

ASSIGNMENT: In his article, Macfarlane argues that "the Anthropocene has administered - and will administer - a massive jolt to the imagination." Considering that your prompt pivots on why the discussion on environmentalism is (or is not) important, make a connection between Quinn's ideas and Macfarlane's argument.

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The Hope for a New Paradise

When is the last time you stopped to think about what the Earth will physically be like in 5 generations? This, unfortunately, is a thought that seems to rarely run through the heads of people today. Recently, someone said to me "the oceans are for the fish and the Earth is for humans." Clearly, the minds of people today are not in the right place if we cannot see the world as more than something made for just our species. In an ideal situation, the world we're living in would have clear waters and be pollution free. Until that point comes, conversations around environmentalism are important to try and inform others of the destruction being caused for the planet and our future generations.

Before being able to help the environment, a change needs to be made - to change the way the environment is viewed. Although it is helpful to compost, recycle, and cut down on energy usage, it's not exciting or interesting for all. People need a spark - a positive outcome to look forward to in order to make their work mean something. This inspiring thought is what the world will be like for generations to come, and knowing you can help make that difference is compelling. "We need more than to be scolded" and that instead we "need a vision of [ourselves] that inspires [us]" (Quinn 243-244). Instead of telling the world what's wrong, the conversation

around environmentalism can give people something positive to encourage them. Scolding a child doesn't make them want to stop - they need a positive reinforcement to make them change their behavior. An inspiring vision is more effective than a vision of doom. People are more likely to change their ways when given a hope, or something positive to look forward to. Telling them everything wrong is only promising to give them a negative view on the environment.

The conversation is important because humans think they can justify actions as good for themselves, but long term they will be harming the planet. Without realizing the effects our actions have on the future, we say they are good for us now. Farmers can justify having a surplus of food as good because it will help to feed the starving people across the nations. However, this leads to overpopulation which will have a negative effect on the future. "Whatever I can justify doing is good, and whatever I can not justify doing is evil" (Quinn 162). In this state of mind, people will continue doing 'good' things for themselves, oblivious to the fact it can harm the Earth. Having a conversation around environmentalism is important because everyone's eyes need to be opened to the consequences of their actions. A theme here is that humans fear the unknown. Because we struggle separating right from wrong, whatever we can justify doing is good. This is a fair justification, being we know no other way. However, in continuing on with this state of mind for generations, the decline of the human population may come sooner than expected.

People are beginning to see the destruction they are causing for the planet. At this point, the damage is recognizable. Conversations around environmentalism need to be continued so everyone is able to see what is going on around them. "The Anthropocene has administered - and will administer - a massive jolt to the imagination" (Mcfarlane). With humans finally starting to

see the Anthropocene, their minds are being 'jolted'. Through this, new ideas will form that can hopefully save us from the trap of destruction we've put ourselves in. This is the imagination piece that Mcfarlane is speaking of. Information about the Anthropocene must be taught to people before they are able to solve the problems created.

We must picture ourselves as playing a part in the Earth since it has begun, not just the time period we are living in right now. Having a mindset that only the time humans have been here matters prevents the belief that at a time the Earth was not affected by pollution and human destruction. With our minds in that frame, it also makes it hard to believe there is a way Earth can regain the beauty it once had. Speaking of the Anthropocene, Mcfarlane says "it requires that we imagine ourselves inhabitants not just of human lifetime or generation, but also of 'deep time'". To be able to make a change, minds must be shifted to picture that the human population has always been here and always will be. This shows that there is importance in putting yourself in a place where you can imagine the past, present and future. If we continue to live with the idea that humans are only on the planet until the destruction gets the better of the world, that's exactly what will occur.

The written arguments around environmentalism, although extremely important, are not enough to fix the problem; it will require a greater force. Literature, art and poetry are weak. They can't do much because it is almost impossible to encompass the idea of environmentalism. "It will indeed take omnipotence to fix the problem without calamity" (Hamilton). In order for a change to be made, everyone will need to work together and take action, as opposed to only a fraction of the people discussing the problem. The human hole of destruction put in the Earth is deep already and the only thing capable of pulling us out is the work of ourselves. We need

omnipotence, a very strong power, to rid the problem without causing a greater destruction. In other words, teamwork is the only thing that can make the dream work. The ultimate goal is to put the planet back to the place it was before humans tried and failed in making it a paradise. Completely shifting the state of the Earth is an enormous job - one that can only be solved through the work of everyone together.

Another reason why the conversation is necessary is because some people don't want to change. They are incapable of seeing past their ways to realize there is a problem in desperate need of being solved. In doing what they want to do, they don't care about the future generations or the world itself. Part of this problem is in instant gratification; getting what they want, when they want it, is all they care about. "The argument absolves us all of the need to change our ways, which is music to the ears of political conservatives" (Hamilton). People like this believe it is impossible to get ourselves out of the damage we've gotten into. They, unlike some, can dismiss the problem without a second thought only because one argument is telling them that. In simpler forms, the problem is humans are afraid of change. There will always be people that disagree with anything said or done. For this reason, the conversation around environmentalism is important - for those types of people. They are the ones that need to be informed of the life threatening problem at hand.

Whether you are a political conservative, active recycler, or have no opinion on these problems, the conversation around environmentalism is something you should become involved in. Through this, the paradise we've been searching for for centuries may be found. In order for this to be achieved, everyone needs to have an active role in the conversation.

Works Cited

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