THE POSSIBILITY OF ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS FROM PRAGMATIST PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT: This paper shows that pragmatic rationality is crucial in environmental culture, without which the smooth functioning of the environment is possible. The second important lesson from this inquiry is that it is the foundation for a rich understanding of rationality that is open and does not discriminate against any environmental entities. Let us pose these questions as an invitation to further study the question of rationality in the field of environmental ethics. Can we abandon rationality and do something worthwhile? Is it not because of rationality that we are discussing the problem of non-human animals? Do we not need a reason to rebuild the eco-culture that we need?

Keywords: Pragmatism, environmental ethics, applied ethics

Introduction

Clare Palmer considers environmental ethics a catch-all stance covering many ethical perspectives. These ethical positions draw on various traditions, including those of [the pre-Socratics], Plato, Aristotle, Mill, and Moore (Palmer, 2002). Environmental ethics is also categorized as a sub-branch of applied ethics. The field of applied ethics emerged in the context of the discussion in the medical field of ethical issues related to medical practice. The main subdisciplines in applied ethics are business ethics, engineering ethics, environmental ethics, and others. However, environmental ethics differs from other fields of applied ethics because it does not fundamentally center on ethics. Instead, it is more closely related to other branches of traditional philosophy such as metaphysics, epistemology, aesthetics, philosophy of science, and social and political philosophy, where different areas of applied ethics are tied to specific subject areas, as subdisciplines in philosophy (Hargrove, 1989).

Moreover, Hargrove also predicted that environmental ethics would disappear as conventional mainstream philosophical subjects become modified and take the problems environmental ethics deals with into account. When the environment is adequately considered within the mainstream fields of philosophy, there will be less need for environmental ethics as a separate subject. He also warned of the possibility of incorrect conclusions from this projection of the end of environmental ethics and that concluding that it would have little importance within philosophy would be erroneous. He also argued as follows:

No area in applied ethics deals more fundamentally with philosophical issues than environmental ethics. It is a severe challenge to philosophy as a whole because many of the essential elements of any environmental ethic adopted by Western civilization will almost certainly be incompatible with fundamental positions in the history of philosophy. Because the basic assumption in environmental ethics conflicts with basic assumptions of traditional Western philosophy, many philosophers argue that environmental ethics is not philosophical (Hargrove, 1989: 2-3).

To fully understand Western attitudes toward the environment in general, let us begin our examination with Pre-Socratic traditions. According to Hargrove (1989), Early Greek and European philosophies were the most instrumental in determining philosophical attitudes toward the environment. Hargrove divided early European philosophy into the pre-Socratic period and the period after Socrates until the Roman conquest of Greece.

Greek philosophy reached its height with the work of Plato and Aristotle during the beginning of the second period. Indeed, even though these two thinkers greatly influenced Western thought, they worked within already-established philosophical traditions. Therefore, before moving on to Plato and Aristotle, the Pre-Socratic era, which is best divided into three traditions: the Ionian, the Italian, and the pluralist, must be briefly discussed. Pre-Socratic philosophy was almost entirely focused on speculation about the natural world.

Around 600 B.C., Western philosophy began to emerge. Specifically, it was created in Miletus, a city on the western coast of Ionia, in present-day Turkey (Miller & Jensen, 2009). Thales is considered the first Western

philosopher (Hargrove, 1989; Miller & Jensen, 2009). Miletean Monism is the term used to describe Thales's thoughts and that of his Miletean followers. This group considers the reality of being one. Thus, everything manifests or is reducible to a single essence or nature (Miller & Jensen, 2009). All Miletean monists tried to answer the question of the nature of ultimate reality.

All early Ionian philosophers were known to associate reality with some perceptible material or something we can see, touch, hear, and smell. Anaximander suggested that an indeterminate material made up reality, perhaps a combination of substances from which the sensory characteristics (hot, cold, wet, and dry) had been separated. Anaximenes considered air an organizing principle for everything else, producing the many things that make us who we are through thickening and thinning. At the same time, Xenophanes chose both earth and water as the ultimate reality. Heraclitus emphasized the mutable or constantly changing nature of things and held that fire was the fundamental reality, which, despite being continuously converted into and out of the other elements, consistently exhibited a divinely prescribed balance and order.

Thales considered the fundamental reality of everything to be water. Miller & Jensen (2009) assumed why Thales believes water is the ultimate reality. First, water is an essential component of all life. Second, it appears that most objects include water. Third, water is all around us. It rises from the earth, falls from the sky, and gathers on windshields. Fourth, this material is more prevalent than any other substance. Fifth, it can be observed that, unlike other common substances, water appears in several forms — a liquid, a solid, and a gas. This metaphysical theory is that water is the one reality that exists, but it was not the last. The successors of Thales each had their ideas on the ultimate reality.

The intellectuals in the Italian tradition showed a different inclination. Everything, according to the Pythagoreans, is a number. The assertion that numbers are the fundamental components of existence may seem strange, and it is not apparent what Pythagoras and his followers meant when they said this. It is evident, however, that the concept draws attention away from the typically perceptible components of the physical universe and toward the intangible, or even nonsensical, structure of things. Parmenides, an Eleatic philosopher, made a strong case for the existence of a single entity that must be constant in all its attributes. Thus, he outright denied the reality of the sensible world with all plurality and motion (Ibid).

The Pluralists, as one might infer from the name of their school, associated reality with a variety of elements while also proposing at least one of them as a candidate for being, making it thus single and unchanging. Empedocles was the first pluralist, proposing the four conventional elements—earth, air, fire, and water—as the fundamental building blocks of everything. In addition, he proposed the concepts of Love and Strife to attract the components together and separate them again in a never-ending cycle. Where the four components are brought together by the pull of Love, a world similar to our own is created. According to Anaxagoras, everything is made up of an infinite number of infinitely divisible particles or seeds, each of which is predominated by a particular attribute and each of which is determined as the sort of object it is by the seeds that predominate in it. However, the whole universe is governed by a pure mind. Leucippus and Democritus proposed the first atomic theory, arguing that everything mechanically develops from the coagulation of an infinite number of irreducible atoms. The Greek word atomos literally translates to "uncuttable," something irreducible (Ibid). The pre-Socratic period was committed mainly to discussions of the nature of motion and change, and it was through this argument that the Western notion of matter took on its ultimate shape.

Heraclitus attempted to build his philosophy on change by asserting that the universe was constantly changing. However, the majority of philosophers at the time were highly concerned about change and even be-

lieved that it was illogical to consider that change could be real. On this subject, Hargrove puts this as follows:

The argument against the change culminated in the philosophy of Parmenides, who believed that something could not come from nothing and that what existed could not cease to exist. What is, is he declared; what is not, is not; what is, can not be, and what is not, cannot be. Since the world of change violated these principles, he concluded that it could not exist and must be an illusion. What existed, Parmenides claimed, must be "without begging, indestructible, entire, single unshakable and endless." He called this the "One," arguing that idea of the world of many objects was just one more illusion. (Hargrove, 1989: 19).

This perspective, according to Hargrove, not only denies the reality of the world but also severely constrains language and cognition. That is, only one thing could be said, "Being is," as the One was the only thing that existed. All other ideas and assertions were absurd because they referred to fictitious objects (Ibid).

As a devoted citizen of Athens, Socrates spent his adult life there, where he engaged in public philosophical discourse and debate on important issues of ethics, politics, religion, and education. Going against conventional wisdom, he reasoned and thought for himself instead of following ancestral. Later philosophers considered significant developments in the history of philosophy to be rooted in Socrates. Philosophical inquiry into life and morals was set on its course by Socrates, who brought philosophy down from the skies to earth. Before him, explanations of celestial and other natural occurrences and the origins and nature of the physical universe were the main concern of philosophy (Cooper, 1998). Socrates changed the paradigm and avoided discussing the relationship between people and the natural world.

Plato developed his own philosophy as a reaction to his predecessors. On the need for true things to be everlasting, lasting, immovable, and unbreakable, Plato concurs with Parmenides. Unlike Parmenides, Plato thinks that metaphysics and epistemology are possible. Plato claimed that there are forms or ideas that direct how we think and perceive the world. The application of reason could reach these forms and did not exist as such in the realm of experience; rather, it existed outside of it. The shadow cast by the realm of Being fell upon the world of Becoming. The intellectual interacted with the intellectual and physical worlds (Hargrove, 1989).

Building on the permanence and indestructibility of the Forms, Plato could satisfy the Parmenidean requirement for unity and protected knowledge, thought, and language from Parmenides's arguments. He claimed that all forms were logically connected to all other forms as a group subsumed under the ultimate form, that of the Beautiful and the Good. As such, he emphasized the difficulty of the change in epistemology.

Aristotle, however, ultimately developed a metaphysical solution and rejected Plato's division of things into two worlds, the worlds of being and becoming. In Aristotle's thinking, the issue of the chorismos (separation)—a Greek term meaning separation—is the major issue. Aristotle accurately presents Plato as having removed the things that are supposed to be caused from the things that are the ultimate causes of (the forms), placing them in a transcendent universe. Thus, Plato's theory of transcendent forms was denied by Aristotle in favor of the idea of immanent forms, which takes the view that Forms are inside specific sensible things. Aristotle argues that Forms can only be the causes of things if they exist in those things, bridging Plato's unbridgeable gap between forms and sensible objects. Just as there is no inconceivable formless substance, there is also no abstract nature of tableness. There are specific tables out there, like this table, that table, and others (Miller & Jensen, 2009).

In contrast to his predecessors, Aristotle considered that the world as it is perceived is genuine. Put another way, the universe of experience is real. In Aristotle's metaphysics, the world is a vast collection of things constantly changing over an endless amount of time. These

changes are ultimately caused by a movement created and maintained by an eternal source of movement, the Unmoved Mover. Aristotle's physical views were largely guided by this idea. A significant contribution to this perspective came from his conception of teleology or the study of ultimate causes in nature. Understanding the function that something is intended to fulfill, in Aristotle's approach, is the best way to comprehend why it is the way it is. For example, an oak tree is a reason for, or the ultimate cause of, an acorn. Aristotle goes on to say that lesser species are there for the benefit of higher organisms and that they may all be arranged in a hierarchy, with humans at the top because human beings are rational. According to Aristotle, this arrangement is intended to remain in place and not change. Consequently, environmental issues related to alterations are not often discussed (Hargrove, 1989).

Religion, more than philosophy, dominated the medieval era. However, the Christian theological context remained nearly entirely intact in medieval philosophy. The primary goal of medieval philosophers was to reintroduce and incorporate Greek philosophy, notably the works of Plato and Aristotle, into a wholly Christian ideology. From a Christian perspective, God was connected with the Platonic Forms, being not in the world but beyond it (Ibid). Saint Augustine of Hippo and Saint Thomas of Aquinas were the foremost contributors to medieval Christian thinking. Saint Augustine incorporated Plato's philosophy into a Christian framework, while Aquinas contextualized Aristotle's philosophy into Christian ideology. Both Augustine and Aquinas considered that human beings are different from other creatures because they are endowed with the reason (Aquinas, 2014; Salisbury, 2013).

Aristotle's solution to the problem of change led to a tremendously productive period of philosophical and epistemological speculation. This period was significant because it paved the ground for the development of modern science in the 17th century. It may be less evident, though, whether it also paved the way for perspectives on nature that are fundamentally at odds with contemporary environmental thought (Hargrove, 1989).

Hargrove claims that the attitude of the Greek philosophers toward natural phenomena was fundamentally unfriendly because their formation of an ecological viewpoint is prevented by the fundamental premises underlying their philosophical speculation. It prevented them from appreciating the natural world on an aesthetic level. They proposed a view of reality that made the concept of environmental protection difficult to grasp (Ibid).

From the beginning, the Greeks found it nearly impossible to think about the concept of environmental friendliness. For this reason, they could not have appreciated the ecological relationships found in nature. Furthermore, knowledge was understood to be eternal, constant, and permanent. Understanding ecological interactions, on the other hand, requires placing a greater emphasis on impermanent, perishable, and ever-changing objects. Understanding this object may, then, be, at best, a matter of opinion and could be of little use in the quest for the overarching principle guiding the cosmos (Ibid).

The Greeks were also discouraged from practicing first-hand observation due to their understanding of the world's rational organization, which contributed to their lack of ecological awareness. They sought primary principles from which they could infer all other knowledge since the senses were considered to impede the use of reason (Ibid).

Modern philosophy has also played the same role, even if Greek philosophy was the main source of a worldview that hampered the development of real environmental and preservationist views (Ibid). What follows will explore modern environmental ethics.

Modern Environmental Ethics

The modern period of philosophy began in the early 17th century and is understood to include most of the philosophy of the twentieth century. This period may be fur-

ther divided into three sub-divisions: the early modern (1600–1800), ninetieth-century philosophy (1800–1900), and twentieth-century philosophy (1900–[present]). Kelbessa (2011) marks the beginning of the modern history of philosophy with the work of Francis Bacon (1561–1626) and René Descartes (1596–1650). However, uses the term "modern" Kelbessa to refer to contemporary environmental ethics in its 20th- and 21st-century forms. Here, we follow Kelbessa in using the term "modern environmental ethics."

Everything in the world is interconnected with everything else in some way. Leopold (1998), the energy plants absorb from the sun flows through circuits known as biota. All of nature considered a biota pyramid, is divided into several layers. Soil exists at the bottom of the layer. The plant layer depends on the soil, the insect layer depends on plants, and the bird and rodent layer depends on insects. It continues until it reaches the top of the hierarchy of larger predators. The logic of this interdependence regarding food and other needs is called the food chain. Similarly, Joseph Claude Evans (2005) writes that our existence as organic life requires participation in the food chain. Our existence as moral agents requires us to ask ourselves how to participate in all these chains and interact with those who make up them, including ourselves.

While it is natural for beings to influence, humans have drastically intervened everywhere, changing their natural environment, populating it with their artifacts, and reshaping it. Nonetheless, people live in natural environments where resources such as soil, air, water, sunlight, and a favorable climate are matters of life and death (Rolston, 2003).

Human beings are part of nature. Our influence on it, therefore, is no wonder. Because our own impact on nature is natural does not necessarily mean that our impact is good, however. That is, humans could be part of the environment and be responsible for the destruction of other species. Thus, we must develop and retain our understanding of ourselves as an integral part of our environment for guidance and to limit our impact on the rest of the environment in ways that are environmentally friendly (Christine & James, 2010; Kelbessa, 2005). This fact is what brings environmental ethics into being.

Environmental ethics is the theory and practice for proper care, values, and obligations concerning the natural world (Rolston, 2012). It emerged as a new subfield for Western philosophy in the mid-1970s (Brennan & Lo, 2002; Rolston, 2012; Light, 2005; Minteer, 2009;2009; Callicot, 1984; Callicot, 1997). In particular, the term "environmental ethics" comes from an article by Richard Sylvan, published in 1973. In it, the author argues that traditional ethics cannot place an appropriate value on non-human beings as human beings begin with anthropocentric assumptions and use other things as means to achieve human ends. Thus, he suggests, an ethics that could define how people relate to their environment had not been created (Sylvan quoted in Gunn, 2007).

The discipline of environmental ethics was established in response to 1960s crises such as air and river pollution in large cities, soil erosion, the alarmingly rapid depletion of natural resources, and population growth (Callicot & Nelson, 2004).

Human beings are introspective and cautious moral agents. This makes man capable of acting ethically. However, this does not imply that humans are the only valuable beings. Rather, it means that human beings must care for the environment (Ibid). In the following, two dominant approaches in modern environmental ethics are discussed: anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric environmental ethics and different versions of each.

Anthropocentric Environmental Ethics

The ethical theories established in the Western philosophical tradition, beginning with Socrates and Plato and extending through Aristotle's virtue ethics, Kant's deontology, and British utilitarianism, contended over two related issues. First, what is it like to be human, and

second, what does it mean to treat others morally (Evans, 2005)? These positions show a lack of unity among the philosophers, who disagree on fundamental issues while agreeing on the moral importance of human beings. This metaphysical and ethical position that underlies these separate views is known as anthropocentrism. This view is supported and/or exemplified by religious teachings, philosophical arguments, and scientific theories (Ibid).

Anthropocentrism regards the view that human interests matter and that environmental policies and practices are justified to the extent that they promote human interests. According to this view, only humankind has intrinsic value and is an end. So then, animals, plants, forests, wetlands, mountains, and everything else do not have intrinsic value but only insofar as they are instruments to achieve human ends (Gunn, 2007; Minteer, 2009; Callicot, 1984).

Mazzotta and Kline (1995) characterize anthropocentrism as the view that humans are the most important beings in the universe and can interpret the world in terms of their own values and experiences. It logically means that all of nature must be managed and cared for to benefit human beings, sometimes at the expense of other species. To them, the dominant ethical traditions of the West, such as those of Kant, utilitarianism, and virtue ethics, could not serve as a basis for new environmental ethics because they saw nature as a means to an end. They only considered the benefits to human beings, considering others unworthy of recognition, denying that nature had any immediate moral significance.

Anthropocentric ethics holds that humans are the subject and object of ethics. It states that humans are not responsible for environmental objects such as rocks, rivers, animals, plants, and ecosystems. Anthropocentrism steadfastly asserts that humans have only serious responsibilities to each other and seek to preserve other parts of the environment for the benefit that they bring (Rolston, 2003; Mazzotta & Kline, 1995). They also consider humans separate from nature. For example, taking the utilitarian formula of the greatest good for the most significant number, natural resources are considered only to the extent that they serve human ends (Botzler & Armstrong, 1998).

Botzler and Armstrong (1998) wrote that anthropocentrism takes the philosophical view that ethical principles only apply to humans and that human needs and interests are of the highest importance and even of exclusive value. Therefore, the interest in environmental objects is limited to objects of value to humans.

Norton (1984) identified two primary forms of anthropocentrism: strong and weak anthropocentrism. Strong anthropocentrism expresses all values concerning human beings' perceived preferences. A perceived preference is the want or need of an individual. Norton agrees that strong anthropocentrism is unacceptable but shows a second form of anthropocentrism, namely, weak anthropocentrism, such that a value theory is weakly anthropocentric if all of the values it describes refer to people's own satisfaction with perceived preferences and worldviews that are essential to determining the preferences in question. Intentional preferences are desires or needs that are consistent with rationally accepted worldviews, such as those of scientific theories and metaphysical frameworks. This deliberate preference draws a clear line between strong and weak anthropocentrism (Ibid).

Non-Anthropocentric Environmental

By contrast with the anthropocentric view of the environment, which promotes human hegemony over the environment, non-anthropocentrism sees humans as one part among many of a natural community rather than as its central or essential part. Non-anthropocentrists consider it to be nature that produces all values, including human values. They believe that the natural world has a value that is truly intrinsic and independent of human values (Mazzotta & Kline, 1995).

Anthropocentrism includes biocentrism and eco-

centrism. These branches' objections differ on whether there are intrinsic values in nature at the level of individuals, communities, species, ecosystems, products, or processes that can limit human rights and interests.

Theories of environmental ethics that are not anthropocentric tend to be individualistic or holistic. A non-anthropocentric individualistic environmental ethics find intrinsic value in all conscious animals (sentient-centered ethics) or all living organisms (biocentric ethics). A holistic theory, also called eco-centric ethics, assigns intrinsic value to inorganic environments (ecosystems), types of life (species), and communities of life that interact with all of nature (Martin, 2007). It is worth noting that ecocentrism is based on the idea that the natural world has intrinsic or intrinsic value. According to Botzler and Armstrong (1998), there are two main types of ecocentrism: land ethics and deep ecology. First, Aldo Leopold, an exponent of land ethics, argues that the Golden Rule is constructed to unite people and society while democracy unites society to the individual. However, he claims that there is no ethics concerning the relationship between humans and the earth and its inhabitants, such as animals and plants. For him, exploitation of the land is not only unnecessary but also wrong (Leopold, 1998).

He also argues that ethics are grounded on the single idea that man is a member of a community of interdependent parts. Leopold argues that land ethics changes the role of Homo sapiens from a conqueror to merely another member or citizen of the land community. This implies respect for fellow members of the community and the community itself (Ibid).

Second, the term "deep ecology" was originally coined by Arne Naess in his paper "Shallow and Deep, Long-Term Ecological Movements," in which he distinguishes between shallow and deep ecology. Here, the shallow ecology movement works to combat pollution and resource depletion. Promoting the health and well-being of people in developed countries is at the heart of this movement. For its part, deep ecology rejects the image of humans in the environment in favor of images of the relational and holistic field. According to this provision, organisms are entangled in biosphere networks or fields of interrelationships. This perspective also promotes the intrinsic value of living beings, regardless of their instrumental usefulness for human needs, and calls for a radical reorganization of contemporary human society along those lines (Næss, 1973).

According to Devall and Sessions (1998), deep ecology establishes a comprehensive religious and philosophical worldview that goes beyond a limited and superficial approach to environmental issues. The foundation of deep ecology is located in the basic intuition and experience of the self and nature that constitute ecological consciousness. In deep ecology, the study of our place in the terrestrial family includes studying ourselves as part of the organic whole. Beyond our narrow materialistic scientific understanding of reality, reality's spiritual and material aspects merge.

Modern non-anthropocentric environmental ethics are heavily influenced by the very anthropocentrism that it seeks to overcome. New values are slowly developing and released from old contexts. The consideration of the struggle between old and new contexts opens up space for alternative models of contemporary environmental ethics. Instead of seeking to reduce our multiple theories to a single one, it is better to develop a pluralistic and exploratory method (Weston, 1992). Indeed, the attempt to make an ultimate determination is inconceivable. This is because the community of scholars has never come to a complete agreement on the correct direction for progress in this field. Environmental pragmatists hold that the failure of this unified vision to emerge and influence practical policy should make us think, and they have concluded that environmental ethics must consider some new positions and re-evaluate their direction (Light & Katz, 1996). Theoretical perfection, thus, is impossible. We can only co-develop ethics with reformed practices (Weston, 1992).

Environmental pragmatists acknowledge the existence of many values in questions of environmental ethics. They adopt a pluralistic moral perspective as a result, which recognizes the presence of several values and is known as moral pluralism(Venkataraman & Morang, 2015). Moral pluralism in environmental ethics was proposed by Andrew Light, Bryan Norton, and Anthony Weston, three prominent environmental ethicists. It advocates an environmental philosophy that can be applied to practical environmental policies. Moral pluralists, who generally consider themselves environmental pragmatists, consider that there is no single supreme principle that encompasses all issues of environmental practice (Edelglass, 2006).

Moral pluralists recognize that we have moral responsibilities for things like salmon, pets, mountains, children, elms, works of art, fellow citizens, and watersheds. However, they contend that we are bound to these entities by moral obligations arising from different principles. For example, when competing theories, such as animal rights and ecocentrism, produce conflicting results, instead of rejecting one of the given theories outright in favor of pursuing monism, pluralists and environmental pragmatists carefully consider what moral principles are to apply to a particular situation. Instead of seeking to identify a single, always correct, and indisputable metaphysics of morals from among ecocentrism versus anthropocentrism, biocentrism versus sentimentalism, or deep ecology versus social ecology, pluralists and pragmatists emphasize practical policies that can be derived from multiple moral principles (Ibid).

Both anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric environmental ethics share the view that environmental entities, as such, are valuable. However, a discrepancy between them immediately arises in terms of the justification of these values. The question of rationality is just as important as the question of the legitimacy of values, as rationality is the tool that makes acceptable explanations possible. Here, there are two camps of philosophers among those who are engaged in environmental ethics: those who are in favor of rationality and those who are against it.

Rationality as a Contested Issue in Environmental Ethics

The question of rationality has been a bone of contention since the birth of environmental ethics. One group of philosophers argues that rationality is the hallmark of humans, giving them an advantage over all other beings. Another group of philosophers, however, argues that although humans are rational, this is not a special trait that provides them with the right to hegemony over other members of the environment.

Immanuel Kant believed that rationality is an essential characteristic of human beings. He claims that they have their own end. That is, it is a meaningful question to ask why animals are there. However, applying such questions to people is trivial and meaningless. Animals have no self-awareness and are merely a means to an end, and such an end will always be a human being. He also argues that our obligations to animals are only indirect. Animal nature is similar to human nature, and doing your duty through animals helps you do your duty to humanity (Kant, 1963). That is, when a man kills a dog because it is unfit for service, he is not neglecting his duty to the dog, as the dog cannot exercise judgment. However, this same act is cruel and inhumane and can negatively affect how we treat our fellow humans (Ibid).

Rene Descartes shares the view that animals lack rationality. He sees animals as simply moving machines. However, when he says machines, he does not simply mean machines, but machines made by the hand of God that are, therefore, of much greater order. They have much more interesting inner workings than the machines invented by human beings. Descartes provides two reasons why animals are moving machines. The first piece of evidence is that they never use words or other signs and never organize like humans to communicate their

thoughts and ideas to others. Some animals, such as magpies, can speak like humans, but they cannot speak languages or compare them as humans can. The second reason is their lack of rationality. For Descartes, the reason is a universal tool that helps us act in the same way in response to a certain set of circumstances. Animals lack the ability to reason and therefore do not act in the way that reasoning makes us act. Of course, some of them can perform certain actions much better than we do. However, it is certain that this machine will fail at other tasks. From this, we can easily conclude that they do not act from knowledge but from the nature of their organs (Descartes & Ariew, 2000).

In a recent article, Alexander Kremer argued that rationality forms the basis of morals and morality. Kremer briefly summarized the works of Peter Singer and Tom Regan to make his point. For Singer and Regan, animals necessarily have moral rights. They use the ability to feel pleasure and pain and the fact of life as criteria for moral standing, respectively. Moreover, they also argued that rationality could not serve as the basis for morals and morality. In contrast to the thinking of two eminent environmental ethicists, Kremer contends that rationality should be the foundation of morals and morality. His two main arguments develop this claim from a (1) logical and experiential perspective and from a (2) historical and ethological one (Kremer, 2018). However, here, the emphasis is given to the first line of reasoning, which has a direct relationship to our current discussion.

Following the first argument, both moral agents and moral choices must be rational; otherwise, it is impossible to speak of morals and morality. Therefore, animals cannot be moral agents because rationality is an essential element of morality, without which it cannot be discussed. Similarly, animals cannot be real moral agents because they cannot know what is good and what is bad in a real moral sense. In this way, morals and morality are not part of the biological basis of animals (Ibid).

However, American philosopher Paul Taylor strongly advocates egalitarian biocentrism in his book Respect for Nature. In this context, egalitarianism refers to opposition to assigning degrees of worth and refers to the equality of all living beings. Taylor claims that placing emphasis on the degree of importance entails discrimination because every living thing has its own unique strengths. For Taylor, every creature has its own value. Thus, we must respect beings with different abilities and potentials. Taylor argues that human beings are not superior to other objects in the environment due to their intelligence. He also notes that, while we cannot avoid some degree of destruction of the natural world in our pursuit of cultural and personal values, developing an attitude of respect for nature can nonetheless allow us to limit ourselves to interfere as little as possible in natural ecosystems and their biota (Taylor, 1986).

Similarly, Val Plumwood argues that the current state of affairs is the product of at least two centuries of a reason-centered, human-centered culture. This has reduced ecological connectivity, which has led to our deployment of destructive behaviors and technologies (Plumwood, 2002). Addressing this requires a deep and true restructuring of culture, one that would rethink and revisits the place of human beings and their relationship to nature. Plumwood believes that reason can play an important role in this rethinking, but it must be a self-critical, benign reason.

Plumwood argues that the responsibility for the current global environmental crisis lies with humans, and it requires a clear and appropriate response. Indeed, technology provides the means needed for sustainable living on and with the planet. She adds that the problem is not limited to a simple increase in knowledge or skills. Instead, an eco-culture is required that not only allows us to assess and fully understand the non-human realm and our dependence on it but also allows us to make the best choices about how we live with and affect the non-human world (Ibid). Here, pragmatic rationality is an important topic, as it relates to the entire idea of rationality.

Pragmatic Rationality

The words pragmatic and pragmatism have two related meanings. On the one hand, being a pragmatist means seeking and practicing what are feasible, not unattainable ideals. Pragmatic people are down-to-earth, rational, sensible, and willing to compromise. A pragmatic person rejects any ideology that adheres to an idea or principle that is never questioned or challenged (Desjardins, 2013).

Pragmatism, on the other hand, is a distinct philosophical tradition developed by American philosophers such as William James and John Dewey in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Philosophical pragmatism is skeptical of monistic theories in both epistemology and ethics. Instead, it focuses on contextually pragmatic explanations of truth and value. Pragmatism is sometimes referred to as radical empiricism. Empiricism asserts that all knowledge comes from experience. Pragmatism emphasizes the characteristics of experience. If we are serious about what we experience, we must recognize that the world that we encounter in experience is a world of diversity, change, and pluralism (Ibid).

Those philosophers who concur with Nietzsche that truth is the will to be a master of multiplicities of sensations, as suggested by Richard Rorty, are referred to as relativists. This term also applies to those who agree with Thomas Kuhn that science should not be considered to progress toward an accurate description of how the world is in itself and to those who agree with William James that the truth is only a means of belief. Philosophers are referred to as relativists in a broader sense when they reject the Greek concept of the difference between the way things are in themselves and the relationships they have with other things, particularly with the wants and interests of humans (Rorty, 1999).

Moreover, Richard Rorty identifies three different definitions of the term rationality. First, rationality is simply the name of an ability that certain beings share to a greater degree than others. For example, squids are more capable than amoebas, people use more language than non-speaking apes, and people armed with modern technology can use it to make themselves more capable than those who are not so armed. In short, rationality refers to the ability to cope with the environment using more complex and subtle control of responses to external stimuli. This is sometimes referred to as a technical reason and sometimes as survival skills. Second, rationality is a special name for additive components that humans have, but that other animals simply do not. It differs in that it can be used in reference to goals other than simple survival. For example, a human being may tell you that it would be better to be dead than to do certain things. Third, rationality is loosely equated with tolerance, the ability to maintain calm in the face of differences from oneself and not react aggressively to those differences. In this form, it is a virtue that enables individuals and communities to coexist peacefully with other individuals and communities, living and creating a new, hybrid way of life that is founded on compromise (Rorty, 1992).

This third definition is directly relevant to the issue at hand. A range of opposing ideas and opinions exist in contemporary environmental ethics, as has been described. In this context, pragmatists unequivocally state that all fields of study—including those in natural science and the social sciences, politics, and philosophy—are concerned with improving life. It is also crucial to consider the examples Desjardins provides in support of this claim. If we asked a doctor which of the many different therapies you provide is the greatest for defending and maintaining good health, we could expect to hear that none and each is. The best response varies by circumstance; no one answer is the best under all circumstances (Desjardins, 2013). To reach a consensus among environmental ethicists regarding what should be done, what goals should be attained, and what measures should be adopted regarding our environment, it is crucial to apply pragmatic reasoning.

For some philosophers, rationality is essentially a human privilege. This perspective can be supported. However, this does not mean that people are free from moral responsibility and can simply intervene with nature as desired. Rationality and the exploitation of non-human animals are not mutually compatible if rationality is used in a responsible way. It is fruitless to search for things that human beings have the same as other animals or for moral considerations bearing on non-human animals are fruitless efforts because it is possible to recognize clear differences while acting harmoniously.

Conclusion

The perspective of modern environmental ethics was used in this study to describe the development of thought in the 20th and 21st centuries. However, from pre-Socratic times until the present, this phenomenon has profoundly formed and affected many different ethical traditions.

Early natural (pre-Socratic) philosophers placed a strong emphasis on the study of natural objects, and they tended to believe that one particular natural object formed the ultimate source of reality. None of them focused on the relationship of human beings to the environment. In Socrates, the subject of philosophy merely changed from natural objects to human beings.

According to Plato, the only thing that is truly knowable or an appropriate object of knowledge is Being. We are unable to fully comprehend the relative and changing world of Becoming that is all around us. We only have ideas about this world because we do not understand it.

Unlike his predecessors, Aristotle at least affirms the reality of this world of experience. In addition, according to his teleological conception, everything exists with respect to a certain end. According to him, lower organisms exist to support higher organisms. Due to human beings' rational nature, of humans, all other organisms exist for their benefit. While Aristotle's theory is entirely anthropocentric, it considers non-human animals.

Philosophers contextualized and incorporated Plato's and Aristotle's writings within the Christian framework during the Middle Ages. Christian teachings dominated attitudes toward the environment during this time. Accordingly, due to their rationality and similarity to God, humans are to be considered superior to other aspects of the environment. Of course, philosophical arguments are used to justify such Christian ideas.

Anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric approaches are the two primary pillars of contemporary environmental ethics. The proponents of these approaches concur on the logical existence of value. Here, values are divided into two groups: intrinsic and extrinsic. The former represents worth for its own sake, whereas the latter represents a value that pertains to a particular purpose. The anthropocentrists hold that only humans have intrinsic value. However, the natural world has intrinsic value that is independent of human values for non-anthropocentrists.

Furthermore, in addition to debates over value, the discourse of rationality has a dubious place in environmental ethics. From this emerge two camps of philosophers: pro-rationality and anti-rationality. Pro-rationality philosophers consider rationality to be a special privilege of human beings. This perspective has been developed and supported by a range of philosophers from the pre-Socratics to Plato and Aristotle, from the Middle age to the modern period. In all these traditions, human beings are hegemonic due to this special tool. However, if we analyze this closely, the view has a devastating impact on human beings' relationship with other environmental entities. In the pre-Socratic traditions, although rationality was used as a special tool, the discourse of the environment was not worthy of discussion. This was the case in the medieval period as well.

Among the anti-rational philosophers, rationality should not be seen as a distinguishing characteristic of human beings. Singer and Regan can be categorized within this category. Although those thinkers use different

criteria for moral consideration, they deny that reason is a special privilege of human beings.

The pragmatic form of rationality can be applied to resolve the above argument. Of course, the reason is best viewed with a wide philosophical lens as a tool that supports the achievement of particular objectives. Pragmatic rationality can be used as a technique for reconciling divergent viewpoints, values, and methods in environmental ethics.

Moreover, Plumwood asserts that the current global environmental crisis is largely due to a reason-centered culture. She believes that reason, but only a kind and self-critical version of reason can play a significant part in the reconsideration of human-natural connections. This leads to the conclusion that this type of reasoning can be best understood as pragmatic rationality. Because reason, an essential instrument, cannot be abandoned as Singer and Regan did, environmental challenges can thus be resolved through pragmatic reason. Therefore, to adequately address future environmental issues and avert potential tragedies, a pragmatic method of reasoning is vitally required.

Thus, this paper shows that pragmatic rationality is crucial in environmental culture, without which the smooth functioning of the environment is possible. The second important lesson from this inquiry is that it is the foundation for a rich understanding of rationality that is open and does not discriminate against any environmental entities. Let us pose these questions as an invitation to further study the question of rationality in the field of environmental ethics. Can we abandon rationality and do something worthwhile? Is it not because of rationality that we are discussing the problem of non-human animals? Do we not need a reason to rebuild the eco-culture that we need?

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