

Science Is Moral

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I AM COMFORTABLE¹ that my own moral sense is strongly informed by scientific inquiry. It is informed less by my former Christian faith, and less by many of the dogmas and practices of other faiths in the world today. How then can I make such an arguably bold statement about science? Because science and religion press upon us in fundamentally incompatible ways:

Religion tends to *centralise the self, promoting ego.*

Science tends to *decentralise the self, demoting ego.*

And it is by decentralising the self that empathy may grow. I consider these examples:

Descartes' animals. Descartes viewed animals as brute organic machines, unlike himself. Therefore, animals could be treated brusquely and mechanically. After all, a machine cannot be abused, right? Today, science has shown that we too are in fact animals. Like all other animals, we are utterly contingent and coexistent. And so science exhorts me to treat animals as I would like myself to be treated. It is this insight which has impelled me to not eat animals. The insight comes from science, not from my former Christian faith. Christian dogma is loudly silent about any personhood which animals may share with us. In fact, did not Jesus himself allow a herd of innocent pigs to die?

As science diminishes my sense of superiority over other forms of life on Earth, I am being decentralised.

Geo-biosphere limits. Remarkably, scientists reveal with increasing clarity the limited capacity of Earth's geo-biosphere to sustain life. Habitat destruction, ecosystem destruction, species diversity loss, climate change, and so on; we all know this by now. And so how we interact with Earth and her resources now has moral attribute. This moral attribute is something new, and it comes from science, not from religion.

As I am nudged to live in sympathy with Earth rather than antagonistically, I am being decentralised.

Heaven and Hell. Modern astronomy and cosmology have so powerfully overtuned ancient cosmologies that there really is no "up there" for Heaven nor a "down here" for Hell. To judge any creature as destined for Hell or Heaven is to invoke ancient and outdated cosmologies. Would such a judgement be morally acceptable? I don't think so.

Conversely, science has revealed Earth to be unimaginably tiny in relation to the wider cosmos. As I contemplate Earth's relative smallness, I am being decentralised, like Sagan's **Pale Blue Dot** drifting in a seemingly endless ocean of Spacetime.

¹I declare this to be my own work, entirely. In particular, no AI was used in any research, analysis, synthesis, writing, nor typesetting of this work. In short, AI was not recruited at any time in this work. Errors and inaccuracies are therefore proudly my own.