Philosophy 224: Environmental Ethics

Possible mid-term exam questions (Fall 2012)

*Directions: I will choose three of the following questions for you to answer during the first exam on Thursday, October 11th. You will have 75 minutes to complete the exam.*

1) Explain Posner’s defense of what he calls moral pragmatism. How does Singer respond to Posner’s argument?

2) Wise, among other defenders of animal rights, appeals to the significance of the mirror self-recognition test. What kinds of warnings do the neuroscientists Rogers & Kaplan and the feminist scholar MacKinnon offer against these types of arguments?

3) Sunstein considers the question of whether animals have legal standing. If not, what three paths does he mark off for expanding the powers of private citizens to act legally on behalf of animals? If so, how does Favre’s model of equitable self-ownership provide a model for making that standing practicable?

4) Explain the arguments that Wise and Francione offer on behalf of animal rights. How do their two arguments compare in practice?

5) Explain Wise’s argument for animal rights, and Epstein’s rejection of it.

6) Explain the role that sentience plays in the arguments on behalf of animals offered by the moral philosophers Singer, Rachels, and Nussbaum.

7) Both Anderson and Nussbaum draw our attention to the moral importance of the normal life of the species to which a creature belongs. Why is species membership important for the arguments of each of these philosophers?

8) Diamond rejects what she calls the “Singer-Regan approach” to defending the moral status of animals. Explain this approach, using Singer’s arguments in *Animal Liberation,* as well as Diamond’s rejection of it. Why, for Diamond, does her response not leave her powerless to answer the defender of slavery?