

ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY

CSPH7010

LECTURE TWO

ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS AND THE DOMAIN OF MORALITY

STUDY EXERCISES

Exercise 1: clarifying Goodpaster's argument

Consider the following questions:

1. Why does Goodpaster prefer to talk about moral considerability rather than rights?
2. What is the distinction he makes between moral considerability and moral significance?
3. How does he distinguish between questions of intelligibility and questions of normative substance?
4. Why does Goodpaster maintain that sentience alone is a sufficient but not a necessary condition for moral considerability?
5. On what arguments does Goodpaster primarily base his case that plants are morally considerable?

Exercise 2

Read Paul Taylor's 'The Ethics of Respect for Nature', in *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*, eds. Michael E. Zimmerman et al (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1998), and Attfield's *Environmental Ethics*, ch.2

Then complete the following exercises / answer the following questions:

1. Outline Taylor's biocentrism with reference to his ideas on inherent worth (pp. 71-75 and 81-85 are particularly relevant here).
2. Do you agree with Taylor? Give reasons.

3. Compare Attfield's biocentric consequentialism with Taylor's biocentric egalitarian stance. How is Attfield's position different from Taylor's? Which is more plausible?

Exercise 3

Consider the following questions:

1. What is it that makes something matter in a moral sense? What characteristic(s) is it necessary to possess to matter morally?
2. What stance would you take to the environment and why – would you consider yourself to be a biocentrist, an ecocentrist, a sentientist or an anthropocentrist?
3. Consider again your response to the Last Man example (lecture one). Is your response compatible with your answer to question two, above? If not, in order to be consistent, you need to revise either your response to the example or consider adopting a different stance.