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Andrews, John, "Weak Panpsychism and Environmental Ethics"

Andrews, John. "Weak Panpsychism and Environmental Ethics." *Environmental Values* 7, no. 4 (1998): 381–96. doi:10.3197/096327198129341636 .

Weak panpsychism, the view that mind-like qualities are widespread in nature, has recently been argued for by the prominent ecofeminist Val Plumwood and has been used by her to ground an ethic of respect for nature. This ethic advocates a principle of respect for difference, the rejection of moral hierarchy and the inclusion of plants, mountains, rivers and ecosystems within the moral community. I argue that weak panpsychism cannot, convincingly, justify the rejection of moral hierarchy, as it is compatible with it. Also the intentional criterion of mind, employed by weak panpsychism, which includes teleology, has the counter-intuitive implication of giving machines moral status. I cast doubt on the claims that (i) intentionality is a necessary condition for moral status and that (ii) it is sufficient for the ascription of agency. It is suggested that any account of intentionality that allows it to be predicated of mountains, rivers etc. would be widely, and correctly regarded as a reduction of that account. Finally an aesthetic reinterpretation of weak panpsychism is offered. (Source: The White Horse Press)

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