

CHAPTER-II

THEORIES IN ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

2.1: Anthropocentrism:

Anthropocentrism means human centeredness. In environmental ethics the term is described as the attitude, values and practices, which focuses only on human interest or position rather than the position and interest of other non-human species in the natural world. It places human beings at the center of universe and measurers of all things because only humans have soul, rationality and capacity to analyze and expressing language. According to this view, man stands apart from nature and nature is viewed as something to be conquered. Human beings have every right to use and manipulate nature according to their own needs and deeds. From a moral point of view, anthropocentrism holds an independent value solely and predominately for human interests. Human beings create all ethical codes and norms, so there are no moral norms or absolute rules other than what human beings have invented. Only humans are the sources of intrinsic value. All other non-human species exist to subserve the purpose of humans. Thus, anthropocentrism is concerned only with human interests, excluding the desires, goals and values of non-human species and interprets everything in the world in terms of human values.

Philosophical Arguments in Favour of Anthropocentrism:

This attitude of human being towards nature can be traced back to Platonic dualism. In the early stage of Western philosophy both Plato and Socrates have interpreted the external world as the copy of the real world existing elsewhere which Plato called the world of ideas. That world of ideas is opposed to the real world from where all ultimate truth could be found only through human reason. Plato thinks that only human beings have reason and by that capacity they can conceptualize, analyze and concentrate on the external world. This makes human beings capable of observing the shadows of the real world that exists beyond the material world. This kind of dualism by Plato perhaps, helped the Greeks to think human beings as reasoning beings different from and more important than nature.

According to the Western tradition this kind of attitude is seen in the idea of *The Great Chain of Being*, which can be traced in Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas and Plotinus.

The great chain of being shows that according to the degrees of perfection there is a descending order of beings from God through angels to human beings, animals and plants. The famous Protagorean view that “Man is the measure of all things” captures the idea that only man can know what reality is for him. Calvin’s statement that “God created all things for man’s sake”⁵ supports anthropocentric attitude.

Aristotle pointed out that species that have lower reasoning ability exist for the sake of those who have higher reasoning ability. He regarded nature as hierarchical and opines:

Plant exists for the sake of animals, brute and beast for the sake of man domestic animal for his use and food, wild one for food and other accessories of life such as clothing and various tools. Since nature makes nothing purposeless or in vain, it is undeniably true that she has made all animals for the sake of man.⁶

In his own major work, the *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas followed the passage from Aristotle and made classification of sins. In his classification of sins, Aquinas has room only for sins against God, ourselves or our neighbours. There is no possibility of sinning against nonhuman animals or against the natural world.⁷

In the religious tradition like the Judaic-Christian tradition there is a dualistic view, where it is said that God is a supernatural and spiritual being who only shares his spirituality with human beings. No other beings have such kind of spirituality. According to the ancient Hebrew tradition, (in 1450 B.C.) the divine creator created the world as good and man and woman in His own image. It is said in the *Genesis* that,

God said “let us make man in our own image in the likeness of ourselves and let them be the master of the fish, of the sea, the birds of the heaven, the cattle, all the wild beasts and the earth”. God created man in the image of himself, in the image of God He created them. God blessed them saying to them “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and conquer it. Be masters of the sea, the birds of the heaven and all living animals of the earth.”⁸

It can be said that Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion. Here man shares God’s transcendence of nature a lot. Thus Christianity in contrast with other Asian religions not only established a dualistic difference between man and nature but also emphasized that it is because of God’s will human species exploits nature for his

⁵ Schwetckhe, A. and Bruhn, M. *The Commentaries of John Calvin on the Old Testament* Calvin Translation Society: Edinburgh 1843-48, 1:96.

⁶ Singer, P. *The Environment: Practical Ethics* 3rd edition Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2011, P.240-41.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Genesis* 1: 26, 27-28.

fulfillment. This makes nature and everything subordinate to human species and their wishes, keeping in mind that nature has no value in itself⁹.

Descartes' supposition that the world is a machine and human being is the chief operator of that machine supports this anthropocentric position. The Cartesian distinction between mind and body, that made the body subservient to the mind implies that the material world is used by human mind also justifies anthropocentric position. Descartes and Kant give priority to rationality and power of communication, to form concepts. In the natural order human beings have the highest reasoning capacity. Inanimate objects and plants do not have this ability. Even the linguistic Philosopher Wittgenstein, the most anti-Cartesian of all philosophers, shares the Cartesian bias against animal mentation by virtue of the absence of language in animals. In one passage he expresses that:

“If a lion could speak, we could not understand him; in another he suggests that it is conceptually impossible for an animal to smile. He also suggests that a dog cannot simulate pain or feel remorse, that an animal cannot hope or consciously imitate, and that a dog cannot mean something by wagging its tail and a crocodile cannot think.”¹⁰

The rise of science influences some exploitative attitude of human beings towards nature. Our technology and scientific development is Western in style. This requires a greater use of natural resources like land, air, and water. Thus, science and technology makes nature more and more used, exploited and subordinated to human being's needs and desires. Only human being is there with inherent value, nature has only instrumental value.

2.1.1: Anthropocentrism and its Varieties:

There are at least three varieties of anthropocentrism prevalent in environmental ethics. Some of these concerned with the interests of human, while some are less concerned with human interest. Let us discuss these varieties given below.

- I. Perspectival anthropocentrism
- II. Strong anthropocentrism
- III. Weak anthropocentrism

⁹ *Genesis* 1: 26, 27-28.

¹⁰ Wittgenstein, L. *Philosophical Investigations* Oxford: Blackwell, 1958, p. 90,153,166,174,224.

(I) Perspectival Anthropocentrism:

Perspectival anthropocentrism holds the view that human being's view about the world is shaped and limited by their position and their way of being in the world. Fredrick Ferre, the supporter of this variety opines: "Man's view about the world is shaped and limited by their position and the way of being within it".¹¹ For Ferre human beings have no choice but to think as human. It is not objectionable that they should be interested in themselves. Like other beings human beings have reasonable interests to pursue. Mary Midgley, one of the supporters of this kind says "people do right not wrong to have particular regard of their own species".¹²

Thus, this kind of anthropocentrism holds that human centeredness is desirable because human-centered means having a well-balanced idea of what it means to be a man, the place and moral significance of human being in the world. Some philosophers and psychologists maintain that properly understood self-love could be considered as a precondition for loving others. Thus, it follows that if human beings know how to treat other fellow beings decently then they will be able to treat others decently. Therefore, a positive concern for human well-being need not prevent a concern for the well-being of nonhumans automatically rather it will develop it. We can say that human self-interests are more important but it needs to be expanded. Bryan Norton introduces two other kinds of anthropocentrism like strong and weak anthropocentrism¹³, which are as follows.

(II) Strong Anthropocentrism:

Strong anthropocentrism allows some immediately felt preferences with an exploitative attitude or despot like attitude of human beings towards nature. Sometimes it refers to "specieism" which affirms that suffering and death of human beings come within the purview of morality. By definition 'specieism' means a discrimination, prejudice or differential treatment justified by species membership. It is introduced by Richard Ryder in analogy with sexism and racism, which is developed later by Peter Singer. According to strong anthropocentrism the death and suffering of nonhuman do not come under the purview of morality. There are no moral similarities between

¹¹ Frederick, F. Personalistic Organicism: Paradox or Paradigm? : *Philosophy and the Natural Environment* edit. Attfield, R. and Belsey, A. Cambridge University Press: UK 1994. P.72.

¹² Midgeley, M. The End of Anthropocentrism: *Philosophy and the Natural Environment* edit. Attfield, R. and Belsey, A. Cambridge University Press: UK 1994. P. 111.

¹³David Clowney & Patricia Mosto edit. *Earthcare: An Anthology in Environmental Ethics*, Rowman & Littlefield Publisher, Inc. 2009. p.159.

human and nonhuman. Man takes the position of a despot with respect to nature. However, it denies any relevant similarities between human and nonhuman nature from the moral standpoint.

(III) Weak Anthropocentrism:

Weak anthropocentrism considers the role of an enlightened self-interested human capable of supporting environmental values. This variety supports environmental values remaining in an anthropocentric world. It does not support harming against nonhumans, such as factory farming and the testing of cosmetics on animals. Harming nonhuman beings is regarded as contrary to the enlightened self-interest in a healthy humane culture. Weak anthropocentrism supports exploitation of nonhuman beings when it is needed for survival of human beings. In certain situations like, when human populations need to clear other species out of their habitats or when the basic needs of humans for survival lead to the exploitation of natural objects or resources, or when human needs medicine that can be obtained by carrying out painful experiments on animals, the vital interests of humans and populations are against those of the interests of nonhumans. In these and similar instances, that may be called “hard cases” where one expects the response of a weak anthropocentrist to be indistinguishable in practice from that of a strong anthropocentrist. One may say that weak anthropocentric position can generate strong anthropocentric policies. However, we can say that when adequately understood, weak anthropocentric assumption rests ultimately on human interests but they coincide with the interest of nature more generally.

Thus, weak sense of anthropocentrism gives importance on some obligations to nonhuman beings but it strongly presupposes that moral obligation towards human beings is stronger or greater than other nonhuman entities. Peter Singer develops the idea of “Speciecism” which refers to arbitrary discrimination when humans are given preferences simply because of their species membership. For instance, the suffering involved in physical abuse matters morally in case of humans but not in non-humans. Following weak anthropocentrism, one may say that if human beings are truly human-centered, they will understand human nature as important and this will encourage good treatment of nonhuman nature. We cannot criticize a cat for its cat-centeredness, why do we need to criticize man for man-centeredness? Aquinas and Kant both believed that cruelty to nonhuman is wrong because it breeds cruelty that is bad for humans as well

as for other animals. Human beings need to understand that they live in one world along with the rest of nature.

2.1.2: Some Observations on Anthropocentrism:

It is often considered that anthropocentrism is a dominant and utilitarian approach towards nature. So far as the critique of anthropocentrism is concerned, we can say that if utilitarian consideration dominates human thinking, then proper respect for other creature will not arise. And so long as human's relationship to nature is valued by considering nature to be our utilitarian source, there will be no place for ethical consideration of the natural ecosystem.

Despite the force and support of arguments justifying anthropocentrism, it is not without problems. It is a basic presupposition that human dominion on Earth is the product of just one sort of cosmology. But there are religions in the world which have a humbler estimate of human place within nature and greater solicitude for other living beings. Say for example, Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism, etc. Modern science also challenges this kind of anthropocentric attitude, which gives less importance of human being within nature. In eighteenth century Linnaeus put forward the idea of *Great Chain of Being* that revealed to be inadequate in the taxonomy of species. In the taxonomy of species the evolutionary picture of inter-species relation is not only more complex but also it is in principle different from the teleological view usually implied by the great chain of being.

According to the Judeo-Christian concept of the *Great Chain of Being*, humans are the superior to animals and plants because their creator has given them a higher place on the chain. Paul Taylor in 'Biocentric Egalitarianism' claims that this structure of concepts and beliefs is completely groundless that is seen as against anthropocentrism. If the *Chain of Beings* start with God at the top, and then moves to the angels, who are lower than God but higher than humans, then to human, positioned between angeles and the beast, and then on down to the lower levels occupied by nonhumans animals, plants, and finally inanimate objects. Humans, being "made God's image" are inherently superior to animals and plants by virtue of their being clever in their essential nature to God.

The Metaphysical and epistemological difficulties with this conception of hierarchy of entities are inseparable. Taylor only points out here that if we are

unwilling to accept the metaphysics of traditional Judaism and Christianity, we are again left without good reason for holders to the claim of inherent human superiority.

This consideration leaves us with one ground for the assertion that a human being, regardless of merit, is a higher kind of entity than other living entities. This is a mere fact of the genetic make-up of the species *Homo sapiens*. But this is surely irrational and arbitrary: why should the arrangement of genes of a certain type be a mark of superior value? There are other aspects of life of a living being, and we need to consider these aspects. We might refer to any other genetic make-up as a ground of superior value. Thus, human's beings are confronted here with arbitrary claim, that can only be explained as an irrational bias in our own favour, which, as Taylor says a deep-seated prejudice. Taylor asks in what sense are humans alleged to be superior to other animals? We are different from them in having certain capacities that they lack. But why should these capacities be a mark of superiority? From what point of view are those judged to be signs of superiority and what sense of superiority is meant? Various non-human species have capacities that human lack. Say for example a speed of Cheetah, the acute vision of an eagle, the agility of monkey and so on. Why should not these be taken as signs of superiority?

One answer that may come to our mind is that, these capacities are not as valuable as human capacity that are claimed to make us superior. Such uniquely human characteristics as rational thought, aesthetic creativity, autonomy and self-determination and moral freedom, have a higher value than the capacities found in other species. Yet, we must ask: to whom those characteristics are valuable, and on what grounds? These human characteristics are all valuable to humans. They are essential to the preservation and enrichment of our civilization and culture. It is clearly from the human standpoint that they are being judged to be desirable and good. It is not difficult here to recognize the question. Humans are claiming human superiority strictly from human point of view in which the good of human is taken as the standard of evaluation or judgement. All we need to do is to look at the capacities of nonhumans and plants from the standpoint of their good to find a contrary judgement of superiority. The speed of a cheetah, for example, is a sign of superiority to humans when considered from the standpoint of the good of its species. If it were as slow as a human, it will not be able to survive. In each case the claim of human superiority would be rejected from a nonhuman standpoint.

The enlightened self-interest defense of perspectival anthropocentrism may be criticized for an over optimistic, and unwarranted, assumption that humans and non-humans interests ultimately coincide. From the above criticism a more determined attempt to deprioritize the claim of humans may be required.

Everything in the universe is a part of the natural process. And, this natural process is something that is beyond the control of any species. This assumption provides a cosmic vision that promotes the thinking that human species are not the sole controlling authority of natural phenomenon and will give different picture of nature-human relationship. Once the thinking process is elevated to this broad vision that humans are just a part of nature, a strong foundation for environmental ethics will be laid. Because once we accept that we are part of an integral whole, we will also be able to develop a sense of sharing with others.

Mery Midgeley gives the best possible criticism of anthropocentrism in her essay 'The end of anthropocentrism'.¹⁴ Let us discuss her position. The central idea of anthropocentrism is that human being is the centre of cosmos. But are human beings central to the cosmos? From one point of view it seems that human beings are central to their own lives, own species. Also the concept of self-centeredness in anthropocentrism implies that each of us is central to the universe. Because human beings have no choice so they have to be interested in themselves. If human beings do not have enough self-love, then they cannot survive and love other species. But the problem with humans is not that they love themselves too much but that they do not extend love towards others species. In this sense the human self must be the centre of the world. But if there is so much self-centeredness in this cosmos then the natural balance of independence cannot be relied on for human being's social life. And extreme centeredness or ego will result into less care for others.

If we say that not the human self but the human species are at the center then people will see themselves as placed at the absolute and objective centre of everything. This kind of centrality is found in both the Western and Asian religious traditions. "God made human in his own image" recognizes human being's special status among the ordinary and non-God-like creatures. This kind of centrality is also found in Kant where he says,

¹⁴ Midgeley, M. *The End of Anthropocentrism: Philosophy and Natural Environment* edit. Attfield, R. and Belsey, A. Cambridge University Press: UK 1994. P.103.

As the single being upon earth that possess understanding [MAN] is certainly a titular lord of nature and supposing we regard nature as a teleological systems he is born to be its ultimate end.¹⁵

For Marx capitalism is the right choice to reject the deification of nature. He says, ‘Thus nature becomes for the first time simply an object for mankind, purely a matter of utility’.¹⁶ John Passmore in this regard quotes Pokrovsky while writing in a brief history of Russia in 1931;

It is easy to foresee that in the future when science and technique have attained to a perfection, which we are as yet unable to visualize, nature will become soft wax in MAN’S hand which he will be able to cast into whatever forms he chooses.¹⁷

Thus, the attitude to dominate nature by science and technology seems perfectly normal to many thinkers in the past. But in modern times the dark side of this attitude needs to be looked at seriously and can be reviewed and considered by philosophers like Mery Midgeley as ‘end of anthropocentrism’.

Midgeley argues that both science and technology made the universe so large and so small that the idea of human being as the centre of cosmos in the physical sense does not make any sense. Various sciences, for example, Astronomy tells us that there is no physical centre rather a formless stage surrounds us in space and time and human beings, bacteria and insects are imperceptible as they move through time and space. Biology adds to the view that among the living things human beings have an accidental arrival and they entered into the biosphere later. Geography adds the view that the continent on which we think that it is a ground or stage for us is itself on mobility. Even Ecology informs us that we cannot mould the wax like nature to fulfill our needs and we will never abide by it without responding to the guiding principles of nature and ecological systems. Thus, we are simply cutting down the trees where we sit on. We can make a stop by responding to the internal guiding principle of ecology carefully. So science and technology that fixes human being at centre as we have seen seems incoherent and weak. Thus, the meaning of anthropocentrism does not appear to be scientific. This word is phrased only to show the point that the central cosmic purpose is foreign to modern sciences like the idea of central location. The error in

¹⁵Kant, I. *Critique of Teleological Judgment* trans. C. Meredith, Clarendon Press: Oxford 1928 P.93-94.

¹⁶Marx, C. *Marx’s Grundrisse* edit. David McClellan, London: Macmillan 1971 p.94.

¹⁷Passmore, J. *Man’s Responsibility for Nature* Second Edition, Duckworth: London 1980 p.25.

anthropocentrism is that “Man is the premeditated aim of the creation of the earth”. So science that emphasises on human centrality removes its base.

Contemporary scientists believe that human perception is absolutely crucial for the existence of cosmos because an unconsciousness matter cannot really function unless it is observed in a special way as physicists observe quantum events.¹⁸ It is believed that the cosmos must have those properties, which permit life to develop within it at some period in its history. But this does not imply that the cosmos or universe works with the aim of producing an observer who will save it. It is combined with the fact that the constitution of the contemporary universe is so extraordinarily improbable that its development is only accounted for by the need to produce an artifact. In a coincidence that selected artifact becomes the species *Homo sapiens* and considered as MAN. Midgley argues that though universe has indeed had the production of Man as its central business but that MAN is indeed simply a physicist, who has the capacity to collapse certain wave functions by observing quantum events and thereby making the universe at least fully or properly real. This position of MAN seems to be in some sense occupying the position of GOD. Though observation of quantum events makes the universe real but it is not considered not as science but rather as a piece of wild metaphysics which, is motivated by the fear of a total cosmic insignificance of MAN. That fear of cosmic insignificance produces violent reactions that lead humans to claim immense and inconceivable kind of significance. Consequently, frightened subjects react against being downgraded by grading themselves up.

So the trouble starts with the fact that when our traditional human-centered position is attacked we do not stop thinking about our image or position rather we simply change the image. We start to think of ourselves like shrinking puppets, bacteria and ants¹⁹. But this role is unbearable because people want to play a key role on the cosmos. So we have to change the image in a more discriminating and profound way. This cannot be possible with anything that is outside of our own planet.

Everyone needs a background or framework that gives life a meaning. Everyone needs a sense of destiny or a sense of larger background where his or her life makes a sense. We need that sense whether or not we believe in God, or whether or not we think

¹⁸ Midgley, M. *The End of Anthropocentrism: Philosophy and Natural Environment* edit. Attfield, R. and Belsey, A. Cambridge University Press: UK 1994. P.108

¹⁹ *Ibid.* P.109.

that we are important and influential. A quickest way to give life a meaning is to draw a line between the opponents and us. Individuals can set themselves against the whole world. Similarly group members can established their group against everyone outside their group. Consequently, life will be so organized that it can go charmingly inside its circle. This line of thinking is not to be considered as anthropocentrism.

It is right for us to think and feel that we are at the centre of our own life. An attempt to get rid of this position may be doomed. We need to think that people will do right and not wrong to have a particular regard for their own species. This recognition does not make any harm to the cosmos. Because we can say that the principles and measures to protect and preserve human race are also the same to preserve and protect the nonhuman world. Human beings cannot save themselves alone or apart from nature, rather whatever cautions they take to protect nature they take those along with the rest of nature. Anthropocentrism in the present day is understood as human-chauvinism or exclusive humanism. Humanism of the exclusive kind is indefensible and we need to think and try to explain anthropocentrism in a less egoistic and less individualistic way. In short human self-interest needs to be understood as an enlightened self-interest.

In the literature of environmental ethics, anti-anthropocentrism is the position that human desires, goals, and need should not be taken as privileged or superseding in considering the needs, desires, interests, and goals of all members of all biological species taken together, and in general that the Earth as a whole should not be interpreted or managed from a human standpoint. According to this situation, birds, trees, and the land itself measured as the biosphere have a right to be and to live out their individual and species capabilities, and that members of the human species have no right to disturb, perturb, or destroy the ecological equilibrium of the planet.

2.2: Non-Anthropocentrism:

If we are seriously looking for a better community life that is shared by both humans and non-humans, then we have to broaden our vision and our limit of greed. This, in fact, will provide a strong foundation for environmental protection. Now, the question is how do we achieve this goal? What kind of Philosophical/Metaphysical view would set such a foundation? The thinking process has to be changed in order to incorporate nature into our moral purview. The sense of sharing will be strengthened, only if we accept that we are part of the integral whole.

The most dangerous propensity of the present human generation is enjoying anthropocentrism in every part of life that directly or indirectly invites environmental degradation which in turn poses a serious threat to the mankind in general. From religion to ethics and from ethics to science there underlies a cemented view of anthropocentrism where man is determined as the measurer of all things; where everything is determined in terms of instrumental value rather than non-instrumental value; where human greed overlaps human's basic needs; where nature is considered as a storehouse of materials. In short, anthropocentric attitude of humans degrades environment, devalues nature and above all injudiciously attempts to conquer nature. Non-anthropocentric approach, on the contrary, pleads for a radical change of human attitude towards nature so that nature can be treated not only as a mere storehouse of materials, but also as the beholder of all biotic and abiotic community. This could be justified in restoring and recognizing an intrinsic value of natural entities.

Non-anthropocentrism thereby brings a message of world peace and environmental protection where every natural entity maintains a harmonious life with others. It tries to establish that all non-human living creatures are morally valuable in themselves as each of them possesses intrinsic value irrespective of valuers. It does not support moral hierarchy within biotic communities, restores equal moral status, and restores environmental justice, mutual care, love and sympathy. It equally nurtures individual rationality by means of which one can understand that his own self is no longer different from other and every individual self is essentially merged with the Self. Thus, self-realization is the most important key in non-anthropocentrism to understand nature. Here one would be a virtuous being who can understand others, feel for others, controls himself from doing mischievous action and confines himself within his basic needs. He then understands that he is a tiny being like many others and he is no longer in a position to command nature. He would come to know that his own fortune and own flourishing actually hinges on the contribution of other fellow beings and he cannot survive any more without the survival of others. This realization in non-anthropocentrism actually prompts him to care for others, love others, and share with others. Lack of feeling for others is a serious threat of present generation and strong anthropocentrism is responsible for this. So our environment can be maintained and preserved by non-anthropocentrism which in turn minimizes the so-called

environmental degradation in general. Everything would be futile as long as one cannot realize himself, cultivate himself within the parameter of non-anthropocentrism.

Therefore, according to this position man is not apart from nature but a part of nature. Human species as a creation of natural evolution has a substantial affinity with other nonhuman species and has a vulnerable dependence on environmental conditions of survival. In general nature should be understood as a whole and should not be interpreted or viewed from human standpoint only. Natural objects and the earth itself have right to exist within nature. Each of them has their respective potentialities.²⁰

It is undeniably true that human species has greater developed capacities for reason, language and social interactions. In order to justify the position of non-anthropocentrism, environmentalist will argue that all these special, unique and developed characteristics are not absolutely absent in the nonhuman species. There are some animals like the apes, chimpanzees that have some kind of sociability and are capable of formulating and indicating symbols. Though human beings have capacity for reason, still it does not keep human being apart and different from nature. Reason should not be used to be alienated from nature; it needs to be used in a more rationalized and civilized manner. Due to reason human species need to understand that there is not a dualistic rather a holistic relationship between human species and nature. According to some religions human species have capacity for reason, value. God created them for which they should be kind and benevolent to nonhuman species. Also some non-anthropocentrists claim that there might be a day, when human being will be replaced by another higher being or species. So nature is not inferior to human beings and human beings must treat nature with care and respect.

Philosophical Arguments for non-Anthropocentrism:

Supporters of non-anthropocentrism may claim that modern science gives less importance to human being within nature. In eighteenth century Linnaeus, a natural historian and also the founder of the science of ecology revealed the inadequacy of the idea of “the great chain of being” that justified anthropocentrism. For him, in the taxonomy of species the evolutionary picture of the interspecies relation of the chain is more complex and it is in principle different from the teleological view, which is actually derived from the idea of the great chain of being. In the *Origin of the Species*

²⁰ Sarkar, Pankoj Kanti. Environmental Crisis: Necessity of Non-Anthropocentrism, *Lokayata: Journal of Positive Philosophy*, Vol. II, No.02, 2012, P.45-49.

Darwin cited the evidence and refutes that nature is to subserve human purpose. Darwin argues that “natural selection cannot possibly produce any modification in a species exclusively for the good of another species.” In his work *The Decent of Man* in 1871 Darwin mentioned that:

‘Man is a part of nature and one of the products of the evolutionary processes. That man is an ecological species but this species has evolved with such unique and unprecedented properties on the animal level that in man the biological evolution has transcended itself.’²¹

Perhaps, Darwin is accountable for the thought that human beings are not different from nature, rather one of the products of evolution. Albert Schweitzer in *Reverence for Life* mentioned that life itself as such is sacred. Schweitzer opines;

‘We must live accordingly and treat each being as an inherently valuable “will-to-live”. In my own will-to-live there is yearning for more life and the mysterious exaltation of the will-to-live is called pleasure and terror in the face of annihilation and that injury to the will-to-live is called pain; the same obtains in all the will to live around me: it may express itself to my comprehension or it may remain unvoiced. Ethics thus, consists in the necessity of practising the same reverence for life toward all will-to-live, as towards my own. It is good to maintain and cherish life; it is evil to destroy and check life.’²²

From the religious point of view, we can find that there are some kind of moral, non-exploitative and nondestructive attitude towards nature, especially in the *Old* and *New Testament*. In the *Old Testament* in *Genesis*, Chapter-9, Verses-12-15, it is observed that God made his covenant with Noah to include not only human beings but also animals. It is said in the following verses.

Verse-12: And God said this is the token of the covenant, which I make between one and you and every living creature that is with you for perpetual generations.

Verse -15: And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.

In the *New Testament*, Chapter-7 and 4, God again seems to express some concern for the nature He created.

²¹ Dobzhansky, T. Human Nature as a Product of Evolution: *The Range of Ethics* Harold H. Titus, Morris T. Keeton East-West Press Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi 1972, p.123.

²² Schweitzer, A. *Reverence for Life: Civilization and Ethics* trans. A Naish, Blackwell: London 1923.

Chapter-7, Verse 2-3: And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God, and he cried with a loud voice to the four angles, to whom it was given to hurt earth and sea, saying, “Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed a hundred and forty and four thousands of all the tribes of the children of Israel.”

Chapter-4, Verse 3-4: And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree: but only those men, which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

For Paul Taylor, every living individual has a goal, and to have a goal implies that they have a will or desire to attain it. One’s goal is one’s good, so all living things are inherently good²³. Christopher Stone argues in his essay ‘Should trees have standing’ that we should assign natural objects (rivers, oceans, trees, the atmosphere, animals) legal rights²⁴. For Arne Naess “self-realization and biotic equality” are the two absolute norms to solve environmental problems. These two norms naturally lead to the idea that the good of each individual becomes the identification with the good of the whole²⁵. John Rodman opines; “to affirm that natural objects have ‘rights’ is to symbolically affirm that all natural entities including humans have intrinsic worth, simply by virtue of being what they are.”²⁶ Support of the hands-off-nature approach is provided by George Sessions in his ‘Spinoza perennial philosophy, and deep ecology’, where among other things, he describes how Aldo Leopold moved from a position considering humans as stewards or managers of nature to one considering man as “plain members” of the total biotic community²⁷. Leopold in his *Land Ethics* says that “A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise”.²⁸ Modern science gives less importance to human beings within nature.

Non-Anthropocentrism can be considered under two banners, i.e, Biocentrism and Ecocentrism. Biocentrism can be understood from two perspectives i.e, Animal Rights of Tom Regan and Animal Liberation of Peter Singer. Ecocentrism is also

²³Pojman Louis P., Pojman Paul, McShane Katie: *Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application*, 7th edition Cengage learning USA, 2015, p.168.

²⁴ *Ibid.* P.217.

²⁵ Naess, A. ‘The shallow and the deep, long range ecological movement’ *Inquiry* 16, Spring 1973. 95-100.

²⁶ Rodman, J. ‘The liberation of nature’ *Inquiry* 20:108 “Quoted with emphasis on capitals by George Sessions in *Eco-philosophy* III, 1997 p.5.

²⁷ Sessions, G. Spinoza, Perennial Philosophy and Deep Ecology Unpublished Paper 1979 p.15.

²⁸ Leopold, A. *A Sand Country Almanac* Oxford Univ. Press: NY 1966 p.340.

understood from three perspectives like, Deep Ecology and Shallow Ecology of Arne Naess, Land Ethics of Aldo Leopold and Gaia Hypothesis of James Lovelock. Let us discuss the two different perspectives of non-anthropocentrism i.e. biocentrism and ecocentrism in the following paragraphs.

Biocentrism:

In environmental ethics biocentrism is an ethical attitude which stands on the maxim that moral obligations need to be extended beyond humans to include all living things. But these moral obligations are not indirect obligations; these are obligations to the living things themselves. In terms of value, it can be said that all living things have intrinsic as well as instrumental value. If we go through the development of biocentrism, we can find that moral obligation was initially recognized in a narrow circumscribed group. It has taken centuries and centuries to expand its circle. Initially moral obligation confined only to the male members of a tribe, but later on it has been expanded towards man, women, slaves, members of other tribes and children. But in the recent progress, it is realized that we have moral obligations to sentient animals, as well as nature and nonhuman entities.

Biocentrism is often defined as the belief that all forms of life are equally valuable and that humanity is not at center of existence. Biocentric positions advocate a focus on the well-being of all life in relation to their ecological, political, and economic perspectives. Biocentrism in this sense is in contrast to anthropocentrism. It refers to the widely-held belief that a person who was born as a male or a female is more “real” and more valid than the individual who has become a man or woman through hormonal, surgical, and cosmetic means. For biocentrism everything in nature is valuable.

Animal right is the idea that the most basic interest of animal should be afforded the same consideration as similar interests of human beings. Animals should be viewed as legal persons and members of moral community. They should not be used in food, clothing, research subjects or entertainment. Jean-Jacques Rousseau argued in *Discourse on Inequality* in 1754 that animals are part of natural rights, and have natural rights, not because they are rational, but because they are sentient. Wollstonecraft argues that animals have “intrinsic and real dignity and worth”. In 1879 Edward Nicholson argued that animals have the same natural right to life and liberty that human beings have. In 1824, Lewis Gompertz, published *Moral Inquiries on the Situation of*

Man and of Brutes, in which he argued that every living creatures, human and non-human, has more right to the use of its own body than anyone else has to use, and our duty to promote happiness applies equally to all beings.²⁹ Bentham wrote:

“The day may come when the rest of the animal creation may acquire those rights which never could have been withholden from them but by the hand of tyranny. The French have already discovered that the blackness of the skin is no reason why a human being should be abandoned without redress to the caprice of a tormentor. It may one day come to be recognized that the number of the legs, the villosity of the skin, or the termination of the so sacrum, are reasons equally insufficient for abandoning a sensitive being to the same fate. What else is it that should trace the insuperable line? It is the faculty of reason, or perhaps the faculty of discourse? But a full-grown horse or dog is beyond comparison a more rational, as well as a more conversable animal, than an infant of a day, or a week, or even a month, old. But suppose they were otherwise, what would it avail? The question is not, Can they reason? Nor can they talk but, Can they suffer?”³⁰

There are two main philosophical approaches to the issue of animal rights: Utilitarian and Rights-based. The former is proposed by Peter Singer and the later is proposed by Tom Regan. As an act utilitarian, Peter Singer judges the rightness of an action by its consequence, and specifically by the extent to which it satisfies the preferences of those affected, maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain. His principle of equality does not require equal or identical treatment, but equal consideration of interests. Tom Regan argues that animals have “inherent value” as subjects-of-a-life and cannot be regarded as a means to an end. Animals have the same moral rights as humans. Regan believes that we ought to treat non-human animals as we would to human beings.

We are acquainted with Black Liberation, Gay Liberation, and a variety of other movements. Animal Liberation is a movement against the destructive attitude of man towards non-human beings. What does animal liberation try to achieve? The aim is to end the present speciesist bias against the interests of nonhuman animals.

Animal Liberation requires greater altruism on the part of mankind than any other liberation movement, since animals are incapable of demanding it for themselves, or of protesting against their exploitation by votes, demonstrations, or bombs. The question is man capable of such genuine altruism? It will be a vindication of all those

²⁹ Taylor, A. *Animals and Ethics*, Broadview Press, 2003, P.62.

³⁰ Singer, P. *Equality For Animal: Practical Ethics* 2nd edition Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 1993: p.56-57.

who believes that man has within himself the potential for more than cruelty and selfishness. The whole Animal Liberation movement is based on the strength of its ethical concern, and it must not abandon its high moral ground.

Ecocentrism:

The term ecocentrism etymologically derived from the word “Oikos” which means ‘home’ or ‘earth-centered’. Ecocentric attitude towards environmental ethics develops from the assumption that ecology must play a vital role in our understanding and valuing nature. It is that kind of normative approach which gives emphasis not only on individual living organisms but also on our relations with biological systems, processes and nonliving natural objects. Ecology teaches the interrelatedness of all organisms and their environment, so ecology must be the first science to realize that all the systems are interdependent, and all philosophical, scientific and religious approaches of nature together form the global ecosystem. Ecocentrists will say that we have direct moral obligations to all things i.e. biotic as well as abiotic components of the natural world. Goodpaster, Rolston, Callicott and Rodman are the exponents of this approach. But Aldo Leopold’s *Land Ethics* is the comprehensive approach towards ecocentrism.

Ecocentrism is a term used in ecological and political philosophy to denote a nature-centered ecological ethics. Justification for ecocentrism usually consists in an ontological belief and subsequent ethical claim. The ontological belief denies any existential division between human and non-human nature which is sufficient to ground a claim that humans are either (a) the only bearers of intrinsic value or (b) possess greater intrinsic value than non-human nature. Thus, the subsequent ethical claim is for an equality of intrinsic value across human and non-human nature, or ‘biocentric egalitarianism’.

Ecocentric ethics actually was conceived by Aldo-Leopold who recognizes that all species, including humans are product of a long evolutionary process and are inter-related in their life processes. Ecocentrism focuses on biotic community as a whole and strive to maintain ecosystem composition and ecological process. Ecocentrism emphasizes not only on individual living organisms but also on our relations with biological system and non-living natural objects. Ecocentrism can be understood if we can introduce the difference between deep and shallow ecology, Land ethics and Gaia Hypothesis.

Deep and Shallow Ecology:

The term deep ecology was coined by Arne Naess in 1973. Deep Ecology is an associated form of radical eco-philosophy which enables us to think that the root of all ecological crisis involve anthropocentrism. It is a philosophy which focuses on fundamental ontological interrelatedness and identification of all life forms, natural objects and ecosystem. It advocates a nature-centered moral code for human beings. “Deep ecology” is a movement calling for a deeper questioning and a deeper self of answer to our environmental concern. The essence of deep ecology is to keep asking more searching questions about human’s life, society and nature.

Deep ecological thinking of Arne Naess was influenced by Rachel Carson’s book *Silent Spring*, published in 1962. Deep ecology is a development of Aldo Leopold land ethics, which has been newly emerged as the science of ecology, a critique of anthropocentrism. In deep ecology we are not only confined ourselves in scientific study but also we an obligation for a global outlook.

The basic ideas and values that constitute the wide variety of deep ecological total views are the followings:

- The rejection of strong anthropocentrism.
- A consideration of eco-centrism as a replacement of anthropocentrism.
- Identification with all forms of life.
- The sense that caring for the environment is a part of individual self-realization.

The philosophy of deep ecology emphasizes alternative modes of thinking such as spiritual enlightenment that emphasizes life-enhancing qualitative values.

Diversity plays a significant role in deep ecology. Diversity is a fundamental norm and common delight. Naess claim that diversity enhances the potentialities of survival, the chances of new models of life and the richness of life forms, and the so called “struggle of life. The maxim survival of the fittest needs to be interpreted in the sense of ability to co-exist and cooperate in complex relationships rather than ability to kill, exploit and suppress. Live and let live is a more powerful ecological principle than either you or me”. There are two ultimate norms of deep ecology such as Self-realization and Bio-centric egalitarianism.

Naess coined the term “Shallow ecology” in the early 1970s for his human centered or “anthropocentric” way of viewing the world. In shallow ecological thinking, people starts from an assumption, often unexamined that human beings are

central species in the ecosystem, and then other beings are part of the system are of less importance or value. In its extreme manifestation, shallow ecology views other beings and features of Earth as resources for human use, and fails to see their intrinsic value. For the shallow ecologist without a value of mankind it is nonsense to talk about value. Natural resources must be saved for preservation of human agriculture and medicine, for the develop countries.

Naess was of the opinion that environmental movement was also approaching its efforts to protect earth from a shallow standpoint, focusing mostly on human health and well-being rather than seeing the environment as a seamless whole with inherent value through out. A number of key terms and slogans from the environmental debate will clarify the difference between the shallow and the deep ecology. Let us discuss.

Pollution

Shallow Approach: Technology seeks to purify the air and water and to spread pollution more evenly. Laws limit permissible pollution. Polluting industries are preferably exported to developing countries.

Deep Approach: pollution is evaluated from a biospheric point of view, not focusing exclusively on its effects on human health, but rather on his life as a whole, including the life conditions of every species system.

Resources

Shallow Approach: The emphasis is upon resource for humans, especially for the present generation in affluent societies. In this view, the resource of the earth belongs to those who have the technology to exploit them. Plants, animals and natural objects are valuable only as a resource for humans.

Deep Approach: The concern here is with resources and habitats for all life forms for their own sake. No natural object is conceived of solely as a resource.

Population

Shallow Approach: The threat of “overpopulation” is seen mainly as a problem for the developing countries. The issue of an “optimum population” for humans is discussed without reference to the question of an “optimum population” for other life forms.

Deep Approach: It is recognized that excessive pressures on planetary life stem from the human population explosion. The pressure stemming from the industrial

societies is a major factor, and population reduction must have the highest priority in those societies.

Cultural diversity and appropriate technology

Shallow Approach: Industrialization of the Western industrial type is the goal of developing countries. The universal adoption of Western technology is compatible with cultural diversity, together with conservation of the positive elements of present non-industrial societies. There is a low estimate of deep cultural differences in non-industrial societies which deviate significantly from contemporary Western standard.

Deep Approach: Protection of non-industrial cultures from invasion by industrial societies. Deep cultural diversity is an analogue on the human level to the biological richness and diversity of life forms. A high priority should be given to cultural anthropology in general education programs in industrial societies.

There should be limits on the impact of Western technology upon present existing non-industrial countries and the Fourth World should be defended against foreign domination. Political and economic policies should favor subcultures within industrial societies.

An Ethics for Land

Shallow Approach: landscape, ecosystem, rivers, and other whole entities of nature are conceptually cut into fragments, thus disregarding larger units and comprehensive gestalts. These fragments are regarded as the properties and resources of individuals' organizations or states. The social costs and long-term global ecological cost of resources extraction and use are usually not considered. Wildlife management is conceived of as conserving nature for "future generation of humans." Soil erosion or the deterioration of ground water quality, for example, is noted as a human loss, but a strong belief in future technological progress makes deep changes seem unnecessary.

Deep Approach: The earth does not belong only to humans. For example, the Norwegian landscapes, rivers, flora and fauna, and the neighboring sea are not the property of Norwegians. Humans only inhabit the lands, using resources to satisfy vital needs. And if their non-vital needs come to conflict with the vital needs of nonhumans, then humans should defer the later. The ecological destruction now going on will not be cured by technological fix. Current arrogant nations in industrial societies must be resisted.

Education and Scientific Enterprise

Shallow Approach: The degradation of the environment and resources depletion requires the training of more and more “experts” who can provide advice concerning how to continue combining economic growth with maintaining a healthy environment. We are likely to need an increasingly more dominating and manipulative technology to “manage the planet” when global economic growth makes further environmental degradation inevitable. The scientific enterprise must continue giving priority to the “hard sciences.” High educational standards with intense competition in the relevant “tough” areas of learning will be required.

Deep Approach: If sane ecological policies are adopted, then education should be concentrate on an increased sensitivity to non-consumptive goods, and on such consumable where there enough for all. Education should therefore counteract the excessive emphasis upon thing with a price tag. There should be a shift in concentration from the “hard” to the “soft” science which stresses the importance of the local and global cultures. The educational objective of the world conservation strategy should be given a high priority, but within the deeper framework of respect of respect for the biosphere.

Land Ethics:

The term Land Ethics first championed by Aldo Leopold in his book *A Sand County Almanac* in 1949. He wrote that there was a need for a “new ethics”, an “ethics dealing with man’s relation to land and to the animals and plants which grow upon it”. Leopold states the basic principle of his *Land Ethics* as, “A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.³¹” He also describes it in this way: “The Land Ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land. *Land Ethics* changes the role of Homo sapiens from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow-members, and also respect for the community as such.³²”

Leopold’s land ethics have a distinctively holistic approach, which emphasizes upon populations, communities, species and ecosystems as deserving of moral consideration. In fact, Leopold was the first scholar ever to suggest that such ecological

³¹ Leopold, *A Land Ethics, A Sand Country Almanac* Oxford Univ. Press: NY 1966 p.340.

³² *Ibid*, p.340.

“whole” are “morally considerable.” Secondly, Leopold offers what he takes to be an equally pressing moral principle as constitutive of the *Land Ethics* is one ought to love and respect the land. Both “head and heart” are central to the land ethics. Leopold’s land ethic is intimately interconnected with changing people’s “loyalties, affections, and convictions” to love and respect the land. Aldo Leopold’s *Land Ethics* not only helped to create and shape the development of the field of environmental ethic but also challenged some of the most fundamental assumptions of Western philosophical thought about the nature of humans, ethics and human relationships to the nonhuman world.

Gaia Hypothesis:

Gaia Hypothesis named after Gaia means Greek goddess of the Earth, is a broadly inclusive term for related concepts that living creatures on a planet will affect the nature of their environment in order to make the environment more appropriate for life. This theory holds that all organisms or extraterrestrial life in this planet regulate the biosphere to the benefit of the whole. The concept of Gaia draws a connection amongst the survivability of a species and its usefulness to the survival of other species. The Gaia hypothesis deals with the concept of homeostasis, and claims the resident life forms of a host planet coupled with their environment have acted and act as a single, self-regulating system. This system includes the near-surface rocks, the soil, and the atmosphere.³³ The Gaia hypothesis was first scientifically formulated in the 1960s by the British atmospheric chemist James Lovelock, as a consequence of his work for NASA on method of detecting life on Mars. James Lovelock defined Gaia as: “a complex entity involving the Earth’s biosphere, atmosphere, oceans, and soil; the totality constituting a feedback or cybernetic system which seeks an optimal physical and chemical environment for life on this planet”³⁴.

2.2.1: Some Observations on Non-Anthropocentrism:

The inconsistency in non-anthropocentrism stems from its fundamental stance of ascribing nonhuman entities with “intrinsic value and species equality”³⁵. It claims that natural properties such as integrity, beauty and biodiversity can provide a non-human basis for valuing nature. The basis and value of subjects are assumed to lie

³³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaia_philosophy.

³⁴ Blewitt, John. *Understanding Sustainable Development*, 2nd edition, Earthscan by Routledge, 2015, P.59.

³⁵ Devall, B & Sessions, G. *Deep Ecology*. Environmental Ethics, Readings in Theory and Application, Sixth Edition, 1985, p. 146.

independent of human observers. However, according to the skeptics, such qualities are neither intrinsic nor non-anthropocentric. In *A Critique of Anti-Anthropocentric Ethics*, Richard Watson argues that non-anthropocentric approaches are, in essence, anthropocentric:

“The notion of a climax situation in ecology is a human invention, based on anthropocentric ideas of variety, completion, wholeness and balance. [...] What would it be, after all, to think like a mountain as Aldo Leopold is said to have recommended? It would be anthropocentric because mountains do not think, but also because mountains are imagined to be thinking which human interests in their preservation or development they prefer.”³⁶

Attributing the environment with non-anthropocentric values requires us to place ourselves in their positions and imagine their viewpoints from human perspectives; this, ultimately, is a human-centered endeavour. It is “logically impossible”, to know how an animal thinks about itself and about human beings.³⁷ Likewise, the genuine feelings of mountains and plants cannot be rationally known. Grey agrees and suggests that if we attempt to step too far outside the scale of the recognizably human, rather than expanding and enriching our moral horizons, we render them meaningless, or at least almost unrecognizable.³⁸ To assign nature with intrinsic value is a contentious approach; from a mild anthropocentric position, nature can be said to have inherent value as the basis of value lies within it but the source of value is in the external valuator. Due to this arguable ascription of intrinsic value to nature, non-anthropocentrism, at its very core, may not be as non-anthropocentric as it appears.

Some anthropocentrists argue that only humans have moral standing and intrinsic value; they claim that nature must and can only be understood from human perspectives. Of these philosophers, Immanuel Kant is perhaps the most notable. In his definitive essay, rational beings alone have moral worth; Kant argues that “our duties towards animals are merely indirect duties towards humanity”³⁹. From his perspectives, we have no duties to nonhumans, only duties to other humans; nonhumans are

³⁶ Watson, R. *A Critique of Anti-Anthropocentric Ethics*. Environmental Ethics, Readings in Theory and Application, Sixth Edition, 1983, p. 157.

³⁷ Nuyen, Anh Tuan. *An Anthropocentric Ethics Towards Animals and Nature*. Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1981, p. 211.

³⁸ Grey, William. *Anthropocentrism and Deep Ecology*. Australian Journal of Philosophy, Vol. 71, No 4, 1993, p. 464.

³⁹ Kant, Immanuel. *Rational beings alone have moral worth*. Environmental Ethics, Readings in Theory and Application, Sixth Edition. 1873, p-61.

appraised as instruments to human interests and values. A tree, by itself, is not valuable; it is only treasured because of its potential to be exploited as a source of fuel, paper, food, medicine and entertainment. The natural subject, by itself, has no intrinsic value; it is only valuable because it can be used to accomplish a goal desired by the valuer. In Kantian language, they are means to an end but not an end in itself.

Non-anthropocentrism has been criticised as being anthropocentric in essence and failing to convey a rational, relevant indebtedness of nature. Nonanthropocentric ethics goes against the practice of nature and it is “swimming upstream”. Norton argues that nonanthropocentrism is:

- a. Conceptually flawed.
- b. Pragmatically unnecessary.

Non-anthropocentrism is often criticised for its propensity to generate moral conclusions that are abhorrent or unworkable conclusions that require vital human interests to be sacrificed for the good of non-sentient entities. The propensity to generate such conclusion seems particularly pronounced in the case of holistic ethics which view the ecosystem or ‘biotic community’ as the primary repository of value, and its component parts as valuable only insofar as they contribute to the flourishing of the whole. Such views have been labeled ‘environmental fascism’ by Tom Regan.⁴⁰ But it is not only holists who are vulnerable to such an argument, as Attfield acknowledges:

“The objection may be expressed as follows. If plants or bacteria have any more than negligible moral significance, then in their millions their interests must sometimes outweigh those of individual humans or other sentient beings; but this flies in the face of our reflective moral judgments, and should thus, short of compelling reasons, be rejected.”⁴¹

There is a logical gap between the claim that something has goods of its own, and the claim that it is morally considerable or has moral standing. The former is a factual claim, that the object in question has a natural potential or a tendency towards the achievement of certain ‘ends’, relative to which it may be said to flourish or not. The latter, on the other hand, is a normative claim, that moral agents ought or ought not to treat it in certain ways. As Taylor notes:

⁴⁰ Regan 1988, pp. 361–2. Regan’s primary target is Aldo Leopold’s famous ‘land ethic’ (proposed in his *Sand County Almanac*), which has influenced writers such as Callicott and Rolston, and which holds that actions are right when they contribute to ‘the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community’ and wrong otherwise. Note, however, that while this quotation tends to support the holist view attacked by Regan, others of his formulations suggest an *extension* rather than an abandonment of human-centred ethics, which would not deny the moral considerability of humans and other individual creatures.

⁴¹ Attfield, Robin. *The Ethics of Environmental Concern*, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2nd edition 1991, p. 154.

“One can acknowledge that an animal or plant has a good of its own and yet, consistently with this acknowledgement, deny that moral agents have a duty to promote or protect its good or even to refrain from harming it.”⁴²

O’Neill similarly observes:

‘That Y is a good of X does not entail that Y should be realized unless we have a prior reason for believing that X is the sort of thing whose good ought to be promoted.’⁴³

In other words the nonanthropocentrists must show not only that it makes sense to speak of nonsentient things having ‘goods’ or ‘interests’, but also that these ‘interests’ are morally significant ones which we ought to promote.

The necessity and even the possibility of a genuinely non-anthropocentric ethic, however, have been challenged by Gery and Justus in the following way. First, non-anthropocentrism suffers epistemological problems: how do we come to know these non-anthropocentric values and how do we rank them? Second, non-anthropocentrism is not genuinely motivating: deep ecology preaches to the choir, and even then only to that portion of the choir who are supporters of intrinsic value. Third, non-anthropocentrism leads to a loss of bearings in moral space. The non-anthropocentric or ecocentric aspirants for the basis of ecological value, such as biodiversity, do not tell us which bio-diverse or biotas we should prefer.

A great deal of effort in environmental ethics has made in trying to develop the circle of moral concern to take account of natural entities. The circle has been variously extended to conscious beings, sentient beings, living beings, even to all existing things. Most of these efforts fail because, for example, they fail to value species and giving preference to individuals, they generate the problem of value attenuation, and they create serious problems for priority-setting. Peter Singer’s animal welfare method is difficult because it appears to lead to sentience chauvinism. It does not pay due respect to non-sentient creatures. The failure of existing arguments for spreading our circle of moral concern need not be a reason for declining the position altogether, just for declining these considerations as providing the basis for the sole source of value. We might, for example, allow diversity about these wider circles of interest, valuing sentient and non-sentient creatures, individuals and species, and so on. But it is rational

⁴² Taylor, Paul. *Respect for Nature: A Theory of Environmental Ethics*, Princeton University Press 1986, p.72.

⁴³ O’Neill, John. *Ecology, Policy and Politics: Human Well Being and the Natural World*, London and New York: Routledge. 1993, p. 23.

to say that any effort to found preservation efforts on such non-anthropocentric widening of the circle of moral concern needs more development.

Leopold's *Land Ethics* culminated in the principle that defines right and wrong interventions into nature in terms, of their effects on the integrity, stability and beauty of ecosystem. Leopold has canonical status among environmentalist who lean towards deep ecology and similar movements. But critics have pointed out numerous problems with his famous principle. First, there is a problem of determining exactly what counts as an ecosystem for the purpose of the criteria of integrity, stability and beauty. Secondly, Leopold purposes ecology in which, ecosystem maintains a kind of homeostatic balance. This "ecology of stability" has come under attack in recent years; many ecologists now subscribe to an "ecology of flux" in which radical change is considered normal. But if ecosystem are in constant flux it is not clear what it would mean to preserve or restore the stability of an ecosystem even if we could decide what features of the ecosystem count in determinations of stability. Third, the notion of integrity of an ecosystem is ambiguous. Does integrity refer to health or the ability to cope with stress? It is difficult to know precisely what ecosystem states correspond to these features. In short, all attempts to determine what counts as integrity or stability rely on extra-scientific judgments of value. This is certainly also the case with Leopold's third criterion, i.e, beauty. Finally, Leopold does not adequately address the is-ought problem. Non-anthropocentric theories have thus provided an inadequate basis for the ethical evaluation of transgenic organism.

2.3.: Reconciliation between Anthropocentrism and Non-Anthropocentrism:

Reconciliation between anthropocentrism and non-anthropocentrism can be made, though there are some fundamental and theoretical disagreements. In the non-anthropocentric theory, it is observed that there is no sound reason for thinking that any species is special or superior, including humans, with the implication that there are no good grounds for treating the species collectively or differently. In particular, they didn't occupy any privileged place in nature. So it seems that the human interests for the sake of preservation of human basic needs i.e. if their life is at stake. The warning here is that it is permissible to attain those needs at the expense of other human needs. It is very natural to them that they prefer their own species. In other words, there is no reciprocity between species. One may object that if reciprocity is the criteria for moral constraint, then why should we have any kind of moral concern for other species? But

if we think on the issue we can see that anthropocentric ethics honors human existence and we can arrange the nature according to our desire then this view is a self-destructive. On the other hand if we make our ethics absolutely non-anthropocentric, then the existence of human being will be at stake.

From the above discussion it can be said that if the basic needs of humans are at stake then there are good reasons for humans to harm against other individual living things. But if the non-basic or luxury needs are at stake, there are no good grounds for humans to harm against other individual living things. This justifies the Weak Anthropocentric and Shallow Ecologist's position.

In a way of conclusion it can be said that anthropocentrism in a weak sense is acceptable. Following weak anthropocentrism we can say that if human's beings are truly human-centered then they will understand human nature as important and this will encourage the good treatment of nonhuman nature. We cannot criticize a cat for its cat-centeredness. Aquinas and Kant both believed that cruelty to nonhuman is wrong because it breeds cruelty that is bad for man as well as for other animals. Humans beings need to understand that they live in one world along with the rest of nature. On the one hand, uncontrolled human behavior and absolute despot like attitude might lead to the destruction of environment and thus lead to the extinction of human beings. Absolute preservation on the other hand, is impossible. Thus, it can be said by supporting weak anthropocentrism that human interest in survival is the best ground on which to argue for an ecological balance which is good both for human and for the whole biological community. A cat does not distinguish between good and bad, but we human beings do. We are gifted with rationality; therefore, we need to use that gift in a rational manner to save our planet and our environment. Thus, to some extent anthropocentrism in a weak sense as we have earlier discussed may be acceptable, if human beings' survival is at stake.