Introduction

The survival of humanity is in question due to the threat of the environmental crisis. The problem of global warming alone could lead to critical problems caused by the rise of sea level, shortages of water for consumption and agriculture, and war over food and water. The environmental crisis is the consequence of human greed for a luxurious lifestyle. Automobiles, industries, and cooling systems that are produced for a comfortable life in a short run eventually lead to long-term threats. Thoughtless consumption of food, water, and raw materials leads to the destruction of forests that “play a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance as sinks, sources and reservoirs of greenhouse gases”.¹ These sources produce food for consumption, fresh water to quench our thirst, oxygen for breathing, and herbs for medication. Arne Naess has commented that “we have ‘progressed’ to the point where the objectives of the good life must be considered threatening; we are intricately implicated in a system which guarantees short-term well-being in a small part of the world through destructive increases in material affluence … and if we continue to live in our present manner, so and so will result” (Naess, 1989, pp. 25-26). The response of philosophers to the aforementioned environmental problems led to the emergence of ‘Environmental Ethics’ as a recognized academic discipline in the 1970s and the first official conference on environmental ethics was held at the University of Georgia USA in 1971.

Development of Environmental Consciousness

The development of environmental philosophy/ethics arises from the environmental consciousness, a concern for negative impacts on the natural environment due to improper treatment. This concern eventually leads to the reconsideration and appreciation of the value, the beauty, the relationship and interactions between humans and the non-human world.

Environmental Consciousness of the Romantic Movement

Human concern for the problem of the environment during the modern period was initiated by the Romantic Movement in English and American literature. Wordsworth² and

---

Coleridge were the two founders of the Romantic Movement in England. Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) and Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) were two pioneers of the Romantic Movement in North America. Their concerns for the natural environment were expressed in reactions against 1) negative impacts of the industrial revolution; 2) rationalism of the Enlightenment that supported a mechanistic worldview; and 3) the established Judeo Christian religion that, according to their understanding, refuted the sacredness and spiritual truth in nature. They proposed that the appreciation of nature led to the better understanding and the love of God. They also introduced the idea of the intrinsic value of nature.

Environmental Consciousness of the Post-Humanism Movement

Thinkers in this Movement included D.H. Lawrence, Aldous Huxley, Robin Jeffers, and Gary Snyder. The Post Humanist movement broke away from the Romantic Movement in two respects: 1) they challenged humanism of the Romantic Movement, and 2) they found the natural world as an organism of unity. D.H. Lawrence (1885-1930) is considered the pioneer. The new idea that he brought to the movement is the interrelatedness of all life forms with the environment. He demanded that humanity stop their destructive behaviors and reestablish the intimate relationship with the natural environment, “cosmos, and the universe [which is like] a great uprooted tree, with its roots in the air” and plan their life and soul in the universe in the same way as a tree submerge its root in earth (Lawrence as cited in Session, 1995, p. 107). Aldous Huxley (1894-1963) introduces the application of mystic experiences in religious traditions as Sufis, Catholicism, early Quakers, and Hinduism and Leibniz’s Perennial philosophy to establish a way of life that “lives as fully human beings in harmony with the rest of life on this island at this latitude on this planet” (Session, 1995, p. 108). Gary Snyder proposes that civilized people should learn from primitive culture “the knowledge of connection and responsibility amounts to spiritual ascesis for the whole community [so as] to transcend ego […] to go beyond society” (Snyder cited in Session, 1995, p. 110). For him, to go beyond society means to see beyond mass ego, and measurement of good life by means of GNP on the expense of the natural environment. He calls for a establishment of personal relationship natural environment in which one lives. He gives further explanation that this way of life could be actualized by living together in a “cohesive community” in close contact with the natural environment, other community members, and local cultures in which a person will appreciate the natural world and develop an “intuition of unity” (Session, 1995, p.111).

Environmental Consciousness of the Conservation Movement

Gifford Pinchot (1865-1946), the first head of the United States Forest Service was the founder of the conservation movement. He coined the term conservation to differentiate his position from that of John Muir. He uses the term ‘conservation’ interchangeably with ‘conservation ethics’ to justify the wise use of natural resources for the benefit and service to the society as a whole in the long run. For example, damming the Hetchy Hetchy Valley in the Yosemite National Park in 1913 was morally justified for the reason that it provided

---

3 Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) was a British poet and contemporary of William Wordsworth. He and Wordsworth established the Romantic Movement in England. His major literary works include ‘The Rime of the Ancient Mariner’, ‘Kubla Khan’, and ‘Biographia Literalia’.
Environmental Consciousness of the Preservation Movement

John Muir (1983-1914), a Scottish-American naturalist was the founder of the preservation movement and the Sierra Club. John Muir was not against conservation, the wise use of natural resources proposed by Pinchot, but he added that it must be developed to preservation which is first and foremost for the wilderness’ sake and aesthetics. He revived the spiritual and transcendental value of nature by describing that wilderness is a ‘Book of Nature’ in which its beauty reveals the creation and the love of God to humanity. Wilderness uncorrupted by human civilization and habitation is a sanctuary for inspiration and prayer since it is a pure creation of God. In contrast to Pinchot, Muir was against damming the Hetchy Hetchy Valley in the Yosemite National Park since its aesthetic and spiritual value is greater than water and hydroelectric power to millions of people in San Francisco. He fought to save the forest for 7 years, from 1906 until it was declared to be flooded in 1913.

Aldo Leopold (1887-1948)

Aldo Leopold⁴ (1887-1948), brought to the forefront his environmental consciousness in his prophetic book entitled A Sand County Almanac (published posthumously in 1949). In this book he calls Homo sapiens to change their status in the relationship with the natural environment from the attitude of a master or conqueror to a mere member and citizen. Such attitude will be realized only when human beings regard other members of the land-community that include soils, waters, plants and animals as a whole as something valuable in itself (in the philosophical sense). He calls for an ‘ethical relationship’ with the members of the land community which we can expressed our love, respect, admiration, a high regards of [their] value. He suggested that an ethical relationship could be actualized by “ecological conscience [which means] a conviction of individual responsibility for the health of the land, […] the capacity of the land for self-renewal” (Leopold, 1981, p. 123).

Rachel Carson

Rachel Carson publicized her concern for degradation of the natural environment and its consequences on the future of humanity in her Silent Spring published in 1962. The book described how thoughtless spray of DDT⁵ killed both targeted insects and other untargeted

---

⁴ Aldo Leopold was a Professor of management game at the University of Wisconsin who eventually decided to join the ‘Wilderness Society’ in 1935 after discovering a rapid loss of wilderness in America. To develop a direct experience with natural environment, he bought a farm on the Wisconsin River and renovated it into family’s new homeland. In their new home, the entire family, his wife (Estella) and five children resided in a living quarter built in a shape of chicken coop which came to be known as ‘The Shack’ afterward. The Leopolds spent their weekends at the Shack, planting trees so as to restore the forest, and observing the way of nature. Close contact with nature sharpened Leopold’s thinking about the relationship between humans and the land and their moral obligations to take better care of it and inspired him to write his most famous book, A Sand County Almanac, published posthumously in 1949.

⁵ DDT was invented in 1874 and was used commonly used for insects control in the army during World War II and in agriculture in around 1939. Shortly after invention, DDT was appreciated as
species as birds and humans indiscriminately. Being an undiluted chemical, DDT toxic accumulated and contaminated the entire world food chain for years afterwards. When DDT was accumulated in the fatty tissues of animals and those of human beings, it caused cancer and genetic damage. Carson concluded the negative impacts of DDT and other pesticides in her most haunting and famous chapter, ‘A Fable for Tomorrow,’ in which she illustrated how insidious effects of DDT affected a nameless American town where all life forms had always blossomed to human children.

Aldo Leopold and Rachael Carson were two prophetic writers whose voices drew attention of the public, theologians, and philosophers to the problem of environmental degradation and eventually led them to take action. However, they needed a very strong will 1) to make people think about the environment in a way they never had before, 2) to introduce to the general imagination the idea of a new science, ecology that they never knew before, and 3) to stand firm against authorities and interest groups, most probably conglomerates.

The Emergence of Environmental Ethics

Philosophers and ethicists started playing active roles on environmentalism and developed ‘Environmental Ethics’ as a recognized academic discipline in the early 1970s. A public philosophical reflection on the issue kicked off for the first time at the conference on ‘environmental ethics’ held at the University of Georgia USA in 1971. Environmental ethics uses classical ethical theories for moral justification. Environmental ethics is about the relationship between humans and non-humans while classical ethical theories are fundamentally constructed on the basis of human-to-human relationships.

The challenges that environmental ethicists have to overcome were the following: 1) Is it possible to apply ethical principles based on man-to-man relationship to human relationships with non-humans? 2) If it is possible, is it theoretically adequate or do we need to extend existing ethical theories to cope with the new challenges? 3) If it is impossible,
what is the proper ethical theory that guides human beings to handle environmental crises that are threatening the security of the human race in our time and in future.

Another challenge to environmental ethics is the question of the value of the natural world in relation to the value of human beings. The intrinsic value of human beings is unquestionable. However, there is no consensus on the idea of the value of the natural world. While the anthropocentric assigns only instrumental value to the natural world, the non-anthropocentric affirms intrinsic value to both human and non-humans. The difference between the two camps lead to further debates on the redefinition of value, the source (origin) of value, the objectivity of values, and the location of value (Palmer, 2003, pp. 16-17).

Two Major Approaches: Anthropocentric vs. Non-Anthropocentric

Philosophers involved in the attempt to solve environmental problems can be classified by the approach they use into two main groups – anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric.

Anthropocentric Approach

The anthropocentric or human-centered approach uses ethical/philosophical traditions which imply the assumptions that only human beings possess intrinsic value and moral standing. These moral traditions value human beings over non-human entities and claim that a human being exists for itself and is an end for itself regardless of its usefulness. Other non-human entities have instrumental value. They exist to serve the well-beings of the humans and are considered valuable in regards to the benefits they generate to the well-being of humans. The anthropocentric group consists of philosophers who are satisfied with classical ethical theories or with attempts to expand classical ethics theories to solve these problems. Since all mainstream ethical theories in the Western world, such as Aristotelian teleological ethics, utilitarianism of Bentham and Mill and deontology of Immanuel Kant, imply the assumption that human beings are superior to non-human entities, they are anthropocentric or human-centered.

Two Forms of the Anthropocentric Approach

Anthropocentric ethics can be found in either strong or weak form. The strong form of anthropocentrism assigns intrinsic value to human beings only (SEP) and only extrinsic value to the non-humans and excludes non-human beings from moral consideration. There is no moral reason for protecting and preserving the natural environment, it is for the service and the well-beings of the humans. This form of anthropocentrism allows human beings to use natural world to the extent that it does not lead to the destruction of other human beings. The weak form of anthropocentrism assigns a significantly greater amount of intrinsic value to human beings and much less to nonhuman things. There are moral reasons to protect and preserve the environment, however, the protection or promotion of human interests and well-being at the expense of nonhuman things is nearly justified (SEP) since “nature has made all things specifically for the sake of man” (Aristotle, *The Politics*, Book 1, ch. 8, p.1256b as in SEP).
Inside the anthropocentric camp, there are philosophers as Kenneth Goodpastor, Tom Regan, and Albert Schweitzer, and Paul Taylor who propose that existing anthropocentric approaches need to be extended and modified so as to handle the environmental issues properly. This group of philosophers argues that anthropocentric being designed to handle the human-to-human relationship cannot be an efficient tool to justify the relationship between humans and the natural environment. There is a need to extend principles of classical ethical theories to cover issues on the new kind of relationship. These philosophers are classified in the group of moral-extension anthropocentrism.

Non-Anthropocentric Approach

In 1973, Richard Sylvan (then Routley) posed a serious question as to whether there was needed a brand new environmental ethics/philosophy in his article with a question form title ‘Is there a new, an environmental, ethic?’ He wrote that:

“Western civilization, at least stands in the need of a new ethic (and derivatively a new economics) setting people’s relation with natural environment. […] It is not of course that an old and prevailing ethics do not deal with man’s relation to nature; they do, and on a prevailing view man is free to deal with nature as he pleases, i.e. his relation with nature in so far as at least they do not affect with others, are not subject to moral censure.” (Sylvan, 1973, p. 205)

The question raised by Sylvan stimulates philosophers who believe that anthropocentric ethics is needed to construct a new philosophy. These philosophers find that the anthropocentric approaches of the classical ethical theories are inadequate to solve environmental problems and to justify the relationship between man and nature because. 1) These ethical traditions have been designed to handle the relationship between man and man, not between man and natural environment. 2) Anthropocentric ethics alienates human beings from the environment by placing humans above non-humans. 3) Their assumed moral superiority of humans over nature of the anthropocentric ethics by the system gives a license to humans to exploit and destroy the natural environment arbitrarily, not to preserve or to care for it. Moreover, traditional anthropocentrism ethics is actually the root cause of environmental problems. The solution to the problem is a deconstruction of anthropocentrism and reconstruction of a new philosophy. 1) It is based on the relationship between man and natural environment in particular. 2) It situates human beings in a global community in which the interdependency (mutual relationship) between man and natural-environment is made explicit. 3) It assigns intrinsic value to both humans and non-humans. Philosophers following this trend are classified in the group of non-anthropocentric.

Deep Ecology

Deep ecology is non-anthropocentric environmental philosophy that emerges in response to the demand for new philosophy to handle the problem of the ecological crisis. ‘Deep ecology’ is a term coined by a prominent Norwegian philosopher, Arne Naess, in his seminal article, “The Shallow and Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movements: A Summary”. The idea is the product of experience sharing and discussion inspired by the life experience of three passionate mountaineers, Naess and his two colleagues Sigmund Kvaloy and Nils Faarlund.

Arne Naess, one of the key founders of deep ecology avoids giving a definition of deep ecology (but eventually does) for he believes that “one should not expect too much from definitions” (Naess, 2003, p. 264). De Jonge, a critic of deep ecology defines deep ecology as “a philosophy of ecology which is deeper than environmental ethics or normative approach to
environmentalism” (Jonge, 2001, p. 1). Rothenberg a proponent of deep ecology and close friend of Arne Naess defines deep ecology as “the belief that today’s environmental problems are symptomatic of deep problems in our society, and that this belief requires an effort to solve these fundamental problems, not just retrofitting our current practices to be in line with environmentally correct mores” (Rothenberg, 1993, p. 1). According to the two definitions 1) deep ecology is distinct from environmental ethics and is environmental philosophy; 2) deep ecology is deeper than ecology and environmental ethics in that it attempts to solve environmental problems that we face at the foundational level; 3) deep ecology requires a change in belief and attitude. Deep ecology demands for a paradigm shift in the relationship between humans and non-humans, a deconstruction of the anthropocentric approach. It denies the domination of humans over non-humans and regards humans as a part of the natural environment. Key concepts of the deep ecology are non-anthropocentrism, the intrinsic value of the non-humans, bio-centric egalitarianism, and the philosophy of holism. Deep ecology has two aspects – deep ecology as an environmental philosophy and deep ecology as an environmental movement (deep ecology movement). Though they both are closely related to one another, they have different focuses.

Deep Ecology vs. Shallow Ecology

Naess explains the concept of ‘deep ecology’ in contrast to ‘shallow ecology’. In his ‘The Shallow and Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movements: A Summary’, Naess explains that if it is ‘shallow ecology’, it is a stance to fight against pollution and depletion of natural resources for the betterment of human life in terms of health, social, political, and economic stability, not for the sake of the natural world and environment itself. This is not a definition and it does not make a clear distinction between deep ecology and shallow ecology, since both are concerned with the problems of pollution and resource depletion. Arne Naess points out two key differences between ‘deep’ and ‘shallow’ ecology are: 1) “the level of questioning of our purposes and value, when arguing in environmental conflicts” (Drengson, 1999), 2). While shallow ecology stops before the ultimate level, deep ecology questions the very fundamental beliefs, characters and approaches to ecological problems; 3) Deep ecology is essentially eco-centric while shallow ecology is anthropocentric.

Key differences between Deep Ecology and Shallow Ecology

Deep Ecology:

1. Rejects “the (human)-in-environment image in favor of the relational, total field-image” (Naess, 1989, p. 95).
2. Maintains that a human being is a member bio-spherical network in which all members are of intrinsic value and interdependent. Human beings are not above or outside of nature but [are] part of it.
3. Criticizes ‘mechanistic materialism’ and Descartes’ dualism, and endorses a ‘code for reading the nature’ (Skolimowski, 1981. p. 8) that enables humans to see ‘unity in process’ in nature. Nature is a process of dynamism (constant flux), instability, novelty, and creativity in which the whole including human beings are inter-related.
4. Is against the ideology of the economic growth model of capitalism and regards it as the root cause of all existing ecological problems.
5. Supports the ideology of ecological sustainability as guidelines for handling social, political and economical issues related to environmental problems.

Shallow Ecology:
1. Accepts and support a belief which maintains that humans are distinct and superior to non-humans.
2. Views humans separate from natural environment.
3. Endorses the ‘metaphysics of mechanistic materialism’ which maintains that the natural environment is inferior to human beings.
4. Accepts the ideology of the economic growth model of the industrial capitalism as the measure for handling social, political and economical issues.
5. Believes that excessive environmental degradation can be settled by ‘Resource Management’, ‘Resource Conservation’ and the development of the capitalism model.

Other Approaches to Environmental Ethics

Environmental Philosophy
Ecology philosophy (DEP) is the term used by deep ecologists for two main purposes: 1) to differentiate themselves from environmental ethicists; and 2) to distinguish a deep ecology intellectual enterprise (philosophical engagement) from the deep ecology movement (activity engagement). While environmental ethics concerns the application of the normative anthropocentric approach to deal with environmental questions, deep ecologists claim that their primary concern is to challenge human-in-nature of the anthropocentric attitude and to establish a foundation of the human relationship with nature and the nature of the self as an integral part of nature on the ontological level. As soon as humans see reality with a holistic perspective (gestalt) and truly understand their unity with nature, they will love and protect nature. Environmental philosophy claims that norms for proper treatment of natural environment are derivative from the understanding on the ontological or metaphysical level, when a person attains the intuition of cosmic identification and realizes the fact that he/she is an integral part of nature, love and care for nature will emerge automatically.

Transpersonal Ecology
Transpersonal ecology is the term proposed by Warwick Fox. Fox writes that transpersonal ecology refers to “a psychologically based approach to ecophilosophical problems … by considering a well-known and apparently widely accepted way of conceiving human psychology or the self” (Fox, 1990, p. 59). Fox links Naess’s wide and deep identification to transpersonal psychology. Fox proposes that deep ecology should change its name to Transpersonal Ecology. Due to its popularity deep ecology does not “reflect what is distinctive about deep ecology theory: the ultimate norm of self-realization” (Zimmerman, 1994, p. 49). He further argues against Naess’s claims that deep questioning would eventually lead to the development of an ultimate norm consistent to Naess’s Ecosophy T principles. To make his point clear, Fox divides deep ecology into three senses: formal, popular, and philosophical. Deep ecology in a formal sense refers to Ecosophy T of Arne Naess. Popular deep ecology is most problematic since almost all green ecology movements claim to tie to deep ecology in spite of their anthropocentric orientation. Fox eventually comes to the conclusion that deep ecology in the philosophical sense refers to his Transpersonal Ecology which upholds the ontology that helps develop self-realization and identification that go beyond personal (egoistic) identification toward ontological and cosmological identification. However, other deep ecologists, members of the deep ecology movement and Naess himself do not agree with Fox. Naess counter-argues with two reasons: 1) his Ecosophy T is compatible and appreciates indigenous animistic worship, esoteric traditions, non-dualistic Asian religions, and radical Western psychology that transpersonal psychology upholds. Therefore, transpersonal ecology is included in deep ecology already. And 2) the fixed
approach (one-way approach of Transpersonal Psychology of Ken Wilbur) of transpersonal ecology closes the door to diversity in an approach on deep questioning on the ultimate level.

**Social Ecology**

Social ecology\(^8\) claims that environmental crisis is the symptom of social illness and “nearly all our present ecological problems arise from deep-seated social problems” (Zimmerman, 1993, p. 417). Therefore ecological problems can be understood and resolved through tackling problems in a society. Western social structure of hierarchical power and authority leads to all kinds of domination, oppression and injustice. “The domination of nature by human stems from the very real domination of human by human” (Bookchin, 2005, p. 1). Whenever there is a change in the structure within human relationships and in the human relationship with the rest of nature, the mutual respect for the interrelationship of all aspects of life will lead to the solution for the problem of the environmental crisis. Most social ecologists do not admit that they are deep ecologists, however, their fundamental claims are closely related to those of deep ecology.

**Ecofeminism**

Jim Cheney explains that ecofeminism refers to “a sensibility, an imitation that feminist concerns run parallel to, are one with the concern for a natural world which has been subjected to much the same abuse and ambivalent behavior as have women” (Cheney, 1987, p.115). The term ‘ecofeminisme’\(^9\) was coined by its founder Franҫoise d’Eaubonne in 1974. In her *Le féminisme ou la mort (Feminism or Death)* in 1974 and *Ecologie-féminisme: révolution ou mutation? (Eco-feminism: Revolution or Mutation?)*, she maintains that the oppressions of women and nature are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. She called upon women to take leading roles in the ecological revolution and to save the earth planet. Ynestra King was considered co-founder of ecofeminism in America in 1980. In her *The Eco-feminist Imperative*, King further articulates d’Eubonne’s eco-feminism in four key principles. They are the following: 1) There is a dialectical relation between the subjugation of women and that of nature. 2) Domination justified by hierarchy and domination based on class, race, nationality, sexuality, and privileges, as well as the destruction of whole species and ecosystems must be resisted at all levels. 3) Diversity must be maintained. 4) Dualistic thinking, especially the bifurcation between culture and nature that supports domination must be changed (Christina Nelson).\(^{10}\) Ecofeminists neither refute to be deep ecologists nor do they claim to be deep ecologists. Fundamental claims of ecofeminism are closer to claims of deep ecology than those of social ecology.

**Bio-Regionalism**

Bio-regionalism is another form of the deep ecology movement that attempts to support and implement the deep ecology philosophy to action. Its activities basically concentrate on the preservation of biodiversity, restoration of ecological systems and wilderness, and agriculture on deep ecology principles. These efforts include “The Wildlands

---

\(^8\) Advocates of social ecology are Franҫoise d’Eaubonne, Murray Bookchin, Henryk Skolimowski, and Luc Ferry.

\(^9\) Advocates of ecofeminism are Karen Warren, Val Plamwood, Carol Adams, Carolyn Merchant, Charlene Spretnak, Susan Griffin, Diamond Irene, Gloria Orenstein, Vandana Shiva, and Maria Mies.

Project, The Arne Naess Selected Works Project, the Eco-agriculture Movement, the Eco-forestry Institute and Institute for Deep Ecology Education Programs, and the Ecostasy Foundation.”

Other movements with different focuses are “Ecopsychology (Roszak, et al 1995), The Natural Step, the Turning Point Project (the project to measure our ecological footprint initiated by Rees and Wackernagel 1996), and Redefining Progress and its measures by means of a General Progress Index or GPI.”

Eco-theology

Eco-theology refers to approaches to handle the issues of environmental degradation by means of theistic-religious approaches as seen in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. The main premise of eco-theology is the relationship between humans and nature on the basis of scripture, spiritual view of nature, and salvation. Eco-theology can be subdivided into different strands. Eco-theology in line with deep ecology has Thomas Berry as the forefront proponent. Eco-theology in line with eco-feminism has Sallie McFague as major supporter. Eco-theology in line with social ecology has K. C. Abraham as supporter.

Christianity Eco-Theology:

Lynn White, Jr., a historian, gives an observation in his famous article ‘Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis’. He says that Christianity “is the most anthropocentric the world has been” (White, Jr., 1967, p. 18). In his criticism on the account of God’s creation in Genesis 1:27, he claims that the creation of Adam and Eve in ‘Imago Dei’ in the last series implies a complete separation between humans and other creatures. Lynn White further comments that the appearance of the terms ‘subdue’ and ‘be masters’ twice in Genesis 1: 26 and 28 implies a ‘master-slave’ relationship between human beings and nature. William P. Brown (1999, p. 6) in his book The Ethos of the Cosmos: The Genesis of Moral Imagination in the Bible comments that Lynn White’s criticism arises from a misinterpretation. Fox are in agreement with Brown that the Christian Bible is not necessarily in opposition to the non-anthropocentric spirit that support arbitrary destruction of the natural world. They have pointed out numerous verses in the Bible that express clear support of the non-anthropocentric spirit. These are only few examples. In Lev 25:24 God has commanded His people that “you will allow a right of redemption over any ancestral property” and in Isaiah 11:9 God instructs that “No hurt, no harm will be done on all my holy mountain, for the country will be full of knowledge of Yahweh as the waters cover the sea.” In Ps. 24:1 The Bible tells us that the earth and all within belongs to God. “To Yahweh belongs the earth and

---


13 Gen 1:27: “God created man in the image of himself, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them.”

14 See also Psalm 8:6-8

15 Gen 1:26: “God said, ‘Let us make man in our own image, in the likeness of ourselves, and let them be masters of the fish of the sea, the bird of heaven, the cattle, all the wild animals and all the creatures that creep along ground.”

16 Gen 1:28: “God blessed them, saying to them, “Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it. Be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven and all the living creatures that move on earth.”

17 This Verse of the Bible and thereafter are downloaded from The New Jerusalem Bible online. [http://www.catholic.org/bible/book.php?id=1](http://www.catholic.org/bible/book.php?id=1)
all it contains, the world and all who live there” (Ps. 24:1). There is also the ideology of non-dualism in the Old Testament. Isa. 40:6-8\(^{18}\) which tells us that there is no distinction between man and non-humans. In Rev. 21:1-4\(^{19}\) God becomes angry and punishes His people when He sees that they use natural resources lavishly and build a new home for His children since land is granted to humans to utilize with care and love, not to exploit and lavish.

Matthew Fox (1988) in his The Coming of the Cosmic Christ has pointed out that the unity and interconnectedness between humans and the non-humans in the perspective of non-dualism can be seen in the New Testament. Resorting to traditional Catholic mysticism, he cites the first letter of St. Paul to the Colossians which states that “for in him were created all things in heaven and earth: everything visible and invisible, thorns, ruling forces, sovereignties---all powers were created through him and in him. He exists before all things and in him all things hold together” (Col. 1: 16-17) to revive the idea of Cosmic Christ. The Cosmic Christ enables Fox to link Christianity to panentheism in the same line as Naess. He eventually calls the Christians to shift the way they understand God, man, and nature in the conceptual frame in which “all things in God and God in all things” (Fox, 1998, p. 57). He calls the Christians to turn away from the historical Christ to “the quest for Cosmic Christ” who connects and contains “heaven and earth, past and future, divinity, all of creation” (Fox, 1998, p. 57) in the one God. This Cosmic Christ is a living Christ being crucified with the poor, the marginalized, and the mother earth. He calls all the Christians to join the crucified living Christ to maintain righteousness and justice for the poor and the marginalized and to the dying mother earth.

Though the vocabulary of Gen I, 22-28 sounds explicitly anthropocentric, the legislation of the Sabbatical year in the Old Testament (Exodus 23: 10-11; Leviticus 25: 1-7; Deuteronomy 15: 1-11, 31:10-13) reflects the long tradition of care and concern for the environment. The sabbatical year literally means the “Year of Remission” (Catholic Encyclopedia), and sometimes the “Year of Rest”. During the whole sabbatical year (the seventh year circle), the Israelites who own land are demanded to 1) leave the land unattended from any kind of agricultural labor as plowing, sowing, harvesting, reaping, 2) leave the land which they have exploited for six years for common benefits, 3) leave the crops of the land for consumption of the slaves and the poor, and 4) leave “what was not used to be abandoned to the cattle and wild animals” (Catholic Encyclopedia).\(^{20}\) Brown (1999, p. 118) has summarized the observance of the sabbatical year in two respects: 1) for the land’s sake (leave the land to a complete restoration), and 2) for social justice (leave the land for public consumption such as slaves, tenants, the poor, the landless neighbors, domestic pets, and wild animals). It is remarkable that in practice, the Old Testament tradition goes further than the non-anthropocentric spirit to care for the natural environment for its own sake to embrace the spirit of social justice.

\(^{18}\) Isa. 40:6-8: “6 A voice said, ‘Cry aloud!’ and I said, ‘What shall I cry?’ ‘All humanity is grass and all its beauty like the wild flower’s. 7 The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of Yahweh blows on them. (The grass is surely my people). 8 The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God remains forever.’”

\(^{19}\) Rev 21:1-4: “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; the first heaven and the first earth had disappeared now, and there was no longer any sea. 2 I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride dressed for her husband. 3 Then I heard a loud voice call from the throne, ‘Look, here God lives among human beings. He will make his home among them; they will be his people, and he will be their God, God-with-them. 4 He will wipe away all tears from their eyes; there will be no more death, and no more mourning or sadness or pain. The world of the past has gone.”

The greater concern of the Old Testament to both issues is seen in the legislation of the “Year of Jubilee” (Leviticus 15: 8-54; 27: 16-24). According to this law, in the seven Sabbath of years (fiftieth year circle), the Israelites of the Old Testament who own land have to 1) leave the land they used at complete rest (as in the Sabbatical year), 2) return the land to its rightful owner who has been deprived of the land due to dire poverty, and 3) proclaim complete freedom to the Israelite brethren who have become slaves and tenants due to dire poverty or other undesirable circumstances (see also Brown, 1999, p. 118). Their adherence to the Sabbath legislation is more serious than our expectation since the violation means punishment with death (Exodus 31: 14-15; Numbers 15: 32-36).

Contemporary Catholic / Christian Involvement in Environmental Problems

The first official response of the Christians to environmental problems was seen in ‘The World Council of Churches’ (WCC) in the Vancouver assembly in 1983 in which the main theme of the discussion was on ‘Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation’ (JPIC). The Roman Catholic Church got involved in the environmental problems in a conference on religion and ecology led by the Roman Catholic priest and eco-theologian, Thomas Berry. The conference was held at the Basilica di S. Francesco in Assisi, Italy in the celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the World Wide Fund for Nature in 1986 and in memory of St. Francis of Assisi. The Catholic Church regards him as the Father of Environmentalism. In his famous ‘Canticle of the Creatures’ he wrote: “Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruits with coloured flowers and herbs” (Canticle of Creatures, 1999, p. 113-4). At the end of the conference, representatives of the five world-leading religions jointly issued the ‘Declaration on Religion and Nature’ which outlined obligations of religions to nature. The WCC called a parallel ecumenical gathering in Rio de Janeiro during the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in the same city in 1992. The representatives of the WCC took active involvement in the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) which was held in Johannesburg in September 2002.

Pope Saint John XXII in his encyclical ‘Pacem in Terris’ reminded “men and women of good will”…[that their life is going to be threatened by global environmental deterioration which is the consequences of their unchecked behaviors and the explosion of industrial civilization. He pleads “the urgent need for radical change in the conduct of humanity”… Saint John Paul II (Pope John Paul II) has warned human beings of the dangers of their excessive exploitation so as to serve immediate use and consumption (Redemptor Hominis, 1979, p. 15). He calls for a global ecological conversion (Catechesis, 2001, p. 4/ Insegnamenti, 2001, p. 179) in which they have to transform their “lifestyles, models of production and consumption, and the established structures of power which today govern societies” (Centissimus Annus, 1991, p. 38) to a new lifestyle which care for God’s original gifts (Centissimus Annus, 1991, p. 58) and “take into account the nature of each being and of its mutual connection in ordered system” (Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, 1987, p. 34). Pope Benedict XVI, his Address to the Diplomatic Corps Accredited to the Holy See (8 January 2007) mentioned the urgent need to eliminate “the structural causes of the dysfunctions of the world economy” …[and at the same time correct the]… “models of growth which have proved incapable of ensuring respect for environment.”

21 Address to FAO on the 25th Anniversary of its Institution (16 November 1970), p. 4)
Pope Francis in his Encyclical ‘Laudato Si’ points out that “climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all.” Yet human beings have destroyed eco-systems to a very great extent that they have suffered the consequences. However, he still sees the opportunity to recover. He writes “[y]et all is not lost. Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start, despite their mental and social conditioning.” In his Laudato Si, he did not mention non-anthropocentric nor deep ecology, however he has similar idea that the root cause of the problem is human beings. So as to solve the problem, we, human beings have to “take an honest look at ourselves, to acknowledge our deep dissatisfaction, and to embark on new paths to authentic freedom.” The Pope is optimistic with human potentiality to solve the problems since God have equipped human beings with wisdom and beautiful mind. Their wisdom and beautiful mind have been blurred by social and economic mentality of consumerism and materialism. Yet it cannot destroy their wisdom and beautiful mind. “No system can completely suppress our openness to what is good, true and beautiful, or our God-given ability to respond to his grace at work deep in our hearts.” He eventually appeals “to everyone throughout the world not to forget this dignity which is ours” and uncover their wisdom and beautiful mind and use them to solve problems. He advises that human beings have to address climate and environmental problems at all levels. On the individual level, each one of us has to “change in lifestyle [that] could bring healthy pressure to bear on those who wield political, economic and social power. This is what consumer movements accomplish by boycotting certain products.” Individuals have to join hands in an environmental movement to put pressure to “[change] the way businesses operate, forcing them to consider their environmental footprint and their patterns of production. When social pressure affects their earnings, businesses clearly have to find ways to produce differently. This shows us the great need for a sense of social responsibility on the part of consumers. “Purchasing is always a moral and not simply economic act”[146]. Today, in a word, “the issue of environmental degradation challenges us to examine our lifestyle”[147].

Buddhist Environmental Ethics

Buddhism is against anthropocentrism in the sense that Buddhism opposes human domination and considers ego-centrism the root cause of environmental problems (de Silva, 1998, pp.30-31). Furthermore, Buddhism considers the anthropocentric approach “a wrong world view orientation, which is referred to as dominant paradigm for exploiting the environment” [and is] “an expression [of] a deep-seated egocentric perspective [in which] nature becomes the object of man’s greed, envy and aggression” (de Silva, 2009, p. 11). According to Buddhist analysis, greed (lobha) and ignorance are the root causes of the problem of ecological degradation. Greed means a lack of concern (metta) for other fellow humans, non-humans, and future generations of humans and non-humans. Ignorance (avijja), refers to the lack of the understanding of the proper relationship between humans and humans, their interdependence in society, and their mutual dependence with the natural environment. The interaction between greed and ignorance intensifies aggression (dosa) against fellow humans, society, and the natural environment. Consumption to satisfy greed without any concern for bad consequences (avijja) in the consumerism society is an example of such aggressions and is the root cause of the current problem of environmental degradation. De Silva (2009, p. 11) remarks that a symptom of a “multi-dimensional crisis has intellectual, sociopolitical, economic, moral and spiritual overtone”. Buddhism does not oppose technical/scientific approach to solve the problem of environmental crisis, but Buddhism points out that scientific approach to environmental problem is a treatment to the
symptom of a sickness whereas the real solution to the problem is to deal with causes of the disease. If the lack of right understanding (avijja) is the cause of the problem, the development of the right understanding (panna) is the solution to the problem.

Buddhism considers the destruction of life and bad treatment to humans and animals a violation of the first sila (panatipata) leading bad karma (bad acts) that becomes an obstacle to the attainment of Nibhana and prolongs the term of the karmic circle. In the Vinaya for Buddhist monks and nuns, they are instructed to refrain from digging the ground, performing agriculture or clearing the temple yard to make sure that they will not kill and harm even the smallest living beings intentionally, unintentionally, directly, and indirectly (Vin iv, 125). Buddhist monks are required to confine themselves in a temple during the lent period (Khaophansa) to assure that they will not step on small living beings that come out to the surface during the rainy season (Vin, I, 137). Buddhist monks are not allowed to cook by themselves for two reasons: 1) to keep them away from killing any living thing for cooking, and 2) to allow believers to do merit. Though Buddha allows monks and nuns to eat meat, but only in cases that they have not seen, heard, or suspected that the animals were killed to prepare food for them in particular (see also Jiva Sutta, M, I, 368-9). Moreover, Buddhist monks are not allowed to tell anyone of their wish to eat certain kinds of flesh so to make sure that they do have no intention to kill, nor indirect involvement nor indirect support of the act of killing. In this same Sutta, “Buddha says that anyone who kills an animal, especially for a monk, acquires demerit, as the animal experiences pain and distress” (de Silva, 1998, p. 212). Buddhism as a middle path does not demand lay people to follow the strict rules of monks and nuns. However, the Lord Buddha regards activities involving in destroying, killing, and injuring life directly and indirectly unworthy and considers them not worthy to pursue. The positive connotation of the first Buddhist precept involves “the rejection of violence and the cultivation of the positive values of love (karuna) and compassion (metta) towards humans and animals. The Lord Buddha has preached the love for all kinds of creatures in Sn.V.143-52 thus:

“Whatever breathing beings there may be,  
No matter whether they are frail or firm,  
With non expected, be they long or big  
Or middle-sized, or be they short or small  
Or thick, as well as seen or unseen,  
Or whether they are dwelling far or near  
Existing or yet seeking to exist,  
May beings all be of blissful of hear.”

(S.V.143-152)

Though Buddhism does not mention bad treatment against plants and natural objects a violation to the first prescription explicitly, the Lord Buddha instructs his monks and nuns not to dig the ground, nor cut trees, nor pull off vegetable for two reasons: 1) to avoid unintentional killing and harming tiniest creatures, 2) to avoid terminating the natural growth of plants and vegetables (Vin, IV, 34; I, 137; IV, 296; IV, 32-33; iv 49,125). Moreover, “violent and irresponsible attitude (including treatment) to nature may have indirect moral and karmic relevance” (de Silva, 2009, p.15), affect the attainment of Nibhana and prolongs the karmic circle indirectly. Buddhist appreciation of nature is seen clearly in two examples. Firstly, the Lord Buddha chooses to stay under the shade of Bo-tree to attain enlightenment. Secondly, the Lord Buddha links the natural environment with spirituality through his instruction to his monks to seek solitude and peace in forests, roots of trees, or empty places. Buddhism sees the connection between nature and spirituality in two respects. Firstly, nature

22 They are fishing, slaughtering, making and selling weapons, and poisonous materials.
is seen as a cradle that provides suitable environment for meditation to the attainment of *Nibbana*. Secondly, an aesthetic experience in the beauty of nature leads the development of pure calmness and joy that uplifts spirituality. However, such a place should be made accessible to nearby villages so that Buddhist monks could perform the functions of begging for food and preaching village people.

Buddha supports lifestyle of frugality or simple lifestyle of the West. It is the lifestyle that takes into account the careful use of “limited resources […] not misery rather that it is frugality in the original sense of fruitfulness, getting more out of little the Ladakh people will find further employment out of it (Norberg-Hodge, 1992, p. 46 cited in de Silva, 199, p. 154). Buddha is aware of the fact that lay people have to earn financial support for the family. He advises them to work with the “sweat of one’s brow” to mount up riches “as ant-heap growing high” (D Tr., III, 189). However he advises them to earn and use worldly riches with the spirit of detachment, not to be too delighted with the gain and too disappointed with the losses. They should hold a scale to keep balance between incomes and expenses (A, iv, 281 qtd. in de Silva, 199, p. 154). When income has been abundantly accumulated to great wealth, He also gives the advice how to use their wealth in the right way:

“When the good layman wealth has so amassed
Able is he to benefit his clan.
In portions four let him divide that wealth.
So binds he to himself life’s friendly things.
One portion let him spend and taste the fruit.
His business to conduct let him take two.
And portion four let him reserve and hoard.
So there’ll be wherewithal in time of need.”
(D Tr., III, 189)

Buddha also instructs his monks to maintain frugality. One good example is the way he advises them of how to use robes. The following is de Silva’s description with reference to Vin., II, 291:

“When the monks receive new robes, the old robes are not completely discarded but to be used as coverlets; when the coverlets are old, they are to be converted to be mattress covers; the old mattress covers are again, when old are to be converted to be rugs, the rugs into dusters, and even the tattered are to be put together with clay and to be used for repairing cracks on the floor and wall.” (Vin., II, 291)

Whenever Buddha gives advice, He also tells them the way to actualize his instruction. His advice for living frugally are – firstly to practice self-restraint in eating, drinking, seeing, and speaking; and secondly to practice mindfulness and concentration. Such practices eventually generate “wisdom – a genuine insight and the possibility of “perceiving things differently”, which is “panna” (de Silva, 1998, p. 142). The term panna here means a mode of understanding of the unity between humans and the non-human world that gets “people to practice compassion (*metta*) and loving kindness (*karuna*)” (de Silva, 1998, p. 142). De Silva describes that a householder who gets to this point will “collect wealth for his needs in a way that a bee collects honey without injuring the flowers” (de Silva, 1998, p. 142 cf D Tr, III, 189).
Questions for Further Reflection
1. What are the main causes of the degradation of natural environment and global warming?
2. Explain why anthropocentric approach leads to the destruction of natural environment. According to your opinion, do the people who have anthropocentric mentality have to transform their attitude towards natural environment so to protect it?
3. Explain how human beings can live in harmony with natural environment according to the Buddhist environmental ethics principles.
4. Explain how each one of us could adjust our lifestyle so as to protect and revive natural environment.

Recommendations for Further Reading


References


Skolimowski, The Trumpeter 6(2), 1989, p .42


**Internet Sources:**


---

1 Thomas Berry (1914-2009) is a Passionist priest who specializes in Teilhard de Chardin. His environmental philosophy is in line with deep ecology.