



## Undergraduate assignment feedback form (to be completed by marker)

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| Student Name: <u>Georgina Chamley</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                 |
| Module title: <u>Environment, Sustainability &amp; Philosophy</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Student number: <u>1600123</u>                                                                  |
| For completion by marker:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                 |
| <p>Comments: This piece of work is fraught with contradictions &amp; inaccuracies, revealing quite a lot of misunderstandings of the texts discussed.</p> <p>Further, for the most part it is not clear whether you're discussing your own view, the view of another author, or the 'standard' Western worldview. As such, the presentation of arguments &amp; ideas is very unclear &amp; incoherent in places.</p> <p>I advise to pay closer attention to the presentation, <u>and</u> to read the texts in much more depth before the next assignment. Overall, while you do reveal some knowledge of relevant ideas, a better</p> |                                                                                                 |
| Marker's signature: <u>[Signature]</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Date: <u>understanding of the reading material is necessary in order to gain a higher mark.</u> |
| Provisional mark: <u>40%</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                 |
| NB. All marks are provisional until confirmed by the final examination board.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                 |

\* Feel free to pop to see me if you'd like to discuss your essay.



Annotated bibliography

Pay close attention to the punctuation  
 ↓ English

Do non-human creature have interest? Does this mean that they also have rights?

Provide reasons/support for your answer

Goodpaster, Kenneth, *On being morally considerable*, The Journal of Philosophy,  
 Volume 75, No.6, 1978

Goodpaster's work helps to answer the question of whether non-human creatures have interests because his position is biocentric meaning he is putting arguments forward which he agrees with. He focuses on the various distinctions in definitions used, allowing arguments to be more encompassing in support of non-human creatures as well as humans. Goodpaster distinguishes between what he calls 'moral considerability' (p.311) the general principle that all should be taken into consideration and 'moral sustainability' (p.311) the belief that when two entities conflict the one with the higher moral considerability should take president.

His work allows the distinction to be draw between moral and legal rights thus helping one decipher the question more. Non-human creatures may not have the legal rights that humans do, Goodpaster proclaims that they should be considered to have an equal footing regarding moral rights, seen in his moral considerability theory. Considerations should be paid to non-human creatures because respect is not restricted by the possession of legal rights but extends further to moral consideration and moral rights, which Goodpaster believes all beings should be entitled too.

Goodpaster believes non-human creatures hold moral considerability but advocates this does not extend to include 'mere things' (p.319) like trees as these indirectly belong to humans. What has rights is restricted by the possession of moral considerability and sustainability.

Non-human beings do have interests so deserve rights with reference to Goodpaster's work because beings who satisfy the interest principle deserve rights. (p.318)

No specify reference is made to the interests of ones own being or to the wider community. Non-human creatures can have both interests for their own flourishing but

This is Feinberg's view - some confusion here.

According to Feinberg

rights, too?

But is this a reason?

Where does he say this?

also it is in humans' interests to keep them around. (p.318) A non-human creatures personal interests can be flourishing. It would be reasonable to grant them with moral rights as their interests are for growth and reproduction, just as humans have these interests. From an anthropocentric view non-human creatures interests in flourishing allow resources which humans need for survival to flourish, it is in both the non-human creatures interests and humans interests to allow them moral rights of survival.

Relating to Goodpaster work when it comes down to the decision of rights the interests or moral sustainability of humans outweighs that of non-human creatures. Moral rights of non-humans are squashed by the legal rights possessed by humans even though they both have the same interests in flourishing. Goodpaster's moral standing 'attaches to everything that has a good of its own.'<sup>1</sup> A good of their own for example being interests which should be considered for moral standing, more specifically attributed with moral rights.

Non-human creatures have interests in themselves although are not covered by legal rights in the same regard as humans, the moral right humans feel towards non-human creatures allows them to maintain their presence. Acknowledging the interests of non-human creatures and justifying this by giving them rights, to an extent.

However although Goodpaster acknowledges the moral considerability or interest of non-human creatures this does not mean that they deserve rights.

Taking into account Goodpaster's work on moral sustainability the rights of humans legally and morally will always override the rights of non-human creatures as human interests are seen as greater significance (p.311) because humans have the ability of 'governing comparative judgements of moral weight in cases of conflict' (p.311) is which a non-human creature does not intellectually the interests of humans are above all.

Goodpaster previously stated only beings who satisfy the interest principle can possess moral rights. (p.318) Non-human creatures have interests in themselves but do not deserve rights because only rational or potentially rational humans (p.315) have the

<sup>1</sup> Attfield, Robin, *Environmental Ethics*, Second Edition, Fully revised and expanded, An Overview for the twenty-first century, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2016, p.11

potentially to fully act on their interests. Moral consideration/ interests of non-human beings can be acknowledged in the way they have the individual interest to reproduce and grow. Broader interests like desires in life and sensory actions are not possessed by non-human creatures so they lack the rights to be considered on the same level as humans.

*Not correct.*

Goodpaster refers to Feinberg (p.318) to propose that non-human creatures lack interests. Just because non-human beings lack interests does not mean that they lack rights, as 'mindless creatures' (p.319) their interests are presupposed by humans.' Non-human creatures are not their own being but implicitly ours by the fact that humans have assumed what a non-human creature desires, hardly an intelligibility problem about representing the tree's interest.' (p.318) This shows that the rights given to non-human creatures is just in place to benefit human life. Non-human creatures may lack interests in themselves but deserve rights as 'to be capable of being represented, an organism must matter to human being.' (p.318) It is in human interest to keep them around so that human life can flourish.

*Include things like trees for F) but not sentient creatures.*

Goodpaster refers to Frankena (p.316) in his work. Frankena says that non-human creatures have no interests therefore deserve no rights. He goes into more depth by saying that only sentient beings deserve rights, but non-human creatures are not sentient nor have the potentiality of becoming sentient thus deserve no rights.

'Frankena suggests that nonsentient beings simply do not provide us with moral

*But Frankena's position is a sentient one.*

reasons for respecting them unless it be potentiality for sentience.' (p.316) This is questioned by the work of Peter Singer (p.314) who gives sentient status to all beings which have the capacity to suffer, this could include animals and plants who suffer at the hand of humans. Animals suffer through pain enacted upon them, but animals and plants can suffer at the hand of humanity if humans destroy the environment the current and next generations of animals and plants will suffer due to a decrease in their surroundings.

Singer advances on his point by saying that 'limit of sentience is only defensible boundary of concern for interests of others' (p.316) this works more in conjunction with Frankena's point.

Singer and Frankena work in partnership here by saying that interests and rights should be restricted to humans because humans are the only species able to take the interests of others into account when partaking in a particular way of life so they have a higher level of more sustainability than other species.

Zimmerman, Michael E, Callicot, J. Baird, Warren, Karren J, Klaver, Irene J and Clark, John, *The Ethics of Respect for Nature, Environmental Philosophy, From Animal rights to radical ecology*, Fourth Edition, Pearson, Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 1998

which article we are discussing → The main theme throughout Zimmerman's work was that humans possess a higher level of well-being than non-human creatures. All that is done to the environment is to enhance 'consequences which are favourable to human well-being.' (p.71) Humans impact the surrounding environment via their actions especially their actions towards the environment which are primarily undertaken to benefit humans rather than plants and animals. This is enhanced by the idea that humans perceive themselves to be on a higher moral footing than the rest of the global ecosystem. In reality humans need the environment more than the environment needs humans, seen by the way it is perceived that we

*'have responsibilities with regard to the natural ecosystems and biotic communities of our planet, but these responsibilities are in every case based on the contingent fact that our treatment of those ecosystems and communities can further the realization of human values and/or human rights.'* (p.72)

The perspective humans take on the environment needs to change to take into consideration the history, interests and rights of non-human creatures otherwise the environment will cease to exist.

Non-human creatures have interests in themselves, the interest in flourishing and surviving. Flourishing just like humans, therefore they deserve rights just like humans have rights, 'living things are now viewed as the appropriate objects of the attitude of respect and are accordingly regarded as entities possessing inherent worth.' (p.74) Rights cannot be circumstantial if flourishing is the basis for justifying rights. All that

flourishes has an equal right to be allowed to live to their full potential without interference.

→ Your new or another author's  
→ Calliott ?  
'Humans are thought of as members of the Earth's community of life, holding that membership on the same terms as apply to all nonhuman members.' (p.74) To use the interest of flourishing to justify rights allows rights to non-human creatures and humans on equal footing. The non-human planet has been around for longer than human life there is no way the human populace would survive without use of the non-human species. If humans gave the same moral right to non-human creatures as they give themselves they may act in a more sustainable manner only taking what they need rather than exploiting the environment. It is wrong to exploit another human so thinking like this it would be wrong to exploit the environment as all have interests and rights, which places 'intrinsic value on the promotion and protection of their good.' (P.74)

As this your new?  
Non-human creatures have an interest in flourishing but this does not mean they deserve rights. Relating to the argument of sentience or conscious beings, 'creature's being worthy of moral consideration is its sentience.' (p.73) Non-human creatures do not consciously make the decision to grow this is an attribute restricted to humans, for non-human creatures this just occurs naturally. They have no ability to make decisions unlike humans 'humans look down on the 'lower' animals' (p.76) humans therefore deserve rights over non-human beings. Humans have the ability to make decisions about who deserve rights while non-human creatures do not. Non-humans have interests in themselves in growing but their lack of conscious means that they do not deserve rights. They cannot consciously act in a way which deserves moral or legal rights, they can only act in one way not make a decision about what action to do. They cannot abide by moral or legal rights as these are in place to produce good among society, if they do not know what is morally wrong or right they cannot be harmed by having no rights.

This lacks clarity

Non-human beings do not have any interests subsequently do not deserve any rights. Non-human creatures cannot make any conscious decisions on what brings them joy or has meaning, so they do not actually have any interests. Interests are restricted to sentient beings who have the ability to suffer. Suffering is a characteristic restricted to

sentient beings who have the ability to know what brings them joy, unlike a non-human and non-sentient creature who do not know they are being cut down. Humans have the ability to access the morally relevant facts to make a decision which best suits their interests. A non-human creature who cannot partake in this action therefore lacks rights as they are just beings who are here for the use of human interests.

Although non-human creatures do not have interest in themselves this does not mean that they do not deserve rights. Their longevity and instrumental value on human interests means their presence is needed for human interest and human growth. Non-human creatures have no interests in themselves, it is in human interest to give them moral rights so that they can be maintained for human's sake. 'The entity itself need not have any interest in what is happening to it for such judgements to be meaningful and true.' (p.79) This relates to the overall theme that the environment is at human's disposal rather than has interests in itself.

Attfield, Robin, *Environmental Ethics*, Second Edition, Fully revised and expanded, An Overview for the twenty-first century, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2016

Attfield's focus is around the distinctions <sup>and</sup> definitions which with clarification can help one to align their own beliefs and principles with a specific ecological framework. The approach he takes is that environmental problems have occurred from the way humans have dealt with the environment, by modifying the environment to suit their needs rather than recognising the interests of the environment in itself (p.1) seen in the 'worldwide problems arising from the human treatment of nature.' (P.4)

Attfield holds the view that although non-human creatures may lack sentience and a conscious mind (p.9) this does not mean that they lack interests. This only shows that they lack interests which are compatible with higher instrumental interests. Non-human creatures possess the same intrinsic interests as humans in their interest to flourish, survival and photosynthesis (p.10) thus 'moral consideration should be shown to all living creatures.' (p.9) Otherwise some humans who are in a vegetative state or suffered from locked in syndrome would not be given rights judging them on the same intrinsic

↑  
still sentient.

values as non-human creatures. 'Moral standing cannot be restricted to humanity alone' as non-human creatures share attributes with humanity.

Attfield has the point that non-human creatures have interests in themselves and do have rights. However in some instances, non-human interests have been overridden (p.14) due to the moral rights which humans possess. With the belief that the moral rights of non-human creatures are at a lower level than the moral rights accredited to humans.

*This contradicts what you say above.*

Non-human creatures do not have interests in themselves. Attfield refers to James Lovelock's Gaia theory (p.3) to support his claim as Lovelock acknowledges that non-human creatures are a 'self-regulating system' (p.3) which has the aim of continuation. Lovelock argues that Gaia does not act with the knowledge of what it is doing or with a purpose to its fruition. This supports the argument that non-human creatures do not have interests in themselves they are just products of the nature ecosystem. Just because they do not possess any interests does not mean they do not deserve any rights. Lovelock acknowledges the need to attribute a sense of loyalty to Gaia, (p.3) which can be the giving of moral rights to maintain the presence of non-human creatures.

Non-human creatures may not have interests, but humans have interests in themselves to maintain the environment for their own self-interests. This gives rights to the non-human creatures as Attfield's work says 'self-interest is added to the love of others and love of nature as a motive for environmental concern.' (p.5) This shows that humans must ascribe rights to the environment as it is in their own personal interests to look after their surroundings.

Attfield distinguishes between animals and plants regarding the heading non-human creatures, he states that most non-human animals have the capacity to suffer therefore are entitled to moral consideration as they share capacities with humans. (p.6) This agrees with the arguments put forward by Peter Singer who regards interests to be restricted to beings with a conscious. (p.7) Plants 'lack the kind of interests that warrant such consideration' (p.6) this allows rights to be given to animals as they have the

interest in avoiding suffering whereas plants do not possess the capacities to give them rights as they cannot avoid suffering. This distinction gives rights to sentient beings with the interest of avoiding suffering and dismisses the idea that non-sentient non-human creatures have interests so should have no rights.

Attfield refers to Descartes in his argument who proclaims that non-human creatures should not be given rights because they are 'machine like entities.' (P.21) They should be treated like machines with the lack of rights which inanimate objects hold. This is problematic because machines are seen as replaceable items whereas when non-human creatures go extinct, they are gone forever and cannot be rebuilt. This distinguishes the difference between machines and non-human creatures. Even if non-human creatures are not granted with the belief that they have interests they should be given rights as they need to be sustained for future generations. Which works with Attfield's belief in stewardship held by the current generation to maintain the resources for future generations. (p.21) It is in human interests to maintain non-human creatures, so to attribute non-human creatures with rights will help their maintenance. Giving non-human creatures rights for the sake of humans agrees with the overall theme that although all creatures human or not have interests the maintenance of non-human creatures is to maintain human longevity.

Anthropocentric view  
for Attfield's

### Bibliography

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