

‘Should we decentre the human? If so, how?’

Humans will become extinct long before the universe, such that they would hardly make the footnotes of a universal textbook. ‘...there once was a star on which clever animals invented knowledge. ...and the clever animals had to die.’ The human should without a doubt be decentred, for why should such an insignificant parasite be a fundamental part of the universe? Yet herein lies the paradox: how can humans decentre humans? And if we are to decentre humans, what displaces it. If one considers how exactly humans are centred, it opens discussion on which humans are more centred than others, exemplifying the prejudice and barriers rife in daily society. Therefore, can we expect a human to not only decentre themselves, but also their entire species in a balanced way.

Perhaps to decentre the human, we should take a leaf from Rousseau and reexamine the fundamentals of human nature, returning ourselves to the level of the rest of the natural environment, away from the elevated pedestal upon which we unwisely lift humanity. Yet again, by centring nature, we are again placing an intrinsic value on something that we perceive as human: life. Perhaps instead, we should centre the fundamental nature of the universe itself: the stanch laws of physics or perchance even the many-worlds theories, upon whose examination the centring of a small part of just one universe seems inaccurate.

The advent of Artificial Intelligence demonstrates a new, yet no more fundamentally different, way to examine the universe. AI is potentially the only way to decentre the universe, as humans will always centre the universe away from its core: our very nature strives for the importance of life and the improvement of our nature. Yet an AI centring of the universe away from the human engenders many problems, the most concerning of which being the embedding of human-centric values and belief systems into the programming and training of the AI, leading to an AI that either centres itself, humanity, or something else unforeseeable. However, even if the AI does decentre humanity, its legitimacy to do so, particularly through human values and beliefs, simply realigns the problem of a human centring the universe.

Therefore, there is no way for humans or their successors to truly decentre humanity, and their belief in self-importance in our universe. On the same line as why we should decentre the human as humans are significant in the universe, why does it then matter what humans and their successors centre into the universe? By asking the very question of whether we should centre the human, we centre the human even further, by implying that the answer of the human is more valid than the very course of nature or the physics of the universe. We should decentre the human, yet it is impossible for any species that believes themselves to be conscious to do so, leading me to conclude that the centring of the universe should not evolve around sentience.