

# ANIMAL/HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS, INDIGENOUS WAYS OF KNOWING AND SPECIES EXTINCTION

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## Abstract:

We, humans, coexist within the biosphere and live among other creatures, and thus, have the duty to protect and preserve the environment. The purpose of this research is to deconstruct the human/animal relationship through the biocentric and biophilic perspectives, challenging the modern Western anthropocentric view of non-humans and nature as compared to the Indigenous way of life, deeply rooted in their Traditional Ecological Knowledge. Through a critical analysis of scholarly books and journals, I have compared and contrasted the Indigenous ways of living with the modern human/animal relationship, assessing the impact of our coexistence in the natural and urban environments. Well respected and renowned scientists have long warned that the current rate of resource consumption is unsustainable and will result in an intergenerational human threat as well as a threat to non-human life and plant peril. Without immediate attention and urgent change in human behavior, we are heading towards a loss of biodiversity. This research highlights the importance of our human ability to decelerate the species extinction by integrating the Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge with the Western science, in informing governments, private interest groups and the public.

## Research Question:

Can Western Society integrate the Indigenous Ways of Knowing to decelerate biodiversity loss?

## Facts:

- It takes millions of years to correct the loss of species and genetic diversity
- Approximately 99 percent of the species ever lived are now extinct
- Unlike other sciences, the study of biodiversity has a time limit
- It is estimated that by 2020, one fifth of the total number of species of flora and fauna may be extinct
- Example: Amphibians have been around since the prehistoric era, and are known to be some of the most resilient species on Earth. The Golden Frog in Panama is now extinct.

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References/Contact: see handout

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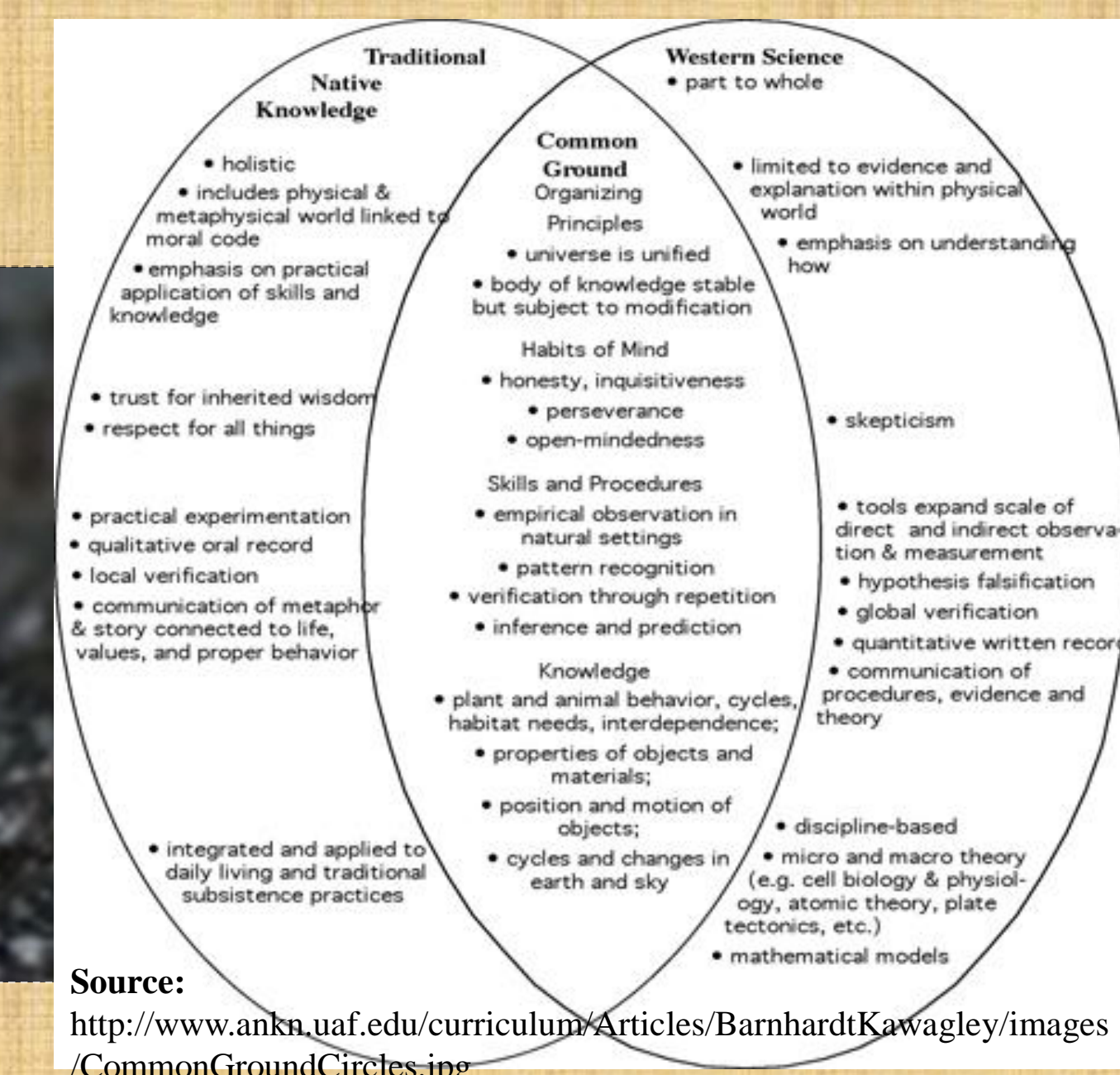
## Discussion:

The human/animal relationship has changed over time.

**First Humans:** People hunted and gathered only when needed, without overconsumption.

**Modern Times:** The more technology advances, with the purpose of providing convenience and comfort, the more we become alienated from the world around us. Over time, human ignorance of the issues of species extinction and the complexity of a biodiverse nature, has led to poor choices regarding the environment and other species via misallocation and overconsumption of resources. This, coupled with the ungrounded belief in an unstable relationship with other species, driving many to imminent or current extinction. Extinction is irreversible. Heroic measures to keep endangered species do not stand much of a chance without profound changes in human behavior and protective measures.

**Indigenous Ways of Knowing vs. Western world: Biocentric vs. Human-centered:**



## Conclusion:

Our actions may mean the difference between life and death for many species, including our own. Humans should care about biodiversity and implicitly non-human communities for their own merit, independent of the benefits that it may have on human beings. There is sufficient accumulated Indigenous Knowledge about endangered species and enough empirical evidence, which alongside Western Science, can help decelerate the loss of species.