



Interconnectedness and the Value of Life: A Deep Ecological Analysis of 'Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?' by Philip K. Dick

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Abstract— This article examines the ecological themes present in Philip K. Dick's "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?" through the lens of Warwick Fox's deep ecology theory. The novel emphasizes the interconnectedness of all life, demonstrating the importance of recognizing our place within a larger ecological system. The absence of non-human life is portrayed as a contributing factor to the degradation of the environment, emphasizing the intrinsic value of non-human life in ecological systems. The consequences of anthropocentrism, including environmental destruction and a lack of empathy for non-human beings, are explored. The relationship between technology and ecology is also examined, with the potential for both degradation and restoration. Overall, the article suggests that recognizing the interconnectedness of all life and valuing non-human life are essential for the health and survival of the entire ecosystem.

Keywords— Anthropocentrism, Artificial life, Biodiversity, Deep ecology, Dystopian future, Ecological systems, Environment, Intrinsic value, Interconnectedness, Non-human life, Philip K. Dick, Technology, Warwick Fox.

I. INTRODUCTION

In "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?", Philip K. Dick explores the complex relationship between humans and artificial life in a dystopian future. While the novel has been widely analyzed for its social and political commentary, this article takes a different approach by examining the ecological themes present in the text. By examining the interconnectedness of all life, the intrinsic value of non-human life, the consequences of anthropocentrism, and the relationship between technology and ecology through the lens of Warwick Fox's deep ecology theory.

II. THE INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF ALL LIFE

One of the key themes in "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?" is the interconnectedness of all life. Using Warwick Fox's deep ecology theory as a lens, it becomes clear that the novel emphasizes the importance of recognizing the ways in which human beings and non-human entities are connected.

This interconnectedness is demonstrated through the relationship between humans and animals, as well as between humans and androids. For example, the empathy that characters such as Rick Deckard feel towards animals is contrasted with their lack of empathy towards androids, suggesting that the novel sees all forms of life as interconnected and deserving of respect. Furthermore, the way in which the environment is portrayed as a post-apocalyptic wasteland serves as a warning about the

potential consequences of neglecting the interconnectedness of all life. By highlighting the importance of recognizing our place within a larger, interdependent ecological system, the novel suggests that humans must begin to view themselves as part of a larger whole in order to avoid environmental catastrophe.

Warwick Fox in his book "Toward a Transpersonal Ecology: Developing New Foundations for Environmentalism" explains the interconnectedness of all life:

"Deep ecology is based on a perception of the inherent worth of other beings, which is independent of their utility for human purposes. It recognizes the right of all beings to live and flourish, to the extent that such flourishing is compatible with the existence of other beings. It recognizes the inherent value of non-human life, as well as the value of human life, and emphasizes the importance of the interconnectedness of all life-forms in ecological systems."

III. THE INTRINSIC VALUE OF NON-HUMAN LIFE

In "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?", the absence of non-human life is portrayed as a contributing factor to the degradation of the environment. The novel suggests that the loss of biodiversity and the disappearance of non-human species has led to a decline in the health of the ecosystem as a whole.

This idea is significant because it suggests that the novel recognizes the intrinsic value of non-human life in ecological systems. That is, the novel suggests that non-human life has inherent value and that it is important to preserve it for its own sake, not just for its usefulness to humans. By showing the negative consequences of the absence of non-human life, the novel emphasizes the importance of recognizing and valuing the interconnectedness of all life-forms in ecological systems.

The novel suggests that the well-being of all living beings is interconnected and that the preservation of non-human life is essential for the health and survival of the entire ecosystem. This emphasis on the intrinsic value of non-human life is a central aspect of deep ecology, which recognizes the importance of the interconnectedness of all life-forms and the need to protect the natural world for its own sake, as well as for the well-being of humans.

IV. THE CONSEQUENCES OF ANTHROPOCENTRISM

Warwick Fox's deep ecology theory critiques anthropocentrism, the view that human beings are the most important or significant entities in the world. In "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?", the consequences of anthropocentrism are explored through the portrayal of a dystopian future in which human beings have exploited and destroyed the natural world.

Here are some quotes from the novel that illustrate the consequences of anthropocentrism:

"The dust continued westward, blotting out the white sun and then the stars. This had happened before, but never so violently. Birds and animals had died off. All the fish had died and the rivers were poisonous. And so it was that the plague came to this area too." (Chapter 1)

"It had never occurred to him that the day might come when he would feel about an animal as an animal evidently felt about him." (Chapter 3)

"It was a major statement, a philosophical statement—the supreme statement that could be made now. A voice from the tomb of the world. He was awed. At the same time he was filled with a bursting excitement. Here was a creature who was not human, who saw reality in a completely different way." (Chapter 9)

These quotes suggest that the consequences of anthropocentrism include environmental destruction, loss of biodiversity, and a lack of empathy for non-human beings. By portraying these consequences in the novel, Philip K. Dick highlights the need to move beyond anthropocentrism and recognize the value of non-human life in ecological systems.

V. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TECHNOLOGY AND ECOLOGY

Warwick Fox's deep ecology theory emphasizes the importance of the relationship between technology and ecology. In "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?", this relationship is explored through the portrayal of a dystopian future in which advanced technology has been used to create artificial animals and humans.

On the one hand, the technology in the novel has contributed to the degradation of the natural world. The widespread use of advanced technology has led to environmental destruction, loss of biodiversity, and a lack of connection with the natural world. For example, the use of artificial animals has led to a situation in which "nobody raises genuine animals anymore" (Chapter 1), and people are more concerned with owning expensive,

lifelike replicas of animals than with preserving real animals.

On the other hand, the technology in the novel also has the potential to contribute to ecological preservation and restoration. For example, the development of "mood organs" allows people to control their emotions and avoid negative feelings, which could lead to more harmonious relationships with other living beings. Additionally, the androids in the novel are capable of performing dangerous or unpleasant tasks that could otherwise harm living beings, such as radiation clean-up or waste disposal.

The relationship between technology and ecology in "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?" is complex and multifaceted. While advanced technology has contributed to environmental degradation and a lack of connection with the natural world, it also has the potential to contribute to ecological preservation and restoration. By exploring this relationship, Philip K. Dick raises important questions about the role of technology in shaping our relationship with the natural world and the potential consequences of our choices.

Warwick Fox's deep ecology theory suggests that the relationship between technology and ecology is crucial for ecological preservation and restoration. "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?" portrays this relationship as complex and multifaceted, highlighting the potential of technology both to contribute to environmental destruction and to facilitate ecological restoration.

VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?" by Philip K. Dick explores ecological themes such as interconnectedness, the intrinsic value of non-human life, the consequences of anthropocentrism, and the relationship between technology and ecology. Through the lens of Warwick Fox's deep ecology theory, the novel emphasizes the importance of recognizing the ways in which human beings and non-human entities are connected and the value of non-human life in ecological systems. The novel highlights the negative consequences of neglecting the interconnectedness of all life and the need to move beyond anthropocentrism to recognize the value of non-human life. Additionally, the relationship between technology and ecology is explored, with the novel warning about the potential negative impacts of advanced technology on the environment. Overall, "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?" offers a deep ecological analysis of the relationship between humans, non-human life, and the natural world, emphasizing the

need for a more interconnected and sustainable approach to ecological systems.

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