

Anthropocentrism, Forest Loss, Corona Virus 2019 and Rainforestation

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Abstract

This study explores the connection of Anthropocentrism, forest loss, Corona Virus 2019 and Rainforestation. Using the qualitative textual interpretative method in light of Hans Georg Gadamer's ontological hermeneutics, this study aims at the following objectives: to understand the connection between the notions of Anthropocentrism to Forest loss; to comprehend the aspects on how forest loss is very much related to the emergence of deadly viruses such as the Corona Virus 2019; and to assess using the existing literature whether or not Rainforestation could address the problem of severe forest exploitation thereby minimizing the chance of deadly viruses to emerge. This study concludes that Anthropocentrism is one of the main causes of deforestation because it is construed to be of value in relation to its utility to humans. Also, the massive deforestation serves as occasions for fatal viruses to emerge since it pushed wild animals to interact with domesticated animals and humans thereby facilitating the transfer of the virus from animals to humans. Lastly, Rainforestation could be a useful innovation to address the challenge of future pandemics

since it brings back biodiversity and ecological functions which are most needed to contain wildlife in their natural habitat.

Keywords: Human centeredness, emerging diseases and environment conservation

Introduction

The natural environment has been challenged for the past decades. Of the things found in nature, the most exploited ones are the forests and the entities that live and depend on it. The gross exploitation of forests for the past years has been caused by the very reason that a lot of things that human beings have deemed useful are related to forests. Forests are paramount to the survival of man through the provision of myriads of goods and services. Such goods include provision of food (for man and animals) in the form of fruits and seeds, leaves and wine. Wood for furniture, pulp and paper, pole and construction among other uses. Non-timber forest products which include medicinal remedies, matches, tooth pick, chewing stick, mat, bamboo, cane, spices, condiments, gum, exudates and fauna products.¹ Said things are the very reason why human beings want to exploit forests to the fullest. People value forests because they are of great use to them. Yet, since they are of great value to people, there has been a rampage on how people treat forests for their own selfish interests.

For many years now, human activities have greatly affected the quality of forests. Commercialization which paved the way for the clearing of forests to give way to roads and residential, commercial or industrial site development initiatives are often referred to as causes of forest fires that result to a great loss of biodiversity in many areas.² These things are

¹ A. A. Aiyeloja, "Forest: Nature at Your Service," *Journal Of Agriculture, Socioeconomics And Sustainable Environment* 1, no. 1 (2013): pp. 35-45.

² Dominick DellaSalla et al., "A Citizen's Call for Ecological Forest Restoration: Forest Restoration Principles and Criteria," *Ecological Restoration* 21, no. 1 (March 2003): pp. 14-23) DOI:10.3368/er.21.1.14

manifestations of human chauvinism that is based on a groundless belief that only humans matter. Thus, if other beings matter at all, they matter only because of their utility to humans. This is the core teaching of Anthropocentrism that the pioneering scholars of environmental philosophy have been fighting to eradicate since the environmental movement started in Australia in the 1970s.³ As a matter of fact, Anthropocentrism, as a concept, is not good for environmental conservation. This attitude among people has seemed to be inspired from Christianity's Holy Scriptures found in Genesis, Chapter 1 Verse 28 that goes "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and every living thing that moves upon the earth".⁴ This may be the reason why trees are cut, wildlife being poached at will and plant life annihilated at a pace never before seen.

Anthropocentrism is the main reason for forest loss in the world today and it is not surprising why the natural environment seems to be always at the receiving end of most undesirable anthropogenic activities. After all, Protagoras' notion of 'man as the measure of all things' may have naturally come to people that they are at the center of the universe and that they can do whatever they like to the things found in nature.⁵ For man to be empowered to have almost complete control of nature for most part of the history of humankind, exploitation of forests would not be an impossible thing. Destruction of forests has improved to a bigger scale as the technology for things designed for forest utilization, or perhaps destruction has also improved through the years. Nevertheless, a

³ Fritz Geraldine Y Fernandez and Guinaldo C Fernandez, "Rainforestation as an Instrument for Sustainable Development: Narratives from the Nagkahiusang Katawhan Sa Esperanza (NAKASE) of Pilar, Camotes Island, Cebu," *Social Ethics Society Journal of Applied Philosophy* 6, no. 1 (April 2020): pp. 45-70.

⁴ Sarah Boslaugh, "Encyclopaedia Britannica," in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., January 11, 2016), <https://www.britannica.com/topic/anthropocentrism>.

⁵ Ted Hayward, "Encyclopedia of Applied Ethics," in *Encyclopedia of Applied Ethics*, ed. Ruth Chadwick (San Diego, California: Academic Press Inc., 1997).

number of people have the belief that limitations of the carrying capacity of the earth's resources are only a minor concern. For these people, new state of the art technologies could address these problems. Hence, one needs not to worry about the exhaustion of the earth's resources in the immediate or remote future.⁶

However, recent researches suggest that forest loss could be attributed as one of the causes of the emergence of deadly forms of viruses. Forests, after all, serve as buffers or shields to human settlements from possible disease outbreaks. Citing various studies from the United Nations and other non-government organizations, emerging infectious diseases in tropical countries, like the Philippines, are aggravated, if not caused, by changes in land and forest cover, particularly deforestation and forest fragmentation. It points out that without forests, more and more diseases that could potentially be harmful or fatal to humans will emerge.⁷ This claim is quite logical since deforestation has indubitably disturbed the balance that is built-in in forests. Disturbing nature would affect its balance since nature has its own interest in maintaining it.⁸ Once the balance in nature is disturbed, elements that inhere in it are affected which eventually give negative or undesirable effects to people. Forests have well-defined balance which is also construed as a value in itself. Such value or balance can be possibly decreased in a given circumstance. Hence, disturbance to the natural environment or to forests should be avoided in order to maintain its balance and value.⁹ Once this balance is

⁶ Sarah Boslaugh, "Anthropocentrism," Encyclopaedia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., January 11, 2016), <https://www.britannica.com/topic/anthropocentrism>.

⁷ Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz, "Deforestation Linked to Emergence of New Diseases," Manila Bulletin (Manila Bulletin, April 2, 2020), <https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/04/02/deforestation-linked-to-emergence-of-new-diseases/?fbclid=IwAR0BuJzagttz6k>

⁸ K K Jensen, "Grundlaget for Miljøprioriteringer," *Jord Og Viden* 38, no. 13 (1994): pp. 21-23.

⁹ Christian Gamborg, "Sustainability and Biodiversity: Ethical Perspectives on Forest Management" (dissertation, The Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University, Department of Animal Science and Animal Health., 2001), pp. 1-249.

disturbed, results could be catastrophic. Yet, if there is one being whom responsibility for such catastrophes can be pinned to, it would be humans themselves. They have the capacity to weight things out and are equipped with rationality to do what they see as right, proper and fit.

Dr. Peter Daszak, President of Ecohealth alliance collaborates with the above-mentioned claim since he also asserted that the frontlines of disease emergence such as the Corona Virus 2019 could be found at the edge of a forest where a large part of it has been cleared to give way to mining or industrial sites. People move in, and when there is no food available, they begin hunting wildlife and start to disturb the balance that is inherent in nature. As similar communities develop in similar areas, they begin to raise animals in larger scales where animals are caged close to each other while there are bats nearby. This gives big chances for viruses to develop since the animals have been placed very close to each other. Forest loss brings wild animals closer to people. There are about 1.5M viruses in wildlife that men of science don't yet know about. With no drugs and no vaccines readily available, people are put at big risk.¹⁰ Yet, the challenges of deadly diseases to humankind have been recorded in the annals of human history. In recent years, there were SARS, MERS-COV and Ebola virus, to name a few. Yet, the most destructive crisis occurred in 1918 where the sickness known as Spanish Flu killed an estimated 500 million people. In the absence of the state of the art medical and biotechnological facilities that this generation enjoys, the citizens of 1918 were made to wear masks, observe physical distancing and were prohibited from indulging into large crowd gatherings. This was accompanied with the closure of public recreational facilities, institutions of learnings and commercial places.¹¹

¹⁰ "This Pandemic," *Corona Virus Explained* (Los Gatos, California: Netflix.com/Netflix, Inc., April 2020).

¹¹ History.com Editors, "Spanish Flu," *History* (A&E Television Networks, October 12, 2010), <https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-i/1918-flu-pandemic>

Looking into how the people of 1918 have done in slowing the virus, the current generation of the world citizens have followed what were done in addressing the Spanish Flu of 1918 in addressing the current Corona Virus Pandemic. In many parts of the world, including the Philippines, lockdowns and community quarantines have already been implemented. Gatherings of large crowds are no longer permitted; establishments are closed except those providing essential things and services, while people are urged to situate themselves from a considerable distance from others at all times if possible. Hence, learning from the 1918 strategies in slowing a potent virus has seemed a bit working in the present times. Nevertheless, taking into consideration that emerging diseases like the Corona Virus 2019 may have been caused by massive deforestation, existing reforestation strategies may also be utilized in addressing the problem of forest loss that has recently been considered as one of the causes for the emergence of deadly diseases like the Corona Virus 2019. Hence, since Corona Virus 2019 has been addressed by old school techniques like social distancing and home quarantine, forest loss to prevent the said disease to continuously emerge ad infinitum could also be addressed by a two-decade-old environment conservation innovation referred to as Rainforestation. This paper explores the relations among Anthropocentrism, forest loss, the Corona Virus 2019 and a reforestation strategy referred to as Rainforestation. As an environment conservation innovation, its effects have already been felt by people who opted to adopt it as a strategy. With the new development of the connection between emerging diseases and the destruction of forests, Rainforestation may be a good instrument to address this concern.

Thus, in the thrust to investigate the connection among the concepts of Anthropocentrism, the reality of forest loss, the emergence of the Corona Virus 2019 deadly disease and the Rainforestation reforestation innovation, this study would examine literatures that have substantially delved into topics

involving the things mentioned earlier. Consequently, this study would delve into the interpretation of texts in analyzing said literatures. Specifically, this study aims to understand the connection between the notions of Anthropocentrism to Forest loss, Comprehend the aspects on how forest loss as triggered by Anthropocentrism is very much related to the emergence of deadly viruses such as the Corona Virus 2019 as well as assess from existing literatures whether or not Rainforestation could address the problem of severe forest exploitation thereby minimizing the chance of deadly viruses to emerge because of deforestation. With these things given, the authors of this paper would be as faithful as possible in deciphering the meaning of the texts that are taken into consideration in this study.

The Role of Anthropocentrism in Environmental Destruction

Anthropocentrism has been referred to as a means for environmental or forest degradation since the start of the environmental movement in Australia in the 1970s.¹² Looking at the long-held belief that only human beings matter, exploiting what exist in nature for their well-being can be very well justified and accepted. From the beginnings of human history, human beings have depended on nature for their survival. Yet, as the world changes, advancement in science and technology has also changed the behavior of human beings toward the natural environment itself. For instance, human beings' behavior towards forests dramatically evolved over the years. From a mere source of food, medicine and other forest products essential to life, humans' interest in the forest has greatly altered to the extent of cutting trees for timber and catching or killing of animals for trade which always translate to higher income and a surplus of financial gains. This is here that environmental

¹² Andrew Brennan, "Environmental Ethics," Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, June 3, 2002, accessed May 7, 2018, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethicsenvironmental/?PHPSESSID=95e59f66d429edbcf3cc2f98ac5a0175>

philosophers have started to argue that human greed has resulted to the detriment to the well-being of forests and the resources that exist therein. This greed has always been anchored on human centeredness that boils down to the development of behavior that looks at things as only related to humans in terms of their necessity. In a way, only human beings matter and other entities in nature matter only if they matter to humans. Yet, looking at another angle of the use of forest, people's use of it may not result to be negative and undesirable. In fact, an anthropocentric view referred to as "resourcism" which views forests as a resource for human consumption and advocates for the "wise use" of forests. Yes, without a clear definition of what "wise use" stands for and really is, this thinking could be used to justify human greed in the over-exploitation of the natural environment and the world's existing forests.

Through the years, Anthropocentrism has paved the way for environment and forest destruction in a variety of ways. In the Philippines for instance, major causes of forest loss often point to the destruction of primary forests by both legal and illegal logging for personal and commercial purposes as well as the destruction of secondary forests for upland agriculture.¹³ Looking at the two main causes of forest loss in the Philippines, it is quite discernible that the endpoint of said causes is geared toward augmenting the well-being of humans while at the same time alleviating the sad plight of forests. This characterized the essence of Anthropocentrism that espouses the notion that everything in the world is of value only if they are of value to human beings.¹⁴ This definition gives Anthropocentrism a connotation that, as a concept, does not sit well with human beings' effort for nature conservation.

¹³ Edwino Fernando, *Classifying Natural and Restored Forests Containing Primary, Secondary Growth or Residual Forests*. (Manila, Philippines: PANA Rainforestation Initiative, 2016)

¹⁴ Helen Kopnina et al., "Anthropocentrism: More than Just a Misunderstood Problem," in *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 31, no. 1 (January 18, 2018)

The reason why Anthropocentrism is often criticized as the main reason for forest loss is that many human practices today do appear to put concern for human interests, and even for relatively trivial human preferences, above any consideration for non-human interests.¹⁵ Have human beings think of the interest of the beings that live inside forests such as the animals, the birds and the living organisms that live beneath the soil underneath the forest, then considerable number of trees and forests have been left to thrive in support to the interests of non-human entities. Yet, reality manifests the opposite since, most of the time, human beings do not care for other non-human beings that they co-exist within this world. Thus, Anthropocentrism appears as a problem to be solved. To understand it, therefore, means understanding what those other interests are. Certainly, the idea of interests cannot be taken in too strict a sense, but it is certainly not meaningless to speak of interests of trees, animals, or even other plant species, in broad terms of 'unimpeded development of species capacities to thrive.'¹⁶ In sum, it can be safely asserted that once Anthropocentrism is placed in check, then it would be the time for non-human entities to flourish to the fullest.

Anthropocentrism's Role in the Emergence of Deadly Viruses such as the Corona Virus 2019

As mentioned in the earlier part of this paper, forest loss has been primarily attributed to Anthropocentrism. Human centeredness has paved the way for a variety of undesirable anthropogenic activities that have resulted in things that threatened human beings' existence. The loss of forests through the years has greatly reduced natural wildlife habitats. This forces wild animals to move closer to human settlements, thus, making them live close to domesticated animals and to people. As forests are destroyed, wildlife habitats are also destroyed.

¹⁵ Ted Hayward, "Encyclopedia of Applied Ethics," in *Encyclopedia of Applied Ethics*, ed. Ruth Chadwick (San Diego, California: Academic Press Inc., 1997).

¹⁶ Ibid.

This causes wild animals to disperse along with the viruses in their bodies. This paves the way for viruses to find alternative hosts such as human beings.¹⁷ Yet, a lot of people tend to disregard this fact because of economic interests. In Brazil, for instance, there have been instances where the government has financially supported the clearing of forests for the establishment of agricultural sites and communities within the vicinities of said sites.¹⁸ In Indonesia, forests are cleared at will to give way to palm oil plantations which provided income to the government. These deforestation activities have been fast-tracked by the system of corruption in the government, the military and people who have authority in forestry.¹⁹ These activities are not right as far as morality and conservation are concerned. As stated many times earlier, forests provide basic ecosystems services that have been proven vital for human existence. Clearing a forest for economic purposes is not the right thing. People should do things right and protect forests for their survival's sake. Hence, when people just do what is right in relation to their involvement with Mother Nature, nature would just remain intact and would continue to support the lives of people.

The natural environment in its unexploited state has served as a buffer between human beings and unknown viruses for many years already. For instance, deforestation in the Amazon has resulted in the increasing number of malaria cases since mosquitoes used to live in forested areas. The same is true with the case of Ebola as human beings have started to invade

¹⁷ Marie Quinney, "COVID-19 and Nature Are Linked. So Should Be the Recovery.," *Nature Action Agenda* (World Economic Forum, April 14, 2020), <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/04/covid-19-nature-deforestation-recovery/?fbclid=IwAR2XfmN>

¹⁸ Philip Fearnside, "Business as Usual: A Resurgence of Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon," *Yale Environment* 360 (Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, April 18, 2017), <https://e360.yale.edu/features/business-as-usual-a-resurgence-of-deforestation-in-the-brazilian-amazon>.

¹⁹ Osama Eldeeb, Petr Prochazca, and Mansoor Maitah, "Causes for Deforestation in Indonesia: Corruption and Palm Tree Plantation," *Asian Social Science* 11, no. 27 (November 30, 2015): pp. 120-124, <https://doi.org/DOI:10.5539/ass.v11n27p120>.

wildlife habitats. A recent study has concluded that forest loss is one of the causes of the animal to human disease transmissions in Uganda and also found out that anthropogenic activities are one of the main causes of this problem.²⁰ Thus, even if one could not certainly connect Corona Virus 2019 (COVID 19) directly to forest loss at this time, existing data show that a number of infectious diseases have originated from wild animals that have come in close contact with humans because of deforestation. AIDS originated from monkeys, while SARS is thought of to have originated from a still undetermined wild animal. For the last five decades, the world loses more than half of its wildlife population. Interestingly, the number of emerging fatal diseases and viruses have also quadrupled during these times.²¹ Yet, one has to take note that Corona Virus 2019 is a zoonotic disease. It means that it is a virus that has been transmitted from animals to humans. As the world is struggling to address the COVID 19 pandemic, conservationists have asserted that the best way to prevent this problem to re-emerge in the future, forest and wildlife habitats must be preserved at all costs. With this, wild animals that serve as carriers of these deadly viruses are contained in the wild where they live far away from human settlements.²² This runs contrary to the essence of Anthropocentrism. But in order to save humans, this thing has to be necessarily done otherwise, it will cause negative repercussions to human beings themselves.

²⁰ Marie Quinney, "COVID-19 and Nature Are Linked. So Should Be the Recovery.," Nature Action Agenda (World Economic Forum, April 14, 2020), <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/04/covid-19-nature-deforestation-recovery/?fbclid=IwAR2XfmN>

²¹ Ibid.

²² Jhesset Enano, "Wildlife Trafficking, a Recipe for next Zoonotic Disease Outbreak," Philippine Daily Inquirer (Internews' Earth Journalism Network, March 30, 2020), <https://earthjournalism.net/stories/wildlife-trafficking-a-recipe-for-next-zoonotic-disease-outbreak>

Rainforestation as a Viable Solution to the Problem of the Emergence of Deadly Viruses.

Wild animal trading is not the only cause that COVID 19 and other deadly diseases have been transmitted from animals to humans. Biodiversity loss which comes as an offshoot of gross forest exploitation, has enhanced the chances of these virus-carrying wild animals to leave the wild. The absence of a healthy ecosystem that serves as the life support system of these virus carriers is no longer present. Hence, these wild animals have been necessitated to leave their habitat to search for alternative shelter and source of food. Unfortunately, these animals end up settling near human communities and thereby, paving the way for the virus that these animals have carried in their bodies to be transmitted to other domesticated animals and then to humans. Just very recently, scientists have recognized the fact that the care for forests could be one of the effective ways to stop the spread of deadly diseases.²³

In the Philippines, one of the means to address forest and wildlife habitat loss is through Rainforestation. Rainforestation is an innovation designed to make use of unproductive lands by planting native tree species which have not been widely used in the Philippines. Rainforestation's basic principle is to bring back forest loss in empty and deforested former forest lands so that loss biodiversity would be recovered. With biodiversity being brought back, there would also be greater chances to bring back a healthy ecosystem within the reforested lands. This program has been referred to as Rainforestation since it mainly aims to bring back the original rainforest made of Philippine native tree species. Hence, if the original rainforest is re-established, it follows also that basic

²³ Eric Roston, "Want to Stop the Next Pandemic? Start Protecting Wildlife Habitats," Time (Bloomberg, April 8, 2020), https://time.com/5817363/wildlife-habitats-disease-pandemics/?fbclid=IwAR2TGFgTf7QvJBI5EWuTFT_g6j5jHIpEvo3VXXyq1uXqu4OPFF T_gUbxY54)

ecosystem services would also re-emerge which could support farmers who live within its vicinity. This would pave the way for sustainable farming enough to support farmers and their families.²⁴ With this, people no longer need to hunt and sell wild animals since this is already a viable and sustainable reforestation innovation. There are also lesser chances for exotic and wild animals and birds to move nearer to human settlements since Rainforestation has the capacity to bring back biodiversity loss as well as basic ecological functions which are most needed by wild animals and plants. With Rainforestation, wildlife could find a home to contain themselves and thrive. Hence, viruses found in animals are contained also within the confines of a vibrant forest. With this, Rainforestation can also be construed as an instrument in promoting the biocentric approach of caring for the natural environment. Rainforestation is designed to bring back basic ecosystem services that were lost years ago, and at the same time, provide shelter to other beings dependent on trees and forests. Hence, with Rainforestation, human beings have complied with their responsibilities of providing animals and plant a place of habitation.

Hence, since Rainforestation's implementation in the 1990s, it has brought a variety of benefits for people who enter into Rainforestation conservation adoption. Years after Rainforestation implementation, people have noticed a significant return of biodiversity within the Rainforestation site. According to the study of Fernandez and Bande²⁵, the Rainforestation adopters have claimed that the river, for instance, has again teemed with traditionally edible freshwater fish that enabled them to catch fish for their consumption. The

²⁴ Guinaldo C Fernandez and Marlito Jose M Bande, "Rainforestation and Sustainable Development: The Lived Experience of the Four Individual Adopters from the Visayas Region in the Philippines.," *Recoletos Multidisciplinary Research Journal* 7, no. 2 (December 2019): pp. 29-46, <https://doi.org/DOI:https://doi.org/10.32871/rmrj1907.02.03>

²⁵ Guinaldo C Fernandez and Marlito Jose M Bande, "Rainforestation Implementation and Durkheim's Notion of Mechanical Solidarity: From the Experiences of the Pioneering Adopters of the Cienda San Vicente Farmers Association in Baybay City, Leyte," *Journal of Agriculture and Technology Management* 21, no. 1 (2018): pp. 8-16)

water in the river is no longer problematic even during the dry season and that birds have come back to the area. Moreover, the area around the Rainforestation site has also become conducive to farming in the sense that water in the river has become available all year round.²⁶ With Rainforestation, the people have been given the chance to earn their keep and at the same time co-exist with the animals in the forested areas without them hurting each other. With this, Rainforestation could also be attributed as being in line with the ecocentric approach to environment conservation.²⁷

Moreover, Rainforestation has also been tested to bring back the environment to its former non-exploited state that it has again become a conducive wildlife habitat. With Rainforestation, soil fertility has been restored and water availability has become stable because of the conservation of the trees in the watershed areas. Rainforestation has not only been developed to shed light to the ecology and value of native tree species, it has also been developed to stop the worsening situation of the use of exotic trees in reforestation efforts in the Philippines. Aside from that, Rainforestation is also suitable for landslide mitigation, if not eradication, in mountainous deforested areas. Moreover, it is also an appropriate way to augment the quality of Philippine watersheds as well as conserving forests for wildlife habitat in tropical countries. Rainforestation could also enhance the quality of river banks by planting it with native trees that thrive well near rivers.²⁸ With the above-mentioned things, it is not very difficult to assert that Rainforestation has also provided environmental benefits to humankind. Its end result of ecological restoration has enabled people to enjoy the basic ecosystems services given free by nature as well as putting wild animals at bay from human

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Christian Gamborg, "Sustainability and Biodiversity: Ethical Perspectives on Forest Management" (dissertation, The Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University, Department of Animal Science and Animal Health., 2001), pp. 1-249.

²⁸ Marlito Jose M. Bande et al., *Rainforestation Case Study: The Cienda San Vicente Farmers' Association Experience* (CT and Panama City: Yale University and Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute., 2016).

settlements since their natural habitats have been restored and been kept intact.²⁹ Looking at the essence of Rainforestation as an environment conservation innovation, it would not be hard to think that have a small fraction of the Philippine society would go into it, forest loss, habitat loss and the circumstance where wild birds and animals would venture into human settlements would have been minimized. With the rise of highly infectious diseases attributed to forest and wildlife habitat loss, Rainforestation could be a viable option to address the said problem. Yet, economic gains from deforestation could again put a challenge to wildlife habitat conservation. Nevertheless, the current experience of dealing with this global pandemic could enable environmental exploiters to think otherwise. The cost of dealing a deadly zoonotic virus is just too costly in exchange for financial gains at the expense of the natural environment.³⁰

Conclusion

This study concludes that there is a significant connection between Anthropocentrism and forest loss. Anthropocentrism, as construed by environmental philosophers, has explicitly manifested that human nature enables human beings to put themselves at the pinnacle of beings that exist in this world. With this, they are above all other beings and that all other beings are determined in relation to their utility to human beings. Hence, other beings matter only if they matter to humans since only human beings matter. With this, humans tend to exploit the

²⁹ Guinaldo C Fernandez and Marlito Jose M Bande, "Rainforestation and Sustainable Development: The Lived Experience of the Four Individual Adopters from the Visayas Region in the Philippines.," *Recoletos Multidisciplinary Research Journal* 7, no. 2 (December 2019): pp. 29-46, [https://doi.org/10.32871/rmrj1907.02.03](https://doi.org/DOI:https://doi.org/10.32871/rmrj1907.02.03)

³⁰ Eric Roston, "Want to Stop the Next Pandemic? Start Protecting Wildlife Habitats," *Time* (Bloomberg, April 8, 2020), https://time.com/5817363/wildlife-habitats-disease-pandemics/?fbclid=IwAR2TGFgTf7QvJBI5EWuTFT_g6j5HIpEvo3VXXyq1uXqu4OPFF T_gUbxY54)

things in nature at will that eventually results in the destruction of forests and affected the lives of other beings living and depending on them. Forests have great value to humankind. And it is because of this value to humans that forests have been grossly exploited for quite some time now. Yet, people have choices on how to deal with forests. They have the option to go for preservationism which does not really oppose the use of forest but focuses on the protection of forests for non-economic reasons.³¹ But as manifested in the greater part of this study, people have greatly opted for the anthropocentric option which has given them economic gains. With this, people have tended to over-exploit forests and the natural environment which have caused forests, ecosystems and biodiversity loss. After all, people have the freedom to choose and they decided to choose otherwise.

Moreover, this study also concludes that forest loss triggered by Anthropocentrism relates to the emergence of deadly viruses such as the Corona Virus 2019. Recent studies have arrived at relevant conclusions that forest loss has pushed wildlife to migrate far into the places where human settlements abound. Said studies have also asserted that viruses abound in wild animals and that when there are occasions where wild animals, domesticated animals and human beings come close to each other, there is the possibility for fatal viruses to emerge. Recent deadly diseases that the present generation have confronted find their origins in wild animals. Hence, it is best for wild animals to be contained in their natural habitats which require the care and preservation of forests. This claim is quite logical. Have forests not been depleted in many parts of the world, there would have been lesser chances for wild animals to venture into places where human beings have settled. They could have been contained in their habitat.

³¹ P List, ed., *Environmental Ethics and Forestry: A Reader* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University Press, 2000).

Man lives and exists in nature. Nature is a necessary component for man's survival. Hence, man should take good care of nature so that it would not lose its balance thereby keeping things intact and keep things natural and harmonious in the world.

Lastly, this study concludes that Rainforestation is a Filipino innovation that can successfully address the problem of forest loss and the emergence of deadly viruses. With a reforestation innovation that made use of Philippine native tree species in rehabilitating denuded lands, biodiversity loss could be recovered as well as the basic ecological functions in the area. With a vibrant forest composed of native trees, wildlife could thrive and be contained in a specific suitable area. Rainforestation mitigates the spread of deadly viruses since it provides a conducive space for wildlife to live and to thrive. Hence, they would not be pushed to the edge of the territories of humans thereby lessening their chances of interaction as well as transmission of diseases. If there is one lesson that each human has to learn, this lesson would be to take care of nature in order to care for wildlife that lives and depend on it. Caring for nature may be easier said than done. But one thing is sure. It would be less expensive than controlling a fatal virus that could annihilate people by the thousands.

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