My Environmental Worldview (Ecocentrism: Environmental Wisdom)

Name

Institutional Affiliation

Date

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A personal environmental worldview determines that person’s interaction with nature, and his/her outlook on how environmental resources should be used (Miller and Spoolman, 2011). Of course an individual’s worldview is shaped by various factors, and it also affects other individual aspects, depending on what is being perceived. In this paper, I will discuss ecocentrism as my environmental worldview, citing how my environmental ethics and the global environmental status quo has formed and influenced this worlview.

My environmental worldview is ecocentrism. According the Houston Independent School District ( HISD, n.d), this worldview holds an earth-centered stance, and is shaped on the belief in the intrinsic value of both nature and humans. In short, the environment should be treated as an individual entity which deserves unassociated moral considerations. This worldview appreciates the need to protect the species from experiencing untimely extinction, as well as the entire ecosystem. This world view is contrary to the anthropocentric worldview, which proposes that humans are superior to the nature, and therefore they should act as the masters of nature. The anthropocentric worldview considers nature to be of extrinsic value; meaning that its value is determined by its usefulness to human beings.

The ecocentric environmental worldview is made up of two schools of thought. The deep ecology stresses that humans have no right to interfere with the richness and diversity of nature. I find this school of thought to be on the extreme, and therefore I do not agree with it. Notably, the fact that I believe in the intrinsic value of both humans and nature alike does not overrule the fact that both nature and humans share the same ecosystem. As a result, there must be interdependencies between nature and humans. However, the deep ecology school of thought does not seem to recognize or appreciate this interdependence (Hedlund-de Witt, 2012).

On the contrary, the environmental wisdom school recognizes the scarcity of resources. However, it also recognizes that human activities including technology and economic growth may either harm or enhance the environment (Miller and Spoolman, 2011). I find this school of thought to be both ethical and logical. While it does not uplift humans above nature, it recognizes the interdependency of humans and nature. Although it recognizes that nature has an intrinsic value, it also appreciates the equal interdependency between human and nature; given that each co-exist alongside the other. As such, this school gives the humans an opportunity to adapt their needs to the environment, as opposed to adoption of the environment for the human needs. In this case then, I find that the environmental wisdom school appreciates the co-existence of humans and nature, and therefore promotes objective interdependency between both entities.

I find the environmental wisdom school to be almost alike with the stewardship school of thought, which is among the schools within the anthropocentric worldviews. The stewardship school bestows on humans, an ethical responsibility to be good and caring managers of nature. Similarly, this thought recognizes the scarcity of natural resources, and promotes sustainability. It also emphasizes that human should engage in activities that do not harm the environment. Besides, the stewardship school recognizes that the success of humans is entirely based on how well they manage the environment and its resources. The only distinction between this school and the environmental wisdom school is that the stewardship does not appreciate the intrinsic value of nature, given that it is under the anthropocentric worldview (HISD, n.d).

My environmental worldview has been shaped and influenced by environmental ethics, as well as real time observations on the occurrences related to the environment. I believe that it is the responsibility of humans to take care of nature. I understand the intrinsic value of humans, but I also appreciate the intrinsic value of nature. A virgin forest or any other virgin environment depicts unique ecological features that would be considered as climax ecosystem. This is an indication that nature can, and in fact does exist and flourish without the interference or management of humans. Secondly, nature possesses inherent worth. This observation shapes my belief that humans cannot be placed above nature, and do not have to necessarily manage nature, as the humans-centered worldview would have us believe. Rather, humans and nature can derive an objective interdependency, for the benefit of both parties.

My environmental ethics is further stimulated by the real time happenings. By placing humans above nature, the anthropocentric worldview encourages uncontrolled selfishness to control human interests; that not only harms the environment, but also the future generations. Take for instance the “no-problem” school which falls under the anthropocentric worldview. The school claims that environmental problems are negligible, and can be easily solved through technology and proper management ((HSID, n.d).). This claim begs the question of whether climate change and global warming are negligible problems, and whether technology has been able to curb these phenomenons, which have had intensive detrimental effects on humanskind.

In conclusion, my environmental ethics, the global status quo, and the impracticality of the other worldviews and schools have influenced my environmental worldview (ecocentrism, environmental wisdom school). I believe that humans have the responsibility of taking care of nature. On the contrary, I recognize that nature can exist and flourish without the management and / or interference of humans. However, I believe that the disregard for the intrinsic value of the environment has yielded a selfish desire in humans to exploit nature, leading to effects such as climate change and global warming. In contrast, the appreciation of the intrinsic value of both humans and nature can be leveraged to yield an objective interdependence that would benefit both parties.

References

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