

Annotated Bibliography

The items chosen for this bibliography are based on reading materials provided in the reading lists for the first three lectures. There is a variety of chapters from books, articles and journals. These materials were chosen as they reflect my areas of interest and they are also some of the items that I enjoyed reading the most. Each annotation includes a reference to the authors background, a summary of the text, a critique and a concluding evaluation.

Attfield, Robin, *Environmental Ethics*, second end. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014), ch. 1, pp. 1-29.

To give some context to this annotation Robin Attfield is an Emeritus Professor of Philosophy who has taught in Universities such as Cardiff. He is well known in this field and has written or edited 15 books and over 250 articles and chapters. The book was intended for a broad audience including students, scholars, researchers, and those with an interest in the field. The chapter cited above is an introductory chapter of the second edition of the book *Environmental Ethics*. The author states in the preface of the book that the aim of this book is to offer a wide range of arguments in defence of biocentric consequentialism. Firstly to summarise the chapter, Attfield begins by trying to address the question of what is an environmental problem?. Clearly this is a huge question which could take an entire book in itself. He goes forward and introduces the local and global issues categories. Local includes issues such as smog or littering in a specific area whilst global issues include things that impact the planet and its inhabitants for example oil slicks in the sea and their impact on marine life. He makes reference to the Gaia Hypothesis originally written by scientist James Lovelock¹. The author goes on to discuss animal welfare and discusses concerns for all beings that can suffer, whether they are human or nonhuman. The nonhumans can be split in to animals and eco-systems. The author goes on to highlight the differences between the two. The conclusion of this chapter is a stark opposite to the concluding paragraphs of Katie McShane²'s journal 'Anthropocentrism vs Nonanthropocentrism: Why Should We Care?' which will be discussed further on in this annotated bibliography. Attfield asks whether it really is possible to care about the environment in such a way which would make a difference.

To compare, unlike Bensons³ introductory chapter Attfield doesn't discuss the benefits to humans when discussing environmental ethics and conservation of the environment in this particular chapter. One critique of this chapter is that when the author makes reference to stewardship he does not acknowledge the complexity of the biblical origins of stewardship or dominion mandates. The legacy from the Genesis passages have been used by Christians and Jews to try and make sense of what the role humans should hold on this earth and what their relationships should be with animals, ecosystems and everything in between. It is also well debated whether humans do hold a 'higher' position or not in the eyes of God. The stewardship versus dominion debate is an infamous debate

¹James Lovelock, *Gaia: A New Look At The Earth* (London: Oxford, 1979).

with many complexities and critiques which span across generations. A prior understanding of this helps the reader navigate through these arguments therefore it feels that more attention could have been given or at least acknowledged before being discussed later on. However, it could be argued that this surpasses the true purpose of this chapter which weakens this criticism. It is also worth noting that further explanations are offered in chapter 3.

Therefore to evaluate, the purpose of reading this chapter was as a companion to a lecture. The book on the whole is a very helpful aid to the course as it provides useful information on all topics discussed in lectures. Another strong point of the book is that it is easily accessible to all through hard copies and electronic copies. Other strengths of this book include its easy to read nature, it's detailed footnotes/reference list as well as the extensive glossary. The main themes and points have been discussed and it is clear to see the main goal of this chapter is to discuss key themes and arguments in the field of environmental ethics as well as to help build a strong base knowledge.

Attfield, Robin, *Environmental Ethics*, second edn. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014), ch. 6, pp. 178-201.

The second source is another chapter from Robin Attfield's book *Environmental Ethics* that I found particularly useful whilst working through this module. As previously stated this is the second edition of the book which was written in light of the Rio Plus Twenty Summit of June 2012. The background for the author and the reliability of the source has already been discussed in the previous annotation. To summarise, the author begins this chapter by reminding us that the environment is part of a global issue which requires a global ethic in order to tackle the aforementioned issues. He continues to explain that the earth is home to a common heritage of human-kind. The author believes that global citizens are required to aid in tackling environmental issues, indeed it is a group effort to ensure that a new global ethic can be formed which will ensure the rehabilitation or even preservation of the planet and its species through the global crisis. Attfield then goes on to discuss the use of different kinds of ethics and how they fit in with environmental issues. He discusses a cosmopolitan ethic, he recognises that this ethic does have its own place to be effective, though he does suggest that a cosmopolitan ethic is not a perfect fit to respond to all environmental ethical issues. He concludes that a broad range of issues do require some degree of cosmopolitanism. Another ethic he discusses at length is consequentialism. He explains that it has fewer limitations to similar theories. He recognises that theories such as Kantianism offer something, but do also have their limitations. In addition to this he mentions the global heritage of human kind. Though globalisation it seems to be getting easier for countries to communicate and work together, it is important to note that countries require different approaches based on their economic and social makeups.

Globalisation has the potential to do so much through allowing more countries to freely discuss and have that open dialogue as the countries metaphorically move closer. However, some countries are not willing to play a part in this whether that be because they are unable or unwilling. A criticism of this chapter would be that the author could have used this to expand on his points on governance and

creating a global ethic for global citizens that would suit the full globe.

In an evaluation, strengths of this chapter include an interesting addition of a learning recommendation at the end of the chapter. These recommendations can be found in a box at the end of a chapter. This is particularly useful to students or to those who want to achieve a further understanding through the use of knowledge checks as they progress through the book. These exercises could also be useful for revision purposes as a book is revisited throughout the semester as opposed to re-reading chapters at a time.

Attfield, 'Global Warming, Equity and Future Generations', in *Human Ecology Review*, Vol.17, No.2, 2010, pp.102-105.

[Accessible at: <http://www.humanecologyreview.org/pastissues/her172/Attfield.pdf>]

The third citation also comes from Robin Attfeild, this time in the form of a short journal. This source is well referenced and is widely available to the public and is part of the course reading list which would indicate that it is a reliable source. References have been made to the background of the author in previous citations. Though this piece of writing is short, it provides valuable information on the studies of environmental ethics. Attfeild begins by stating that the environment requires more than just a scientific solution. This is an interesting point to make. When climate change or other related issues are mentioned many minds - including my own - jump straight to the scientific answers such as the greenhouse effect. By saying more is needed, the author is encouraging readers to look at the issues from an ethical or philosophical perspective. He also goes on to refer to global warming as a 'phenomenon'. Assuming the 'phenomenon' is true Attfeild continues to suggest some sustainable responses which could help with this issue. For example Attfeild looks at the possibility of sharing resources and once a certain amount has been used, there would be a cut off point. The purpose of this would be to work out how much extra green house gas the Earth could safely take in order to preserve or improve the state of the current natural systems. He goes on to suggest that this could also be used to take future generations and their needs into account. An issue with environmental ethics as mentioned by several authors cited here is that it's difficult to define what needs to be done and who counts as having intrinsic value. Attfeild's suggestion would include the future generations. Though this idea might seem simple in the beginning, it would require a lot of working out. Attfeild himself recognises this and explains how many factors such as animals, farming and other requirements would need to be factored. Other challenges Attfeild recognises is that not all countries would have the same allowance of green house gas emissions for example. Creating a system of deciding how to allocate the allowance could cause other global issues in itself due to the potential of some countries feeling like they are missing out. Another challenge is that it would be difficult to stop humans from using resources. If a human was paying and able to use a service it would be incredibly difficult to stop them without infringing on some rights.

The system of Contraction and Conveyance discussed in this chapter has some clear and practical strengths, however there are some weaknesses which have been recognised by the author. One criticism not highlighted by Attfeild is the changing information during this crisis. For example at one stage it was believed that diesel cars would be beneficial in reducing the carbon footprint, it has since been discovered that this is not the case with many car manufactures no longer producing them and opting for other options such as electric. Creating and implementing a limit would depend on many factors, should new evidence or research uncover new information the entire system would need to be revised.

Robin Attfeild writes in a way which personally captures my interest. His points are well set out and it is interesting to see links within his different pieces of writing. I found this particular piece helpful when considering the implications for future generations. Through reading this chapter I was able to settle on a decision for a further essay question as well as gain a deeper understanding of a lecture topic studied as part of the course.

Benson, John, *Environmental Ethics: an introduction with readings* (London and NY: Routledge, 2000), ch.1, pp.9-29.

John Benson is a philosopher and Emmaratus Professor in the field of environmental philosophy. To begin, Benson discusses the different kinds of environments and recognises the difficulties in defining them. He uses the example of a cats environment to illustrate his point in a way that is understandable and accessible to different kinds of readers. The beginning of the chapter focusses on the broadness of the term 'environment'. The author discusses the difficulties on defining this term and emphasises how the term 'environment' is subject to its relationships, area and characteristics amongst other things. In order to decide where the definition begins and ends it is imperative that all things are considered. This leads the author to the focus of the book as a whole, environmental ethics. Much like the term 'environment' Benson recognises that environmental ethics is a difficult object to define. He discusses a range of environmental concerns and addresses the question does environmental ethics need to include everything in the environment. The chapter concludes with references to sources used and further reading on this subject which is useful to gain a broader knowledge. This source also offers a summary box at the end of each chapter which is useful to knowledge check or recap before moving on to another chapter if the reader has taken a break in between chapters.

Despite being an introductory chapter Benson makes several interesting arguments. This particular chapter has been useful to me in the initial stages of developing an understanding of environmental ethics. The chapter offered a brief overview of the works of Arne Naess⁴, Mary

⁴ Naess, Arne (1986). The Deep Ecological Movement: Some Philosophical Aspects. *Philosophical Inquiry* 8 (1/2):10-31.

Midgley⁵ and the Routley brothers⁶. Having prior knowledge of their works and arguments have supported me whilst getting to grips with a new subject. The references to these key thoughts have made this resource stand out from the others and encouraged me to read further in to the book. In addition to this the argument made on animal ethics was interesting and emphasises the need for more thought on environmental ethics. Though this chapter offers a lot, it is done in a way which engages the reader and does not confuse them. Though some areas (such as where The Last Man is discussed) may appear that they could be expanded on, after reading following chapters arguments are delivered in a full and well reasoned manner.

I chose this chapter as it has helped broaden my subject knowledge and has supported me in creating an understanding to base arguments on in future assignments. It is a strong and clear introduction which can be used for assignment research or general reading for those interested in the subject of environmental ethics.

Goodpaster, Kenneth E., 'On Stopping at Everything: A Reply to W. M. Hunt', in *Environmental Ethics*, Vol.2, No.3, 1980, pp.281-84.

An interesting read, this piece was written as a response to W. M. Hunt following his critique on Kenneth E. Goodpaster's original "On Being Morally Considerable".⁷ The purpose of this piece is to address the critiques made by W. M. Hunt⁸ and for Goodpaster to come to a conclusion clarifying his stance in light of these critiques. From the offset we can see that the author is confident in his original statements and findings and that he is very keen to defend these thoughts. This piece could be more useful to those who have read the original journal as prior knowledge of arguments will help the reader understand exactly what is being said in this journal. It could also be favourable to read the original response by Hunt. For context, Hunt argues that Goodpaster has not categorised who/what deserves moral consideration or not. As Goodpaster clearly states, what Hunt is arguing would suggest that Goodpaster is either being too vague, or not specific enough when he explains who/what he believes deserves moral consideration. Through using a porch as an example, Goodpaster explains that though a porch might need painting, the actual painting is done as per its owners will. It is not the porch itself that decides this as it is an inanimate object. In conclusion Goodpaster maintains his stance that "being alive" is what is required for moral consideration. Goodpaster defends his arguments as well as addressing the critiques from Hunt.

Unable to locate original source

⁶ Routley, R. & Routley, V. (1980). Human chauvinism. In D. S. Mannison, M. A. McRobbie & Richard Sylvan (eds.), *Environmental Philosophy*. Dept. Of Philosophy, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University. pp. 96--189.

⁷Kenneth Goodpaster, "On Being Morally Considerable," *Journal of Philosophy* 75 (1978): 308-25; W. Murray Hunt, "Are Mere Things Morally Considerable?" *Environmental Ethics* 2 (1980): 59-65.

⁸ *ibid.*

One slight critique is that it is difficult to critique this as a stand alone piece due to its intertwined nature with the other two afore mentioned pieces. As far as the content of this piece is concerned, all points are clearly addressed and counter-critiqued. Whether you agree with original arguments or otherwise, the author has defended his work well.

Therefore to evaluate, this short piece of writing is concise and to the point and through reading in conjunction I developed a deeper understanding of his original journal therefore it was a useful read. Despite being part of other works, as a stand alone piece you do get a basic insight in to the main arguments for moral consideration.

Leopold, Aldo, 'The Land Ethic' [originally appeared in Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac*, 1949], in *Environmental Philosophy: from animal rights to radical ecology*, eds. Zimmerman et al (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1998).

Aldo Leopold was an American professor and even 70 years after his death he is still regarded as one of the most well known contributors to the contemporary environmental movement. The intended audience of this book is unclear, however given the magnitude of his contribution the paper has been read and used by students and scholars alike. His paper opens with a reference to a greek myth. The paper is well organised and is divided with subtitles. This summary will discuss each subsection briefly, and it important to note that not all content can be discussed therefore I have focussed on the arguments and points that personally drew my attention.

Leopold begins by stating the differences between the term 'ethical' in a philosophical context and the same term in an ecological context. Leopold believes that ethics offers an opportunity, as he compared the callings for a development of a 'land ethic' to an embryo. The next section of his works refers to community. Within communities humans are often seen as the 'conquerors' of a specific place. Leopold insists that this is not how things *should* be. Making reference to the American national anthem, he discusses that love for the land is something millions pledge regularly, but what does that really mean in reality? Leopold recognises that it is not possible to control how things are used and how these 'resources' are divided or used by individuals. However it is possible to fight for their right to survival. He uses examples of communities which have 'developed', though in reality they have only developed through what the land has produced. For example without the ability to build, farm or alter land many communities could arguably be stuck in a different age entirely. The author discusses so called 'land pyramids'. Once a piece of land has been touched, it never goes back the same way. This could lead to destruction. The author moves on to speak of an ecological conscience. As part of developing an ecological consciousness Leopold argues that education isn't doing enough. My own experiences of teaching a module on Global Citizenship echo the point made by Leopold. It is taught that global issues should be tackled to help save the planet, for the benefit of what a healthy planet would mean for humans not for the benefit of the planet itself. The outlook according to Leopold is that more

needs to be done on the grounds of respect and love for the land. There needs to be a shift towards good and moral education as opposed to that which is economically focussed.

It is difficult to critique this piece as many points or arguments set out are strong and well thought out. However, there is a call for an environmental ethic and it could be argued that there is room for this essay to go further. For example a further clarification on what exactly the role of humans should be. How can farmers show respect and integrity for their land if that means that they are unable to turn a profit to ensure their bills are paid? In addition to this, is there a way to police acting in a more respectful and conscious manor? Evolution is inevitable and what might work to answer the call for a 'land ethic' now might not fit with future generations.

Therefore, as the environmental crisis is clearly worsening and gains more media attention by the year. Taking in to consideration the time 'Land Ethic' was written it is interesting to see how the call for a good and clear environmental ethic is as needed now as it was then. There are many considerations put forward by the author which if implemented sooner could have made a huge difference to the situation the Earth is in at this given moment. This essay has encouraged me to think more about how I use and see 'resources' as well as do some further research on responses to this paper in the future.

McShane, Katie, 'Anthropocentrism vs Nonanthropocentrism: Why Should We Care?', *Environmental Values*, Vol.16, No.2, May 2007.

[Accessible at: http://hettingern.people.cofc.edu/Environmental_Philosophy_Fall_2011/McShane_Anthropocentrism_vs_Nonanthropocentrism_%20Why_Should_We_Care.pdf]

Katie McShane is an American professor whose research interests include the theory of value, and environmental ethics. Her writing explores the moral significance of actions and emotional attitudes that we take when considering the world and its inhabitants. Her unique approach is different to those already discussed in previous annotations. The source is part of a collection of journals and therefor is a reliable source. The author draws upon her own narrative as well as arguments and research from other philosophers which have all been referenced. The journal is split in to 6 parts with subtitles which is useful for future reference.

To summarise the author begins by explaining the differences in key terms, this is helpful and makes the journal accessible to students, scholars and researchers. She goes on to discuss what counts as a practical implication of an ethical theory. She then draws attention to an argument made by Tom Regan⁹ regarding respecting all things on earth, human or otherwise. This arguments strengthens her journal entry as it gives an understanding to the root of some of her theories in this piece of writing. Following this McShane draws a contrast by explaining that most traditional ethical views are indeed anthropocentric. She continues by reasoning that both anthropocentric and nonanthropecentric views

⁹ Tom Regan, *The Case For Animal Rights* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

lead to similar action norms. Anthropocentric views may not change what you think but when you react to environmental ethics/issues in an anthropocentric way it changes how you react. The two viewpoints offer a different stance on how we see and treat other beings whether they are human or not. She recognises that there are differences between anthropocentrism and nonanthropocentrism which are well worth considering, however she makes clear that ethics should come from feelings. Our moral lives are things that we live with inside ourselves and the author argues that this should be reflected in the way we treat things.

The author then draws to an interesting conclusion. There have been many discussions in other sources about the role of humans and the consideration of animals, plants, the eco-system which have drawn some similar and different conclusions however they have all referenced the need for a further ethic when it comes to environmental ethics at some stage. This author agrees with that, however she also adds a further view. She concludes that whilst concentrating on feelings might not be the answer to all of the Earth's environmental issues, if all humans considered the consequences of their actions more, these little things could amount to a great difference in the scheme of the environmental crisis the planet and its inhabitants are currently facing.

This particular journal offers something different to the other items and was a thought provoking read as the author encourages you to think about your own impact on the Earth and its inhabitants without asking you directly to do so. McShane's writing draws on similar themes to Leopold as she urges us to be more considerate. The two authors encourage us to care more which is such a small and manageable step. By using the views of both Leopold and McShane could be argued that respect could be the first step in creating a new environmental ethic which is desperately needed before this environmental crisis worsens further from the point of no return than we are at the minute.