



MODERN ANTHROPOCENTRISM: A CONTEMPORARY, PRAGMATIC PATHWAY TO ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION

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Introduction:

Anthropocentrism asserts that humans are the apex species, and historically, most people have subscribed to this idea, which has resulted in significant ecological degradation. It is true that human beings have been quite self-serving in their exploration and exploitation of the natural world, but it would be incorrect to draw the implication that humans shouldn't utilize natural resources for their own legitimate purposes and necessities. We do, in fact, require the assistance of nature to survive. Our problem is that we tend to blur the distinction between ethical, progressive, and humanitarian consumption and insatiable, destructive exploitation. The Judeo-Christian Bible's account of creation in the book of Genesis contains the origins of anthropocentrism. In this account, humans are created in God's image and given orders to "subdue" the earth and "have authority" over all other living things. This passage has been interpreted as supporting an instrumental view of nature, according to which the natural world only has worth if it helps humankind, and as demonstrating humanity's superiority over the natural world. This school of thought is not unique to Jewish and Christian theology; it is also present in Immanuel Kant's moral philosophy and Aristotle's Politics.

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This kind of view has caused men to be careless in how they use the natural environment and narcissistic in how they perceive their place in it. Modern anthropocentrism was created to alter people's destructive perspectives while upholding the traditional view that humans are the center of the universe. By arguing that because humans are the most important species, they should defend other components of the planet, modern anthropocentrism plays on people's sense of superiority. This amplification of anthropocentrism may be beneficial from an environmental standpoint, considering that people are made aware that the term "dominion" connotes both the authority to exploit and the duty to safeguard and conserve. Another benefit of

contemporary

anthropocentrism is that people would take better care of their environment for the benefit of their offspring in order to preserve their "intrinsically superior" race.

Need of the hour:

The ongoing challenges that the natural increase in population poses for environmental preservation should be addressed with the proper policies and actions. People are the most valuable thing in the world. People are what advance society, produce social riches, advance science and technology, and continuously alter the environment via their labour. The capacity of man to better the environment grows daily along with social growth, the advancement of manufacturing, research,



and technology. History has reached a turning point where we must now consider the environmental effects of our global actions more carefully. We can cause significant and irreparable damage to the earthly environment, which is essential to our survival and well-being, through ignorance or indifference. On the other hand, we can create a better existence for ourselves and our descendants in a world that is more in line with human needs and aspirations through greater knowledge and smarter action. There are numerous opportunities to improve environmental quality and create a good living. Intense yet well-organized labour and an eager but composed attitude are required. Man must use knowledge to improve the environment in collaboration with nature in order to achieve freedom in the physical world. In addition to and in harmony with the long-standing and fundamental aims of world peace and economic and social progress, it has become essential for humanity to protect and improve the environment for both the present and the future. Such an environmental aim will need the acknowledgment of responsibility by individuals, groups, and organisations at every level, as well as their fair participation in collective efforts. The world environment of the future will be shaped by individuals from all walks of life as well as organisations from a variety of fields. Large-scale environmental policy and action within a country's borders will fall primarily on local and national governments. In order to secure funding to assist developing nations in carrying out their obligations in this area, international collaboration is also required. Due to their regional, global, or common international impact, a growing class of environmental issues will necessitate considerable international cooperation as well as action by humanitarian bodies for the benefit of all parties.

In "Anthropocentrism: A Misunderstood Problem," Tim Hayward claimed that the term "anthropocentrism" is sometimes used incorrectly to criticise humanity as a

whole, which is detrimental for environmental conservation and even misanthropic. In relation to other species, Hayward contends that it is crucial to define what is "good" and "not so good" about anthropocentrism. He claims that it is "less tenable" to think of humans as being created in God's image than as a byproduct of natural evolution. He then goes on to outline ontological and ethical criticisms of this viewpoint that define anthropocentrism as attitudes, values, or practises that advance human interests at the expense of the interests or well-being of other species or the environment, a view that places humans at the centre of the universe. Notably, the phrase "at the expense of nonhumans" links anthropocentrism, at least according to this definition, to speciesism and human chauvinism. The prevalent Western paradigm is an example of humanist anthropocentric philosophy, which frequently exhibits the notion of human chauvinism. According to Hayward, critiquing anthropocentrism might backfire if it fails to make a distinction between legitimate and illegitimate human interests. Illegitimate concerns include social darwinism and human chauvinism, whereas legitimate concerns include the duty to protect other members of one's own species. He does say that we should be interested in ourselves and those like us because it appears inevitable. According to Hayward, the issue here is not so much the concern for human welfare in general as it is the arbitrary preference for that welfare over the welfare of other species. Human interests must always take precedence over those of nonhuman animals. Human chauvinism rejects using human values as a standard of comparison and allows no comparison to be made between humans and other species. Human chauvinism regards people highly only because they are people. No amount of proof that other beings meet these criteria would convince the human chauvinist that they should be accorded a similar moral concern, despite the fact that they may officially claim there are criteria that



provide reasons for preferring humans—such as the fact that they have language, rationality, sociality, etc. The human chauvinist's main argument is that moral concern is a necessary and sufficient prerequisite of being human. Hayward contends that speciesism and human chauvinism, not anthropocentrism, are the "evil" ideologies.

The knowledge that ecosystems serve as the "life-support system" for humans is the best justification for protecting them. Self-interest in protecting the environment is frequently believed to produce the same results in reality as other ethical stances. This is in line with pragmatic environmental ethics literature, particularly Norton's (1984) "convergence theory," which holds that conserving the environment for human material advantage is the primary motive for protecting nature. The strongest justification for preserving the ecological systems on which we depend is anthropocentric motivation, which ultimately leads to the same practical conclusions as ecocentric perspectives. The United Nations General Assembly's World Charter for Nature (UNGA 1982), which asks for non-wasteful use of natural resources and notes that humanity benefits from balanced ecological processes and biological variety, serves as an example of this perspective. This is consistent with the anthropocentric goal of safeguarding environmental protection for the good of all humans.

Criticisms and counter criticisms:

Critics of anthropocentrism argue that its central tenet—valuing humans on an intrinsic level and nonhuman components of the universe on an instrumental level—is unethical since we are unable to justly defend such a hierarchy. In contrast to the anthropocentric perspective, ecocentrism accords all parts of the environment, including biotic and abiotic aspects, the same intrinsic worth and does not favour any particular species. In terms of ecocentrism helping to solve the environmental crisis, ecologist John Stanley

Rowe has argued: "It seems to me that the only promising universal belief-system is ecocentrism, defined as a value-shift from *Homo sapiens* to planet earth. Deep ecology is an environmental philosophy that supports the idea that all living things have intrinsic value regardless of how useful they are for human needs and calls for the reconstruction of contemporary human cultures to reflect these beliefs. Deep ecologists argue that non-human entities and humans are both of equal importance and criticise anthropocentrism.

Modern anthropocentrists' main issue with deep ecologists in their disagreements is that they fail to distinguish between human and non-human nature. They believe that deep ecology's theoretical framework is wholly the result of human agency. The human species is given a special standing in the natural world as a result of this conceptual framework. They disagree with Arne Naess' assertion that people are merely a component of nature and basic members of the biotic community. The true human potential of an individual depends on their position in nature. They contend that deep ecology encourages eco-fascism, or the sacrifice of individual humans for the good of the ecological whole, to the extent that it fails to appropriately acknowledge the uniqueness of human life and accord moral significance with other life forms. According to modern anthropocentrism, all ethical systems were developed by people in specific cultural contexts. There is therefore no evidence in the slightest that animals show behaviour that can be characterised as discursive, meaningful, or moral if human activity is removed from the equation. In the way that deep ecology presents its ideas, there are some divergent aspects. The rapidly deteriorating environmental situation is thought to require intervention in order to restore a balanced ecology. Concerning that man must take charge if the question of changing human behaviour to solve the ecological problem is to be addressed. However, Naess places more emphasis on introspective thought than on



distraction. Human interference with nature is regarded as detrimental. The goal of deep ecology is to reach a state of knowledge regarding the supposed lack of distinctions between cosmic oneness and human consciousness. Naessian deep ecology warns against the devastating effects of human meddling on first nature on one occasion and calls for human beings to take immediate action to safeguard the environment on another. The argument goes that the desire to protect biotic integrity should act as a guide when humans intervene in the natural world. As a result, according to anthropocentrists, conceptualising the deep ecological framework appears to be logically contradictory.

Conclusion:

To conclude, despite the fact that deep ecology and biocentrism offer more palatable, theoretically equivalent approaches to protecting the environment, contemporary anthropocentrism is a revised, pragmatic,

and sure way to save our ecological, in my estimation. For the sake of both the environment and future generations of humans, humans must learn moderation. The maintenance and responsibilities of people should allow all biotic and abiotic elements to develop and prosper together.

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