

## Forgetfulness of Being as the Biggest Threat to Humanity



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**ABSTRACT:** This paper attempts to describe the major issue confronting humanity. I contend that the greatest threat to mankind is human forgetting of being, or rather the perception one has of what constitutes being. The way one interprets being influences one's orientation and attitudes towards that being. As a result, it is critical to have a clear conception of being, one that does not compromise the uniqueness of each creature. As a result, throughout our conversation, we will look at the meaning of being, different ways of being, and the interdependence of being. The paper also investigates what is meant by amnesia of being and what causes forgetfulness. It went on to say that human arrogance, fueled by some antagonistic worldviews, is the main issue undermining other people's individuality. The study proposed various viable counter-threat approaches as a remedy to the problem. As a result, unless such orientations and attitudes are clearly addressed and understood, humanity will undoubtedly continue to face the repercussions of being forgetful.

**KEYWORDS:** Being, forgetfulness of being, humanity, anthropocentrism, nominal and the verbal sense of being.

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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

A human being is, by definition, a part of nature, and as such, the majority of his or her prosperity is dependent on factors such as climate and huge natural resources. Indeed, the growth of technological knowledge owes much to the human physical environment, through which humans have been able to rapidly alter and exploit vast amounts of natural resources. Arguably, that may have appeared to work effectively but for a short period. However, if immediate and sound steps are not adopted, humanity is likely to face catastrophic consequences in the long run. As can be seen in today's world, there has been a significant outcry and concern for environmental protection and conservation as a result of environmental degradation, ozone layer depletion, and various forms of pollution that have a tremendous impact on practically every type of life on Earth. Indeed, for the past several decades, our world has been exposed to a more deep threat than ever before, one that threatens not only human survival but also the well-being of other creatures.

Various causes, such as technical advancement, human population, prevailing theories and hostile worldviews, frequent natural disasters, and so on, could be considered as potential threats to humanity's well-being. This necessitates an immediate and severe rethinking of human attitudes towards himself/herself and the entire environment in general. In this framework, the current study examines the issue, focusing on what may be the greatest threat to humanity. As a result, the report contends that the primary and most fundamental problem confronting humanity is forgetting, rather than secondary issues such as inflation, food scarcity, nuclear weapons, deforestation, or toxic petrol emissions.

Our central argument is that the way we experience being, whether human or otherwise, influences our orientation and attitudes towards one another, with enormous consequences not only for mankind but also for the environment. People are unlikely to modify their worldviews for the welfare of society and the environment in general unless the problem is fully addressed from its basic ontological component. To accomplish our goal, the paper will first give the concept of being from which we will extract our main argument for the paper, namely amnesia of being. Then we will present some essential and antagonistic worldviews that have greatly affected a dominant worldview. Finally, the study will provide some potential solutions to the problem.

### 1.1 Understanding being

Traditional definitions of 'being' include anything that exists in its own right. This is an ontological notion of being because it maintains that whatever exists is a 'being,' whether mental or extra-mental, whether I can see it or not, but as long as it exists, it is a being.<sup>1</sup> In that view, everything is a being, and as such, being can be considered synonymous with existence. However, for the

<sup>1</sup> Richard, "Parmenides on What There Is", 167-190.

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purposes of our current study, we will confine ourselves to entities with unique status, that is, beings that are not only conceptual but have extramental existence. In this situation, humans, animals, plants, and the physical environment are among those beings that exist independently of human perception, and as such, each of them exists in its own way.

### 1.1.1 What does it mean to say every being exist in its own way?

The phrase “every being exists in its own way” implies that each human or entity has its own distinct existence, defined by its own characteristics, experiences, and views. It suggests that each entity has a specific character and style of being that distinguishes it from others. It is an assertion that each entity is not only self-contained, but also has some inherent value of its type. Any attempt to exploit will be a misuse of its nature, because I am unable to digest or rather absorb to myself. This is a key concept of being since it affirms both the transcendence of being and the existence of the external world.<sup>2</sup> Following this viewpoint, one cannot fall into the trap of lumping all entities together, as the pantheist would. Similarly, if one defines being in such a way that only one type of being fulfils the definition, the remainder are considered non-beings, which means they do not merit significant consideration.<sup>3</sup> That is, our current conditions and environment would be of little concern or viewed solely for one’s own benefit. As a result, all tragedies, conflict, and injustice in the world around us would be unimportant to us. Most of the challenges confronting modern humanity, such as global warming and nuclear weapons, are due to our view of the environment around us, that is, our sense of what being is. For example, Paul Sartre explored being and discovered that it is nothing, hence his pain, but Gabriel Marcel examined being and discovered that it is mysterious, hence his optimism. It is in this setting that a precise understanding of being becomes critical, because one’s concept of being essentially determines and impacts one’s orientation towards other beings.

### 1.1.2 Different senses of being

We can derive two meanings from our concept of existence based on the previous understanding. Being, in one meaning, refers to things that exist solely by virtue of their being. However, another understanding of being is that, apart from objects that are, being is capable of engaging in activity and initiating action.<sup>4</sup> So, they are not simply things that be because beings are constantly changing, constantly growing. This means beings possess an intrinsic force, inherent energy.<sup>5</sup> The first sense of being is known as the nominal sense, while the second sense of being, that is, the verbal sense, is known as the dynamic sense, the activity of being. Being so has two meanings: as a noun and as a verb. We acknowledge being as simply existence, the thing that is, in the nominal meaning; in the dynamic sense, we affirm its dynamism, vigour, and energy.<sup>6</sup> So it’s not just a thing, but something greater, something beyond comprehension.

If we only focus on things that are, on existents, and ignore the other component (the verbal sense), we will miss out on the most important aspect, the mystery of being (verbal sense). The two states of being are simply two sides of the same coin. One implication of neglecting the verbal sense of ‘being’ in favour of the nominal sense is that you end up considering/taking ‘being’ as merely a thing, an item that can be managed to one’s advantage. ‘Being’ loses (completely) its essential worth in this context. It is the linguistic sense, the dynamic sense that makes the ‘being’ not merely existent, things that are, but also an active being capable of initiating an action.<sup>7</sup> Given that each being exists in its own unique way and continuously revels in its dynamism, we can never claim to have complete awareness of it. This is not to say that we cannot claim knowledge of it; rather, the argument is that our knowledge of it is never exhaustive.

### 1.1.3 Beings as inevitably Codependent

When we think of being, we affirm its identity as distinct from other things. We consider it to be complete in itself, with its own identity.<sup>8</sup> But that does not imply beings are in complete isolation, there is a tremendous sign of oneness, at least for the beings we experience in this world, with varying degrees of composition within them and varying degrees of interaction among objects or different types of beings. They are not completely isolated from one another. For example, there are various ways in which we can perceive that beings rely on one another for survival. On a physical level, it is obvious that living things require nonliving objects to survive. Living organisms die without air, water, or food, while decomposing bodies provide good nutrients for plant growth. While some consume plants directly, others feed on animals that consume plants. This points to beings’ inherent connection, natural interdependence.

Furthermore, from a metaphysical standpoint, a being is said to rely on another being, for example, for its existence or identity. Beings that do not have their own existence owe it to the initial universal Cause of all beings. This is a causal relationship in

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<sup>2</sup> Francis, *Greek Philosophical Terms. A Historical Lexicon*, 141-142.

<sup>3</sup> James, *The Greek Philosophical Vocabulary*, 49-50.

<sup>4</sup> Gilson, *Being and some philosophers*, 2-3, 6-7.

<sup>5</sup> Anthony, *Historical Dictionary of Ancient Greek Philosophy*, 67-68.

<sup>6</sup> Basson, “Language and Philosophy: Some Suggestions for an Empirical Approach”, 49-65.

<sup>7</sup> John, *The Question of Being*, 51-71.

<sup>8</sup> Gilson, *Being and some philosophers*, 2-3, 6-7.

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which one that is less vital and fundamental is thought to be ontologically dependent on the other that is more vital and fundamental.<sup>9</sup> It is critical to recognize that, while beings (at least in this world) are ontologically and physically dependent on one another, that does not diminish their uniqueness, their particularities.

The recognition of this relational feature is critical in our interactions and attitudes towards one another. When I consider myself to be one, I should consider the other to be the same. This consideration marks the idea of being as a cosmos of beings whereby different types of beings are distinguished, each with its own identity but reliant to one another, interacting as each realizes itself through its rightful activity, active in relation to others and passive in accepting impacts, each to differing degrees. These distinctions and disparities must be appreciated and acknowledged. Consideration of metaphysical and physical codependency demonstrates that for each (human being) to think of oneself as being (thus unique) is to think (a priori) of one in connection to another being. When a person recognizes and respects this fact, he or she will be more careful in dealing with other beings. He or she will realize that his or her survival is dependent on the actions of other beings.

### 1.2 Forgetfulness of being as the biggest threat to humanity

By humanity, I mean human beings, or those who have the quality of being human. By forgetfulness of being, I mean taking for granted the idea that each being is unique and exists in its own manner. It is a human failing to recognize and appreciate the dynamism of being, the reality that the otherness, the uniqueness of the other being cannot and should not be reduced to simple appearance, to the thing with which I come into contact.<sup>10</sup> It emphasizes the nominal sense of being while ignoring the verbal sense, or dynamism of being. The verbal sense maintains that existence is more than just an appearance; it is dynamic and so cannot be reduced to a phenomenon. When the other being is simply considered nominally, it loses its otherness and becomes manipulable. That is a great exaltation of one component of one's being over another. Any attempt to weaken that dynamism of being will undoubtedly have disastrous consequences for humans and other beings alike, because all beings are linked in some way.

In truth, there are numerous symptoms in our modern world of human self-estrangement, human hubris above and above other beings, and human beings considering themselves to be privileged and superior beings.<sup>11</sup> Many human activities and beliefs tend to display such superiority, such as industrialization, deforestation, the manufacture of nuclear weapons, specism, anthropocentrism, scientism, and so on. All of this is the result of humans isolating themselves from other creatures and viewing them as objects to be manipulated and reduced to mere stuff. As a result, we have all of these frightening factors, such as looming nuclear wars that threaten to end life on Earth, regular violence at both the regional and international levels, primarily as a result of selfishness and human arrogance, rising global warming, and so on. These and similar approaches are generally the result of human actions, attitudes, and orientation towards other creatures, which are clear evidence that humanity is not cognizant of its orientation and attitudes towards other beings, which unfortunately leads to the damage of human beings themselves.

One can wonder what causes forgetfulness of being. The main underlying factors that lead to forgetfulness of being include: obsessive self-centered worldviews (anthropocentric perception/orientation), complexity/intricacy of understanding being itself, negligence (both theoretical and practical - being insensitive to nature (nonhuman beings) (ignoring the impacts of our worldviews, attitudes, and actions towards nature), and so on. For example, we are indoctrinated from childhood that other beings are inferior entities who exist solely for human interest and accomplishment. Such a mindset allows for, and tends to encourage and excuse, inhumane treatment of nonhuman species. However, such attitudes have major consequences for humans at some point. Consider for example, ozone depletion, deforestation, pollution (air) - the release of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, water pollution, nuclear weapons, and so forth. This harmful perspective is the product of human arrogance, self-centeredness, supremacy, or, more broadly, anthropocentrism.

### 1.3 Understanding Anthropocentrism and its different forms

This is the belief that humans, above all other beings, are the most important beings on the planet.<sup>12</sup> The belief that humans are the planet's superior living type. It restricts value and morals to human. In other words, it is an ethical failing to recognize and address the natural world.<sup>13</sup> As a result, humans are seen as the sole species worthy of particular consideration. Because of this human self-centeredness, non-human beings are treated as less important. Although anthropocentrism fundamentally refers to a preference for human beings over non-human beings, in a much larger and deeper meaning, such sentiments result in self-centeredness, in the care and fortification of oneself.<sup>14</sup> A person may believe that he or she is safe in caring for and protecting oneself while forgetting about others. However, because all beings are dependent on each other to some extent, the destruction of one will undoubtedly have major ramifications for the other. According to Plumwood, by promoting an anthropocentric

<sup>9</sup> Hofstadter, "Building Dwelling Thinking", 217-265.

<sup>10</sup> Crowell, "Why Is Ethics First Philosophy? 564-588.

<sup>11</sup> Hammerschlag, "'A Splinter in the Flesh': Levinas and the Resignification of Jewish Suffering, 1928-1947", 389-419.

<sup>12</sup> Crist, *Abundant Earth: Toward an Ecological Civilization*, 34-35. See also, Jensen, D. *The Myth of Human Supremacy*, 16-18.

<sup>13</sup> Norton, *Environmental Ethics and Weak Anthropocentrism*, 131-148.

<sup>14</sup> Washington, *A Sense of Wonder Towards Nature*, 59-61.

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perspective, humans have lost sense of themselves as beings who are not just natural but also have origins in the Earth.<sup>15</sup> It is in this setting that it becomes critical to be concerned about the safety and well-being of all living and non-living beings.

According to the anthropocentric viewpoint, human beings are privileged in terms of their place in the hierarchy of beings, their knowing capabilities, or the worth attributed to them.<sup>16</sup> Thus, anthropocentrism can be classified into three types: metaphysical, epistemological, and moral anthropocentrism. When humans are regarded to possess a particular and advantageous position in the hierarchy of entities, we talk about metaphysical anthropocentrism. Epistemological anthropocentrism is the belief that humans are the only beings capable of rational knowledge. Moral anthropocentrism occurs when ethical principles are strictly limited to humans, essentially eliminating all care and response to nonhuman nature.<sup>17</sup> Human arrogance is primarily responsible for elevating humanity above nonhumans.

Some thinkers believe that anthropocentrism can be regarded in two ways, one weak and one strong. The strong sense assumes that non-human beings exist only for the sake of humans;<sup>18</sup> that is, they serve no purpose in and of themselves. This viewpoint vehemently supports human rule over all other beings.<sup>19</sup> The weak view holds anthropocentrism to have some reservations about human treatment of nonhuman species, but they do not believe nonhuman beings have intrinsic value in and of themselves. As a result, the weak sense provides some justification for condemning some individual behaviors towards nature.<sup>20</sup>

### 1.3.1 Hostile Worldviews that propagate human arrogance

From ancient times, there have been viewpoints that argue that human beings alone have moral standing, or that they are superior to other beings in some way. Such worldviews primarily contributed to the transmission and implementation of a destructive and domineering attitude towards other beings. Humans privileged themselves and elevated themselves above all other beings. Consider a popular saying from one of the ancient philosophers, Protagoras “Man is the measure of all things”<sup>21</sup>, or by the Aristotelian model, which asserted that every species has an inherent telos, with humans having greater position.<sup>22</sup> Similar sentiments can be found in Immanuel Kant’s philosophy, confirming dubious preconceptions about human superiority “As the sole being on earth who has reason, and thus a capacity to set voluntary ends for himself, [man] is certainly the titular lord of nature, and, if nature is regarded as a teleological system, then it is his vocation to be the ultimate end of nature.”<sup>23</sup>

Such worldviews not only elevate humans to an exceptional level in comparison to other species (of this world), but also argue that humans are justified in adopting egocentric and egoist attitudes towards other beings. Acceptance and application of such hegemonic notions eventually led to the treatment of all other beings (including humans) as only a means to an end. As a result, communities established an association of dominance and control over the rest of the world (the excluded). Certainly, dominant concepts such as capitalism, industrialism, and consumerism emerged in this milieu. One just takes deliberate consideration of the other based on subjective preferences, with no regard for the consequences of his/her actions. No surprise, then, that we are seeing all kinds of disaster in our modern world, from moral decay to global environmental crisis, whether it is climate change, biodiversity damage, or industrialized animal farming. When one thinks about it critically, most of the problems that humanity is facing today are the result of disregarding or diminishing the inherent differences that exist between beings.

One fixes his or her gaze on things that are, on existents, and these are considered detachedly, isolatedly, as just a thing outside there, as something I encounter, which I see entire before me, and which I may thus manage and reduce to what it is not. In other words, other beings are just considered nominally. A large number of researchers<sup>24</sup> have focused their attention on indigenous populations, the local people who were said to have a non-anthropocentric viewpoint. As a result, traditional communities were able to maintain a balance between humans and nonhuman beings. They observed that, aboriginal societies meet on a regular basis “express and promote values that have affinities with ecocentrism, including kinship feelings and responsibilities toward nonhuman organisms”<sup>25</sup>.

However, with the rise of influential worldviews, previous civilizations’ approaches were rendered obsolete, and societies acquired a new perspective and attitude towards non-human species. For example, the mechanical revolution of the world supported by scientific institutions has its origins in key historical inspirations promoted by Ancient Greek philosophy<sup>26</sup>, the

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<sup>15</sup> Plumwood, *Towards a Progressive Naturalism*, 3-32.

<sup>16</sup> Vetlesen, *The Denial of Nature*, 11-12.

<sup>17</sup> Muradian, - Gomez-Baggethun, *Beyond ecosystem services and nature’s contributions*, 38.

<sup>18</sup> Norton, *Environmental Ethics and Weak Anthropocentrism*, 131-148.

<sup>19</sup> Crist, *Abundant Earth: Toward an Ecological Civilization*, 27-28.

<sup>20</sup> Vilka, *The Intrinsic Value of Nature*, 9-11.

<sup>21</sup> Oelschlaeger, *The Idea of Wilderness*, 77. See also, Rodman, *Paradigm Change in Political Science*, 49-78.

<sup>22</sup> Jowett, *Aristotle Politics*; Batoche Books: Kitchener ON, Canada, 1999, 13.

<sup>23</sup> I. Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2000, 298.

<sup>24</sup> Washington, *A Sense of Wonder Towards Nature*, 14-15. See also, Taylor, et al, *The need for ecocentrism in biodiversity conservation*, 34-59.

<sup>25</sup> Van Horn, - Kimmerer, Hausdoerffer, (Eds.) *Kinship: Belonging in a World of Relations*, 28-49.

<sup>26</sup> Rodman, *Paradigm Change in Political Science*, 49-78.



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reformation or commonly the renaissance philosophy,<sup>27</sup> and later by modernism and postmodernism views.<sup>28</sup> The new ideas pioneered and characterized the evolution and radical change from traditional civilizations that revered nonhuman animals to contemporary industrial societies that entirely objectified nonhuman beings, from organic to mechanical worldviews.<sup>29</sup> As highlighted by Oelschlaeger, M. it was a complete turn of events such that “the very meaning of the word Nature was changed from organic to mechanistic.”<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, Oelschlaeger<sup>31</sup> and White<sup>32</sup> while noted that traditional religion were ecologically responsive, they accused Christianity as encouraging human supremacy over nature. The rediscovery of the writings of Aristotle and Plato during the modern time<sup>33</sup> escalated the removal of traditional view which celebrated non-human beings and consequently “places humans, as the beings capable of reason, in charge of modernization and civilization: it gives us license to adjudicate the contents and behaviour of Nature”.<sup>34</sup>

Furthermore, we read from the works of Descartes, who advocated for a strict separation of matter and thought, and Newton, who promoted the idea of nature as an unresponsive machine. Understanding nature solely in a mechanistic sense, allowed the human mind to maintain and enjoy an exalted position above non-human beings.<sup>35</sup> The glorification of humans paved the way for the mechanistic interpretation of the world, a vision and attitude that continues to be dominant and visible in our modern world.

### 1.3.2 Key Ideologies abetting anthropocentrism

Modernization is one of the most prominent ideologies linked with anthropocentrism. With modernism, anthropocentrism took a fairly drastic turn, with the world being viewed purely as something to be managed for human benefit.<sup>36</sup> Modernism ideology encouraged constant objectification of nature, aided by scientific and industrial growth. According to M. Oelschlaeger, modernization takes “nature as nothing but matter in motion.”<sup>37</sup> Modernism focused on the practical aspect of resources while ignoring the intrinsic value of things.

In addition to modernism, numerous economic worldviews can be identified as spearheading anthropocentric perspective. For example, we read from the work of renowned economist Adam Smith<sup>38</sup> and some other celebrated economists who held a powerfully utilitarian attitude<sup>39</sup> as H.A. Daly underscores that “the neoclassical view is that man will surpass all limits and remake Creation to suit his subjective preferences, which are considered the root of all value. In the end, economics is religion.”<sup>40</sup>

Another factor to examine is the consumerism that has obsessed humanity. Humans, unlike other beings, have been captivated with the spirit of consumerism, the amassing of riches and products driven by his/her insatiable needs. Regardless of how much he or she has amassed, he or she is never pleased. Such a spirit is extremely destructive and damaging to the well-being of other beings. Humans must remember that desires are never satisfied, so it is critical to be moderate, reasonable, and modest in our attempts to satisfy our cravings. As A. Vetlesen points out, humans take pride in their intelligence “amounts to mindless destructive hubris if our way of enacting it in the world is not informed by the modesty that goes with a sense of awe toward the non-human manifestations of value on earth.”<sup>41</sup>

Another ideology is the acceptance of utilitarian ideology, which prepared the way for reducing everything to capital, everything to functionality, that is, as long as it suits someone’s interest, primarily those in positions of control. Clearly, our current world is penetrated and ruled by a spirit of severe greed, as the capitalist prescription of amassing for the purpose of amassing can be found in every element of our surroundings, and everything are regarded as merely commodities to be traded. Such views represent a major existential threat to humanity’s survival.<sup>42</sup> The continuous existence of capitalism and industrialization poses an existential threat to humans. Indeed, with the advent of these new ideologies made possible by the scientific revolution, the gap, or

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<sup>27</sup> Oelschlaeger, *The Idea of Wilderness*, 23-25. See also, Evernden, *The Social Creation of Nature*, 9-11. Also, Fisher, *Radical Ecopsychology*, 26-27.

<sup>28</sup> Rolston III, *Natural and unnatural*, 61, 267–276. See also, Gare, *Postmodernism and the Environmental Crisis*, 61-63. See also, Butler, *Postmodernism: A very Short Introduction*, 17-18.

<sup>29</sup> Washington, - Maloney, *The need for ecological ethics in a new ecological economics*, 169.

<sup>30</sup> Oelschlaeger, *The Idea of Wilderness*, 76.

<sup>31</sup> Oelschlaeger, *The Idea of Wilderness*, 77. Also, Rodman, *Paradigm Change in Political Science*, 49-78.

<sup>32</sup> White, *Historical roots of our ecological crisis*, 1203–1207.

<sup>33</sup> Oelschlaeger, *The Idea of Wilderness*, 77. Also, Rodman, *Paradigm Change in Political Science*, 49-78.

<sup>34</sup> Evernden, *The Social Creation of Nature*, 89.

<sup>35</sup> Abram, *The mechanical and the organic*, 70-75. Also, Godfrey-Smith, *The value of wilderness*, 309-319.

<sup>36</sup> Washington, *A Sense of Wonder Towards Nature*, 47-49. See also, Curry, *Ecological Ethics: An Introduction*, 21-22.

<sup>37</sup> Oelschlaeger, *The Idea of Wilderness*, 69.

<sup>38</sup> Smith, A. *The Wealth of Nations*, 17-18.

<sup>39</sup> Muradian, Gomez-Baggethun, *Beyond ecosystem services and nature’s contributions*, 185.

<sup>40</sup> Daly, *A Steady-State Economy: A Failed Growth Economy and a Steady-State Economy Are Not the Same Thing*, 25.

<sup>41</sup> Vetlesen, *Ethics and Value in Naess’ Ecophilosophy*, 260.

<sup>42</sup> Braidotti, *Animals, anomalies, and inorganic others*, 526-532. See also, Altvater, E. *The Capitalocene, or, Geoengineering against Capitalism’s Planetary Boundaries*. In *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism*, 138-152.

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estrangement, between humans and their physical surroundings has grown significantly. H. Washington emphasizes the spirit of capitalism and industrialization that “privileges the market above ethics, above sustainability, and indeed . . . Above survival. Both the economy and the market are ideas, neither thinks about what is wrong with the world, neither cares for society or Nature”.<sup>43</sup>The abovementioned social and intellectual shift has resulted in today’s technologically advanced civilization becoming very anthropocentric.

### 1.3.3 Problems with Anthropocentrism

The primary issue with anthropocentrism is alienation, often known as exclusion. This means that non-human entities are removed and interpreted as having no intrinsic value in and of themselves. That finally means they are only seen from the standpoint of profit, and hence they are simple commodities. In other words, they have no moral standing and exist purely for the benefit of humans.

Aside from exclusion, anthropocentrism fails to distinguish between genuine and unlawful human interests. This is because once other beings (nonhuman nature) are viewed of as just objects for manipulation, reduced to mere resources, mere things, and given minimal attention, humans are left with nothing but egoistic aims to drive them. As a result of human arrogance, nonhuman nature suffers the repercussions, and everything else loses value and becomes disposed for human interest. However, such an attitude will have long-term consequences for humans. When the environment suffers, humans will undoubtedly suffer as a result. The reckless use of natural resources causes issues such as global warming, climate change, pollution, and so on. As a result of restricted resources, this leads to starvation, epidemics, and conflicts, among other things.

In this context, E. Crist warned that if we insist on maintaining human hegemony over non-human beings, we shall eliminate the possibility of peace “yet-to-be-imagined (sane, harmonious, beautiful) ways of being on Earth.”<sup>44</sup> Anthropocentric thinking is destructive to the environment because it tends to regard people intrinsically while only value nonhuman animals instrumentally, based solely on profit. Intrinsic value is widely regarded to be required for total moral standing or participation in an ethical community. To regard anything as inherently valuable is to regard it as essentially useful in and of itself, whereas to regard it as instrumentally valuable is to regard it as valuable contingently, that is, for some other cause. According to the anthropocentric viewpoint, only humans have fundamental value, and as such, they have existential priority and deserve primaeval protection above nonhuman animals. While it is the best at protecting human interests, it is the worst at protecting the interests of nature and nonhuman beings.

The distinction between the intrinsic and instrumental values suggest that, there are basically two different types of values, namely, natural values and given (artificial) values. Natural values are inbuilt, they are simply found in nature, while instrumental values are given for some purposes. In that context then, every being has got an intrinsic value, just from the fact of its existence. However, a being may acquire additional value depending on some circumstance and subjective preferences. In agreement with this point, Holmes Rolston remarks that, “some values are already there, discovered not generated by the valuer.”<sup>45</sup> It is on that account it becomes paramount to respect the uniqueness of every being because from the fact that it exists it possesses some intrinsic value and that make it distinct from others. Arguing in favour of natural values, H. Washington vehemently declares:

“Nature is the generator of value, having created so many wondrous and amazing things, including humanity. Through wonder, we engage with the beauty and unique value of different aspects of nature. . . . All of our evolutionary kin, plus the geodiversity that forms their homes, have value. How can they not? Only the blinkers and arrogant hubris of strong anthropocentrism cuts people off from a recognition of such intrinsic value, a value that most children understand.”<sup>46</sup>

Based on the preceding insight, it is critical to recognise the variance in values and that it is unfair to focus on human-given values while ignoring or undermining discovered or inherent values. When we presume that values are just those granted by humans, existence loses its natural value and becomes only an object for human manipulation. Humans are not and cannot be the sole providers of values to other beings. It is then vital to abandon mentalities and worldviews that do not recognize distinctions in our value perceptions.

Reductionism is another issue with human arrogance. This is the tendency to see nonhuman beings as nothing more than things I meet, and once they are no more than objects before my eyes, humans believe they are free to reduce to anything they wish. Someone who takes this stance has no incentive to spare nonhuman species; he or she does not respect and understand their intrinsic value. As a result, devastation will occur, which will be harmful to humans as well, given that they, too, rely on nonhuman species for their well-being and sustainability. As previously stated, there is no humanity without nonhuman beings, as we rely heavily on them. Take an example of air, water, food, without these human beings could not survive.\

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<sup>43</sup> Washington, *What Can I Do to Help Heal the Environmental Crisis?* 71.

<sup>44</sup> Crist, *Abundant Earth and the population question*, 145.

<sup>45</sup> Rolston III, *Naturalizing Callicott*, 118, 120.

<sup>46</sup> Washington, *A Sense of Wonder Towards Nature*, 65.

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### 1.3.4 Possible alternative against anthropocentric threat

Having addressed the issues associated with anthropocentrism, we now turn our attention to several possible alternatives to anthropocentric mindsets. The section considers the idea of combining human existence in the world with being at home with other beings, particularly nonhuman beings. We will argue that it is possible to establish genuine existence among creatures without damaging or endangering the well-being of another.

The first alternative is establishing I-Nature relationship between human and nonhuman beings. This is the relationship that recognize the otherness, the uniqueness of the other. This means instead of viewing nonhuman beings as mere object, worthless in themselves, human beings should consider them as beings not only other than human but more importantly as different in all aspect with their own inherent values. From our definition of being we have seen that, a being is that which exist in its own way. That means every being has got its own way of existing, as such it is unique. So, it is ontologically wrong to subjugate this otherness and no one is justified in manipulating the other. It becomes crucial then to respect such uniqueness, such differences, hence the I-Nature relationship.

So, while beings rely on one another for existence and sustenance, it is vital to remember the intrinsic value of other beings and enable our orientation and attitudes to be led by a harmonious, critical, and reasonable relationship. We can ensure the existence and continuity of not only humans, but also other beings, because nature's comfort ensures and protects human comfort.

The next closely related alternative is adoption and promotion of nature-centered attitudes.<sup>47</sup> The point is that instead of placing humans at the center (anthropocentrism), nature should be placed at the center (eco-centrism). Eco-centrism recognizes nature as the primary source of worth and significance for all beings, not just humans. With eco-centrism, no single being is prioritized at the expense of others; rather, nature in its collectiveness is prioritized. As a result, humans must overcome their hubris and recognize that they are a part of nature and must act properly towards it. As Washington et al. put it, eco-centrism is the path to sustainability.<sup>48</sup>

Another thing to consider is extension of moral standing to all beings. For many centuries, the concept of moral standing has been restricted to human beings. It is obvious that this cleared the way for the justification of human behavior over other beings, because non-humans have no moral status and hence become victims of human transgression and superiority.<sup>49</sup> However, morality should not be limited to humans. Only recently have some environmentalists initiated a campaign to combat such destructive views towards nature. According to proponents of nature's moral standing, it is critical to extend moral credits from humans not only to sentient and inorganic beings, but also to all beings, the entire universe, and not just our planet, as it is obvious that humanity makes deliberate attempt to conquer other planets, such as Mars. Such an endeavor will almost certainly result in catastrophic issues for life on Earth.

Once the above options are in place, it will be easier to implement ecologically friendly policies to reduce global emissions, regulate industrial activity, and ensure proper resource management. It is therefore necessary to raise awareness of the issue and stimulate critical reflection on human preferences, as well as to eliminate privileged thinking that views humans as the center of the universe, the "Masters of Nature"<sup>50</sup>. Humans should recognize and appreciate the truth that, regardless of how brilliant our mind is, we rely on nature to survive - the oxygen we breathe, the crops we cultivate for food and business, the shelter we build, the ammunition we manufacture, and everything else we make is dependent on our environment. So, when humans harm the environment, they are not acting responsibly. Humanity, both now and in the future, requires a balanced natural system. It is, thus, critical to adhere to natural boundaries.<sup>51</sup> An attitude that amplifies ecological threat is obviously not viable for ecological sustainability.

## 1.4 CONCLUSION

This article attempted to investigate the most serious threat to humanity. As previously said, the primary issue is our perception of being. According to the paper, the greatest risk and threat to humanity today is the failure of humans to recognize the need for a sense of being. Human beings have been so engaged on functionality in a period solely dedicated to practical and technological achievements that they have wiped out all prospect for the sense of being, leaving no place for the enigmatic aspect of being. Thus, throughout ages, humans have embraced and nurtured toxic ideas that jeopardize not only humanity's well-being and continuity, but also the survival of other beings. Significantly, these harmful inclinations have been choreographed and influenced by prevailing worldviews that place humans at the center of the universe and dismiss nonhuman beings as simple objects destined to fulfil a human-centered reality. With such beliefs, humans adopt a deity-like stature and so justify all their actions towards others. As a result, both local and global issues arose, such as unregulated industrial operations that significantly contributed to

<sup>47</sup> Thompson, Barton, *Ecocentric and anthropocentric attitudes toward the environment*, 149-157.

<sup>48</sup> Washington, et el, *Why ecocentrism is the key pathway to sustainability*, 35-41.

<sup>49</sup> Vilka, *The Intrinsic Value of Nature*, 34-35. See also, Nash, *The Rights of Nature*, 21-23.

<sup>50</sup> Washington, *A Sense of Wonder Towards Nature*, 57-58.

<sup>51</sup> Ceballos, - Dirzo. *Biological annihilation via the ongoing sixth mass extinction signaled by vertebrate population losses and declines*, 114. See also, Ripple, et el. *World Scientists' Warning to Humanity*, 67.

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global climate change, toxic emissions, deforestation and the like. These views have far-reaching consequences for the survival of humans. Our world would no longer be the best place unless humans changed their attitude towards nonhuman beings. While the impact and influence of human arrogance continues to grow, it is positive that some philosophers have recently shown worry about ecologically sustainable practices and attitudes. It is consequently critical for mankind to recognize the risk that humans inflict on themselves and act rationally by rejecting any horrible ideologies, worldviews, and practices that do not care for the wellness and continuity of our world. Human superiority and an anthropocentric perspective break natural order and are a disaster not just for humanity as a whole, but also for the achievement of a balanced and sustainable ecological system.

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