

# Val plumwood " a crocodile story' essay



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" The Crocodile Story: Being Prey" by Val Plumwood " The unheard of was happening; the canoe was under attack! For the first time, it came to me fully that I was the Prey" Val Plumwood, 2006 SUMMARY: Val Plumwood, an Australian feminist and environmental activist describes a nearly fatal attack by a crocodile in her article " Being Prey". In 1985, Plumwood was canoeing in Australia's Kakadu National Park when she noticed what appeared to be a " floating stick" however as she approached the ' stick" she realized it was a crocodile.

She tried to canoe to shore but the croc struck her canoe, over and over again repeatedly, fear of being capsized Plumwood attempted to escape by jumping onto an overhanging tree branch from her canoe. However her attempt failed! The croc seized in mid air between her legs and began " death rolling" her several times underwater. On her third attempt to escape from the croc, Plumwood succeeded! She managed to pull herself up from a hanging tree branch onto the mud bank.

With her entire leg ripped open and bleeding profusely, Plumwood crawled nearly two miles for several hours to the nearest rescue point. She was found later that evening and against all odds, survived. THEMES:

ANTHROPOCENTRISM, DUALISM, AND FRAMEWORK OF SUBJECTIVITY

Plumwood states that in the anthropocentric culture of the West humans fail to see themselves as animals positioned in the food chain, she further states that our culture's human-centric view disconnects us from the reality that we too are food for animals.

We see ourselves as outside of nature, we have illusions that we can control it, that we are not embodied beings and are apart from the animal kingdom, this ideal of humans as prey threatens the dualistic vision of human anthropocentrism where we can control and manipulate nature from the outside and thus are the predator never the prey. These ideals of anthropocentrism and dualism create a framework of objectivity where we only view the world from the inside, where we define it on our own terms, pretend we have power over it, and act above it. However this self-centered version is challenged in extreme realities, where we see the world from the outside, where we realized that our own ingenuity makes us nothing more than a piece of meat within the natural world.

Plumwood further states that our disregard for animal life is portrayed in our inhumane treatment of the animals we eat, this inhumane treatment is derived from our inability to imagine ourselves as food. The concept of human identity where humans position themselves outside and above the food chain is challenged by our acceptance of ecological identity where large predators can take human life, we need to acknowledge our own animality and ecological vulnerability, and acknowledge that we ourselves are part of that vulnerable and fragile system.

QUESTIONS: 1) Anthropocentrism is especially strong in influential religious cultures, such as Christianity, Catholicism, and Islam, would it make a difference if these religions taught a more non-human centered worldview?  
2) In most science fiction movies anthropocentrism is strongly evident portraying humans as superior beings who life is being threatened by non-humans.

Examples can be seen in movies such Return to Narnia: Prince Caspien where the Telemarine's who invades Narnia wipe out the anthropomorphic creatures chasing them into the woodlands. In Star Wars the Galactic Empire is portrayed anthropocentric invading alien worlds and enslaving them, same holds true for Avatar. And District 9, or even vampire movies such as Twilight. Do these movies further influence the dualist mentality separating humans from non humans, and the supremacy of the human race?