



Undergraduate assignment feedback form
(to be completed by marker)

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Module title: Environment, Sustainability and Philosophy: HPPH5016	Student number: 1701482
For completion by marker: Comments: Overall, this piece of work displays a fairly solid understanding of the main normative stances in environmental ethics, & there is clear evidence of having engaged with the reading material. However, there are some inaccuracies, & the English (grammar, punctuation, etc) tends to let the essay down. Importantly, there are no references - ensure that you insert full references (inc. pg. numbers)	
Marker's signature: <i>[Signature]</i>	Date: 30/5/19
Provisional mark: 56%	
NB. All marks are provisional until confirmed by the final examination board.	

- What, if anything, is intrinsically valuable and why?

Here I will write an annotated bibliography on the above essay question. I have chosen three sources in which I think will allow for ethical groundings to answer the question asked. My answer to the question would stand to say, that everything does have intrinsic value in and of itself for the main reason that we are individuals; yes, but we are also a part of this interconnected web of existence. We are to know that our part in the world is not one of dominance but of coherence. It is easy to place human beings above and beyond everything else for we have the mental capacity to create much more, and also to speak for others. The thing that we need to do as a species gets back to the roots in which our human capacities were built for; cooperation, unity; for in this we will learn that all the individual components of this intricate web of life are but part of a whole system. We are not above it but a part of it.

This will need more content.

My first source:

Robin Attfield, *Environmental Ethics* (Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity, 2003) .pg 9-15, *Theories of value*.

The Main focus of the work is outlining the differing views of intrinsic value; bringing in thoughts of Goodpaster's term 'moral considerability.' It goes on to outline the types of opposing arguments to that of Goodpaster's.

Below are the names and meanings in which Attfield points out in this text.

Anthropocentrism: This states that humans are the only species that have intrinsic value as they are conscious beings; they can feel pain and suffering; therefore, they are the only ones that have value. This puts humans at the top of all systems on our planet, stating they are the most important; that humans alone are the only ones that have independent value. Some but not many do see other animals as

Not
entirely
correct

or give animals indirect consideration
sentient but simply, for whatever reason, do not take this into only account.

Sentientists: They believe that value is not dependant on human interests. That an animal suffering is of importance and should be prevented, but this view does also seem quite narrow in the sense that it is still only focusing on sentient beings and not allowing the broader scale of our interacting system. ✓

Biocentrism: They believe that all living creatures have a good of their own, that they have intrinsic value utilizing, flourishing, and maintaining their own good individually. They do not discount that ecosystems too have a good of their own, but it is the individual components that are important; the things individually that make up this interconnected system of life. ✓ Good

Not correct ✓
Ecocentrism: They believe that ecosystems have a good of their own, more so than the individual components. That these interconnected systems as wholes have their own moral standing, this view holds that wholes of systems take precedence over individuals. ✓

Very good.
But references needed
The outlining and explanation of these opposing arguments and views in this text make it very useful to see the differing standpoints one can take in answering the question of what has intrinsic value. It is of importance to know and research the differing viewpoints of moral standing; in which in this sense, this text has excellent value.

It is also Attfield's ✓
The special features of the work that were unique or helpful include again the outlining of the opposing arguments and the description of which each means, also the explanation of moral considerability, and his conclusion that all living creatures have moral standing. He also does state that inanimate entities lack moral consideration, saying they have no good of their own. This was Goodpaster's view and not the author's (Attfield). Attfield also outlines in the text what intrinsic value is, which is an essential part of the text. He states that intrinsic value is something that has a good of its own; that it is its nature. He also outlines the opposing view which is instrumental value; this meaning that it is only of the use of what it can be used for. These both are important in answering this essay question.

The background and credibility of the author are good. Robin Attfield is a professor of philosophy at Cardiff University.. He has had many year's experience within the field and had many published works regarding these views and issues. In this particular text, it does not outline what Attfield's conclusions are, but instead outlining the essential factors to consider for your own argument; in which I found very helpful.

My Conclusions or observations reached by reading the text, and having in mind the question would be that I would tend to sway somewhat in between ecocentrism and biocentrism. I would say that every living thing has a good of its own despite its instrumental use, for me it seems that this intricate web of life has independent value (meaning individual) but also a good of its own in regards to the wholeness; to step back and see the larger picture of this intricate interconnecting system. I feel this text is beneficial in allowing you to see the terms that create your own views but also the ones that oppose it, for this makes good solid standing for your own argument.

My second source:

Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics*, second edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. Pg 105-109, *comparing the value of different lives*).

Gr. The ^m Main focus of the work is in the comparison of the value of life. Whether it be conscious beings or if non-conscious beings have value in themselves and for themselves regardless of others placing value to them. It also outlines the differing levels of self-conscious beings, considering the differing value between things depending on the level of self-consciousness and whether this itself determines the intrinsic value of things? Peter Singer does say that it can be seen as a form of anthropocentrism or sentientism in ways of creating this hierarchy of value between species.

Why? Because he applies the principle of equality?

The usefulness of this work in answering the question and it being a good source is that it considers how one gets around the hierarchal view; of what seems to be more limiting views, and also quite damaging views. These are very much in place in our systems today; albeit a few that are wanting change, they do still have a heavy influence on how we conduct ourselves as a species on the planet. Peter Singer does go on to say that in this view we would put human species at the top and everything else below in regards to value.

clarity needed

Special features of the work that would be unique or helpful in answering the question are when the underlying part is floored. Just because a person, for example, can write and put forward a philosophical interpretation does not mean it has more value than an elephant walking the plains. For although it could be placed hierarchically from our standpoint, it would not be so from the elephants. The walking the plains for water would by far outweigh our meaning of a philosophical debate. In this, he shows that it is of equal value because of the meaning to the living thing itself in this, stating it is of intrinsic value so therefore should allow moral standing or moral consideration. Peter singer does outline a scenario which I think is of great value and something to consider in that he puts forth that you could supposedly become a horse with all the horse like faculties and mental capacity. There would be a third state in which you are neither human nor horse but can remember being both now this would presuppose that you would have preference over being one or the other, so then it does go back to thinking about this hierarchical system despite there being intrinsic value for both species. This was a great feature to consider in your argument as to why things have intrinsic value.

Lack of clarity

The background and credibility of the author are well established. Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University which gives him credibility for texts that are academically accepted. He has many publications and is considered a known philosophy professor on ethics. He has been influenced by Marx and also of Darwin. Overall I would consider this source academically credible.

are

Conclusions reached by the author ~~is~~ still ~~one~~ to be seen. However he does put forward that it is in the HOW; how we put forward an equal

value because of the different states of self-conscious experience and the preference as human species we do place between species. It is very much a subjective matter. However, for me in this, it clearly states then that there is intrinsic value for value is rated in the value to the independent being.

Conclusions or observations reached by myself would be that the text shows to me that indeed there is intrinsic value in all living things for it is of value to their own survival and flourishing within this interconnected system. It also shows that there is within this to be considered of a hierarchical system too, it allows you to dig deeper and consider the Why; why something has intrinsic value despite our personal preference of species and of being more self-conscious. My view would be that although preference of being one living thing over another could be viewed from our standpoint would it give precedence to preference, and would it really diminish that all things have equal value? I would not think so for the sole reason that it can only ever come from our human perspective so could not give any credence to this theory for it would be taking you back to the thoughts of anthropocentrism or sentientism views.

References
needed

My third source:

Attfield, 'Can Biocentric Consequentialism Meet Pluralist Criticisms', in *Consequentialism and Environment Ethics*, eds. Hillel and Khan (London: Routledge 2014).

The Main focus of the work is Biocentric consequentialism below are the critical points in which I feel this paper outlines and is also of use to form a good argument for the intrinsic value being in all living things.

- Gr
- The moral standing of all individual living creatures and individual future actions the most significant overall good. That every living being has intrinsic value in and of itself, but this does not mean it has equal significance. When things are up against each other, it seems that the more complex ones take precedence over the ones that are not so. Biocentric consequentialism lends way to the fact that there will be clashes of interests and that there should be moral significance. In regards to more sentient beings taking precedence over ones that are not so sentient; being ones that experience pleasure and pain. This is only though in a conflict of interest between one or more species. ✓

- Reb's
- This view gives clear precedence too to future generations. This is by seeing that it is not about the well-being now but the well-being also of the unforeseeable future of the differing species. This is a critical factor if humans are to be concerned for the future of our planet and us as a species.

- Good
- It seems that overpopulation is a crucial argument and one that we cannot quickly get around so well. For me, overpopulation needs to be brought back into balance and will do so in its own natural way. For when something is taking over too much space, in which it is causing other species suffering it is really counterbalancing the whole system. When the intrinsic value of one is then compromising that of another's it can put the whole system out of sync; not knowing what effects can occur from this. We need to be aware of this complex ecosystem that nourishes us and allows us to exist at all.

- Very good
- It also shows that not all systems of species compete, that mostly they rely on each other. Being this either ancestors or of different species, but as a whole ecosystem they are dependent on other things flourishing too to enable their own healthy survival; it's all of relation and also that of balance.

- Limits to justifiable extinction in the needs of human interest. If endangered this would take precedence over more self-conscious beings.

- The article also goes on to talk of the net loss of value in species due to the colonization of human species. In this favoring the whole of life. For if solely in favor of human needs, this would be disastrous. The point is to have geographical limits to the areas of human habitation. This theory only commends population increases when it is not of adversity to other living creatures on the planet. My question would be, does this include vegetative habitats too?

Removed

✓ The usefulness of this source in regards to the essay question is that it gives a more in-depth view of biocentrism and the value it gives in particular things. It also shows that, and I feel it gives ethical groundings for a biocentrist view that in the conflict of interest, there is still precedence to take into account. It does, however, also give precedence to endangered species over others or more rare species that need to be preserved in order to be of benefit to the ecosystem. I think this is a fair and very enlightening way to see our place within this system of individual parts and also take into consideration the whole. I would also class these views from the article as great features to be considered of this overall view and very helpful in giving a strong argument as to things having intrinsic value and also why.

The background and credibility of the author are good. Robin Attfield is a professor of philosophy at Cardiff University. You know that the works are of professional educational standards and accuracy. He has had many year's experience within the field and had many published works regarding these views and issues. In this particular text, it does outline what standpoint Biocentric consequentialism is coming from, and is especially helpful in putting forward a case that the things indeed do have intrinsic value in and of themselves. It does again give excellent views to consider for your own argument; in which I found very helpful.

For myself and how I would go about answering the essay question, I would consider Biocentric consequentialism to be closest in how I would answer. I believe that everything living does have intrinsic value: why because it is of value and consideration for that living organism to flourish to survive and fulfill its purpose no matter what

that purpose is should ^Cnit be really under scrutiny; for it is in the interconnected system of individual component's that is of importance here. I do however feel that in the conflict of interest in regards to one species over another there should be precedence given not necessarily to the one more conscious but to the one that enables the whole system to thrive (maybe this is now bordering on the ecocentric view?). I think all the above sources give you an in-depth view of all the differing views and allows you to come up with your own argument as to if you believe things to have intrinsic value and why.

