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Ecological Theory: Anthropocentrism as an Evolving Phenomenon in the Global Environment

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Abstract: *Man, as a creature of God's creation is given an advantage over other creatures, nevertheless the advantages are used by humans inappropriately. Anthropocentrism's ecological theory places man as the central or most important entity in the universe and has full authority to manage God-given natural resources. Initially, humans were present in the world collaborating, fused with the environment, and utilizing natural resources just to meet the needs of life in the form of food, taking directly from nature and relying on simple technology. As the population grows and the desire to socialize, settle in a certain area, leading humans to be creative with their minds, start farming and raising simply. Excessive exploitation of natural resources by humans begins when population growth begins to get out of control and the availability of natural resources is not proportional to population growth. The impact of excessive exploitation of natural resources, characterized by uncontrolled environmental damage.*

KeyWords: *Anthropocentrism, Natural Resources, Environmental Damage, Evolving Phenomenon.*

Introduction

The environment is a never-ending discussion as far as human life and other creatures on earth take place. When discussing nature and the environment, it certainly cannot be separated from the discussion about nature and humans as creatures and God as creators (Hills, 1983).

Today, the world community is being hit by two major crises, namely the ecological crisis (environmental crisis) and the spiritual crisis. A dangerous ecological crisis, threatening human life. This crisis has an impact on the condition of the earth as a place to live that is no longer comfortable, global warming temperatures, depleting ozone layer, deteriorating air quality, denuded forests, and so on. The environmental crisis is strongly triggered by the human condition that is experiencing a crisis within itself or what is often referred to as a spiritual crisis. This happens as a result of an incomplete or partial understanding of the self (Moore, 2017).

Anthropocentrism, modern humans are unable to enter into the realm of substance, so they are only confined to harmful accidents. To reach the area of substance, humans must reach the center point (axis/center) and not stop at the outer layer (rim/periphery), so that humans can arrive at an understanding of the human conception as a whole which includes its three dimensions, namely soul, body, and spirit (Moritz, 2012; Norton, 2017).

LITERATURE REVIEWS

What is anthropocentrism?

The origin of the word Anthropocentrism comes from the ancient Greek, *ánthrōpos*, man, and *kéntron*, central in other words the belief that humans are the central or most important entity in the universe (Boslaugh, 2013). The term may be used interchangeably with human ecocentrism, and some refer to the concept as human supremacy of human exclusion.

Anthropocentrism interprets or views the world in terms of human values and experiences. This is considered to be deeply ingrained in many modern human cultures and is done consciously. It is a key concept in the field of environmental ethics and environmental philosophy, where it is often considered the root cause of problems created by human actions in the universe. However, proponents of anthropocentrism claim that this is not true. They recognize that the global environment needs to be maintained for human well-being for the sake of human and environmental sustainability.

Anthropocentrism is strongly suspected to be rooted in the teachings of monotheistic religions, including Islam, which is accused of developing these teachings. Toynbee, as quoted by Martin Harun, asserts that monotheistic religions have lost respect for nature so that nothing can stop human greed. Islam as a monotheistic religion is not immune from similar accusations. The roots of the same tradition, namely the Abrahamic religion and being born in the Middle East, have resulted in Islam as a religion being considered the same as the Judeo-Christian tradition in teaching anthropocentrism. Judging from its history, the birth of the philosophy of anthropocentrism originated from the philosophy of releasing humans from the confines of God. In the Middle Ages to be exact, the Western world's mind was filled with mythological thoughts. That is rooted in Greek mythology, at that time the West was completely trapped in a religious understanding that it was as if God was shackled to humans.

The above paradigm began to be abandoned with the emergence of the renaissance. And, the thought arises that man is the center of everything. God and gods are only considered as myths. The view of anthropocentrism emerged as a revolutionary breaking of mythological religious views. The view of anthropocentrism or also commonly known as humanism assumes that life is not centered on God, but on humans. Man is the master of reality, who determines his destiny and truth. Therefore, God and the holy books are no longer needed. Anthropocentrism comes with the arrival of rationalism which no longer believes that natural laws are absolute (Kuntowijoyo. 1998). As we all know, humans are figures who hold important functions and roles in the context of their environment. But physically humans are weak creatures compared to other living things (animals). To overcome their weaknesses, humans are given the advantage of reason or mind. With these advantages, humans can create a culture and with their culture, humans can defeat larger creatures and conquer terrible nature (Barlian & Umar, 2020).

The purpose of human creation

From various viewpoints of divine religions such as Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, the creation of humans as representatives of God on the surface of the earth (*khalifatul fil al-ard*), special beings armed with rational abilities given by God. Humans are creatures that have advantages over other creatures and these natural and environmental resources were created for the benefit of humans. Therefore, it must be exploited for the sake of human welfare (Abdillah, 2005).

Anthropocentrism in the dimension of Islamic studies originates from the basic principles of Islam related to the concept of human nature as a special being (super-being), humans as beings who are given reason (rational), humans are creatures who have the most power over nature and the concept of the *khalifatul fil ard*. The four basic principles and concepts of life above become theological knots that are anthropocentric bias. Thus, it can be understood that humans are the best creatures because they are

equipped with reason. Humans are dynamic creatures while other creatures are static. With reason, humans can develop technology to control natural resources and the environment and even explore outer space. This philosophy of anthropocentrism is also accused of giving birth to the philosophy of liberalism in the management of nature.

That *the khalifatul fil al-ard* referred to by God in the holy book (Qur'an, QS 2:30) is not like the relationship between the conqueror (humans) and the conquered (the universe, the environment), or a master and servant, but a relationship of togetherness in submission. to God as the real ruler (Shihab, 2013). This means that humans on earth are caliphs who are representatives of God who are given tasks, so humans must walk according to the assignments desired by the assignor. In carrying out their duties by what is said that humans cannot understand anything and how to live on earth (finish tasks) and be good human beings towards themselves, towards other creatures,

Thus, it is clear that Islam and other divine religions agree on the existence of humans on the surface of the earth not to destroy nature but together to maintain the sustainability of the natural environment for mutual prosperity. Precisely the paradigm of humans as super-beings who can will at will to destroy nature is not the main goal of human creation. Religion is a moral ethic to limit human use of nature according to the rules that have been outlined by God. Humans exploit nature just to fulfill their welfare and survival, while other creatures as partners jointly use nature according to their respective needs. Humans and the environment must have a harmonious relationship, humans can live because of the support of the natural environment, while nature can't survive and support humans without the support of its natural sources. Strictly speaking, humans and nature live in a naturalistic symbiosis that complements and supports each other (Yusuf, 2013)

Anthropocentrism in the global environmental vortex

Global issues related to the environment today are still related to human conditions and concerns: the depletion of the ozone layer, global warming, the greenhouse effect, deforestation that results in deforestation which results in the expansion of desert areas. The environmental damage that occurs, cannot be denied as a result of human activities in overexploiting nature, one of the supports is the philosophy of anthropocentrism, which assumes that humans are free and independent and become the center of everything. The understanding of anthropocentrism has now penetrated the world of the environment, which views the center of the universe as human, so that human interests are the most decisive in making policies related to the environment, directly or indirectly. Such symptoms appear when encountered in real-life community behavior that does not reflect ecological behavior. Humans are reduced to nothing more than part of the machine, namely the giant machine of modern technology. Because of this process, the view of humans is reduced. Humans are part of the production of modern technology. It only becomes an element of mechanization and an element of technological automation.

Initially, humans were present on the surface of the earth to collaborate, blend with the environment (nomadic way of life) and use nature only to meet the needs of life in the form of food, taking directly from nature and relying on simple technology. In line with the increasing population and the desire to socialize, settling in certain areas leads people to be creative with their minds, start farming and raising livestock simply as a means of fulfilling the needs of their group. Nature is used sparingly. Excessive exploitation of nature by humans begins when human groups form a larger and wider society in the form of an enclave or kingdom so that human needs for the survival of the group are getting bigger and require effort in the form of technology, in addition to expanding and building new territories. At that time, wars were mostly carried out to obtain natural resources and to expand the territory politically.

Overexploitation of nature by humans became increasingly common during the industrial revolution of the 18th century. The invention of steamships encouraged humans to compete and control new areas to be

overexploited. Europe, which needs a lot of natural resources, flocked to Asia, Africa, America, and even Australia to build and develop new cities in Europe to fulfill the comfort and happiness of its people. The natural resources of the colonized areas were exploited in such a way and caused environmental damage that was previously unimaginable.

The development of science and technology directly accelerates the process of natural destruction by humans. Massive exploitation does not only turn forests into plantations but also damages the exploitation of mineral resources such as coal mining, oil and gas fuels, and other metallic minerals. Humans have become excessive in using nature, thus showing human arrogance towards nature and its impact is starting to be felt globally. Climate change, storms, floods, and landslides that occur in all parts of the world, cannot be denied due to human activities in managing nature.

Environmental damage can be broadly classified into 2 (two) (Dewata & Putra, 2021): 1) Natural pollution: The environment is often polluted by natural phenomena, such as earthquakes, floods, droughts, hurricanes, etc; and 2) Man-made pollution: Human activities. Environmental pollution can also be further classified as, Air pollution, water pollution, soil pollution, food pollution, noise pollution, and radioactive pollution, etc.

The environmental crisis arises from environmental damage caused by some forms of pollution, depletion of natural resources due to the level of exploitation by humans, and increasing dependence on energy consumption and ecological damage. Habitat loss due to industrial, urban, and agricultural expansion, ecological population reduction and loss due to overuse of toxic pesticides and herbicides, and loss of several plant species due to monocultural habitat loss practices through forest clearing have now become global concerns. Ordinary human life is so quickly affected by environmental damage caused by humans themselves, massive exploitation in the last decades, causing environmental degradation and disruption of natural ecosystems, and depletion of resources.

The striking fact of environmental degradation and the impact of the global environmental crisis is the worsening of the relationship between humans and the environment due to the rapid pace of natural exploitation by draining resources, technological development, and industrial expansion. Environmental damage caused by human activities has been so fast and widespread. Human impacts on the environment fall into two categories; 1) direct or intentional impact, and 2) indirect or accidental impact.

The direct or intentional impact of human activities is pre-planned because humans are aware of the consequences, both positive and negative. On the other hand, the indirect impact of human activities on the environment comes from human activities that aim to accelerate economic growth, especially industrial development. The indirect impact is experienced after a long time when it has grown and is difficult to handle. This indirect effect of human economic activities can change the natural environmental system as a whole.

CONCLUSIONS

Ecological Theory - Anthropocentrism argues that the universe is provided by God only for human prosperity, resulting in the exploitation of these natural resources increasingly brutal and uncontrollable. Divine religions are also suspected to have strongly instilled anthropocentrism in their adherents so that it seems as if religious dogma has accelerated the destruction of the environment and nature. If studied further, the purpose of human creation on the surface of the earth is to create a balance so that the environment develops properly, the use of natural resources by humans is solely for human welfare by paying attention to the survival of other creatures. The level of human obedience to God is directly proportional to the mindset of human procedures related to nature. Global environmental damage is the result of excessive exploitation of nature, based on the human desire to control nature according to his

will without regard to ethical principles and conscience. Nature is considered as a means of showing human superiority over other creatures. Without realizing that humans are weak without the help of other living creatures and nature provides all human needs.

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