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The Value of Nature: Utilitarian Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Utilitarianism regards pleasure, or the satisfaction of interest, desire, and preference as the only intrinsic value. Therefore, Utilitarian's believes that right actions are those which produce the greatest pleasure for the greatest number of people. Ethical actions are judged and determined by their consequences, as opposed to de-ontological, which is concerned with rights and duties regardless of consequences. It focuses is on the instrumental value of actions. However, in environmental ethics, instrumental value also comprises the value of nature as a human resource. Ascribing the instrumental value to nature had started with humans' use of natural resources for survival on earth. Human use of natural resources soon turned into the exploitation of nature through a rapidly changing process which includes the science and technological revolution. Thus, the anthropocentric worldview was blamed for human reckless exploitation of nature. Anthropocentrism; a dominant western worldview sees only human beings as having independent moral status even to the detriment of other beings in the environment. This theory prioritizes those attitudes, values, or practices which give preferences to human interests rather than the interests of beings who are other than humans in the environment. In this work, I will be discussing instrumental value. I will be discussing the value of nature only as an instrument of human welfare for life support. I will be preoccupied with some of the issues regarding whether nature has any interest or significance as such independently of human concern.

Keywords: Environmental Ethics, Anthropocentrism, Utilitarian Ethics.

INTRODUCTION: THE TELEOLOGICAL (NATURAL LAW) TRADITION

The anthropocentric view of nature can be traced back to Aristotle's teleological theory of nature. Aristotle believed that everything in nature is for the satisfaction of human needs and he says:

Plants exist for the sake of animals... all other animals exist for the sake of man, tame animals for the use he can make of them as well as for the food they provide; and, as for wild animals most though not all of these can be used for food and are useful in other ways; clothing and tools can be made out of them. If we are right in believing that nature makes nothing without some end in view, nothing to no purpose, it must be that nature has made all things for the sake of man (Rachels & Rachels 1986, p. 60).

Aristotle develops and explicates the concept of teleology systematically. The concept of teleology advocates that all natural phenomena are determined by an overall design or purpose in nature. Teleology is thus viewed as the study of ends, purposes, and goals. The ends of things or processes are seen as providing the meaning for all that has happened or that occurs. Aristotle's thought is teleological, i.e., everything which is always changing and moving has some goal or purpose (Chase 2011). This idea of teleology can be expressed in the language of Newtonian physics which says that everything has potentiality to be something and, therefore, it may be actualized. For example, an acorn is potentially an oak tree. The acorn undertakes a process of change and motion. In this process of change and motion the acorn is directed to realize the potentiality of becoming an oak tree. Therefore Aristotle believed that things in nature occur because they serve a purpose. All living organisms and non living things develop as they do because they have a natural goal or teleos in nature.

This tradition is called the teleological or natural law tradition. For Aristotle, to understand a thing fully is to understand the causes for its being and its nature. So Aristotle talks about the four causes of an object's existence. These are the material, formal, efficient and the final causes. The material cause of an object is what an object is made of, that is, the stuff out of which it has come. It thus refers to the matter. The formal cause is how that matter is organized or structured so that this material is what it is. For example a tree, and a table have the same material cause, i.e., wood. Wood exists in two different forms. An efficient cause explains how something comes to be what it is. A carpenter is the efficient cause for a piece of wood, of becoming a table. The final cause is the purpose or characteristic activity of the object. The final cause of the table is to provide a place at which to sit and eat. Hence the final cause of a tree is the activity which the tree does and which other living things do not. He believed that all things do have a natural and distinctive activity. We understand some object fully only when we understand its natural function or activity.

Aristotle distinguishes two basic types of natural objects (Oderberg 2016). These are; living and non-living (Abakare 2020). The living things are called, "the principle of life", or "psyche" which is later translated as the "soul". Thus it has the "powers" or "fundamental activities of life". These are nutrition, sensation, and thinking. Plants are living things which possess only nutritive soul. It means that their characteristic activities include only the powers of nutrition, growth, and reproduction. Animals

possess appetitive powers in addition to nutrition. These material activities include the powers of sensation, desire and motion. Finally, it is the humans who possess the three life activities of nutrition, appetite, and thought. The teleological theory of nature could be applied to all natural objects including humans. All living and nonliving things have a natural activity or function. Things are viewed as good when they fulfill this function or actualize their potential. Every living thing is to attain its natural activity in order to realize its full potential. The purpose of a plant is to accomplish the nutritive functions such as taking nutrition from soil, growth, and reproduction. The purpose of an animal is to attain its desire and fulfill its appetites that include the nutritive function. In the case of humans the notion good becomes a comprehensive notion since it includes not only those above mentioned ends but more importantly it includes the idea of a contemplative life i.e., a thoughtful and deliberative life.

The modern environmentalism is based on this teleological theory of nature. Environmentalists assume that natural ecosystems are well ordered and harmonious. All parts of an ecosystem have a unique and distinctive place in the ecosystem. Each contributes in its own way to the natural order of the ecosystem. Undisturbed ecosystem is good. All ecological problems arise only when human being interferes with the natural objects. According to this view the way the world is, is the way the world should be without the interference of human beings. In this context we can talk about Thomas Aquinas who says nature exists only to satisfy human needs. Accordingly the resources of nature should be fully utilized for the service of mankind (Pasnau 2002). This is the way how nature assumes its perfection. Descartes was one among the philosophers who influenced the western thought of domination of nature by humanity. According to him animals are like machine without consciousness. Hegel considered nature to be totally lacking value in its untransformed state (Novakovic 2017). Nature is only worthy of admiration when converted into some form of garden and farm. Hobbes and Locke thought that only human beings have value. According to Karl Marx nature is having value as an instrument to humans (Foster 2017). At this point we discuss Kant's view regarding the value of nature little elaborately.

Though Descartes provides a major historical source to the idea of inherent worth of human beings, Kant made it more explicit in his theory of categorical imperative. Kant says rational beings only have moral worth (Abakare 2021). According to Kant's first formulation of categorical imperative, human beings are only rational beings (Donaldson 2017). They are only ends in themselves and therefore they should not be used as only means for certain ends. Only human beings are having intrinsic moral worth. So animals are not having the worth of a person because they are not rational. They are not self conscious beings and they do not have also the capacity of grasping the moral law. Therefore Kant excluded them from the moral domain. Only humans are the member of the moral domain therefore we as human beings do not owe anything for them. But at this point Kant says human beings should be kind to them because this helps us

to develop good character in us. The kindness towards animals as Kant observes also helps us to treat our other fellow human beings with greater consideration. It means according to Kant, the duties of human beings towards animals thus turned out to be indirect duties for the purpose of serving human beings.

According to Kant the will is the faculty which enables a person endowed to act in accordance with certain laws. He further says that only human beings who are rational beings are endowed with this faculty. The autonomy of the will has certain ends which are achieved through certain means. Kant characterizes this as the hypothetical imperative. Apart from hypothetical imperative Kant claims that there is something whose existence has an absolute worth in itself. This he calls an end in itself or the categorical imperative. As he puts it only rational being exists as an end in himself. He must be always regarded as an end in himself and regards other rational beings as end in themselves. All other objects are only having a conditional worth. So at this point he says the beings whose existence does not depend on our will but on nature are not rational beings. These beings have only a relative value as means. Therefore Kant called them as irrational beings. On the contrary he called the rational beings as persons. It is because they are ends in themselves and they should not be used merely as means. Therefore they are subjects of respect. The foundation of categorical imperative is based on the rational nature of the individual person that exists as an end in itself. A rational being has duties towards other rational beings as to treat them as an end in themselves which in turn becomes an universal principle.

According to Kant as far as animals or any other entities of nature are concerned, human beings do not have any direct duties. It is because animals are not self conscious and they are not rational. Therefore they are regarded by Kant merely as means to certain ends. The end is to serve man. If we question the purpose concerning the existence of animals then the answer is their existence is only to satisfy certain ends of human beings. Based on the utilitarian thinking Kant assumes the idea of ascribing value to animals. Kant's explanation to the question why should we give value to animal thus presupposes an utilitarian answer. In Kant's reflection: Animal nature is similar to some extent with that of human nature. But the only difference is that they are not rational. The idea of rationality plays a crucial role here since it influences our behaviour towards animals. Thus, as rational beings we strongly feel in understanding duties towards animals. By doing our duties to animals we manifest our human nature. The duty that we perform for the wellbeing of animals has an impact on our moral nature. Our realization that we ought to be kind towards animals is in turn helps us to be kind towards our own fellow beings. By doing our duties towards animal we thus in a sense do our duties towards humanity indirectly. To give Kant's example of a dog, he says if a dog has faithfully served his master for long then the dog's service deserves reward. When the dog has grown old to serve then his master ought to keep him until he dies. Kant says that such actions towards animals enable us to develop a

moral character within us. As a consequence Kant holds that humans realize the need for performing duties towards other human beings, i.e., serving others. Likewise any animal behaviour that is analogous to human actions may be claimed to spring from the same principles as human actions do. Therefore we have duties towards the animals because we have to cultivate the corresponding duties towards human beings like the case of a dog. A person must practice kindness towards animals because for Kant a person who is cruel to animals also becomes cruel in his dealings with other human beings. As Kant observes, our duties towards animal thus essentially are the indirect duties towards mankind. On the basis of such kind of value ascription to animals and nature independently of teleological tradition becomes the basis of the utilitarian approach to environment.

UTILITARIAN THEORY

Utilitarianism is a form of consequentialist ethic. Consequentialist ethics identifies the goals or outcomes which each and every rational agent ought to attain. Actions are considered right on the basis of the production of the specific consequences. The actions are considered wrong when they do not produce the specific consequences. Hence, utilitarianism is a form of consequentialist ethics elaborated by Jeremy Bentham. According to Bentham:

An ethical act is one which increases “utility”, utility being equivalent to pleasure (happiness) or absence of pain. “Nature has placed mankind under to sovereign masters, pleasure and pain. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do (Alder & Wilkinson 2016, p. 38).

This passage brings out explicitly the utilitarian standpoint on morality. In the utilitarian account, morality is viewed essentially to be meant for human beings. In its moral concern, utilitarianism thus does not have any place for nature. The concern for nature is accordingly seen from an utilitarian point of view, that is, the utility that it serves for human beings. The same idea we have found while discussing Kant’s position on the value of nature. Following this line of thinking our duty or obligation to nature becomes indirect. Objects of indirect duty in nature are animals, plants, and any other entity in nature. Therefore the direct objects of duty are only the other human beings. The non- anthropocentric value of nature is unfit in the utilitarian perspective. The utilitarian theory allocates moral value in terms of the overall benefit of actions. It says that an action is right when it maximizes the good for maximum number of people. This theory has two important reasons for its contribution to the theory of environmental ethics. The first reason is, it does justice to the fact that some of the remote consequences or expected consequences do matter in moral thinking (Akpan & Bassegy 2020). The reason is any moral position must take into its consideration of the account of the consequences of actions in its assessment of their rightness. Therefore the utilitarian theory says that an action is right when it maximizes the good for maximum number of people. The second reason is more compelling than the first reason. The utilitarian theory lends itself to the theoretical development in a way that other moral

accounts do not. It provides a principled means of arriving at decisions in the case of moral problems. It evaluates with the moral problems in terms of the principle of measurable utilities like pleasure and pain. This theory also helps us to provide solutions by using mathematical and graphical models in our moral deliberations. Therefore we can say that the utilitarianism is an influential theory today. Utilitarian reasoning is influential in the areas of economics, public policy and government regulations. It has also played a significant role in environmental policy. It promotes how to maximize the good. It's ethos is to produce the greatest good for the greatest number. Thus this theory is based on two basic elements: The concept of "good" and a rule for judging all acts and decisions in terms of that good. This rule helps us to judge the ethical status of a particular act in terms of its consequences.

Hence, utilitarians distinguish between two basic types of values (de Lazari-Radek & Singer 2017). These are, first, the concept of "intrinsic good" which is valued for its own sake, second, the value of all other things are related to the concept of "good". We explain this in the following way. For utilitarians there are two kinds of values, i.e., intrinsic value and instrumental value. The examples of intrinsic value are the concept of good, pleasure or happiness. These intrinsic values express the notion of intrinsic good. All other things and activities are said to have instrumental values. On the basis of our discussion we can now claim that environmental ethics needs the inclusion of both anthropocentric and teleological perspective. These two perspectives together spell out that nature exists for the sake of humans and the significance of nature lies in serving humanity. This we have seen while discussing Kant and Aristotle. We may thus conclude that environmental ethics is not possible independent of human beings. In other words, environmental ethics needs anthropocentric perspective. With this observation we now come to anthropocentric perspective.

ANTHROPOCENTRIC PERSPECTIVE

Anthropocentrism is a stream of thought which is basically based on the utilitarian theory of ethics. This theory is based on human wellbeing or human rights. This theory is more like traditional ethical theories (Kopnina *et al.*, 2018). Its main justification to give primary value to human beings is that, human beings are intrinsically more valuable than any other living and non-living beings. It is because man is the sole bearer of values. It is due to this man alone has the capacity to give value to everything including nature. Human beings give value to nature because they need ecology for their survival. Nature as such is outside the purview of ethical discourse because it is only physical or objective. Hence the anthropocentric theory argues that ethics is not concerned with the entities of nature. We cannot pass a moral judgment on the activities of non-living beings and animals (Akpan *et al.*, 2020). In view of its position the anthropocentric ethical theory thus holds that nature should be preserved because it is useful for human existence. The biotic entities like forests, rivers, mountains, animals and the biospheric atmosphere are subservient to human purpose. They are only the providers of basic needs and vital breath to human

beings. Accordingly the forests should be preserved because they provide many products for human survival. The natural resources including both biotic and abiotic are essential for human life. Human beings have greater capacity for all kinds of experience. It is thus evident that the anthropocentric theory does not extend its moral domain to other living and nonliving objects. Its moral domain remains limited to human beings only. The fundamental anthropocentric principle is that only human beings can have moral values. We value all other natural things only in relation to human purposes and goals. Nature is a resource to be conserved for to meet the requirements of human welfare. The view that humans as masters of nature are popular with policy makers. As human beings we owe moral duties to the rest of the nature, because we have social and moral obligation towards other fellow human beings. By conserving nature we are performing moral duty towards nature which ultimately fulfills the obligation towards the welfare of mankind. Anthropocentric theory can be said of two kinds according to its orientation or presupposition. These two are strong anthropocentrism and weak anthropocentrism.

Strong anthropocentrism says all and only humans have moral nature possessing a set of intrinsic values (Norton 2017). Nonhumans are mere instruments to human benefits and ends. Nature is only a resource. We have no duties to nonhumans, but only duties to other human beings. Our approach to non-humans is thus influenced by our moral concern for human welfare. In this way strong anthropocentrism can give rise to a particular conception of environmental ethics which does not assume the fundamental moral value concerning respect or having care for other creatures. It thus holds that it is important to protect the environment for the sake of environment. It is due to this instrumentalistic attitude anthropocentrism does not give any thought over negative or destructive consequences that human actions may have on nature. This stand of anthropocentrism is sharply different from weak anthropocentrism or stewardism. With this note we come to weak anthropocentrism.

Weak anthropocentrism is a liberal kind of anthropocentrism. As I have already said, "anthropocentrism" literally means morality should be central to humans. Weak anthropocentrism has peripheral moral concern for nonhuman beings to the extent to which they are concerned with human beings (Norton 2017). However it does not deviate from its basic position which says that humans are superior and they matter more than other beings and they are the caretakers of nature. Humans are important but other creatures also have value in themselves. Further it holds that nature exists for God and it is the role of humans to look after God's creation as His steward. As stewards human beings should look after nature for the benefit of the future generations. Considering this it appears that nature should be conserved on the basis of general description of weak anthropocentrism we will now go in to some of the varieties of weak anthropocentrism.

ENLIGHTENED ANTHROPOCENTRISM

Today many people do not accept the view that only humans have moral status. The modern view says that at least some non-human animals must be given moral status to some extent. Unconstrained anthropocentrism has led to the current environmental problems. So we can say that there is a need for constrained anthropocentrism for the purpose of better environmental management. This theory is called enlightened anthropocentrism. Enlightened anthropocentrism is the view which holds that humans should give moral consideration to nature but the consideration it gives is always secondary to human needs. It is similar to anthropocentrism because it takes into account the benefits of nature towards human beings (Keulartz 2012). Nature provides number of benefits to humans such as medicinal plants, recreational utility natural beauty etc. This kind of anthropocentric theory appeals to the human self-interest for exploiting nature. At the same time it is also moderated by the fear of inviting natural destruction for humans through their own activities. Human beings get cautioned by the nature's disasters. Enlightened anthropocentrism facilitates the protection of natural entities from excessive human intervention. It is due to this particular kind of characteristic enlightened anthropocentrism is found to be widely accepted among liberal governments. Our day-to-day human concern with nature is guided by enlightened anthropocentrism in practice. For example, we make laws to protect nature for human use and by protecting nature we indirectly protect wild animals. There are two other kinds of enlightened anthropocentric theories that are not despotic or exploitative. Such theories go into the discussion on the relationship between environmental protection and non-material human concerns. These theories emphasize that we are parts of nature and as parts of nature human beings should respect nature for its existence as such and as a ground for resources. But we should do it in our own interest as a part of nature.

Utilitarianism claims that, maximizing human happiness and minimizing pain is the ultimate principle of morality. In the context of human happiness environment has an important role to play. Human happiness requires the maintenance of an environmental life-support system. Apart from the basic necessities of human existence human happiness is dependent on medicine, economic benefits, aesthetic experiences and other instrumental values possessed by nature. According to J.S. Mill, human beings develop more intellectual or virtuous kinds of happiness, when they come in contact with wild nature. This kind of view is also reflected in G.E. Moore's ideal utilitarianism. It is well known that Moore defines the ethical principle of good not in any utilitarian term such as happiness. For him "good" is an irreducible non-natural property that cannot be further analyzed (Shaver 2018). "Good" is not composed of any other properties such as happiness. He says "beauty" is the most important form of "good". Therefore, we have a moral obligation to act in such a way so that we can make the world beautiful. Hargrove has extended this principle further. He argues that we should preserve the

natural beauty of the environment because everything in nature is beautiful. Thus, the whole nature is worthy of protection.

In this context I bring the discussion of John Passmore. According to him there are traditions which do not view man essentially as a despot out to exploit nature ruthlessly (Attfield 2014). The first is the tradition which sees human being as a “steward”, or a farm manager. Man is responsible to take care of the nature. The second tradition sees human being as co-operating with nature in an attempt to perfect it. According to the first tradition, it is the responsibility of the human beings to look after the inanimate things. Man is sent to the earth by God to take care of nature. Man is the master of nature and his role is not simply to contemplate it or to preserve it in its original condition. His power does not entitle him to use nature according to his will. He cannot exploit its resources without any consideration regarding the consequences of his actions on nature. He is at liberty to restrain fierce animals, but he should protect non-dangerous and useful animals. Like a farm manager he can cut down trees to make new farms only if, in doing so, he does not destroy the beauty and usefulness of nature. In this context we see that modern conservationists conserve natural resources based on this idea of responsibility of human beings.

In the second tradition it is maintained that man’s responsibility is to perfect nature by co-operating with it. Here the word “nature”, derives from the Latin word *nascere*. It means to be born, or to come into being. This etymology suggests the potentiality of nature. The etymological meaning of this expression implies that an area which is still in its original condition, as “not yet developed”. In this way man’s relationship to nature is to develop various natural resources, such as, land in order to actualize its potentialities. This means to bring out what it has in itself to become and this is the way how human beings perfect nature. This tradition is applicable to the attitude among modern developers for whom the potentialities of an area of land consist solely in the profits they can make out of it. So man’s duty in respect to nature is to perfect it by bring out its potentialities. The question is how is perfection to be judged? The answer may be given in Aristotelian manner i.e., the teleology of nature. Nature is at its best when it fulfils man’s needs. The potentialities are the reason for the existence of it. To perfect nature is to make it useful for human beings. For man’s purposes we have to make nature more useful, more intelligible to our reason and more beautiful to our eyes but at the same time we should respect it. There are, according to Passmore, two traditions in western civilization which think of man as having responsibilities towards nature. The first is called the conservationists. It emphasizes the need to conserve the earth by effective management. The second one is the perfection of nature by man (Elliot 1995). Perfection means taking account of nature’s own resources which, man has already achieved in the process of civilizing the world.

According to Passmore through our familiar and established ethical principles, we can preserve our environment. These principles thus serve the purpose of preserving the environment. They give us a new moral

awareness about environment. As a result we adopt certain attitude towards environment which includes attitudes like compassion for fellow creatures, aesthetic appreciation of natural beauty, psychological need for contact with nature, and our awareness of disturbing the harmony of nature by our own deeds that pollute nature. These are based on the two fundamental principles we should have reverence for other forms of life and, second, we should respect value diversity. However, inculcating such ethical attitudes do not suggest that we should give more priority to the interests of other species than our own interests. This attitude comes due to our basic belief that man controls nature and not other way.

Enlightened anthropocentrism argues that the different kind of environmental problems can be solved in the ways suggested above. This helps us to recognize the deontological stand that nature is having its own interests other than what human beings impose on it is not reasonable. Since we know that we are similar to nature in certain respect we know what is good for us is also good for nature. For example, the enlightened anthropocentric theory has influenced many conservation laws. This theory also helps us to conserve useful and attractive things, such as, elephants and lakes. So when it comes to law making for our future human needs, efforts to save nature outweighs our other immediate needs such as limiting the use of vehicles since they cause pollution. The well being of future generations and the survival of an endangered species are the items which environmentalists must seek to preserve since they are remote and speculative. On the other hand there is the other objective which is opposite to previous one. It prescribes the one that is most immediate and concrete such as restriction on using cars. In order to preserve nature for future generation we should restrict the use of vehicles to maintain a less polluted environment. This brings us to the conception of another kind of anthropocentric theory know as extended anthropocentrism: the concern for future generations.

EXTENDED ANTHROPOCENTRISM: CONCERN FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

The main concern of extended anthropocentrism lies on the welfare generation (McShane 2007). Its basic argument is that we should protect environment for the welfare of future generation. In this respect it points out the evil impact of environment on us, such as, global warming, climate change and various other environmental problems arising due to our abuse of nature. It will take many generations to rectify these environmental problems. Similarly the effects of environmental exploitation, such as, marine pollution, nuclear pollution, green house gases and global warming are long lasting and will be felt most severely by people of several generations in the future. Therefore we should refrain from using the sea for the disposal of hazardous waste and radioactive contaminants. On land also the hazards associated with nuclear power installations are as important for future generations as they are for the present generation.

Scientists and policy makers from leading national and international institutes for environment call for a declaration from all nations to give priority to the conservation of plants, forests and marine species than to hunger. Here we see the principle of hypothetical imperative as the basis of anthropocentric approach towards nature. Either we should try to keep the equilibrium of nature or we face hunger and other related environmental problems for our present and future generations. It is because the custodians or stewards of biodiversity resources are the human beings. The more we abuse the environment the closer we are in putting question mark to our existence. The nature is not a non-living entity with resources. It is on the other hand a living entity that has its own mechanisms. Human beings try to protect nature with the sole purpose of increasing our longevity.

In view of these above considerations it is felt that anthropocentric ethics must be extended to future generations for its protection and welfare. This becomes an important move in the direction of our ethical concern for environment. It is due to this new thinking that all concepts and theories of (Okeke & Akpan 2012) have been applied to future generations. The principle on which the concern for future generation is based is called intergenerational equity that is the benefits that we as present generation is enjoying the future generation to must be enjoying the benefits of nature in the same way. This suggests that a balance must be struck between our own interests and the interests of descendants. This principle of intergenerational equity is supported by the utilitarian theory. It is the principle of maximizing happiness for maximum people. But the condition is that maximizing the welfare of maximum people should be indifferent to time.

For example, a forest is the product of millions of years. If we cut it down then the continuity has been broken. The natural life cycles of plants and animals are disrupted in this process. The forest will never be the same again. Once the forest is cut, the link with the past will go forever. Nature as a whole is a store house of many different kinds of knowledge. If a jungle is destroyed then many plants and species will disappear for ever on which different researches could have been done. This is a cost that will never be borne by every generation that succeeds us on earth. Therefore environmentalists say wilderness is a world heritage. It is something that we have inherited from our ancestors. We must preserve all these for our descendants. Human-centered or anthropocentric theories are based on such kind of consideration for future generations. Such an ethics does not imply that economic growth is more important than the preservation of wilderness for the future generations. On the contrary, a human centered ethics concerned strictly to the benefits of the present generation as for example it gives more priority to economic growth. Unconcerned economic growth will lead to a lopsided development. Growth is thus achieved at the cost of destroying nature. The impact of it though may not be felt by the present generation its evil effects will be most acutely observed in the life of future generation.

LIGHT GREEN OR SHALLOW ANTHROPOCENTRIC ETHICS

This theory holds the two basic positions first nature has instrumental value and second our concern for nature is restricted to put it negatively as long as nature as it does not harm our existence (Gansmo 2017). In this way our concern for nature becomes indirect. Its chief characteristic is that it gives direct value to human beings like all other anthropocentric theories. Except human beings, all other living and non-living entities have no independent moral status. Human beings give them value in so far as they matter to humans. Hence, the consequence is, any part of non-human nature that has no utility value can be destroyed. Natural diversity is valuable to humans as a resource. Any kind of plant or animal species should be saved because they are valuable as genetic resources for human agriculture and medicine. Shallow ecology is based on utilitarian theory. According to this theory nature has only instrumental value. So, for example, pollution should be decreased because it threatens the health of human beings. Hence it defines an ecological problem as one that poses difficulties for humans. It might be having its effects on the rest of nature. But we should not bother about it as far as it is not affecting us.

The shallow ecological argument is more useful in modern environmental conservation. Its roots lie in the dominant view of western philosophy. It is the dominant philosophy where nature is conceived as the only source of resources. In government departments and ministries, corporations, research laboratories and all environmental research institutes nature is considered as a resource. The followers of this theory see non-human nature as a resource which is to be exploited for human ends. Therefore, this view is used in resource management and conservation, human welfare ecology. All of them comprise of what is broadly called environmentalism. This theory serves well in an immediate crisis. It is fairly a good theory as long as humans ascribe utilitarian value to the natural resources like plant, animals, species and place. Environmentalists though consider nature as having instrumental value it does not stop with it. The concept of instrumental value or use value is extended beyond its normal boundaries. For example, we can argue that an entity or a piece of landscape is useful because it meets our aesthetic or spiritual needs. In these cases we are not using nature for having benefit. Their value lies in our experiencing of it, now by, its beauty. However, in our overall assessment shallow ecology is inadequate to defend nature.

The principles that it prescribes are,

1. Natural diversity is valuable as a resource for us.
2. There is no other value except the value for human beings.
3. Plant should be saved because of its value for human agriculture and medicine.
4. Pollution should be decreased if it threatens economic growth.
5. Third world population growth threatens ecological equilibrium.
6. The concept of resource has its meaning only with reference to human.
7. Economic growth gets maximum priority because it is held that we should not compromise with our standard of living for the conservation of nature.

8. Nature is cruel and necessarily so.

In this anthropocentric theory, the relationship between human and nature can be balanced only by assuming that the concern for nature is dependent on the concern for human beings to whom values can be ascribed directly. Shallow ecology thus prescribes only instrumental value to nature.

INSTRUMENTAL VALUE

The theories which we have discussed in this research are supporters of the use value or resource value of nature. Nature is valuable on the basis of its use value. Environmental philosophers call this kind of value as instrumental value (Baard 2019). The word “instrumental” is derived from the Latin word *instrumentum*, which means tool or equipment (Kaufman 1980). In this respect the approaches or the theories they have suggested that, the nonhuman world is having instrumental value and therefore, all are human-centered expressing an anthropocentric approach. The instrumental approach does not necessarily mean that it is a destructive approach or an exploitative approach. Here we make three kinds of instrumental value approaches. These are as follows.

1. Unrestrained exploitation and expansionism.
2. Resource conservationism and development.
3. Resource preservation.

In the first two approaches the non-human world is considered valuable only in so far as it is of instrumental value to humans. The particular instrumental value in these two kinds of approaches is the physical transformation of the non human world. That value is called the economic value. The economic value is realized by physically transforming the non-human nature by adopting (such as, damming, farming and mining) measures through which natural resources are utilized for the purpose of earning profits. The point where the first two approaches differ is that the first approach, i.e., the unrestricted exploitation and expansionism does not recognize that there are limits to the material growth and limits to resource exploitation. The second approach i.e., resource conservation and development, on the other hand, does recognize the limitations of the use of natural resources and says that there are limits to the material growth.

The third approach i.e., the resource conservation approach suggests that the non human world should be preserved. We should preserve it on account of its instrumental value to humans. Environmental philosophers like, William Grey and George Sessions, have given nine arguments in support of the resource preservation approach. These are as follows.

1. The life support system argument states that we ought to preserve all aspects of the non-human world because it is vital to our physical wellbeing. We should preserve natural plants and species because we can do research on them for medicine. Almost all drugs we use are made either from plants or from animals. When a new drug is made we first

- use it on animals for testing the effects of that particular drug.
2. The early warning system argument states that we ought to preserve all aspects of the non-human world because it is an early indicator of ecosystem determination.
 3. The silo argument states that we ought to preserve some aspects of non-human world because it represents a repository of potentially valuable genetic information for use in medicine and agriculture.
 4. The laboratory argument states that we ought to preserve the non human world because it is relevant for scientific study. For example, the study of human origins.
 5. The gymnasium argument states that we ought to preserve the non-human world because it is good for physical recreation. People can go for a pleasant walk or picnics.
 6. The art gallery argument states that we ought to preserve the non-human world because we need it for our aesthetic pleasure and experiences.
 7. The cathedral argument states that we ought to preserve it because we may need it for spiritual inspiration.
 8. The monument argument states that we ought to preserve non- human nature because it has a symbolic or instrumental value of some kind e.g., the eagle as a symbol of freedom and pigeon as the symbol of peace.
 9. Finally, the psycho developmental argument states that we ought to preserve nature on the grounds that contact with non-human nature is essential for healthy psychological development. This last argument is effectively the psychological counterpart to the physically based life support system argument.

Following this discussion we can see that the first two approaches emphasize the value of physical transformation nature. The first two approaches while restrict the notion of instrumental value to a limited field, the third approach widens the scope of instrumental value and thus in addition to physical benefits that we derive from nature it includes various other benefits. The nine arguments as stated above bring out this wider meaning of instrumental value. It will be wrong to consider the wider meaning of instrumental value as mere semantic. The wider meaning of instrumental value point out in practical terms how different ways we derive benefits from nature. A brief elaboration may be of some help to put argument in perspective. The life support system argument emphasizes the physical nourishment value of the nonhuman world to humans. For food we are dependent on nature. The early warning system management, the laboratory argument and the silo argument emphasize the informational value of the nonhuman world to the human world. The gymnasium argument, the art gallery argument and the cathedral argument emphasizes the experiential value of the nonhuman world to humans. The monumental argument emphasizes the symbolic or instructional value of the nonhuman world to the humans. The last, i.e., the psycho developmental argument emphasizes the psychological nourishment value to the non human world. The above

three approaches argue that we can exploit, conserve, or preserve the nonhuman world. We can exploit it on the basis of purely instrumental value of the non human world.

CONCLUSION

The value of nature is instrumental. It can be used as we have discussed above, as an instrument for human welfare in various ways. The instrumental perspective of anthropocentric theories show that nature is irrational and it does not have interests like human beings have. Further anthropocentric theories hold that it is only human interests and not nature that should be given priority. Started from Aristotle and Kant nature is meant for the use of human beings.

Everything in nature has a purpose and therefore nature is only teleological. According to the purpose that the individual entities have Aristotle made a hierarchy in which human beings are placed on the top of the scale. But it is not true that all anthropocentric theories give prima facie importance to human beings. This will be found from the claims made by theories like enlightened anthropocentrism, extended anthropocentrism and shallow ecology where the idea of human beings having the duties to take care of nature is prominently found. However in spite of their revised or enlightened stand, these theories confirm to their ultimate instrumentalistic position. That is, the concern for nature is ultimately for the benefits of human beings of future generation. Man is thus conceived as steward or caretaker whose supreme duty to take care of all the values (recognized as instrumental values) that nature exhibits which are vital for human beings. Taking care of these values is thus meant to be indispensable for the survival of human beings. Hence serving nature for them will thus mean serving the future generation of mankind.

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