

SEMINÁRIO PERMANENTE DE FILOSOFIA DAS CIÊNCIAS

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Abstract

Organismality Grounds Species Collective Responsibility

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It is frequently claimed that our species is responsible for climate change, for a new impending mass extinction, for destabilising ecosystems dynamics etc. These claims might be interpreted literally as meaning that it is our species, not merely its constituent organisms, that is causing climate change, biodiversity loss and ecosystem upheaval. Such literal interpretation depends on what kind of answer is given to the general theoretical question of whether supra-organismal biological entities such as groups, populations and species can be morally responsible for anything as collectives. Given that ascriptions of collective responsibility are controversial, I shall argue that organismality is the biological property grounding species collective moral responsibility. The question is thus whether our species is organismal enough to be considered a morally responsible causal agent.

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