

“Applying Environmental Ethics to the Corporate World of America”

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1. ABSTRACT

Environmental ethics is a branch of philosophy that studies the relationship that people have with the environment, pertaining to their moral standards. Central to environmental ethics are questions such as, “are humans anthropocentric when interacting with nature?”, “do animals have rights?”, and “should humans limit the use of environmental resources, today, to maintain their existence for generations to come?”. Standards of morality, concerning the interaction of humans with their natural environment, will be analyzed to provide a better grasp of how we should go about preserving natural resources. In this study, the focus will be to attempt to provide insight as to how modern environmentalism can affect the economy and the ecology, or sustainability, of our natural environment through an objective analysis of available literature. Corporations that use environmental resources to produce goods, to be sold in the marketplace, will be taken into account to identify how committed they are to applying ethical standards to the environment and to identify how environmental ethics can be applied to effect change. The approach to this study will be more analytical than scientific. One may note that there are corporate entities that sustain the environment for the future, promote ‘good’ ecological morals and still make large profits. These are the corporations that modern environmentalists want to support, due to their commitment to the sustainability of the environment. The goal of this research is to be able to ascertain how corporations within the United States should apply ethical standards

2. INTRODUCTION

Throughout human history, people have been anthropocentric, or human-centered, when it comes to their relationship with the natural environment. Humans have demonstrated the consistent belief that they are not so much a part of the natural environment but, rather, that they have been destined to control it. When the topic of environmental ethics arises, questions that govern the way we care about, and use our environment come to light. In America, the leaders of most corporations are concerned with monetary gain only, the result of which is a disregard for the natural environment. This leads to the depletion of many of the earth’s natural resources.

4. DISCUSSION

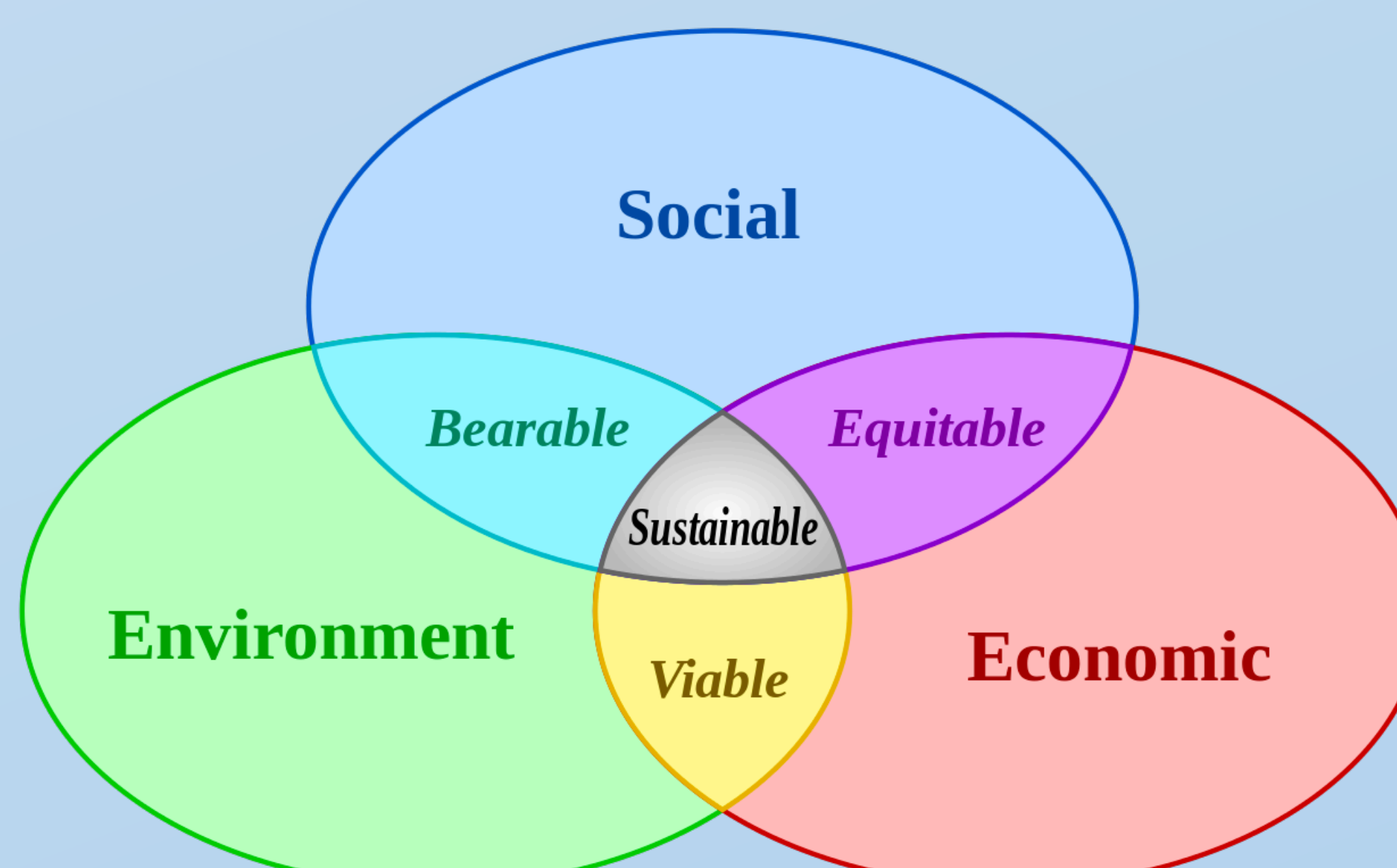
- In what ways has the anthropocentric unconscious biased perspective of people negatively affected the natural environment?
- What regulations can corporations infuse into their business plans that will preserve environmental resources while still maintaining an attractive profit margin?
- The polar bear is a familiar animal to most people, having seen them in zoos or at fairs, but will our children be able to experience the same pleasure or will they only be able to view them through pictures?

5. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

As members of the only species on the planet whose collective actions, over many generations, have had significant deleterious effects on the natural environment, we must strive to avoid our historic anthropocentric relationship with our natural environment and must maintain our own awareness that we are a part of our natural environment so that we, even those of us who manage corporations, can co-exist with nature. The adoption of such a commitment to our natural environment by leaders of American corporations would serve to stem the tide of environmental pollution and the depletion of natural resources, and, thus, would allow the natural environment to be preserved for future generations.

3. OBJECTIVES

To identify some of the problems which result from environmental destruction, and to apply the views of some environmental ethicists to the environmentally destructive actions of major corporations thereby, providing an ethical standard to which major corporations in America should be held.



6. REFERENCES

- <http://www.nsf.gov/od/oia/programs/epscor/index.jsp>
 - http://www.reformed.org/webfiles/antithesis/index.html?mainframe=/webfiles/antithesis/v1n2/ant_v1n2_environ.html
 - <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-environmental>
- The Ethics Resource Site**