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"Anthropocentrism as the Scapegoat of the Environmental Crisis: A Review"

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Anthropocentrism has been claimed to be the root of the global environmental crisis. Based on a multidisciplinary (e.g., environmental philosophy, animal ethics, anthropology, law) and multilingual (English, Spanish, French, German, Japanese) literature review, this article proposes a conceptual analysis of "anthropocentrism" and reconstructs the often implicit argument that links anthropocentrism to the environmental crisis. The variety of usages of the concept of 'anthropocentrism' described in this article reveals many underlying disagreements under the apparent unanimity of the calls to reject anthropocentrism, both regarding what exactly is the root of the problem, and the nature of the possible solutions. It highlights the limitations of the argument of anthropocentrism as the scapegoat of the environmental crisis and identifies two main challenges faced by attempts to go beyond anthropocentrism: an epistemological challenge regarding knowledge and the place of sciences, and a metaethical challenge related to values and cultural pluralism. Beyond the issue of an anthropocentric point of view, the core of the problem might be an intertwinement of views and assumptions that work together to undermine attempts to protect the environment from the greed of some humans, such as the human-nature dichotomy, capitalism, consumerism, industrialism, etc. Finally, this article suggests that making the nuances and the presuppositions that underlie various versions of the anti-anthropocentric rhetoric explicit is necessary to foster constructive dialogue among different anti-anthropocentrism proponents, as well as with their detractors. (Abstract)

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