If we believe that a home is of incremental value, that would oddly commit us to building and creat-

ing as many as possible. In contrast, I mean to say that a home is more so sacred. “The hallmark of the sacred as distinct from the incrementally valuable is that the sacred is intrinsically valuable because – and therefore only once – it exists” (Dworkin 1994, 73-74). Thus, once a homeland has been imbued with meaning in the ways discussed above, it takes on a sacred value. This can help us to make sense of exactly why even a perfect replica would fall short. One’s homeland is a sacred thing for them. Its destruction violates something which they may hold dear and its loss is a tragedy.

So then, we have a three-fold principle of irreplaceability which applies to homelands. They are historically valuable in the way that they provide a connection to the past. They are also personally and uniquely valuable in the sense that while your homeland and mine may both be valued similarly, one’s homeland has a specific value to them that cannot be replaced by someone else’s or a replica. Finally, homelands are sacred in that once we have one it seems like we should treat it as inviolable and regard the loss of it as a tragedy.

## 6. *Some objections and clarifications*

It may be useful to stop briefly to make clear some things that I am not claiming. It is important to note that I am intentionally stopping short of claiming that these features of historical, personal, and sacred amount to intrinsic value, or to ends in themselves. I find that while this form of irreplaceability does get down toward the base of the object, it fails to get all the way down. In this sense, homelands are still a derivative good and fall short of being valuable for their own sake or good as the “chief good” that grounds the good of all others (Aristotle 2009, 1094a).

G.E. Moore proposes a test which we can use to determine if something is relationally good or good on its own. For Moore: “We *can* consider with regard to any particular state of things whether it would be worthwhile that it should exist, even if there were absolutely nothing else in the Universe besides [...]” (Moore 2005, 83). It seems intuitive that homelands don’t pass. Following this test, homelands then could not be of intrinsic value. A universe simply full of homelands without the people to inhabit them sounds somewhat absurd, and certainly does

not sound as good as one full of people who value their places in life. The value of a homeland then is based on the value of persons and their specific conceptions of the good life.

Further, it is imaginable that for some a homeland has none of these qualities. I can envision a situation where for a variety of reasons someone might feel no connection to her homeland, or may even at times feel a revulsion towards it. With this in mind I do not mean to suggest that the features of irreplaceability put forth above automatically inhere in a homeland. They instead require a person or persons to imbue them with such value.

Regardless, I do think that valuing our homelands as irreplaceable is somewhat the norm. Those who truly do not care about them may be the exception that proves the rule. So then, it follows that when we lose a homeland as those who inhabit small islands soon may, we are the victims of a very significant harm. Moreover, this is a harm that has gone relatively unaddressed by theories that aim towards reparative justice and compensation. In the following section, I will discuss the compensation packages on offer and highlight their focus on individual or territorial rights. I will then discuss theories which appreciate the scale of the loss of a homeland and advocate for prevention. Finally, I will challenge the dominant paradigm that currently aims to repair what has been broken through compensation.

## *7. Forms of compensation and rights*

The forms of compensation which are already on offer typically correspond to a restoration of either individual or territorial rights. I will first discuss those that cover individual rights. Matthias Risse specifically addresses small island states (Risse 2009). Risse defends a right to relocation as compensation for the loss of land from climate change. For Risse, this right is based on a concept of humanity's collective ownership over the earth which he believes entitles those who have lost their land to relocate to a new piece of land. In another theory, Heyward and Ödalen propose a free movement passport for the territorially dispossessed (Heyward and Ödalen 2016). This amounts to the right to migrate to a state of choice for climate refugees and is based on the threat of

statelessness and lack of recourse in the international realm owing to the disappearance of their home state (Heyward and Ödalen 2016, 5). These forms of compensation aim to restore individual rights. In Risse's account displaced people can migrate to a new state and are able to have their rights to safety and security ensured under this new regime. Heyward and Ödalen advocate for additional rights flowing to individuals as they are given this new form of free movement. Both of these proposals however still bring the displaced under the purview of a new state and thus remain silent on the loss of the homeland itself and the irreplaceability of this good.

Other proposals aim at a restoration of jurisdictional territory rights: "A territorial right may be understood as the spatial component of a self-determination right [...]" (Dietrich and Wündisch 2015, 85). One often acquires individual rights without necessarily acquiring territorial rights. Once migrants are welcomed into a state under legal conditions they are typically afforded rights to own property and make the choices that come along with that, but are not afforded rights to self-determination. Territorial rights then constitute the rights to legislate on one's own behalf, set border policies, trade agreements and other typically state level competencies. Dietrich and Wündisch's theory of territorial compensation aims to restore these territorial rights. In their proposal, displaced small islands states have their self-determination restored by being ceded an entire swath of territory from polluter states (Dietrich and Wündisch 2015). This amounts to being able to re-establish their own state on land which was previously part of a polluter state. Cara Nine has her own proposal aimed at restoring territorial rights. Nine adapts her argument from the Lockean proviso over property ownership to the territorial state system. For Nine, based on this condition, when a state loses its territory due to rising seas we may be obligated to re-make national boundaries in order to carve out a new territory to restore their self-determination (Nine 2010). These theories then address both individual and territorial rights, yet still fail to focus on the irreplaceability of the loss.

There are certain theories that have addressed the idea that the loss of a home is irreparable such as those of Rebecca Buxton (2019), Kyle Fruh (2021), and Avner de Shalit (2011). Fruh incorporates testimony from displaced people and draws attention to the fact that the harm of displacement is in a sense a "[...] scar never really healed" (Fruh 2021,

108). Buxton states that we should not forget that: “Perhaps nothing can truly repair the loss of home, just as no amount of money could ever compensate for the death of a loved one” (Buxton 2019, 211).

The main proponent of the irreparable nature of this harm however is Avner de Shalit. In de Shalit’s theory, he builds from Amartya Sen’s concept of capabilities and functions. For Sen it is important to measure global equality in terms of capabilities, or the material freedom to live as one wishes (de Shalit 2011, 311). De Shalit posits then that the loss of place, or even the threat of this loss, impedes these critical functions by threatening a sense of identity (de Shalit 2011, 317). When the place from which one comes has totally disappeared it becomes impossible to return. This makes it more difficult for the place to maintain its position as a piece of one’s identity than it would be if the place were vacated temporarily (*ibidem*). De Shalit argues that any attempt to replace the function of self-identity will fail as it cannot be fulfilled by a new place and it is incommensurable with alternative methods of compensation, such as money (de Shalit 2011, 321).

My disagreement is with de Shalit’s theoretical grounding, not with this conclusion. On my view, the idea that a loss of a sense of place can impede or wholly destroy critical functioning still fails to see beyond the instrumental value of the home. My conception is much closer to a position de Shalit takes up when addressing objections to his theory. He offers that place is: “[...] vital to human identity because it bonds us to our values, history, personal and collective memory, language, and natural surroundings, to things we are familiar with and at ease with” (de Shalit 2011, 318). I agree with all of this, but argue that even this summary seems to treat the homeland (or place in de Shalit’s terminology) as a mere instrument which provides us with *access* to certain other goods. I have instead argued that the loss of a homeland is irreplaceable and is itself tragic. For my argument, I need not appeal to the functions that a homeland may serve. My claim is instead grounded in the idea that the homeland itself is among a special class of irreplaceable goods. In this way, my theory moves the claims further away from the instrumental value of homelands. It points to the idea that what is destroyed is truly a loss and one that does not need to rely primarily on the instrumental value of the homeland. I find that it is often this instrumental value that leads to misconceptions in the possibility of compensation. Most theo-

ries, as I have shown above, tend to restore merely what homelands can accomplish for people such as territorial and individual rights. De Shalit's theory, while getting closer to the irreplaceability, still fails to fully appreciate a homeland for the level of importance it has in a human life.

What I have aimed to show in this discussion of existing proposals for compensation is that these two spheres of rights, the individual and territorial, cannot fully address the loss which has occurred for small island states. The proposals for compensation on offer thus all fail to meet the burden of restoring what has been lost. In the next section I will discuss compensation in general and show how it is perhaps the concept itself, not what is offered, which fails the displaced peoples. In doing so, I will look at Robert Goodin's work on compensation and show that neither of his established forms represents a live option in the case of a loss of a homeland. After establishing this, I will work out a positive proposal that may be better suited to address the loss of a homeland.

## 8. *The failure of compensation*

For Robert Goodin, compensation comes in two forms. These are alternatively means replacing and ends-displacing compensation. Means replacing compensation provides the injured party with: "[...]equivalent means for pursuing the same ends[...]" (Goodin 1989, 60). We can follow Goodin in calling this Compensation<sub>1</sub>. Alternatively, there is ends-displacing compensation which compensates people by: "[...]helping them pursue some other ends in a way that leaves them subjectively as well-off overall as they would have been had they not suffered the loss at all" (*ibidem*). Goodin calls this form Compensation<sub>2</sub>.

Compensation<sub>2</sub> relies on what Goodin refers to as the indifference curve (Goodin 1989, 64). This could be a loose constellation of goods such that when we grant them as compensation, their value taken together lifts the receiver over a threshold of indifference regarding the harm they have suffered. In other words, any combination of goods aiming at ends-displacement can push someone over the determined level to reach indifference. In Compensation<sub>2</sub> it does not matter which goods are offered so long as the point of indifference is reached. Owing to this, Compensation<sub>2</sub> will always be an inferior form of compensation. It will

necessarily involve the rearranging of people's preferences around what they can be offered in equivalence of what they have lost. Compensation<sub>1</sub> is therefore preferable. It dodges the challenges levelled against Compensation<sub>2</sub> and restores those injured back to their original state (Goodin 1989, 67).

There are, of course, situations where Compensation<sub>1</sub> is simply not possible. In the case of irreplaceable goods, the nature of the goods themselves precludes the possibility of this precise form of compensation. In these cases, Compensation<sub>2</sub> will be the only option available. "There being no close substitutes for objects that are irreplaceable, it is impossible to compensate people in the first sense should those things be lost. All we can do is to compensate them in the second sense, offering them goods with different characteristics, speaking to altogether different desires, and yielding altogether different satisfactions" (Goodin 1989, 65).

Oddly enough, it feels as if many of the proposals examined above still advocate for some form of Compensation<sub>1</sub>. That is, they offer the injured party alternate means for pursuing the same ends, the protection of individual and territorial rights. This constitutes a central problem with the approaches as they exist. They still treat the homeland as an instrument mainly capable of achieving the protection of individual and territorial rights, thus missing the irreplaceable value of the homeland. Only once we appreciate the homeland as an irreplaceable good can we truly see the misfit of attempts at Compensation<sub>1</sub>. While attempting to use means replacing compensation, these theories treat the homeland as a mere means.

In this sense then this may be a special harm which is perhaps irreparable by traditional forms of retributive compensation. It is widely accepted that certain forms of Compensation<sub>2</sub>, like money for example, would be completely inappropriate in the situation of climate displacement. It is less accepted, however, that forms of Compensation<sub>1</sub> would be just as inappropriate. In other words, it seems that goods that aim to replace means would be just as unacceptable as goods that mean to displace ends. We can think of examples like a new homeland, or moving to a new location. It is telling that Goodin himself uses the home as his example of an irreplaceable good. In his case he refers to one's physical house when speaking of the public policy decision of whether or not to build a third London airport. Goodin shows that eight per cent of residents in the proposed area reported that they would not move for any

price (Goodin 1989, 74). On my view, this implies they would certainly not move if offered a new house in a different location, or the opportunity to live in multiple houses at once, or the chance to pick up their house and take it someplace else. These hypothetical forms of Compensation<sub>1</sub> correlate with many of the examples of compensation proposals already existing. It seems that once we have established that a homeland is irreplaceable even attempts at Compensation<sub>1</sub> feel as inappropriate as those at Compensation<sub>2</sub>. By attempting Compensation<sub>1</sub> these theories are thus ignoring the irreplaceable value of the homeland.

What is really at stake here for me is the claim that in certain situations involving irreplaceable goods it is not possible to compensate for the loss, full stop. In Compensation<sub>1</sub> the homeland is treated as a simple means to an end, or as an instrument. In Compensation<sub>2</sub> the attempt at reaching indifference is wholly insufficient and inappropriate. It is also possible that sometimes simply offering Compensation<sub>2</sub> may inadvertently become another facet of the harm. By offering someone money in exchange for the right to destroy her homeland we may symbolically reduce the value of her homeland to its market or instrumental value. This constitutes another failure to appreciate the homeland as an irreplaceable good.

Goodin does not mention this point about Compensation<sub>2</sub>. He does acknowledge the difficulty of Compensation<sub>1</sub> and thus converges with de Shalit in advocating for prevention above all else in these cases. I think however that still something else is needed. Prevention is best, without question, but in our world it is a risky bet at best. The call for prevention also ignores that fact that in many cases this harm is not hypothetical. Already around the world climatic conditions have begun to deteriorate causing many to move away from where they once made their lives. This points to the urgent need of finding ways to move forward in the wake of the failure of traditional compensation. In the following section, I will discuss some possible alternatives or complements to compensation from the domain of restorative justice.

## *9. Moral failures and compensation; reconciliation and apology*

It seems then like compensation (either 1 or 2) cannot quite meet the moment regarding the loss of a homeland. It is obvious that once a

homeland is appreciated as an irreplaceable good it can never be compensated for with Compensation<sub>1</sub> (as Goodin would agree). What is more, Compensation<sub>2</sub> may feel inappropriate in situations involving irreplaceable goods, and may even demean or belittle the victim. Prevention is certainly ideal but it is not always a live option when considering the current global situation.

We need to offer something else to these groups who will in all likelihood lose their irreplaceable homeland. I see one obvious direction to follow. In place of a pure discussion of compensation, we could spread awareness of our moral shortcomings and include other non-compensatory notions like reconciliation and apologies. This could take the form of truth and reconciliation commissions the likes of which are in place in Canada, for example.

On my view, attempts at reconciliation through an organized body can be a meaningful expression of genuine remorse. Studies have gone so far as to claim that the restorative aspect of justice can perhaps do more to promote reconciliation than retributive justice (Clark 2008). Truth and reconciliation commissions (TRC) are typically an: “[...] official, temporary, non-judicial fact-finding body set up to investigate a pattern of abuses of human rights committed over a number of years” (Stanton 2011). TRCs are an established form of restorative justice which has different aims than retributive justice. These aims include such things as encouraging and promoting healing, learning, moral improvement, communal interest and engagement, respect, repair, transformation, responsibility, and apology (Braithwaite 2002; Allais 2011).

What a TRC really boils down to is a thorough attempt at finding out exactly what went wrong, who is responsible, and creating a formal and public apology for said wrongdoing. This would still not restore the irreplaceable good of a homeland that has been lost. In light of the failure of other forms of compensation however, it may be appropriate to aim for a type of response which is non-compensatory in nature. At least this form of restorative justice can fully acknowledge the harm that has occurred and put into the open the wrongs that have been committed. By doing this it is possible that the international community leaves open a space for genuine healing in the face of an irreparable harm.

To be clear, I do not mean to suggest that these non-compensatory responses can replace compensation altogether. It is obvious that the displaced will still need somewhere to go when they lose their home-

land, and I seriously doubt that simply apologizing and acknowledging the harm done can fulfill this duty. I am making the much more modest claim that attempts at restorative justice can perhaps slightly nudge compensation that is inadequate towards something better. Forms of compensation which feel inappropriate, insufficient, or offensive could perhaps have this swamped when coupled with genuine attempts at reconciliation. For example, if we offer relocation to refugees from small island states as means replacing compensation we could combine this with a commission on reconciliation like something from Canada or South Africa. This could help to appreciate the homeland as irreplaceable and would be better than offering only compensation.

## 10. *Conclusion*

I have argued here for two central claims. The first is that a homeland is an irreplaceable good. This is because it is historically valuable, personally valuable, and sacred. The second claim is that neither Compensation<sub>1</sub> nor Compensation<sub>2</sub> are capable of meeting the burden of reparation. I also noted that the current matrix of proposals for compensation owed to climate migrants is left wanting. By focusing on either individual or territorial rights these proposals fall short of appreciating the gravity of the harm caused by climate change displacement. When this harm is appreciated it is still not for the idea of the homeland as an irreplaceable good, but instead for the instrumental value of what it provides to inhabitants. We therefore should begin to conceive of a homeland as irreplaceable outside of its functions.

In light of these claims, I have attempted to show that we should shift our focus from compensation to forms of restorative justice. We of course are unable to fully abandon attempts at compensation. We will have to restore the means by which displaced people can realize the ends of protecting their rights. I then addressed the idea that at times forms of Compensation<sub>2</sub> may contribute to the harm by belittling or demeaning the victim. I finally proposed that we may be better able to appreciate the harm that has occurred and save attempts at compensation by coupling it with restorative justice in the form of truth and reconciliation commissions, or other forms of public acknowledgment and apology.

The irreplaceability of a homeland is the main thrust of my argument, and I believe it is important that we begin to conceive of homelands in this way. It is often the focus on the instrumental or functional value of the homeland that causes proposals of compensation to feel incomplete. I acknowledge that positing a homeland as irreplaceable is a large and morally significant claim, it implies that it will be much more difficult than we previously thought to make right some of the wrongs of climate change. My hope is that further research can sort out some of the puzzle I have created here. Regardless, it is important to understand the full scope of the harms that have been done by climate change. Without taking full stock of what has been lost, that is acknowledging the loss of something irreplaceable, we will not be able to move forward in the wake of these harms.

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