



PRIFYSGOL CYMRU

Y Drindod Dewi Sant

UNIVERSITY OF WALES

Trinity Saint David

**Postgraduate/Distance Learning
Assignment Coversheet & Feedback Form**

For completion by the student:

Student Name: ZOE MAVRIDI

Module code: HPPH7009	Student University Number: 2023154	Educational support needs: No
Module title: ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY		

Module tutor: DR REBEKAH HUMPHREYS

Assignment title: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Assignment due date: 27 AUGUST 2021

I confirm that this is my original work and that I have adhered to the University policy on plagiarism.

Name: ZOE MAVRIDI

Assignment Mark

1 st Marker's Provisional mark	
2 nd Marker's/Moderator's provisional mark	
External Examiner mark (if relevant)	
Final Mark	

NB. All marks are provisional until confirmed by the Final Examination Board

For completion by Marker 1:

Comments:

This piece of work presents a clearly written overview of the selected texts, revealing knowledge of the ideas & arguments at stake. In places closer attention to preparation is needed to avoid conceptual confusion. See p.3, for eg, and p.4. Also, whilst there is a good attempt at evaluation, these sections tend to be quite descriptive, with the conclusion sections being a little more evaluative. That said, you reveal an understanding of some important issues at stake, & do a good

Marker 1 signature:

57

job at presenting arguments in a

Date:

For completion by Marker 2 / Moderator:

Comments:

clear manner, displaying an engagement with the readings you've chosen.

Marker 2 / Moderator signature:

Date:

External Examiner's comments (if relevant):

External Examiner signature:

Date:

Using the reading sources itemised on the reading lists for the module, write an annotated bibliography of up to 10 items. These may include a mixture of articles, chapters of books, papers in edited collections, and / or whole books. You are free to choose which items to use for this task, provided that they are all on the reading lists for the module.

(5 items, 800 words each)

TEXT 1

Attfield, Environmental Ethics, second edn. (Cambridge, UK, and Malden, MA: Polity, 2014), chs. 1-2

Summary

Human existence on Planet Earth is causing global (and subsequently also local) environmental problems, and theories such as environmentalism have been born and developed in order to address them. Conflicting positions, such as anthropocentrism and biocentrism, mainly debate *intrinsic value* both in human and non-human animals and other natural resources, a concept crucial to how we tackle the issues and what solutions we have available. Environmental problems neither recognise nor are confined to man-made borders; they are neither of a spiritual nor of a technological nature. What they are substantially depended on, however, is human attitude towards their existence and amelioration. Traditional Christian opinions about nature are now being challenged by the powerful concept of 'moral standing', a biocentric rather than anthropocentric concept, which adds new perspectives to the environmental crisis we are all dealing with today.

The theory of anthropocentrism maintains that humanity has mastery over fellow creatures, who were simply created to serve human purposes. Anthropocentrism can be either normative, according to which moral standing is confined to human interests (p. 30), or teleological, supporting the belief that creation exists exclusively for the sake of humanity (p.30). Anthropocentrism is also supported by Christianity, according to which nature is at human disposal and man has dominion over animals. These beliefs have, however, been challenged by those who have studied the Old Testament and the Psalms, with passages referring to man and beasts as 'all coming from the dust, and all turning to dust again' (p. 31).

Analysis/evaluation

The first two chapters of Attfield's Environmental Ethics are written in a clear, concise style, and the first significant stop in the journey, after the introduction to environmental problems caused by humans, is most certainly the Gaia hypothesis of James Lovelock, describing the Earth as a self-

regulating superorganism with self-repair capabilities (p.3). A very important point is made that local problems are just as important as global ones, and some even go unnoticed for years by governments and environmental organisations. Both local and global environmental threats present a challenge to environmental ethics and the full extent of these problems needs to be correctly addressed, in order for the right action to be taken.

Environmental ethics also takes into account the treatment of non-human animals and their capacity to suffer, and in this chapter, we are introduced to some very important theories, such as sentientism (a theory, which supports consideration to sentient beings 'comparable to human beings', p. 6), consequentialism (morality of actions depends on the consequences) and rights theory, the theory which supports that non-human animals have the right to life and the right not to be killed by humans. In the first chapter, three very important value theories are also introduced; anthropocentrism, biocentrism and ecocentrism, all vital to our understanding of the moral code underpinning the decisions we need to make in order to safeguard the environment for us and the future generations.

A concept which would help us achieve this is 'intrinsic value' (p.12), the idea that an entity is valuable 'because of its nature' (p. 12) and 'for what it is in itself' (p.12), not according to human needs or as ends. There is, however, the theory of relativism, which treats concepts and solutions as 'perspective-dependent' and very much shaped by (human) preference. All belief systems are, ultimately, anthropocentric and based on human valuing, even theories such as sentientism and biocentrism, despite their commitment to impartiality.

Religious beliefs can harbour dangers if a domineering approach to human stewardship of the Earth is adopted. The exploitation of nature should always come with ethical constraints, otherwise lack of responsibility could have disastrous consequences for the environment, and this is laid out very clearly in the first chapter.

The second chapter discusses biblical and Christian attitudes, which favour human stewardship and even human ownership of the Earth and the environment, as opposed to more neutral, biocentric views. It also gently introduces key meta-ethical debates, such as cognitivism and objectivism and the possibility that 'no one really knows the difference between right and wrong and between the valuable and the valueless' (p.56).

Conclusion of critique

Attfield's first two chapters are an introduction to Environmental Ethics and the main philosophical theories that underpin it. The author does not take sides or openly supports a particular approach but stresses the importance of ethical thinking, which varies from theory to theory; for example, Christian beliefs clash with Aldo Leopold's theory that 'a broader understanding of moral standing is needed'

(p. 62). Other important concepts are also introduced, such as biocentric consequentialism and ecofeminism and the idea that environmental concerns are not isolated from the well-being of non-human animals is emphasised throughout the second chapter. Both emotion and rationality will help us overcome our egoism and face the environmental challenges of the future, and Attfield's introductory chapters are a good starting point.



806 words

TEXT 2

Goodpaster, Kenneth, 'On Being Morally Considerable', in *Journal of Philosophy*, 75, 1978. Reprinted in *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*, eds. Michael E. Zimmerman et al (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1998).

Summary

Goodpaster's article tackles one of the most important and complex philosophical challenges; the discussion of who is morally considerable and why. This is an elaborate question with multiple theories attempting to answer it and serious consequences for those affected by it. Both the framework of moral consideration and its application are being discussed, as well as the concept of rights for non-humans, the distinction between moral considerability and moral significance (p. 311), moral consideration according to logic versus moral consideration as a matter of ethical facts (p.312) and many other crucial topics usually discussed in Environmental Ethics.

The article starts by highlighting our concerns about the environment, endangered species, our treatment of animals, the morality of abortion and the use of technology (in medicine, for example). Goodpaster maintains that we cannot resolve questions of conservation, environment preservation and technology assessment using only a humanistic approach but we need to start thinking 'beyond humanism' (p.310). For example, there is a fundamental difference between protecting animals against cruelty and maintaining that animals have rights (p. 311). The author also draws caution to the danger of comparative judgements, for example whether a tree deserves saving or whether a tree deserves saving more than a dog or a cat, despite rights definitions usually resulting 'from comparative contexts' (p.312). Nevertheless, 'logical' morality and morality based on ethics might not be as easy to keep apart as it sounds. Goodpaster seems to be echoing Bentham at this point, defending the idea that the capability of suffering is far more important than the ability of the being in question to reason logically. Their ability to experience suffering and any glimpse of alleviating it should take precedent when decisions are made about assigning morality over any other characteristics. Goodpaster also quotes Feinberg, who defends moral considerability for any living being, even plants. Trees and other plants have an undeniable interest to stay alive because, according to Feinberg, they are not 'mere things' (p.320) and deserve moral considerability. Goodpaster concludes that the necessity of sentience as a condition of moral responsibility might not be plausible and any theory underpinning morality is indeed dependent on its interests, from beneficence to hedonism (p.321). Hedonism and technology could also be a threat to biocentrism, as their primary concern is anthropocentrism, not altruism. Furthermore, consideration of life cannot be given a precise definition by humans, which captures all its attributes and can be served as a criterion for morality (p.323).

Explained the difference.

But for Feinberg, 'interests' are framed with a cognate element. There is a tension in his view. Try to explain this.

Analysis/evaluation

Goodpaster's article is rather long-winded and in parts, it does seem to take a long (reading) time to get to the point, when, if summarised more succinctly, it could have led to a shorter, more compact article. One more observation is that the article has no sub-headings (for example introduction and conclusion), which makes it slightly confusing and a bit tiring to the eye. Nonetheless, it does tackle some important ideas, and once these emerge, they come across as having been meticulously thought out and well-researched. The article concludes that competing claims can very often be a hindrance to progress, but an ethical vision is definitely a prerequisite for a better world, and in a way, we are obligated to assess and adopt it, for our own sake and for the sake of future generations.

Conclusion of critique

Goodpaster dismisses sentience as the only criterion that underpins morality; moral considerability can also extend to plants, insects and microbes (p. 322). Plants are not sentient but have an interest in being watered because they will die. So, in terms of moral considerability, their interests matter. If morality underpins what is essential and indispensable to our ecosystem, then he is definitely correct to support this claim. He also dismisses the idea that animals have no more moral worth than vegetables and is convinced that humanity will be proven wrong in the long term, also implying that our current treatments of them is shameful. Furthermore, precise definitions of abstract concepts such as life should not be obstacles to moral considerability, since humans use so many other similar concepts, which also rate as morally worthy but are also still relatively vague and debatable, for example sentience and rationality (p. 323). Goodpaster's article initiated a debate whether animals, plants and other natural entities have moral significance, and sentience was challenged as being the defining criterion; for the first time other traits and attributes were also considered and the idea was mocked by some environmental ethicists but taken seriously by others. Sentience, according to Goodpaster, serves the purpose of survival but suffering and enjoyment go a step further on the moral considerability scale and are worth considering even more. Although Goodpaster's article does not reach a clear conclusion, it certainly raises an important question, and food for thought, which hadn't been considered before. The importance of the questions he posed will challenge our anthropocentric point of view but also force us to (re)consider the position of other entities and their moral significance in the ecosystem; this could, perhaps, contribute to human animals accepting other co-inhabitants on this planet with much more willingness than what has been the case so far.

Good conclusion.

853 words

TEXT 3

Singer, Peter, 'All Animals are Equal', in *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*, eds. Michael E. Zimmerman et al (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1998).

Summary

Singer's *All Animals Are Equal* begins by highlighting the existence of liberation movements, which defended oppressed groups such as Blacks and Hispanics against moral principles of the time, which we now consider not only outdated but also inherently wrong, unjust and discriminatory. There is no doubt that there is still much more to be achieved but admittedly, significant progress has been achieved for the aforementioned groups, and we seem to be heading in the right direction. There seems to be a very large group of non-human animals, however, who are still neglected, invisible, abused and not included in our fight for equality, just like women once were, for example, when they fought for equal rights against men. A common misconception for the exclusion of non-human animals from the fight of equality is rationality. Men and women are the same species after all, and making rational decisions is a characteristic they have in common. Equality, however, does not mean identical treatment but equal consideration. Men and women are both capable of voting and they need to, in order to elect competent people in power.

Is equality for all beings a feasible concept though? We are all born different and our physical and intellectual capabilities vary enormously. Some of us will be happy and successful, others not so. This principle, however, does not justify discrimination under any circumstances. We do not know how much these differences are owed to genetic or environmental factors. Science has also not reached a definite conclusion, nor are its findings a prerequisite for humans to understand that equality among all beings is a moral imperative. The fact that our differences could be either genetic or environmental or both, automatically points to the fact that they are not necessarily voluntary, nor can we do anything to avoid them. Judging and rating according to physical and intellectual abilities is, therefore, an unfair and pointless task. Actual, precise equality could very well be a fallacy. Equality is a moral concept, not an actual one, based on exact facts and figures. ✓

Analysis/evaluation

From your reading of Goodpaste, you could consider whether suffering is necessary for moral standing.

In *All Animals Are Equal*, Peter Singer quotes English philosopher Jeremy Bentham that the interests of every human and non-human animal are no more or less important than those of any other and that 'each to count for one and none for more than one' (Singer, p.3). Bentham regarded the capacity for suffering as the most essential characteristic 'that gives a being the right to equal consideration' (Singer, p.4). Singer fully agrees with Bentham, that if a sentient being has the ability to suffer, then they are automatically granted the right to be equally considered with other beings who can experience suffering – and to be granted the right to have their suffering alleviated too. Sentience, therefore, is the key characteristic, which could grant equality for all human and non-human animals, not intelligence, rationality or skin colour (Singer, p. 5). Similarly to Bentham, Singer uses skin colour to highlight inequality and draw parallels to the plight of non-human animals. Skin colour, body shape and intellectual capacities are not solid enough reasons to justify discrimination and inhumane treatment of other individuals. Each sentient being is unique and besides, not every human is intellectually superior to other species, with examples being babies and mentally disabled people (Singer, p. 6).

Conclusion of critique

Towards the end of the article, Singer makes a very important point regarding the concept of dignity; he questions the way we automatically assign it to mankind, but challenge it when it is attributed to species other than ours. Once again, he questions what makes humans morally worthy of intrinsic dignity but not other non-human animals. Is it awareness, intelligence or sentience? Perhaps we, humans, feel good about knowing we are worthy of intrinsic dignity. We feel superior to other species and do not need to assume responsibility of looking after them. However, there are dissenting voices arguing against human superiority and anthropocentrism. What do we base these assumptions on, they ask. If it is intelligence, then the assumption is flawed as there are mentally disabled people and babies, whose intellectual capabilities would be lower than those of a pig, yet they enjoy the 'privilege' of moral dignity and respect.

Singer seems to believe that torturing and ultimately killing non-human animals for our taste buds is morally indefensible. The reason (taste) does not seem to justify the ordeal and is a form of discrimination. This also applies to animal experimentation: even if one animal was sacrificed to save hundreds or even thousands of humans, the reverse would never be acceptable in any civilised society: no human would ever be officially sacrificed to save other human lives – as a matter of principle (Singer, p. 6). The fact that we practise vivisection on non-human animals is the ultimate form of speciecism.

800 words

TEXT 4

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

Summary

Attfield argues that climate change does not require a predominantly scientific solution but more of an ethical and cultural one. Ethics and morality can still be the guides for rational environmental solutions but cross-cultural common ground and impartiality will need to be found, and those primarily responsible for global warming and carbon emissions will have to face these heavy responsibilities and commit to do something about it.

All human beings, by virtue of existing, are entitled to generate emissions. This entitlement is based upon the fact that we are human, *human needs* not the superiority of some humans over others. Greenhouse emissions should, therefore, be distributed equally across the global population without affecting global temperatures or undermining the needs of future generations. Emissions are also generated by non-human animals, and this allowance needs to be taken account when calculating the greenhouse emissions average. Emissions generated by domestic animals should be part of the allowance for humans, as these animals are bred, consumed and controlled by humans. Equal distribution of emissions should not favour the human species under any circumstances and should care about and focus on *all* living beings equally (Attfield, p.105). These calculations need to be made by the governments on behalf of their populations, but this is not always a feasible or even welcome suggestion. There is no guarantee that governments will implement the recommendations to divide greenhouse emissions equally. However, since there is no alternative, a solution would be international sanctions to those who fail to comply with the regulations.

Using population numbers as a means of determining gas emissions allowances could result in deliberate population growth or distorted emission statistics. Issues such as pro-natalist policies, poor countries with low population numbers trading their emissions and not being able to fulfil their own needs and wealthy nations paying for development could seriously jeopardise the future of humanity and the planet. An approach of allowances based on past emissions would also be unrealistic and controversial, due to nation border changes since the Industrial Revolution, with Poland being a good example. A further obstacle could be the fact that a country's size and the number of its emissions do not necessarily reflect its wealth, with Russia being the best example. A country's economic fluctuations would result in foreign aid that is not guaranteed every time, with large countries such as Ukraine and Kazakhstan not being able to afford it at all. In order to succeed, a solid plan to effectively control emissions would have to be based on universal rules, which would apply to everyone, but also

seriously aim at eradicating world poverty. In order for a proposal about emissions to be successful, it needs to offer sustainable solutions, which could comfortably extend into the future. To conclude, the allocation of emissions per population should be encouraged, in order to safeguard the environmental interests of the future generations. When allocating emissions, other species should also be taken into account, and all countries should benefit from this allocation, in order to satisfy their populations' basic needs.

Analysis/evaluation

← Here, you could consider why basic needs allocation is plausible

Attfield's 'Global Warming, Equity and Future Generations' is a very interesting article and raises key environmental challenges: how to tackle global warming and what the best way to share the burden of global carbon emissions would be across the board. There is no doubt the planet is increasingly burdened with pollution caused by humans, and current generations have responsibilities towards future generations, as to what 'state' they are going to leave the planet in for them. Attfield starts with a basic principle, which is good to be established from the beginning: that all human and non-human animals have the right to produce emissions, in order to satisfy their needs. He also emphasises that the responsibility should be shared equally and not in the form of 'ethical imperialism', in other words wealthier nations imposing their will on poorer ones. Although the article contains some innovative ideas, such as the aforementioned ones, one cannot help thinking that the perfect division of gas emissions among nations is an unrealistic one. In reality, the individual need for gas emissions is not based on an inherent human right, but the individual's economic situation, location and other, mainly external and not predominantly ethical, needs: a retired person in the middle of the English countryside will most definitely have less human, practical, ethical and logistical need to use their gas emissions quota than a frequently flying CEO of a multinational company, and trying to allocate equal share could cause many practical problems or lead to inaccurate statistical data.

~ between wealthy nations... (?)

Conclusion of critique

Is this just fair though?

'Global Warming, Equity and Future Generations' is an innovative article with fresh philosophical ideas, whose aim is to tackle serious modern environmental problems. Clearly written and easily understood, the article recognises the importance of both human and non-human animals and the role they play in climate change, but also the key responsibility we all hold to ensure we bequeath a liveable planet to the next generation.

826 words

TEXT 5

'When Preservationism Doesn't Preserve', David Schmidtz, Philosophy Department, University of Arizona

Summary

Should elephants be deemed 'resources'?

It is widely agreed that precious resources, such as Redwoods and elephants, should not be wasted for frivolous reasons, such as photos of stump dancing or ivory ornaments. Conservationists, however, would not dismiss the use of wilderness for human benefit, as, according to them, wilderness is a resource. On the other side of the spectrum, however, preservationists would argue that non-human animals (and other natural resources) have a moral status of their own, and do not exist merely to be utilised by humankind. Wise use of resources can be a controversial concept, because we, humans, do not know with certainty how the way we utilise natural resources today will affect tomorrow, and the damage we might unwittingly be doing to the planet. In other words, shooting elephants for ivory is not only unethical but also a waste of precious resources, which could affect the entire ecosystem.

In his 'When Preservationism Doesn't Preserve', Schmidtz starts his argument against Preservation with Guy Grant, who bought a ranch in Kenya. In 1977 Kenya banned sport hunting, so Grant had to graze more cattle to make ends meet, at the expense of wildlife – in his case zebra. This resulted in more zebras being killed than normal. Kenya's president had also ordered that poachers are shot on sight, which resulted in scores of poor, unarmed villagers getting killed. Despite the deaths, poaching was still on the rise. Another example against Preservation is the controversial ivory trade; banning it would increase illegal activities but, would satisfy wildlife organisations with highly-publicised campaigns against its use. However, the biggest threat to elephant survival as a species is the enormous human population increase in Africa and the battle for territory and resources.

Analysis/evaluation

Before any voice of concern becomes prevalent, the need for survival will always be of uttermost importance. Environmental concerns are valid and vital for our planet's survival, but people who struggle to put food on the table will not regard them as their top priority. Animal sentience and deforestation mean very little to an African farmer, who struggles to make ends meet and sees elephants as an enemy against whom he needs to protect his crops. Western affinity towards popular 'Disney' animals, such as lions, elephants and giraffes, is fairly detached from reality, and interference from abroad could cause friction between local communities and free-roaming wildlife. If not lucrative, wildlife becomes a liability to the locals and will be decimated. There are, however, solutions to human-wildlife conflict, such as making the most of photographic tourism by selling them crafts and taxing them for overnight stays. Local communities such as Maasai tribes and farmers should

receive money from tourism, which would provide them with an incentive to protect their wildlife and not see it as a liability. Hunting should also be encouraged, to provide much-needed income for anti-poaching efforts. Financial autonomy of the received funds would also result in local communities choosing wildlife over cattle, if this were to prove more lucrative. Despite what most people think, photographic tourism is not necessarily more benign than hunting; it requires a lot of habitat-destroying infrastructure such as hotels and roads, as well as huge consumption of natural resources by tourists, such as water.

Very often, animals such as elephants need to be culled for ecological reasons. Animal rights organisations oppose the practice, claiming that humans should let nature take its course. Sometimes their voice prevails, others hunters cull the excess animals. No human intervention very often results in more deaths than necessary (for example due to starvation) but also means an individualistic rather than holistic approach to animal welfare, where the animal is treated and respected as an individual, not as yet another faceless member of a species.

What is your view?
To develop an argument here.

Conclusion of critique

The piece approaches the topic of wildlife as a resource from various aspects; the practical, the ecological, the moral and the ethical. Yet, there is something deeply disconcerting about the author's views. Although he does not directly endorse sport hunting (killing for fun, not survival), his support for hunting as a whole is evident, and according to him, it should not be interfered with, if it 'allows people and wildlife to live together in some semblance of harmony' (Schmidtz, p. 337). Yet, how can the wild animal 'live in harmony' since it is (going to be) killed? Do we pick some to kill and let others live? What are our criteria? Health? Age? None? Why is this ethical when it concerns animals but we would not even remotely consider it for humans? Despite hunters' claims, hunting does not discriminate – but even if it did, why should older animals die anyway? Is their life not worth anything? Their role in the herd is vital for guiding the young – and sentience alone makes their life worth living. Morality, Schmitz claims, is more than one thing (Schmitz, p. 336) – is it though? One would claim that morality is pretty fixed when it comes to humans (in other words, when it comes to protecting our own interests). Do we cull the elderly 'to live in harmony and protect resources?' Do we accept trophy money to kill people for fun, even if this paid for electricity, education and other essentials for local communities? The moral dilemma lies with the reader.

Try to rephrase these questions & develop into an argument & an overview of your critique/review.

878 words

Total: 4,163 words