

BIODIVERSITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE AN ENVIRONMENTAL AESTHETICS VIEWPOINT

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Nature is an unlimited source of vital values - adaptive values - which are the product of biological evolution; nature in this context is used to imply wildlife. In fact, in nature we meet a network of values. The "explosion" of values is closely connected with the occurrence of Homo sapiens. Environmental ethics is referred to as "vital values." After the domination of Biblical views of the world and, also positivistic ones, it is time for an environmental view. A sense of the environmental era is the new view of the world. Lifestyles should be up to the environmental challenge. Culture is specific to the human multidimensional eco-niche; its existence depends on our respecting the standards of ecological normality - environmental quality - so only some of the axiological proposals, influenced by the cultural paradigm, can be teleonomic. Natural forms, which fulfil the criterion of biospheric functionality (ELQ), are naturally good.

Pro-vital behaviours, i.e. inborn skills, can be divided into sexual, nutritional and moral. The first two are connected with the physiological - vegetative - aspects of the life process, but moral behaviours are connected with ELQ. The quality of biological existence is probably evolutionary, primary and constant in reference to moral instincts - sense. Situations of ELQ depreciation, or life endangerment, verify the position of vital values in reference to other human values. These situations are the main stimulus for "moral psychomotrics."

Neonaturalistic evolutionary ethics defines morality with the help of the following characteristics: material; psychological - moral sense as a specific, inborn, emotional reaction motivating adequate, teleonomic behaviour towards a situation of ELQ in danger; and functional - minimisation of suffering and death, ritualisation of aggression, health of social life.

In Homo sapiens, moral values acquire the status of proper values; they are not only secure, but also constitute ELQ as states with intrinsic value. The roots of this relation are grounded in the instinct for propagation, which has as its primary behavioural expression the defence of an offspring's life. Life is always a value, but not always a positive one. Biological existence is not of interest when its quality decreases below a subjectively acceptable level. Fulfilling of moral duties can lead to the loss of biological existence, but the lack of moral value can bring about an unacceptable decrease in ELQ, i.e. in the dimension of dignity. According to neonaturalistic ethics, the proper function of Homo sapiens in the biosphere is the niche of moral responsibility - moral agency - for the future existence of life on the Earth, i.e. defence of panspecific ELQ.

The ability to value creates an adaptational plasticity in organisms. The laws of organic evolution are not axiological laws nor moral norms. Valuing and possessing moral sensitivity are evolutionary facts/products, but not a rule of evolution, since evolution does not indicate such rules. Only treating ELQ as a value gives possibility to living beings to survive transgenerationally.

Valuing means surviving. Homo sapiens is able, on the basis of the genetically programmed possibility to learn, to improve their behaviour during phylogenesis. They can also - within one generation - act better or worse according to interspecific ELQ criteria. The human species can be regarded as poorly or well adapted to the environment of the bio-community. In the case of Homo sapiens, we can talk about evolutionary progress or regression, measured by the functionality of cultural development priorities.

Morally-right behaviour, especially in interspecific relations, is functional for adaptation. Radical naturalistic metaethics treats premises of ethical norms as existential judgements about facts. Aesthetic qualities existing in nature - colours, song, nest architecture - are phenomena significant for adaptation. Thus, the status of aesthetic reactions is instinctive. Aesthetic phenomena could exist both as forms of aggression, and also as signals reducing aggression. Homo sapiens not only discovers natural beauty, but also produces new configurations, which are evaluated as beautiful or ugly, but, none the less, aesthetically valuable. In this classification scheme, culturally rationalised conventional criteria are important.

References

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