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Mediating Essay: Ecological Activism vs. Human Rights Movements

The guiding purpose from the Thunberg and Davis stories is that balance must exist between fundamental human rights and environmental justice. The environment in which humans live dictates many things, including lifestyle, life expectancy, and quality of life. Thunberg's ideas revolve around the need for governments to be an active entity in emphasizing the role of climate change. Thunberg offers multiple suggestions for tackling climate change, beginning with personal responsibility at the individual, societal, and national levels before considering a global effort. In contrast, Davis upholds the need for globalized efforts to address human rights violations and injustices. The strategies against pollution are pegged on educational awareness on climate change, empowerment on ways to reduce greenhouse emissions, and pursuit of healthy lifestyles. On the other hand, Davis highlights the need to focus on mass movement to ensure human liberation. Despite the difference in approach, both parties also identify common strategies to solve their problems. The rationale is that global civil movement triggers an awareness that change can only be achieved by identifying and mitigating the systematic weaknesses promoting the historical and current ecological and human rights violations.

Governments are central in the war against environmental destruction and human rights violations. While social movements have increasingly become powerful over the years, earning

substantial influence in policy-making and administration, the government should be considered as a partner in these fights rather than an opponent. Meaningful change can be established through legislation as opposed to goodwill campaigns. Davis highlights how everyday activities and interests are dictated by selfishness and individualism, undermining the realization of public welfares (Thunberg 6). The same perspective is shared by Thunberg, who notes the pretentiousness of political aspirants campaigning on false climate change manifestos (2). Hence, activists' efforts should evolve from recruiting masses, as proposed by the two authors, to engaging people within the government for a policy-led campaign. Importantly, both authors recognize the lack of information to many who resist joining the fight against environmental degradation and human rights abuses (Davis 5; Thunberg 9). Hence, it is more valuable to educate influential targets in the government on the different courses' premises to understand their importance and promote useful policies.

The reasoning elements relate to cognition and choice issues, intending to explain the reasons prompting people to behave as they do. Reasoning must be aligned to rationality to facilitate objective inferences. These sentiments must guide the interactions between activists and authorities. The idea that it is those in positions of power frustrating the efforts of environmentalists and human rights activists should be reconsidered to incorporate the role of the "system." It is unfathomable that since the civil rights movement and the commencement of anti-global warming campaigns, all political leaders are opposed to the right way.

Perhaps they are just unable to execute permanent change due to systematic weaknesses. Davis argues that "If indeed all lives mattered, we would not need to emphatically proclaim that "Black Lives Matter" (85). These sentiments have been repeatedly floated whenever there are protest against people of color's mistreatment, implying the problem goes beyond the leadership

or societal influences. Thunberg posits that “People keep doing what they do because the vast majority doesn’t have a clue about the consequences of our everyday life. And they don’t know the rapid changes required” (5). The authors must recognize the commonalities in their diagnosis of the problems facing activism before offering their solutions. They must identify their subconscious acquittal of the human element as the primary cause and provide system-oriented proposals. For instance, legislations towards using more eco-friendly energy should be adopted, supported by green consumerism. On the other hand, addressing the cultural, political, and economic biases that promote racism and other biases might be more effective than legal provisions against discrimination. The objective should be to eliminate the precursor of these evils rather than treating their consequences.

Markedly, Davis’s proposal of intersectionality can help achieve the objectives of both the human rights faction and the environmentalists. The author argues that “the question of how to bring movements together is also a question of the kind of language one uses and the consciousness one tries to impart” (24). While her objective is to unite all activists fighting for human rights and equality, the concept can be stretched to include all activists. Notably, Thunberg holds that “every single person counts,” referring to the rights of future generations to enjoy ample natural resources as current ones (6). Hence, all movements can alter their perspective and collectively approach their fight as one under the “rights” umbrella to gain bargaining power.

Works Cited

Davis, Angela Y. *Freedom is a constant struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the foundations of a movement*. Haymarket Books, 2016.

Thunberg, Greta. *No one is too small to make a difference*. Penguin Books, 2019.

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