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The Necessity of Environmental Ethics for The Survival of Humanity and The Well -Being of Future Generations: A Study of Applied Ethics in Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the important role of environmental ethics in ensuring the survival of humanity and well-being of future generations. With the rising of increasingly uncontrollable and intensified environmental issues, including climate change, resource depletion and biodiversity loss that face humanity, the need for environmental ethics becomes ever more pressing. This field is an applied branch of philosophy which will provide a basis for the understanding of the moral relationship between human beings and the natural world. In this context, it would recommend a change in perspective from anthropocentricism, where man's needs come first, to ecocentricism and biocentricism, where one recognizes the intrinsic value of ecosystems and non-human life. There are different philosophies: deep ecology, ecofeminism, and the Aldo Leopold's land ethic; among them is one that promotes intrinsic value respect and interconnectedness between all species; another key tenet includes the concepts of sustainability and justice for all entities that share space and time on the earth. The review also touches on the major impact of humans on the environment, calling for ethical rethinking of practices such as resource exploitation and industrial expansion. This review calls for integrating environmental ethics into global decision-making for a more sustainable and equitable future, ensuring the preservation of environmental and social systems for future generations.

Keywords: *Necessity, Environmental Ethics, Survival, Humanity, Well -Being, Applied Ethics, Philosophy.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Environmental ethics is one of the branches of applied philosophy that concerns the moral relation between human beings and nature. Currently, this sort of environmental ethics has come to be even more pronounced vis-à-vis the latest trend in accelerating environmental degradation, climate change, and resource depletion (Absori, 2024). The subject matter has provided a framework of understanding human activities vis-à-vis ecosystems, biodiversity and the delicate balance of life that sustains humanity. It seeks to answer one of the burning questions about how humankind can persist in a fashion that will ensure the best future for succeeding generations by making ethics a part of decision-making over environmental protection.

Environmental crises have become rising calls for humanity to change the paradigm of perception and interaction with nature. This is more than an anthropocentric approach to things, which makes human needs and desires the main thing in every issue, leading to an exploitative kind of attitude toward the environment (I.Al Walidah & I. Husaini, 2023). The environmental ethic is against this worldview because it holds intrinsic value in non-human entities and ecosystems. This position advocates for the moral right of forests, rivers and wildlife on their grounds, which extends beyond the human utility considerations. Any such transition is, thus cardinal in enhancing sustainable practices in line with ecological harmony rather than short-term benefits.

Future generations are at the heart of the debate concerning environmental ethics. Philosophers claim that the moral obligation for current generations is to ensure that the resource base and an earth able to be habitable by future generations. This mandate is beyond conservationism in terms of seeking out the source of the problem causing environmental ills: overconsumption, industrial pollution and forest destruction (H. Bilavych, 2022). Lack of action today will cultivate scarcity, environmental jeopardy and suffering as their legacy. Philosophical pillars like intergenerational justice urge fairness in the allocation of resources over time and call upon contemporary society to engage in sustainable practices that prioritize the needs of future populations.

Environmental ethics is thus needed to be incorporated into the processes of decision making across the world in addressing the challenging environmental problems within environmental governance. Policies concerning the challenges on issues of climate, biodiversity and

sustainable development would take account of the importance of respecting both human and non-human life by such decisions based on ethics (J. Drydyk, 2023). Diverse philosophical visions in terms of deep ecology and ecofeminism thus help enrich the conversation while in search for all-inclusive solutions. These frameworks show that there is interrelation of ecological and social systems, with survival for the human species directly related to health for the planet.

Environmental ethics is important because it can mold the collective consciousness and action of humankind. In so doing, it allows for the possibility of living in harmony between man and the environment through responsibility to nature (M. S. Ebrahimi, 2023). Such moral enlightenment is not only vital for the plight of the present environment but also for the future of generations yet to come. Through the study and application of environmental ethics, philosophy offers a mighty tool for reconceptualizing a sustainable and equitable future for all forms of life on Earth.

Table 1: Summary of Research Studies on Ethics and Philosophy.

Author Name	Topic Covered	Research Study Title
(R. A. Feenstra, 2021)	Research misconduct in ethics and philosophy, perceptions of researchers in Spain	*Research Misconduct in the Fields of Ethics and Philosophy: Researchers' Perceptions in Spain*
(M. L. Fischer, 2021)	Animal research ethics, environmental enrichment standardization	*Refinement as Ethics Principle in Animal Research: Is It Necessary to Standardize the Environmental Enrichment in Laboratory Animals?*
(Y. Ge, 2022)	Influence of Western philosophy on Chinese environmental philosophy	*Analysis of the Influence of Western Philosophy on the Development of Chinese Environmental Philosophy Theory and Its Future Direction*
(A. Grunwald, 2021)	Intersection of life and technology, philosophical and ethical dilemmas	*Living Technology: Philosophy and Ethics at the Crossroads Between Life and Technology*
(M. Huda, 2021)	Islamic philosophy and ethics	*Islamic Philosophy and Ethics of*

	of education, Al-Zarnūjī's concept of Ta‘ẓīm	*Education: Al-Zarnūjī's Concept of Ta‘ẓīm in His Ta‘līm al-Muta‘allim*

2. ANTHROPOCENTRISM VS. ECOCENTRISM:

Environmental ethics contrasts two major worldviews: anthropocentrism and ecocentrism. These are two disparate perspectives regarding the relationship between human beings and their environment, which defines the nature of understanding as well as responsiveness to ecological issues (J.Jing, 2021). Anthropocentrism places people at the center of moral consideration; it is concerned with environmental issues for utility to human beings. Ecocentrism asserts that each aspect of nature possesses inherent value and thus, ought to have a more expansive moral circle of rights and necessary attention towards non-human beings and ecosystems.

2.1. The Anthropocentric Worldview and Its Limitations:

The belief in anthropocentrism assumes that the most important species on Earth is humans and that the natural world exists to satisfy human needs and wants. Such thinking has shaped human activity for ages, with benefits manifesting as agriculture development, industrialization and technological development (C. C. Akpuh, 2022). At the same time, this belief system promoted activities aimed at immediate short-term gains in the benefit of humans over the stability of the environment. Under an anthropocentric lens, exploitative activities such as deforestation, overfishing and the excessive use of fossil fuels are often justified because they cater to immediate economic and societal demands.

The contradictions of anthropocentrism appear when it will not consider all sorts of life, involving the existence of interdependence in an ecosystem. By strictly considering human interest alone, it denies the interrelation within the system of an ecosystem and promotes environmental degradation that will, in the long run, affect humanity as a whole. Climate change, biodiversity and pollution are severe reminders of the blindness to other needs in the ecological system. The argument against anthropocentrism is the conclusion that it leads to human chauvinism, removing the moral obligation to protect and preserve the environment for its intrinsic value.

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Figure 1: Anthropocentric.

2.2. Ecocentric and Biocentric Approaches to Environmental Ethics:

Ecocentrism and biocentrism approach the question with a less human-centered, holistic and inclusive environmental ethic. The essence of ecocentrism lies in the concept that ecosystems have intrinsic value by virtue of their being wholes within which things are interconnected, without regard to the utility to man. It seeks to preserve the ecological balance while recognizing the rights of all entities, both living and non-living, to exist within it (A. Lee, 2021). Ecocentrism is very much in line with philosophies like Aldo Leopold's land ethic, which calls upon humans to consider themselves as part of a greater biotic community rather than as masters of the same.

One branch of ecocentrism is biocentrism. This school emphasizes the moral worth of all living beings. This philosophy propounds that all forms of life, from the smallest microorganism to the largest mammal, have intrinsic value and must be morally treated as such. Biocentric ethics argue against the human tendency to classify species into a ranking hierarchy, where all forms of life should therefore receive equal respect and protection. Biocentrism is thus being called for all human beings to take up this role as caretakers of nature and not become a plunderer.

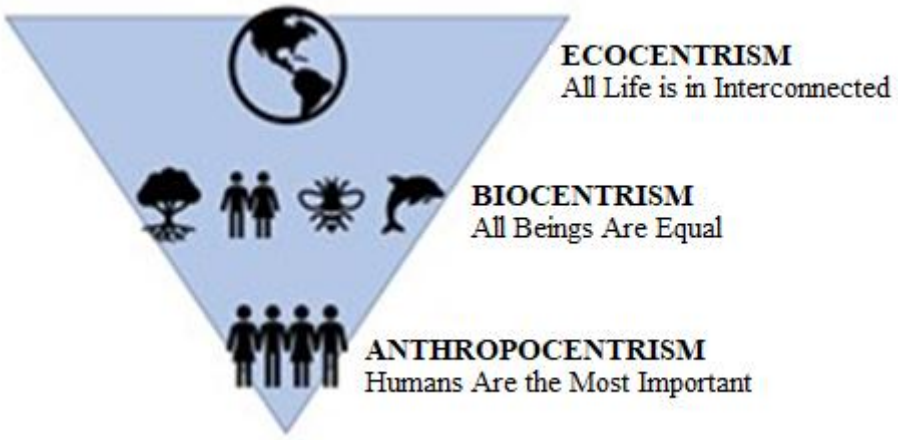

Figure 2: Hierarchical Perspectives on Environmental Ethics.

Especially, ecocentric and biocentric views provide valuable guidelines for the effective management of contemporary environmental issues. They also counterbalance the anthropocentric approach toward nature, instilling a greater respect for nature with the added motivation of living a life that is more sustainable (L. Li & W.Li, 2022). This implies that humans' survival and prosperity are interconnected with that of the environment; hence, this collective shift is towards living in harmony with nature ethically.

3. PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS:

Environmental ethics on its part draws on a rich philosophical base from the exploration of humanity's relationship with the natural world. Therefore, it gives intellectual and moral basis to settle the ethical dilemmas brought by environmental challenges (A. McGovern, 2022). Philosophical bases of environmental ethics question the traditional anthropocentric mind as it pointed out more inclusive values regarding the intrinsic worth of nature and proper moral obligations towards it. There are a few major theoretical frameworks and ethical principles that have defined this discourse.

3.1. Key Theoretical Frameworks: Deep Ecology, Ecofeminism, and Land Ethic:

- **Deep Ecology:**

Deep ecology, a term coined by Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess, rejects the shallow or superficial approach to environmental conservation, which tends to focus on human-centered solutions. It instead calls for a radical shift in the way people view their position in the natural world, suggesting a "deep" understanding of the interconnectedness of all life forms. The

framework emphasizes the intrinsic value of ecosystems, plants, animals and non-living elements of nature, irrespective of their utility to humans (D. J. Merder, 2022).

Deep ecology supports the ideology of self-realization whereby one is made to believe that they form a part of the larger ecological system of life. It makes one act in a manner that will ensure environmental health and stability by instilling ecological identity. This model also aids in limiting human intervention in the natural world, as excessive resource utilization and technological control ruin the balance of nature that is required by all living beings to survive.

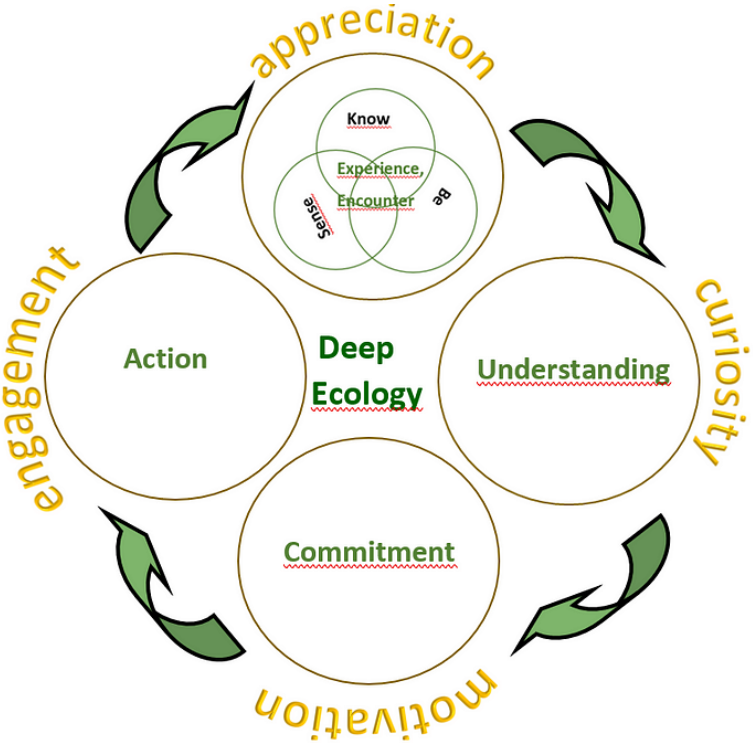

Figure 3: Deep Ecology.

- **Ecofeminism:**

Ecofeminism, a 20th-century movement, describes the connections that exist between exploitation of the environment and the subjugation of women. Through this movement, scholars have concluded that domination over nature is somehow similar to women's subordination, since women, like the natural world, are resources subject to control and exploitation. Values such as care, cooperation and reciprocity may be promoted against these hierarchical systems (E. I. Badano, 2024).

Ecofeminism brings an emphasis on the gendered elements of environmental ethics that introduce diverse solutions to balance social and ecological inequalities. More importantly, an ecofeminist voice brings forward voices for diversity in ecological decision-making processes from the perspective of the marginalized. In this understanding, it finds a deep place in the paradigm where ecological well-being is synonymous with the causing of social justice in interlinking for human and ecological liberation.

- **Land Ethic:**

The land ethic is a revolutionary approach toward environmental ethics by American ecologist and philosopher Aldo Leopold, which aims to extend the scope of the moral community for "soils, waters, plants and animals". Leading to a notion of ethical stewardship over the whole ecosystem and herein comes out the truth that mankind is part of a more complex biotic community and ought to take up the role of stewardship and not conquest (C. S. Mudeje Buya, 2024).

Leopold's land ethic forces the individual and societies to reflect on the ecological implications of their actions. The philosophy aids in the development of practices that preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of ecosystems. It encourages seeing land not as property but also as a resource to be shared, respected and cared for. This line of philosophical thought has greatly impacted the efforts of conservation; it promotes the use of land sustainably along with policies based on ecological balance.

3.2. Ethical Principles Guiding Environmental Responsibility:

Environmental ethics is based on several underlying principles, governing human interaction with nature. Such principles provide a moral basis from which issues related to the environment may be framed to enhance sustainable practice (I. A. Ogaga, 2023).

- **Respect for Intrinsic Value:**

A major postulate of environmental ethics is that nature has inherent worth. It insists that nature has worth of itself, beyond any worth to humankind, and therefore deserves moral regard. It criticizes anthropocentric outlooks and promotes greater regard for ecosystems, biodiversity and natural resources.

- **Interconnectedness:**

The principle of interconnectedness states that everything within the environment, both living and non-living, has a relationship in such a way that they interlink. Therefore, it is not possible to differentiate human well-being from ecosystem health; this is why holistic approaches to environmental decision-making must take into consideration the broader ecological impact (R. S. Ross, 2024).

- **Sustainability:**

It holds that the need of the present generation must not compromise the future generation's ability to meet their own needs. Main principles involved in sustainability include the responsible use of resources, reduction of waste and long-term planning with ecological resilience and social equity in mind.

- **Precautionary Approach:**

Hence, the precautionary principle cautions on preventive actions on environmental degradation in anticipation and despite imperfect scientific knowledge. Cautionary action takes place if the ecosystems or human health irreversibly could suffer damage due to degradation (O. C. Salazar & F. M. Vargas, 2024).

- **Justice and Equity:**

Environmental ethics also deals with justice and equity, meaning it advocates for equal distribution of environmental benefits and costs. This might include the ramifications of environmental degradation that affect marginalized people and ensuring equality in access to clean air and water, etc.

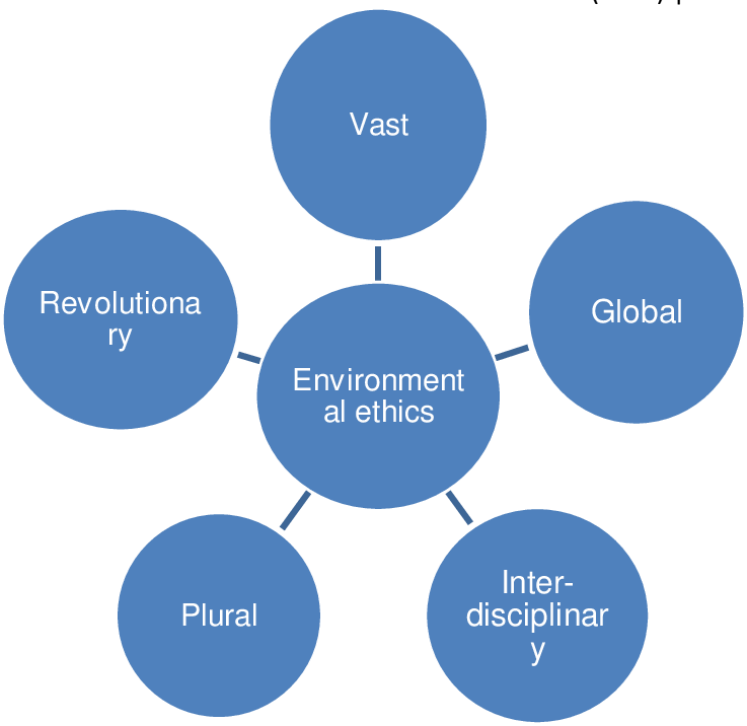

Figure 4: Environmental Ethics.

Their implications combined with essential theoretical frameworks may enable environmental ethics to have a good solid foundation that promotes sustainability and equity for humanity and human existence in tandem with nature (F. Salem, 2021). These philosophical tidbits nurture both deeper knowledge about ecological challenges and meaningful motivation to care for this planet for the current populations and for posterity.

4. HUMANITY'S IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT:

Presently, man intervenes with the environment as an essential activity, which brings about unfavourable and long-lasting effects. The quest for economic growth and industrialization into urbanization without a second thought brings about extreme exploitation of resources and acceleration of environmental breakdown (W. M. Schröder, 2021). This impact both ways toward the need to have an ethical re-evaluation of man's relationship to nature, where the current trajectory endangers ecosystems and biodiversity and imperils the health of future generations.

Table 2: Summary of Literature on Ethical Philosophy, Environmental Practices, and Healthcare Ethics.

Author Name	**Topic Covered**	**Research Study Title**

(K. Shim & J. N. Kim, 2021)	Ethical philosophy, corporate hypocrisy, CSR	The impacts of ethical philosophy on corporate hypocrisy perception and communication intentions toward CSR
(P. P. Thanapanyo, 2023)	Land ethics, soil and land resources, Aldo Leopold's theory	Land Ethics for Solving Soil and Land Resources of Aldo Leopold
(M. D. Tran & S. Adomako, 2022)	Environmental reputation, ethical behavior, regulatory enforcement	How environmental reputation and ethical behavior impact the relationship between environmental regulatory enforcement and environmental performance
(R. O. Tumanggor, 2022)	Ecological behavior, youth, environmental awareness	The Study of Ecological Behavior of Youth in High School X in Jakarta
(L. Varagona, 2022)	Virtue ethics, healthcare teams, nursing ethics	Virtue ethics in health care teams; its time has come: review of the nursing virtue ethics literature

4.1. Exploitation of Natural Resources:

Exploitation of Natural Resource exploitation is when the earth unreasonably supplies materials to a human population: forests, minerals, fossil fuel and fresh or raw water. Although this exploitation supported human development-technological changes, industrial and improved ways of living for centuries, at a very aggressive and unbridled rate.

Deforestation best exemplifies resource exploitation, with agricultural land, timber and infrastructure development being high-demanding drivers of this practice. In addition to habitat destruction, this activity disrupts carbon cycles, thus perpetuating climate change. Over-extraction of fossil fuels also triggers greenhouse gas emissions, worsening global warming. There is a massive depletion of water resources due to over-utilization in agriculture, industry and domestic consumption, which leads to water scarcity in many areas (P. I. Wardhani, 2022).

Mining operations are again a very important example of resource extraction being devastating. Open-pit and strip-mining involve the removal of all topsoil from the ground, poison heavy metals into streams and irreparably mark landscapes. Fishing is another crucial issue, wherein overfishing depletes fish populations, upsets marine ecosystems and brings biodiversity and a community's survival on fishing-dependent livelihoods in jeopardy.

This constant exploitation is born of a mind-set that conceives nature as an ultimately limitless reservoir for human advantages, without reaching for sustainable principles; the lack of finite resources threatens the ecological balance that promises high-quality future life.

4.2. Consequences of Environmental Degradation:

Environmental degradation refers to a process whereby natural environments deteriorate due to the impact of human activities that culminate in destruction of biodiversity, ecological system derangement and health damage. It is mainly the direct resultant of resource exploitation, pollution and unsustainable development trends.

This critical impact of the problem is climate change, which manifests due to an increase in the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Melting polar ice caps, increasing high temperatures and frequent occurrences of extreme climatic conditions signify that global warming is a comprehensive consequence. Ecosystems alone are not in danger; global warming also presents threats to social and economic inequality in vulnerable societies.

The other significant impacts of environmental degradation are loss of biodiversity. The extinction rates of plants and animals have risen to unimaginable levels due to habitat destruction, pollution and climate change. This means that the services of ecosystems, such as pollination, fertility of the soil and purification of water, which are fundamental to human existence, are diminished (P. Zadrożny, 2021).

Industrialization and urbanization have resulted in the current situation of worldwide pollution throughout the entire medium, whether air, water or soil. Air pollutants caused by automobile and industrial emissions give rise to respiratory diseases and heart conditions, while water pollutants brought about by agricultural runoffs and industrial wastes adulterate sources of drinking water. Soil pollution from the excessive use of chemical fertilizer and forest destruction lowers the agricultural land's yield and thus, food security.

Environmental degradation also has deep economic and social consequences. Natural disasters, exacerbated by ecological imbalances, kill and displace whole populations; they also create economic setbacks. Degradation of natural resources, such as arable land and clean water, increases competition and conflict, further destabilizing societies.

5. CONCLUSION:

The reason why environmental ethics is becoming indispensable for the very survival of mankind and the flourishing of future generations as the earth encounters more and more critical environmental crisis is that these ethical principles about respect for intrinsic value, interconnectedness, sustainability and justice be incorporated into international decision-making, thereby creating an even more conciliatory harmony with nature. Deep ecology, ecofeminism and the land ethic form philosophical frameworks which challenge anthropocentric views and make a shift to ecocentric and biocentric perspectives based on the principle of respect for the inherent worth of all forms of life and ecosystems. Re-evaluation in ethics is also important in bringing about the underlying causes of degradation in the environment, ensuring that resources are there and guarding the planet for future generations.

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