

**IDENTIFICATION, SELF-REALIZATION AND SPIRITUALITY:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is my original work and it has been written by me in its entirety.

I have duly acknowledged all the sources of information which have been used in the thesis.

This thesis has also not been submitted for any degree in any university previously.

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SUMMARY

Our actions toward our immediate surroundings should be more important than showing ecological consciousness about the global environment. We cannot protect the global environment by merely having ecological consciousness, but we can protect our local environment by recognizing certain values and relations with the place. So, it is equally important what kind of self we develop and what gives us motivation for protecting the environment. An appropriate worldview could ensure right actions and can motivate individuals to protect their environment. Of course, comparative environmental philosophy is one of the main sources of articulating an appropriate worldview. In this thesis, I will be comparing Western and Asian environmental philosophies in order to suggest a proper human-nature relationship. I consider, in particular, the common core values which are specified in major Asian traditions and by two influential environmental philosophers in the West, Arne Naess and John Passmore. Identifying the common core values, I argue for a new kind of self which can maintain the right attitude toward the environment.

I begin with Western traditions. The worldview that Western traditions suggest generally conflicts with the Asian traditions. But discovering some common values among them would produce an integrated approach to address the ecological crisis we are currently facing. The Western worldview mainly subscribes to anthropocentric values and ends up with an ecological master relation to the environment. However, Western traditions also share enough

elements of nonanthropocentric values. One of the best examples of Western nonanthropocentrism is Naess's ecosophy. I show that Naess's ecosophy explores three fundamental values, identification, self-realization and spirituality. Passmore's stewardship environmental philosophy, I argue, endorses these values as well. In addition to Passmore and Naess, three major Asian traditions, namely, Chinese, Indian and Japanese, also highlight these three basic values in their human-nature scholarship. I regard identification, self-realization and spirituality as common core values.

Even though these values are commonly held, it is often noticed that some Asian traditions suggest adapting an ecological slave relation to the environment. The same is true for Naess's account of the ecological self. In principle, human beings then are constrained to accept either an ecological master or an ecological slave relationship. Focusing on the common core values as a viable solution to the ecological crisis, I argue that a neighborhood sense of identification, self-realization and spirituality may lead us to an alternative option beyond anthropocentrism and nonanthropocentrism. This alternative option is a neighbor-centric relationship, an outcome of comparative environmental philosophy and an embedded worldview of indigenous people's lifestyles in Asia and other parts of the Earth. The neighbor-centric environmental philosophy is a comprehensive normative guideline to protect ecological neighbors by maintaining one's "neighboring self".

INTRODUCTION

Environmental philosophy and ethics seek to reexamine and discover some traditional values which are crucial to protect nature and to maintain a proper human-nature relationship. Each tradition has its own ecological wisdom and ethics, rooted in its perception of nature. Therefore, environmental philosophy and ethics in one tradition is different from those in other traditions. However, there are enough commonalities between them. For example, most traditions hold that human beings are unique, human beings are identified with their surroundings, nature is aesthetically and spiritually rich, human beings are dependent on the environment to fulfill their basic needs and necessities, and they should follow some ethical principles in using environmental resources.

Nonetheless, uniqueness may not mean the same in different traditions. One tradition may place rationality as the top criterion of uniqueness, while the other may give priority to the capacity for realizing cosmic harmony through feeling empathy and sympathy for all natural elements. One tradition may claim that human beings are personally identified with their surroundings, while another may argue that they are cosmologically identified. The notion of cosmological identification, which refers to a single unified concept of community comprising both living and nonliving entities, gives rise to different accounts of the human-nature relation. One tradition may hold that nature itself is not sacred but it is the manifestation of a divine sacredness, while another may hold nature itself as sacred, and therefore all natural

elements deserve our respect and reverence. Accordingly, they may subscribe to different types of environmental ethics.

Comparative environmental philosophy suggests the possibility of finding some common core values. Lynn White Jr. in 1967 recommends a rethinking of Western value “axioms”, though he did not look into Asian traditions for insights and inspiration. The recent focus on Asian environmental philosophy is welcome, but it is still limited to general discussions of a particular tradition, or its distinctiveness from the Western traditions. However, what is more important is to try to find some common core values so that a comprehensive environmental ethics can be proposed.

When comparative environmental philosophers emphasize a radical change in self-nature metaphysics and its underlying ethics for overcoming the ecological crisis, they prescribe either one or the other of the two approaches: the ontological approach (ecosophical approach) or the normative approach (ethical approach). In other words, some thinkers argued that we should solve the ecological crisis by looking at the ecological wisdom found in different traditions, and gradually enlarge our ecological consciousness to a maximum level so that it can protect the environment. By contrast, those who are doubtful about ecological consciousness are only confident about applying established ethical principles or a combination of them. The first, an influential and novel approach in contemporary environmental philosophy, is demonstrated by Arne Naess and is known as “deep ecology”. The second is widely accepted and strongly defended by the prominent environmental philosopher John Passmore. The former suggests a deeper inquiry into values

and interrelationships between self and nature, while the latter relies on scientific data in suggesting the appropriate ethical guidelines.

However, if we are only concerned about some ethical principles as a solution to global ecological crisis, we may lack ecological wisdom and hence the long-run aim of overcoming this problem may not be achieved. Similarly, if we are only concerned about ecological wisdom or ecological consciousness we may lack proper action-guiding principles necessary to formulate environmental policies and to guide individuals on how they should behave toward their immediate surroundings. So, one has to concentrate *equally* on ecological wisdom and ethical principles to protect the environment. How can that be done? Is it possible to suggest a new approach as a solution to this controversy? How should self relate to nature? What principle should it follow?

I have selected particular Western and Asian figures and traditions in this study for their theoretical influence in addressing a rich diversity of the traditional values. More clearly, two major theoretical contributions to Western environmental philosophy and ethics are Passmore's endorsement of respect for nature and Naess's ecosophy. The former developed an anthropocentric position while the latter developed a nonanthropocentric position. Together they represent two main theories of environmental philosophy and ethics in the West.

Since environmental philosophy and ethics in Asia, were embedded in the traditional practice and values, I focus on three major traditions, Chinese, Indian and Japanese. These traditions have been influential in Asian history and civilizations. I think selecting them as representatives of Asian traditions is justified, especially in presenting diverse Asian traditions in a manageable

way. However, I acknowledge that with more time and space, a more detailed analysis would have been helpful.

What I want to do in the next six chapters is to spell out some common core values by comparing Western and Asian traditions. This comparison is important because we need to know why and how the perceptions of human-nature relationship differ. In Western traditions, my focus will be on Naess and Passmore as stated before, and in the Asian context, I will focus on Chinese, Indian and Japanese traditions.

I believe that beyond their several differences they suggest some common core values. I will carry the idea of common core values further to show that they actually reflect a different kind of self which I call the “neighboring self” and prescribe a guiding principle for a comprehensive environmental ethics. I argue that we should abandon Naess’s notion of the ecological self and adapt the “neighboring self” because it can successfully overcome some of the major limitations of the former. This can also provide a solution to the controversy mentioned earlier. So, this thesis will try to answer two main questions: Is it possible to find some common core values which could underpin a comprehensive environmental ethics? What should be the right attitude toward nature in the context of self-nature relationship?

The first two chapters of my thesis analyze how the human-nature relation is perceived in Western traditions and in major Asian traditions. Here, I try to identify the fundamental values of these traditions. According to Lynn White, Christian theology is responsible for the ecological crisis because Christianity allows dominion of human beings or “rightful mastery” over nature and is anthropocentric. Western value axioms which are

anthropocentric should be replaced by an alternative Christian view, namely, the view of Saint Francis of Assisi. In Chapter One, I argue that White's thesis has provoked two kinds of response: some philosophers reject his view that anthropocentrism and Christianity are the root causes of the ecological crisis. Others accept it and support his suggestion for a reformation of Western value axioms. Nonetheless, unlike White, they think that there are many alternative ways for this reformation, apart from a revision of Christian doctrines. One of these alternatives is looking into other traditions, such as Asian traditions. It will significantly help Western people to change their value axioms to a deeper level.

My brief historical survey of Western traditions show that all major thinkers considered human beings at the centre of their thoughts, some even claim that they are the "closest" creatures to God and therefore deserve special value and protection over all other natural elements. Perfecting nature for the sake of improving human lives is necessary according to them. In fact, Western classical philosophers agreed that imperfect nature was a threat to human lives and control over nature is a positive phenomenon.

I argue that although Western traditions are closer to the anthropocentric approach, nature was not ignored. Rather, nature was valued for its "use value" and some important criteria, such as rationality, autonomy, dignity and personhood, were identified to distinguish between human beings and other creatures. Moreover, not all Western environmental philosophers are anthropocentric, and some of them think that nature itself has a value apart from its *use* value. Each element in nature is connected and *Homo sapiens* are

dependent on and ecologically related with other species. Arne Naess coins this thought with a view of one single community.

I argue that Naess's ecosophical view can prioritize some fundamental values. Nonanthropocentric values, such as interrelatedness, diversity, joyful living, are very clearly noticeable in Naess's ecosophy. But despite these, there are some other fundamental values in his environmental philosophy. Naess explicitly said that his ecosophy T is grounded on "one ultimate norm: Self-realization!". He breaks the centuries-old idea of "self-realization" by replacing it with a capital "S". So, his "Self-realization" means realizing oneness-with-nature, rather than self-examination, self-mastery, or self-perfection.

Since the final goal of oneness-with-nature is to correct our attitudes, I argue that the norm of Self-realization does not function until self-realization is regarded as a fundamental value. Naess holds identification as a process by which the egoistic self extends and deepens into the comprehensive Self. Identification is valuable to gain ecological consciousness or Self. Naess's ecosophy then ultimately leads to a spiritual consciousness which motivates awareness about interrelation or oneness-with-nature. I argue that, while ecological wisdom or ecological consciousness is Naess's main concern, three fundamental values are evident in his account. These are: identification, self-realization and spirituality.

Like Naess, a lot of environmental philosophers have argued that the only option to overcome the ecological crisis is to adopt some nonanthropocentric values. But the most important person to defend other options within the traditional anthropocentric framework is Passmore. He

argues that the global ecological problem is a problem of ecology, and urges us to solve it with scientific invention, just as we solve any social problem by survey, finding cause-effect relation, and taking appropriate policy measures. But he suggests further that human beings have to change their current attitudes. I argue that Passmore is suggesting a kind of self-realization so that we could be aware about our role as human beings. Human beings are God's deputies and therefore they cannot perfect nature without caring for it. The nature-human identification is not just that we are here to use natural elements for maximizing our own interests, but rather we have a sacred duty to care for them. Passmore does not think that nature itself is sacred, but it is God's handiwork. He perceives human-nature relation in the light of divine stewardship. It means that his spirituality is quite different from the traditional view. He compares human beings with good artists who treat nature far beyond just looking and touching it. Human beings can "smell" and even "taste" nature through their artistic power. Nonetheless, they, as artists, are also obliged to "respect their materials". Clearly then, I argue, Passmore's environmental philosophy also subscribes to the three fundamental values noted earlier.

However, their senses are philosophically different. Apart from personal and cosmological senses of identification, self-realization and spirituality, there is a unique sense of neighborhood belongingness that is clearly unfolded. I begin this interesting and new viewpoint with a brief discussion of the evolutionary history of our planet Earth. It is highly probable that our ancestors were maintaining a neighborhood relationship not only with their fellow humans, but also with animals and their immediate surroundings

for a while. I show that the neighborhood philosophy has contributed to the discovery of revolutionary scientific theories. Yet, little or no attention was given to it in environmental ethics.

In Chapter Two, I explain some nonanthropocentric values in three major Asian traditions. I examine how nature and self-nature relationships were perceived in Chinese, Indian and Japanese traditions throughout the centuries. The Chinese traditions, as I show, perceive nature in relation to balance and harmony. They emphasize self-cultivation and invoke anthropocentrism. However, when the issue of human-nature relation is examined a huge element of cosmocentric values dominates the whole tradition. For example, the Chinese do not view nature as merely a composition of land, trees, rivers, seas, and other natural resources, but include all elements in between Heaven and Earth. Human beings have to consider themselves in relation to a greater cosmic boundary. Everywhere in nature there is a balance of *li* and *chi* and every action human beings perform must be done by maintaining that balance. Identification with the cosmic balance and harmony is the prior condition of sagehood. The Daoist “principle of naturalness” involves some crucial elements (such as spirituality) which, if ignored, may cause imbalance and lack of harmony. Nature is a “seamless whole” and human beings have to fit themselves within this spiritual wholeness. This is the Chinese self-nature relationship.

Nature plays a very important role in Indian cultures and lifestyles. Beyond Indian mythology and Hindu theology, nature remarkably dominates Indian philosophical traditions. Indian philosophers believe that life and philosophy cannot be separated. I discuss briefly Indian religious traditions to

show how nature and spirituality were interwoven. Achieving *Moksa* (liberation) through *bhakti* (devotion), and freeing self from *Avidya* (ignorance), is the main spirit of the Indian religious tradition. Indian philosophical traditions discuss the relation of individual self and the Ultimate Reality or Universal Self from epistemological as well as ontological perspectives. The key point that most Indian schools concentrate on is Self-realization. In the Indian context, the aim of Self-realization is not just to realize the oneness-with-nature, nor merely conceptualize the Supreme Being and several deities as identified with nature, but also to emphasize that human's surrender and their devotion to *prakrti* (nature) is a must for true liberation.

Another key feature of Indian traditions is turning spirituality to divine duty. The *karma* principle discourages all sorts of selfish desires and gains and guides its followers to a spiritual salvation of self. Gandhi's *Ahimsa* (nonviolence) theory retains the teachings of the *karma* principle by maintaining that selfless simple lifestyle is a requirement for political and environmental harmony.

The Japanese view of nature highlights the relationship of human beings and some other special elements, such as *yama* (mountains). This view was influenced by Shinto and Buddhist worldviews. Yet, the scientific worldview is not completely absent in Japanese perceptions of nature. For example, Kinji Imanishi offers an idea of "self-completeness" equally recognizable in living and nonliving things. The Japanese even believe that the heart can be purified when everything in nature are placed in their right ways. Shinto spirit *kami* does not just supply spiritual elements, but legitimately

corrects human's behavior by identification with its brightness and uprightness. The Japanese monk Kukai perceives the universe as the "Indranet", or a macrocosm of infinite microcosm. The view later generates a "relational cosmology" with aesthetic implications.

Noticeably, the Japanese Buddhist traditions emphasize "self-transformation" through Buddhahood or dharmakaya. The uniqueness of Buddhist self-transformation reveals that human beings should act compassionately to all sentient and non-sentient elements. Self-transformation ends up with *bodhi* (wisdom) and awareness. This awareness reflects an intense identification with the phenomenal world in a highly compassionate way. Similarly, wisdom suggests how to behave compassionately towards other natural elements. This chapter concludes with an internal comparison of Asian traditions and an evaluation of Asian worldviews.

In Chapter Three, I compare Western and Asian traditions to show their differences on some basic issues, such as uniqueness of human beings, the importance of dividing living and nonliving elements, and sacredness of nature. I claim that in each case they differ in the underlying theoretical foundations. For example, in the case of human uniqueness, the Western traditions subscribe to two types of theories: the dominion theory and the mechanistic theory. The former suggests a hierarchical categorization whereas the latter was inspired by Western Enlightenment and Darwinism. Darwinism maintains that human beings are unique for their meaningful language capacity and complex brain functions. Human's identity in the mechanistic theory derives from the socially constructed ego or self consciousness. By contrast, human uniqueness in Asian traditions mostly focuses on a virtuous

person, or a person with excellent moral character. In Asian philosophies, the concept of personhood was *not* identified with the individual's autonomy, their ability to make rational decision, awareness about rights, liberty, and one's own dignity. Rather, personhood constructed individuals' relation with their families, their societal relation and ability to sacrifice their own interest. So, being selfless is not negative at all. Indeed, selflessness is a positive attitude in the Asian traditions which is contrary to the Western traditions. In the Western traditions, gaining self through construction and deconstruction of selfhood is considered crucial.

The distinction between living and nonliving elements is important in the Western traditions because most Western traditions do not treat some natural elements as having moral standing. Human dignity is seen as intrinsically valuable. Asian traditions, however, do not support this view. For achieving personal as well as social harmony and balance, one has to include everything in the moral circle which exists between Heaven and Earth. Without paying proper respect and devotion to them liberation is not possible to obtain for human beings. A combination of various approaches, such as right-based approach, care-based approach, and a relational perspective, prevails in the Asian traditions.

The issue of sacredness may be seen as some kind of special consciousness. Thus, sacredness in nature is not more than a kind of ecological consciousness according to the Western traditions. This kind of sacredness is fundamentally different from the religious sacredness. Asian people like to locate sacredness in natural elements and their cosmic powers. So, the ecological dependency of human beings could be seen as a means to relate

with the Ultimate Reality or motivation to act correctly in preserving greater balance and harmony.

Despite indicating these differences, I find some core values, and provide a detailed analysis of them in Chapter Four. I claim that we could reasonably deduce identification, self-realization and spirituality as common core values since these are emphasized in both traditions. I also explain why they should be regarded as core values by proposing some criteria of core values. These three common core values are discussed from practical and theoretical perspectives because our main goal is to show that they are crucial for formulating effective and appropriate environmental policies. In this context, I review some basic environmental Declarations, such as The Earth Charter, to see whether these values are adopted or at least recommended. At the theoretical level, I consider the notion of comprehensive environmental ethics and its relation to the common core values. I argue that neither the normative approach (environmental ethics) nor the ecosophical approach (ontological approach) provides an appropriate solution to the ecological crisis. Therefore, a complete theoretical reconstruction should be taken seriously.

In Chapter Five, I argue that an emotional attachment with our surroundings is crucial for a theoretical reconstruction. A place-based responsibility will motivate individuals to develop an ecological consciousness, and inspire them to live harmoniously, even by sacrificing some of their personal interests.

While I agree that a notion of impartial self, such as Naess's ecological self, is a novel idea in environmental philosophy, it does *not* provide an appropriate solution to the global ecological crisis. I develop three types of

criticism in this regard. Firstly, there is no unified consensus about what the ecological self really means. For instance, Freya Mathews develops an ecological self based on physics and says that the cosmos “qualifies for selfhood”. But it seems Naess is not interested in a cosmic selfhood. Instead, he wants to enlarge our feelings and identification with nature at the cosmic level so that the isolation between us and nature could be removed. Another deep ecologist, Warwick Fox, outlines a different ecological self. He thinks that the ecological self mainly manifests “impartiality” rather than cosmic selfhood. So, he discards all kinds of personal relationships between nature and human beings as preconditions for an ecological self. He even moves further to claim that we should reject the notion of ecological self because it does not represent the idea that Naess originally invoked in his deep ecological philosophy. However, Fox does not accurately capture Naess’s notion of ecological self. I show that the whole idea of ecological self has not been constructed correctly. This is because Naess very often mixed-up several ideas rooted in Western and Asian thoughts without considering their traditional contexts.

Secondly, Naess maintains a balance between emotion and intuition in his idea of identification. But when he develops the ecological self he suddenly moves toward intuition and rejects emotion. He gives examples from his own country where emotional attachment with the place is highlighted. Nonetheless, he removes all sorts of emotion when he claims that empathy and sympathy are *not* the basic issues for the ecological self. Naess believes that the widened and deepened ecological consciousness is enough to feel that if we harm the Arctic penguins we actually harm ourselves. This is not because

of emotional attachment with the penguins, but because penguins are parts of ourselves. However, I believe that our emotional bonding with the place is very crucial. It also shows, as Val Plumwood argues, that we are distinct from nature but at the same time we are attached to nature.

Thirdly, the ecological self does not have enough motivational power to inspire people to behave in a responsible way toward nature. This is because of its lacking a proper action-guiding moral principle and maintaining a highly abstract relationship, extremely difficult for ordinary people to grasp. It requires another higher faculty, usually found in saints, philosophers, poets, and artists. But environmental ethics is for ordinary people who have to deal with nature for various purposes in their daily lives. If we want to overcome the ecological crisis they should be our focus, not the people with extreme imaginative powers.

Finally, by articulating my own concept of “neighboring self”, a new version of ecological ontology is developed in Chapter Six. The neighboring self, I argue, is an outcome of comparative analysis of Western and Asian environmental philosophies. In other words, the neighboring self is reflected in the Western as well as Asian traditions. The neighbor-centric approach proposes a guiding principle of comprehensive environmental ethics, the Protection Principle. Its specialty may be pointed out as place sensitive, intimate, emotional, but at the same time it acknowledges that humans and nature have their particular status. A person and his or her neighbors are locally-emotionally attached, but they maintain a relationship which does not require self surrendering, or dominating each other.

I show that the arguments against the neighbor-centric approach for its local orientation are not persuasive. In other words, those who argue that a local concept is ineffective to solve a global problem, such as the ecological crisis, are simply wrong for two reasons. Firstly, their claim cannot be supported from evolutionary biology which shows that our ancestors maintained a neighboring relation with their surroundings. The Earth at that time was environmentally clean, balanced and sound. Secondly, they ignore or missed the example of indigenous peoples' lifestyles where a simple metaphysics is followed, that is, the neighbor-centric metaphysics.

So, I propose to adapt a neighboring self as a viable solution to the ecological crisis. The neighboring self holds identification-as-neighborhood, neighborhood self-realization and neighborhood spirituality as the most appropriate dimensions of common core values, and neither subscribes to a dominating worldview nor to a cosmological worldview. It may overcome some of the major limitations of the ecological self and fill the action-guidingness gap in the ecosophical approach, and provide ecological wisdom for the normative approach. It may also open an alternative avenue to view nature beyond anthropocentric or nonanthropocentric perspectives if nonanthropocentrism is given a more straight-forward interpretation.

CHAPTER ONE

ENVIRONMENT IN WESTERN TRADITIONS:

NAESS AND PASSMORE

Environmental ethics emerged in the West in 1970s by challenging its centuries old philosophical and ethical traditions which was all about “humans”. The twentieth century was, thus, the time of reasking and rethinking about the value of nonhuman beings, and also relocating values which are crucial in the human-nature relationship. A common consensus is that the Western traditions misdirected our attitudes toward the environment. The ecological crisis, one of the most serious problems currently, is the result of misperceived values. However, the ecological crisis opens an opportunity for Western philosophers to reconsider environmental values, and to examine whether Western traditions are narrow and overspecialized.

In 1967, an insightful historical study was conducted by Lynn White Jr. where he reviewed most of these questions. His landmark work was published in the *Science* journal and cited widely. His view was criticized as well as appreciated. In his paper, White discussed the historical development of present civilization and argued that Western science, technology, and Christian theology, were the main determining factors. The thesis set forth by him is that human dominance over nature lies at the heart of the ecological crisis. In other words, human being’s alienation from nature developed a

dominant worldview long ago. This dominant worldview, according to White, has two different roots: religion, namely Christianity, and the fusion of scientific knowledge and technological power.

These two roots have changed the human-nature relation at the medieval age which started at the 7th century. As White puts it, “Formerly man had been part of nature; now he was the exploiter of nature”¹. The Judeo-Christian theology, in spite of the creation myth, declares, “...God had created Adam...Man named all the animals, thus establishing his dominance over them”². So, the fundamental ground of human’s dominance was Christian belief or Christian theology according to White. Human’s approach to nature, however, was based on the Baconian axiom, “scientific knowledge means technological power over nature”³.

White argues that the West traditionally has inherited an erroneous human-nature relation whose basic axiom was that human beings are the master of nature. This basic axiom allows them to exploit nature for their own purposes, treating nature merely as a means to human progress. According to White, this anthropocentric value oriented human-nature relation has sparked off a great challenge for humankind. However, many environmental philosophers do *not* think that anthropocentrism, and Western traditions as a whole, is absolutely problematic. They even asked whether White was fair to Western traditions.

For example, John Passmore, one of the founding fathers of environmental ethics, argues that Western traditions are extremely innovative,

¹ Lynn White, Jr., “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis”, in *The Palgrave Environmental Reader*, ed. Daniel G. Payne and Richard S. Newman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 180.

² *Ibid.*, 180.

³ *Ibid.*, 177.

rich, and capable of solving the ecological crisis in their own terms. He believes that the West does not need to borrow values from other traditions. Instead, finding more options within its own traditions is sufficient. In opposition to White, he noticed that science and technology have made Western traditions more problem-solving and resourceful. The roots of the ecological crisis, according to Passmore, are neither Christianity nor science and technology, nor are they anthropocentric values. Rather, they are to be found in our short-sightedness. Passmore takes the challenge of Western anthropocentric value theory more seriously and runs with it.

However, like White, Arne Naess, the most influential environmental philosopher of the 20th century, finds the Western perception of the human-nature relationship extremely problematic. Instead of dominance, he wants to maintain a symbiotic relation between human beings and natural elements. Naess gets inspiration from ecology, a holistic science, and calls for a fundamental change in our lifestyles. He appreciates White's suggestion to "rethink our axioms" and to find a "new set of basic values" to overcome the ecological crisis. However, Naess does not seem to believe that there exist a close link between Christianity in particular and anthropocentric values. Moreover, unlike White, he does not think an alternative Christian view might be sufficient to get rid of the ecological crisis. According to him, an ecosophy or ecological wisdom is needed to change our shallow ecology and to replace it with a deep ecological attitude.

So, there are some important questions which need to be addressed: What are the anthropocentric environmental values? How are Naess's and Passmore's values different? Are they arguing for conflicting values? How

would Naess and Passmore respond to human uniqueness? Is it possible to perceive the environment from a different perspective? These are the questions we will deal with in this chapter.

I. ANTHROPOCENTRIC ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES

According to the *Dictionary of World Philosophy*, value “denotes the worth of something”⁴. That is, value indicates the “worth” of an object, entity, or a system. How do we measure this worth? In particular, how do we measure the worth of the environment? One could measure the value of the environment by the amount of utility we get from it. In other words, we can value the environment as the source of firewood, furniture, houses, crops, cars, ornaments, energy supply, cosmetics, leather goods, and for other means. In this case, the environment is valued *instrumentally* or economically, i.e. the environment is a *means* or *instrument* to get certain ends (such as utility, pleasure, and satisfaction).

However, one could also value the environment for some other reasons, such as inspiration, wonder, contemplation, meditation, learning, aesthetic feeling, feeling interconnectedness, realizing the Creator’s art, and much more. Human beings may not be the only valuable things, rather, there are other *equally* valuable natural elements. It is therefore possible to maintain that the environment is not necessarily a mere means to the fulfillment of human ends. One can also value the environment *noninstrumentally* or noneconomically.

⁴ A. Pablo Iannone, *Dictionary of World Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2001), 539.

Thus, when human beings value themselves as superior to the environment, and they treat the environment as merely serving human purposes, then they have what may be called anthropocentric environmental values. By contrast, when human beings value themselves equally with other natural elements, and regard themselves as a part of nature, which has an intrinsic value, then they subscribe to what may be called nonanthropocentric environmental values.

There are plenty of examples in the history of Western philosophy where famous philosophers argued for anthropocentric environmental values. For instance, the influential medieval philosopher, Thomas Aquinas, observed natural order hierarchically, with God at the top, human beings occupying a middle position, and all other creatures, including animals, at the bottom. Human beings occupied the highest position in nature since God has given them a special quality, i.e. rationality, and bestows on them intrinsic value. God has permitted human beings to exercise their rational power in order to dominate other creatures, just as God exercises His power on them, as Aquinas maintained. In this sense, the natural surroundings of human beings are not more than “slaves”. Aquinas writes,

Therefore every other creature is naturally under slavery; the intellectual nature alone is free...Accordingly divine providence makes provision for the intellectual creature for its own sake, but for other creatures for the sake of the intellectual creature.⁵

In this statement, we see that the rank for human beings is the highest among all creatures in nature, and therefore, their wants, satisfaction, happiness, and needs, should get highest priority over other creatures. John

⁵ Thomas Aquinas, “Humans as Moral Ends”, in *Environmental Ethics: The Big Questions*, ed. David R. Keller (West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2010), 63.

Locke has established this hierarchical chain and articulated nature simply as human's property. The only value he granted to nature is its "use-value". Similarly, Francis Bacon described nature as artificial, where physical and mathematical laws are applicable. He writes, "And inquiries into nature have the best result when they begin with physics and end in mathematics"⁶. Bacon wanted to show that the laws of physics can reasonably be extendable to nature. He thinks that human knowledge generates power to command over nature, and recommends, "Thus we should consider, for the purpose of generating and superinducing any nature on a given body, what precept, direction, or procedure someone would most wish for"⁷.

Rene Descartes, the most cited anthropocentric philosopher, maintains that in the Earth every element has been created by two basic substances, mind and body. The difference between human beings and all other natural elements is that the latter lacks a mind which is the fundamental criterion of moral consideration, according to Descartes. While he is aware that trees, plants, and animals, can move, grow, and even, in the case of animals, have sensation like human beings, they do not qualify for moral consideration because they lack the thinking capacity, "It is much more wonderful that a mind should be found in every human body than that one should be lacking in every animal"⁸. In opposition to Aristotle, who observed the Earth according to a principle of integration, Descartes supports Baconian mechanical views. We illustrate Descartes's position more vividly,

⁶ Francis Bacon, "The Mastery of Nature", in *Environmental Ethics: The Big Questions*, ed. David R. Keller (West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2010), 68.

⁷ Francis Bacon, "The Second Book of Aphorisms Concerning the Interpretation of Nature, Or the Kingdom of Man", in *The Instauration Magna Part II: Novum Organum and Associated Texts*, eds. Graham Rees and Maria Wakely (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 203.

⁸ Rene Descartes, "Nonhumans as Machines", in *Environmental Ethics: The Big Questions*, ed. David R. Keller (West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2010), 71.

In contrast, Descartes was a supporter of the scientific revolution that replaced Aristotle's views with a conception of nature as wholly mechanical in character. Thus, the external world reintroduced in his *Meditations* consists of "dead" matter whose behavior can be understood by reference to a set of mathematical laws.⁹

In sum, since the natural elements do not have rationality—the essence of mind, Descartes argued that the Earthly elements, such as animals, are nothing but "machines", or "brutes".

So, Descartes's view not only allows mastery over nature but also encourages using nature for human purposes and satisfaction. Indeed, one of the Descartes's famous statements is: "...we could use this knowledge—as the artisans use theirs—for all the purposes for which it is appropriate, and *thus make ourselves, as it were, the lords and masters of nature.*"¹⁰

Nonetheless, it should be worth noting that in opposition to this standard interpretation an alternative interpretation was offered by Wee where she evidently argues that Descartes does *not* necessarily subscribe to the "Dominion theory" because human being's privileged position is not God-gifted but "self-ascribed"¹¹. Although this self-ascribed interpretation is a refined representation of Descartes's view it also shares the anthropocentric ingredients.

John Locke considered nature as merely an economic resource for human beings and defends property rights by his labor theory: "God and his

⁹ Cecilia Wee, "Descartes, Rene", in *Encyclopedia of Environmental Ethics and Philosophy*, vol.1, ed. J. Baird Callicott and Robert Frodeman (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2009), 213.

¹⁰ Rene Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes* vol.1, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff and Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 142, quoted in Cecilia Wee, "Cartesian Environmental Ethics", *Environmental Ethics* 23, no. 3 (2001): 276.

¹¹ Cecilia Wee, "Cartesian Environmental Ethics", *Environmental Ethics* 23, no. 3 (2001): 279.

reason commanded him to subdue the earth—*i.e.*, improve it for the benefit of life and therein lay out something upon it that was his own, his labour”¹².

The great classical utilitarian, John Stuart Mill, advocates mastery over nature according to human needs and necessities. Unlike Kant, who considered “humanity” as the end of human beings, Mill thinks that for a moral being promoting “happiness” is the end. In a famous statement Mill clearly says,

The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals, Utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness.¹³

Obviously, Mill takes into account the happiness of human beings. But by distinguishing between higher and lower quality of pleasures he has given priority to the higher pleasures and introduces the concept of quality of happiness.

According to Mill, we could refer to “nature” in two different senses. In the first sense, nature is “the aggregate of the powers and properties of all things”, while in the second sense, “Nature stands for that which takes place without human intervention”¹⁴. The former sense states that nature is simply the sum total of everything, including facts and possibilities, which happen or will happen. In other words, nature is not supernatural, but rather the sum total of natural things. The latter sense states that nature is as it is, without human interruption. Put differently, nature is not artificially created, whatever

¹² John Locke, “Nature as Economic Resource”, in *Environmental Ethics: The Big Questions*, ed. David R. Keller (West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2010), 79.

¹³ John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, in *The Basic Writings of John Stuart Mill: On Liberty, The Subjection of Women, and Utilitarianism*, ed. F.B. Schneewind and Dale E. Miller (New York: The Modern Library, 2002), 239.

¹⁴ John Stuart Mill, “Nature”, in *Three Essays on Religion: Nature, The Utility of Religion, and Theism* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1874), 5, 19.

we see in nature is created without our interventions. Neither sense provides a standard for evaluating human conduct. The first sense, according to Mill, is “unmeaning” because, except for unconditional surrender to nature, “man has no power to do anything else”¹⁵. Similarly, the second sense is “irrational and immoral” since all human actions in order to improve nature would be unjustified in this sense. So, Mill rejects both of these views and argues that nature never provides a moral standard for guiding our conduct.

Mill observes nature as “gigantic power” that exists imperfectly, and should be made perfect by human intelligence. Human civilization cannot progress by following nature, but by perfecting and improving nature. Nature should be “dispraised” if human beings want to clear up their ignorance and wonder regarding it. Following nature cannot improve human conduct as well since, nature itself is destructive in Mill’s view. He argues that nature’s imperfection is a threat to human lives, and taking nature as a moral guide would be irrational to them. In short, Mill regards following nature an obstacle to the improvement of human condition and civilization. So, he suggests an attitude of correcting nature and *not* following it. In Mill’s words, “All praise of Civilization, or Art, or Contrivance, is so much dispraise of nature; an admission of imperfection, which it is man’s business, and merit, to be always endeavouring to correct or mitigate”¹⁶.

Mill’s statement shows that he would permit any activity to improve nature as long as that activity would maximize Utility or human happiness. However, his aim was not to devalue nature but to praise human intelligence. He remarkably expanded the moral circle to other sentient beings since, he

¹⁵ Ibid., 64.

¹⁶ Ibid., 21.

says, “the good of human or other sentient beings”¹⁷. Human beings should consider the good of other sentient beings in order to achieve greater happiness.

Finally, Immanuel Kant, the prime defender of humanity, maintains that there is a “unity” or “system” in nature which is governed according to the empirical laws. Empirical laws are scientific laws understandable by reason. The understanding of empirical laws helps us to discover the natural system and to manage it harmoniously. Kant says, “...it is quite conceivable that the specific variety of the empirical laws of nature with their effects might still be so great as to make it impossible for our intellect to discover an intelligible order in nature; to divide its products into genera and species...”¹⁸. It is important to note that Kant emphasizes the *understanding* of intelligible ordering in nature, not just the order itself. Reason according to Kant made this understanding possible as he says,

Reason never relates directly to an object, but solely to the understanding and by means of it to reason’s own empirical use, hence it does not **create** any concepts (of objects) but only **orders** them and gives them that unity...Thus reason really has as object only the understanding and its purposive application.¹⁹

According to Kant, the purpose or the ultimate end of human beings is humanity. Like other major philosophers, Kant also believes that human beings are intrinsically valuable. However, his argument is distinct from theirs in that he believes *only* human beings are able to construct “a concept of ends”, and “a system of ends” based on scientific understanding of nature. The

¹⁷ Ibid., 65.

¹⁸ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment* in *Basic Writings of Kant*, ed. Allen W. Wood (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), 285.

¹⁹ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, (A643-4/B671-2), quoted in Paul Guyer, *Kant’s System of Nature and Freedom: Selected Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 61.

question is, therefore, what is the end purpose of natural elements? Kant himself asks this question and replies without any hesitation,

What is the end and purpose of these and all the preceding natural kingdoms? Man, we say, and the multifarious uses to which his intelligence teaches him to put all these forms of life. He is the ultimate end of creation here upon earth, because he is the one and only being upon it that is able to form a concept of ends, and from an aggregate of things purposively fashioned is able to construct by the aid of his reason a system of ends.²⁰

From this statement, we see that Kant would permit any natural element to be used for human needs and satisfaction as long as the act is performed according to human intelligence and reason. Kant ascribes an indirect duty to the animal kingdom:

Animals are not self-conscious and are there merely as a means to an end. That end is man. We can ask, ‘Why do animals exist?’ But to ask, ‘Why does man exist?’ is a meaningless question. Our duties towards animals are merely indirect duties towards humanity.²¹

Since the unity and system in nature is maintained by empirical laws, using nature in accordance with science can be seen a recommendation from Kant for better understanding of nature.

However, beyond this scientific value, Kant holds that nature also has an aesthetic value. The aesthetic value depends on the “feeling” of human beings and comprises a “positive component”. The positive component was illustrated by Budd in this way: “The positive component is a feeling of elevation in judging our own worth, a feeling of our supremacy over the natural world, the compensatory realization ...a value, infinitely superior to

²⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, in *Basic Writings of Kant*, ed. Allen W. Wood (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), 347.

²¹ Immanuel Kant, “Indirect Duties to Nonhumans”, in *Environmental Ethics: The Big Questions*, ed. David R. Keller (West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2010), 82.

that of nature”²². Although Kant’s view suggests that we should consider all natural elements as merely instrumentally valuable, and human beings as intrinsically valuable, some recent Kantians argued that we must consider a few more issues apart from reason. Brown’s important statement might be worth mentioning here, “Rational nature, on his account, entails not only the capacity for reason, but also the capacity for principled action, as well as the capacity to make practical choices in a way that is completely independent of all natural causes”²³. The point I would like to mention in this context is that understanding nature in accordance with empirical laws would confer superiority on human beings over nature since other animals lack it in Kant’s sense.

From the above discussion, we could say that almost all major classical thinkers in Western traditions considered human beings at the centre of their thoughts. Some of them have gone further by thinking that human beings are the “closest” creatures to God and so they are the master of the universe. To them, nature, like a machine, functions for human beings. The Western philosophers may not under-value nature since they all admit that human beings have to depend on nature for various purposes. The value they ascribe to nature is its “use-value”. Sometimes nature was seen by them as a barrier or obstacle to social progress. Most of their recommendations are to using or perfecting nature for the development of human knowledge and for the improvement of human lives. Imperfect nature, in their view, is not only

²² Malcolm Budd, “The Sublime in Nature”, in *Kant’s Critique of the Power of Judgment: Critical Essays*, ed. Paul Guyer (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003), 132-133.

²³ Christopher A. Brown, “Kantianism and Mere Means”, *Environmental Ethics* 32, no. 3 (2010): 275.

dangerous for human beings, but also a threat for other animals. So, control over nature was regarded as a positive phenomenon.

As noted earlier, human's rationality, or rationality with respect to seeking the best means to one's ends, plays a vital role in conceptions of nature. After Locke, other theorists, political leaders, and economists were inspired to deal with the notion of property ownership. Later, the economists focused on the economic value of nature. Accordingly, the anthropocentric value theory appeared and justified "...the view in which nonhuman nature is valued primarily for its satisfaction of human preferences and/or contribution to broader human values and interests"²⁴.

Western traditions often stress anthropocentric environmental values which mainly consider the interests of human beings, or see them at the top of a value pyramid, and hold that human beings are *intrinsically* valuable for their capability of rational behavior. Other natural elements are treated as instruments, or simply means to human ends. However, we must keep in mind that not *all* environmental philosophers agreed that anthropocentric value theory necessarily undermines other species in nature, or endorse the destruction of nature. In fact, anthropocentric environmental values recognize some important phenomena as vital to distinguishing between human and nonhumans. For example, human uniqueness.

While many classical environmental ethicists and philosophers contributed to the battle of intrinsic and instrumental value of natural elements, contemporary philosophers seem to turn their attention to the worldviews of various cultures and traditions as a way out from this building block. They are

²⁴ Ben A. Minteer, "Anthropocentrism", in *Encyclopedia of Environmental Ethics and Philosophy*, vol. 1, ed. J. Baird Callicott and Robert Frodeman (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2009), 59.

now more interested in examining various life-styles, cultural festivals, religious rituals, and traditional customs, in different parts of the Earth where human beings clearly value natural elements. For example, indigenous people worldwide maintain a kinship relation with nature. Arne Naess is the most prominent among these philosophers who develop a deep ecosophy.

II. VALUES IN NAESS'S ECOSOPHY

Arne Naess, who first introduced the term “deep ecology”, argues that we have to change our present value theory and lifestyles, and expand some fundamental ideas (e.g. community). With George Sessions he has outlined a deep ecological platform as a basis of the deep ecological movement. The philosophy of the deep ecological movement is “ecosophy”, or “ecowisdom”. Naess maintains,

By an *ecosophy* I mean a philosophy of ecological harmony or equilibrium. A philosophy is a kind of *sophia* wisdom, is openly normative, it contains *both* norms, rules, postulates, value priority announcements *and* hypotheses concerning the state of affairs in our universe.²⁵

Notice that Naess’s ecosophy prioritizes some fundamental values. What are these values?

Naess is obviously arguing for some nonanthropocentric values. Perhaps, deep ecological values would be well-being, flourishing, diversity, richness of wilderness, and joyful living. Naess would value diversity or wilderness at the cost of reducing economic progress. So, initially diversity or wilderness could be the first value.

²⁵ Arne Naess, “The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movements: A Summary”, in *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. George Sessions (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1995), 155.

Naess's nonanthropocentric ideas incorporated deep ecology, not shallow ecology, a distinction Naess himself has made. The shallow ecology has the central aim to save "people", and fight against "pollution and resource depletion". Its goal is to save human beings by reducing or controlling environmental pollution. The Earth, for shallow ecologists, is a resource. In contrast, the deep ecology has the central aim to save *all* elements in the *biosphere*, and it rejects "man-in-environment" image. It favors an image of "relational, total-field". All elements (human and nonhuman) in this Earth are intrinsically related, which means without this relation they are "no longer the same thing". So, interrelatedness or interconnectedness could be another value in Naess's deep ecology.

There are some other values, such as respect for all life forms. Naess writes, "To the ecological field-worker, *the equal right to live and blossom* is an intuitively clear and obvious value axiom"²⁶. In another place he writes, "...but the "hanging together of everything" is nevertheless experienced and conceived of as a positive value"²⁷. A closely connected value with our daily lives, but quite different from "Newtonian and mechanistic" experience, can also be traced. He notes, "Many supporters of the Deep Ecology movement, however, are inspired by ways of experiencing reality which clash with this dominant way of conceiving reality"²⁸.

However, Naess's ecosophy basically contains only one norm and sets forth some *priority* values beyond those just indicated. He separates norms from values by saying "Norms are in general derived from other norms and

²⁶ Ibid., 152.

²⁷ Arne Naess, "Ecosophy and Gestalt Ontology", in *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. George Sessions (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1995), 240.

²⁸ Ibid., 244.

hypotheses, rarely only from others norms”²⁹. On the other hand, he integrates values by saying “Values are linked together: one thing is good for another which in turn is good for a third thing”³⁰. So, Naess deduces that there might be *some* priority values but there should be only *one* basic norm. Any other auxiliary norms are derivable from this basic norm. Of course, the basic norm would develop one of the fundamental values or priority values. Yet, no one has outlined or specified the fundamental values in Naess’s ecosophical thinking and I would like to do so. We will see that the values we have pointed out “linked together” with Naess’s *fundamental* values.

Naess called his own ecosophy “ecosophy T” and writes, “Ecosophy T has only one ultimate norm: “Self-realization”!”³¹ So, it is clear that the ultimate or basic norm is “Self-realization”. But his notion of “Self-realization” has a completely different meaning and implication from the traditional notion we find from Socrates to Holmes Rolston III.

I do not use this expression in any narrow, individualistic sense. I want to give it an expanded meaning based on the distinction between a large comprehensive Self and narrow egoistic self as conceived of in certain Eastern traditions of *atman*.³²

Thus, Naess breaks the centuries old idea “self-realization” by replacing it with a capital “S”.

Not only does Naess borrow the term “Self” from the East and replace it in the Western philosophical traditions without considering its Eastern cultural context and implication, but he also believes that the egoistic self can

²⁹ Arne Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy*, trans. and rev. David Rothenberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 43.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 40.

³¹ Arne Naess, “The Deep Ecological Movement: Some Philosophical Aspects”, in *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. George Sessions (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1995), 80.

³² *Ibid.*, 80.

be enlarged, widened, broadened, through a particular process called “maximization”. In his words,

This large comprehensive Self (with a capital “S”) embraces all the life forms on the planet (and elsewhere?) together with their individual selves (*jivas*). If I were to express this ultimate norm in a few words, I would say: Maximize (long-range, universal) Self-realization!³³

It might be note worthy that Naess changes “self” but kept “realization” as it is in the phrase “self-realization”. Does the term “realization” have the same meaning in the West and the East? More precisely, does self-realization have the same meaning in both traditions? We will deal with these questions later. We should consider first how self-realization is to be maximized? What is the process from self to “Self”?

Naess clearly states the process of gaining Self-realization. He says,

By identifying with greater wholes, we partake in the creation and maintenance of this whole. *We thereby share in its greatness...*egos develop into selves of greater and greater dimension, proportional to the extent and depth of our processes of identification.³⁴

Hence, identification is the process by which the egoistic self extends and deepens into the comprehensive Self. Identification with nature can inspire us to find nature intrinsically valuable.

Certainly, by devaluing identification none can achieve the ultimate goal of Self-realization. Identification creates the foundation of Self-realization. Identification is worthy, valuable as there is no alternative way to maximize self, to participate in the ecophilosophical feeling, to realize diversity and interdependence, and to perceive nature as intrinsically valuable.

³³ Ibid., 80.

³⁴ Arne Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy*, trans. and rev. David Rothenberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 173-174.

So, *identification* must be the first fundamental value in Naess's ecosophy. Let me illustrate this value in more detail.

Identification is the first step to gain ecological consciousness. Through the process of identification, the immature self or egoistic self becomes the ecological self or ecologically conscious self. Identification implies a feeling, a deep attachment, diminishing of narrow ego. It is a process of widening feelings toward the nonhuman world and narrowing alienation. Naess defines identification as "...a spontaneous, non-rational, but not irrational, process through which *the interest or interests of another being are reacted to as our own interest or interests*"³⁵.

According to Naess, identification is spontaneous since we want to be identified to gain something immaterially valuable. We feel the urge to share other beings' interests as our own interests. Alienation is seen as a burden on us. The more identification, the more achievements. Although the *motivational* force behind such spontaneous identification was not clearly mentioned by Naess, he seems to emphasize the emotional side of identification.

Identification is rather non-rational than irrational. For example, if a fly sits on the dustbin and takes its food we cannot try to do so because we are different, though we might have the same interest to eat our food. By identifying with it we could feel its pain or hunger but cannot do the same thing as it does. Put differently, when we identify with the fly it is not required that we sit on the dustbin and eat the same food in the same way the fly does. The reason is that our rationality, food types, body structure, social and existing moral norms will not permit us to do so. But what is required from us

³⁵ Arne Naess, "Identification as a Source of Deep Ecological Attitudes", in *Radical Environmentalism: Philosophy and Tactics*, ed. Peter C. List (California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1993), 29.

is the *feeling* of commonalities between us and the fly. So, identification is non-rational, instead of irrational. Now, what makes identification a value rather than a norm might be evident from Naess's own writings.

According to Naess, norms are "prescriptions or inducements to think or act in certain ways"³⁶. But later he says this definition is "rigid" and proposes that norms generally provide "tentative guidelines". In Naess's theory at least identification cannot be a norm since his only norm is Self-realization which prescribes deep ecological action. Perhaps, identification is a value by which we can achieve Self-realization. Identification does not prescribe any particular act. We have just seen that identification could be "non-rational". If identification is "non-rational" then it cannot be a norm. The reason is that a norm provides "prescriptions" or at least "tentative guidelines" which identification does not fulfill.

Naess considered identification in at least three ways³⁷ : 1. Identification is "the basic tool" of maturity (widening and deepening) of the self, 2. Identification is a "source of active participation" in the natural diversity and interdependence, and 3. Identification is a "source of belief in intrinsic values". Naess writes, "The process of identification is the prerequisite for feeling the *lack* of greatness, equanimity in one's empirical self. One 'sees oneself in the other' "³⁸. These senses are positive as well as negative. In the positive sense, identification is the "sharing" of greatness, wholeness, interdependence, by spontaneity and internalization. In the

³⁶ Arne Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy*, trans. and rev. David Rothenberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 42.

³⁷ Arne Naess, "Identification as a Source of Deep Ecological Attitudes", in *Radical Environmentalism: Philosophy and Tactics*, ed. Peter C. List (California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1993), 26-27.

³⁸ Arne Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy*, trans. and rev. David Rothenberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 172.

negative sense, it is a decrease in our narrow egos or alienation with nonhuman beings.

The standard example of identification is illustrated by Naess's reaction when he saw a dying flea that had suddenly jumped into the acid chemicals. Though he was not able to save the flea from dying, he felt deeply its painful suffering. Naess felt that this suffering was for him "a painful sense of compassion and empathy"³⁹. Hence, psychologically Naess realized the similar pain of death and felt deep compassion and empathy by identifying with the flea. Identification involves not *alienating* from others.

Sessions, the co-founder of the deep ecology movement, illustrates identification and its value as follows:

...human individuals attain personal self-realization, and psychological/emotional maturity when they progress from an identification with narrow ego, through identification with other humans, to a more all-encompassing identification of their "self" with nonhuman individuals, species, ecosystems, and with the ecosphere itself. This process of "wide identification" Naess takes to be a process of the development of the "ecological self".⁴⁰

Like Naess, Sessions believes that identification plays a crucial role, provide a basis, and a move toward self-realization. Human beings, though egoistic, can make progress by identification which would reduce their narrow egoism. According to this statement, the first stage identification starts from human-human relationship, aims at psychological or emotional maturity. But in the successive stages, human beings must identify themselves with nonhumans, other species, ecosystems, and finally, with the whole ecosphere.

³⁹ Arne Naess, "Self-realization: An Ecological Approach to Being in the World", in *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. George Sessions (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1995), 227.

⁴⁰ George Sessions, ed., *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1995), 189-190.

So, there is a gradual development in the identification process. Only in the final stage, when the individual reaches the highest degree of identification, can he or she gain wholeness, totality, and unity. In Naess's words, "From the identification process stems unity, and since the unity is of a gestalt character, the wholeness is attained"⁴¹.

However, some worries are: When can one be sure that his or her "self" has attained unity or wholeness? How does he or she realize and recognize it in him or herself? These are, I believe, the most puzzling and vital questions which raise many criticisms against deep ecology. Initially, the answer is: when "we see ourselves in others". But what does this *see* mean here? One can deduce two options from Naess's texts.

Firstly, "see" means we can internalize other's sorrows, pains, sufferings, *empathically*. We could place ourselves in other's situation and share the same feeling with empathy. Most animal rights movements argue for animal liberation based on the empathic feeling of animal sufferings. Naess himself says in his standard example of identification that what he felt for the dying flea was a painful "compassion and empathy". The empathic identification is also recognizable in some religions (especially Buddhism and Hinduism), and some Asian cultures. However, Naess immediately rules out empathy and says, "But the empathy was *not* basic, rather it was a process of identification: that "I saw myself in the flea"⁴². So, he includes empathy as one of the components rather than the end of identification. But there are several overlaps in his ecosophy regarding this view.

⁴¹ Arne Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy*, trans. and rev. David Rothenberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 173.

⁴² Arne Naess, "Self-realization: An Ecological Approach to Being in the World", in *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. George Sessions (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1995), 227.

Secondly, we can “see” ourselves in others in the sense that we human beings and nonhuman beings belong to one community. We are united, indivisible, and inseparable. There is an amazing “unity” which can be realized by identification. Without identification this unity cannot be discovered. We are just the different forms of a united community. We share a sense of solidarity or fellow feelings for each other. Thus the foundation of this ecological unity, in Naess’s word, is *equality* or *equanimity*. “All life forms are fundamentally one”, Naess says.

III. DETERMINING SOME OTHER MAIN VALUES

Two famous deep ecologists, Devall and Sessions, perceive Self-realization “...as the realization of “self-in-Self” where “Self” stands for organic wholeness”⁴³. Our earlier discussion shows that Naess’s Self-realization aims to attain a special type of development, what he and other deep ecologists called “full mature personhood and uniqueness”. Traditionally, self-realization refers to some improvements in human personality. In other words, human beings can improve their behavior, passion, uniqueness, by controlling their emotions or sensory activities. Self-realization was seen as synonymous with self-examination, self-mastery, and self-controlling. But Naess believes that this conception only considers “individual salvation”, or how a human being as a person can develop his or her own personhood. This sounds “narrow” to Naess, and separates or dislocates a human being from his or her bigger community. The small self-realization thus can be seen as a way

⁴³ Bill Devall and George Sessions, *Deep Ecology: Living As If Nature Mattered* (UT: Gibbs M. Smith, 1985), 67.

of *separation* rather than integration. However, the bigger Self-realization is *integration* with nonhuman species through deep meditation according to Naess.

We could easily see that Naess is not rejecting the value of traditional self-realization, nor does he construct his idea of self-realization by excluding personhood. Both concepts of self-realization are aiming at one single phenomenon, “consciousness”. Naess claims that his idea of consciousness is wider because it includes trans-personal consciousness, while the traditional idea of consciousness is narrower because it is intra-personal. So, he basically claims a wide consciousness instead of a narrow one. However, one may ask: What ingredient makes the ultimate norm, Self-realization, so valuable?

Socrates said, “know thyself”, i.e. “know yourself”. Apparently, this implies that one should know himself or herself, which sounds too personal. However, does it mean a human being should live alone, completely isolated, and then know himself or herself? Is it possible at all to know me without knowing others? Will I be able to know the difference and commonality between me and others by living a lonely life? I can only know me when I live in a family or in a society where I see myself as a part. I might have several limitations, for example, I might be self-centred, and always want to benefit myself, in comparison to others. I can only know myself when I am *with others*. I am self-realized when I find others having better qualities than me and I try to incorporate these in myself. That self is not narrow but much wider than my previous one. Socrates also said, “the unexamined life is not worth living”. Each and every person should examine their lives in relation to others. How can one think that his or her life is worth living without relating to others?

Of course, most traditional philosophers consider “other” as other human beings. But some of them were exceptions. For example, Aristotle includes human beings, animals, and plants, as integrated parts of an organic system. Biocentric holism appears in his book *Progression of Animals*, “...nature never produces in vain, but always produces the best among the possibilities for the being of each kind of animal.”⁴⁴

Naess’s ecosophy maintains a “totality” or “unity”. Naess persistently invites us to realize the unity of nature through diversity. The more we realize diversity, the more we will realize its internal unity. Like some classical philosophers and theologians, Naess also thinks that totality is a sign of “reality”. Nature as reality plays a special role in our lives. In the history of philosophy, there are philosophers who argued that nature should be the Ultimate Reality, God. In the Indian traditions, nature is seen full of spirituality.

A large number of people believe that we should be identified with nature to realize the spirituality of God. Others, who do not believe in God, usually find spirituality in matter. However, Naess distinguishes himself from both views. The term “ecosophy T”, he says, “...includes personal and community self-realization, but is conceived also to refer to an unfolding of reality as a totality”⁴⁵. Unlike others, in order to “unfold” the reality Naess does not rely on mysticism. Contrary to them, he solely emphasizes “personhood”.

⁴⁴ Aristotle, *Progression of Animals*, IA2.704b14-17, quoted in James G. Lennox, “Are Aristotelian Species Eternal?”, in *Aristotle on Nature and Living Things: Philosophical and Historical Studies*, ed. Allan Gotthelf (Pennsylvania: Mathesis Publications, 1985), 72.

⁴⁵ Arne Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy*, trans. and rev. David Rothenberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 84.

Naess's concept of spiritual personhood develops gradually. Unfoldingness starts when a person discards herself from this "own" thinking. Deep ecologists Devall and Sessions's comment is worth mentioning here. They said,

We are thus robbed of beginning the search for our unique spiritual/biological personhood. Spiritual growth, or unfolding, begins when we cease to understand or see ourselves as isolated and narrow competing egos.⁴⁶

According to Devall and Sessions, "unique personhood" thus would mean those who have spiritual capacities to identify with nonhuman beings. In a slightly different way from them Naess says, "...to believe that how we feel nature to be is not how nature really is. Rather, it is that reality is so rich that we cannot see everything at once; we see separate parts (or aspects) in separate moods"⁴⁷.

Until now, we have seen that identification and self-realization are two fundamental values in Naess's ecosophy. The third one, which seems to be "spirituality", becomes evident from his concept of "spiritual personhood". It might be helpful to note that Naess does not consider spirituality in a religious sense, rather in a sense of deep consciousness through which one can perceive nature as an unfolding reality. This spiritual personhood would consider nature internally connected, having a strong feeling to nonhuman elements, or intimate belongingness with them. A religious person would believe that God will punish her if she unnecessarily performs a cruel act on animals. In contrast, a deep ecologist would hold that she would perform cruelty on

⁴⁶ Bill Devall and George Sessions, *Deep Ecology: Living As If Nature Mattered* (UT: Gibbs M. Smith, 1985), 67.

⁴⁷ Arne Naess, "Self-realization: An Ecological Approach to Being in the World", in *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. George Sessions (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1995), 237.

herself if she unnecessarily performs a cruel act on animals. Both of them have spiritual feelings, however, those feelings originate from two different sources: God for a religious person, and Self-realization for a deep ecologist.

But there are some deeper questions which were not addressed in this simple generalization. For instance, a religious person would get *inspiration* from religious scriptures, from the reward of God, from heavenly peace and joy, and from eternal happiness by loving God's creatures. Moreover, God's command, His permissions and prohibitions, are the sources of moral guidelines for her. She firmly believes that the ethical guideline in her religion is perfect, enough to live a moral life in this Earth and beyond. What is the inspiration or the motivational force for a deep ecologist? What is the moral guideline to her? What are the action-guiding principles?

For the first question, Naess's answer is "joy". He said "The sources of joy go deeper and farther"⁴⁸. He also writes, "Part of the joy stems from the consciousness of our intimate relation to something bigger than our ego"⁴⁹. So, Nature is joyful to a deep ecologist. One finds intense joy when she identifies with nature. Killing animals or cutting trees are not enjoyable for her, rather she feels joyous by taking care of them. A question then is whether joy is inside the person's conscious experience or is it inside nature.

Naess replies, "It is misleading, according to my intuitions, to locate joys inside my consciousness...it is an attribute of a reality wider than a conscious ego"⁵⁰. Naess believes that nature itself is joyful, and when one

⁴⁸ Arne Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy*, trans. and rev., David Rothenberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 86.

⁴⁹ Arne Naess, "Self-realization: An Ecological Approach to Being in the World", in *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. George Sessions (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1995), 236.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 237.

identifies with nature, he or she also becomes joyful. A wet tree in a rainy day can no longer be sorrowful. It is similarly joyful when we see it in a sunny day.

Naess's ecosophy significantly differs from the traditional views. Naess is somewhat reluctant about introducing morality into his ecosophy. He sometimes considered moralizing "too narrow". There are several comments in his writings. For example, he writes, "I'm not much interested in ethics or morals. I'm interested in how we experience the world...If deep ecology is deep it must relate to our fundamental beliefs, not just to ethics"⁵¹. In one of his early writings he says, "Moralizing is too narrow, too patronizing, and too open"⁵².

However, I do not think that Naess completely rules out ethics and just argues for ontology, as his fellow deep ecologists claim. Naess himself writes, "But one's ethics in environmental questions are based largely on how one sees reality. If the developer could see the wholes, his ethics might change"⁵³. Naess is not rejecting ethics, but rather a *change* in ethics is essential according to him. Perhaps, it could be joyful and natural to follow ethics. As he says, "our behavior *naturally* and beautifully follows strict norms of environmental ethics"⁵⁴. Naess's response to the question about action-guidingness seems very obscure. Of course, Naess does not state any straightforward ethical principle in his ecosophy. Indeed, he finds *inclination* is more vital than moral laws. Therefore, too many action-guiding principles are

⁵¹ Quoted in David Rothenberg, "Ecosophy T: From Intuition to System", in Arne Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy*, trans. and rev. David Rothenberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 20.

⁵² Arne Naess, "Beautiful Action. Its Function in the Ecological Crisis", *Environmental Values* 2, no.1 (1993): 71.

⁵³ Arne Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy*, trans. and rev. David Rothenberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 66.

⁵⁴ Arne Naess, "Self-realization: An Ecological Approach to Being in the World", in *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. George Sessions (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1995), 236.

possible, or different people would have different action-guiding principles depending on their inclination power.

IV. VALUES IN PASSMORE'S ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY

After White's revolutionary observations on the ecological crisis, many environmental philosophers have tried to show that we should abandon Western environmental values, since Western traditions are anthropocentric. More and more thinkers started to contribute nonanthropocentric ethics, and their works were well appreciated as a new trend in Western environmental thinking. Environmental ethics at these times appears synonymous with nonanthropocentrism. However, the first and bold defense of Western values is by John Passmore.

According to the *Encyclopedia of Environmental Ethics and Philosophy* (2009), Passmore was "enormously influential" in drawing attention to environmental issues. He is the most important figure in suggesting that "environmental ethics might not be synonymous with nonanthropocentrism"⁵⁵. Passmore, therefore, indicates some values in the Western traditions which he thinks are relevant to ecological decisions. I will first discuss Passmore's thoughts, and then explain the values he is arguing for.

A lot of environmental thinkers hold that in order to overcome the ecological crisis we ought to reduce the pollution level, we ought to reduce consumption, we ought to preserve resources, we ought to maintain a small population, and we ought to preserve animal species as well as wilderness.

⁵⁵ J. Baird Callicott and Robert Frodeman, ed., *Encyclopedia of Environmental Ethics and Philosophy*, vol. 1, (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2009), 60.

Since these claims significantly ignore human's creativity and capability in solving ecological problems, they lack strong supporting ground according to Passmore. We should not forget, he warns, today's rich civilization was built by human beings.

Passmore regards deep ecology as "merely cosmetic", even "rubbish". Instead of grounding a technological solution, the ecosophy of deep ecology is a kind of mysticism. The philosophy of wholeness or mysticism is always opposed to rationality, science and technology. Ecosophy, he added, simply "complicates" the environmental decision-making process.

For instance, one of the major environmental problems is the "energy crisis", which cannot be solved by the philosophy of wholeness. We need physical laws, such as "all forms of energy are equivalent", to solve it. Since, according to physics, there cannot be any shortage of energy we just need "to develop the existing, harmful or risky, energy-sources as slowly as possible"⁵⁶. Contrary to Naess, Passmore thus supports "shallow ecology"—mainly concerned with the health and environment of human beings. He declares, "I am proud to call myself 'shallow'"⁵⁷.

However, this does not imply that Passmore encourages current Western lifestyles, people's attitudes toward the environment, and sees no environmental threats. Nor does he think that the Western perception of nature is absolutely correct. He admits that there are ecological problems, such as pollution, extinction of species, and damage of wilderness. He points out that the "ecological problem" and the "problem in ecology" is not the same as commonly understood.

⁵⁶ John Passmore, *Man's Responsibility for Nature: Ecological Problems and Western Traditions* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1980), xi.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, ix.

An ecological problem, he says, is a kind of “social problem” because without this problem a society would be “better-off”. In other words, an ecological problem can be seen as the *social impact* of technology. By contrast, a problem in ecology occurs when scientists have a naive understanding of any ecological phenomenon. This type of problem is a “purely scientific problem”. An ecological problem arises from “our dealings with nature”. Global warming, for example, does not arise from a wealthy living standard, but rather it is the cost of our imperfect dealings or “attitude” toward nature. The solution to ecological problems, like other social problems, therefore, would be a “satisfactory way of reducing” pollution.

What is the *satisfactory* way that Passmore has in mind? In principle, he is arguing that we cannot “abolish” ecological problems. However, we can obviously “reduce” them. Pollution, for example, in his view is *misplaced* matter. So, the satisfactory way is to put it in the “right place”. More clearly, a kind of pollution might be harmful for a specific kind of natural element, while the same could be useful for another. In Passmore’s words, “...phosphate fertilisers are beneficial in a potato field but not in a lake or river, salt is harmless in the seas but not in irrigated fields”⁵⁸. The solution of the pollution problem requires *reducing* the flow of pollutants into the wrong places, and rearranging pollutants in the right place, which is purely scientific and not metaphysical.

Passmore urges Western societies to be more “prudent” in using their technologies, more “conscious” in using natural resources. We human beings are ignorant in many ways about our dealings with nature. We need to know

⁵⁸ Ibid., 45.

more about various species, plants, and their lifestyles. According to Passmore, “...we are proportionally ignorant, proportionally in relation to what we need to know”⁵⁹. Genesis, the root of Western ecological knowledge, does support human beings as the master of the universe. But that is the one-sided view which most critics, including White, are highlighting without realizing its deeper side. The view “nature is wax in man’s hands”, Passmore agrees, “must certainly be rejected”⁶⁰.

Passmore, then, sharply disagrees with the deep ecologists and other environmentalists who claim that Western traditions as a whole are despotic and should be “abandoned”, and it should be replaced by a “new ethics”. Human beings are unique, as Western traditions point out, but that uniqueness must be shown in their behavior. They cannot be only “chauvinist”, they are also “steward” according to Passmore. The Earth was given to them by God, so they cannot destroy God’s gift in whatever way they like. Surely, human beings are responsible for their behavior to God. They have responsibility *for* nature instead of *to* nature, since nature cannot be regarded as a “pseudo-person”. The conclusion he draws to solve the ecological crisis is that, “...new modes of behaviour are much more important than new moral principles”⁶¹.

Hence, the values Passmore is arguing for may not be new. Indeed, these values can be found in all anthropocentric traditions. However, he provides a different angle for looking at the same values. In some cases, he stands completely opposite to White’s thesis. For example, he does not think that *all* Western traditions are despotic. Let me illustrate in more detail.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 177.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 178.

⁶¹ Ibid., 188.

It is generally accepted that Western traditions are utilitarian. That is, all actions are focused on the utility for human beings. When cost-benefit analysis proves that a policy is beneficial for human beings, that policy is morally considerable. Most environmental philosophers believe that the dominant ethical view is utilitarianism.

Passmore supports Western traditions. He is sympathetic to “Cost-benefit analysis” to solve ecological problems. He thinks that the traditional “Cost-benefit analysis” method, which is mainly based on the utilitarian principle, is sufficient to solve the ecological crisis. It is consistent with the flourishing of Western science and technology. Passmore suggests, “Ecologists and economists ought to be friends. They are both interested in the allocation of scarce resources in the most effective possible manner”⁶².

Passmore’s comments imply that he is more interested in a scientific-utilitarian worldview where human beings are identified with rational capability and maximization of their happiness. His view is more consistent with Western anthropocentric traditions. He writes, “In so far as ecological problems can be solved only with the help of scientific discovery and technological invention, they can be solved only within the Western rational tradition”⁶³.

However, Passmore recognizes utility as a tool, as an instrument, but values identification since he does not think that human beings should maximize their happiness by any means. But he does not hesitate to consider human beings as the masters of the universe in the sense of God’s deputy. His sense of identification, therefore, is different from Naess’s who rejects

⁶² Ibid., 50.

⁶³ Ibid., 49.

utilitarianism and the higher status of human beings. Passmore's sense of identification admits utilitarianism as well as the higher status of human beings.

Passmore points out that we are most often narrowly interpreting the word "usefulness". The preservation of wilderness and species may not be valuable only for economic reasons. But rather, it will provide "...opportunities for the pursuit of science, for recreation and retreat, as sources of moral renewal and aesthetic delight"⁶⁴. For instance, preserving wilderness could be beneficial for biologists, geographers, agriculturalists, and also ecologists. Wilderness can be a place where we find "economically valuable" plants and trees, but it can also be the habitat of some extinct species.

We can even compare wilderness, in Passmore's view, to a "scientist's laboratory". Apart from economic value, a science laboratory has some other values. When we ride on a small boat, or sit beside a nice lake and watch the movements of small fishes, we don't ask whether it is man-made, or how much economic value we are gaining. We are in there simply for aesthetic delight. Passmore's point is that we could preserve wilderness beyond mystical reasons. For preserving wilderness, we also do not need to bring unseen future generations forward. We could just preserve it for some other values, such as aesthetic value.

Passmore admits that people can achieve self-knowledge through the interaction with nature. For example, one can achieve self-knowledge by realizing that she is not isolated from nature, she is a part of nature. Alternatively, she could also realize that nature is full of mysteries. Human

⁶⁴ Ibid., 101-102.

beings should discover or erase these mysteries by their rational endeavor. In contrast to Naess, self-realization may not only mean “realizing interrelatedness”, but rather realizing that human beings were given enormous capacities to redesign nature by creating wilderness, canals, lakes, waterfalls, and gardens. Once all these were part of “crude, unformed, inhuman, unperfected” nature. Passmore’s sense of self-realization is more consistent with conservation rather than preservation of the environment. In other words, “adventures with nature” rather than preserving as it is.

Passmore was encouraged by Christianity and Judaism which holds that nature “...exists primarily as a resource rather than as something to be contemplated with enjoyment, that man has the *right* to use it as he will, that it is not sacred”⁶⁵. So, instead of mystical principles, he wants to suggest a rational principle to govern human-nature relationship. Let me give an example. One version of mysticism is Aldo Leopold’s land ethics, which claims that land cannot be “merely soil”, but it is more than that. In his words, land is a “fountain of energy”. But Passmore shows that a soil scientist goes to a deeper level of land by studying its atoms, molecules, and system. She knows the behavior of land well even when heavy rain falls degrade it. She knows the perfect land for different crops to grow.

Another important claim that Passmore rejects is the view that science is atomistic. Many ecosophers claim that except for ecology most sciences are separate from others. The scientific attitude is too narrow. Science only observes a part of nature without observing the whole picture. We should thus abandon science to realize our interconnectedness with nature. But Passmore

⁶⁵ Ibid., 20.

defends science and also points out the ecosopher's crucial mistake in this regard. He argues that science and atomism are not "intrinsically" related. Let us consider the hydro-electric science. By analyzing the nature and behavior of tides the power is converted to another power, namely electricity. Only sometimes does a scientist need to look at the molecular forms that constitute the matter. Also only sometimes she needs to look at its activity in a wider context.

But most of the time a scientist looks at the part, for example, the genetic form, and also the wider context, for example, the system as a whole. When a hydro-electric project works, scientists have to think about the electromagnetic particles and also their impact as a whole on nature. Science in this sense is not necessarily atomistic, or not necessarily focused only on behavior, but rather, it is holistic and focuses on the "cultural" behavior of different activities. Passmore thus rules out the ecosophers' rejection of science as too narrow.

The idea of self-realization is used by Passmore in the sense of realizing rationality. A sense of realizing rationality is that human beings have enormous capability of rational decision-making. Human beings, like other creatures, should not surrender themselves to nature. Conversely, their rational activities can help them to realize nature scientifically. To study nature in a systematic way requires rational observation, not worshipping nature blindly as sacred. The rejection of mysticism in nature is one of the fundamental features of Western traditions, and Passmore's solution to the ecological crisis is to go back to the "greatest of man's achievements".

However, Passmore's rejection of sacredness in nature does not entail that he is devaluing spirituality. Rather, he invokes a special sense of spirituality uncommon in Western traditions. His final goal was to turn humanity into stewards. Human beings can preserve their mastery over nature, and at the same time care for nature. Many great religions hold that everything in nature is created for human beings. Christianity is the most notable of them. Passmore agrees with White that "Christianity has encouraged man to think of himself as nature's absolute master, for whom everything that exists was designed"⁶⁶. However, does it mean that nature is *merely* a resource for human beings? A machine to use for human purposes? Nature certainly is "God's handiwork" for one who believes in God, and she must believe that the world was "perfect until Adam sinned". Who can dare to destroy God's perfect handiwork?

Passmore grants that the human-nature relationship goes far, even at a spiritual level. However, the sense of spirituality is quite different from the traditional one. Human beings, like good artists, should "respect their material". A good artist uses her materials to draw a picture, but at the same time she respects and takes care of them, even though these are paints, brushes, papers, bronzes, and marbles. Human beings, he added, should look at their world "sensuously", and only then could they be caring for it. Passmore goes to a further level of spirituality by saying, "Not only to look at it, but to touch it, smell it, taste it"⁶⁷.

Passmore does not think that Christianity, or Western traditions in particular, is responsible for the ecological crisis. The Greek Enlightenment

⁶⁶ Ibid., 13.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 189.

which rejects *hubris*—a view that considers human beings as gods—was responsible for thinking of nature as a machine. Later, Bacon and Descartes, who considered this view as consistent with Christianity, created a misperception about Christianity and the Western traditions. But Passmore shows that not *all* Western traditions are despotic. There are, according to him, two minor traditions in the West which encourages stewardship to nature. Passmore adopted their views and claimed that the right attitude toward nature is when man (human being) “...sees him [self] as a ‘steward’, a farm-manager, actively responsible as God’s deputy for the care of the world, and...co-operating with nature in an attempt to perfect it”⁶⁸. In sum, human beings are those stewards who “manage and protect” nature for their own purposes. Respecting and protecting nature, in Passmore’s view, does not encourage either being a slave of nature, or regarding nature as a slave.

We have seen that Naess’s three main values, i.e. identification, self-realization and spirituality, appeared in Passmore’s environmental philosophy in a quite different sense. In the next section we will concentrate on the different senses of three main values.

V. DIFFERENT SENSES OF MAIN VALUES

Warwick Fox has distinguished three senses of identification: personal identification, ontological identification, and cosmological identification⁶⁹. Personally based identification requires “personal involvement” to experience the commonality of two entities. This is the most general form of

⁶⁸ Ibid., 28.

⁶⁹ Warwick Fox, “Transpersonal Ecology and the Varieties of Identification”, *The Trumpeter* 8, no.1 (1991):3.

identification according to Fox. Two other forms of identification, ontological identification and cosmological identification, on the other hand, are *transpersonal* where transpersonal means impersonal. In short, transpersonal identification simply includes “**all** forms of identification” except the personal one⁷⁰.

The experience of ontological identification is extremely hard to convey and even to express in language. Generally, ontological identification admits that things exist, but one can experience them as they are absent. Sometimes, people in the meditative stage are able to establish a fine tune communication with the things around them, also the things far away. Zen Buddhism is the most appropriate example to understand ontological identification.

Cosmology based identification is a deep realization of the commonality that “we and all other entities are aspects of a single unfolding reality”⁷¹. This experience of identification does not stick to a particular cosmology, but any type of cosmology which sees the universe as a single unfolding unity, e.g. the worldviews of Taoism.

The distinction between personally based identification and cosmologically based identification is that the former proceeds from inward to outward, while the latter proceeds in the opposite direction, i.e. from outward to inward. In Fox’s language, “...we can think of personally based identification as an “inside-out” approach and cosmologically based identification as an “outside-in” approach”⁷². “Inside-out” approach states that

⁷⁰ Ibid., 3.

⁷¹ Ibid., 4.

⁷² Warwick Fox, *Toward A Transpersonal Ecology: Developing New Foundations for Environmentalism* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1990), 258.

identification develops from the person and then it proceeds to other entities which are physically or mentally nearest to him or her. But “outside-in” approach states that identification develops from a unified sense of cosmos and then it proceeds to the individual entity through a realization of commonality.

Consider Fox’s example of a tree and its leaves. Suppose that all leaves are conscious and have a sense of commonality. They are all the same and belong to a single tree. This is an example of “inside-out” approach. However, the tree as a whole could be seen as an image of consciousness, and that consciousness could proceed to individual leaves. This is an example of “outside-in” approach.

Fox admits several significant advantages of cosmology based identification. The most important of them is that “cosmologically based identification tends to be more *impartial* than personally based identification”⁷³. The impartial characteristics are opposed to any destruction or oppression of other entities, and manifest friendliness. Naess, Gandhi, Spinoza, and even Einstein’s worldviews embrace cosmological identification according to Fox.

However, remember Naess’s “standard example” of identification which was about a dying flea, and his comment,

Naturally, what I felt was a painful sense of compassion and empathy...it was a process of identification: that “I saw myself in the flea”. If I had been *alienated* from the flea, not seeing intuitively anything even resembling myself, the death struggle would have left me feeling indifferent. So

⁷³ Ibid., 256.

there must be identification in order for there to be compassion and, among humans, solidarity.⁷⁴

Note that Naess in this statement is not talking about cosmological identification, simply because any “aspects of single unfolding reality” is absent here. Even his involvement with that flea is not merely “personal” because he felt deep empathy and compassion for the flea. So, we *cannot* call this identification either personal or transpersonal.

Christian Diehm, in his interesting and well argued paper, “Identification with Nature: What it is and Why it Matters?”, noticed a rare form of identification in the ecosophy of Arne Naess which he calls “identification-as-kinship”⁷⁵. Unlike “identification-as-belonging” that refers to “interconnectedness” or “interrelatedness”, “identification-as-kinship” signifies something as a “like” sense. For instance, without realizing our connections with Antarctic penguins we can see that they are *like* us. They can also suffer in a poisonous environment. So, identification-as-kinship functions as if we realize others as “enough *like*” us.

Nonetheless, the most commonly expressed identification according to Diehm is “identification-as-belonging”. Identification-as-belonging holds that the self can attain such awareness that we are part of nature, and the destruction of nature means the destruction of ourselves. Fox’s three types of identification, namely, personal identification, ontological identification, and

⁷⁴ Arne Naess, “Self-realization: An Ecological Approach to Being in the World”, in *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. George Sessions (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1995), 227.

⁷⁵ Christian Diehm, “Identification with Nature: What it is and Why it Matters”, *Ethics and The Environment* 12, no.2 (2007): 1.

cosmological identification, are therefore, simply “identification-as-belonging” for Diehm⁷⁶.

But when Naess says in the previous example “what I felt was a painful sense of compassion and empathy”, and “I saw myself in the flea”, the sense of identification is very different than identification-as-belonging. As Diehm notes, “Here, the term “identification” does not signify “interconnectedness” or “belonging”, but rather something along the lines of “kinship” ”⁷⁷. A feeling of empathy rather than interconnectedness is the precondition for identification-as-kinship. Of course, similar examples can be found in Naess’s book *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy* (1989).

However, my view significantly differs from Deihm’s in that when we think someone or something is *like us*, we should not use the term “kinship”, in particular for the environmental context. The reason is that if the pronoun *us* denotes human beings, then the phrase *like us* would denote like human beings, which is absolutely anthropocentric and narrow. Moreover, kinship may refer to some sort of *blood* connection. But actually, we do not have any blood connection with the environmental elements. So, Deihm has chosen the wrong connotation to refer to the distinct and rare sense of identification.

In my view, the words *like us* most likely denote our neighbors. Moreover, when he uses the term *enough*, it becomes almost obvious that the attitude is neighbor-centric since only our *neighbors* could be *enough like us*, rather than our family members or relatives. Perhaps, very often we maintain a

⁷⁶ Ibid., 5-6.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 12.

hierarchical relationship and practice different values in our family relationship.

To be impartial and more correct I will call this rare kind of identification “identification-as-neighborhood”. It also broadens the concept and applies well to the environmental context.

VI. CAN WE PERCEIVE THE ENVIRONMENT FROM A DIFFERENT VIEWPOINT?

The environment exists prior to human history. It is and was full of secrets and thrills, and human beings at all times were eager to know these. The environment is still amazing. Human beings—the owners of some special qualities—succeeded in knowing very little about the environment since their arrival on this Earth. Surprisingly, they were not capable of creating any natural elements ever. Meanwhile, whenever they knew anything about the environment they used it for further modification, positively or negatively. Enough modifications have already been done. These modifications sometimes could be extremely dangerous and may bring catastrophe for all members of the Earth. Moreover, the environment also has its own evolution process. The situation is going to worsen day by day through human actions rather than the process of evolution.

The major cause of our ecological crisis, in my view, is misguidedness. Human beings were misguided by poets, theologians, dramatists, historians, movie makers, novelists, economists, philosophers, and most notably scientists. As most elements in nature, including species and plants, and natural laws,

were unknown to human beings, these intellectuals misguided the common people. They did this intentionally or experimentally (in the form of testing alternative policies), but common people trusted them and made their decisions. Policy-makers, whose decisions significantly matter, were also misguided. As Katherine Richardson et al., when commenting on the policy of fossil fuels, pointed out,

Today, the burning of fossil fuels has become accepted by many as a prerequisite for economic stability and growth. Now, science is confronting us with the insight that the burning of these fossil fuels is altering the functioning of Earth's climate system. In essence, humans are threatening the viability of their own life support system.⁷⁸

As this statement shows, once burning fossil fuels was invented and considered safe for Earth's habitants to meet the huge demand for power, but nowadays it is considered a threat. Meanwhile, we have already burned millions of tons of fossil fuels relying on its economic value.

The real value of human-nature relations either changed or was lost. The real value, however, can be recovered. Believers in religion seek to learn from their religious scriptures. Nonbelievers seek to learn from nature or from the scientific study of nature. But there are major disagreements between religion and science. Religion says our Creator has created this Earth. Science says this Earth was created by an evolutionary process. Religion holds that human beings have duties to take care of other creatures. Science focuses on the modification of nature for more comfortable human lives and indirectly claims mastery over nature.

⁷⁸ Katherine Richardson et al., *Climate Change: Global Risks, Challenges and Decisions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 474.

However, there is an important meeting point between science and religion regarding human-nature relationship. In order to find that we should know the history of Earth and the origin of human beings. I would like to start from the beginning of the Earth's history available in science rather than religion. One of the reasons is that many people believe that science is universal, while religions are not. To them, science is more reliable than religion.

Stephen Hawking, a contemporary supporter of the Big Bang theory and one of the most influential scientists after Einstein, writes, "...the beginning of the universe couldn't have been just a few thousand years ago"⁷⁹. Hawking's comment sounds very simple. But it took a hundred years to discover. It is only in the 1930s that Edwin Hubble remarkably observed "the universe is expanding". How did he recognize it? It was possible by analyzing and measuring the light coming from other galaxies. Hubble, with his colleague Slipher, found that there is one "blue-shifted" nebula closer to our galaxy, while all other nebulae are "red-shifted". A further closer observation showed surprisingly that the blue-shifted nebula, named Andromeda, "is moving toward us while the other nebulae move away from us"⁸⁰. Hawking called this blue-shifted nebula "our galactic neighbor" which has challenged all the previous conceptions of the origin of the universe.

The *expanding* universe was Hawking's starting point. According to him, it was one of the "great intellectual revolutions". The expanding universe view leads him to discover that "...the universe and time itself must have had a

⁷⁹ Stephen Hawking, *The Universe In A Nutshell* (New York: A Bantam Book, 2001), 75.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 76.

beginning in a tremendous explosion”⁸¹. According to the Big Bang theory, there was a tremendous explosion at the origin of the universe, “If general relativity were correct, the universe started with an infinite temperature and density at the big bang singularity. As the universe expanded, the temperature of the radiation decreased”⁸².

Thus, the universe was too hot at the beginning and its temperature was then more than 100 billion degrees. Scientists believe that radiation started from this densely hot stage of the universe, and is still continuing today. However, it takes billions of years for the universe to cool down and become livable, even for single-celled bacteria.

Hawking’s explanation of time appears in the “Black hole” principle. In his view, time has started since the big bang and will end up in the black hole. He writes, “Time will come to an end for an astronaut who falls into a black hole and hits the singularity”⁸³. Interestingly, the black hole principle works in a very unique way. That is, the black hole *cannot* function alone. As Hawking himself states, “...a black hole still exerts the same gravitational pull on neighboring objects as did the body that collapsed”⁸⁴. Thus, we have learnt that our blue-shifted *neighbor* galaxy Andromeda changes all of our previous observations about the origin of the universe, and the black hole, in principle, functions with its *neighboring* objects. Why is it that such remarkable findings have not inspired environmental philosophers yet?

Our planet Earth was formed approximately 4.7 billion years ago, and is in many ways unique from other planets. The most important feature of our

⁸¹ Ibid., 76.

⁸² Ibid., 78.

⁸³ Ibid., 116.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 115-116.

planet is that its atmosphere is life-supporting. Its position is also favorable for life because if it were closer to or farther away from the Sun, it would have been too hot or too cold. Life on Earth began approximately 3.5 to 4.0 billion years ago. The early organic matter, Amino acids, developed from gases like Carbon dioxide, Nitrogen, Ammonia, and Methane. Most scientists believe that, “The organic matter gradually acquired the characteristics of living cells”⁸⁵. This new formation became possible as “a result of a “cooperative” or constructive type of interaction”⁸⁶.

Although it is difficult to specify the exact time intervals in the Earth’s evolutionary process, and different scientists have different views regarding this, a general picture is common and presented clearly in Graham-Smith’s interesting book, *What? On Earth: Making Sense of a Creative World* (1987). The single-celled blue-green algae, and the equally simple bacteria, the first living components, developed 1000-3000 million years ago. These living cells became complex and multi-celled creatures, such as fish, gradually formed about 500 million years ago. Within a further 100 million years trees and plants have formed. The evolutionary process then produced reptiles, such as snakes, approximately 200 million years ago. 200 million later years were for mammals, such as tigers, to join the evolution process.

The story of primates, such as monkeys, began about 65 million years ago. Apart from family life, primates were able to use their eye power, brains, and hands. They maintained a very slow learning process. The fossil evidence found in Ethiopia and Tanzania showed that pre-humans, such as baboons or

⁸⁵ James E. Girard, *Principles of Environmental Chemistry* (Massachusetts: Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 2010), 16.

⁸⁶ William Graham-Smith, *What? On Earth: Making Sense of a Creative World* (London: The Conservation Foundation, 1987), 15.

chimpanzees, have evolved in this Earth about three million years ago. The basic features of primates were very similar to human beings. For example, their brain sizes were 600-1000 c.c., while human's brain size was normally between 1200-1600 c.c.

Finally, the emergence of *Homo sapiens* was not any special event in the creation process. About 60000-100000 years ago human beings evolved in this Earth. A high level of communication skill through speech and language, organized thinking ability, complex brain activities, sharp memory capacity, and making rational choice, made human beings special. The ancient human beings kept themselves busy with tending fires, and collecting food, by using simple means like stone. It is strongly believed that they were maintaining a unique co-operative relation with natural elements, such as plants, trees, rivers, and animals. Human being's dominion was less possible since they were comparatively new in joining an established community. Hunting and agriculture were not unfamiliar because other animals already knew this. Monkeys, birds, and other species, possibly gained the sense that fruits are enjoyable but not the seeds. So, they threw seeds to grow.

But human beings obviously had the ability to do these in a more organized way, which started merely 10000 years ago. Nonetheless that organization was not always rational. Graham-Smith nicely writes,

For hundreds of millions of years mutual interactions between the plants, the animals and the physical conditions had resulted in stable ecosystems that were, overall, evolving very slowly. Now human beings were replacing these by intrinsically unstable systems, created for their own benefit and sustained by their own endeavours.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Ibid., 50.

From the above historical background some issues became clearer. Firstly, like Graham-Smith, many scientists believe that there were “mutual interactions” and “co-operation” among other community members before human beings came along. Secondly, human beings since their origin lived in this community composed of numerous biotic and abiotic members, such as plants, trees, lakes, rivers, oceans, mountains, animals, and bacteria. Finally, and most importantly, there was mutual co-operation between humans and other community members. But what type of “mutual interaction” or “co-operation” existed in this ancient community?

On the basis of our analysis we could confidently say that there can only exist *neighboring* relationships. Since there were a few humans they had to live with other neighbors who were plants, trees, rivers, rocks, stones, and animals. Moreover, as soon as the human family settled there was no vital change in neighborhood attitude for quite a few thousand years. When the concept of civilization developed, human beings started to separate themselves from their neighbors. Gradually, they changed this conception of neighborhood and redefined “neighbor” strictly from the social perspective, not from the environmental perspective. The *neighboring self* was lost.

The concept of neighbor is the meeting point between science and religion. Both agreed that this Earth was livable before human beings appeared. The first human beings found nonhumans as neighbors. All were creatures as no hierarchy was recorded in science.

To sum up, I have discussed how the environment was perceived in the Western traditions. I have argued that although Naess and Passmore support different attitudes toward the environment, they share the same fundamental

values at a deeper level. Moreover, the environment can also be discussed from a different point of view beyond anthropocentrism and nonanthropocentrism. This different viewpoint, I believe, can be even more promising. In the next chapter, we will concentrate on how nature was perceived in Asian traditions.

CHAPTER TWO

NATURE AS PERCEIVED IN ASIAN TRADITIONS

Nature, directly or indirectly, controls Asian people's lifestyles, religions, emotions, joys, sorrows, romance, success, failure, rituals, rites, socio-political and economic lives, and almost everything which is possible to imagine. Even marriage, birth, and death, take place in Asian people's minds in relation to nature. They love nature, respect nature, worship nature, fear nature, care for nature, get purified by nature, and also use nature to survive.

Western traditions used science to control nature, to claim mastery over nature, to make nature more hospitable, comfortable, and safe for human beings. The Asian traditions, on the other hand, inspire human beings to be controlled by nature, not to act against nature, and also not to be adversely affected by nature. Science is hidden inside nature, only reasonable people can realize it. Reasonable people do not mean only scientists or highly intellectual people, but rather, people who have refined wisdom, whose knowledge cannot be framed in the traditional way. Traditionally, a person who is capable of expressing his or her thoughts clearly and systemically through skills, acquired by academic learning and training is called a learned person.

However, an Asian mindset would allow that one could realize the internal science of nature even without academic training. The meaning of internal science should be understood from an interrelated or interconnected

perspective, and not from a physical perspective. In physical science, medicine is enough to recover bodily weakness, while for internal science bodily weakness is a breakdown of nutritional, psychological, emotional and nervous systems, and hence, for proper recovery these systems should be improved first. Interestingly, science in Asia seeks harmony with nature. Those sciences which are contra nature were not regarded as true sciences in Asian culture. Clarke has observed the Eastern and Western encounter as a long “ambivalence” and writes about the East,

On the one hand it has been a source of inspiration, fount of an ancient wisdom, a culturally rich civilisation which is far superior to, and can be used to reflect on the inadequacies of, our own. On the other,...It is a place which invites imaginative flights and exaggerations of all kinds.⁸⁸

Asia is the largest continent on Earth and has diverse ideologies, cultures, and traditions. For example, the Chinese have the most continuous civilization and thousand years old historical-political background. The classical philosophers in China are mainly humanistic, but they maintain a unique harmony with nature by their heart-mind principle. The heart-mind principle states that a human being, through self-cultivation or cultivating self-transformation, balancing between emotion and rationality (or desire), can achieve an ideal character. He is someone who has an ability to blend both reason and emotions and maintain a harmony between these two opposite faculties. This harmony with reference to the ecological balance has been discussed by Confucian and non-Confucian traditions.

India—the most naturalistic religious nation—celebrates her numerous rites and rituals toward nature, and reflects an exceptional spiritual philosophy

⁸⁸ J. J. Clarke, *Oriental Enlightenment: The Encounter Between Asian and Western Thought* (London: Routledge, 1997), 3.

toward it. Almost all Indian philosophical traditions concentrated on liberation from ignorance. This liberation should be attained in this Earth through knowledge and devotion. The Japanese may be regarded as the most sensitive nation to mountains and animals in this region. Although nature worship hardly takes place in Japan, the Japanese view nature as aesthetically rich and plentiful. Their aesthetic attitudes toward nature developed a concrete philosophy of empathy and sympathy rooted in Buddhism and Shintoism.

Middle Eastern Asian environmental philosophy was historically human-centred. Water management and irrigation policies dominate the Middle Eastern states before oil resources were discovered. Agricultural goods, such as rice, wheat, and corn, were exported to other parts of the world, including Africa, Europe, some parts of Asia and America, and were the main sources of revenue. Environmental policies concentrated on ensuring fertility of land and sufficiency of water. Environmental values were based on the religious teachings of Islam, Christianity and Judaism. An intimate human-nature relation, especially the Nile River and local farmers' deep bonding with it, is found in historical literature. Two other rivers, Tigris and Euphrates, contributed to irrigation, farming and exporting the agricultural goods to the Western world. Later, cotton production was implemented in agriculture.

However, the attachment of humans and nature becomes weak after the discovery of oil resources and emerging regional conflicts among the Middle Eastern countries. Massive establishment of oil refineries and increasing oil export made human-nature relation vulnerable. On the one hand, new roads, dams, cars, buses, buildings, and defense structures, have accelerated pressure on the environment. On the other hand, weapons and chemicals used for war

have rapidly contaminated the land and water. Air pollution after several Western operations and wars between Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Syria and Israel creates a health and environmental challenge for the whole population of the region. Although governments of all Middle Eastern countries are aware about these environmental challenges and water crisis is recently reduced by implementing recycling technology, it may take a long time to achieve a harmonious environment in this region. Meanwhile, some Arabian countries (such as Saudi Arabia) are preserving lands and wildlife through Islamic environmental policies and inspiring people to follow environmental guidelines. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Islamic environmentalists are working closely to protect the environment. In short, Middle Eastern Asian traditional views of human-nature relation justified “human intervention” but also maintained an intimate relation with nature through agriculture⁸⁹. I will leave this tradition at this point.

Of course, there are other traditions in Asia, for instance, Southeast Asian traditions. In fact, Southeast Asia is the habitat of most of the existing flora and fauna occupying thousands of islands. The people living in these islands might have a more intimate relationship with nature, and surely profess a radical environmental ethic. However, it is not possible to discuss all of these traditions, and so we will limit our discussion to three major traditions, namely, Chinese, Indian and Japanese.

We will concentrate on some vital questions in this chapter, such as which values can be regarded as nonanthropocentric? How is nature perceived

⁸⁹ Edmund Burke III, “The Transformation of the Middle Eastern Environment, 1500 B.C.E. - 2000 C.E.”, in *The Environment and World History*, ed. Edmund Burke III and Kenneth Pomeranz (California: University of California Press, 2009), 110.

in Asian traditions, in particular, Chinese, Indian and Japanese traditions?
How do Asian worldviews address human-nature relations?

I. NONANTHROPOCENTRIC ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES

According to nonanthropocentric environmental value theory, human beings are *not* at the centre of the environmental system since all natural elements have equal value irrespective of their uses. The nonanthropocentric value theory can be seen as a holistic approach which emphasizes wholeness, interconnectedness, and interdependence. O'Neill et al. have illustrated nonanthropocentric value theory more vividly. They write, "Accordingly the new non-anthropocentric ethic has been built around two claims: first that the class of beings to whom moral consideration is owed needs to be extended beyond human persons; second that nature has intrinsic value"⁹⁰.

Although this statement shows that nonanthropocentrism argues for the extension of the "class of beings" there are many nonanthropocentric philosophers who go far beyond the circle of beings or living entities. In principle, these philosophers argue that rivers, mountains, gardens, stones, even the whole cosmic system, should be taken into ethical consideration. One notable example of this view is Naess's ecosophy. Scherer has indicated some basic characteristics of nonanthropocentric environmental values. Firstly, nonanthropocentrism means valuing interdependence, i.e. the value of a flora cannot be "denied" or "mitigated" by some other values. Secondly, it means valuing the potentiality of development of all natural elements with equal

⁹⁰ John O'Neill et al., *Environmental Values* (Oxon: Routledge, 2008), 92.

emphasis. Finally and most importantly, nonanthropocentrism comprises a set of values “...designed to enhance the harmony of the environment and the possibilities of creatures’ [creatures] flourishing within it”⁹¹.

Nonanthropocentric environmental value theory assigns *equal* consideration to *all* natural elements. It attributes intrinsic value to animals, lands, grass, stones, lakes, even to the whole biosphere. Often, a wide definition of nonanthropocentrism and its undefined principles may create problems for environmental policies. A workable definition of nonanthropocentrism does not acknowledge any *special* position for human beings. It regards nature as intrinsically valuable, and demands a *total* revision of present ethical theories. However, it would be incorrect to think that all environmental theories are either anthropocentric or nonanthropocentric. There are a number of issues in between which can create enough possibilities to develop a mixed-view. If one claims that human beings have special status on Earth, but that status requires them to perceive nature as integrated, balanced and harmonious, then this view does not endorse absolute anthropocentrism.

Similarly, if one claims that nature has intrinsic value, but human beings have special duties since only they are capable of caring for nature, then this is not absolute nonanthropocentrism either. Eminent environmental philosophers sometimes call their views as anthropocosmic or anthropogenic to distinguish them from anthropocentrism and nonanthropocentrism.

Perhaps, there is no standard nonanthropocentric ethical principle available to guide ethical decisions. Without such a principle, human beings

⁹¹ Donald Scherer, “Anthropocentrism, Atomism, and Environmental Ethics”, in *The Ethics of the Environment*, ed. Robin Attfield (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008), 38.

may adapt the attitude of worship nature. They may consider nature as a moral guide. In nature, very often we find that the stronger dominates the weaker, or acts cruelly towards them. But it is highly debatable whether nature could be our moral guide. For example, John Stuart Mill and Holmes Rolston III do not think that nature should be followed for moral guidelines. Thus, lacking standard ethical principles, nonanthropocentrism may be less action-guiding. In the next successive sections, we will see that nature is perceived in Chinese, Indian and Japanese traditions mainly from nonanthropocentric perspectives. Nonetheless, anthropocentrism is not fully absent there.

II. NATURE IN CHINESE TRADITIONS

The Chinese traditionally perceive nature as the source of harmony and balance. Chinese traditions are unique since, on the one hand, they hold that there is no God, while on the other hand, nature possesses enough spiritual elements for them. A key issue of Chinese traditions is to achieve harmonious human societies through moral self-cultivation, which sounds anthropocentric. However, an important point is that not only ordinary human beings but also the sage kings must maintain a harmonious relation with nature. In other words, harmony starts from the continuous or inseparable attachment with nature. One who wants to achieve perfection in either personal or political life should achieve it through the harmonious or balanced interaction with Heaven and Earth. Chinese traditions do not view nature as merely a compound of trees, rivers, plants, lands, and other natural elements, but all elements

between Heaven and Earth are treated as nature. That is, the whole cosmic boundary should be considered as nature.

According to Chinese traditions, there is no Creator of nature. Nature was created by itself and evolved through construction and destruction. Human beings are simply elements of nature who are made of the same cosmic primal elements *li* and *chi*. All natural elements have only one source of origin, Heaven. Nature in Chinese traditions is thus unified, united, and balanced. Human beings once unbalanced would experience chaos, unhappy personal, social and political lives. In short, an extremely poor, painful, and unsuccessful life which every one wants to avoid.

Confucius or *Kongzi* is regarded as the founder of “*Ru-ism*” in China. Like Socrates, his main aim was to establish morality in society. He recognizes harmony as the basic ends of social, political, and moral lives. He perceives the human-nature relation in terms of harmony. In the *Analects*, Confucius emphasizes moral self-cultivation. His view is also shared by two famous disciples, Mencius and Xunzi. In general, their views are grounded on some human virtues, such as humanity, loyalty, and empathy. Human being’s role to achieve social and political harmony is mainly explored, but nature is also given an exceptional priority.

For instance, Confucius has an uncommon worldview where human beings are seen in relation to Heaven and Earth. Liu writes, “Ideally, human beings subsist between Heaven and Earth, playing the same roles that Heaven and Earth play”⁹².

⁹² JeeLoo Liu, *An Introduction to Chinese Philosophy: From Ancient Philosophy to Chinese Buddhism* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2006), 58.

So, we could easily assume that Confucian cosmology has enough spiritual resources. Indeed, Tucker and Berthrong maintain, “Confucianism has significant intellectual and spiritual resources to offer in the emerging discussions regarding attitudes toward nature, the role of the human, and environmental ethics”⁹³. We will discuss here Confucian attitudes toward nature, human being’s relation to nature, and the ethical norms governing the relationships between Heaven, Earth, and Humans.

Confucianism holds nature as organic and spontaneous. The Confucian vision of nature is reflected in the comments of Tucker and Brethrong, “Nature is seen as unified, interconnected, and interpenetrating, constantly relating microcosm and macrocosm”⁹⁴. Nature, according to Confucianism, was not created by a Creator. Rather, nature is self-generating through an organismic process. In spite of the “creation myth” which is common in other Asian traditions, Confucian traditions offer a more dynamic and ever changing view of nature. Julia Tao writes, “Nature as a life force is dynamic and ceaseless, consistent and forever changing, transforming and unfolding new contours, new forms and new lives”⁹⁵.

Thus, all life forms and physical objects arise by nature. However, nature itself is not the Creator. Unlike other Asian traditions which sometimes perceive nature as a “person”, Confucians perceive nature as an impersonal dynamic whole. It is therefore most likely that human beings, myriad creatures, and physical objects, all belong to one single category without any hierarchical

⁹³ Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Berthrong, ed., *Confucianism and Ecology: The Interrelation of Heaven, Earth, and Humans* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998), xxxv.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, xxxvi.

⁹⁵ Julia Tao, “Relational Resonance with Nature: The Confucian Vision”, in *Environmental Values in a Globalising World: Nature, Justice and Governance*, ed. Jouni Paavola and Ian Lowe (Oxon: Routledge, 2005), 71.

order. The ideal human beings must realize this great unity and be identified with the balanced condition of Earth and Heaven. Tu Weiming outlines the Confucian notion of ideal human beings by highlighting the realization of humanity,

The highest Confucian ideal is the “unity of man and Heaven”, which defines humanity not only in anthropological terms but also in cosmological terms. In the *Doctrine of the Mean (Chung yung)*, the most authentic manifestation of humanity is characterized as “forming a trinity with Heaven and Earth.”⁹⁶

As reflected in this statement, human beings are not merely rational, social, or political animals, but they also have the capability of “self-transformation” to be identified with other elements in Heaven and Earth. This capability of self-transformation is embedded in human nature. Their enormous capabilities of communication with other natural elements would lead them to maintain a harmonious relationship with nature. Indeed, we could consider this capability as the capability of self-realization. If human beings can realize their appropriate relationship with the cosmic world, then they would become more responsible beings.

Forming “One body” with all elements in the Heaven and Earth is essentially a spiritual consciousness. Confucian philosopher Chang Tsai presented this view in a famous paragraph,

Heaven is my father and earth is my mother, and even such a small creature as I finds an intimate place in their midst. Therefore that which extends throughout the universe I regard as my body and that which directs the universe I

⁹⁶ Tu Weiming, “Beyond the Enlightenment Mentality”, in *Confucianism and Ecology: The Interrelation of Heaven, Earth, and Humans*, ed. Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Berthrong (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998), 18.

consider as my nature. All people are my brothers and sisters,
and all things are my companions.⁹⁷

From this paragraph we could assume that there is no ontological divide between human beings and all myriad things in Heaven and Earth. Moreover, this relation does not simply dissolve the categorical division between them but rather invokes a more intimate companionship or family relationship, such as father, mother, and children. Taylor's comments might be note worthy here.

He writes,

Through the identification of the commonality of material force and the nature of all things as a description of the nature of the universe, there is a call to treat all people as brothers and sisters and a call to see all things as companions, a prescription to act upon the basis of the knowledge of the nature of things.⁹⁸

The underlying moral principle regarding Heaven, Earth and human relationship is easily deducible if we concentrate on the *call* for "identification of the commonality" as stated in Taylor's comments. The moral principle would be the same one which we practice in our family life. In other words, we respect our parents, love our brothers and sisters, and also do not harm anyone of them. Of course, without self-realization this moral principle may not be effective at all, and therefore, Confucianism develops a more consistent view of self-realization. Callicott indicates this point very clearly when he observes,

Among Asian traditions of thought, Confucianism provides a worldview much more consonant with ecology for grounding Arne Naess's Deep Ecological "Self-[with a capital 'S'] realization" than is the Vedantic worldview...The

⁹⁷ *Sources of Chinese Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), 524, quoted in Rodney L. Taylor, "Companionship with the World: Roots and Branches of a Confucian Ecology", in *Confucianism and Ecology: The Interrelation of Heaven, Earth, and Humans*, ed. Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Berthrong (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998), 48.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 53.

Confucian self is neither a discrete entity, a social atom, nor a playful manifestation of *atman-brahman*.⁹⁹

Like other early Confucians, Mencius also developed a kind of ethical principle which does not separate human beings and other natural elements. Put differently, Mencius holds that what is good for the flourishing of human beings would be good for the flourishing of other natural elements. Cecilia Wee emphasizes the equal status of human beings and other natural elements in Mencian ethics and writes,

The Mencian would conclude that, insofar as we ought to promote the good of humans (i.e., ethical development), we ought to similarly promote the good of these other kinds. Thus, the Mencian would try to keep mountains in their state of natural luxuriance, ensure that rice plants receive their requisite moisture, air and sunlight, and so on.¹⁰⁰

Two Daoist philosophers, Lao Tzu (*Laozi*) and Chuang Tzu (*Zhuangzi*), gave more attention to nature. Instead of moral cultivation or human virtue, Daoism directly develops their moral guidelines from nature. Koller and Koller have noted that “...instead of emphasizing human relationships, Taoism emphasizes the way of nature”¹⁰¹. The way of nature is referred to as *Dao*. There are several interpretations of the word *Dao*. One of these interpretations is “Oneness”. In the *Dao-De-Jing* (or *Tao-Te-Ching*) Lao Tzu says, “Dao produced the One (*sheng-yi*), the One produced the two, the two produced the three, and the three produced the ten thousand things”¹⁰².

⁹⁹ J. Baird Callicott, *Earth's Insights: A Survey of Ecological Ethics from the Mediterranean Basin to the Australian Outback* (California: University of California Press, 1994), 82-83.

¹⁰⁰ Cecilia Wee, “Mencius and the Natural Environment”, *Environmental Ethics* 31, no. 4 (2009): 371.

¹⁰¹ John M. Koller and Patricia Joyce Koller, *Asian Philosophies* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1998), 268.

¹⁰² *Lao-Zi*, Chapter 42, quoted in Xiaogan Liu, “Daoism (I): Lao Zi and the *Dao-De-Jing*” in *History of Chinese Philosophy* ed. Bo Mou (Oxon: Routledge, 2009), 223.

The One denotes nature and ten thousand things are the myriad things in it. The evolution process of nature is described here in a metaphorical language but the origin of all natural elements from one single source is also reflected. The sense becomes clearer in another verse of chapter 51 in the *Dao-De-Jing*: “Dao produces [10,000 things], and *de* rears them. Things take shape, and vessels are formed. This is why the ten-thousand things all revere Dao and honor *de*”¹⁰³.

The Daoist view of nature is articulated by two terms: *Zi-ran* and *Wu-wei*. *Zi-ran* is commonly translated as “nature”. However, there are also several translations of this word and so we may consider its literal meaning. According to Liu, “*Zi* denotes ‘self’, *ran* denotes ‘so’; thus, *zi-ran* literally indicates ‘self-so’ or ‘so-of-itself’, suggesting that something or some state of affairs develops naturally”¹⁰⁴. So, *Zi-ran* means something which is natural, i.e. develops without any interruption. Liu calls it “naturalness”. Heaven and Earth also integrate *Dao* and *Zi-ran* by a strong bond. Lao Tzu says, “People model themselves on the earth (*ren-fa-di*), the earth models itself on Heaven (*di-fa-tian*), Heaven models itself on Dao (*tian-fa-dao*), and Dao models itself on *zi-ran* (*dao-fa-zi-ran*)”¹⁰⁵.

This statement clearly suggests that *Zi-ran* is an unfolding activity of developing natural interrelationships of human beings, Heaven, Earth, and the Dao. The activity is rather important because it can yield an alternative to anthropocentrism. On the one hand, human beings are seen here as the vital forces or main parts of nature. On the other hand, considering their interests would make them interdependent with other natural elements. They can

¹⁰³ Ibid., 225.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 226.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 227.

maintain a perfect balance. As Lai notes, “These two features—integrity of the individual (*de*) and its conditioning locus (*dao*)—are held in a finely tuned balance”¹⁰⁶.

One may ask whether this can be a completely nonanthropocentric viewpoint. Apparently, it is true that the nonanthropocentric viewpoint does consider “balance” as one of the key features, and the realization of cosmic integrity and balance is given special importance. However, this may sometimes encourage human beings to submit to nature because respecting nature may also mean placing nature above us. Here, this submission is completely rejected and a concept of harmony is highlighted. A traditional Chinese illustration is “cooking soup”, where all ingredients have specific contributions without losing their own identities. Unlike the nonanthropocentric view where values of natural elements are intrinsic, values should be taken here in its proper context. Lai called Daoist insights of valuation “context-interdependence nexus” and writes,

According to this interpretation, value derives from the context-interdependence nexus. As with all other beings and entities, humanity must be understood within its larger environmental context, together with the relations that hold.¹⁰⁷

The main point to be noted here is interdependence. However, one could be misguided that the principle hinted here is the law of nature. Since laws of nature are those laws which human beings only experience by observation, and are unable to do anything except experiencing. The Daoist principle is *not* one of these laws. For example, one fact that human beings are

¹⁰⁶ Karyn L. Lai, *An Introduction to Chinese Philosophy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 86-87.

¹⁰⁷ Karyn Lai, *Learning from Chinese Philosophies: Ethics of Interdependent and Contextualised Self* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006), 42.

dependent on vegetables as they are sources of many vitamins which cannot be found in animal bodies, may be considered a natural law. In this case, human beings have nothing to do except eating vegetables by destroying some plants. But the Daoist principle seems much broader than natural laws. This “principle of naturalness” involves some crucial elements that if ignored may cause imbalance and lack of Harmony between human beings, Heaven, Earth, and the Dao. The major Daoist scholar Liu I-Ming writes, “The Tao is completely balanced in the center, not leaning to one side at all. Who can go all the way through on this Way?”¹⁰⁸

We could easily assume that this ever lasting balance may not be realized very soon. It would require deep identification. Moreover, the balance may not be the balance in an ordinary sense. This is a spiritual balance which must be realized in accordance with the basic principle. I-Ming writes,

The Tao connects with the spiritual. Once understood, it applies to everything, going beyond the dust of the ordinary world...This is most sacred, most spiritual—the three poisons of greed, aggression, and stupidity die out, there are no calamities, no difficulties, all reasons are spring.¹⁰⁹

As Miller notices below, this Daoist basic principle is *Wu-wei* which is not difficult to extract from the Daoist tradition and from the *Dao-De-Jing*, “Since the nature of the Dao is to be self-actualizing, creative and spontaneous...the way in which one arrives at this state of naturalness is through the principle of ‘wuwei’ ”¹¹⁰. However, the exact meaning and implication of the term *Wu-wei* is very difficult to understand and complex. Indeed, Chinese scholars are still offering new interpretations of the term. But

¹⁰⁸ Liu I-Ming, *Awakening to the Tao*, trans., Thomas Cleary (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2006), 94-95.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 101.

¹¹⁰ James Miller, *Daoism: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2003), 140.

many of them have agreed that *Wu-wei* is the most important principle in Daoism, equally applicable to human-human and human-nature relations. Liu calls it “The most emphasized negative moral principle”¹¹¹.

The negative connotation may be deducible from the literal meaning of the term. *Wu-wei* is a combination of two different Chinese terms. “Wu” generally means “negation”, and “wei” means “action”. So, the term *Wu-wei* commonly denotes “no-action” or “non-action”. Koller and Koller have provided a simple but interesting explanation of the term,

Nonaction (*wu-wei*) is an important Taoist concept. It means doing nothing except what proceeds freely and spontaneously from one’s own nature. Snakes should not attempt to walk or fly; their *wu-wei* is to crawl. A bird’s *wu-wei* is to fly; attempting to crawl would be forced action for a bird.¹¹²

This comment suggests that “Wu-wei” should be considered in the sense of “acting naturally”. But some other senses were also developed in Chinese texts. For instance, Xiaogan Liu writes, “*Wu-wei* has also been rendered as ‘effortless action’... ‘acting naturally’, and ‘non-purposive action’, each of which reflects an aspect of the term’s connotations”¹¹³.

Therefore, the term “Wu-wei” could have various meanings. However, all of these meanings share the same moral principle as our guideline for actions. As we have stated before, *Wu-wei* is a combination of two terms; this combination itself signals one of the basic guidelines. Liu writes, “This combination seems to signal the cancellation of all acts and behaviors with no

¹¹¹ JeeLoo Liu, *An Introduction to Chinese Philosophy: From Ancient Philosophy to Chinese Buddhism* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2006), 144.

¹¹² John M. Koller and Patricia Joyce Koller, *Asian Philosophies* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1998), 271.

¹¹³ Xiaogan Liu, “Daoism (I): Lao Zi and the *Dao-De-Jing*”, in *History of Chinese Philosophy* ed. Bo Mou (Oxon: Routledge, 2009), 231.

discrimination made among them”¹¹⁴. Of course, the value of “nondiscrimination” stated here is not a common practice to all traditions. Rather, many traditions prize *discrimination* as a necessary criterion for environmental policy-making. Liu adds, “All these phrases imply an attitude that apparently runs contrary to common knowledge, customs, values, and methods, but motivates one toward higher values and better results that can be approached only through an extraordinary manner and method”¹¹⁵.

Surprisingly, few scholars have paid attention to these “higher values” pointed out by Liu. One of the exceptions is Miller who writes, “...in fact this ‘action as non-action’ is really a form of spiritual technology by means of which humans cultivate their own natures and the nature around them”¹¹⁶. As hinted in Miller’s comment, the *Wu-wei* is spiritual, a self-identified consciousness for human beings to realize nature “...weaving together the seemingly disparate elements of their existence into a seamless whole: the fabric of the Dao”¹¹⁷. Nature cannot be interfered with for fulfilling greedy and selfish human wants and desires by interrupting any of ten-thousand elements in it. In contrast to interruption or intervention, human beings should be identified with the Dao to realize the action-guiding principle *Wu-wei* in order to act correctly with the “seamless whole”.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 231.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 232.

¹¹⁶ James Miller, *Daoism: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2003), 140.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 151.

III. NATURE IN INDIAN TRADITIONS

Nature plays a crucial role in Indian mythology, Hindu theology, philosophy, and cultures. Many stories in Indian mythology and Hindu religion regarded nature as a single ecological community consisting of both organic and inorganic members. Indian philosophy respects this religious spirit and develops a distinct analysis, rare in world philosophical traditions. Many philosophers in Indian traditions admit that philosophy cannot be separated from life. Rather, life has to be led with a synthesis of religion and philosophy. The religious traditions in India are diverse but mainly Hindu dominated. In spite of a majority of Hindus, there are Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Sikhs, and Jains. The word *Hindu* originates from the Persian vocabulary and refers to *Vedic* people who lived in the bank of the Indus river¹¹⁸. So, it is easily inferable that Hindus have a very close relationship with nature.

A significant number of great Indian philosophers, poets, writers, and novelists, marvelously drew the emotional aspects of human-nature relationship in their works. In order to get a full picture of the Indian attitude toward nature we should survey religious as well as philosophical resources. The main religious scriptures for Hindus are the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, and the *Bhagavad Gita*. Among them the oldest is the *Vedas*. Hindus believe that the knowledge and authority of the *Vedas* are self-evident and do not necessarily require any external recognition. According to a Hindu spiritualist and direct disciple of the Saint Sri Ramakrishna, verses in the *Vedas* “...themselves *are* authority, being the knowledge of God. And...their truth is

¹¹⁸ J. Baird Callicott and Robert Frodean, ed., *Encyclopedia of Environmental Ethics and Philosophy*, vol. 1, (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2009), 513.

verifiable by any spiritual aspirant in transcendental consciousness”¹¹⁹. Elimination of ignorance and acquiring knowledge are Vedic commands to its followers. Without knowledge *moksa* (liberation) cannot be achieved. The liberation has to be gained in this Earth by *bhakti* (devotion), *samarpon* (surrender), *prathas* (practicing rituals), and *puja* (worship gods and goddesses). These are the true ways for enrichment or purification of soul.

According to the *Vedas*, the Supreme Being or the Supreme God has created *prakrti* (nature) by some *bhutas* (primal material elements), for example, *agni* (fire), *apah* (water), *vayu* (air), and *prithivi* (earth). However, these primal elements also have the power of deities. According to the established knowledge, what is sentient cannot be non-sentient at the same time. The case here may not be the same. One normal proof of sentience is immediate reaction from the being. Similarly, the primal elements could react and that is why we get floods, cyclones, and earthquakes. However, one can point out that the reaction may not be as quick as we usually expect.

Instead of reacting quickly, they may react slowly with massive power, while for a long time they may be calm and quiet. One might think that they are non-sentient. For instance, a dead body is non-sentient to us, but for the Vedic people, his or her spirit could exist in this Earth through the unification with natural elements. So, a concept of super human being has been created. They are sentient and at the same time non-sentient. Sentient because they are like super human beings, and non-sentient because they are natural objects. Nature, according to the *Vedic* literature, is anthropomorphic. An anthropomorphic view of nature treats natural elements as beings who have

¹¹⁹ Swami Prabhavananda, *The Spiritual Heritage of India* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1999), 26.

super human powers. In other words, all natural elements are beings who possess different powers of deities. They are benevolent but can be aggressive too if disturbed or harmed. Chakraborty explained the *Vedic* view of natural elements in a straight-forward way, “They are powerful, benevolent, but at times can be destructive. They are the objects of our reverence and prayer. Each natural object has been looked upon as a deity”¹²⁰.

The *Vedas* explained nature as a fraction or part of the Supreme God. From His body all gods, goddesses, human beings, animals, plants, even the whole Earth were created. One of the principal verses of *Rg-Veda* is “All beings of the universe form, as it were, a fraction of his being...universe appears as sentient and insentient beings. From a part of him was born the body of the universe, and out of this body were born the gods, the earth, and men”¹²¹.

The major Hindu religious scripture after the *Vedas* is the *Upanishads*. These are the “last part” of the *Vedas* and literally mean “sitting near devotedly, and so brings concretely to mind an earnest disciple learning from his guru, his spiritual master”¹²². The *Upanishads* are called the “knowledge” or “philosophical” portion of the *Vedas*. As its literal meaning and traditional recognition suggest, the *Upanishads* tell more about the relation between the Supreme Realities and nature. The *Upanishads* are all about learning real knowledge or liberation and getting rid of ignorance. Koller and Koller nicely

¹²⁰ Nirmalya Narayan Chakraborty, “Ethics in Indian Attitude Toward Nature: Organic and Inorganic”, in *A Historical-Developmental Study of Classical Indian Philosophy of Morals*, vol.12, pt.2, ed. Rajendra Prasad (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2009), 461.

¹²¹ *Rg-Veda*, x.90.1-5, quoted in Swami Prabhavananda, *The Spiritual Heritage of India* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1999), 32.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 39.

note, “The key question of the Upanishads is, What is the true nature of ultimate reality?”¹²³

Koller and Koller’s question hints that there might be some “false” nature of ultimate reality that are simply appearances but are perceived as real. For example, the flash of the lighting may be falsely understood as the power of light, but actually, this is the power of the Ultimate Reality. The Ultimate Reality, according to the *Upanishads*, is *Brahman* or *Atman* or Self. The *Kena Upanishads* says, “This is the truth of Brahman in relation to nature: whether in the flash of the lighting, or in the wink of the eyes, the power that is shown is the power of Brahman”¹²⁴.

According to the *Upanishads*, *Brahman* is the existence, knowledge, essence of the universe. Nature begins and ends with the *Brahman*. He is the One, and only One. The diversities in nature are merely apparent and illusory. Nature is the manifestation of one single reality, the *Brahman*. Chakraborty writes, “The *Upanisads* are well-known for their monistic metaphysics. Reality is one, they declare. The diversity that our robust common sense teaches us is only apparent and illusory”¹²⁵. When the individual perceives nature as real she only misperceives the *Brahman*. She is in ignorance. She does not have knowledge of *Brahman*. However, as soon as she realizes nature as the manifestation of *Brahman* she achieves self-consciousness, the knowledge of *Brahman*. Sri Ramakrishna’s statement should be worth while

¹²³ John M. Koller and Patricia Joyce Koller, *Asian Philosophies* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1998), 20.

¹²⁴ *Kena Upanishads*, iv.4, quoted in Swami Prabhavananda, *The Spiritual Heritage of India* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1999), 42.

¹²⁵ Nirmalya Narayan Chakraborty, “Ethics in Indian Attitude Toward Nature: Organic and Inorganic”, in *A Historical-Developmental Study of Classical Indian Philosophy of Morals*, vol. 12, pt. 2, ed. Rajendra Prasad (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2009), 465.

here: “When one attains samadhi [transcendental consciousness] then only comes to him the knowledge of Brahman”¹²⁶.

Ignorance is common to all individual selves. But some of them can overcome it. Those self-conscious selves have the ability to realize Earthly elements as the manifestation of *Brahman*. Earth was in the *Brahman* and He wishes to create it as the spider’s web is created. The spider’s web is temporary, like the Earth. Nature, similar to the individual self, has multiple powers, two of them are dynamism and staticness. All elements in nature were created by dynamic and static characteristics. The static characteristics are the three *gunas* (qualities), such as *Satya*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*, and the dynamic characteristic is the evolution process associated with these three *gunas*. However, these are only the dark side while *Brahman* is the light side. The individual self or *jiva*, when observing the dark side, feels pain and bondage. But that perception is changeable by the knowledge of the Self. All the pains and bondages are destroyed by Brahman’s knowledge. He is one, and in this way His knowledge omits all types of dualism. Theoretically, that would be the immediate experience of liberation.

Nonetheless, as Sharma mentions, “Self-realisation is the only means of liberation. But in the evolution towards perfect self-realisation many other means have to be utilised”¹²⁷. There are several conditions in Indian traditions for perfect realization of Self. Without these conditions realization cannot happen.

For instance, initiation and devotion to the teacher, free from the experience of birth and death, are some of the necessary conditions which

¹²⁶ *Sri Sri Ramakrsna kathamrta*, vol iii, 9-10, quoted in Swami Prabhavananda, *The Spiritual Heritage of India* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1999), 47.

¹²⁷ Ram Nath Sharma, *Indian Philosophy* (New Delhi: Orient Longman Ltd., 1972), 53.

must be fulfilled. Only a teacher can bring the enquirer to the final stage of self-realization, *turiya*. This would require absolute surrender and devotion of the disciple to *Brahman* and also to a teacher. In case of proper practice under the teacher, experience of birth and death disappear since the individual self identifies with the Supreme Self. The Supreme Self has no beginning and end, no birth and death. So, the individual self does not experience these once the stage of *turiya* is achieved. In Prabhavananda's words, "Conceived as liberation-moksa-turiya is the state which results when the bonds of ignorance have been burst asunder, and implies freedom not only from all imperfections and limitations, but also from birth and death"¹²⁸. *Moksa*, therefore, is freeing from all kinds of bondage, limitations, physical experiences which can be gained in the whole life-time or at the time of death. In other words, this is Self-realization that the Upanishads have asked to achieve for their followers.

So, the *Upanishadic* view of human-nature relation can be seen as spiritual. Nonetheless, that spirituality is based on a concrete philosophy. This philosophy seems to be realizing "Oneness". But that oneness presupposes identification of individual self and the Supreme Self, God. The dualism, Self and individual self, originates only by false identification, i.e. misunderstanding or ignorance of the Self. Thus, the fusion of self and individuality creates Indian spirituality. In this regard we could mention Prabhavananda's comment, "This so—vaunted individuality of ours—what is it, after all? Born as it is of the false identification of the Self with the non-Self, it is but the illusory product of a radical misunderstanding"¹²⁹.

¹²⁸ Swami Prabhavananda, *The Spiritual Heritage of India* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1999), 62.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 63.

The *Bhagavad Gita*, or the essence of *Upanishads* is a part of the great Indian epic *Mahabharata*. The *Vedas* outlines the Hindu anthropomorphic view toward nature, the *Upanishads* explores the realization of Self through knowledge and freedom from ignorance, the *Gita* developed the final moral principle, the *Karma yoga* (renunciation through action), which is very different from other traditions. Perhaps, the Karma theory manifests the whole Indian moral vision. *Gita*'s main attempt is to "combine knowledge, devotion and action"¹³⁰.

Mere knowledge has no value in Indian thought. Knowledge has to be integrated with devotion and action since knowledge could develop a one-sided view of nature. But when it combines with morality, and finally, spirituality, then that would be the comprehensive development. The *Gita* thus maintains, "integral perfectionism, refutes one-sided development, and preaches "renunciation through activism" "¹³¹.

The *Gita* invites self-surrender to God who belongs to all beings, "Self-surrender, knowingly 'to live, move, and have our being in God', is central"¹³². Self-surrender requires meditation. But meditation alone cannot validate this self surrender. Performing one's own duties toward natural elements, unselfish work, and specific personal sacrifices are also required. There are four principal paths for performing duties: *Jnana yoga* (renunciation through knowledge), *raja yoga* (renunciation through psychic control), *bhakti*

¹³⁰ Nirmalya Narayan Chakraborty, "Ethics in Indian Attitude Toward Nature: Organic and Inorganic", in *A Historical-Developmental Study of Classical Indian Philosophy of Morals*, vol. 12, pt. 2, ed. Rajendra Prasad (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2009), 469.

¹³¹ Ram Nath Sharma, *Indian Philosophy* (New Delhi: Orient Longman Ltd., 1972), 63.

¹³² Swami Prabhavananda, *The Spiritual Heritage of India* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1999), 98.

yoga (renunciation through love and devotion) and *karma yoga* (renunciation through work)¹³³.

Knowledge, self- control, love, devotion can make human beings truly admirable. The *Gita* says, “The truly admirable man controls his senses by the power of his will. All his actions are disinterested. All are directed along the path to union with Brahman”¹³⁴. More interestingly, Krishna, the Hindu Lord, says in the *Gita*, “A man should not hate any living creature. Let him be friendly and compassionate to all. He must free himself from the delusion of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ ”¹³⁵.

The teachings of *karma yoga* theory have a broader impact. If one does not obey her duties, or escape from her duties, or perform duties for some selfish gains then one must be prepared for equal sufferings and punishment. Suppose that one treated animals, say a rat, badly and then he or she died. Generally, in other religions or cultural traditions God will punish him or her. But very interestingly, in the Indian traditions, he or she has to come back again to this Earth as a rat and will be treated similarly. This rebirth cannot be avoided since it is God’s wish.

However, again, the goal of *karma yoga* theory is not action. Rather, spirituality or *bhakti* toward all natural events in the Earth is the goal. In other words, Prabhavananda nicely comments, “...unless they are spiritualized they have no relation to karma yoga. Not karma, mere action, but karma yoga, union with God through action, is the essence of the teaching of the Gita on this subject”¹³⁶.

¹³³ Ibid., 98.

¹³⁴ Ibid.,122.

¹³⁵ Ibid.,132.

¹³⁶ Ibid.,100.

Indian philosophical systems, generally known as “darsana”, were developed through the construction, reconstruction or reactions to, the teachings of Hindu religious scriptures. Indian philosophy has its own epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics, but all these are focused on establishing or refuting religious ideas. Interestingly, Carvaka, Buddhism, and Jainism, hold a conflicting view with Indian religious traditions. Nonetheless, they all developed a kind of spiritual philosophy which made Indian philosophy distinct from the West, as well as other philosophical traditions. Radhakrishnan, a major Indian philosopher in modern times, puts it clearly, “Philosophy in India is essentially spiritual”¹³⁷. He also comments, “Spiritual experience is the foundation of Indian’s rich cultural history”¹³⁸.

The Sanskrit word “darsana”, however, literally demonstrates a very pragmatic attitude toward life, mentioning seeing or observing critically or logically. But what is to be seen or observed? The answer is human’s mysterious surroundings or nature. Meditation in a calm quiet place through identification with nature can produce true philosophy and thus *ashrams* (teacher’s house) and *tapovanas* (forest) were regarded as the source of all philosophical knowledge. The *Vedas* and *Upanishads* (the last part of the *Vedas*) were considered great books of all knowledge for Hindus since the ancient times. Indian philosophical systems are often distinguished in relation to the interpretation of the *Vedas*.

Broadly, they can be divided into two groups: Vedic and nonVedic. The Vedic systems, Samkhya, Yoga, Mimamsa, Vedanta, Vaisesika, and Nyaya, acknowledge the authority of the *Vedas* and support its views. In

¹³⁷ S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, vol. 1, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008), 4.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

contrast, the nonVedic systems, Carvaka, Buddha, and Jaina, do not acknowledge the authority of the *Vedas* and develop an anti-Vedic philosophy. Each philosophical school may not deal with the same issues. However, human-nature relation was vital for all of them. Let me discuss two most prominent Indian philosophies briefly. The first is Buddhism, developed by Gautam Buddha or Sidhartha. The second, a Vedic philosophy called Vedanta.

Buddha denies the existence of God but he admits “consciousness” rather than soul. Meditation or discard of selfishness through identification with higher paths plays a vital role in Buddha’s thought. Buddha perceives nature as usual without discussing its creation or end. The most important things to him are natural elements and human beings. He observes nature as full of sorrows, miseries, and sufferings. Nature is also painful. All beings must die and death can only bring pain for them. So, Buhhda investigates the causes of sufferings, which are sensual pleasure, enjoyment, and desire. The main cause, however, is ignorance.

Of course, cessation of sufferings is possible by the destruction of ego and by loving all beings. Diminishing of ego and feeling love for all beings can develop gradually by meditation. The liberation is *Nirvana* which can be attained by contemplating *Sunya* (Nothing) in accordance with a special path called the “eight fold path”. The noble eight fold path is a path of self-development through *dhyana* or identification with unselfishness.

Buddha’s most important term “Nirvana” can be interpreted as a spiritual development through self-realization. Self-realization is a kind of perfection, a kind of positive development of one’s own self. *Nirvana* in its literal meaning is “cooling” or “blowing out” from long passion, also

extinction from all sorts of evil qualities in human life¹³⁹. Buddha notes, “The mind released is like the extinction of a flame”¹⁴⁰. At the final stage, *Nirvana* implies a deep spiritual consciousness which is not obsession with nature, but rather is integrated with nature peacefully and harmoniously. Radhakrishnan’s comment exposes the great philosophical insights of *Nirvana*, “The suppression of the evil tendencies is accompanied by a simultaneous spiritual progress. Nirvana, which is the consummation of the spiritual struggle, is a positive blessedness”¹⁴¹.

The Vedanta philosophical system is considered as the highest flourishing of Indian thoughts. Vedanta philosophy was systematically illustrated and interpreted by the great Indian philosopher, Samkaracharya. Samkara’s philosophy is an identification of individual self with the universal Self or *Brahman*. This non-separation enables him to develop a monistic philosophy, as Radhakrishnan notes from *Sutra* of Badarayana, “Samkara takes it to mean a complete identification with the universal self, while Ramanuja interprets it as a partial assimilation to God”¹⁴². The philosophy of Advaita (non-dual) Vedanta is all about realization, the realization of *Atman* (Self). But that realization also aims at self-knowledge, as Deutsch nicely observes, “...that he who knows himself knows reality and overcomes all pain, misery, ignorance, and bondage”¹⁴³. The Advaita Vedanta philosophy enables

¹³⁹ Ibid., 377.

¹⁴⁰ *Digha Nikaya*, ii, 15, quoted in S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, vol. 1, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008), 377.

¹⁴¹ S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, vol. 1, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008), 378.

¹⁴² Ibid., 411.

¹⁴³ Eliot Deutsch, “The Self in Advaita Vedanta”, in *Indian Philosophy: A Collection of Readings*, vol. 3, ed. Roy W. Perrett (New York: Garland Publishing, 2001), 343.

the individual self “to acquire a fuller realization of who or what we essentially are”¹⁴⁴.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, the key political reformer and pioneer environmentalist in India, not only perceived human-nature relation from an integrated viewpoint but also practiced the simple way of living by making his own clothes through *Charka* (hand mill) and maintains his daily nutrition from a goat’s milk. His life styles give one important message to people in the whole world that by maintaining selfless simple life styles humans could preserve harmony in nature. But in order to achieve such a mentality they first need Self-realization and strict commitment to *Ahimsa* (nonviolence). Gandhi himself writes, “What I want to achieve—what I have been striving and pining to achieve these thirty years—is self-realization, to see God face to face, to attain Moksha [Salvation-oneness with God and freedom from later incarnations]”¹⁴⁵. Rabindranath Tagore writes about the importance of identification,

The man whose acquaintance with the world does not lead him deeper than science leads him, will never understand what it is that the man with the spiritual vision finds in these natural phenomena. The water does not merely cleanse his limbs, but it purifies his heart; for it touches his soul.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 344.

¹⁴⁵ M.K. Gandhi, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, xi-xii, quoted in Louis Fischer, ed., *The Essential Gandhi: An Anthology of His Writings on His Life, Work, and Ideas* (New York: Vintage Books, 2002), 3.

¹⁴⁶ Rabindranath Tagore, *Sadhana: The Realisation of Life* (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1913), 8.

IV. NATURE IN JAPANESE TRADITIONS

In Japanese traditions, naturalness is denoted by the term “Shizen”. *Shizen* is considered also as the synonym of nature. Like the Chinese word “Ziran”, *Shizen* is a combination of two Japanese words “shi” and “zen”. Tucker notes that *shi* often means “spontaneously or naturally so” and *zen* means “it does”. So, literally *Shizen* means something which originates naturally as it does¹⁴⁷. According to Tucker, the literal meaning of *Shizen* is “from itself (*shi/ji*) thus it does (*zen/nen*)”¹⁴⁸. So, we could assert that *Shizen* captures the Chinese sense of spontaneity of nature with a considerable modification.

The Japanese perceive spontaneous characteristics of nature in relation to Heaven and Earth, and also other encompassing natural elements, especially *yama* (mountains). As a result, the word *Shizen* differs from the modern Japanese word *kankyo*, meaning environment. The word “environment”, though used interchangeably with nature in the West, generally implies scientific understanding of nature. By the word *kankyo* the Japanese refer to their surroundings rather than to the broader concept of nature. In the Japanese view of nature, humanity and nature are not only integrated but also humans are identified with the natural forces. As Tucker puts it,

Like Saigusa, the philosopher Sakamaki Shunzo has suggested that Japanese did not coin any single word for nature signifying something apart and distinct from humanity precisely because they considered themselves to be integral parts of the whole, closely identified with the elements and forces of the world around them.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ John A. Tucker, “Japanese Views of Nature and the Environment”, in *Nature Across Cultures: Views of Nature and the Environment in Non-Western Cultures*, ed. Helaine Selin (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003), 161.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 161.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 163.

The idea of an integrated nature has also appeared in the writings of many Japanese philosophers, monks, and even scientists. For instance, an influential Japanese scientist and founding ecologist, Kinji Imanishi, had a unique view which he calls “self-completeness”, equally recognizable in living things and matter. In his famous book, *Seibutsu no Sekai* (The World of Living Things), Imanishi writes, “All living things and the societies they form through this self-completeness must always be connected with the principle of this world, with the self-completeness of this world”¹⁵⁰.

Imanishi’s view suggests that all myriad things, whether living or nonliving, have the same origins, and human beings need to be connected with this principle of self-completeness. Noted Neo-Confucian Japanese philosopher, Kaibara Ekken, called the common principle between human beings and myriad things *qi* (or *chi*) and writes, “There is only one material force between Heaven and Earth, and when there is movement and tranquility, we call it yin and yang. The virtue of ceaseless production we call life [creativity]...it is actually all one reality”¹⁵¹.

Shinto and Buddhist worldviews in the Japanese traditions manifest the commonality of human beings and other natural elements and the basic principle of a unified natural system. Shintoism is the most distinguished feature in Japanese traditions. “Shinto” originates from the word “Kami” which means “sacred objects” which can be found in Heaven, Earth, and human beings themselves. The term “Shintoism” refers to the “Way of Kami”. Sometimes it may also mean *Shen-tao* or the “law of Heaven and Earth” as

¹⁵⁰ Kinji Imanishi, *A Japanese View of Nature: The World of Living Things*, trans. Pamela J. Asquith et al. (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002), 86.

¹⁵¹ Kaibara Ekken, *The Philosophy of Qi: The Record of Great Doubts*, trans. Mary Evelyn Tucker (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 146.

expressed in Taoism. Tsunetnugu has identified three basic characteristics of Shinto.

The first and second characteristics are related to Imperialism and Realism respectively, but the third one is the most interesting and spiritual which “refers to the reverence for brightness and purity in all matter and thought”¹⁵². Note that the brightness and purity should not be understood as common usage. Brightness and purity are synonymous with goodness. Tsunetsugu writes, “At the heart of the Shinto theology of the Outer Shine a spiritual *meijo shugi* existed in diverse forms”¹⁵³. However, all forms have focused on “correctness and uprightness”.

This correctness and uprightness belongs to the heart of human beings. In other words, the correctness and uprightness may appear as a response by the heart through self-realization. The heart can be purified when everything in nature is placed in its proper place: “Fast and prepare yourself purely and fairly with a bright, red heart and not a dirty, black heart. Serve the Great Kami by treating left as left and right as right, without shifting things on the right to the left”¹⁵⁴.

Clearly, Shintoism maintains realization in practicing some great virtues. However, just realization or worship of Kami may not be enough. These may supply the spiritual elements but the correctness of behavior comes from the identification of brightness and uprightness. As Tsunetsugu puts it, “...“kami” is thought to have been identical with...the natural objects of heaven

¹⁵² Muraoka Tsunetsugu, *Studies in Shinto Thought*, trans. Delmer M. Brown and James T. Araki (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 29.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 34-35.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 37.

and earth (such as heavenly bodies, mountains, rivers, fields, seas, rain, and wind), but also of birds, beasts, insects, trees, wood, grass, and minerals”¹⁵⁵.

Like Confucianism and Daoism in China, Buddhism has developed in Japan not only as a religion but also as a way of being connected with nature. For example, the Japanese holds the conception of “Buddhahood” or “Buddha-nature” as the vital force which exists in all entities in the world. Despite the Buddhist text *Sutras* there are several individual monks’ poetry and their conceptual resources in Japan. For instance, the Monk Kukai writes, “Both this space and these plants-and-trees are the dharmakaya”¹⁵⁶. The two Buddhist terms “Buddhahood” and “Dharmakaya” are discussed below to present a clearer Japanese worldview.

At the time of transplantation of Buddhism from India to China it was believed, particularly in Mahayana Buddhism, that “Buddhahood belongs to all sentient beings”. After a long debate, the Chinese Tien-tai school claimed that Mahayana Buddhist logic requires universalism, i.e. having sentience is not necessary for a being to be respected. In other words, everything should be respected. Their influential comment was, “Buddha-nature be ascribed not only to plants, trees, and earth, but even to particles of dust”¹⁵⁷.

When Buddhism entered Japan, this view was absorbed by the Japanese indigenous religion Shinto. According to Shinto, nature and human beings are equally divine. As Parkes notes, “In Shinto the whole world is

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 55.

¹⁵⁶ Kukai, *Kobo Daishi Zenshuu*, vol. 2, p. 37, quoted in William R. LaFleur, “Saigyō and the Buddhist Value of Nature”, in *Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought: Essays in Environmental Philosophy*, ed. J. Baird Callicott and Roger T. Ames (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 186.

¹⁵⁷ Graham Parkes, “Voices of Mountains, Trees, and Rivers: Kukai, Dogen, and a Deeper Ecology”, in *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*, ed. Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997), 113.

understood to be inhabited by *shin* (*kami*), or divine spirits”¹⁵⁸. The divine spirits are present in anything which deserves our respect and reverence. This atmospheric set-up was suitable for Buddhism. The Tendai School at first elaborates this idea in Japan and makes it as a central theme of Buddhism. The medieval monk Kukai regards this issue as very important.

Kukai summarized his worldview as, “The Four Mandalas are inseparably related to one another...Infinitely interrelated like the meshes of Indra’s net are those we call existence”¹⁵⁹. According to traditional Buddhism in Japan, when people got enlightenment they manifest “Dharmakaya” (teaching body). So, *Dharmakaya* was seen as a form of Absolute Reality. But Kukai explains it by asking, “Where is the Dharmakaya? It is not far away; it is in our own body”¹⁶⁰. This conceptual transformation implies that there is no significant difference between Absolute Reality, human beings, and natural entities. This is the cosmic identification or cosmic harmony which can be attained by *mandalas* (mind), *mantras* (speech), and *mudras* (body)¹⁶¹.

When Kukai monks refer to the “Indra net” they mean a total interdependence. As Ingram writes, “Kukai’s universe is a universe of nondual-identity-in-difference”¹⁶². Steve Odin explains the metaphor of “Indra net” in the paradigm of microcosm and macrocosm. The cosmic web, like Daoism, has a dynamic causal interrelationship. Everything in nature arises by an inter-fusion of one and many. The universe can be illustrated as a

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 113.

¹⁵⁹ Hakeda, *Kukai*, 10-15, quoted in Paul O. Ingram, “The Jeweled Net of Nature” in *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*, ed. Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997), 75.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 76.

¹⁶¹ Ibid, 77.

¹⁶² Ibid, 80.

macrocosm of infinite microcosm. Odin describes this view as “relational cosmology” which has aesthetic implications¹⁶³.

The relational cosmology later appeared in another trend of Buddhism, namely Kegon Buddhism, in their two famous doctrines: *riji muge* (“interpretation of part and whole”) and *jiji muge* (“interpretation of part and part”)¹⁶⁴. Moreover, they gave it an axiological dimension by saying that since everything relates to everything, there is nothing in this universe that is valueless. Odin says, “This view further entails a morality of unconditional compassion and loving kindness for all sentient beings in nature”¹⁶⁵.

The term “Buddha-nature” was used by Japanese scholars in various senses. For example, Buddha-nature meant sympathy, nonviolence, love, wisdom, reality, and compassion. King argues that Buddha-nature is regarded as a “social stereological device” for self-transformation in Japanese traditions. Buddha-nature motivates human beings to act compassionately to all sentient and non-sentient elements. In his words,

Thinkers and movements as diverse as Rissho Koseikai, Soka Gakkai, and Thich Nhat Hanh all assert that it is an important part of practice to manifest one’s Buddha-nature through bodhi-sattva action in the form of concrete acts of compassion and social activism.¹⁶⁶

Two important issues in Japanese traditions are “wisdom” and “awareness”. Indian traditions, as we have seen, are mainly concerned with “liberation” and “ignorance”, while Japanese traditions focus on achieving

¹⁶³ Steve Odin, “The Japanese Concept of Nature in Relation to the Environmental Ethics and Conservation Aesthetics of Aldo Leopold”, in *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*, ed. Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997), 98.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 98.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 98.

¹⁶⁶ Sallie B. King, “The Doctrine of Buddha-Nature Is Impeccably Buddhist”, in *Pruning the Bodhi Tree: The Storm Over Critical Buddhism*, ed. Jamie Hubbard and Paul L. Swanson (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), 191.

bodhi or wisdom and awareness. Zuiho writes, “First, the purpose of Buddhism is not “liberation” (*mukta, vimoksa*) but the realization of “wisdom” (*bodhi*) for the practice of “great compassion” (*mahakaruna*)”¹⁶⁷. But why does one need to realize *bodhi*? Zuiho adds, “Third, to achieve *bodhi*-wisdom, one must begin by cultivating an awareness of the a priori actuality of the phenomenal world that can be expressed in words, and then pass beyond words...”¹⁶⁸.

Realization of *bodhi* would entail awareness of compassion for all life-forms and myriad things in the Earth. This awareness actually is the attainment of the highest identification with the phenomenal world in a unique compassionate way. In short, awareness that “causes an emotional and willful attachment to the self”¹⁶⁹. The Japanese spirit of human-nature relation is highlighted in the words of Nakasone, once the Prime Minister of Japan,

We Japanese are not monotheists. We go through a cycle that draws us into the world of polytheism, being born into Nature and returning to Nature at death. The mountains, rivers, grasses, and trees are our brothers: this is the origin of the notion that “mountains, rivers, grasses, and trees all attain Buddhahood.”¹⁷⁰

In his comments, Nakasone stresses that all natural elements, including human beings, share the same Buddhahood, i.e. natural elements are interconnected. Some philosophers have perceived it as an “ecocentric turn” in Japanese traditions which started in the Japanese Tendai Buddhist doctrine, “...If I

¹⁶⁷ Yamaguchi Zuiho, “The Core Elements of Indian Buddhism Introduced into Tibet: A Contrast with Japanese Buddhism”, in *Pruning the Bodhi Tree: The Storm Over Critical Buddhism*, ed. Jamie Hubbard and Paul L. Swanson (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), 222.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 222.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 225.

¹⁷⁰ Nakasone and Umehara, “The Sixty-first Year of the Showa Era”, 297, quoted in Matsumoto Shiro, “Buddhism and the Kami: Against Japanism”, in *Pruning the Bodhi Tree: The Storm Over Critical Buddhism*, ed. Jamie Hubbard and Paul L. Swanson (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), 360.

realize that Suchness and I are one and the same thing...the myriad bodhisattvas are not apart from my very own body”¹⁷¹.

As pointed out earlier, apart from empathetic perception of nature, a good number of Japanese poets and philosophers fused aesthetics and nature. Callicott writes, “A long tradition of Japanese poets—including Teika, Saigyō, Bashō, and Sesshū—captured the delicate Japanese Buddhist religio-aesthetic posture toward nature in a medium accessible to a broad audience”¹⁷². Interestingly, Japanese traditions not only maintain this “religio-aesthetic posture” theoretically but they have also implemented this view in conserving nature. Tucker writes, “It was the Confucian and Neo-Confucian scholars who, in addition to admiring natural beauty and revering it spiritually, made the natural world...designed to conserve the environment for future generations”¹⁷³.

V. LOCATING SOME ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES IN ASIAN TRADITIONS

Asian attitudes toward nature are mainly nonanthropocentric¹⁷⁴. However, anthropocentric ingredients are not rare in Asian traditions. So, when we

¹⁷¹ Ruben L.F. Habito, “Tendai *Hongaku* Doctrine and Japan’s Ethnocentric Turn”, in *Pruning the Bodhi Tree: The Storm Over Critical Buddhism*, ed. Jamie Hubbard and Paul L. Swanson (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), 376.

¹⁷² J. Baird Callicott, *Earth’s Insights: A Survey of Ecological Ethics from the Mediterranean Basin to the Australian Outback* (California: University of California Press, 1994), 96.

¹⁷³ John A. Tucker, “Japanese Views of Nature and the Environment”, in *Nature Across Cultures: Views of Nature and the Environment in Non-Western Cultures*, ed. Helaine Selin (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003), 169.

¹⁷⁴ An Analysis of Asian values, ecosophy, and environmental ethics is presented in my conference paper, “Identifying Three Asian Values in Arne Naess’s Ecosophy”, in *Empowering the Humanities in Upholding Heritage, Knowledge, People and Nature: Conference Proceedings of the International Conference on Humanities 2011, Penang, 14-16 June 2011* (Penang: Universiti Sains Malaysia, 2011), 1-11.

discuss Asian environmental values we should assume diversity and integrity in and between these traditions. As we have seen, Asian environmental values are articulated with some basic ideas, such as community, identification, spirituality, companionship, nonviolence, self-realization, continuity, interrelatedness, aesthetic appreciation of nature, devotion, sympathy, and empathy. We will discuss some of them which are more vivid and closely related to environmental philosophy and ethics.

The concept of community has appeared in Asian traditions in a very broad sense. Community is not limited to human societies, groups, races, and religions. Rather, the whole cosmos is seen as a community where human beings, animals, gardens, stones, and mountains are all members. One community member has no right to dominate others even though these are nonliving. Perhaps, the division between living and nonliving is hardly regarded as important in all Asian traditions discussed. The value of considering all natural elements as a single community is clearly reflected in Indian, Chinese and Japanese traditions.

The Indian perspective of treating nature as body parts of gods and goddesses has fostered a change in the traditional view of human-centric community. Their value of perceiving different natural powers as the powers of gods and goddesses created a strong ethical principle called the *Karma* theory which is mostly based on the idea of one single community. Further, the general convention of time by which we denote an event as present, past, future was also omitted in the *Karma* theory since one who pays any disrespect toward other beings may come back with the same body and soul of

that being. So, time is seen as continuous, and the ethical principle applicable to human beings is also applicable to other natural elements, such as animals.

In the Chinese traditions, community is seen in relation to material forces of *li* and *chi* or *yin* and *yang*. All natural elements, including human beings, are composed of *li* and *chi*, the primal cosmic energy or matter-energy of the universe. The myriad things between Heaven and Earth are community members and also maintaining a balance of *li* and *chi* which human beings should not interfere with. Daoism more radically mentions ten thousands myriad things as members of community. A Daoist approaches all of them as family members.

The Japanese Shinto and Buddhist views opposed the significance of the living and nonliving distinction. Every natural element holds Buddha nature and Buddhahood is the principle of community to be followed. The Japanese view of Buddhahood turns to empathy and sympathy for all natural elements. The concept of community plays a crucial role in Asian environmental philosophy. It may not be wrong to say that environmental philosophy is just an expansion of the traditional concept of community. Naess wrote his whole book on the interrelation of community, ecology and life styles.

A sense of a wider community represents the value of "totality". In other words, a wider community comprises an idea of totality rather than particularity. Totality is a value which might be seen in any aboriginal society in the West in a form similar to that in Asian traditions. Many environmental ethicists regard totality as one of the basic values in human-nature relation. For example, Lovelock observes the Earth as Gaia, or a total, unified organism.

Aldo Leopold's land ethics is another major development of the value of totality and community. Leopold writes, "The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land"¹⁷⁵.

Therefore, Asian environmental values are closely related to the concept of "totality". Put differently, a sense of community based on interrelation, interdependent, empathy, and sympathy, has motivated Asian people at least theoretically, religiously, and culturally. However, this finding is not entirely new since a few comparative environmental philosophers have already alluded to some of these values. Callicott, for instance, when commenting on Asian environmental values, writes,

Human beings enjoy an interdependence and mutuality with all enviroing conditions. Perhaps the greatest contribution that classical Chinese thought can make to a global deep-ecological awareness lies in this conception of dynamic, mutually constitutive, internal relatedness.¹⁷⁶

My findings, however, show that these are only *surface* level values, and for a "global deep-ecological awareness" we would need further analysis. The *deeper* level values which I have indicated in my analysis are identification, self-realization, and spirituality. An in-depth comparison in the next chapter will show these values more vividly.

¹⁷⁵ Aldo Leopold, "The Land Ethic", in *The Ethics of the Environment*, ed. Robin Attfield (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008), 100.

¹⁷⁶ J. Baird Callicott, *Earth's Insights: A Survey of Ecological Ethics from the Mediterranean Basin to the Australian Outback* (California: University of California Press, 1994), 85.

VI. DO ASIAN WORLDVIEWS HAVE AN ADVANTAGE IN ADDRESSING HUMAN-NATURE RELATIONSHIP?

Many Western environmental philosophers have pointed out that Western attitudes and values toward nature need to be corrected, and the West should adapt a different attitude and some alternative values for harmonious co-existence in nature. These philosophers have turned their attention to Asian worldviews for a potential reformulation. One of the main reasons to consider Asian worldviews is that the mind-body dualism found in the Western traditions is almost absent in Asian worldviews. Some Asian scholars already created the ground by presenting successfully Zen Buddhism, Taoism, and Advaita Vedanta philosophy in the West to show how ontological dualism has dissolved in their metaphysics. Inspired by them, a few famous environmental philosophers related their thoughts to Asian worldviews. Hargrove writes in this context, “Deep ecology as a popular movement within environmental philosophy did, of course, retain some Eastern elements”¹⁷⁷.

It is well-known that the West considers nature from the materialistic point of view. Industrial revolution helped the West to maintain a separation between human beings and the rest of nature. Nature was viewed from an engineering perspective. Rapidly the mechanistic view of nature was culturally absorbed in the West. Callicott and Ames state, “Nature is represented in atomism as particulate, reductive, material, inert, quantitative, and mechanical. This concept of nature became institutionalized in early modern science and

¹⁷⁷ Eugene C. Hargrove, “Foreword”, in *Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought: Essays in Environmental Philosophy*, ed. J. Baird Callicott and Roger T. Ames (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), xiii.

was pragmatically translated into an engineering agenda”¹⁷⁸. As these comments represent, Western traditions gained a mechanistic view of nature largely based on science and technology.

In contrast, Asian traditions attempted to unify humans and nature since the ancient times. Unlike the Western traditions which rank nature below human beings, the Asian traditions rank nature above human beings. But this higher rank of nature did not separate them. Nature was seen as mother, natural elements were seen as brothers and sisters, and harming nature was regarded as a sin. Nature was respected and understood as a larger family. Historian Roderick Nash writes, “Ancient Eastern cultures were the sources of respect for and religious veneration of the natural world...As early as the eighth century B.C., the Indian philosophy of Jainism proposed that man not kill or harm any living creature”¹⁷⁹.

Apart from respecting nature, Asian traditions formulated a rich code of conduct to relate with nature. People in this region willingly followed these codes, and persons who achieved mastery by performing these codes of conduct were generally regarded as wise or enlightened persons. Nash adds,

...early Buddhists and Hindus professed a feeling of compassion and a code of ethical conduct for all that was alive. Likewise, China and Tibet produced philosophies which honored life other than man’s and promulgated elaborate dietary rules in this interest.¹⁸⁰

The Asian traditions were devoted to maintaining a compassionate relationship with all natural elements. But this companionship was *sometimes*

¹⁷⁸ J. Baird Callicott and Roger T. Ames, ed., *Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought: Essays in Environmental Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 5.

¹⁷⁹ Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 20-21, quoted in J. Baird Callicott and Roger T. Ames, ed., *Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought: Essays in Environmental Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 9.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

articulated just as theories. Perhaps, an unconditional sympathetic attitude toward animals, trees, plants, and lands is needed in practice. However, anthropocentrism was discouraged throughout history. Callicott writes, “...human beings and nature leading to sympathy for other creatures, to compassion—that is, to *ahimsa*—is implied...certainly it represents an advance beyond egocentrism and anthropocentrism”¹⁸¹.

Therefore, one of the main advantages of the Asian perception of human-nature relation is noted as a “seamless interconnection” or “continuity” between the Creator, human beings and natural elements. In the Western traditions, there is a hierarchy between the three categories. But this hierarchy has been dissolved in Asian worldviews. Two influential Asian scholars, Tucker and Grim, comment,

The East Asian traditions of Confucianism and Taoism remain...The seamless interconnection between the divine, human, and natural worlds that characterizes these traditions has been described as an anthropocosmic worldview. There is no emphasis on radical transcendence as there is in the Western traditions.¹⁸²

Selin, commenting broadly on non-Western cultures, says,

Non-Western cultures, and not just tribal cultures, do not necessarily see people and nature as separate entities; they know that we are affected by our surroundings and we affect them. No great intellectual leap is needed to realize that where we are affects who we are.¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ J. Baird Callicott, *Earth's Insights: A Survey of Ecological Ethics from the Mediterranean Basin to the Australian Outback* (California: University of California Press, 1994), 66.

¹⁸² Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, “Series Forward”, in *Confucianism and Ecology: The Interrelation of Heaven, Earth, and Humans*, ed. Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Berthrong (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998), xxvii.

¹⁸³ Helaine Selin, ed., *Nature Across Cultures: Views of Nature and the Environment in Non-Western Cultures* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003), xx.

In his monumental work Needham's notes, "It is, indeed, as if the Chinese saw phenomena in Heaven and Earth running along parallel strands in time, perturbing events in one strand giving rise to perturbing effects in the other"¹⁸⁴. We could find several examples in Asian traditions where not only sage masters but also common people realize that their surroundings have enormous spiritual, psychological and aesthetic effects on them. So, another advantage of Asian worldview is interdependence.

Nonetheless, these advantages do not guarantee that Asian worldviews will solve the present ecological crisis within a very short time. Indeed, despite these traditional advantages some Asian countries are evidently under environmental threats. China's current environmental crisis is worth mentioning here. Nowadays, many people in China are not able to see the sky at daylight due to severe air pollution. Rivers and lakes are occupied with low water. Flood, cyclone, draught, and earthquakes are regular events. Mining tragedy very often appears at news headlines. Pollution related deaths are increasing every year. Militarization with an increasing number of military bases has made the environmental issues more complex.

For rapid industrial development a huge demand of energy pushes China in using all types of natural resources, including coal, gas, oil, hydraulic power, nuclear power and fossil fuels. Heavy industrial pollution is often dumped into Chinese land, rivers, and seas. Deforestation raises negative impact all over the country. One can realize the threats of environmental crisis in China by just considering the media reports on the Huai River Watershed accident as an example, "In 2004, the media exposed not only this watershed-

¹⁸⁴ Colin A. Ronan, *The Shorter Science and Civilisation in China: An Abridgement of Joseph Needham's Original Text*, vol. 1, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 282.

wide water pollution accident, but also a high incidence of cancer believed to be caused by this pollution in villages within the watershed”¹⁸⁵. Mekong River is one the biggest reservoirs of biodiversity, including rare fishes, reptiles, and mammals in the Earth. Over-fishing and chemical dumping in the river have made some species extinct.

Environmental degradation is also severe in India. Air, water and noise pollutions are the most common problems. India’s main energy resources are coal, oil, hydraulic power, and natural gas. However, nuclear power plants which use uranium and thorium are rapidly increasing. The bad effects of radiation and chemical exploration were reported by the news media. The Bhopal disaster in 1984 was one of the worst environmental disasters. The chemicals which were released from the exploration were extremely dangerous for humans and nonhumans. The *Encyclopedia of Environmental Ethics and Philosophy* notes, “Bhopal is an example of everything that can go wrong in an industrial catastrophe”¹⁸⁶.

Japan is one of the top consumers of fossil fuels. Two major environmental problems in Japan are industrial pollution and heavy illegal dumping. There are several industrial accidents in the history of Japan. They include the Meiji Restoration in 1868, the Ashio Copper Mine accident in 1880, and the Fukushima Dai Ichi power plant disaster in 2011. Due to these environmental disasters a lot of people died of Minamata disease. Some suffered for a long time, and land, air, and water pollution were matters of serious concern. Even food items, vegetables, and meat were radiation

¹⁸⁵ *The State of the Environment in Asia 2006/2007*, ed. Japan Environmental Council (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2009), 186.

¹⁸⁶ J. Baird Callicott and Robert Frodeman, ed., *Encyclopedia of Environmental Ethics and Philosophy*, vol. 1, (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2009), 91.

contaminated after the recent Fukushima nuclear accident. *The State of the Environment in Asia* notes, “Recently the most serious problem Japan faces with regard to waste management and resource recycling is illegal dumping (which includes inappropriate disposal and illegal exports)”¹⁸⁷. In addition to these, urbanization reduces forest, and hunting whales causes imbalances in the environment.

Now, one can challenge the advantages of Asian traditions by referring to the environmental degradation of these countries. Isn't it a clear disconnection with the traditional values just discussed? I agree that certainly there is a *disconnection* between the actual practice and traditional values. What is the cause of this disconnection? There are two possible answers. Firstly, there is a crisis of policies and perceptions held by the relevant countries. Secondly, people have lost their bonding or appreciation of the traditional values of nature. Tucker and Grim speak of a “moral and spiritual crisis”¹⁸⁸. Jiang claims that “China's environmental crisis is, at its core, a crisis of policies and perceptions”¹⁸⁹. To me, the environmental crisis is a crisis of losing our primitive selves, deeply interrelated with the traditional values and our surroundings.

What can be done to overcome this situation? Major environmental problems arise from *competition* in industrial development. Probably, none of the relevant countries would allow a slow economic growth and less

¹⁸⁷ *The State of the Environment in Asia 2005/2006*, ed. Japan Environmental Council (Tokyo: Springer-Verlag, 2005), 176.

¹⁸⁸ Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, “Series Foreword”, in *Confucianism and Ecology: The Interrelation of Heaven, Earth, and Humans*, ed. Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Bertrung (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998), xvi.

¹⁸⁹ Hong Jiang, “Desertification in China: Problems with Policies and Perceptions”, in *China's Environmental Crisis: Domestic and Global Political Impacts and Responses*, ed. Joel Jay Kassiola and Sujian Guo (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 35.

technological development. But they can accept the cross-cultural example of harmonious living between nature and human beings, the re-establishment of their rich social, cultural, and religious heritage. Then they can reconstruct their selves and their moral principles in the light of traditional values. Jiang's suggestion is, "New values of respect for nature have to be (re-) established, inspired by both traditional Chinese culture, with its roots in Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism..., as well as by modern ecological sciences..."¹⁹⁰. A similar recommendation was made by Tucker and Grim, to "reorient ourselves in relation to the earth"¹⁹¹.

My suggestion is to engage with the common core values extracted from the cross-cultural observations and strengthen the bonding with our surroundings as ecological neighbors. We need to formulate a comprehensive ethical framework. But before that, we should consider whether any reformulation of Asian traditions is necessary, as suggested by the Western philosophers.

It should be worth noting that some key environmental thinkers admit the relative advantage of Asian worldviews, but they think that without significant reformation of Asian "conceptual resources" these worldviews are not acceptable. John Passmore, for instance, says, "Mystical contemplation will not clean our streams or feed our peoples; no invisible guiding hand, whether Providence or History, guarantees our salvation"¹⁹². Of course, Passmore is right in saying that mysticism cannot give us food and eliminate

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, 35.

¹⁹¹ Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, "Series Foreword", in *Confucianism and Ecology: The Interrelation of Heaven, Earth, and Humans*, ed. Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Berthrong (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998), xvi.

¹⁹² John Passmore, *Man's Responsibility for Nature: Ecological Problems and Western Traditions* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1980), 194.

famine, but in the same way sufficient food cannot ensure that we can survive environmentally well.

In sum, I have discussed the concept of nature in Asian perspectives. Three major traditions, namely, Chinese, Indian and Japanese, are discussed in order to get an overall picture of Asian environmental thoughts. Our analysis has shown that Asian worldviews demonstrate an alternative environmental philosophy based on some nonanthropocentric values, such as interrelatedness, interdependentness, continuity, companionship, devotion to nature, aesthetic appreciation of nature, and empathy and sympathy for all living entities. But there are also enough ingredients for anthropocentric values, for example, Confucian moral self-cultivation. Of course, Asian worldviews have greater resources for addressing the human-nature relation because of maintaining a respectful, compassionate, and interrelated attitude toward nature. However, these advantages may not ensure that Asian worldviews could provide a completely correct attitude toward nature because of the dislocation of some core values.

Thus, it seems to me that some of these nonanthropocentric values, such as totality, are only the surface level values. The deeper level values are identification, self-realization and spirituality, as reflected in our discussion. A comparison of Western and Asian traditions will further make it clear how and in what sense these values are treated in specific environmental philosophical issues. In the next chapter, we will therefore concentrate on a comparison by focusing on these issues.

CHAPTER THREE

A COMPARISON OF WESTERN AND ASIAN VIEWS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Environmental philosophy in the West and in Asia reflects different attitudes, goals, and perspectives which were discussed in the previous two chapters. Environmental philosophy focuses on some vital questions, and these questions were answered in different traditions in quite different ways. All traditions ultimately attempt to articulate a few basic questions when dealing with the human-nature relationship: Are human beings unique? How should the living and nonliving elements in nature be considered? Is nature sacred? So, when we compare Western and Asian views on the environment we must address these issues.

It may not be surprising that Western and Asian traditions sometimes reach similar conclusions regarding human uniqueness, the distinction between living and nonliving elements, and nature's sacredness. However, there are also differences in perceptions and valuations of the environment. In this chapter we will further concentrate on an important question: Why do the two traditions differ in valuing the environment? Alternatively, do they have the same sense or different senses of some environmental values when discussing the issues of uniqueness, living-nonliving distinction, and

sacredness? We will begin our discussion by comparing the views on human uniqueness.

I. UNIQUENESS OF HUMAN BEINGS

The uniqueness of human beings is a major issue in Western philosophical traditions, as we have noted in Chapter One. Western traditions subscribe to two types of theories regarding uniqueness. The first may be called the *dominion theory* and the second is the *mechanistic theory*. The former is derived from Christian theology and holds that human beings are created in God's image and they have inherited power and right from Him to dominate over nature and subdue all natural elements.

Verse I:26 of *Genesis* states, "Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth" "193. In verse I: 28 *Genesis* also states, "And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth" "194.

This dominion attitude was pervasive in the Greco-Roman philosophical traditions. However, there is no reason to think that all Greek philosophers supported this superior position of human beings. A few Greek philosophers sought to eliminate the human-nature separation and argued for

¹⁹³ "The Bible, *Genesis* I: 20-31", in *Environment: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, ed. Glenn Adelson et al. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 364.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 364.

the unity of nature. Hughes in the *Encyclopedia of Environmental Ethics and Philosophy* comments,

The oneness of nature can be found in Orphic thought, and philosophers such as Pherecydes (c. 544 BCE), Pythagoras (fl. 530 BCE), Philolaus (470-390 BCE), and Empedocles (492-432 BCE) refined this idea. Orphic cosmology envisioned an organic unity of the world and the cyclical interplay and balance of elements and creatures within it.¹⁹⁵

Apart from Orphic philosophers, Aristotle also showed an internal integrity between natural elements. But he also wrote that “Plants exist for the sake of animals...all other animals exist for the sake of man”¹⁹⁶.

Another famous example against the dominion attitude is the Gaia hypothesis. Krooth writes, “Free of human interference, Gaia is an unfettered living force of wondrous conditions: flowing atmospheric gases that interchange with plants and animals; soils, water and sunlight that make plant photosynthesis possible, producing food...”¹⁹⁷. Gaia is an organic whole personified in the Greek mythology. Lovelock, who revived the Gaia hypothesis in the 20th century, states this organic view more vividly, “As understanding of Gaia grew, however, we realized that it was not life or the biosphere that did the regulating but the whole system”¹⁹⁸.

In the Greco-Roman traditions human beings were primarily regarded as dominators, but the organic attitude toward nature was also present and continued up to the middle age of the history of philosophy.

¹⁹⁵ J. Donald Hughes, “Environmental Philosophy: I Ancient Philosophy”, in *Encyclopedia of Environmental Ethics and Philosophy*, vol. 1, ed. J. Baird Callicott and Robert Frodeman (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2009), 356.

¹⁹⁶ Aristotle, *The Politics*, book1, ch.8, p.1256b, quoted in Joseph R. DesJardins, *Environmental Ethics: An Introduction to Environmental Philosophy* (Toronto: Thomson Wadsworth, 2006), 96.

¹⁹⁷ Richard Krooth, *Gaia and the Fate of Midas: Wrenching Planet Earth* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2009), 558.

¹⁹⁸ James Lovelock, “Gaia”, in *Language of the Earth*, ed. Frank H.T. Rhodes et al. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2008), 291.

Then the mechanistic theory of the environment bloomed. Dramatically, since the sixteenth century the organic view of nature was completely changed by the influence of Rene Descartes, John Locke, David Hume, Karl Marx, John Stuart Mill, Friedrich Nietzsche, Sir Isaac Newton, Albert Einstein, and other prominent thinkers. Their *mechanistic* worldviews replaced the *organic* attitude toward nature. A form of the mechanistic worldview was provided in Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* (1871).

The Darwinian worldview contributed significantly to shaping present Western scientific knowledge, attitudes toward the environment, the origin of human beings, their relation with other species, and Western traditions generally. But Darwin's works were not much discussed earlier in philosophy because they dealt mainly with the classification of species and with evolutionary biology. However, a drastic revival of a Darwinian worldview can be seen in almost all contemporary Western environmental philosophers from Aldo Leopold to J. Baird Callicott. In particular, Alan Holland, Bryan G. Norton, Eric Katz, Robin Attfield, and Brian Baxter directly based their views on supporting Darwinism. Arguably, Naess's ecosophy has also incorporated some elements from the Darwinian evolutionary biology. It is therefore necessary to discuss briefly the Darwinian worldview and the place of human beings in his worldview.

Darwin showed that all animal species are the result of the evolutionary process through natural selection which is contrary to the creation process stated in religions. According to Darwin, human beings are simply the complex form of lower members of the same family. The

superiority of human beings narrated in the religious scriptures is all about language capability and the developed brain functions of human beings. But according to Darwin, other lower animals also have the potentiality to develop such language and brain functions. A famous defendant of Darwinism, Baxter, writes,

The Darwinian worldview embodies, of course, the two key ideas of Darwin's theory as applied to human beings. Firstly, it takes as axiomatic the claim that '*Homo sapiens* is an animal species'. Secondly, it accepts the Darwinian claim that this species, like all others on the planet, has arisen by a process of evolution by natural selection from an ancestor common to them all.¹⁹⁹

From this comment, it is clear that the Darwinian worldview is completely opposite to the Biblical worldview. According to the Biblical worldview, a hierarchical chain must be maintained, which is God, angels, human beings, animals, plants, and material objects respectively. In the Darwinian worldview, however, there is no hierarchical chain, but rather all species develop from their lower descendants and consequently human beings are "co-descendants" of an animal family. Darwin writes, "The main conclusion...is that man is descended from some less highly organised form"²⁰⁰. In a rather clearer way he says, "...all point in the plainest manner to the conclusion that man is the co-descendant with other mammals of a common progenitor"²⁰¹.

Of course, from the environmental ethical perspective Darwin's view could claim a relative advantage because of eliminating hierarchy. But the process by which this hierarchy dissolved is natural selection—a totally

¹⁹⁹ Brian Baxter, *A Darwinian Worldview: Sociobiology, Environmental Ethics and the Work of Edward O. Wilson* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007), 1.

²⁰⁰ Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*, ed. James Moore and Adrian Desmond (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2004), 676.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 676.

mechanistic view. If everything in nature is sustained or lost by the evolutionary process, then there is no need for environmental ethics. Humans can be frustrated, demoralized and might show less interest in living with cooperation and natural balance. The behavior of human beings will have little or no impact on the Earth. Human beings could do whatever they like for their own purposes. The question of “worthwhile life” even becomes blurred in the Darwinian worldview. Darwinian humanism thus creates a tension for environmental ethics. Krikman notices this tension and writes, “There is, however, a serious and plausible objection to Darwinian humanism and its consequences for environmental ethics, an objection that merits treatment at some length”²⁰².

The questions are: What type of humanism Darwin proposes? Are Darwinian humans dignified? Is it possible to live a worthwhile life in Darwinian humanism?

Darwin’s worldview rather sketches a pessimistic position of human beings in the animal kingdom for those naturalists who think that human beings could certainly claim a superior position for their spiritual and natural capabilities. However, Darwin thinks that the difference between humans and animals is not in kind, but in degree. Of course, a difference in degree cannot justify a higher place for human beings according to Darwin. In a famous paragraph he comments, “...that the mental faculties of man and the lower animals do not differ in kind, although immensely in degree. A difference in

²⁰² Robert Kirkman, “Darwinian Humanism and the End of Nature”, *Environmental Values* 18, no. 2 (2009): 219.

degree, however great, does not justify us in placing man in a distinct kingdom”²⁰³.

From this influential passage, we can understand that all animals in the Earth, including human beings, belong to one single category because they differ mainly in *degree*, not in *kind*. A difference in degree is generally less important than a difference in kind. Recent “genome mapping” has confirmed the Darwinian thesis that there is a very insignificant difference between the human genome and the genome of great apes. As Oelschlaeger points out, “Following the “genetic revolution”, beginning with Mendel, then Watson and Crick...we are confronted with a stark truth: the human genome is virtually identical to that of the greater chimpanzee. There is less than one percent difference”²⁰⁴.

Naturally, like Darwin, many people will ignore this “less than one percent difference” as being very *insignificant*. But ignoring this insignificant, less than one percent difference, may be very costly. If there is less than one percent change in the Earth’s axis, the whole solar system will break down. If there is less than one percent change in the water level, the Earth would have either floods or deserts. If there is less than one percent change in the air flow, everything either flies or there is fire and death. If there is less than one percent change in the Earth’s ecosystem and geological balance, nothing can be sustained. So, even if Darwin and the genetic revolution are correct, the less than one percent difference is enormously significant and extremely valuable. Moreover, Darwin’s worldview does not offer any explanation of inorganic

²⁰³ Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* ed. James Moore and Adrian Desmond (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2004), 173.

²⁰⁴ Max Oelschlaeger, “Boundaries and Darwin: Bridging the Great Divide”, in *Nature’s Edge: Boundary Explorations in Ecological Theory and Practice*, ed. Charles S. Brown and Ted Toadvine (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), 7.

elements of nature, such as land, water, air, sky, and mountains. His view fails to realize that there is another world—the inorganic world.

By treating the difference of species as merely a matter of degree, Darwin undermines some important features of human beings, such as incommunicable spiritual and aesthetic experience capacity. Oelschlaeger comments,

The one percent of difference between human and chimkind, as it turns out, makes all the difference. After all, chimpanzees are not cratering the planet. In effect, the specific difference between the human species and the other primates generally, and chimpanzees specifically, plays out in those capacities that make us language animals—Homo narrans.²⁰⁵

Perhaps, language is the most distinctive characteristic of human beings which separates them from other lower animals according to Darwin. He asserts that only human beings have a strong power of articulating meaningful diverse sounds and ideas. This is possible basically for the high level of mental power of human beings. Nonetheless, the high level of mental power, or self-consciousness, is simply an “incident” in evolution theory in Darwin’s world. He says, “...these qualities are merely the incidental results of other highly-advanced intellectual faculties; and these again [are] mainly the result of the continued use of a perfect language”²⁰⁶.

At least human beings are distinguishable, if not unique, for their capability of using complex language. Indeed, some critics (e.g. Daly) have argued that Darwin’s theory offers a lower possibility of living a “meaningful life”, or a “worthwhile life”, for human beings because, without having a goal

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 7-8.

²⁰⁶ Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*, ed. James Moore and Adrian Desmond (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2004), 151.

or a purpose of life, there is always a threat that human beings will adapt a mechanistic life-style where love, emotion, sympathy, and empathy, are totally absent. So they claim that as natural selection is the dominating factor in the Darwinian worldview, human beings are no more than a “travelers” of the evolutionary time machine. However, supporters of Darwinian theory, such as Holland, do not think that this criticism is fair to Darwinism. Rather, according to him, the Darwinian view can provide a “liberated” life for human beings, and produce worthwhile lives.

Holland’s argument is that if human beings exist in the natural kingdom to fulfill any purpose then their lives are not meaningful at all. Everything they intend to do must be compatible with that purpose. In other words, their desires, emotions and behavior are merely fulfilling that purpose. They would just live a life without freedom. In his words, “...individual life would have no point if there were already a purpose to human existence, and that Darwin’s theory precisely liberates us to lead individually meaningful lives”²⁰⁷.

Perhaps, Holland is just taking here a biased position and his view cannot be fully justified. His claim—if there is a purpose for human beings then we are not free to lead a meaningful life—seems problematic. There are some people in society who believe that the purpose of life is to show strong gratitude to the Creator and not to do harm to any human being irrespective of his or her religion, race and nationality. Can we say that these people do not have liberty? Can we say that their lives are meaningless since their purpose is not to harm any human beings? In fact, some great defenders of absolute

²⁰⁷ Alan Holland, “Darwin and the Meaning in Life”, *Environmental Values* 18, no. 4 (2009): 515.

liberty (such as Mill) suggested that not harming anybody is one of the chief ingredients for a worthwhile life, “The liberty of the individual must be thus far limited; he must not make himself a nuisance to other people”²⁰⁸.

Holland concludes that, a *call* for a realization that worthwhile life must be found in this natural world, not elsewhere, is already present in the Darwinian worldview. This call has profound impact on environmental ethics. A similar argument can be found in Baxter’s interpretation. He argues that the Darwinian worldview could offer a robust environmental ethics in the way of “moral motivation”. Moral motivation, nonetheless, does not feature vividly in Darwin’s own writings. But many scholars, such as Wilson, were inspired to show that it is a vital part of the Darwinian worldview. Wilson even developed a remarkable hypothesis, known as the “biophilia hypothesis”, to prove that the Darwinian worldview clearly demonstrates moral motivation to *biophilia*. Baxter later tried to fit this hypothesis into the environmental ethical context.

The biophilia hypothesis claims that human beings have an “innate tendency” to interact with other life forms beyond their intention to benefit from them. Wilson writes, “The object of the reflection can be summarized by a single word, biophilia, which I will be so bold as to define as the innate tendency to focus on life and lifelike processes”²⁰⁹. He believes that the biophilia hypothesis is a new way of looking at Darwin’s theory from a broader value orientation to nonhuman organisms. By emphasizing the “deep and complicated” mental process of human development Wilson maintains,

²⁰⁸ John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, in *The Basic Writings of John Stuart Mill: On Liberty, The Subjection of Women, and Utilitarianism*, ed. F.B. Schneewind and Dale E. Miller (New York: The Modern Library, 2002), 58.

²⁰⁹ Edward O. Wilson, *Biophilia* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1984), 1.

There is more. Modern biology has produced a genuinely new way of looking at the world that is incidentally congenial to the inner direction of biophilia. In other words, instinct is in this rare instance aligned with reason. The conclusion I draw is optimistic: to the degree that we come to understand other organisms, we will place a greater value on them, and on ourselves.²¹⁰

The biophilia hypothesis claims that human beings reasonably want to value other organisms in nature for various purposes which are surely noninstrumental. For example, when we use snakes as a symbol for certain institutions we want to give a message of mystery, power, and protection. Snakes are praised as the protectors of wealth and also for life-saving. This is the reason that snakes are used in pharmaceuticals and medical institutions as their symbols.

Similarly, the state symbols of eagle and lion carry the special message of keen-eyed, strong power, and danger to the potential enemies. Most nation-states in the current world use various symbols, designed with animals, plants, trees, and flowers, to mark their spirit, customs, philosophy, heritage, and traditions. Using symbols has become increasingly important. In fact, we need a logo of green tree to appeal for environmental conservation, a symbol of panda to represent extinct animals, and a symbol of cheetah tiger to display the strength of an engine.

Ivanhoe states the biophilia hypothesis as a “need” for human beings from this point of view and writes, “...it is impossible for us *not* to have developed certain tendencies and learning strategies concerning the world around us”²¹¹. Moral motivation in the Darwinian worldview can be realized in two ways, firstly, human beings could and ought to acquire “a greater

²¹⁰ Ibid., 2.

²¹¹ Philip J. Ivanhoe, “Of Geese and Eggs: In What Sense Should We Value Nature as a System?”, *Environmental Ethics* 32, no. 1 (2010), 71.

degree of concern for their well-being”, and secondly, “...human beings share features with other organisms with which they share common descent”²¹².

The Darwinian worldview, in my opinion, can result in a *minimal* possibility of worthwhile lives for human beings. Any explanation of the Darwinian theory would lead us merely to an anthropocentric lifestyle. Moreover, it is frustrating that beyond observing the evolutionary process human beings have nothing to do. So, even if they share the deep feeling for their descendants that may contribute very little to overcome any global crisis, such as an ecological crisis. Indeed, Darwin would not admit it as a global crisis. He would rather observe them as an outcome of the evolutionary process or a process of development.

Darwin perceives this Earth as full of living organisms, similar and dissimilar. He undervalues or rather ignores the major part of nature—nonliving elements—which are closely connected to living organisms. To Darwin, these nonliving elements are simply material forces, a machine to keep the continuation of the natural selection process. But Darwin should be credited for recognizing close “affinities” between living organisms and presenting an explanation for them by scientific observation. He writes in *The Origin of Species*, “The affinities of all the beings of the same class have sometimes been represented by a great tree. I believe this simile largely speaks the truth”²¹³. Darwin is right, but this simile could tell the *complete* truth *only* if his imagination goes far beyond the tree. That is, he should consider the land

²¹² Brian Baxter, *A Darwinian Worldview: Sociobiology, Environmental Ethics and the Work of Edward O. Wilson* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007), 141-142.

²¹³ Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species*, ed. Gillian Beer (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 106.

where the tree stands, the water on which it survives, the air which supplies its food, and the light which keeps it alive.

Relying on Darwinism and a mechanistic worldview, Western Enlightenment brings the idea of autonomy, and relates moral responsibility with it in a manner that significantly differs from Asian traditions. Ames comments, “What is at stake for most of the modern philosophers taken within the context of the Enlightenment project is nothing less than the defense of individual autonomy and moral responsibility”²¹⁴. In the analysis of anthropocentric environmental values in Chapter One, we have seen how autonomy, dignity, and moral responsibility portrayed an idea of unique human beings in the Western traditions. But these ideas appear in a different way in Asian traditions. The distinction is particularly important because the main debate in environmental ethics can be articulated as a debate on human uniqueness as autonomous persons and their attitude toward nonhuman elements.

The Chinese concept of human beings and personhood was very clearly explained by Tu Wei-ming, “Personality, in the Confucian perception, is an achieved state of moral excellence rather than a given human condition”²¹⁵. Here we can notice that personality in Chinese traditions is seen as a form of “moral excellence”, not as a form of social excellence. Moral excellence would take *wholeness* seriously and aims to maintain the great cosmic balance found in the traditional Chinese thoughts. The body in this case is metaphysically less important, as is reflected in Tu’s further comment,

²¹⁴ Roger T. Ames et al., ed., *Self as Person in Asian Theory and Practice* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 3.

²¹⁵ Tu Wei-ming, “Embodying the Universe: A Note on Confucian Self-Realization”, in *Self as Person in Asian Theory and Practice*, ed. Roger T. Ames et al. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 177.

“The Confucians do not take the body as, by nature, an impediment to full self-realization. To them, the body provides the context and the resources for ultimate self-transformation”²¹⁶.

Yet, the existence of the body is important for proving the context of improvement in personality. But what does moral excellence mean to the Chinese? Is it gaining a social self? The Chinese traditions answer these questions through the heart-mind principle. The heart-mind principle invokes the uniqueness of human beings. It is also the hallmark of human dignity. But a dignified human being must be a person who feels the sufferings of others. Tu notes, “The most prominent feature of the heart-mind is sympathy, the ability to share the suffering of others”²¹⁷. The others are simply everything which belongs to sky, Heaven, and the Earth.

One of the most prominent features of the Chinese concept of personhood is that it has to be understood through *family*. The family is not merely a social unit or institution where human beings are born and grow up, but it also shapes their personhood. In the Chinese context, the person should realize that his or her decision has profound impact on the harmony of the family. Empathy, rather than right, is one of the key indicators of the Asian view of family life. Family therefore plays a broader role in the Asian context. Ontologically, family could comprise the whole Earth and as a result the welfare of a person may not be reducible to the welfare of his or her immediate family. Family can be seen as a *seedbed* where virtues are grown and cultivated in and between numerous relationships. Lee and Ho point out, “When family members cultivate this seed of virtue by acting in accordance

²¹⁶ Ibid., 178.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 180.

with the duties and rituals associated with their roles in the family, the whole world is made virtuous”²¹⁸.

The fundamental difference from the Western traditions is explained by Tu, “Human beings are therefore defined primarily by their sensitivity and only secondarily by their rationality, volition, or intelligence”²¹⁹. Ames drew a similar conclusion, but in different terms, “The uniqueness of the person is embedded in a ceaseless process of natural, social, and cultural change”²²⁰.

Clearly then, while Western traditions want to gain uniqueness by liberty, equality, rights, autonomy and rationality, the Asian traditions want to gain it by becoming a human being who is not selfish, but is deeply attached not only to family members and fellow humans, but also to nonhumans, and perceive nature through a lens of interrelations that provide them with the sense of uniqueness, whether in a personal life or in social life. Unlike Western traditions, even selflessness is seen as a positive notion in some Asian traditions (e.g. Indian traditions). The concept of human being and person thus differ fundamentally from the Western traditions. Ames says, “Dualisms such as agent and act, self and other, mind and body, are not relevant. Instead, persons are seen as integral to a communal field, constituted through the very interactions and life forms they seek to define”²²¹.

²¹⁸ Shui Chuen Lee and Justin Ho, “Medicine and the Biomedical Technologies in the Context of Asian Perspectives”, in *The Family, Medical Decision-Making, and Biotechnology: Critical Reflections on Asian Moral Perspectives*, ed. Shui Chuen Lee (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007), 2.

²¹⁹ Tu Wei-ming, “Embodying the Universe: A Note on Confucian Self-Realization”, in *Self as Person in Asian Theory and Practice*, ed. Roger T. Ames et al. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 180.

²²⁰ Roger T. Ames, “The Focus-Field Self in Classical Confucianism”, in *Self as Person in Asian Theory and Practice*, ed. Roger T. Ames et al. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 195.

²²¹ Roger T. Ames et al., ed., *Self as Person in Asian Theory and Practice* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 173.

As the earlier comments show, when persons are defined in relation to the “communal field” individuals are less likely to see themselves in the light of Western Cartesian dualism where human beings are unique in possessing minds. In other words, they are less likely to consider themselves as the only moral agents because they have minds. Minds are for realizing the communal bond and for understanding that humans are part of this greater community. Consequently, it leads us to a resolution of Western dualism without compromising human’s autonomy and dignity. Perhaps, autonomy in Confucian family life is *relational* rather than individual. Moreover, the Confucian concept of human dignity is often metaphorically labeled as a chain relation which states that

...we cannot give a full and satisfactory account of our personal identity without taking into the fact that we are also part of the whole chain of living things...As such, they are objects of our moral concern and necessarily figure in our relationally autonomous actions.²²²

Similarly, Indian traditions also offered an alternative viewpoint of relationally dignified, autonomous, and self-conscious personhood. The most striking feature of Indian traditions is that the correct perception of Self (or no self) would lead a person to a higher stage of human life such as *moksa*. Moral motivation is strongly involved in this transformation. In Indian traditions, two ways of thinking appeared. In the first, self is seen in relation to a selfless process. In the second, however, the self is seen in accordance with gaining self-awareness, or eventually gaining a moral consciousness. Motilal comments on the *Nyaya* concept of self that illustrates the first way, “...the self has both a transtemporal and a transmigrational identity, thereby taking care of

²²² Shui Chuen Lee, “On Relational Autonomy: From Feminist Critique to Confucian Model for Clinical Practice”, in *The Family, Medical Decision-Making, and Biotechnology: Critical Reflections on Asian Moral Perspectives*, ed. Shui Chuen Lee (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007), 91.

the moral responsibility implicit in the Karma doctrine”²²³. For the second way, Motilal says, “The ultimate goal is...cessation of *samsara* through a sort of self-realization, the ultimate knowledge of what one’s own self is”²²⁴. As reflected in Motilal’s comments, both the selfless way or the way of gaining self, aim at one ultimate goal, self-realization. Self-realization entails that a person, a conscious self, cannot be separated from the Universal Self.

Indian traditions also embrace relational autonomy rather than personal autonomy. Mines has identified the Indian concept of autonomy through the ethnosociological approach and the social-psychological approach. The ethnosociological approach shows that “Individual happiness and the autonomy that produces it are irrelevant; the emphasis is on the collective whole, on collective man. Liberty is surrendered to the interests of castes and families”²²⁵. Similarly, the social-phychological approach states that

...the ideology and values that accompany India’s hierarchical social system rewards compliance and punishes autonomy. Adult identity is seen as an identity of adjustment rather than as one of self-choice (...), in contrast to the way identity formation is perceived as occurring in the West.²²⁶

In Japanese traditions, the views of self and person were constructed in line with Buddhist views and the indigenous Shinto religion. The Japanese concept of human uniqueness can be viewed as a combination of the secular and the sacred, secular because of the Western influence, and sacred because of the traditional religions. The secular culturally embedded self goes to a

²²³ Bimal Krishna Matilal, “The Perception of Self in Indian Tradition”, in *Self as Person in Asian Theory and Practice*, ed. Roger T. Ames et al. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 291.

²²⁵ Mattison Mines, “Conceptualizing the Person: Hierarchical Society and Individual Autonomy in India”, in *Self as Person in Asian Theory and Practice*, ed. Roger T. Ames, Wimal Dissanayake and Thomas P. Kasulis (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 319.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 320.

deeper level of self-understanding which is mainly intellectual. The monk Kukai develops several philosophical ideas by mixing Confucianism and Buddhism. His concept dominated ancient Japan. Kukai's view of self represents a comprehensive and coherent concept of self instead of an individualistic self.

According to Kukai, "The self is inherently empty and achieves its meaning (indeed, its being) only as an expression of the cosmic buddha [Buddha], Dainichi"²²⁷. The self is a special awareness that the Earth is full of cosmic Buddhas. When we as human beings participate in this cosmic web as an enlightened self we can find a harmony within this universe. However, the realization of this cosmic harmony should not be just spiritual, but rather intellectual. Lebra called this self the "consciously socialized self" which is boundary conscious, empathic, and so stays in between the Western concept of personhood.²²⁸

In contrast, the sacred view of Japanese human beings does not articulate any element from the Western traditions. This view constructed a self of living elements that is sustained in a sacred manner through all entities in the universe. Obenchain puts it very interestingly, "It is this conscious realization of participating *together* in something *more*, in something sacred, that is what true self-realization is all about"²²⁹.

²²⁷ Thomas P. Kasulis, "Researching the Strata of the Japanese Self", in *Self as Person in Asian Theory and Practice*, ed. Roger T. Ames et al. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 96.

²²⁸ Takie Sugiyama Lebra, "Migawari: The Cultural Idiom of Self-Other Exchange in Japan", in *Self as Person in Asian Theory and Practice*, ed. Roger T. Ames et al. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 107.

²²⁹ Diane B. Obenchain, "Spiritual Quests of Twentieth-Century Women: A Theory of Self-Discovery and a Japanese Case Study", in *Self as Person in Asian Theory and Practice*, ed. Roger T. Ames et al. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 154.

II. DIVIDING LIVING AND NONLIVING ELEMENTS

The division between living and nonliving elements is inevitable in Western traditions. Even among the living creatures human beings are given more weight for their special qualities. Brennan and Lo note that “...properties such as *being a subject of a life, being a self-maintaining living organism, or being self-choosing and self regulating* are the best explanation[s] of the fact that human beings are the paradigm case of intrinsically valuable things”²³⁰. Human beings possess some special properties that are the hallmark of intrinsic value, distinguishing them from other creatures. Since human beings are intrinsically valuable, they have distinctive dignity.

Human dignity was considered as one of the fundamental principles for making laws and policies. For instance, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights—a major development in the history of ideas—recommends that human’s dignity and their rights must be respected anywhere and anytime irrespective of their race, religion and nationality. This Declaration obviously shows that human dignity and their rights can override the rights and status of other creatures.

Although the recent animal rights movement has challenged this fundamental concept, human dignity provides the basis of Western worldviews. Immanuel Kant’s contribution to the idea of human dignity was extremely influential. His view not merely recognizes human beings as dignified, but also regards the preservation of human dignity as a *duty* for mankind. In fact, according to him, morality is grounded in human dignity and

²³⁰ Andrew Brennan and Y.S. Lo, *Understanding Environmental Philosophy* (Durham: Acumen Publishing Limited, 2010), 15.

human dignity is grounded in their autonomy. Kant shows that every being in the kingdom of ends has a *price* or instrumental value. However, only human beings have *dignity* and intrinsic value. Thus, everything else has an equivalent alternative except dignity. He writes,

Now, morality is the condition under which alone a rational being can be an end in itself, since only through this is it possible to be a lawgiving member in the kingdom of ends. Hence morality, and humanity insofar as it is capable of morality, is that which alone has dignity.²³¹

Kant concludes, “*Autonomy* is therefore the ground of the dignity of human nature and of every rational nature”²³². Beyond respecting other’s dignity, a human being should respect his or her own dignity. Human dignity is important for human flourishing. A dignified human being cannot perceive this Earth as a rabbit perceives it because a human being has the capability to revise his or her actions, and Kant called this the “inward view of self-examination”.

The idea of human dignity is also valuable for it may lead us to a worthwhile life. A worthwhile life respects its own as well as other’s personal worldviews. Some of us perceive the Earth as one global village, others as an evolving entity, or even as the manifestation of the Ultimate Reality. Apart from these views, perceiving the Earth as the sign of the Creator’s superiority and His blessings not only for human beings, but also for all creatures is not rare. All these views perceive the dignity of human beings in different ways, instead of abandoning it. For example, those who think that the Earth is a global village maintain human dignity in relation to other creatures.

²³¹ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. and ed. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 42.

²³² *Ibid.*, 43.

However, Kant's notion of dignity creates several problems, not just in environmental ethics, but also in the social context. A main problem is that Kant clearly ascribed dignity to *all* human beings without considering their rational, physical and social capabilities. Naturally, people's contributions to society may not be the same. People differ in their capacity of reasoning, working ability, physical and social power. Thus dignity may often calculate on the basis of their contributions to society. We respect a person more who is a king, a political leader, a spiritual reformer and a dynamic policy-maker than a common individual. Sometimes in order to save an important person we kill a lot of individuals, or in order to remove a king, we do not hesitate to kill thousands of individuals. The concept of dignity is also governed in terms of market mechanism or *price*. By highlighting present capitalist social systems where very often the value of dignity is measured in proportion to the market mechanism, Bonefeld and Psychopedis write, "Dignity here appears in the perverted form of worth that is conferred on individuals according to their effectiveness as market agents, that is, the worth of an individual is governed by the 'price mechanism' ”²³³.

Yet Kant tried to avoid this problem by claiming that without being a *person* a human being cannot claim his or her dignity. In other words, Kant made a distinction between a person and a human being. A human being is a sentient rational being. In addition to these capacities, a person, however, has the capacity to act autonomously or morally. That is, a person is capable of performing an act according to a moral principle. Hruschka comments, "Dignity is coupled with a claim to respect. Dignity, or absolute value,

²³³ Werner Bonefeld and Kosmas Psychopedis, ed., *Human Dignity: Social Autonomy and the Critique of Capitalism* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005), 3.

however, is not inherent to a human being when seen as a rational natural being (*animal rationale*), but only when seen as a person²³⁴.

Rationality, consciousness (or sentience), and person are therefore typically interconnected. Environmental philosophers face a variety of theoretical complexities as they differ in their attitudes toward moral consideration and recognition of a person. For instance, sentience nowadays is recognized as a basic criterion of personhood. In fact, many scholars in environmental ethics maintain that we should at least consider great apes as persons. Peter Singer argues for an *equal treatment* of animals. Contrary to Kant, he thinks that intelligence or rationality cannot justify the superior moral status of human beings. Since all animals are equal in their capacity for feeling pain or suffering, they should be treated equally with human beings. The real boundary according to Singer is *sentience*. In his own words, “If a being is not capable of suffering, or of experiencing enjoyment or happiness, there is nothing to be taken into account. This is why the limit of sentience (...) is the only defensible boundary of concern for the interests of others.”²³⁵

Basically, Singer has made two types of claim: factual and moral. The factual claim is that “humans are not the only beings capable of feeling pain, or of suffering”²³⁶. The moral claim, according to him, comprises three premises. The first one is more significant here, “Pain is bad, and similar

²³⁴ Joachim Hruschka, “Kant and Human Dignity”, in *Kant and Law*, ed. B. Sharon Byrd and Joachim Hruschka (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006), 70.

²³⁵ Peter Singer, “All Animals are Equal”, in *Ethics in Practice: An Anthology*, ed. Hugh LaFollette (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2007), 175.

²³⁶ Peter Singer, “An Intellectual Autobiography”, in *Peter Singer Under Fire: The Moral Iconoclast Faces His Critics*, ed. Jeffrey A. Schaler (Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company, 2009), 74.

amounts of pain are equally bad, no matter whose pain it might be”²³⁷. Singer’s view has significant impact in the development of Applied Ethics.

One thing is clear, that Singer’s worldview is not anthropocentric or human-centred. He advocates utilitarianism, but he never claims that economic growth should be justified over preserving wilderness. Nevertheless, he also claims that no value is possible beyond sentient beings. What follows then is that wilderness has no value in itself, but it has instrumental value in relation to the sentient beings. If so, should we destroy a forest or a natural habitat? An organism (say coral reef) might not be sentient but might be very important for the ecosystem. Should we destroy it? Singer would say whatever does not have an *interest*, which can be confirmed by its feeling of pain and enjoyment, is permissible to use for any purpose.

Although Singer is sympathetic to all sentient beings, he has given much more weight to the sufferings of great apes. The great apes are persons because they can satisfy the criteria of personhood proposed by Singer. His basic features of personhood include, “self-awareness, self-control, a sense of the future, a sense of the past, the capacity to relate to others, concern for others, communication and curiosity”²³⁸. So, Singer would allow the destruction of an ecosystem if this destruction is the interest of sentient beings, but such an interest must be weighted against the benefits to others. Singer will consider other non-sentient creatures if their destruction have reverse impact on the sentient beings.

²³⁷ Ibid., 74.

²³⁸ Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 73.

In this regard, Singer has a fundamental moral disagreement with other environmental philosophers, like Naess, Taylor and Rolston. Rolston paraphrases Singer's view in this way,

But the trees there, and most of the animals, who are insentient in Singer's pain-suffering sense, are "to be taken into account only in so far as they adversely affect sentient creatures". That seems rather narrow minded for a comprehensive ethic of respect for life.²³⁹

Rolston argues that Singer's view cannot be considered as a comprehensive environmental ethic because it only aims to protect a narrow percentage (4%) of living things, mostly mammals. Thus, it keeps the whole world of plants, trees, and non-sentient organism outside of moral realm. Apart from these, uncountable inorganic objects, such as mountains, rivers, and seas cannot be protected.

In brief, two main criticisms that Rolston has developed to show the inadequacy of Singer's view are, firstly, this view does not count the broader community of life. Secondly, Singer's view does not value the integrity of the natural environment. For example, plants may lack self-consciousness and may lack the capability of future planning. However, they are spontaneous, self-maintaining, reproducing organisms which can repair their injuries. According to Rolston, these are mere facts for trees, and like a tree, an organism has a "good-of-its-kind" which we must count. Rolston notes, "Singer will have to say that, even though plants have a good of their own and do these interesting things, plants are not able to value because they are not able to feel anything...a plant is without minimally sentient awareness"²⁴⁰.

²³⁹ Holmes Rolston III, "Respect for Life: Counting What Singer Finds of no Account", in *Singer and His Critics*, ed. Dale Jamieson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1999), 259.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 253.

Rolston argues that Singer's distinction between sentient and non-sentient beings is a good example of subjective bias. The criterion of "conscious experience" takes the side of some specific life-forms which are minor parts of a bigger picture. This Earth functions as a part of the universe. If we ignore this fact, Rolston points out, "We need an account of the generation of value and valuers, not just some value that now is located in the psychology of the experiencers"²⁴¹. Each organism and life-form can defend its identity by DNA code or what Rolston called a "linguistic molecule". But Singer's view overlooks these unique biological settings present in every life, not just in the life of self-conscious beings.

In response to Rolston, Singer would insist that he does not deny that non-sentient beings are morally considerable. They *matter* in an instrumental way. Rolston misunderstands him and analyzes his view "out of context". In fact, he clarifies the view by citing his own passage again and notes, "The passage asserts that if a being is not sentient, it has no interests that we can consider. This is not a claim that Rolston denies. The passage does *not* say that if a being is not sentient, it doesn't matter at all what we do to it"²⁴². So, we should not do whatever we like to the non-sentient beings, we only can destroy them if that is necessary for persons.

Secondly, subjective bias is equally applicable to Rolston's view. Rolston comments "Dirt is instrumentally valuable, but not, Singer will say, the sort of thing that has value by itself. Put like that, we agree. An isolated clod defends no intrinsic value and it is difficult to say that it has much value

²⁴¹ Ibid., 266.

²⁴² Peter Singer, "A Response: Rolston", in *Singer and His Critics*, ed. Dale Jamieson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1999), 328.

in itself”²⁴³. So, Rolston agreed with Singer by saying that inanimate objects, such as dirt, are instrumentally valuable. But then Singer raises the issue whether Rolston himself can avoid the charge of subjective bias. He notes,

If Rolston thinks that this would be wrong, he should tell us why the distinction between human beings and other sentient animals is important enough to outweigh concerns about species preservation, but the distinction between sentient beings and non-sentient beings is not.²⁴⁴

Nonetheless, David Schmidtz also thinks that Singer’s view is “biased” in favor of sentient beings. He notes, “Peter Singer and others speak as if speciesism [specieicism]—the idea that some species are superior to others—is necessarily a kind of bias in favor of humans and against nonhuman animals. (Singer has no problem with being “biased” against plants.) This is a mistake”²⁴⁵.

Singer’s mistake, according to Schmidtz, is not considering “self-respect”, which allows us to respect chimpanzees more than mice. Or, respecting a human being more, even though he or she is brain-damaged and physically unconscious, than a chimpanzee. Human beings as unique creatures are “self-aware” and “reflective”. They have the capacity to show respect for other creatures, appreciate aesthetic beauty in them, and take care of them. Human beings can respect a dolphin without giving equal status to it because killing a dolphin for no justifiable reason would mean disrespecting their own unique qualities. As dolphins and chimpanzees are closer to human beings in their reflective and rational capacities, they belong to a different category than

²⁴³ Holmes Rolston III, “Respect for Life: Counting What Singer Finds of no Account”, in *Singer and His Critics*, ed. Dale Jamieson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1999), 265.

²⁴⁴ Peter Singer, “A Response: Rolston”, in *Singer and His Critics*, ed. Dale Jamieson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1999), 331.

²⁴⁵ David Schmidtz, “Are All Species Equal?”, in *Environmental Ethics: What Really Matters, What Really Works*, ed. David Schmidtz and Elizabeth Willott (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 98.

mice or mosquitoes even though they all can feel pain. So, Schmidtz argues, “The point is that we can, we do, and we must make policy decisions on the basis of our recognition that turnips, mice, chimpanzees, and humans are relatively different types”²⁴⁶.

We can observe, unlike Kant, Singer’s account includes some non-rational sentient beings as objects of moral consideration. However, Singer’s account of equal consideration of the interests of sentient beings should be taken in relation to the context of human beings and other sentient beings. Instead of taking a broader focus, like the environment, we may place it in the debate of moral considerability of rational creatures vs. sentient creatures. Then it can claim some crucial benefit, especially saving the great apes from maltreatment, torture, and using them in unproductive medical researches. However, if the issue is conserving the environment, then his view would contribute little to it.

In my view, Singer’s ethical approach is problematic, at least in two ways, when we consider it in the environmental context. Firstly, his approach faces the problem of balancing the *different* interests of living creatures. The environment which is painful to a sentient being may not be painful to another. Apart from nonliving things, the whole ecosystem consists of living entities with diverse interests. Secondly, and more significantly, this view does not pay attention to the *changing* interests of human beings due to the influence of science and technology.

For the first problem, how can we ensure that *all* sentient creatures have the same interest of avoiding certain conditions? For example, a monkey

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 99.

might have the interest to live in the forest, but a human being might not. Living in the forest is the best interest for a monkey, but living in the forest might be a least interest for a human being. Similarly, a polar bear would enjoy the snow environment, while a human being might not. It is just painful for a human being to live in an ice-cold environment, while such environment is essential for penguins and polar bears. Even different human beings might have different interests. As Talbert argues “Not all beings have the same interests”, and he stresses the divergence of interests between both human and nonhuman beings²⁴⁷. How would Singer balance these different and conflicting interests?

Moreover, like Rolston, Taylor and Naess, environmental philosophers who believe that we should have respect for *all* life-forms, will find Singer’s view “narrow”, because Singer wants to show respect only for those life-forms who are sentient. Even among living beings Singer paid more value to those who are able to feel pain, merely a sect of the whole living creatures.

For the second problem, Singer’s view will place the protection of the environment, or preserving wilderness, in the *interest of human or sentient beings*. In other words, Singer’s view will only protect a wilderness, or the environment, for the sake of sentient-beings, not for itself. When human beings (or sentient beings) have an interest in the environment they may seek to preserve it. However, in this cutting-edge electronic civilization, technology plays a vital role to shape our interests. The influence of technology in our generations and the generations to come is remarkable.

²⁴⁷ Matthew Talbert, “Contractualism and Our Duties to Nonhuman Animals”, *Environmental Ethics* 28, no. 2 (2006): 213.

For instance, our parents enjoyed nature by going for a forest walk, swimming in the river, catching fish, climbing hills, and a traditional boat ride. However, we like to log on the internet, visit a webpage, and prefer watching television to engaging in those activities which gave pleasure to our parents. It has been highlighted in the following comment of an environmentalist,

Our communal contact is dissolving; we lack engagement and involvement with others, with activities, and with our surroundings. This disengagement is marked by anonymity, alienation, and detachment...We know going out for a walk is a healthy activity; yet, it seems difficult to pull ourselves off the couch.²⁴⁸

The current scenario of the influence of technology among our children is even more alarming. We find almost everywhere children and teenagers obsessed with new gadgets and iPhones. They like to spend more and more time in video chatting on Skype, instant messaging, and extremely popular video games on large screen television, iPhone and iPads. A father, when reflecting on his own daughter, writes, "...what was even more remarkable was that she was able to successfully complete her homework while simultaneously listening to *Grease* on her iPod, instant messaging her friends, checking her e-mail, and managing a stable of virtual horses"²⁴⁹.

Kahn even looks further, and perhaps, expects for a "digital experience" of nature than going wilderness for this generation children. He writes,

Entire television networks, such as Discovery Channel and Animal Planet, provide us with mediated digital experiences of nature: the lion's hunt, the monarch butterfly's migration, and the adventure of climbing high into the Himalayan peaks. Video games like Zoo Tycoon engage children with animal

²⁴⁸ Sarah Pohl, "Technology and the Wilderness Experience", *Environmental Ethics* 28, no. 2 (2006):159.

²⁴⁹ Steven J. Kirsh, *Media and Youth: A Developmental Perspective* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 1.

life...Inexpensive robotic pets, such as the i-Cybie, Tekno, and Poo-Chi, have been big sellers in Walmart and Target.²⁵⁰

We could assume that the generations to come will be more identified with electronic devices and multi-task gadgets than with nature. They might have very little interest in the wilderness, in identification with and protecting nature. As the influence of technology can dramatically reduce the interest of human beings in their environment, Singer's view can contribute little to save the environment.

Should we have an attitude of respect toward all living organism, not just sentient beings? A few Western philosophers have argued this point. Paul Taylor has developed a comprehensive biocentric theory which denies human's superiority as a species and argues for the moral considerability of *all* living entities. Taylor's argument is not right-based. Instead of rights, it shows that all living organisms have "inherent worth" of their own. Human beings have a moral obligation to respect and promote the inherent worth of other living entities. Taylor's biocentric view favors extending our moral concern to the biotic communities. In his words, this view derives "...from the science of ecology: the interdependence of all living things in an organically unified order whose balance and stability are necessarily conditions for the realization of the good of its constituent biotic communities"²⁵¹.

Taylor would accept that the Earth functions in an interdependent manner, not an independent mechanistic manner. In other words, we should accept that the Earth can only function when we preserve its balance and stability found in the biotic communities. Unlike Singer, sentience is

²⁵⁰ Peter H. Kahn, Jr., *Technological Nature: Adaptation and the Future of Human Life* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2011), xiii.

²⁵¹ Paul W. Taylor, "The Ethics of Respect for Nature", in *The Ethics of the Environment*, ed. Robin Attfield (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008), 257.

completely irrelevant here for having respect or giving moral considerability to plants and animals. Taylor does not think that their “interest” can be morally important. What should concern us, according to him, is that they are the “possessors of inherent worth”. We should respect all living entities because they have inherent worth. Taylor uses an analogy to explain the point. We usually respect persons because they are the possessors of inherent worth, irrespective of their merits, social status and contributions, race and color. Similarly, we can hold an attitude of respect toward all living creatures. He notes, “To have the attitude of respect for nature is to regard the wild plants and animals of the Earth’s natural ecosystems as possessing inherent worth”²⁵².

Taylor’s theory has more merit than Singer’s sentient-centrism. We do not need to engage with some complex psycho-physical phenomena, such as suffering, or interest, for moral considerability. Animals, plants and other organisms are the possessors of some priceless wealth, some of them we know but many we do not know yet. We could also avoid the never ending debate of intrinsic and instrumental value of nonhumans once we agree that they all are inherently valuable. However, it is unclear to me why some nonliving elements (e.g. mountains, rivers, seas) which are also contributing in a great manner to preserve the ecological balance and harmony lack inherent worth.

Taylor’s prior analogy is incomplete and problematic too. It is incomplete because he has not provided a clear definition of a person. If human beings have inherent worth and rats also have, then should we respect a rat like a human being? It is problematic because it will not allow reducing some members of a species (e.g. malaria-causing mosquitoes) to save another

²⁵² Paul W. Taylor, *Respect for Nature: A Theory of Environmental Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 71.

species (e.g. human beings and other animals). Taylor has to explain how we are to resolve conflicts of interests between different beings with inherent worth.

In Western traditions, consciousness was somehow given priority. While personhood often centers on human beings, self and consciousness are two complicating factors mostly noticed. We can overcome some of the human limitations (e.g. selfishness) by developing or changing ourselves or gaining self-awareness. So, one could conceive a social self, a material self, an individualistic self, a relational self, or an ecological self. However, all of these concepts of self deal with “personality”. By highlighting self and personhood, Arne Naess proposes an idea of ecological personhood or *mature* personality. By this he intends to overcome some of the limitations of biocentrism just mentioned.

The ecological personhood, as Naess puts it, is “acting more consistently from oneself *as a whole*”²⁵³. Naess and most deep ecologists maintain that socially constructed persons “underestimate themselves” since they limit their personality by drawing a boundary line between human beings and other elements of nature. Thus Naess argues, “Our personality is not as narrow as we think”²⁵⁴. The lifestyles and perceptions of an ecological personhood and a socially constructed personhood therefore differ in many ways. The basic difference is the difference in consciousness, or a total change in our consciousness. The change in consciousness “...consists of a transition to a more egalitarian attitude to life and the unfolding of life on Earth”²⁵⁵.

²⁵³ Arne Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy*, trans. and ed. David Rothenberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 86.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 86.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 91.

Naess's biocentric egalitarianism even goes further to protect those who are often neglected and vulnerable. Thus, by maintaining the distinction between living and nonliving elements at the ontological level one may also extend his or her consciousness to preserve natural elements on Earth. How can a moral system do this?

Ten, commenting on moral systems in a comparative perspective, writes, "A developed moral system will use these tools...for the protection of the weak and the vulnerable who, unloved and uncared for, are in danger of being left outside the moral circle"²⁵⁶. This comment rightly indicates that a developed moral system should use some normative ideas, such as rights, to include weak and vulnerable entities, those who are excluded from the traditional moral circle and left uncared. Of course, we could also mention other approaches like duty-based approach, virtue-based approach, and care-based approach in this regard.

Asian traditions focus on constructing a normative system which is mainly virtue-based, but also maintain a different sense of rights in treating nonhuman elements. This different sense of rights must be understood collectively. In other words, balancing between virtue, rights, respect and duty, is a key feature in Asian traditions. Nuyen, pointing to the dark side of Western right-based approach, comments,

More importantly, much is lost when we insist on our rights in our dealings with others. To give something to someone only because he or she has the right to it is to do so either without feelings, or with grudge. To take something from

²⁵⁶ C.L. Ten, "The Moral Circle", in *The Moral Circle and the Self: Chinese and Western Approaches*, ed. Kim-chong Chong et al. (Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company, 2003), 24.

someone solely on the basis of right is to do so without gratitude and without appreciation.²⁵⁷

We should notice that in Asian traditions some ideas are morally important, such as feelings, gratitude and appreciation, as defended in this comment. Taking a balancing attitude, Asian normative systems *rarely* encourage distinguishing between living and nonliving organisms. A combination of right-based approach and care-based approach is unique in Asian social customs.

For instance, while many Western nation-states want to achieve social harmony through a democratic system which protects the civilian rights, Chinese traditions aim to achieve social harmony through *ritual practices* which promote *trust* among civilians. Sor-hoon Tan nicely writes, “In a society where ritual practice reigns, it is easier to trust one’s fellow citizens. If one trusts one’s fellow citizens, it is easier to participate in social action. It is easier to build a vibrant civil society”²⁵⁸. A Chinese civil society would therefore practice both rights and trust instead of relying entirely on an individual’s basic rights to build up a harmonious relation among citizens.

Similarly, the rights-based approach is also discouraged in the Asian family life. Two major Asian scholars, Rosemont and Ames, write, “In the Confucian tradition, human morality and the personal realization it inspires is grounded in the cultivation of family feeling”²⁵⁹. Previously, we have seen that from the cosmological point of view the word “family” could comprise

²⁵⁷ A.T. Nuyen, “Balancing Rights and Trust: Towards a Fiduciary Common Future”, *Asian Philosophy* 21, no.1 (2011): 84.

²⁵⁸ Sor-hoon Tan, “Can There Be a Confucian Civil Society?”, in *The Moral Circle and the Self: Chinese and Western Approaches*, ed. Kim-chong Chong et al. (Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company, 2003), 211.

²⁵⁹ Henry Rosemont, Jr. and Roger T. Ames, *The Chinese Classic of Family Reverence: A Philosophical Translation of the XIAOJING* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009), xii.

anything in nature and even beyond nature in the Asian context. Now we will concentrate on *realization* to justify the claim that Asian normative systems rarely encourage distinguishing between living and nonliving organisms.

Realization is the chief moral term which most Asian traditions concentrate on. Realization can be seen from two different perspectives in the Asian context: separating humans from all other entities and developing a sense of humanity, and secondly, thinking about the cosmos first and then placing humans in the cosmic unity. In the first case, human beings are distinguished by their rationality and humanity by which they are capable of constructing a conscious idea of rights and duties toward other human beings, or broadly toward other living beings. Human beings must use their rationality in order to succeed in their socio-political as well as moral life.

A successful social human being then should have the ability to make rational decisions, to rule the state with appropriate political wisdom and react accordingly when the sovereignty of the state is in crisis and the peace, stability, and integrity of its citizens are facing challenges. In the *Analects* 15.9 Confucius says, “People of knowledge and humanity may accept death in order to realize humanity but will not seek life at the price of humanity”²⁶⁰. Here we can notice a distinction between human beings and all other beings. Like Confucius, many Chinese philosophers (e.g. Mencius) emphasized knowledge or education, and human-human relationship was vital for them. Huang’s comments might be worth noting here, “Thus, in Mencius’ view, while it is important that people are well fed, warmly clothed, and comfortably

²⁶⁰ Quoted in Yong Huang, “Confucius and Mencius on the Motivation to be Moral”, *Philosophy East and West* 60, no.1 (2010): 74.

lodged, sages realize that “without education, they will become almost no different from animals”²⁶¹.

The realization, however, could be reversed when the cosmos is set at the centre rather than human beings. That is, when the cosmos is seen as interconnected with all living and nonliving elements, and human beings occupy the same place as a corn plant, in which case human beings are not entitled to perform *special* duties and obligations toward others. What is expected from them is non-intervention in the natural set-up. However, a natural question then is: Who will take care of the corn plant? We could resolve it by arguing that if there is no interruption for the corn plant, no caring is necessary for it. When human beings realize this great cosmic bond with all other natural entities their life is called enlightened.

This enlightenment therefore does not just require morality or humanity but rather something *more*. It is a transformation of the human self into the self of natural entities which is necessary for harmonious co-existence. Yang remarkably states, “In the realization of value, the combination of the transformation from Nature to human and that from human to Nature constitutes the essence of the participation of humans in the endless evolving process of Heaven and Earth”²⁶². “Value” in this statement must be taken as the value of the cosmos, and the transformed human beings are different from common human beings.

In the Indian traditions, realization often relates to this transformed idea and is called *moksa* (liberation). No one can attain *moksa* without *bhakti* (devotion). Slakter notes, “...it is understood that liberation (*moksa*) is

²⁶¹ Ibid., 75.

²⁶² Yang Guorong, “Being and Value: From the Perspective of Chinese-Western Comparative Philosophy”, *Philosophy East and West* 58, no. 2 (2008): 278-279.

achieved through individual devotion (*bhakti*) rather than through the fulfillment of one's ritual obligations and such continued fulfillment by one's descendants"²⁶³. Therefore, for Indians *bhakti* is the way of transformation. Both of the cases, i.e. valuing the cosmos and gaining liberation, inspire human beings to ignore the division of living and nonliving elements.

Therefore, we can clearly see that the division of living and nonliving elements is perceived from two viewpoints (realizing humanity and realizing cosmic integrity). Both of the views are grounded in self-realization. Self-realization has appeared in a sense of self-examination, self-development, or realizing duties and obligations toward fellow human beings as well as nonhuman beings. This is the excellence of humanity. By contrast, self-realization has also appeared in a sense of cosmic integration or realizing the wholeness. Human beings themselves feature in both of these views. However, the former is anthropocentric, while the latter, in Tu Wei-ming's word, is "anthropocosmic". The anthropocosmic view is closely related to the sacredness of nature.

III. SACREDNESS OF NATURE

Rolston remarks, "If anything at all on Earth is sacred, it must be this enthralling creativity that characterises our home planet"²⁶⁴. We may notice here that Rolston wants to view sacredness in the Earth as an aesthetic creativity of God, instead of nature itself being God. Sacredness in nature involves spirituality. Often spirituality is used to refer to religious sacredness,

²⁶³ David Slakter, "On *Matsyanyaya*: The State of Nature in Indian Thought", *Asian Philosophy* 21, no.1 (2011): 32.

²⁶⁴ Holmes Rolston, III, "Caring for Nature: What Science and Economics Can't Teach Us but Religion Can", *Environmental Values* 15, no. 3 (2006): 313.

but certain views of spirituality have proposed that the idea can be sustained *without* religious sacredness. Take the case of animal ethics. Some animal ethicists clearly acknowledge a spiritual kinship relation with animals.

There can be two aspects of spirituality in this regard: the first one is that human beings may experience a kind of spirituality by maintaining spiritual kinship with animals as well as other nonhuman elements in the Earth. They may or may not be inspired by a kind of religious sacredness. But soon after, as soon as the spiritual kinship with animals and other nonhuman members is established by human beings themselves, the uniqueness of human beings must be established. The second aspect of spirituality is that human beings are *separate* from all nonhuman members in the Earth. When Darwin mentions the “close affinities” of human beings with animals he actually admits the second aspect of spirituality. Thus, spirituality in nature may originate from religious as well as non-religious roots. The non-religious root is more committed with beauty, emotion, inspiration rather than salvation.

Darwinian philosopher Michael Ruse, when commenting on Richard Dawkin’s view of nature, notes, “But the point, Dawkins stresses, is not that nature is intentionally vile. It is just that nature is indifferent. Remember: “DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music” (Dawkins 1995, 133)²⁶⁵. So, for DNA music a religious person would just believe sacred things in it given by the Creator, while a scientist would believe that there might be several possibilities which are undiscovered at present. But a scientist’s uncertainties at present may also offer a kind of scientific-spiritual explanation regarding DNA music.

²⁶⁵ Michael Ruse, *Science and Spirituality: Making Room for Faith in the Age of Science* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 198.

Despite Dawkins, Passmore, following Mill, rejects sacredness in nature. His argument is mainly grounded on Christian faith and the development of science. He said, “there is one point on which it is absolutely clear: nature is not sacred”²⁶⁶. Passmore thinks that sacredness is an obstacle to the development of modern science. Since he attempts to solve the ecological problems with Western science and new innovation, rather than promoting a complete set of new ethical norms and deep consciousness, he also admits that sacredness is incompatible with this attitude. Denial of sacredness appears an important fact in the Graeco-Christian tradition and was revived by Passmore, “Men were free to use nature as they chose—provided they did not worship it as sacred”²⁶⁷. In short, Passmore believes that sacredness is as such anti-scientific and the notion of sacredness creates obstruction for environmentalists. For example, while environmentalists may want to utilize a forest for tourism and as an eco-park, local people may object to this policy immediately as they believe the forest is sacred.

However, ecologists differ from Passmore. For example, Fikret Berkes maintains that ecology is “a worldview different from the mainstream Euro-Canadian one, a worldview in which nature pulsated with life”²⁶⁸. The worldview Berkes hinted at is surely different from the Newtonian, Darwinian science. This worldview is mainly shared by the world’s indigenous cultures, such as the Cree people in Canada, American Indians, Australian aborigines, Nepalese Sherpa culture, and other indigenous groups. Their lifestyles, identification with nature, belief in sacredness and spirituality do matter

²⁶⁶ John Passmore, *Man’s Responsibility for Nature: Ecological Problems and Western Traditions* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1980), 9.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

²⁶⁸ Fikret Berkes, *Sacred Ecology* (New York: Routledge, 2008), xvi.

because this worldview, as Berkes says, has almost universal characteristics, “an ethic of nondominant, respectful human-nature relationship, a sacred ecology”²⁶⁹. One example of this worldview could be when the Cree people say, “we all knew that the land was sacred and full of spirits”²⁷⁰.

Nevertheless, sacredness does not appear only in the indigenous cultures. Albert Schweitzer, though primarily a physician, dedicated his whole life to realize sacredness in life. His theory, “Reverence for life” tries to establish one single truth, “life as such is sacred”²⁷¹.

Aldo Leopold, the father of land ethics, argues for the realization of our “symbiotic relationship” with land. According to him, land ethics enlarges the moral community which will include animals, plants, water, in a collective sense. But why does he believe that land should be included in our moral community? The reason is crucial and becomes clear in his own language, “Land, then, is not merely soil; it is a fountain of energy flowing through a circuit of soils, plants, and animals”²⁷². In this statement, Leopold seems to detect a spiritual energy in land in the sense that it produces plants, trees, crops and grow their seeds.

Thus, it can be argued that beyond the religious meaning of sacredness there is another sense of sacredness, and sacredness may not always be a barrier to science. Richard Dawkins writes, “And yet there are objects and occasions which invoke in me a profound sense of the sacred, and I can cite

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 252.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., xvi.

²⁷¹ Albert Schweitzer, “Reverence for Life”, in *Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application*, ed. Louis P. Pojman and Paul Pojman (Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2012), 199.

²⁷² Aldo Leopold, “The Land Ethic”, in *The Ethics of the Environment*, ed. Robin Attfield (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008), 107.

other humanist scientists of whom this is also true”²⁷³. Surely, Dawkins is suggesting a sense of sacredness that is not based on religion. In the religious sense, God is sacred; nature is the creation and expansion of God, so, nature is sacred. Alternatively, everything created by God is sacred. In the words of Nigel Warburton, nature is sacred because “it emanates from God”²⁷⁴. Some environmentalists use this sense of sacredness to argue that nature should be preserved. Richard Norman rejects this argument though he does not deny the possibility that nature is sacred.

Norman accepts Ronald Dworkin’s definition of sacredness. According to Dworkin, *inviolability* is the main criterion of sacredness. That is, if something is sacred then it should be “inviolable” and “may not be destroyed once it exists”²⁷⁵. So, Norman deduced that sacredness “sets up boundaries or barriers which must not be crossed”²⁷⁶. This comment shows that two notions of sacredness are possible, sacredness in the instrumental sense and sacredness in the deeper sense. Sacredness in the instrumental sense denotes that something is sacred because it serves as incremental to find the supreme sacred. For example, knowledge is sacred because through knowledge we can find the supreme sacred. By contrast, sacredness in the deeper sense means that something is sacred because it has been transcendent directly from the supreme sacred. For example, human life is sacred.

²⁷³ Richard Dawkins, “The Sacred and the Scientist”, in *Is Nothing Sacred?*, ed. Ben Rogers (Oxford: Routledge, 2004), 135.

²⁷⁴ Nigel Warburton, “Is Art sacred?”, in *Is Nothing Sacred?*, ed. Ben Rogers (Oxford: Routledge, 2004), 42.

²⁷⁵ Richard Norman, “Nature, Science, and the Sacred”, in *Is Nothing Sacred?*, ed. Ben Rogers (Oxford: Routledge, 2004), 10.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

According to the former sense, land, river, trees, and mountains, are sacred but not in a sense that life is sacred. According to the latter sense, human lives are the most sacred and nothing is comparable to them.

However, Norman argues that nature cannot be sacred in the instrumental sense, nor can it be sacred even in a deeper sense, i.e. in the sense that human lives are sacred. Let's say nature is sacred in the instrumental sense, i.e. we cannot violate the sacredness of land to grow our food. It is impractical and a violation of this sense of sacredness is obvious if we want to feed our people. If nature is sacred in the deeper sense we have to respect everything, species, landscapes, biotic and abiotic communities, not just the land. But it is impractical as well because for preserving "harmony and balance" we have to reduce at least a portion of them. So, nature cannot be sacred in the deeper sense either. The only possibility for sacredness of nature, according to Norman, is an account of "aesthetic value" which is non-instrumental.

In response to Norman, Alan Holland disagrees with Dworkin's notion of "violation" and argues that "the sacred is precisely that which *can* be violated"²⁷⁷. An example of violation is "original sin". Holland finds two important elements in the concept of sacred: one is whatever is sacred must be "exempt from transactions" and the other is "a commitment that is unconditional"²⁷⁸. Norman's aesthetic claim of sacredness does not satisfy any of these criteria, moreover, "it lacks the relevant kind of universality"²⁷⁹, he claims.

²⁷⁷ Alan Holland, "Is Nature Sacred?: Response to Richard Norman", in *Is Nothing Sacred?*, ed. Ben Rogers (Oxford: Routledge, 2004), 30.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 31.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 36.

Nature should be sacred according to Holland in a comprehensive sense, i.e. a sense of deep-rooted “eco-graphy”. Nature is not merely a realm of causal laws, but rather it refers to “a unique and historically contingent biosphere”²⁸⁰. However, according to Holland, this conception of sacredness may not “immediately guarantee respect for nature”. Like Mill, he also believes that nature is “amoral” and its sacredness in any context does not “foster obedience”²⁸¹.

One important candidate for the sacredness of nature seems to be overlooked. Nature is the source of knowledge. Nature inspires us, indicates to us how we should live. It can help us to live a truly human life. In short, nature can be a guide to realize the meaning of life, or in the words of Holland, “for a deeper meaning to life”²⁸². Nature is so resourceful that many great ideas of living a meaningful life are available here. For instance, we see that everyday the Sun rises and sets, day and night appear rotationally. These are very important events for calculating days, months, years. We see these things happen in a timely manner. So, we can learn punctuality from these events. We may not be obedient to nature because modern science does not permit it, but we can identify with nature spiritually or non-spiritually.

At the same time, it seems necessary to reduce the apparent distance of science and religion when both believe that inorganic elements, species and biospherical system are uniquely connected. This extremely inspiring hypothesis has encouraged theologians and environmentalists for a long time. Still, many environmentalists (e.g. Rolston) believe that a new attitude is possible once we mingle spirituality and environmentalism. Hay rightly

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 36.

²⁸¹ Ibid., 39-41.

²⁸² Ibid., 41.

comments, “Certainly, the hostility many environmentalists hold towards science and rationality often takes the form of a search for a new cosmological/spiritual/religious basis for human life and inter-species relationships”²⁸³.

Hence, we can say that the spiritual basis of the environment is not necessarily religious. In fact, Naess’s ecosophy somehow successfully blended cosmology, spirituality, and religion. Naess, when commenting on E.F. Schumacher’s article about Christian ecosophy, writes, “...he stands in relation to the near-common points of the deep ecology movement...a Christian ‘Ecosophy S’ might be elaborated on the basis of his influential writings”²⁸⁴. Clearly then, a deep ecologist could believe that nature is sacred. While the sense of spirituality in deep ecology is somewhat predictable, it is not entirely clear how spirituality and deep ecology can be infused. George Sessions made it clear to us. He writes, “Further inspiration for contemporary ecological consciousness and the Deep Ecology movement can be traced to the ecocentric religions and ways of life of primal peoples around the world...”²⁸⁵. From this comment we can understand that both spirituality and deep ecology aim to achieve “ecological consciousness”—a consciousness of deep ecological interrelatedness.

Both the view that nature is sacred and the view that God is sacred may share the same degree of ecological consciousness as deep ecology. Gottlieb, who mainly explores the spiritual perspective of deep ecology in his many

²⁸³ Peter Hay, *Main Currents in Western Environmental Thought* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 94.

²⁸⁴ Arne Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy*, trans. and rev. David Rothenberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 189.

²⁸⁵ George Sessions, ed., *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1995), ix.

writings, maintains, “Deep ecology is both an orientation within environmental ethics and a spiritually based rethinking of human identity”,²⁸⁶. Interestingly, spirituality in the case of ecological consciousness has received great attention in the Asian traditions. Indeed, in the way of religious practice, rituals, and cultural heritage, spirituality shapes Asian worldviews and peoples’ lifestyles.

In general, Indian ethics can be seen from two angles, liberation from all personal emotions by practicing selfless actions, and purifying one’s soul through the reverence and love for the Ultimate Reality which is extremely emotional. The liberation perspective considers *Karma* theory (the theory of action) as its basic moral principle, while the purification perspective considers devotion, joy and aesthetic experience as its basic moral principle.

However, there is an overlapping in all dominating theistic schools in Indian traditions. Perhaps, the cultural traditions are more aligned with the latter. We can also find enough examples of *bhakti* ethics in the *Gita*. The basic idea of spiritual teaching in *bhakti* philosophy is clearly explained in Prasad’s comments, “ In *bhakti* philosophies a devotee’s complete surrender of himself to God is very highly rated. Rather, a devotee is advised to do that.”²⁸⁷ *Bhakti* is often equated with the sacred or purified path in Indian traditions. Joshi says *bhakti* is the path of “surrendering everything to God”²⁸⁸.

²⁸⁶ Roger S. Gottlieb, ed., *This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, Environment* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 473.

²⁸⁷ Rajendra Prasad, “Ethics and Devotion to God (*Bhakti*): Some Problematic Concepts”, in *A Historical-Developmental Study of Classical Indian Philosophy of Morals*, vol. 12, pt. 2, ed. Rajendra Prasad (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2009), 353.

²⁸⁸ Shubhada Joshi, “Ethics in *Bhakti* Literature (with Special Reference to Some Maharashtrian Saints’ Views)” in *A Historical-Developmental Study of Classical Indian Philosophy of Morals*, vol. 12, pt. 2, ed. Rajendra Prasad (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2009), 379.

Bhakti has a close relationship with the Indian word *prem* (love). Singh notes, “In the Eastern traditions, the depiction of the life of higher love has been one of the foremost aims of art”²⁸⁹. Art is one of the major ways of expressing spirituality which is predominant in Indian cultural traditions. In all Indian cultural festivals and literature, art is an essential ingredient. One excellent example, which combines love, devotion, art, and spirituality in Indian traditions on the one hand, and Westerners’ respond toward it on the other hand, is portrayed in Haberman’s words,

It was close to noon by the time my bicycle rickshaw left me off at Mathura’s Holy Gate...the sandy shoreline, couples established altar spaces by drawing *svastikas* (symbols of well-being) with red *sindur* powder and offered coconuts, flowers, rice, milk, money, and incense to Yamuna. Some used the services of local priests, others performed the worship themselves. The collective mood was joyous; delight in Yamuna was palpable...But what about the pollution? When I asked one young woman from Gujarat she was aware that the river was polluted, she said with a beguiling smile, “Yes, the river is polluted. But today our hearts are unpolluted, so there is no problem.”²⁹⁰

Haberman was illustrating the most famous and sacred Indian festival, locally known as *Yamuna Jayanti* or the celebration of birthday of Holy river *Yamuna*, when billions of Hindus believe that their sins were taken and souls were purified by the Holy river *Yamuna* despite its high pollution level. With his Western eyes the author observes the pollution of the river’s water, but Hindus with their spiritual eyes see the purity of the same water. Here beyond the view of sacredness, they differ with the sense of purity and cleanliness. In the West, impure water means presence of harmful micro-organisms (e.g. bacteria), while in the Indian tradition if it is the water of *Yamuna*, though

²⁸⁹ R. Raj Singh, *Bhakti and Philosophy* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2006), 85.

²⁹⁰ David L. Haberman, *River of Love in an Age of Pollution: The Yamuna River of Northern India* (California: University of California Press, 2006), 131.

highly impure in one sense, would be regarded as perfectly pure and holy. This water, as Indian traditions would explain, could be dirty, but not impure.

IV. WHY DO THE TWO TRADITIONS DIFFER?

Needham comments,

The Chinese world-view depended on a totally different line of thought. The harmonious co-operation of all beings arose because they were all parts in a hierarchy that formed a cosmic pattern. They obeyed the dictates of their own natures, not the orders of some superior authority. Modern science and the philosophy of organism have come back to this wisdom, fortified by a new understanding of cosmic and biological evolution.²⁹¹

Thus, the Western and Asian worldviews are fundamentally different. They differ not only in approaches, valuation of the environment, the uniqueness of human beings, the division of living and nonliving elements, spiritual experience toward the environment, but also in the senses of identification, self-realization, and spirituality.

Noticeably, environmental philosophy of the Western traditions highlights certain values, such as personal identification. Personal identification assumes that the identification process could only be continued when it is possible to establish a personal communication. Western traditions are more interested in constructing some criteria of personhood for determining an entity's moral considerability. For instance, before Singer's pioneering work on animal ethics, people rarely think about their identification or commonality with animals. Indeed, some major thinkers (e.g. Bentham)

²⁹¹ Colin A. Ronan, *The Shorter Science and Civilisation in China: An Abridgement of Joseph Needham's Original Text*, vol. 1, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 306.

recognized animal sufferings are unacceptable because, like human beings, they are also capable of feeling pain. It does not matter who is suffering, but it matters when sufferings are ignored. The important point to note here is that the identification with animals creates the possibility of treating animals as persons, or taking them into moral consideration.

Human beings are considered the only rational creatures and hence the moral questions were all about human's excellence. A lot of medieval and modern philosophers (e.g. Descartes) hold that animals are not our moral concern, but none of them concluded that human excellence can be gained if they torture animals. Most Western environmental views are therefore anthropocentric or inclined to personal identification. A human being who can identify with other human being's sorrows, sufferings and pains is generally treated as a moral person. Even when animal ethicists argued for broadening the moral circle they simply claim a personal identification with animals beyond human interests. They show the commonality of capacity for feeling pleasure and pain with nonhuman animals.

Passmore's philosophy is also an example of personal identification. His thoughts support the Biblical view of human-nature relation. He has given priority to personal identification since he thinks that a stewardship relation is necessary to overcome the ecological crisis. A steward observes his or her commonality with God as well as with God's creatures. He has a personal sense of identification as a caretaker of God's properties. Utilitarians (e.g. Singer) and Kantians both developed a personal sense of identification. Naess, however, is an exception in the West. Although it is possible to show examples of personal identification in his writings, his main goal was to

contemplate an “ecological consciousness” beyond personal experience. His theory can be considered as one of cosmological identification.

Development of self-knowledge was one of the main elements in Western traditions. Plato argues for self-mastery for becoming a philosopher king. Aristotle, similarly, develops the concept of a virtuous person who has control over her or his emotions, sentiments and pleasure. A virtuous person also has the knowledge of the golden mean. Descartes, Hume and Kant emphasized self-development—a development in human’s character—to show humanity for others. Only an improvement in personhood can make a being moral. In the case of mastery over nature, Western philosophers do not suggest an irrational behavior toward the nonhuman elements. Rather, they prescribe self-realization to behave rationally to nonhumans. However, the example of rationality in the instrumental sense is not absent. Treating nonhumans as mere means to the pursuit of human ends is immoral because this attitude could develop a less creative human society. A creative society may not be a society where human beings are emotionless, unkind, without spirituality, and unable to feel the aesthetic beauty of nature. In a nutshell, a society where human-like robots lives. Self-realization thus can be seen as personal development, personal improvement, and re-examination of intra and inter species relation. Clearly, a sense of self-realization would imply an improvement in personhood. It will demonstrate a concept of ideal human being which is often called a virtuous person, an enlightened person, or a person of humanity.

Naess also argued for a sense of spirituality. Whether human beings submit themselves to nature, or maintain a sense of balance or harmony, or even considered themselves as stewards of nature, are all significant for

spirituality since these all manifest ecological consciousness. But ecological consciousness can also be gained through an indirect (spiritual) communication with the larger part of nature, as Naess showed. Surprisingly, although appeal is made to different notions of ecological consciousness, the achievement of ecological spirituality results in a different kind of human being.

When human beings manifest non-ecological spirituality, they see themselves as unique, not only in reason, but also in using, respecting and reorganizing natural elements prudently. There is no need to worship nature. Naess, however, may insist on both (i.e. uniqueness of human beings and worshipping nature) since by worshipping nature many people show their reverence for nature, and practice a deep ecological consciousness in their selves.

In contrast to the Western personal identification, cosmological identification is more vivid in the Asian traditions. Asian people initially start with personal identification, but their aim is to gain an identification with the cosmos or the Ultimate Reality. In other words, an identification with the bigger Self. This cosmological identification has appeared in Chinese, Indian and also Japanese traditions. The Chinese anthropocosmic view of nature suggests a balance of *li* and *chi* with all natural elements. Land, water, Sun, trees and all other things are seen in a close integration with human beings. They are symbolically like brothers and sisters. Human beings and other animals are born helpless, but their parents help them to grow and live. Similarly, the Earth and Heaven take care of everything. They are

ontologically parents since they nourish and take care of everything. They therefore deserve respect and reverence from human beings.

However, Chinese worldviews do not discourage the use of nature for human needs. Since humans are generally recognized as virtuous persons, they are allowed to use nature in a way where *li* and *chi* are *balanced* and cosmological *harmony* is maintained. Indian traditions, nonetheless, tried to achieve this balance and harmony in a different way. Their notion of cosmological identification should be understood in relation to the Ultimate Reality and His manifestation of natural elements. This cosmological identification requires devotion and submission rather than balancing any material force.

In Japanese traditions, cosmological identification appeared in an exceptional way. Japanese traditions do not describe nature as the manifestation of the Ultimate Reality, but rather everything from the Sun to dust is the fountain of Buddhahood. Individuals should communicate and set themselves in the Indra's net (the web of Buddha-nature), where all elements in the universe are intimately connected and their relations are mutually tied-up without harming or destroying other fellow creatures.

In cosmological identification, it is not important at all to ascribe personhood toward natural elements. The important thing is to gain the extremely abstract power of communication with all elements in nature, a sense of commonality, so that even a piece of dust can be seen as intrinsically valuable (because interconnectedness is the basis of intrinsic value). Put differently, in the ontological sense there is no distinction between a human being and a grain of sand since they are equally valuable in nature in relation

to their status. For this reason, a sage, a monk, a Brahman may regard killing an ant as serious as killing a human being. Since they consider this whole Earth and beyond, as one single unit, one single family, all members are equally important for them.

Similarly, Self-realization could also be a *realization* of a bigger Self whether in the sense of Ultimate Reality, or in the sense of cosmic balance. Self-realization should not be merely self-development, self-mastery or self-knowledge. Perhaps, self-realization is a deep realization of selflessness, an abandonment of personal ego. Realization cannot be gained just by feelings, but by sympathy, wisdom, reverence, respect and a proper attitude toward all creatures.

In Indian traditions, self-realization denotes the realization of the bigger Self. It is a realization of *moksa* (liberation) and free from bondage. This is a realization that the true Self is manifested in nature so that all natural elements are part of the true Self. Nature then becomes a cosmic person to be realized, a source of sacredness, deserving human reverence and submission. The Chinese and Japanese traditions share self-realization in relation to a cosmic family, comprising all natural elements. Humans thus have a duty to act in accordance with this sense of self-realization. Self-realization will thus *inspire* them to act in a virtuous way, to act most wisely with spontaneity and righteousness. One sense of self-realization is self-examination, while the other sense is realizing the oneness-with-nature.

The latter sense of self-realization surely commits its supporters to a new sense of spirituality. This sense of spirituality need not involve a formal spiritual life in accordance with a particular religion. For example, a spiritual

life for a Buddhist is to respect natural elements as Buddha. But he or she may not be required to submit himself or herself to natural elements. However, for a Hindu, it is not enough just to believe in the Ultimate Reality, but he or she has to submit himself or herself to nature. Respecting in itself does not require submission. One could respect a tree without submitting himself or herself to it, for what it involves is the acceptance of the tree's self-maintenance capability, ecological value and beauty. By contrast, submission requires a total surrender by realizing that the tree is more than what one sees. The tree, being a part of supernatural Being has more power, is capable of changing the fate of human beings, is capable of harming or bringing benefit to human beings. It is an acceptance that the tree is more important, mighty and powerful than a human being. Indian traditions are distinct and unique in this sense. The Chinese traditions, however, neither require respect nor submission, but require a wisdom of balance and harmony. So, at the end they all invoke spirituality, either by submission to nature, or by maintaining balance and harmony. This analysis shows that the different senses of identification, self-realization and spirituality are responsible for different worldviews and human-nature relations.

To sum up, the basic questions discussed in this chapter revolves round the sense, if any, in which human beings are unique? How should the living and nonliving elements in nature be treated? Is nature sacred? A comparison of Western and Asian traditional views shows that they give different answers. When we consider the root cause of the differences, we found that it is a matter of taking identification, self-realization and spirituality in different senses. This finding implies that these are potential candidates to be

considered as core values. In the next chapter, we will examine whether these values could indeed be considered as core values.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE COMMON CORE VALUES

We are living in an Earth where natural catastrophic events are becoming more frequent in comparison to previous times. Our cutting-edge scientific-technological inventions mainly aim at safe and secured human health, enough food production, maximum reduction of manual jobs, renewable energy, and nanotechnological living appliances for a more comfortable living. In addition to this, sophisticated weapons for possible wars, robots and Unmanned Ariel Vehicle (UAV), bombs with high radiation capacity, and space ventures are also highest priorities. Value matrix therefore rapidly changes since uses of technology is a major factor to distinguish between high-tech society and low-tech society. In general, people in the Western traditions are culturally techno-lovers, while people in the Eastern traditions are culturally techno-avoiders.

But some contemporary values, such as globalization, sustainability, internet and virtual communication, are commonly appreciated in almost all societies. Nowadays, these are no more purely Western concepts because almost all societies are habituated with them in their own ways. However, this does not prove that all people throughout the globe are happy with the contemporary values, such as globalization and sustainability. Nor that their impacts in all societies are remarkably positive. Indeed, in some less advanced societies the impacts of globalization and sustainability are highly contentious.

In principle, sustainability requires preserving wilderness areas whereas globalization encourages increases in economic production. The developing countries are facing difficulties in seeking both. A notable Indian environmentalist and participant of Chipko Movement, Vandana Shiva, comments, “Sustainability demands that we move out of the economic trap that is leaving no space for other species and most humans. Globalization has become a war against nature and the poor. We must bring this war to an end”,²⁹².

We should therefore answer some basic questions, such as, can we find some fundamental values which are *common* and at the same time be regarded as *core* values in Western and Asian traditions? Are present environmental values inspiring enough, or at least convincing? If not, do we need some new values? These questions are important, not only for making robust and well-appreciated environmental policies, but also to conceptualize a sense of comprehensive environmental ethics.

In this chapter, we will identify some common core values and explain them. It might not be difficult to find the common values in the light of our previous discussions on Western traditions and Asian traditions, but we will explain why they should be regarded as core values. We will also discuss the relation between common core values and comprehensive environmental ethics. Finally, we will concentrate on whether a normative approach or a deep ecological approach would be more significant in solving the ecological crisis.

²⁹² Vandana Shiva, “Sharing and Exchange, the Basis of Our Humanity and Our Ecological Survival Has Been Redefined As a Crime”, in *Speaking of Earth: Environmental Speeches That Moved The World*, ed. Alon Tal (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2006), 230.

I. IDENTIFICATION, SELF-REALIZATION, AND SPIRITUALITY AS COMMON CORE VALUES

Three values which are predominant in both Western and Asian traditions discussed in the previous chapters are identification, self-realization and spirituality. These three values were in Naess's ecosophy as well as in Passmore's environmental philosophy. We have also noted that they appeared in Asian traditions with even more strong examples of living a harmonious life through reverence, respect and rituals. Clearly then, these three values are common. But their commonality could only *partially* provide a ground for the claim that they are core values. In other words, for a complete recognition as core values they must be supported by some robust criteria. We need to explain briefly how identification, self-realization and spirituality are common values and how they qualify as core values.

Aldo Leopold, one of the major environmental value thinkers in Western traditions, argues for a different valuation of land in 1970s. But his land ethics is not merely some suggestions about how we should use land for development. Rather, his view is all about a very different concept of community, identification, integration, and rare spiritual-aesthetic relation of land and human beings. Before Leopold no one thinks that land is alive, land is powerful, land is the fountain of beauty, and land exposes a unique sense of community. The values he highlighted are identification, self-realization and spirituality that conceptualize land in a *fundamentally* different way.

In his influential book *A Sand County Almanac: And Sketches Here and There* (1949) Leopold writes, "It is inconceivable to me that an ethical

relation to land can exist without love, respect, and admiration for land, and a high regard for its value”²⁹³. An ordinary person or a conservationist usually shows “love, respect and admiration” for land, but an ethical relation deserve something more, a valuation which combines identification, self-realization and spirituality. Leopold’s remarks clearly signal an adaptation of an alternative ethics based on these three values, an ethics which can include more than love, respect, admiration, sacredness and aesthetic feeling for land. This would result in a different appreciation of land, far beyond its economic value.

This ethics should inspire anyone to treat land not just responsibly, but rather with an intimate fellow-feeling. One must realize the vitality, the consciousness of land, through his or her spiritual bonding with it. Only then would he or she be led to an ethic which Leopold said “...reflects the existence of an ecological conscience, and this in turn reflects a conviction of individual responsibility for the health of the land”²⁹⁴.

Paul Shepard’s pursuit of identification, self-realization and spirituality appears in his influential book *The Subversive Science: Essays Toward an Ecology of Man* (1969). Like Naess and Leopold, his viewpoint is also ecological, but it also reflects the metaphysical complexity of human-nature relation. Shepard argues that there are two kinds of selves—one is simple, i.e. feeling, thinking, and organizing one’s surroundings through the concept of “me”. The other is wider, i.e. a self which is all-inclusive. He writes, “Oak

²⁹³ Aldo Leopold, “The Land Ethic”, in *The Ethics of the Environment*, ed. Robin Attfield (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008), 112.

²⁹⁴ Ibid, 110.

trees, even mountains, have selves or integrities too”²⁹⁵ . This view is developed by Shepard and is completely different from Naess and Leopold, because none of them has claimed that nonliving entities could have their own selves.

Shepard’s second view of the self reflects an integrated view where human beings can “fit” into the complexity of nature. They may find themselves within boundaries, such as society and family, but their vision could be across boundaries. This vision is not the ability to see something, but seeing something from inside its shell or skin.

Shepard sees humanity within the complexity of nature. Like nature and landscapes, human beings can also create “room” inside their minds where plants and animals are not in opposition. He suggests realizing how human beings maintained their humanity in ancient times. To these ancient people, affirmation of natural entities shaped their worldviews and mentality. Of course, they regarded themselves as human beings, but these are the type of human beings who are not what Shepard calls “man-fanatic” i.e. species fanatic.

Shepard’s worldview would be comfortable for those who are ready to accept an alternative radical view of the self. Such a view does perceive its surroundings beyond the traditional boundaries of living and nonliving. Shepard himself believes that his view mainly represents those historical thoughts which manifest, “...a deep sense of engagement with the landscape, with profound connections to surroundings and to natural processes central to

²⁹⁵ Paul Shepard, “Ecology and Man - A Viewpoint”, in *Encyclopedia of Environmental Ethics and Philosophy*, vol. 2, ed. J. Baird Callicott and Robert Frodeman (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2009), 453.

all life”²⁹⁶. The words “engagement” and “connection” are simply equivocation of the value identification. When he says “a deep sense” then he really means self-realization since without reviewing one self a deep sense is not possible to construct, and the expansion of one’s surroundings is clearly some sort of spiritual experience through self-realization.

Holmes Rolston III, who argues for the intrinsic value of natural elements, has valued identification, self-realization and spirituality as fundamental. He believes that aesthetic experience of nature is not only awesome but also a fountain of joy and delight. Rolston views human beings as the ultimate and capable “aestheticians”, having some special qualities, such as admiration and sense of good and bad. He writes, “We humans are the only aestheticians on the landscape, and if we do not rejoice in this “awe-full” beauty, who will? And what a pity if none ever should”²⁹⁷.

We can find deep identification and a sense of self-realization when human beings value nature as full of aesthetic beauty which may also inspire them to behave with other natural elements aesthetically and compassionately. We have seen that when Asian traditions value the sky, the Moon, mountains, gardens, flowers, trees, they very often ascribe spirituality to it. Rolston tries to capture this feeling by his aesthetic observation and presents it in a rich philosophical language. He comments that a combination of green landscapes, blue open space, formation and reformation of clouds must make a strong appeal to any human being. They are even more precious than we can think. If one is *unable* to be identified, self-realized and spiritualized with these

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 455.

²⁹⁷ Holmes Rolston, III, “Mountain Majesties Above Fruited Plains: Culture, Nature, and Rocky Mountain Aesthetics”, *Environmental Ethics* 30, no. 1 (2008): 20.

beauties then one may lose his or her humanness. Rolston notes, “This vast nature transcends me and my humanness”²⁹⁸.

Val Plumwood criticizes Naess’s notion of deep ecology and proposes a deconstruction of human-nature relation from an ecofeminist perspective. However, she clearly hints that in order to overcome Western rational accounts of self, valuing identification, self-realization and spirituality is obvious. In the next chapter where Plumwood’s view is explained in detail, we will see that she finds the deep ecological self extremely faulty since it does not consider the independence of self. The ecological self mainly focuses on the interrelatedness or interconnectedness, in spite of independence. But many people want to value independence. As Plumwood notes, “...we need to recognize not only our human continuity with the natural world but also *its distinctness and independence from us and the distinctness of the needs of things in nature from ours*”²⁹⁹.

Her ecofeminist approach suggests resolving self-nature dichotomy by new insights of identification, self-realization and spirituality. According to Plumwood’s ecofeminism, the ecological self should be replaced by the *relational account of self*. In contrast to the ecological self, she suggests that the relational self would engage, “...through connection to and friendship for *particular* places, forests, animals, to which one is particularly strongly related or attached”³⁰⁰. The issue here is not just that Plumwood, like Rolston, emphasizes place or surroundings, but also that she suggests that identification begins with particularity rather than universality. Her view contradicts Naess’s

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 14.

²⁹⁹ Val Plumwood, “Nature, Self, and Gender: Feminism, Environmental Philosophy, and the Critique of Rationalism”, in *The Ethics of the Environment*, ed. Robin Attfield (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008), 203.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 211.

claim that identification corresponds with universality. She also differs from Rolston as the aesthetic beauty of nature is *not* her main concern. Instead, she focuses attention on a particular place, forest, or even animals. The aesthetic appreciation of place may also increase our consciousness or realization that we should care for it.

Similarly, Asian thinkers provided some mystical accounts of identification, self-realization, and spirituality. Their distinguishable thoughts reflect how these values could lead to an enlightened or expanded self. Nonetheless, this does not mean their notion of expanded self is completely metaphysical. Of course, they suggest retaining something which is noble, comprehensive, and total in character. But at the same time a practical view emerges from their analysis. This practical view urges a “reconnection” with the Earth that a techno minded people usually break away from most of the times when they relate with nature. David Suzuki et al. note, “We can begin to reconnect ourselves to everything on Earth, recreating a complete worldview by establishing or rediscovering rituals and ceremonies that celebrate those linkages and our communities”³⁰¹.

Suzuki’s insightful comments involve a mysterious sense of “reconnection”. However, it is not difficult for us to realize that for a complete worldview “rituals” and “ceremonies” are important. Asian societies are mainly “ritual” and “ceremony” based societies. Asian people like to celebrate rituals and ceremonies not just for pleasure, but because of a deep sense of identification, self-realization and spirituality. Most of Asian rituals and ceremonies are related to spirituality, and offer a different message to the rest

³⁰¹ David Suzuki et al., *The Sacred Balance: Rediscovering Our Place in Nature* (Vancouver: The David Suzuki Foundation, 2007), 301.

of the world. Like other traditions, when people celebrate their rituals and ceremonies, Asians integrate once again with their roots. They also perceive these rituals and ceremonies as means to a harmonious life, a way to know and preserve the ecological balance. As the Western poet John Seed says, “I am part of the rain forest protecting myself. I am that part of the rain forest recently emerged into thinking”³⁰².

Here, Seed identified himself with the rain forest and realizes himself as “part” of it by his unique spiritual experience. But his process is basically a thinking process, instead of Suzuki’s connecting process. Asians do not have many rain forests, but they have century-old rituals and ceremonies present in almost all of their traditions. Their identification and reconnection with these rituals and ceremonies form the same ecological consciousness as John Seed felt.

Like him, Indian composer Rabindranath Tagore says in one of his songs, “Is springtime, my friends, a festival only of fresh flowers? Haven’t you seen the play of dry leaves and shed petals?...On this spring day, my friends, watch the play of shed flowers”³⁰³.

Environmental values are closely linked to religious, cultural, and scientific values³⁰⁴. Science and technology in today’s society play a vital role in shaping our worldviews. Western traditions admire scientific lifestyles, and science divides sharply between living and nonliving elements. This

³⁰² Seed et al., *Thinking Like a Mountain: Towards a Council of All Beings*, 36, quoted in Val Plumwood, “Nature, Self, and Gender: Feminism, Environmental Philosophy, and the Critique of Rationalism”, in *The Ethics of the Environment*, ed. Robin Attfield (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008), 202.

³⁰³ Rabindranath Tagore, “Song no. 203, Prakriti, *Gitabitan*”, in *Of Love, Nature, and Devotion: Selected Songs of Rabindranath Tagore*, trans. Kalpana Bardhan (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008), 114.

³⁰⁴ For a comparative analysis from Western and Eastern perspectives on this issue see my paper, “Self, Nature, and Cultural Values”, *Cultura. International Journal of Philosophy of Culture and Axiology* 7, no.2 (2010): 81-99.

distinction is fundamental to any science, and so living beings are separate from nonliving entities. Western ethics, being consistent with this worldview, formulated principles which exclude nonhuman elements from moral consideration. Indeed, not all living beings are considered as morally valuable. Asian ethical systems do not consider the distinction of living and nonliving as so *important*. Rather, most Asian traditions hold that even a stone which is nonliving can get our respect and reverence. It is not that the stone is economically precious, but rather that it contributes to keeping the harmony and balance of our livelihood, and broadly the balance of our Earth.

But both Western and Asian traditions value mountains, the Moon, the Sun, rivers, seas, green landscapes, and water-falls. We human beings all like the sea, beaches, wilderness, and deep green landscapes, and that is why people usually want to be identified with these whenever they have some time. We feel some spiritual experience, even emptiness (in the sense that they are aesthetically, physically and ecologically more amazing than we experience) once we reach them. Both traditions preserve these natural elements through love, reverence, and deep feeling. Some Western thinkers, who believe in Gaia, mix-up science and spirituality in preserving them. Their self-realization does not separate them, but rather integrates with the scientific attitude.

So far in the previous three chapters, we have seen that the importance of identification, self-realization and spirituality was highlighted in Western and Asian traditions. Despite Naess and Passmore, classical Western philosophers reinforced these ideas in their own ways. Naess explicitly argues for identification with nature. His ecosophy, which is grounded on the ultimate

norm “Self-realization”, also conceived the value of self-realization and spirituality.

Passmore holds the view of stewardship with nature. He has suggested a new human-nature identification where humans are prudent managers, i.e. they are self-realized about their duties and responsibilities for nature. He believes that as human beings are creative and innovative creatures, they are capable of solving the environmental problems. For example, a rational principle can regulate our energy policies, use of natural resources, in a harmonious and sustainable way. However, Passmore asserted a spiritual bond with nature from the theological perspective. If the Earth is God’s handiwork, humans, as His representatives, should respect the Earthly elements and care for them.

Similarly, Asian traditions provide a strong historical persuasion for identification, self-realization and spirituality. For the ecological harmony and balance Chinese traditions maintain identification with the primal matter-energies. The success of an individual’s social and political lives is dependent on the balanced interaction with Heaven and Earth. Moral self-cultivation begins with the spiritual bonding of nature. Daoist philosophers have emphasized human’s identification with the *Dao* and act according to the principle of *Wu-wei*.

The Indian traditions encouraged a selfless identification with nature. Realizing nature as a bigger Self generates deep spiritual relation with the natural elements. The Japanese traditions invoked the Shinto and Buddhist spirituality, realizing the “Way of Kami” and “Buddhahood” or “Buddha-

nature” respectively. Compassionate and sympathetic behavior identification with all life-forms and the myriad things is essential.

When we compare Western and Asian views on the environment the importance of identification, self-realization and spirituality was marked again. What type of identification can claim human’s uniqueness best? Is the distinction between living and nonliving elements so important for a compassionate and caring attitude toward nature? Can nature be sacred other than in the religious sense? Analysis of these vital questions shows that these values are granted with high priority in the human-nature relation and by several thinkers of both traditions. It implies that we can consider identification, self-realization and spirituality as common values. The next question is: Are these common values *core* values?

In order to consider any value as a core value we must have some criteria of core values. These core values are universal in character, and are used to conceptualize a harmonious and balanced human-nature relationship. They are embedded in the majority of people’s lifestyles, thoughts and everyday actions. This set of values articulates their empathic behavior and inspiration to preserve nature. So, the basis of selecting these values is cultural, religious, and philosophical reflections on the human-nature relation revealed in the Western and Asian traditions.

I have set forth the following criteria of core values in the light of my previous discussions. Moreover, some of these criteria have been appreciated in the religious practices and cultural activities. For example, “fulfillment and perfection of life” is emphasized in traditional religions and Western and Eastern philosophical ideas. Another criterion, “ecological imagination”, is

also vivid in the traditional cultural ceremonies where natural elements are seen as persons, gods and goddesses. The Sun, for example, was seen as a god. We will see how identification, self-realization, and spirituality can satisfy all of these conditions.

1. *Rich way of living and long-term effect on human lives:* The richness of living is a very important concept we need to consider for environmental interaction. People usually do not want to live in a polluted area. Instead of risky living, they desire to live in a place which is *naturally* fresh. They like to go outdoor at least once a year with the opportunities of staying beside seas, mountains, green forests, natural habitats of animals, birds, fish, and other creatures. There is a close connection between living in nature and richness of life. It is not surprising that the impressions and experiences people gather would have long-term impact on their lives. When values are rightly recognized these may even change people's worldview and their behavior toward nature for their whole lives. Any core environmental value should contribute to the rich way of living and must have long-term effects. The values, identification, self-realization, and spirituality, are those values which people want to achieve in their nature-living.

2. *Powerful enough to change people's attitudes:* Environmental values could be more important when individuals find that the environment inspires them, attracts them. It may not just be enough to use green technology, but rather holding a caring attitude toward one's surroundings is vital. People in most cases destroy trees or other natural elements unnecessarily, but they could change their attitude when they are deeply identified with these natural

objects, take care of them, realize the need for and interest in them and feel their spiritual aesthetic beauty.

3. *Joyful and natural*: Individuals may find it joyful to hold some environmental values not because these are beneficial to some other end, but because these are joyful too. When any environmental value inspires, preserves diversity, ensures unity and joy, enough people would naturally accept it. Identification, self-realization and spirituality are those values which people in many traditions find joyful and natural.

4. *Practical rather than theoretical*: Environmental values should be practical and more pragmatic so that we can practice them not only in the environmental context, but also in other perspectives of our lives. For instance, if we are identified with the aesthetic beauty of a garden in front of our home, we can preserve the aesthetic beauty of our homes by applying the same value. Theoretical guidelines, such as various environmental declarations and environmental laws, require awareness and a minimum level of knowledge, whereas once individuals are identified, self-realized and spiritualized they could avoid this theoretical limitation and burden. One possible example is indigenous people's lifestyles. Another example is a nature lover who may be unaware or less educated but hold a deep caring attitude to his or her immediate environment, such as gardens, valleys, cornfields, mountains, and rivers.

5. *Cultivable*: Anything that we achieve very quickly may give us less pleasure and have short-term effects. But if we cultivate something day after day, year after year, then it may give us true pleasure and must have long-term effects. For example, most people love gardens, but many of them do not

know how to create a garden in their yards. They are even unfamiliar about what plants need less water and more sunshine, when fertilizers should be applied, how natural pesticides can be used, and how natural symbiosis of the garden can be maintained. But once they start to cultivate this knowledge they can make beautiful flowers bloom with ecological wisdom that have long-term impact. This impact may be used as a seedbed to produce gardens in their own heart-minds where flowers like virtues and values would bloom.

6. *Fulfillment and perfection of life*: Our lives are valuable but other life-forms are also equally valuable intrinsically when mutual co-operation is the basis of value. The basic aim is that all human beings want to achieve perfection, whether theists or atheists, spiritualists or humanists. The perfection of life gives them enormous joy, happiness, satisfaction and a deep feeling of meaningfulness. For this reason some people are religious since religious values give them perfection. Others are non-religious since religion is unable to give them perfection. In the environmental context, identification, self-realization and spirituality could ensure the fulfillment and perfection of environmental moral life because these values are implicit in any environmental theory. However, their senses and resulting ethical principles are different.

7. *Motivational force*: Motivation is one of the fundamental elements for our lives to keep going on. Without enough motivational force people may not be inspired to preserve the environment. Some religions suggest that trees are sacred. So, the followers of these religions want to save trees even at the cost of their lives. Others suggest that trees are created by the Creator and so any follower should not destroy them without proper reason. Religious

believers wish to follow what they regard as a religious command. But environmental values are not like religious commands, and people are not bound to follow them. So, why do people still think that these are important values? One main reason is that they have enormous motivational force even for people who don't believe the sacredness in nature. Our common values, identification, self-realization and spirituality, reflect this degree of motivational force irrespective of religion, race, color, and gender.

8. *Against separation*: The main cause of environmental problems, as many environmental philosophers agreed (e.g. Naess, Rolston), is human-nature separation. Human beings who consider their environment completely dead matter, and non-responsive, separate themselves from it. Even when they regard animals and some environmental elements, as living creatures, they think these are lower than human beings in terms of reason, rationality, and capability of feeling. So, everything, whether living or nonliving other than human beings, belong to one single category, *other*. This human-other relationship is only harmonious when separation is minimized with integration and species egoism is reduced. Otherwise this unhealthy separation would gradually make human beings greedy, selfish and short-sighted. Therefore, the core environmental values must be all-inclusive rather than exclusive. Identification, self-realization and spirituality effectively undermine separation and aim at integration.

9. *Ecologically imaginative*: Imagination is a special power useful to any creation. Evidence shows that many great innovations were begun from imagination. Even science, which is pragmatic instead of imaginative, values this power. Architects randomly fight with their imagination and creation.

However, ecological imagination is even more powerful and very effective for environmental protection. Recent ecological movies, where animals, trees, plants, seas, mountains, and forests, are the main characters, are using this power to communicate and make people conscious about their environment. Core environmental values should comprise ecological imagination so that people can build their own worldviews by nurturing these values. Many environmental philosophers have offered an imaginative view of the environment. For instance, Passmore imagines this Earth in stewardship, Naess and the Gaia hypothesis imagine this Earth conscious and alive as human bodies, Freya Mathews imagines the Earth as beehives, the Chinese as an intersection of Heaven, Earth and humans, the Indians as Brahman, and the Japanese as the web of Buddhahood. But we have seen that all these worldviews explore three common fundamental values, identification, self-realization and spirituality. Therefore, these values are ecologically imaginative and surely core values.

10. *Preserve balance and harmony*: Preserving balance and harmony is the first priority for environmental protection. Balance and harmony are two main ideas which are applicable from human bodies to the Earth's body. Every element in this Earth was received with an appropriate proportion of balance and harmony. However, human being's thrust for knowledge, innovation, and domination has made this Earth unbalanced. The unbalanced Earth naturally interrupts its internal harmony, and catastrophic events, like floods, cyclones, tsunamis, acid rain, and earthquakes, are the ultimate result. If we are not caring about the environment, the future might be even more dangerous. The simple but rich way of caring about the environment is to

recognize some common core values and change our lifestyles in relation to these values.

These criteria are generally commonsensical and may even seem subjective. I have indicated that the bases of selecting them are the cultural, religious, and philosophical ideas regarding the human-nature relation found in the two traditions discussed. These are mainly deep-rooted ideas and beliefs which most common people share and praise.

These criteria are, therefore, important in deciding which environmental values we should maintain for a harmonious co-existence. We can find so many values in different societies, but we cannot incorporate them all in our lifestyles for various reasons. So, some core values that are justified by standard criteria can be taken into consideration. Our common core values, identification, self-realization and spirituality, satisfy all of these criteria and obviously deserve our consideration. But why and how are they particularly important in environmental philosophy?

II. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF COMMON VALUES

The environmental problems are not limited to local, territorial or continental contexts, but rather these are global problems. Like other global problems, such as poverty and health problems, this problem is one of the major concerns for all nation-states. Many approaches, including technological, geographical, economical and sociological, try to meet environmental challenges. Philosophers and ethicists have been discussing several options for a harmonious co-existence with nature. A global challenge undoubtedly needs

a global solution. A solution that is effective, innovative, as well as compatible with decades old historical, cultural and philosophical traditions. A peculiar, complex, unfamiliar solution surely does not work and may be unnecessary. Still, people in some traditions are caring, preserving their environment spontaneously, and are considerably aware of it. On the one hand, they are maintaining traditional values, on the other hand, they are ready to review these values for a better Earth. They do not even hesitate to give up any traditional environmental value which opposes environmental preservation.

Therefore, one of the main tasks for environmental philosophers and ethicists is to *rethink* which values should be protected and which values should be rejected, to make people *aware* of these values, and to *inspire* them to accept some influential environmental values found in different traditions for harmonious human-nature relationship. Most importantly, environmental philosophers and ethicists would offer theoretical discussions and continue to search for some *common core values*.

Until now, environmental philosophers and ethicists were able to persuade people that most environmental problems are caused by human beings in their various relationships with nature. Thus environmental policies not only suggest some guidelines on human-nature relations, but also explain why people need to follow these guidelines. In that case, a common core value approach is the most effective, practical and unified approach. Several organizations, like UNESCO, have focused on common core environmental values for environmental protection and recommended the adoption of "...environmental values shared by those from all communities of the world,

allowing for wider global action by all”³⁰⁵. Apart from UNESCO, a major environmental Declaration, The Earth Charter (2000), warns us again and again, “We urgently need a shared vision of basic values to provide an ethical foundation for the emerging world community”³⁰⁶.

Beside the global scenario, the environment was a great concern for every cultural and intellectual tradition in the East and in the West. In recent times, many Western presidents are elected from the green parties and they have to make significant contributions to their nation’s environmental protection policy. Similarly, Asian leaders must assure people that local environmental policies could maintain a balance between persevering wilderness, sustainability and economic development. Environmental laws throughout the globe are becoming more refined and philosophically ecocentric, instead of anthropocentric. The values that environmental policy-makers, both global and local, emphasize are identification, self-realization and spirituality.

The Earth Charter and the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights (2005) are two notable examples. These Declarations were approved by many influential organizations, such as UNESCO and the UN, which are committed to promoting common values, rights, and shared interests. At the very beginning, the former asserts, “Earth, our home, is alive with a unique community of life”³⁰⁷. Here, the Earth’s community cannot be understood as human community, but rather a community comprising human

³⁰⁵ *Universalism and Ethical Values for the Environment*, ECCAP Project Working Group 1 Report, (Bangkok: UNESCO Bangkok 2010), 1.

³⁰⁶ “The Earth Charter” Earth Charter Commission, 2000, in *Encyclopedia of Environmental Ethics and Philosophy*, vol. 2, ed. J. Baird Callicott and Robert Frodeman (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2009), 502.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 501.

beings, animals, micro-organisms, both sentient and non-sentient, plants, trees, rivers, gardens, mountains, basically everything in this Earth. There are always integration and reduction in Earth's community members and as such the Earth is "alive". This view sharply contrasts with the mechanistic view where the Earth is seen as a big machine, dead but evolving since its creation without any purpose. Human beings in this mechanistic vision were the centre, whereas the Earth in The Earth's Charter's vision is the centre.

In addition to this radical development, The Earth Charter has adopted three fundamental common values both explicitly and implicitly. For example, it explicitly says, "...we must decide to live with a sense of universal responsibility, identifying our selves with the whole Earth community as well as our local communities"³⁰⁸. A call for identification is clear but it goes further. We must value identification in a way that our aspiration for other community members would lead to a sense of universal responsibility for harmonious co-existence. Another fundamental common value, "spirituality", is also explicit in principle 8 (b) under the title of "Ecological Integrity" which states, "Recognize and preserve the traditional knowledge and spiritual wisdom in all cultures that contribute to environmental protection and human well-being"³⁰⁹.

This statement then recognizes the value of spirituality in a way which shapes our lifestyles and attitudes toward the environment and can contribute significantly to improve our conduct towards it. Indigenous people throughout the globe affirm many spiritual elements in nature and maintain a close bonding, integrity, and compassionate behavior with nature. Their ecological

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 502.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 503.

wisdom is considered as unique and insightful, and inseparable from their spiritual living. A true spiritual valuation of nature is important for mankind to live a long and healthy life, as well as protect fellow Earth's community members.

It seems to me that while The Earth Charter explicitly recognizes two fundamental common values, identification and spirituality, we can also find another common core value, self-realization, in an implicit manner. However, this value is surely given high importance to protect the environment. Perhaps, one of the basic goals of The Earth Charter could be seen as promoting self-realization since at the end the Charter states, "Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life"³¹⁰. As these words reflect, we certainly need "awakening", i.e. a realization of our responsibility and duty, a realization of various impacts of our behaviors, attitudes and activities toward other community members, a realization of our uniqueness and interdependence, and also a realization of joyful co-existence with firm ecological wisdom.

Although The Earth Charter is a milestone in environmental policy-making and for adopting some common core values, it does not spell out any particular ethical principle for environmental protection which could clearly show us how these values and policies can be implemented within conflicting interests and agendas. The Earth Charter recommends avoiding serious environmental harm, prevention of environmental pollution, migrating to renewable and environmental friendly energies, such as solar and wind

³¹⁰ Ibid., 505.

energies, from nonrenewable energies, such as coal and gas. But it is silent on the moral principle which we should adopt in order to achieve these shared goals. Since merely fixing some goals can only bring some satisfaction but no solution of the real problem, we should develop appropriate moral principles based on these values so that both individuals and policy-makers together can build an ecologically harmonious society.

The next influential Declaration, the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights, is another major turn toward the ecocentric worldview. Nonetheless, this Declaration mainly aspires to biocentrism with an emphasis on the species of human beings, “*Aware* that human beings are an integral part of the biosphere, with an important role in protecting one another and other forms of life, in particular animals”³¹¹. In this statement, human beings are not described at the centre of the biosphere, nor are they given special priority in relation to other life forms. But it assigns some special duties or responsibilities for them to protect the biosphere.

While human beings are seen as protectors, as an “integral part” of nature, the underlying ethical principles to protect nature are not clearly stated. Apart from animals, there are many small organisms which play crucial roles in the ecosystem, and these are largely ignored. Moreover, members of the animal kingdom, those who are necessary for protecting human lives (e.g. for medicine) and those who are necessary for protecting the ecosystem but not directly useful for human beings, are not distinguished and given equal priority. As a result, the role of human beings who are the protectors and also consumers appears more complex and puzzling. But there is little or no

³¹¹ *Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights* (Paris: UNESCO, 2008), 8.

guideline about how these complexities could be overcome. The boundary line of some vital issues, such as basic needs, interests, balance, and harmony in environmental protection, needs to be drawn. The necessary principles are also unexplained, whether human beings are stewards or merely protectors of their own welfare should be addressed.

Despite these limitations, the Declaration highlighted interconnectedness and some important future tasks required for harmonious co-existence. For instance, in article 17, the Declaration suggests adapting an attitude which is nonanthropocentric and encourages protecting other life forms, respect traditional knowledge and *wisdom*, and supports appropriate access and utilization of biotic and genetic resources.

In its recommendation of biocentrism toward ecocentrism, three common core values, identification, self-realization, and spirituality, are incorporated with proper emphasis. Interconnectedness appears as a sense of self-realization, respecting traditional knowledge and wisdom require identification, and spirituality is absorbed into the sense of vitality in lives. This advancement of environmental thought was possible because some fundamental values were promoted by philosophers, writers, activists in the West and also in Asia. Now the questions are: Are these values all encompassing? Are they inspiring and significant in comparison to present individualistic attitudes toward nature? Both answers are positive and highlighted in the future vision of several policy-making organizations.

TEEB (The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity in National and International Policy Making), an influential policy maker's forum of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), notes, "We find that at

times it suffices just to *recognize value*—be it intrinsic, spiritual or social—to create a policy response favoring conservation or sustainable use (e.g. sacred groves; legal Protected Areas or community-based Conservation Areas)³¹².

One of the key messages set forth in the future vision of TEEB is to value nature. Although its current policies are human-centric, its future vision (2010-2020) adopted a global awareness agenda with highest priority for intrinsic valuation of nature through globally agreed values and frameworks. The organization has suggested multiple tiered solutions to the ecological crisis, instead of present market-based mechanisms and cost-benefit solution. It treats the common value of “planetary stewardship” as fundamental. It is therefore not surprising that future environmental policies are changing from anthropocentrism to nonanthropocentrism, with special focus on some core values of ecocentrism. For instance, TEEB’s basic future vision is “working with the value of nature” which states, natural biodiversity “needs to be preserved for its intrinsic value and the benefits it provides to present and future generations...at all geographic levels, from global to local”³¹³. Therefore, the common core value approach is and will be a dominating factor in environmental policy-making. The common core values discussed here *should* be accepted in global policies.

At the theoretical level, it is already mentioned that many environmental philosophers not only want to develop a plausible theory for environmental valuation, but they also argue for a radical change in our worldviews and lifestyles. Indeed, not all of them have considered a common value approach in solving the ecological crisis. For instance, White and

³¹² *The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity in National and International Policy Making*, UNEP 2011, ed. Patrick ten Brink (London: Earthscan, 2011), xxviii.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, 453.

Passmore are against the common environmental value approach and they think that a reformation of Western values is sufficient. However, they also believe that we need a change in present worldview. Others have diverse views on common core values. Norton writes, “What we need, in other words, is an approach to environmental values and valuation that fits comfortably into the experimentalist framework of an adaptive management process”³¹⁴.

Norton’s view clearly does not make any distinction between Western and Asian traditions because he believes that the main task of environmental valuation is pragmatic and should be suitable for “adaptive management”. In fact, he suggests John Dewey’s empirical approach for environmental valuation. Dewey’s social learning might even have wider implications which may include some of the Asian values that are also common in Western traditions. So, a common core value approach could be a high potential candidate for adaptive management as well.

O’Neill et al. defended a value “pluralistic” approach instead of a value monist approach, because our relations with the environment are multi-dimensional and a single value, like pleasure, happiness or human dignity, is not enough to provide a moral guideline in all situations. A “trade-off” among different core values is important according to them. It is interesting that all of these philosophers hold that when we *lose* “so much” in an ultimate value we should compensate by *gaining* “so much” in another ultimate value. So, the trade-offs between values basically involves compensating the loss of one value with a gain in another. In their words, “There are a variety of ultimate values, but we can compare those values and say that a loss in one dimension

³¹⁴ Bryan G. Norton, *Sustainability: A Philosophy of Adaptive Ecosystem Management* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 192.

of value is equal to a gain in another”³¹⁵. But what might be difficult in this trade-off approach is that sometimes it becomes hard to negotiate and set trade-offs between different values.

In order to avoid this difficulty, they introduced a new idea called a “common scale”. So, their final suggestion is, “What we need is a universal currency for that trade, some measuring rod which we can use to measure the different rates at which losses and gains in different dimensions of value evidence themselves, and then put them on a common scale”³¹⁶. According to this statement, a common scale actually is a sense of commonality, some common core values which explain the value of the environment for any human society. These are universal “currencies” that we use.

Green movements and their supporters in the Western traditions often maintain that a radical change in our present value system would mean an abandonment of so-called environmental values. For example, using DDT had an environmental value in the 20th century because it could protect humans and other animals from mosquitoes causing malaria. Many countries in the world use DDT as a protection from harmful insects which may cause dreadful disease (e.g. malaria, dengue) if uncontrolled. However, this DDT creates severe environmental hazards and it has profound harmful impact on other species and organisms. Like DDT, so many new chemicals are produced in the laboratories. It is claimed that the Enlightenment and the environmental crisis are “mutually exclusive”. Enlightenment supported individualism. We need a sustainable environment, but as an enlightenment value it is the individual’s *decision* whether she or he want to recycle his or her own car. It is an

³¹⁵ John O’ Neill et al., *Environmental Values* (Oxon: Routledge, 2008), 75.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 75-76.

individual's choice whether he or she would continue to use DDT or not. Sometimes there is a conflict between an enlightenment value and an environmental value.

But this claim needs a proper justification. Some ecological philosophers have shown that the real problem is not fundamental enlightenment values, but rather a gap of communication which undermines the possibility of finding some common core values. They believe that a bridge between the Enlightenment and ecological values is possible to establish through accommodating some common core values. One of the philosophers who proposes this idea is Hayward, and he comments,

The implications of ecology, as often elaborated within green movements and by their intellectual sympathizers, present a challenge to the most fundamental values we have inherited from the historical Enlightenment...but that it is a mistake to see the values of ecology and enlightenment as mutually exclusive...We may then even find there is some basis for a synthesis of the values of ecology and enlightenment.³¹⁷

Apart from the policy and theoretical levels, the common core values can play a crucial role in *educating* our next generation to protect nature. Notable philosophers, like Hargrove, point out that "...for the environment to be properly protected, value perspectives other than economic value perspectives must play a leading role"³¹⁸. His suggestion is not only that the common core value approach could be more important for environmental consciousness, but rather it will help to avoid many environmental disputes. In that case it must be based on "widely accepted values", i.e. common core

³¹⁷ Tim Hayward, *Ecological Thought: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 6.

³¹⁸ Eugene C. Hargrove, "A Traditional and Multicultural Approach to Environmental Ethics at Primary and Secondary School Levels", *Environmental Ethics* 30, no. 3 (2008): 271.

values as well as the traditional ideas and wisdom of a particular country. He writes,

...it is best, I believe, to concentrate not on converting current theory in environmental ethics into curricula material but rather on general environmental values that are widely accepted and consistent with the history of ideas that actually formed environmental perceptions in specific countries.³¹⁹

So, the common core value approach is theoretically as well as practically significant. Policy-makers and educationists could use the common core values to create environmental consciousness both at the local and global levels. The common core values should articulate an environmental ethic which is comprehensive in nature. Then, the next question would be about the relation of common core values and environmental ethics.

III. HOW DO COMMON CORE VALUES AND ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS RELATE?

Environmental ethics is all about environmental values, values we should consider in our relation with the environment. These values have significant impact on our attitudes and behaviors toward the environment. If we value the environment because it is the only means to survive, the only resource which supplies us with the basic necessities, such as food, clothes, shelter, Oxygen, and pleasure, then the environment is just like a machine. But apart from the basic necessities, the environment also inspires us, delights us, makes us happy with its aesthetic beauty, help us bloom spiritually, provide a sense of vastness and also show up various short-comings of human beings as

³¹⁹ Ibid., 264.

a species. A perfect sense of community and communal relationship is maintained in the idea of the environment.

We have seen that our common core values are embedded in Western and Asian traditions. Although the environmental ethics developed in these traditions are somehow different, they all value identification, self-realization and spirituality in their worldviews and in human-nature relationship. Nonetheless, environmental ethics in a particular tradition might be criticized as narrow even if it considers the same environmental values. The reason is that there could be some practices in the name of environmental ethics which do not actually turn up as environmental protection. For example, killing whales is a traditional practice for some fishermen, and that particular tradition might justify that activity as a sustainable act because of the presence of a huge number of whales. However, that kind of activity may not be sustainable. So, none of the traditions could claim its environmental ethics as comprehensive.

Asian traditions are very often criticized for their inability to apply in a scientifically advanced society, while Western traditions are evidently anthropocentric and often blamed for the ecological crisis. China, Japan and India traditionally respect nature, but surprisingly they were unable to protect their environment properly and some environmental problems (e.g. deforestation, air and water pollution) are severe. Similarly, most rich countries in the West use a large number of animals for scientific experiments, production of cosmetics, leather and other luxuries goods. Rapid growth of their cities, cars, industries, chemical uses, pest control, and weapon

production has increased the potential vulnerability of people's lives. Clearly then, a comprehensive environmental ethics is necessary.

A good number of classical philosophers (e.g. Aristotle, Spinoza, Lao Tzu, Samkaracharya, Kukai) have put forward a set of values which can be used to construct a comprehensive environmental ethics. Contemporary philosophers (e.g. Naess, Gandhi, Suzuki, Rolston, Tu Weiming) have developed these traditional views and directly or indirectly outlined their own sense of a comprehensive environmental ethics. For instance, Confucian scholar Tu writes,

Indeed, it is in the anthropocosmic spirit that we find communication between self and community, harmony between human species and nature, and mutuality between humanity and Heaven. This integrated comprehensive vision of learning to be human serves well as a point of departure for a new discourse on the global ethic.³²⁰

Similarly, Rolston notes, "But the Earth's atmosphere is as vital as its water or dirt. "Earth" is the name of the whole system, the proper name of our planet, like Jupiter and Mars. A comprehensive environmental ethics must become an Earth ethics"³²¹.

However, others think that environmental problems are like other social problems and scientific solutions are enough to face them. But human beings need to change their attitudes toward the environment for a harmonious co-existence and sustainable living. This implies that the values of a comprehensive environmental ethics should be some common core values.

³²⁰ Tu Weiming, "Beyond the Enlightenment Mentality", in *Confucianism and Ecology: The Interrelation of Heaven, Earth, and Humans*, ed. Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Berthrong (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998), 17.

³²¹ Holmes Rolston, III, *Conserving Natural Value* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 205.

Now, we need to consider what exactly they mean when famous environmental philosophers refer to *comprehensive*.

Unfortunately, like any philosophical idea, comprehensiveness is also an idea about which philosophers disagree vastly. The debate on comprehensiveness begins in the early 1970s when environmental ethics just emerged. After Lynn White, a well-known philosopher, Richard Sylvan, boldly argued for a “new” environmental ethics in 1973. Since traditional environmental ethics addresses natural elements in an anthropocentric manner, Sylvan shows that such an ethics cannot claim its comprehensiveness until the intrinsic value of all other elements is recognized. But a good number of philosophers, including Passmore, have argued that in order to behave ethically toward nature we do not need to ascribe intrinsic value to all of its elements. Nor do we have to abandon anthropocentrism. So, an anthropocentric environmental ethics can be regarded as comprehensive if it treats other elements sustainably.

These two views still dominate, and supporters of both views offer new arguments to justify their claims. The first view, which I shall call “Ideal comprehensive environmental Ethics”, is non-instrumental, radical and all-encompassing, while the second view, “Adaptable comprehensive environmental ethics”, is instrumental, pragmatic and sustainable. The most notable philosophers holding the former view are Naess, Sylvan, and some Asian philosophers, while the philosophers holding the latter view include Passmore, Norton and Holland. Philosophers who seek to reconcile the two views of comprehensiveness by a synthesis of science, ecology and ethics are Leopold, Callicott and Rolston. We will not repeat here the views of Naess,

Passmore and the Asian philosophers. Rather, I will concentrate mainly on the views of others.

Sylvan formulates the issues as follows:

Whether the blue whale survives should not have to depend on what humans know or what they see on television. Human interests and preferences are far too parochial to provide a satisfactory basis for deciding on what is environmentally desirable.³²²

In this statement, the value of a new comprehensive ethics which Sylvan argues for is that the ethical decision regarding the environment should *not* depend on “human interests”, or their “preferences”. Norton, on the other hand, refers to a value called “sustainability” or “adaptability” without undermining human’s interests and their preferences. He writes,

...I will propose one approach to a new environmental philosophy, a philosophy that is more geared to learning to be sustainable than in defining what kind of good nature has. This philosophy emphasizes social learning and community adaptation, and it derives its method more from the epistemology of pragmatism than from theoretical ethics.³²³

John O’Neill, with Holland and Light, similarly considered human’s interests and suggested that “...a defensible approach to nature has to start from a human scale of values and from the rich normative vocabulary that has been bequeathed to us through our human engagements with the various environments we inhabit”³²⁴. The main claim is that values must “start” from human beings, but they should not end up or be limited to the human species.

³²² Richard Sylvan (Routley), “Is There A Need For A New, An Environmental, Ethic?”, in *Encyclopedia of Environmental Ethics and Philosophy*, vol. 2, ed. J. Baird Callicott and Robert Frodeman (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2009), 489.

³²³ Bryan G. Norton, “Ethics and Sustainable Development: An Adaptive Approach to Environmental Choice”, in *Handbook of Sustainable Development*, ed. Giles Atkinson et al. (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2007), 29.

³²⁴ John O’Neill, Alan Holland & Andrew Light, *Environmental Values* (Oxon: Routledge, 2008), 113.

Indeed, human beings should consider each and every aspect of *their* relations with nonhuman elements.

Finally, Callicott thinks that a comprehensive environmental ethics should include “spirituality” and contemporary sciences, such as ecology. He writes,

What would a comprehensive Gaian environmental ethic look like? It would somehow unite contemporary ecofeminist Goddess spirituality with the Gaia hypothesis (or model) in contemporary science. So far, though mutually acquainted, the two have not been mutually informing.³²⁵

Two views of comprehensive environmental ethics are vividly distinguishable from these comments. The ideal comprehensive ethics rejects the view that human beings are the centre of the universe, or a privileged species, and their satisfaction, interest, preference, and well-being should come first. That is, the Earth, rather than human beings, is the centre of moral consideration.

Earthly elements are intrinsically valuable, apart from human interests. The natural system as a whole is also intrinsically valuable. So, all types of religious, cultural and philosophical values which represent integrity, respect, love, and revere nature, and embody an ideal comprehensive environmental ethics. This ethics is necessarily nonanthropocentric. By contrast, the second view, the adaptable comprehensive environmental ethics, starts with human interests, but human beings cannot be self-centred. A harmonious relation, generally referred to as a sustainable relation, is the key value of this ethics. A sustainable relation, according to adaptable comprehensive environmental ethics, *does not* mean ascribing intrinsic value to *all* natural elements, or the adoption of nonanthropocentrism.

³²⁵ J. Baird Callicott, *Earth's Insights: A Survey of Ecological Ethics from the Mediterranean Basin to the Australian Outback* (California: University of California Press, 1994), 41-42.

Sustainable living is by human beings, including future generations. If burning fossil fuels is harmful for human beings and future generations, then there is no reason to burn them, even though burning fossil fuel is cost-effective. Rather, renewable energy, such as sunlight, which is neither harmful for humans nor for other species, should be used. Declaring nature as intrinsically valuable makes no sense for philosophers who subscribe to this view of adaptable comprehensive environmental ethics. Indeed, this is a mistake and would make nature more mysterious according to them.

However, a totally new sense of comprehensive environmental ethics is noticeable primarily in Holmes Rolston III's numerous writings. Rolston holds that nature is intrinsically valuable but that value originates and develops *from* (rather than *by*) human beings³²⁶. Humans must have duties and responsibilities to protect nature without asking the question why. This view is neither anthropocentric nor nonanthropocentric, but rather anthropogenic. Rolston's sense of comprehensiveness is grounded on modern science and ecology. Science will help human beings to consider nature as intrinsically valuable and a joint endeavor of scientists and ethicists would set the principles of duties and responsibilities toward nature. Rolston's idea is credited not only for making a bridge between anthropocentrism and nonanthropocentrism, but also for its potentiality to apply to modern scientific

³²⁶ In an influential earlier paper Rolston writes, "Beyond this, *intrinsic natural* value recognizes value inherent in some natural occasions, without contributory human reference" (p. 145). This implies human's existence is *not* essential to consider nature intrinsically valuable. However, Rolston also notes human beings as the most vital part of nature whose absence would entail nature unconscious, "In that sense, in our knowing we are simplifying what is there, not enriching it, though, in another sense, the coming of humans enriches the drama, because valuers arrive in whom nature becomes conscious of itself" (p. 149). Moreover, nature is like womb which human species can never leave, "The stage is the womb from whence we come, but which we really never leave" (p. 151). See Holmes Rolston, III, "Are Values in Nature Subjective or Objective?", *Environmental Ethics* 4, no. 2 (1982): 125-151.

societies. We should therefore look more closely at the most basic values in his comprehensive environmental ethics.

In his very first influential paper published in 1975, “Is There an Ecological Ethic?”, Rolston denotes comprehensive environmental ethics as “Ecological ethics” and says,

This environmental ethic is subject both to limits and to development, and a fair appraisal ought to recognize both. As a partial ethical source, it does not displace functioning social-personal codes, but brings into the scope of ethical transaction a realm once regarded as intrinsically valueless and governed largely by expediency.³²⁷

Rolston clearly states that a comprehensive environmental ethics would value both development and ethics. He thinks that our “social-personal” codes are equally valuable when we relate with the environment. But these codes must consider natural elements, which were thought valueless for a long time, as intrinsically valuable. Rolston’s view is interesting since here some of our common core values are directly addressed again and again. For example, he writes, “Mountains have both physical and psychic impact. Remove eagles from the sky and we will suffer a spiritual loss. For every landscape, there is an inscape; mental and environmental horizons reciprocate”³²⁸.

Note that one of the common core values, spirituality, is vital in Rolston’s environmental ethics. In his famous book *Conserving Natural Value* (1994), Rolston gives us a consistent account of a comprehensive environmental ethics which he called the “Earth ethics”. A synthesis of ethics, science and development is the basic theme of his Earth ethics.

³²⁷ Holmes Rolston, III, “Is There An Ecological Ethic?”, in *The Ethics of the Environment*, ed. Robin Attfield (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008), 25-26.

³²⁸ Ibid., 25.

Unlike Naess and other deep ecologists, Rolston is committed to scientific cultural value and anthropocentric values. Although nature and culture sometimes conflict, Rolston notes that natural and cultural values can co-exist and even “one value can be subtly transformed into another”³²⁹. How is this co-existence and transformation possible? His answer is, through human beings, “We have a duty to our higher selves to respect nature. We have already said that humans who do the right thing in environmental ethics can really never lose. They get more Socratic soul”³³⁰. We all know that Socrates persistently sought “self-knowledge” or self-realization. A Socratic soul would represent the value of self-realization in the form of human excellence.

Of course, there is much more anthropocentric inclination in the Socratic human excellence, but Rolston balanced this anthropocentrism by defending intrinsic natural value, regardless of the value of ecosystemic integrity and the value of unity and diversity of nature. He comments, “We cannot have enriched wild nature by clever management, because the management ultimately impoverishes rather than enriches...We value nature as an *end in itself*”³³¹. If we cultivate ourselves in the light of scientific knowledge, spirituality, aesthetics, and love for nature, only then the true enrichment can take place.

Rolston’s view of comprehensive environmental ethics missed a common core value which is identification. Instead of identification, he emphasizes appreciation of the aesthetic value of nature. But identification as

³²⁹ Holmes Rolston, III, *Conserving Natural Value* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 33.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, 163.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, 201-202.

a value inspires people to protect nature since they find some commonalities with the natural elements with which they identified. In contrast, aesthetic appreciation of nature is only a fraction of a larger picture of identification. Moreover, the sense of “beauty” may vary from person to person and also may not inspire *equally*. What is beautiful in a scientific sense may *not* be beautiful in a common sense.

However, Rolston argues that scientific knowledge would inspire people to preserve nature. For instance, when one knows that certain types of plants have some scientific value, such as medicinal, protect land degradation, and help some beautiful insect species to flourish, one would be inspired to protect those plants. But it is not possible for all people to access scientific knowledge. As a result, protecting nature just based on scientific knowledge is difficult. There might be diverse attitudes toward the reliability of scientific knowledge in different cultures. One interesting example is animal slaughter. The slaughter of cows is banned in some Indian provinces, whereas pigs are forbidden in some Arabian countries. But *scientifically*, there is little or no difference between slaughtering a cow or a pig, and between pig’s meat and cow’s meat. So, a scientific worldview may not be equally acceptable in all cultures and societies. Rolston, therefore, cannot claim comprehensiveness for his environmental ethics. The same is true for others who claim comprehensiveness. Either they all lack a common core value or are highly biased toward modern science.

Nonetheless, from the above discussion some basic features of a comprehensive environmental ethics can be outlined.

Firstly, a comprehensive environmental ethics attempts to value nature beyond its instrumental use. In fact, it holds that natural elements are intrinsically valuable or values belong to them independently. In other words, the value of nature does not depend on human beings.

Secondly, the scope of a comprehensive environmental ethics is so wide that the whole cosmos and natural system may be included in the objects of moral consideration.

Thirdly, the values on which the idea of comprehensive environmental ethics is grounded are not the usual values, such as human interests, but rather some bigger and noble values, such as interconnectedness, sacredness, beauty and sustainability.

Fourthly, a comprehensive environmental ethics should be acceptable to people in any society and any culture. So, having broad values is not enough, it is necessary that these are common core values. In particular, the values of identification, self-realization and spirituality. A comprehensive environmental ethics which lacks any of these three common core values cannot justify its comprehensiveness because these values are fundamental for a harmonious co-existence with nature.

Fifthly, human beings have a vital role to formulate and apply comprehensive environmental ethical principles in their dealings with all natural elements. But their interests must be modified in accordance with the balance and harmony of nature.

Sixthly, a comprehensive environmental ethics should be able to provide pragmatic action-guidingness in any kind of human-nature relation. So, it has to include *some* sciences so that on the one hand people do not

undermine themselves (by placing nature above them), while on the other hand, they can realize and improve gradually their current lifestyles through integration with nature.

Neither ideal comprehensive environmental ethics nor adaptable environmental ethics could justify their comprehensiveness according to these criteria. Beyond the intrinsic value of nature, either they ignore one of the common core values or they lack action-guidingness. As a result, their proposed ethics is inappropriate and unacceptable in a broader context. However, even though Arne Naess, John Passmore and Asian thinkers have exceptionally considered identification, self-realization and spirituality as fundamental values for human- nature relation, their ethical principles are insufficient and less action-guiding too.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS (NORMATIVE) APPROACH VERSUS ENVIRONMENTAL WISDOM (ECOSOPHICAL) APPROACH

It might be worth noting that the comprehensive environmental ethics cannot be just some ethical principles, guidelines, or tools to solve the global ecological crisis. Nor can it be a bundle of traditional environmental wisdom lacking appropriate, constructive and effective ethical principles. Environmental philosophers have been inflexible in applying one or the other of these two approaches. Contemporary ecofeminist thinker Val Plumwood comments on this issue. She says, "...current mainstream brands of environmental philosophy, both those based in ethics and those based in deep

ecology, suffer...to rely implicitly upon rationalist-inspired accounts of the self that have been a large part of the problem”³³². So, according to Plumwood both ways are problematic since the self-nature relation is constructed implicitly on a “rationalistic” account.

Plumwood’s comment distinctively shows that there are two main approaches in current environmental philosophy: one is based on ethics, and let’s call this the environmental *ethics* approach. Another is deep ecology, and let’s call this the environmental *wisdom* approach. Their debate is fundamental.

The debate basically is about the value of the environment and the protection of this value. If one relies on the ethical approach then his or her worldview would be completely different from that of those who rely on the wisdom approach. So, it is quite possible that different values and worldviews would give rise to different notions of the self. Even the same value, when used in different senses and contexts, may produce a completely different kind of self, as was noted in Chapter Three. But we have not shown yet how the worldviews and the notions of the self influence each other.

Naess remarkably proposes and develops the idea that the notion of the self has crucial impact on environmental relationships. Prior to him, most philosophers were engaged in developing a plausible environmental ethics. Nevertheless, Naess declares,

We need environmental ethics, but when people feel that they unselfishly give up, or even sacrifice, their self-interests to show love for nature, this is probably, in the long run, a treacherous basis for conservation. Through identification, they may come to see that their own interests are served by

³³² Val Plumwood, “Nature, Self, and Gender: Feminism, Environmental Philosophy, and the Critique of Rationalism”, in *The Ethics of the Environment*, ed. Robin Attfield (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008), 193.

conservation, through genuine self-love, the love of a widened and deepened self.³³³

Notice that Naess connected some important ideas, such as conservation, self-interest and a widened and deepened self by one single value “identification”. We have already discussed in the Third Chapter Naess’s sense of identification as cosmological, while Passmore’s sense of identification is personal. Cosmological identification ends up at a unique self which Naess called the “ecological self”.

The ecological self, therefore, is unselfish, non-dominating, non-dual, and follows the norms and principles of environmental ethics “naturally” and “beautifully” with joy and happiness. No sacrifice is necessary since what is a sacrifice to others is a joyful activity to the ecological self. The ecological self is an ecologically wise self who has achieved ecological wisdom embedded in traditional cultures and values.

Therefore, it is not surprising, but rather usual that philosophers who are arguing for an enlightened self-interest would end up with a self which prioritizes human beings. Those who are more rigorous, and find human beings as the *only* rational creatures, and rank their preferences at the top, would end up with a dominating self. The dominating self views all types of relations as personal in the sense that members of the human species are the first priority. Whether it is an enlightened self or an egoistic self, it would first consider human beings and their unique ability to solve social, economical and ecological problems. Most classical philosophers (e.g. Descartes) in the West were arguing for a dominating self. However, a major exception is Passmore

³³³ Arne Naess, “Self-realization: An Ecological Approach to Being in the World”, in *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. George Sessions (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1995), 229.

who argues for an enlightened self through stewardship. He writes, “But the Western stewardship tradition goes further than that. It demands from man an active concern for the earth’s fertility”³³⁴.

Until now no established ethics considers nature intrinsically valuable or includes natural elements as moral phenomena, and as such they are all somewhat dominating. However, the great advantage of the ethical approach is that this is action-guiding and in some cases successful enough to solve ecological problems. This approach is also pragmatic and short-term. One appropriate example is Passmore’s environmental philosophy which later contributed to the development of the notion of sustainability. Without the engagement of human beings and their various creative initiatives, sustainable development makes no sense. Therefore, personal identification is the basis of the ethical approach. Personal identification would lead to a dominating self or ecological master.

The environmental wisdom approach, on the other hand, would construct an ecological self or ecological slave. An ecological self is an ecological slave because it puts nature first, just as a religious person puts God first. In some cases, the ecological self may metaphorically become the slave of nature by showing absolute devotion and complete surrender to it. Many people worship nature since nature and the Supreme Being became identified. They consider themselves as the slave of the Supreme Being, and hence they also consider themselves as the slaves of nature. Of course, there are exceptions, as we can see in the Chinese traditions.

³³⁴ John Passmore, *Man’s Responsibility for Nature: Ecological Problems and Western Traditions* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1980), 32.

The basic advantage of the wisdom approach is that norms and principles are not the driving force for humans. Rather they rely on their traditions which support humans and nonhumans. Human beings cannot see themselves isolated, distinct, egoistic and absolutely autonomous once traditional wisdom disallows these values. Sometimes protecting nature through reverence and respect might be internalized in the traditional wisdom.

So, neither the ethical approach nor the wisdom approach can convincingly address the present ecological crisis. They have some advantages as well as disadvantages. A rectification for both approaches is necessary. The dominating self would downgrade nature, while the ecological self would upgrade nature. The former lacks proper wisdom, whereas the latter lacks action-guidingness. The ecological self as an idea is a great advantage in our environmental thoughts, but theoretically and practically unsound, as will be discussed in the next chapter in more detail. A complete philosophical reconstruction of both approaches is necessary for a harmonious co-existence and appropriate environmental policy.

In sum, in this chapter, we have deduced three common core values, namely, identification, self-realization and spirituality from Western and Asian traditions. These values are justified by some standard criteria of core values. The three common core values are discussed from practical and theoretical perspectives. We have also discussed the relation of common core values and comprehensive environmental ethics and noticed that philosophers disagree vastly on the notion of “comprehensiveness”. It is argued that the proposals for ideal comprehensive environmental ethics and the adaptable

comprehensive environmental ethics both are insufficient to address a harmonious human-nature relationship.

A complete theoretical reconstruction is necessary. Is our *emotional* attachment with the environment important at all for a comprehensive environmental ethics? What kind of self would suggest our common core values? Is it the highly conscious (but impersonal) ecological self or a self that considers its emotional bonding with the *place*? These are the questions we will deal with in the final two chapters.

CHAPTER FIVE

SURROUNDINGS, EMOTION AND ECOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

The common core values, identification, self-realization and spirituality, embrace an emotional attachment with the surroundings. They developed *from* a place-based responsibility rather than a humanistic responsibility. By a humanistic responsibility we mean that human beings can form an ecological consciousness through environmental ethical principles. In this case, we do not need to maintain an emotional belongingness with the place. In contrast, a place-based responsibility develops from our deep belongingness with the place. Such responsibility shows that some moral norms spring from our relationship with the surroundings. In recent environmental thinking, place-based responsibility is becoming more prominent since environmental philosophers are not only arguing that our developmental policy should be sustainable, but they are also arguing for a “sustainable biosphere”, or being motivated by “the love of a place or home”. For a solid ecological consciousness, these philosophers therefore think that we must value ecological relationship, biodiversity preservation, our home, and our locality.

However, a tension is already there. Is it the biosphere which should be sustained, or is it our selves? A sense of a bigger Self, or a “comprehensive Self”, which gradually develops from the ecological self is thus created. In this chapter therefore our focus will be the complex relationship of the

environment, emotion and ecological consciousness. We will argue that emotional attachment with our surroundings is important. We need to examine which way our common core values can actually move people to conceive the environment, i.e. toward a sustainable biosphere or toward a comprehensive Self. Let me begin with the idea of a sustainable biosphere.

I. SUSTAINABLE BIOSPHERE

In his latest book, *A New Environmental Ethics: The Next Millennium for Life on Earth* (2012), Holmes Rolston III has outlined a new era for the next millennium environmental ethics. Most environmental philosophers in this century are engaged with the foundational principles of sustainable development. But Rolston warns that sustainable development is not enough for the next century. We have to shift to a much bigger idea called “sustainable biosphere”. The idea of sustainable biosphere is a fundamental paradigm shift in environmental philosophy and ethics. Rolston notes,

An environmental ethic is not just about wildlands, but about humans at home on their landscapes, humans in their culture residing also in nature. This will involve resource use, sustainable development, managed landscapes, the urban and rural environments. Further, environmental ethicists, now and in the future, can and ought sometimes wish nature as an end in itself, a sustainable biosphere.³³⁵

This comment shows that environmental ethics ought to move from sustainable landscapes or managing landscapes to the psychological attachment of human beings to their place or “home” where they consciously

³³⁵ Holmes Rolston III, *A New Environmental Ethics: The Next Millennium for Life on Earth* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 47.

set themselves. A distinction between sustainable development and a sustainable biosphere may help to show us how crucial the latter term is.

Sustainable development emphasizes “development”, or the improvement of the economic condition by using land and other natural resources as long as degradation and pollution is tackled, or at least within control. Sustainable development seeks maximum production of food and agricultural goods at the cost of using chemical fertilizer, pesticides, and other means. In short, nature is a “resource” or “capital” for sustainable development while keeping pollution and environmental hazards in an acceptable or minimum level. For a sustainable biosphere, land should be treated as “community” rather than as “commodity”. Economy and development must consider nature as a “support system” for humans, animals and other biotic communities. According to Rolston, the fundamental principle of a sustainable biosphere is that “any production of such goods be *ecologically sustainable*”³³⁶.

He also calls it the “ultimate survival” philosophy. Earth as our home cannot be sustained if our present attitudes toward it continue. A greater responsibility will take place when we reconstruct our attitudes for a sustainable biosphere, as he metaphorically says, “Earth is not simply the stage, but the story”³³⁷. In the story, emotions, belongingness, feelings, love, and integrity are vital, while in the stage the performance of various characters is vital. Human beings can only achieve a sustainable biosphere when they recognize this Earth as *home* instead of a stage, since at home we practice sympathy, kindness, love, respect, and care, but on the stage we just perform.

³³⁶ Ibid., 219.

³³⁷ Ibid., 220.

II. THE LOVE OF HOME-OIKOPHILIA

Human beings have enormous capacity to destroy the environment, but they are also capable of restoring or repairing it. For restoration, a motivational force is necessary. Roger Scruton in his recent book *Green Philosophy: How to Think Seriously About the Planet* (2012) has introduced an environmental philosophy called *Oikophilia*, or “the love of home”, which is surprisingly in line with Rolston’s idea of a sustainable biosphere. Scruton has showed that our ecological consciousness can emerge from our local *Oikophilia*. He claims that what could prevent human beings from destroying the environment is love of home or belongingness with the place. Love of home supplies the deepest motivational force for environmental conservation. He notes,

...oikophilia, the love of home, a motive that comprehends all our deepest attachments, and which spills out in the moral, aesthetic and spiritual emotions that transfigure our world, creating in the midst of our emergencies a shelter that future generations also may enjoy.³³⁸

Scruton argues that most national and international environmental treaties and governmental initiatives do not work because they lack local affections or people’s attachment with their local environment. The centre of local environment, as Scruton notices, is home. Home represents a place where we feel and show gratitude to our dead forefathers and are also concerned about our children and grand-children, i.e. future generations. At home, we are most free and most accountable in comparison to our interactions with the society, work-place, relatives, friends, and colleagues.

³³⁸ Roger Scruton, *Green Philosophy: How to Think Seriously About the Planet* (London: Atlantic Books, 2012), 214-215.

This can be said to be a “self-chosen” responsibility, i.e. a responsibility which we choose freely, motivated by our deep emotional bonding with home.

The love of home can reasonably be extended to the planetary level according to Scruton. People in Europe, being religiously, culturally and legislatively diverse, still share an idea of homeland. Humans are often identified by their homeland rather than their religious and linguistic background. Home, our living place, therefore generates a loving, caring, and responsible attitude toward our surroundings. He observes, “...the love of the *oikos*, which means not only the home but the people contained in it, and the surrounding settlements that endow that home with lasting contours and an enduring smile. The *oikos* is the place that is not just mine and yours but *ours*”³³⁹.

To conclude, both Rolston’s and Scruton’s views show that belongingness is important for environmental ethics. Perhaps, belongingness with place can lead individuals to a responsible attitude and consideration for others’ interests in order to achieve harmonious living. How should we then define a place?

III. WHAT IS A PLACE?

Although we use “place” in our usual communication loosely there are a number of serious concerns that demand more attention. In order to understand place properly, one may think about a space first. A space is empty, a vacuum. But a place reflects an interrelation between human beings and other natural entities. From the discussion of the previous two sections we may notice two

³³⁹ Ibid., 227.

basic features of a place. Firstly, a place represents a community. This community is not necessarily comprised of humans alone, but also animals, sentient beings, living organisms, plants, trees and other natural entities. Secondly, in a place, community members have to sacrifice some of their personal interests for the sake of harmonious living. This implies that community members living in a place have affections for each other and are dedicated to continue their living harmoniously.

The first feature provides an account of ecological consciousness. In other words, community members value ecological consciousness and engage each other over several important issues. Of course, human beings are the focus of a community.

The second feature provides an answer to the questions why and how community members sacrifice their personal interests for others. There are two types of explanation in this regard. One way is through the maturity of self or intense affection. It is developed by Arne Naess. Another way is through devotion rather than affection, an alternative view of Cartesian ethics. I will discuss and examine both options, the first at length in sections IV and V, and the second more briefly in section VI.

IV. MATURITY OF SELF

The key feature of Naess's sense of "maturity" is to consider nature as *alive*. This maturity is to identify with nature which is "left out" in the traditional

sense of self. The mature self would realize “Nature from the very beginning of our selves”³⁴⁰. A mature self is an ecological self.

Naess is the first person in the West to introduce the idea of ecological self. In fact, the central theme of his ecophilosophy is the construction of an ecological selfhood which feels that nature and self are identified. The ecological self will not destroy nature for any reason because that destruction is ultimately its destruction. The ecological self is simply the ecologically conscious self, a transformative sense of Western selfhood inspired primarily from the Indian traditions. Naess provides a clear definition of the ecological self in his earlier writings. He says, “I shall offer only one single sentence which resembles a definition of the “ecological self”. The ecological self of a person is that with which this person identifies”³⁴¹.

As reflected in this comment, a person and his or her ecological self are “identified” for Naess. Identification was noted as the opposite to alienation or separation. Personhood and the ecological self are inseparable once this kind of self is achieved. It is assumed that the ecological self cannot develop suddenly. It is a process of development from the individual self to the social self, and then from the social self to the metaphysical self. Naess points out that “I”, “ego”, and “self” are identified in Western traditions. Nature does not play any significant role in this identification. The Western form of *the maturity of the individual self* comprises three stages: “...from ego

³⁴⁰ Arne Naess, “Self-realization: An Ecological Approach to Being in the World”, in *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. George Sessions (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1995), 226.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 227.

to social self (comprising the ego), and from social self to a metaphysical self (comprising the social self)”³⁴².

Naess distinguishes between the “social self” and the “metaphysical self”. The social self comprises an isolated and egoistic self but maintains a social relationship with families and friends in the process of identification. On the other hand, the metaphysical self comprises a social self, which is a developed form of an isolated or egoistic self, and it considers at least all social human beings beyond families and friends for identification.

Naess’s deep ecological slogan, “life is fundamentally one”, is closely related to his notion of maturity of self. A mature self would perceive this ecosphere as one single life-form. It attempts to protect this life-form as it protects its own self. But then the question is: Why should we consider “life” in particular as something to be cared for? Is it because every life is valuable and can feel pain or sufferings, and as such nature is also able to suffer? However, Naess never explores “sentience” as a hallmark of morality. Rather, he is always concerned about the “consciousness” which a human being should achieve in order to be aware of other natural elements. Naess’s idea of maturity of the self in the end cannot go beyond life-centredness (all life should be morally considered).

Thus, although Naess argues far beyond biocentrism, his notion of maturity could result in a mere identification with living elements, and it largely ignores the non-sentient elements, such as land, mountains and seas. Even if we consider these as life-forms, Naess does not provide any

³⁴² Ibid., 226.

reasonable explanation of what makes them alive. Is there any spirit or vitality or other element which make them alive?

Nevertheless, we have seen that some Asian traditions also hold nature as alive, active and dynamic. But their explanations are completely different from Naess's. For example, Indian traditions hold that nature is the manifestation of different organs of god and goddesses. Nature itself is the Supreme Being and alive. The Chinese maintains that there are material forces of *li* and *chi* in every element of nature, and the Japanese considered nature as Buddhahood or Buddha-nature which is able to feel. Naess's view is clearly then a jump from biocentrism (members of biotic community are morally significant) to ecocentrism (members of both biotic and abiotic communities are morally significant) without providing sufficient argumentation.

Naess's various examples of the ecological self show that personal identity or personhood has a significant role in developing the ecological self. One example is that of Norwegian settlers who were transported to another place, Naess believes that for them "There is a consequent loss of personal identity"³⁴³. Similar comments are made about the Eskimos: "We all regret the fate of the Eskimos, their difficulty in finding a *new identity*, a new social self, and a new more comprehensive ecological self"³⁴⁴. The ecological self manifests a certain kind of personality or personhood totally different from socially constructed personhood. The ecological self is context-insensitive, unemotional as well as rational to the environment.

In Naess's view, a person who achieved the ecological self does not share contradictory interests with other nonhuman animals or even plants. The

³⁴³ Ibid., 230.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 231.

interest of any animal or plant is compatible with the interest of that person. Only an ecologically enlightened self can realize nonhuman's interests through deep realization of their "inherent potentialities". Naess notes, "...animals and plants have interests in the sense of ways of realizing inherent potentialities which we can study only by interacting with them"³⁴⁵. This discovery of common interest seems unacceptable because humans and nonhumans have different as well as common interests. But Naess only highlights the common interests (such as being alive), and provides too little attention to the different interests (being moral, maximizing self-interest rationally, or sacrifice self-interest rationally for others).

Naess is partially correct that as much as we "interact" with the environment we can realize other fellow creature's inherent potentialities. We need interaction because our study of nature is too insufficient and isolated. Scientific study alone cannot give us the real potentialities of nature. Rather, an open, spiritual, aesthetic, loving, discovering mindset is necessary. Many great scientists spend their whole life in the forest or sea in lieu of their laboratories just to study one single aspect of a particular species. Sometimes, they do not restrict themselves to purely scientific study, experiment and observations. New theories therefore emerged by breaking the old paradigm.

Naess's claim about the same kind of interest of human beings and other nonhumans is inadequate. At a certain level, for instance, an ant and a human being might have similar interests. That is, both want to eat food in order to survive, and they also want to save their lives from potential harms.

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 229-230.

But it is clear that an ant would have an interest for food quite different from human beings. Ants would have an interest to walk collectively rather than individually. Ants do not need artificial appliances, such as air conditioners, refrigerators and cars, for a comfortable and smooth life. Ants are not interested at all to know about the outer space, Mars, and the Moon. They are not worried about finding water in another planet, or searching alternative accommodation there, but human beings are interested in all of these. Since their creation ants and other life forms have been maintaining unchangeable interests, some of which we too can realize (e.g. community bonding). However, the interests of human beings are rapidly changeable and largely unpredictable. Something is present in human beings which distinguished their interests from the interests of a nonhuman being.

Which context or place would the ecological self consider, its immediate context or the global context? Naess's examples claim that the ecological self is more inclined towards its immediate environment. Perhaps, the ecological self is inseparable from its immediate surroundings. But there are times when Naess stresses the idea of global consciousness, such as when he writes: "From the identification process stems unity, and since the unity is of a gestalt character, the wholeness is attained. Very abstract and vague! But it offers a framework for a total view..."³⁴⁶.

Certainly, Naess's main goal is to present a "total view" of what he called "total field-image" throughout his ecosophy. But his arguments are vague as he himself acknowledges in the previous statement. Naess tries to avoid an abstract ecological imagination as much as possible, as his standard

³⁴⁶ Arne Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of An Ecosophy*, trans. and rev. David Rothenberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 173.

example of identification and the example of Norwegian settlers show. Naess also regards a balance between “emotion” and “reason” as vital for his ecosophy. But he is inconsistent in his formulation of the ecological self. Naess uses *context* and *emotion* in his interconnected thesis. However, he is mistaken in focusing merely on ecological consciousness. Recognition and valuation of emotional attachment with our immediate surroundings is much more important for ecological consciousness. Naess initially admits this, but finally overlooks it.

More clearly, in the example of Norwegian settlers, Naess has initially admitted that fishermen living in the Arctic coast maintain an emotional closeness with their surroundings (e.g. they enjoy wilderness and living with the sea creatures). Their resettlement in the new place was described as a transportation of their bodies, not their minds and emotions, as these remained in the previous place. However, Naess then moves further in a broader scale of the same feeling for Eskimos and penguins which is transpersonal rather than personal. While he notes “...their home-place was a part of themselves and that they *identified* with features of that place”³⁴⁷, he mistakenly holds that all of these emotions can be articulated in a single term “ecological consciousness”. Similar emotional approaches can be found in other key examples.

However, the idea of the ecological self has received significant attention in contemporary environmental philosophy. There are some other influential deep ecologists (e.g. Freya Mathews and Warwick Fox) who exclusively formulated different models of the ecological self.

³⁴⁷ Arne Naess, “Self-realization: An Ecological Approach to Being in the World”, in *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. George Sessions (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1995), 231.

Mathews built up her model of the ecological self on the basis of a theory of quantum physics, generally known as the “theory of geometrodynamics”. In her book *The Ecological Self* (1991), she argues that the principle of geometrodynamics provides enough support for Naess’s interconnectedness thesis. Once we appropriately follow this principle, we would end up with a “New Physics” and a new selfhood. This new selfhood is the ecological self.

The interconnected thesis is explained by Mathews in two basic terms: unity and discreteness. Natural substances, such as stones, plants, sands, and rocks, do not have discrete identity, rather, their identity must be retained with cosmic unity. By a combination of Einsteinian physics and Spinoza’s cosmology Mathews presents an argument that “substance is a fluid continuum which cannot be carved up into separate chunks”³⁴⁸. Substances are *fluid continuum*. That is, they are not separate, distinct and independent. Newtonian physics holds atoms static and passive, while Einsteinian physics describes them as a dynamic field where electron, proton and neutron are bonded together. Mathews claims that we have to analyze substances in a “space-time manifold” in accordance with this interrelation.

Ontologically, Mathews’s view then would define natural elements from two perspectives, geometrical structure and functional form. A rock has identity and stability in relation to its geometrical structure, but its functionality is as the same as an organism. Whatever dynamism and unity can be found in organic elements can also be found in it. From the functional point of view a rock is also a self-maintenance machine as an organism is. All

³⁴⁸ Freya Mathews, *The Ecological Self* (London: Routledge, 1991), 93.

elements in this Earth then function under one single systematic principle, “self-maintenance”.

To say that both living and nonliving elements function under the “self-maintenance” system implies that the Earth itself cannot be left out. The Earth has to follow its own self-maintaining functionality. According to Mathews, this self-maintenance should be called “Self-realization” because it is “goal-directed”. Since the goal directedness is intrinsically valuable, Self-realization is also intrinsically valuable for her. Only self has objective identity in Mathews’s Self-realizing system where there are uncountable small selves and one bigger Self, the cosmos. The important point in her claim is that selfhood cannot be limited to human beings alone, but everything from rock to cosmos could have a selfhood. So, her main claim can be summarized in a few words, “...that the cosmos as a whole possesses the power of self-realization, and hence qualifies for selfhood”³⁴⁹.

This view is not fully compatible with Naess’s view. Naess did conclude that there is a wide sense of self, but that has to be extended from the narrower self. Mathews finds that the cosmos “as a whole” is the bigger Self and claims its selfhood. But in order to claim selfhood, showing structural similarities may not be enough. Mathews further has to show that the cosmic Self has the same feeling capability, emotional response, and most importantly, autonomy which an individual self might have. Her geodynamic principle provides an argument for self-maintenance present in all organisms, trees and plants. However, along with self-maintenance, we need to know whether the

³⁴⁹ Ibid., 129.

cosmos can do it consciously. Or, does it just run according to a mechanistic model through interrelatedness and interdependence?

Naess, on the other hand, begins with ecology not physics. His basic principle is the ecological relationship found in natural elements. We all ought to value and maintain this relationship. He finds that all organisms and natural elements are inherently connected and are contributing to the functioning of the biosphere. He is less interested in whether the biospheric aliveness could claim a kind of selfhood. Of course, he would not reject Mathews's view as deeply ecological.

One of the main goals of Naess's ecosophy was to remove spirituality or religious phobia from nature, and provide an ecological explanation which can match well with Western views. However, Mathews goes far beyond Naess's view when she claims that the cosmos as an organism could qualify for selfhood. Moreover, her view would not be very different from those in the Indian traditions. Mathews, therefore, could be regarded as a Neo-panpsychist, while Naess is not a panpsychist.

Another version of the ecological self was developed by the contemporary deep ecological thinker Warwick Fox, which he called "the transpersonal self". While his approach is also based on Naess's interconnected thesis, it is "more ecocentric" and "cosmological". He uses psychology rather than theoretical physics. Fox's transpersonal self is mainly endowed with the deep ecological notion of Self-realization. He argues that deep ecology should be articulated in three different senses, formal, philosophical and popular.

The formal sense is “asking deeper questions” related to our ecological relationships. Any kind of religious or philosophical pantheism, which also asks such deep questions and provides answers, will be included in this sense. The philosophical sense refers to the derivation of Naess’s own ecosophy, ecosophy T. Finally, the popular sense adopts all kinds of radical ecocentrism that supports Naess’s ecosophy, such as when one says, “Let the mountain Himalaya live!”

Given these three distinctive senses of deep ecology, the fundamental problem Fox finds with Naess’s notion of deep ecology is, in his words,

...insofar as we hold deep ecology to be concerned with an ecocentric approach to ecology/living-in-the-world, Naess’s formal, asking - deeper - questions / derivation - from - fundamentals sense of deep ecology is not a *tenable* sense of deep ecology. It fails to distinguish ecocentric views (or those who hold these views) from anthropocentric views (or those who hold these views).³⁵⁰

Fox’s challenge is twofold, first, only asking deeper questions is not deep ecology. We need to change our behavior immediately and that requires Self-realization. Secondly, Naess’s sense of deep ecology may lead us to an anthropocentric conclusion. In the end, deep ecology is an attempt to construct the anthropocentric ethics under the name of ecocentric ethics. These attacks are not fully justified in my view.

Asking deeper questions is painted as an indication of deep ecology. Many environmental problems caused by human beings can be solved if we ask deeper questions. Do we need to use a plastic bag? Most people do not think about this, but a deep ecologist raises the issue, and refines at least his or her own activity. This change in his or her behavior does not arise from “Self-

³⁵⁰ Warwick Fox, *Toward A Transpersonal Ecology: Developing New Foundations for Environmentalism* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1990), 141.

realization” with the plastic bag. Instead, it just comes from deep thinking and feeling. Since a deep ecologist does it habitually, thinking about duties or calculating utility may not be necessary for him or her. An appreciation of deep questions, deep realization of the impact of his or her activity is enough. Deep ecology is a prominent approach in this regard. It is important to note that Naess stresses “Self-realization”, but he also paid enough attention to identification and spirituality. Thus, isolating Self-realization from the rest of his views would be misleading. We should consider the whole of his deep ecology.

I agree with Fox that there are several anthropocentric elements (e.g. joy, happiness) in Naess’s ecocentrism. This is probably because human beings possess some special qualities (e.g. they are capable of taking care of other creatures from a sense of duty or utility). For Naess, human beings are unique in realizing “interconnectedness” or realizing that they are inherently connected with other community members. This realization warns them against greed, egoistic and isolated behavior. Their awareness is at the core of an appropriate attitude toward nature.

Nevertheless, we have little basis for claiming that Naess is anthropocentric because he never thought human beings are superior. Nor did he think that all values should be derived from human beings, from their preferences and choices. His view is just an ecocentric view as he proceeds from biosphere to human beings, not from human beings to biosphere. But it is evident that he is more concerned about “life”, than with nonliving elements. He might hold a biocentric view, but by believing “all life-forms are one” he dissociates himself from anthropocentrism.

Fox tried to show that a true ecocentric view has to be “impartial” to all elements, living and nonliving. In other words, he believes that an ecocentric view must overlook all special qualities of human beings and realize that all elements are equal. In this type of ecocentrism, a farmer’s identification with his or her own cattle and his or her identification with all other cattle in the Earth intensively and qualitatively is the same. What Fox suggests is that Naess’s notion of Self-realization generates a transpersonal self, not an ecological self.

Fox’s transpersonal self is not distinct only from the ecological self, but it is also distinct from all kinds of selves so far proposed. As he claims,

This is because, whatever their qualitative differences, the desiring-impulsive self, the rationalizing-deciding self, and the normative-judgmental self all refer to a narrow, atomistic, or particle-like conception of self whereas the transpersonal self refers to a wide, expansive, or field-like conception of self.³⁵¹

At this stage it is necessary to review whether we need to distinguish between Naess’s three senses of deep ecology. We need to ask, does Fox’s view correctly address Naess’s deep ecological approach? On the one hand, Fox has tried to provide a philosophical framework for deep ecology, Naess’s ecosophy and ecocentrism in a broad sense. On the other hand, he has misguided other deep ecologists to perceive Naess’s ecosophy *only* from a cosmological perspective, instead of a combination of personal and cosmological perspectives. Naess’s main concern was to define some values, such as identification, self-realization, and spirituality, and to use them to build a *comprehensive* environmental philosophy.

³⁵¹ Ibid., 215.

Most scholars (e.g. Bill Devall, George Sessions, David Rothenburg) think that the term which represents Naess's Gestalt thinking is "Self-realization". Some of them, such as Mathews and Fox, interpreted this term in an excessively psychological and cosmological manner. Others prioritize his Gestalt move or "shift" from the narrow self to a comprehensive Self. This Gestalt shift significantly contributes to change our attitude and behavior toward the environment. Christian Diehm, one such deep ecologist, concludes, "Starting with the gestalt ontological considerations...we have found that emphasis ought not to lie primarily on expanding the self but on expanding the possibilities for new forms of encounter with nature and for a deeper understanding of the values it holds"³⁵².

Diehm's point is that we should consider different types of "encounter" with nature, instead of just focusing on a single norm, "Self-realization", when explaining Naess's ecosophy. However, from my point of view, throwing other possibilities away, Mathews and Fox just focused on Self-realization, and that is a clear deviation from Naess's basic ideas.

V. MAIN OBJECTIONS TO THE ECOLOGICAL SELF

Naess and other deep ecologists claimed that the only viable way to solve the ecological crisis is to reduce our alienation from nature to a maximal degree. In order to do so, they have suggested viewing nature as part of us. Alternatively, we and nature are *not* distinct and separate. So, nature cannot be

³⁵² Christian Diehm, "Arne Naess and the Task of Gestalt Ontology", *Environmental Ethics* 28, no.1 (2006): 33.

independent from us but rather, nature is a unified cosmic whole with human beings as a part of it.

The ecological self, referred to as the “expanded self”, is a widened and deepened self that is capable of feeling others’ destruction as its own destruction. This kind of self includes others’ interest in its own, and ultimately treats nature as an expanded notion of “self-interest”. How can it avoid egoism? The problem of the expanded self is not merely carrying egoistic elements, but it also rationalizes them as far as possible. As a result, the distinctiveness of others is denied.

Another problem is that although Naess says empathy should not be the main issue for the expanded self, his illustration clearly shows that such a self must “empathize” with nature. However, all deep ecologists strategically avoided the role of empathy. In the end, the expanded self shares both egoism and “sacrificed” self-interest. Plumwood comments that the expanded self is “...just another pretentious and obscure way of saying that humans [can] empathize with nature”³⁵³. She agreed with fellow ecofeminist philosopher Warren that in this account of self “Others are *recognized morally* only to the extent that they are incorporated into the self, and their *difference* denied”³⁵⁴.

Plumwood’s view is that the ecological self should necessarily be a caring self, full of emotion, and valuing personal relationships, rather than an “abstraction” and “detachment” from places. Her conception of self is entirely feminine, and she calls it a “relational account of self”. Her relational self would maintain two basic characteristics, “...the distinctness of nature but also

³⁵³ Val Plumwood, “Nature, Self, and Gender: Feminism, Environmental Philosophy, and the Critique of Rationalism”, in *The Ethics of the Environment*, ed. Robin Attfield (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008), 205.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 205.

our relationship and continuity with it”³⁵⁵. There is no merger of egoistic self and bigger Self, nor any diminishing of ego, nor even highly abstract cosmological identification. The relational self thus sees the “...self as embedded in a network of essential relationships with distinct others”³⁵⁶.

Fox’s transpersonal self is also detached from particularity and aims at “impartial identification” with the cosmos. That is, as he claims, it discards “particular concerns, personal emotions, and attachments” while maintaining impartial identification. The advocates of the transpersonal self intend to provide a universal framework of deep ecological philosophy. However, many scholars find this universalization a great *deviation* from Naess’s basic thesis. As Plumwood notes,

...it cannot allow for the deep and highly particularistic attachment to place that has motivated both the passion of many modern conservationists and the love of many indigenous peoples for their land (which deep ecology inconsistently tries to treat as a model).³⁵⁷

We have noticed that the attachment to place appears as a major concern for Naess in his many examples, including Norwegian settlers and Arctic penguins. Plumwood’s concern therefore must be taken seriously as she notes that a lot of conservationists get their motivation and passion from their identification with a particular place. A place can never be just a place if one identifies with it. It can always be defined with motivation, inspiration, passion and intimacy. Otherwise, it seems very hard to explain why sometimes people stay in a place with their families for the whole life. We love our old home even though we leave it, our old schools, our old villages, and old playground. There is possibly no way to undermine these personal attachments.

³⁵⁵ Ibid., 210.

³⁵⁶ Ibid., 210.

³⁵⁷ Ibid., 205-206.

Thus Plumwood says, “In inferiorizing such particular, emotional, and kinship-based attachments, deep ecology gives us another variant on the superiority of reason...”³⁵⁸.

One of the major issues in environmental philosophy is to define the position of human beings and the position of other natural elements in relation to them. The deep ecological self requires that we should live in a way that is “self-in-Self”. In other words, except for fulfilling fundamental needs we cannot destroy nature. The comprehensive Self is much bigger and more valuable than human beings. The deep ecological self cannot allow building a dam even though without it many people will die each year because of flood. The comprehensive Self (or nature) dictates to individuals what they should do. Their personal interests will be fulfilled by nature just as a religious person’s interests are fulfilled by his or her Creator. So, human beings’ freedom, dignity, autonomy are definable only in relation to the supremacy of nature. It seems that they are living with nature as slaves live in order to support the interests of their master.

That should not be the right position for the human species, the only capable species on Earth to take care of other creatures, to realize their deep connection with other natural elements, to identify very intimately with their surroundings, and most importantly, to protect nature through their attitudes, behavior, reason, and activities. Other natural elements could be their inspiration, motivation, fulfillment of deep aesthetic-spiritual understanding, but not their masters. So, in the idea of the ecological self both the positions of human beings and other elements of nature are misplaced. Human beings are

³⁵⁸ Ibid., 206.

neither masters nor slaves of nature and vice-versa. A *partnership* relation is much more appropriate.

The idea of the ecological self is a seriously mistaken synthesis of Western science and Eastern mysticism which neither fit well in the Western context nor can it fit in the Eastern context. Arne Naess acknowledges that he was greatly inspired by Gandhi's thought, specifically, his notion of Self-realization. Gandhi's concept of Self-realization was not a new thing, it was directly borrowed from Hindu religious scriptures. In particular, Samkara's *Advaita Vedanta* was its origin, as we have discussed in the Second Chapter. So, the idea of Self-realization obviously has a religio-cultural context. In the Hindu cultural context, Self represents the Ultimate Reality or Supreme Being. One important thing to note here is that in Hindu metaphysics "ignorance" and "knowledge" play a vital role. The way of being self-conscious and of realizing the Ultimate Reality required knowledge. Individuals can obtain this knowledge through devotion, their complete surrender to nature through performing several religious rituals.

Once they realize that this world and the Self are identified, nature is an expression of the Ultimate Reality, they achieved liberation (*moksa*) from all kinds of ignorance (*bondage*). Self-realization therefore has a very strong religio-cultural background in the Asian context. However, Naess borrowed this influential term and discards its religio-cultural roots when he replaced it in the Western context.

Western cultures attempt to justify human-nature relation on the basis of science. Naess as a Westerner imports his notion of interconnectedness from ecological science, but imposes the Eastern metaphysics of Self-

realization. Therefore, clearly there is a religio-cultural gap or missing link in Naess's synthesis of ecology and cosmology. For this reason, Naess sometimes provides vague, obscure, overlapping meanings of identification, self-realization and spirituality. Moreover, Brennan and Lo have emphasized the inadequacy of the ecological self and Naess's deep ecological platform, "There is no need to hold a relational conception of the self, or to share his views on identification and extended self-concern in order to sign up for the platform",³⁵⁹.

A related problem is that the idea of the ecological self can hardly motivate people who do not support the deep ecological platform. Thus, lack of motivation could be seen as a major problem in the idea of the deep ecological self. One might argue that "interrelatedness" should play the key role to motivate people, whether they believe in the deep ecological platform or not. But this kind of argument is acceptable at the surface level, not at the deeper level. Many governments, despite being aware of their interconnectedness with the local environment, are engaged with environmental hazards. Sometimes their activities are so irresponsible that the whole nation has to pay for it.

For instance, Ludescher recently calls for global environmental activism to save the Amazon rain forest. She writes, "The destruction of the Amazon rain forest via deforestation, mining, and oil drilling presents a grave environmental crisis demanding immediate action"³⁶⁰. The author notes that the "aggressive resource extraction" is operated by global oil companies with

³⁵⁹ Andrew Brennan and Y.S. Lo, *Understanding Environmental Philosophy* (Durham: Acumen Publishing Limited, 2010), 112.

³⁶⁰ Jessica Christie Ludescher, "Sustainable Development and the Destruction of the Amazon: A Call for Universal Responsibility", *Environmental Ethics* 33, no. 2 (2011): 197.

a partnership of Peru and the Ecuadorian governments. Now, we could easily imagine the scenario of other developing countries where law and order are mostly ineffective or simply absent. Although a few powerful people, who are benefiting from such activities, know that “everything is interrelated”, they are not motivated enough to protect the Amazon. However, the indigenous people around the Amazon and all over the Earth are always motivated enough and displayed their concern for the environment through repeated movements. Why?

The ecological self provides us little or no action-guidingness in making practical decisions. Environmental decision-making is becoming more and more complex in the contemporary world. We are now living in a time when people are relatively conscious about their environment. But simultaneously, they also want to live a much more comfortable life. They want all equipments to be automatic and remote-controlled, so they can enjoy their lives without disruption or physical labor, and feel much more secure and environmentally clean.

However, a well-known problem is that we have to choose to either preserve the environment and live less luxuriously, or enjoy huge economic and scientific development with less environmental preservation. The developed world has implemented “sustainable development” so that they can maintain both rich life styles and preserve wilderness. But environmental decisions are not so simple for them too.

Let’s take one familiar problem in one of the most developed countries in the world, the United States of America. In the western United States an endangered fish species is humpback chub (*Gila cypha*) which has no

instrumental value, no aesthetic value, no ecosystemic value and also no transformative value. As Smith describes the problem, “Since either the humpback chub has no clear instrumental goods, or what few instrumental goods it does have are likely outweighed by the costs of trying to save it, instrumental goods cannot reasonably be used in a defense of its preservation”³⁶¹. Should the U.S. preserve humpback chubs at the cost of millions of dollars and considerable sacrifice? How does Naess’s ecological self guide us?

Naess would say that an ecological self perceives all life-forms as intrinsically valuable. Since all life-forms are fundamentally the same in quality and they are parts of a big comprehensive Self, it is not important whether chubs are useful or have economic value. The question which is important to Naess is, are they members of the ecosphere? An ecological self would feel the sufferings of chubs due to the loss of their habitats. Then, the ultimate guideline is that Americans should preserve humpback chubs even at the cost of downgrading their lifestyles to generate funds. This guideline is somehow acceptable, though some people may find it irrational.

However, Americans cannot leave the Colorado River useless just for the habitat of an endangered species which has no or ignorable instrumental value. Long before Smith’s paper, pioneer environmental philosopher Holmes Rolston III mentions that Coloradans need a dam for available water supply to the inhabitants and also for economic development,

Coloradans need to decide whether to trade water development on the Colorado River, providing growth and convenience for the Front Range cities, against the

³⁶¹ Ian A. Smith, “The Role of Humility and Intrinsic Goods in Preserving Endangered Species: Why Save the Humpback Chub?”, *Environmental Ethics* 32, no. 2 (2010): 172.

extinction of the humpback chub...The chub cannot live in the lakes behind the dams that humans desire.³⁶²

The issue is now complex. Should Coloradans have the dam at the cost of the extinction of a unique creature? The supporters of the ecological self could reply that human beings are not the species which should come first. In making this decision why should we give priority to the human community? Coloradans must accept a shortage of water supply and less consumption of water if they are ecologically conscious. Surely, this would be an *impractical* guideline for the Coloradans and annoying for the U.S. government.

Now, let us turn the issue in an opposite direction. Consider Bangladesh, one of the least developed countries in the Earth with a huge population and currently facing extreme environmental threats from Climate Change. In fact, scientists forecast that parts of the country may “disappear before too long”³⁶³. Bangladesh, with her neighbor India, owns the largest mangrove forest in the Earth, “Sundarbans”.

Sundarbans is a habitat of hundreds of species of fish, crabs, snails, mollusks and shrimps (prawns) with birds, reptiles, animals, insects, and uncountable micro-organisms. A large number of species of flora, locally known as “Sundari” (*Heritiera tomes*), are distributed throughout the forest land. Should Bangladesh preserve the Sundarbans or continue to collect 50% of the total forest related revenue at the cost of rapid reduction of flora and funnel species? Can the ecological self motivate the Bangladeshis to preserve Sundarbans at the cost of not feeding themselves and their families?

³⁶² Holmes Rolston, III, “Can the East Help the West to Value Nature?”, *Philosophy East and West* 37, no. 2 (1987): 185.

³⁶³ Andrew Brennan and Y.S. Lo, *Understanding Environmental Philosophy* (Durham: Acumen Publishing Limited, 2010), 3.

Recently, in a study on Sundarbans it is found that “The significant and recent causes of Sundarbans mangrove loss in the past decade have included...the destructive production methods of export-oriented industrial shrimp farms and factories”³⁶⁴. Note that this study has mentioned one of the major causes of wilderness destruction in Sundarbans, “destructive production methods”. Of course, human beings are directly or indirectly responsible for every cause related to wilderness destruction and biodiversity extinction in the forest. But if we want to know the root causes we must know *who* these human beings are. An in-depth historical and cultural study has showed that Sunderbans is now occupied with migrant settlers who are basically workers for various trade industries.

Interestingly, the study noted that at earlier times there were only temporary settlers. Later, a few permanent settlers maintain their livelihood by collecting honey and producing salt from saline water. Gradually, “The jungle receded to the background and the original settlers were exploited”³⁶⁵.

Definitely there is a difference between the identification of “original settlers” and “migrated settlers” with Sunderbans. The difference lies in the knowledge of relationships to their surroundings. Knowledge that the migrant settlers lack but the original settlers practice is simple, “They know that in time the jungle will reclaim its territory, the tiger and the snake will become their neighbours and then it will be time once again to search for new

³⁶⁴ M.A. Awal, *Ecological Pollution in Sundarbans* (Dhaka: A H Development Publishing House, 2010), 20.

³⁶⁵ Sutapa Chatterjee Sarkar, *The Sundarbans: Folk Deities, Monsters and Mortals* (New Delhi: Social Science Press, 2010), 183.

homes”³⁶⁶. They have the knowledge of neighborhood, a responsible mentality found in the neighboring self.

Indeed, the solution that Smith has provided to preserve humpback chubs is to develop a virtuous self. This virtuous self will show “humility” to other creatures. If one can recognize what is important in the other species, having a virtuous self he or she should be motivated to do that for them. In this way, Coloradans can save the lives of chubs, even though chubs are not intrinsically valuable. So, the core idea “...is being motivated to promote the importance of other things outside oneself and one’s associates”³⁶⁷.

Smith’s solution is sensible, that if someone is motivated enough to promote other’s important interests then the question of intrinsic or extrinsic valuation becomes irrelevant. Indeed, Smith argues that all biological species possess intrinsic goods. But should we also preserve mountains? Is there any value in nonliving elements? Or are they just valueless? Why should humility be practiced “outside oneself and one’s associates”?

In my view, a better solution could be a fundamental change in Coloradans’ perceptions of neighbor, and an increase in their level of awareness toward harmonious living. We assume that many Coloradans naturally share Western anthropocentric environmental values, but at the same time they are also (more) informed about the environmental crisis. Dealing with this local as well as global crisis we need personal and collective initiatives. For a better living Earth Coloradans may begin from their own State, like the Sierra Club people started from Hetch Hetchy Valley, California. They need to come out from their high rise buildings and visit the Colorado

³⁶⁶ Ibid., 16.

³⁶⁷ Ian A. Smith, “The Role of Humility and Intrinsic Goods in Preserving Endangered Species: Why Save the Humpback Chub?”, *Environmental Ethics* 32, no. 2 (2010): 179.

River, enjoy its beauty and also see the beauty of humpback chub, their happy movements in their own habitats. It will increase Coloradans' existing level of *identification*. After going back home they will *realize* that they need water and uninterrupted energy supply, but the fish also need the river just for survival. This realization would be totally different. They will feel that humpback chubs are their neighbors, living in the same territory. A *spiritual* consciousness may develop on the basis of this neighboring relationship that would guide their decision-making.

I think that when Coloradans shift their understanding and relation with a river and a fish species through identification, self-realization and spirituality they would conceive a different kind of self, namely, the neighboring self (I explain this notion of self in detail in the final chapter). It will change their mindset, awareness level, and perceptions of their neighborhood. In due course, they themselves will decide how much sacrifice they can make for their fellow neighborhood species. Like the Sierra Club people, there are many examples throughout the globe where native inhabitants join their hands together to save a species, a river, a forest, or a mountain. Why not Coloradans?

VI. LOVE AND DEVOTION

Despite Descartes's well established anthropocentric view of nature, an alternative view of his philosophy has been proposed by Cecilia Wee. Wee shows us how an individual can sacrifice his or her interests for other community members by maintaining a Cartesian ethical principle. Generally, a

Cartesian agent is self-centred. But the agent can overcome this self-centredness through the virtue of love and devotion. Descartes believes that this universe was created by God. One who loves God must have love for all of His creations, including the Earth. In this way, the Earth as a whole becomes his or her object of reverence, love and respect.

The point to consider here is that Descartes' view does not support an extension of love on a one-one basis, i.e. human beings' love for their animals or any other particular species. Instead of it, love should be extended to the universe as a whole. Wee notes, "...Descartes believes that the universe as whole has its own value above the value of its component parts. Moreover, as this value far outweighs our own as individuals, we should place its interests above our own"³⁶⁸.

Now, a Cartesian response to the question why agents should abandon their own interests to preserve nature becomes clearer. We may also assume the motivational force that drives them to do so. Descartes made a distinction between "affection" and "devotion" to discuss this point more precisely. If one loves an object he or she should have devotion for it, not just affection. He says, "when we have less esteem for it than ourselves, we have only a simple affection for it...and when we have more esteem for it, our passion may be called "devotion" "³⁶⁹. Thus, a Cartesian agent may have affection for a natural entity but that has to be transformed into devotion for the preservation of nature since "In the case of devotion, the agent feels greater esteem for the loved object than for herself, and so the loved object is considered the greater

³⁶⁸ Cecilia Wee, "Cartesian Environmental Ethics", *Environmental Ethics* 23, no 3 (2001): 285.

³⁶⁹ *Oeuvres de Descartes*, ed. Charles Adam and Paul Tannery (Paris: J. Vrin, 1982), 11: 390, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol. 3, trans. John Cottingham et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 357, quoted in Cecilia Wee, "Self, Other, and Community in Cartesian Ethics", *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 19, no. 3 (2002) : 261.

part of the whole. The agent would then abandon her interests for the preservation of the loved object”³⁷⁰.

Wee’s argument appropriately shows that community members may abandon their personal interests for the good of community. But one important issue could be that when an agent does *not* believe in God, or nature is not His creation, he or she may not share similar esteem of love or devotion for natural entities. One option to resolve this tension is viewing nature as mother.

VII. NATURE AS MOTHER

There are some Asian traditions which invoke a feminist relation with nature. For instance, Indian traditions view nature as a mother and very often called “Mother Nature”. In Western traditions, Gaia was also a name of a mother goddess who is identical with Earth. So, the “Mother Earth” slogan is not unfamiliar to the West. But is there any advantage if human beings perceive this Earth as “Mother Nature” or “Mother Earth”?

From my point of view, the feminist concept of “Motherizing” nature might have very little significance to protect the environment. The relation between mother and child is very special, psychologically begins even long before the child comes into this Earth. In other words, the mother and child relationship develops as soon as fertilization happens. Although the zygote does not have human-like structure and consciousness, the mother’s emotional attachment with it cannot be overlooked. A mother begins her imagination truly as a mother, thinking that her baby is growing. A mother’s imagination

³⁷⁰ Cecilia Wee, “Self, Other, and Community in Cartesian Ethics”, *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 19, no. 3 (2002): 261-262.

even goes further once she starts to feel the existence of the baby in her womb through its physical movement.

Apart from deep emotional attachment, the mother-child relation is a highly caring relationship. Once the child was unable to do anything, but mother did everything for him or her. Later the mother becomes unable to do many things by herself, and the child does those for her. So, a kind of unconditional intimate support and co-operation from both sides can be observed. However, the traditional “Mother-Nature” relation is one-sided. Human beings as children are seen only as a receiver of food, shelter, air, water from the Mother. But human beings do not receive these unconditionally. Sometimes they have to pay physical or intellectual labor, money, and other kinds of return. So, unless there is a religious inspiration it is hard to view nature as a mother.

However, there is another metaphorical way of viewing nature as a mother. A mother carries the future generations. So, the next generation and the mother’s womb are identified, inseparable. This Earth is like the mother’s womb. If we want to preserve our own next generation, generations of other species, from extinction, we should be caring for and protecting the Earth which produces food for all kinds of living creatures. If the mother’s womb becomes toxic no child can be sustained. Numerous recent researches have found that food materials are becoming toxic day by day because of the use of complex chemicals and as a result of pollution. Mothers, both in the animal kingdom and in the human species, are consuming these toxic foods. As a result, not only a particular mother’s body, but also the next generations and even the whole Earth is under threat.

We should be caring about mother. As Simms observes, “When we alter nature through the introduction of artificial compounds, we also alter the female body and the bodies of generations to come”³⁷¹. This kind of ecofeminist philosophy provides us with enough insights to go beyond the individual mother and think about the ecological responsibility that we have towards the Earth. Before doing any alternation, or producing chemical compounds in nature, we must keep in mind that “...the extinction of *our species* is happening in our bodies”³⁷². Surely, a child can sacrifice some personal interests for nature if he or she views it as Mother.

I will end this discussion with Rolston’s comment on ecological wisdom. His following comment summarizes the basic limitations of the mere ecological consciousness and also shows the significant reason to abandon it. Rolston writes, “What is required is not just prudence, but principled responsibility to the biospheric Earth”³⁷³. Rolston is correct in saying that the ecologically conscious self that could only provide us with “prudence” is not enough. We also need a “principled responsibility”. Of course, Rolston has outlined his own principles of responsibility, but purely on the basis of physics, Darwinism and psychology. So, he does not need to develop a concept of self. However, in my view, the concept of self is crucial for human-nature relationship if we really want a viable solution to global ecological crisis since only a responsible self can change the current attitudes and lifestyles. Is it possible to construct a self which is based on ecological prudence and a principled responsibility? The answer is given in the final chapter.

³⁷¹ Eva-Maria Simms, “Eating One’s Mother: Female Embodiment in a Toxic World”, *Environmental Ethics* 31, no. 3 (2009): 274.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, 277.

³⁷³ Holmes Rolston III, *A New Environmental Ethics: The Next Millennium for Life on Earth* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 153.

In this chapter, after discussing the complex issues of emotion, ecological consciousness and the environment, we considered that an emotional attachment with our surroundings is not just present but is required for a sustainable biosphere. If we love our home, value it for emotional attachment, that should motivate us to preserve other natural entities closely associated with it. While we appreciate that an ecological consciousness can direct ourselves toward an impersonal communication with nature, it will not provide an action-guiding moral principle. On this ground, we have discussed some significant reasons for abandoning the idea of the ecological self or maturity of self. Regardless of holding an idea of maturity of self, one may view all entities in nature as God's creations and love for Him enables us to sacrifice some personal interests. Alternatively, Earth as Mother seems plausible for the caring of future generations. All these discussions signify that a place and our emotional attachment to it should be taken more seriously. In the last chapter, I therefore intend to develop a new version of human-nature relation based on our three core values and one primitive ethical principle which is intimate, emotional, responsible, and highly motivational.

CHAPTER SIX

A CONCEPT OF 'NEIGHBORING SELF' AND THE 'PROTECTION PRINCIPLE'

A neighbor-centric sense of three common core values, identification, self-realization and spirituality, was distinguished in our previous discussion. This new sense creates the possibility of constructing a version of the “neighboring self” and a guiding principle for the protection of nature. In other words, the concept of neighboring self is a product of comparative analysis of Western and Asian environmental views. My intention is to present a full version of a neighbor-centric approach that synthesizes elements from other approaches in environmental philosophy. In addition, I will outline a protection principle to promote my neighbor-centric approach. I will then argue that a comprehensive environmental ethics would maintain this principle. Some potential criticisms of the neighbor-centric view will also be addressed accordingly.

“Neighbor” as a term is vividly present in our social, political, religious, anthropological, scientific, philosophical and even legal discussions. It has appeared in many perspectives. Yet, most environmental philosophers have overlooked the idea till now, and current environmental policies do not address the issue as a potential solution to the global environmental crisis. The idea apparently receives less attention in the environmental context. One of the main reasons for this is its local orientation. Put differently, “neighbor” refers

to a relationship focused on the local surroundings. However, there is no reason to think that this idea is less significant in the environmental context just because environmental problems are global in character, whereas neighbor is a local concept.

Human beings as responsible agents can have harmonious co-existence with their fellow nonhuman neighbors. Indeed, there is evidence that when this Earth was environmentally sound, human beings maintained a harmonious relationship with their nonhuman neighbors. Currently, the indigenous people, who rarely lead a techno-centric civilized life, somehow bear the sentiment. Their lifestyles are environmentally very rich, but generally simple. What then is a neighboring self? Is there any deep-rooted ethical principle that is embedded in this notion?

I. A CONCEPT OF 'NEIGHBORING SELF'

A neighboring self is a neighborhood conscious self, rather than the ecologically conscious self. I am using the word "neighbor" in the ecological sense where communities are defined as "natural communities", instead of "social communities". Generally, neighbors are people or a group of people who live in the same area. Sometimes, neighbors denote those people living in two different countries in the same geographical region. Neighbors may also refer to a group of people who have a common race, language, culture, religion or ideology. Neighbors usually maintain a co-operational and harmonious relation for mutual benefit. The term represents an intimate, emotional, and caring relation. However, it is not obvious that all neighbors

have responsible relations. People of two neighboring islands can fight for decades without any neighboring relation. Indeed, history shows that if neighbors have a harmonious neighboring relation they can live better.

We are habituated with human neighbors. But I am highlighting here that the habit of excluding other community members, such as, trees, rivers, plants, mountains, and numerous flora and fauna, may make our lives challenging. Is it really correct that only humans can be our neighbors? What does a maple tree beside my residence lack that excludes it from being regarded as neighbor contrasted with a handicapped human being?

We human beings are not isolated from natural elements. Sometimes natural elements can represent a country. For example, Niagara Falls in Canada, the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, Sahara Desert in Africa, Mount Everest in Nepal, the Nile River in Egypt, Mount Fuji in Japan, Huang He River in China, and many more. We feel proud of them. These natural elements inspire us in various ways. So, we should also look at our surroundings, where many natural elements are living with us for a long or short while, but may totally be unknown to us. This separation arises for a very narrow meaning of the term “neighbor”.

I believe that neighbor should be understood in a spatial sense. Natural elements are ecological neighbors to us. We live in the same surroundings. We have an emotional attachment to them which other elements elsewhere lack. We cannot survive in their absence. They also need care from us. The main advantage of considering them as neighbors is *motivation*. Our ecological neighbors motivate us to flourish as a caring human beings, responsible persons, and conscious citizens.

Generally, neighbors involve a place and community. A place is not just a combination of some biotic and abiotic elements. A place has a system, other life-forms and natural elements are fabricated within it. A community is a mutual attachment, sharing and sacrificing some personal interests between all members. Local affections can reduce many environmental problems we are facing today, such as losing forest, land degradation, river pollution, and biodiversity extinction.

Since human beings are regarded as social and political animals, previously the term “neighbor” was confined to social human beings. Its original connotation was even more limited to a “member of Israel”³⁷⁴. That is, the word “neighbor” literally refers to a particular nation. However, such a definition given to this word was simply “nation-based” and was *not* well accepted.

The term was later adopted in the social sciences with a wider “society-based” engagement. But in the development of animal science, it becomes clear that some animals (e.g. the great apes) are social animals as well. So, the “society-based” definition of neighbor was also modified since it did not include other social animals, confining itself to human beings. Clearly then, the term warrants a very significant and wide meaning. I believe that this meaning is *ecological*. Modern science partly accommodates the ecological sense by using words like “virtually neighborhood community”, “shared neighborhood model”, “neighborhood consequences”, and “neighborliness relation”.

³⁷⁴ Daniel Patte, ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christianity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 859.

But the revival of the term is incomplete because the term is detached from the “place-based” emotional attachment and applied to the impersonal social ties of online arrangements. So, a new sense of “neighbor”, namely, “virtual neighbors”, where members need not live in the same place, same city, or even in the same country, has been established. But an intense connection and emotional relation found in the place-based neighborly relation is absent there, what Yi-Fu calls *topophilia*, “*Topophilia* is the affective bond between people and place or setting. Diffuse as concept, vivid and concrete as personal experience...”³⁷⁵.

The basic idea of the term is ecological, and we should consider it in relation to identification with the surroundings. Until we consider nonhuman members, such as animals, plants, rivers, mountains, as our neighbors, and we value our intense identification and interaction with them in our daily lives, we have not fully embraced the values of neighborhood. Our community must be considered a natural community, rather than a social community, where humans and nonhumans are neighbors. The basis of a natural community has long been a *mutual relation* in a *shared location*.

An ideal relation between neighbors is emphatic, compassionate, joyous, dutiful, independent as well as interdependent and co-operative. Neighbors are defined basically in relation to place and distance. People living within the same area are neighbors. Their relation is neither official nor so informal as that between family members. However, they can even become more intimate because of place and their immediate bonding with the place. So, the value here must be identification, perhaps the identification-as-

³⁷⁵ Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1974), 4.

neighborhood. The identification-as-neighborhood surely does not refer to the personal identification or cosmological identification.

Identification-as-neighborhood fundamentally differs from the traditional thinking. Unlike the traditional view where neighbors are persons, identification-as-neighborhood is not restricted to persons. The whole idea is that humans could consider their surrounding non-human members as neighbors. Some animals have mysterious similarities with humans, others share similar self-maintaining activities with them. For example, tigers and lions hunt by a combination of their intelligence, pace and timing; migratory birds fly from one country to another, or even from one continent to another continent by maintaining wind directions, navigation, and intelligence. Plants, mountains, rivers, and seas become closer to them, if they realize the intrinsic value of these elements and their interconnectedness. Sometimes they can be destructive to us. But our human neighbors can equally be violent. Natural disasters actually destroy our neighborliness.

When there is a natural disaster we lose one set of neighbor who is then replaced by a new set. In this way, people adapt and gain strength to sustain themselves. The Norwegian settlers, for example, find their new neighbors when they have shifted from the old one. However, there was a significant emotional loss of the original place. Naess rightly noticed that “their home-place was a part of themselves and that they *identified* with features of that place”³⁷⁶. Now, “the features” of their old place was nothing but a harmonious co-existence of human beings, rivers, landscapes, trees, plants, mountains in a tiny locality where the difference between human and

³⁷⁶ Arne Naess, “Self-realization: An Ecological Approach to Being in the World”, in *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. George Sessions (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1995), 231.

nonhuman beings was not important. But this kind of mentality and personhood was possible because of uninterrupted relation, strong belongingness and emotional attachment within a community where all members consider themselves as equally valuable. Naess thus said, “the tiny locality...has formed their personhood”³⁷⁷.

Identification-as-neighborhood can construct a personhood based on the idea that there exist no hierarchical relations. Humans and nonhumans belong to the same community where the hierarchical division is simply left out. Two lessons are important here, first, this is an acceptance by the local people that humans and nature are equally important to each other and belong to the same community. Second, there is a suggestion to view Earth as neighborly *ordering*, instead of the hierarchical ordering.

In the neighborly ordering, the message is that Earth is organized and functions as a “neighboring plate”. There are enough examples in every natural process and event which can mark the Earth as interlinked. Only a neighborhood conscious self could understand the lessons behind them (e.g. the capacities and uniqueness of each creature are quite different, the physical systems of each organism are different, and it is possible that their perceptions, reactions and expressions are different, in some cases superior to some human beings). If we look carefully around our Earth there are diversities. Some regions are deserts, some are covered by ice, some are simply floating on the water, and some are landlocked. The size, shape, culture, belief system in each region is different from others. The minerals which are extracted from different regions are different in their color, quality and quantity.

³⁷⁷ Ibid., 231.

There are millions of uncountable creatures in the Earth. Only a few of them are known to us. They differ in their own ways and have different tasks. The diversities we perceive are countless. However, a great unity among these diversities is clearly recognizable. The same trees produce the same kind of fruits and vegetables all over the Earth. The same water is given to them. They grow on the same quality of land and weather conditions.

Although all human beings are rational they themselves differ in colors, sizes, preferences, attitudes, beliefs, intellects and characteristics. Nonetheless, these differences are not rare in nature. The fruits and vegetables in one region are excellent to eat, while those in other areas are not. Even fruits from the same tree may have different tastes, color and size. The same soil grows different trees, some are short, some are very tall, some have green leaves, some are multiple colors, and some are even leafless. Some trees need desert to grow, while some need an undersea environment. We can see in the same forest some trees are reaching maturity, others decaying. New young trees are filling up this gap. But these diversities are well-balanced and well-structured.

Suppose we think about a forest community. The surface of the forest once was rocky. Some tiny rock particles formed a layer in the course of time. The formation process continues through some complex chemical reactions by rain water, sunlight, dusts and sands. Fungi, followed by grasses and herbs, are grown. One day wind brings some seeds to grow and numerous young trees are grown. Successively, birds, reptiles, several viruses, bacteria, uncountable insects and millions of organisms set themselves as a forest community³⁷⁸. They all belong to the same forest as united community members with great

³⁷⁸ Karen Gridley, ed., *Man of the Trees: Selected Writings of Richard St. Barbe Baker* (California: Ecology Action, 1989): 23-24.

empathy and mutual interdependence. They have different functions. For instance, earthworm prepares the soil, butterfly and beetles contribute to grow flowers and then fruits. When the parent trees became old, fungi play their roles to decay and viruses and bacteria do their parts to mix them into the soil again.

Since every forest has its own rhythm, balance and community, all community members are *integrated* in a neighborly ordering. That is, all of them display and maintain a neighboring relationship, they are potentially aware about their own good as well as the good of neighbors. They belong with true compassion but also with competition. They never upset the equilibrium of forest by selfish greed, power and dominance. They all follow one simple principle of protection.

Now, let us think of the Earth as a big forest where humankind is one of the species. Humans sharing a neighboring self observe this Earth as a unified whole rather than a fragment. For most deep ecologists the protection of nature is seen as a by-product of the expanded self. In other words, the aim of cosmological identification is to expand one's narrow self, not to protect the individuals themselves. Through protecting the bigger Self all natural elements will be protected. So, the process involves self-defense rather than self-sacrifice. However, those who are arguing for self-sacrifice ideally suggest complete sacrifice. As a result, enjoying human life sometimes conflict with enjoying nature.

The neighboring self is the medium between them. Through identifying-as-neighborhood, this kind of self could realize the wisdom found in nature. Natural objects, such as water, are not regarded as merely useful to

human beings in a limited manner. Water, which is a must for the survival of living creatures, can be liquid, ice, or cloud. A small piece of steel cannot float on it. But water can transport millions of tons of steel, iron, copper, silver and other necessary elements, including crops, foods, and medicines, from one part of the Earth to another part. No maritime activity is possible without water. Winds help ships and other vehicles to reach their destinations.

The ecological self, as Naess suggested, would recognize the diversity and unity of Earth's ecosystem. But it would *not* recognize the diversity of *interests* and *needs* of different community members. In contrast to the ecological self, the neighboring self could avoid this problem because it acknowledges the variation of interests and different needs of entities in nature. Expanding awareness, empathy, compassion to other neighborhood entities is primary for the neighboring self, rather than expanding its consciousness to a maximum level and then becoming selfless. Self belongs to the neighboring self in a manner. As renowned Japanese scholar Keiji Nishitani says, "the self truly knows itself, and that this self-knowledge is at the same time accompanied by some sort of activity"³⁷⁹.

The distinguishing feature of identification-as-neighborhood is the *awareness* of Earth's *neighborly ordering*. Unlike the ecological self, the neighboring self perceives the ecological ordering more closely and intimately. In so doing, the neighboring self is not just aware of the unity and diversity, but it is also aware that this ordering is neighbor-centric. Earth's oceans, seas, rivers, ponds, and canals are therefore not just ecologically connected, but these are the containers which hold and preserve different kinds of water for

³⁷⁹ Keiji Nishitani, *On Buddhism*, trans. Seisaku Yamamoto and Robert E. Carter (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 138.

different neighbors according to their interests and needs. It was impossible for human beings or any living beings to preserve water themselves even for a week if the Earth was unable to do that for them. Moreover, if someone could manage it anyway just for himself or herself, it would be very hard to keep this water pure and usable. But the Earth holds water in various ways, such as liquid, ice and clouds. The Earth purifies and makes water usable for all living creatures in a very sophisticated way.

The Earth's surface also works as a great reservoir. If all these reservoirs were able to reserve water in only one form, say liquid, we have to float on water with all kinds of poisonous garbage, if they were in ice form we have to live in extremely cold environment, if it were in cloud form we have to fight with heavy rain falls and devastating floods. All of our neighbors are serving mysteriously and tirelessly to keep each other alive and functional. This is not just human beings who are aware and can realize Earth's neighborly ordering. Each and every element in nature is vital for its neighbors, just as a forest community members are vital for their neighborhood and co-existence. A tree is serving Oxygen and taking Carbon dioxide, a river is taking dirty water and supplying clean water, a mountain preserving geological and ecological balance, different organisms and plants are supplying precious life-supporting elements for humans, animals and other organisms.

Although all entities, including human beings, are integrated parts of the Earth's neighborly ordering, only human beings have the capacity to realize their duties toward all other neighbors. Self-realization for human beings is simply the realization of duty or responsibility toward their fellow

neighbors, humans as well as nonhumans. Though all traditions and religions subscribe to a loving attitude toward human neighbors, nonhuman neighbors are largely ignored. Most prominent philosophers have also addressed loving human neighbors as a universal moral norm.

In his essay *Utilitarianism*, Mill writes, "...love your neighbour as yourself, constitute the ideal perfection of utilitarian morality"³⁸⁰. The reason he states,

As the means of making the nearest approach to this ideal, utility would enjoin, first, that laws and social arrangements should place the happiness, or (as speaking particularly it may be called) the interest, of every individual, as nearly as possible in harmony with the interest of the whole...³⁸¹.

Mill shows that utility and happiness depend on the collective harmony of neighbor's interests. Our laws and social policies therefore should be compatible with the collective interest, not the individual interest.

Joseph Butler writes, "The competition and rivalry is between self-love and the love of our neighbour: that affection which leads us out of ourselves, makes us regardless of our own interest, and substitute that of another in its stead."³⁸²

Christoph Horn writes,

The biblical commandment "love your neighbor as yourself" does not imply that love is the appropriate starting-point of moral action. It does not even imply that love is an adequate motive at all. It rather describes and demands a process of habituation: If I practice beneficence, I will obtain, as a result, love as a feature of my character.³⁸³

³⁸⁰ John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism, Liberty, Representative Government* (London: Everyman's Library, 1968), 16.

³⁸¹ *Ibid*, 16.

³⁸² Joseph Butler, "Sermon 'Upon the Love of Our Neighbour' ", in *Ethics: The Classic Readings*, ed. David E. Cooper (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1998), 141.

³⁸³ Christoph Horn, "The Concept of Love in Kant's Virtue Ethics", in *Kant's Ethics of Virtue*, ed. Monika Betzler (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 153.

Passmore advocates conventional morality, based on a famous moral principle, human beings “ought not so to act as to injure their neighbours”³⁸⁴. Of course, Passmore’s neighbors do not include merely the present generation of human beings, but also future generations.

Naess too admits this golden norm of conventional morality with due emphasis and declares it as one of the top norms of morality, “The top norms may concern liberty, equality and fraternity, love for one’s neighbour, or the search for truth”³⁸⁵.

We have noticed that Naess has argued for a cosmological viewpoint. However, he also writes, “In practice, we have for instance greater obligation to that which is nearer to us”³⁸⁶. By the word “nearer” he means species closeness or human-human and human-animal relationships. So, his view contradicts with his own ecosophy.

This analysis shows that neighbor not only relates to empathy, love and sympathy, but also some other moral virtues are embedded in this relation. The virtue that my neighbor-centric view mainly underpins is *duty*. When this view is endorsed in the non-Western traditions it also exhibits a concern for duty. Human beings should not limit their obligations to their fellow human beings, animals and other sentient beings. They should also show concern and dutiful empathy to plants, mountains, rivers and other natural elements in their surroundings. This sense of duty would contribute to a virtue to act with appropriate neighborliness, and the harmony of nature is ultimately preserved.

³⁸⁴ John Passmore, *Man’s Responsibility for Nature: Ecological Problems and Western Traditions* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1980), 186.

³⁸⁵ Arne Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of An Ecosophy*, trans. and rev. David Rothenberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 74.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 170.

Kant considered loving one's neighbors in accordance with the ethical law of perfection and the duty of sympathy. His maxim is the maxim of benevolence which says that even if one does not have respect, or does not find loving his or her neighbors "worthy", he or she cannot avoid the duty of sympathy to neighbors. Kant declares, "In accordance with the ethical law of perfection "love your neighbor as yourself", the maxim of benevolence (practical love of human beings) is a duty of all human beings toward one another, whether or not one finds them worthy of love"³⁸⁷.

Note that without performing their empathic duties toward neighbors one cannot be a perfect human being according to Kant. Moreover, when Kant said "Sympathetic Feeling Is Generally a Duty" he mentions two basic features of humanity, first, their capacity of feeling joy and sadness, and second, their capacity of feeling others' joy and sadness which promotes aesthetic experience in themselves. Kant says, "Now, humanity can be located either in the *capacity* and the *will to share in others' feelings (humanitas practica)* or merely in the *receptivity*, given by nature itself, to the feeling of joy and sadness in common with others (*humanitas aesthetica*)"³⁸⁸.

In this context, instead of taking humanity with great emphasis we should take note of Kant's point of receptivity. Kant clearly says that receptivity spreads "naturally among human beings living near one another"³⁸⁹. Kant's endorsement of "living near" in this statement is a precondition to perform one's duty with sympathy. My basic concern is not only for human beings but also for those nonhuman elements which belong to our close

³⁸⁷ Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. and ed., Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 200.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 204.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 205.

surroundings. I feel that we should show deep empathic attitude through our love, duty and kindness to let them survive in their own ways. Whether we take care of them or not, one thing is clear, we should not wipe out their existence for ever. As an individual, living in Asia, I may not be able to take care of the animals, plants and trees in the Amazon, but I could certainly take care of my neighborhood mountains, rivers, trees, plants, birds, insects and micro-organisms. This is not because these are useful for me but because we are living in the same surroundings. These elements have neighborhood value to me that the elements in the Amazon forests lack. But in a greater sense, the Amazon forest might have some neighborhood value.

I believe that Kant's view may include nonhumans as neighbors. Kant firmly says, "Love for the *creature* is always good, in so far as it is considered to be a creature"³⁹⁰. There is no sacrifice or loss if we consider natural elements as our neighbors. Rather, as Kant says, feeling neighborliness to others, regarding them as creatures just like us would be "good" for us as well as for them. Indeed, one might be misguided about Kant's notion of capacity when taking it merely as a rational capacity. Actually, Kant's emphasis here is the capacity of realization of others' good and pursuing this good successfully through our special qualities like emotion, joy and aesthetic appreciation. Kant's focus may become clearer in Paul Guyer's comments, "it is actually the *ability to set our own ends and the capacity to realize or successfully pursue them*"³⁹¹. If we practice love for neighborliness among ourselves and inspire

³⁹⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Observations On the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime and Other writings*, ed. Patrick Frierson and Paul Guyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 275.

³⁹¹ Paul Guyer, *Kant's System of Nature and Freedom: Selected Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 250.

others to do so, we all can extend our moral circle with less effort in a virtuous manner.

Therefore, *duty* is the appropriate outcome of neighborhood self-realization. Yet, it is not just confined to duty alone. For any tradition, neighborhood also invokes unity, harmony, responsibility, and aesthetic tribute. An enriched human neighbor would value his or her ecological neighbors for various intrinsic goods they conserved. In fact, we may not be able to form a *complete* sense of some basic ideas if the word “neighbor” is restricted to the human species.

For example, consider a family where each member enjoys liberty to express his or her opinion. They can choose to stay alone when they want. They can enjoy themselves according to their own preferred ways. But for collective issues, such as switching off the television after 11 p.m., they all rely on the father’s decision. We can find some sort of *unity* in this family tradition. However, if they share their neighbor’s concern and realize the disturbance they have caused, and maintain a lower level of noise, we may find a *better* concept of unity. Similarly, if the family members decide that they could reduce the time of using air conditioners, or switch it off by realizing the harm caused by CFC to various entities living in the same surroundings, then we can say there is even a bigger sense of unity in this family. Finally, if all the family members, before engaging in any activity; think of the harm it may cause to things in their surroundings, and act in the same responsible way, then they show even *greater* unity. This unity is called neighborhood unity.

This example illustrates the importance of taking “neighbor” in a much broader sense. It raises the point that neighbor in the case of solely human-human relation is less significant. Imagine an Earth where only human beings exist and they all maintain a neighboring relation. There are no birds, no trees, no gardens, no flowers, no rivers, no seas, no green fields, no mountains, and no water falls in their surroundings. Can the idea of unity be complete? Is living worthy at all in such a scenario, even though human beings continue to maintain a neighboring relation among themselves? Surely, none of us want to live in such an Earth.

But one important question remains unsolved: Isn't diversity and neighborhood conflicting? In other words, how can we maintain diversity and neighborhood simultaneously? We will come back to the issue soon.

For the moment, the true unity is one where human beings and nature are united, the smallest species united with the biggest species, the largest creatures united with the smallest creatures, the most intellectual creatures united with the most stupid creatures, the most sentient creatures united with the most insentient creatures, the most powerful neighbor united with the most powerless neighbor in a surrounding. Almost all creatures follow this moral convention (unity and co-existence through neighborhood feelings) except human beings. It's a moral convention because in any human society and nonhuman community a neighborhood bond is respected.

We see in our neighborhood that butterflies, dragonflies, honey bees and beetles can stay together, and never try to dominate each other. They sit on the same flowers but never quarrel. Some of them collect honey from flowers without doing any harm to the flower plants. Flower seeds also cannot

spread without them. An excellent, rich and vibrant garden requires these neighbors. However, insects are also responsible for destroying a garden. But that will take a long time and in due course a new ecosystem can take place. One is not justified in killing all of these insects to satisfy one's own plan of a garden. But most human beings will prioritize their plans rather than these insects. Their so-called highly complex brain very often makes them egoistic, isolated and detached.

But they should keep in mind that everything in this Earth is mysterious, unique, amazing and have their own abilities to play their parts in different ways. Currently, we know very little about their ability and activities. If we exclude other natural elements as our neighbor because they are not sentient, or brute, or machine-like, then there is a strong chance that we will lose in the end, instead of gain. We may lose humanity, we may lose sympathy and empathy, we may lose good health, we may lose enjoying long life, and we may even lose our future generations.

We should be responsible toward our ecological neighbors. But how much responsibility do we need to show them? The answer itself is hidden in the powerful single word "neighbor". We may practice responsibility by maintaining a single moral principle developed hereafter.

Responsibility to our natural neighbors may ensure *safety* feeling for human beings. Those human beings who respect and protect their natural neighbors can enjoy worthy lifestyles. Many environmental scholars have pointed out that a "partnership" relation with the environment must be established for a safe and harmonious living. For instance, Mirjam de Groot et. al. have conducted an empirical study on recent Western societies and have

noticed that “Virtually all respondents believe that humans are morally responsible for nature and recognize the intrinsic value of nature”³⁹².

The reason for this sense of responsibility is that we all are facing serious natural calamities, such as extreme low temperature, heavy snowfalls, deadly floods, high magnitude earthquakes, and ferocious volcanic eruptions globally. One of the new responses to such natural disasters, as de Groot suggested, is to articulate a “partnership” and a vision that synthesizes stewardship and oneness-with-nature ethics. This vision is called hermeneutical environmental ethics, “Hermeneutical environmental ethics could even help to articulate and cultivate an environmental virtue ethics”³⁹³.

Unity and responsibility are environmental virtues which would not forbid human beings from using their natural neighbors. Further, they may be good for strengthening human-human relationship. Responsibility involves an informed awareness regarding our duties toward the environmental neighbor. In general, most human beings are more or less caring for their surroundings, whether for themselves or for the good of natural entities. But their effort may not be enough. Since the industrial revolution, the competition in achieving remarkable advancement in science and technology through dominating nature has already unbalanced the harmony of Earth. We must show empathetic, caring, responsible, and dutiful attitude toward the environment if a new balance or harmony is to be established.

A few years ago, a notable radical ecologist, Carolyn Merchant, has also proposed a partnership ethics. Although de Groot did not fully develop the basic feature of partnership ethics, Merchant defines and develops this new

³⁹² Mirjam de Groot et. al., “Public Visions of the Human/Nature Relationship and their Implications for Environmental Ethics”, *Environmental Ethics* 33, no. 1 (2011): 39.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, 44.

ethics in a simple and straight-forward way. She states, “It is an ethic based on the idea that people are helpers, partners, and colleagues and that people and nature are equally important to each other”³⁹⁴. The definition she has given for a partnership ethics is inspiring, “A partnership ethic holds that the greatest good for the human and nonhuman communities is in their mutual living interdependence”³⁹⁵. The key concept a partnership ethic endorses for a harmonious human-nature relation is “mutual living”. In this mutual living, the partnership ethics holds that natural elements are human being’s partner.

They are not passive partners, but rather partners who could act and react similarly as human beings. They are like individuals who belong to the same community and share the same events in everyday living. In our general vocabulary, a partner is a male or female human being who maintains some sort of commitments such as, equal respect, trust, and sharing the feelings of joy and suffering. But Merchant argues for an innovative view where a comprehensive idea of partnership could easily accommodate a tree, a salmon fish, and even a butterfly. This is comprehensive because her partnership ethics has five basic foundations outlined in her other book: both humans and nonhumans are morally considerable, their communities are equally valuable, biodiversity and cultural diversity should be respected, minorities, women and nonhumans must be protected by an ethical code of conduct, and finally, the health of human and nonhuman communities ought to be preserved and any ecological management must be consistent with their preservation.³⁹⁶

³⁹⁴ Carolyn Merchant, *Reinventing Eden: The Fate of Nature in Western Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 223.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 223.

³⁹⁶ Carolyn Merchant, *Radical Ecology: The Search for A Livable World* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 84.

Interestingly, Merchant's view synthesizes most of the conflicting views in environmental philosophy from anthropocentrism to ecocentrism. Indeed, she does not ascribe intrinsic value to human beings, nonhuman beings, or the cosmos as a whole. Alternatively, she finds the idea of "relation" is intrinsically valuable. So, there is no difficulty for Merchant in appreciating a bear as a partner. She writes, "But the term *partner* can also be used to represent gnatcatchers, coho salmon, grizzly bears, and checkerspot butterflies. Indeed, nonhuman nature itself can be our partner"³⁹⁷.

We have noticed in the discussion of previous chapters that many famous environmental thinkers pave the way for redefining or widening some basic terms which could make a significant impact in our attitude toward the environment. For instance, we have seen that Gaia involves a new perspective on the organic system of Earth, Willson's biophilia hypothesis has suggested a new way of looking at our common descent, and Naess proposed a new concept of a mixed community.

Environmental philosophers therefore wanted to establish an adequate communication with their nonhuman members in diverse ways. The outcome is that we have achieved a new mentality or at least psychological set-up to see nature with different eyes. Merchant's view is an important addition to this move. However, viewing nature as our partner might have less support from the evolutionary history available.

Historically, the most appropriate term for "mutual living", as de Groot and Merchant are suggesting for harmonious co-existence, should be "neighbor" rather than partner. When two people say they have a partnership

³⁹⁷ Carolyn Merchant, *Reinventing Eden: The Fate of Nature in Western Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 224.

relation then they could either mean a physical or a business relation between them. For a physical relation, sexual happiness and satisfaction play a major role in their mutual living. For a business relation, on the other hand, equal and just distribution of burdens and benefits play the vital role in their mutual living. In human-nature partnership relation, both types of attitude could be problematic. Although there are some examples where some traditions practice a physical relation with natural elements, such as marrying a tree or a dog, these are merely symbolic. Nonetheless, they send a message that nature is not that much separate as science suggests (separating living elements as opposed to nonliving, dividing the Earthly elements into two groups, i.e. physical and biological, and stating that human beings are superior to any other creatures). It also explores an alternative view to perceive nature beyond the economical perspective.

The business attitude toward nature has been practiced for a long time, but this relation was merely a monopoly for human beings (most actions were taken in favor of human beings or for human's benefit). In this case, nature was seen just as a passive partner, unable to receive the burdens and benefits. So, we cannot see nature as partner. But we can see nature as a neighbor because neighbors do not require a physical relation, or a business relation. It simply requires the existence of two or more entities in a common surrounding. Moreover, all the environmental values (e.g. equal respect) found in the partnership relation can also be found in the neighbor-centric relation.

A good person may not be a person who is caring, kind and responsible to his or her family and friends alone. A bad neighbor could be one of the most unexpected events in our lives. Similarly, a good person must be a good

neighbor. There is no need for him or her to dominate nature, to ignore nature, or to protect nature at the cost of destroying himself or herself. In any society, good treatment of neighbors is appreciated and reflects a high scale of relationship. The value neighborhood self-realization suggests is that of loving one's neighbors, neighbors who are humans as well as neighbors who are ecological, through *dutiful* empathy.

A sense of spirituality could help to view nature as our ecological neighbor. We are rational, but at the same time intuitive, imaginative. We could even understand an abstract concept through our intuition and imagination. For this reason, intuition and unity have emerged as two major ideas in contemporary environmental philosophy. No one can answer the question what nature is, until he or she recalls his or her sense perception of the immediate surroundings. This is because we all have grown up in a neighborhood with which we are united. Philosophers' views of the environment are very often based on their intuition and also how they have perceived the remarkable unity in nature. The environment is basically the representation of human being's imagination and understanding. These two are the unique capacities of human beings, as Kant notices, "...*imagination* for bringing together the manifold of intuition, and *understanding* for the unity of the concept uniting the representations"³⁹⁸.

Through the power of imagination and understanding human beings can observe nature as aesthetically rich. In fact, our aesthetic appreciation of nature is mostly dependent on these capacities. For some of us, when birds make sounds, we can realize it as they are singing. We can hear these songs

³⁹⁸ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, trans. James Creed Meredith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952), 58.

with great interest. But for others these are merely meaningless noises. Some even could consider these as their voice and an expression of meaningful communication. So, poets and philosophers would see them as a community like human beings, and some of them may appreciate their songs better than those of other human beings in some respect. Can we ignore the bounty of natural beauty at all? Kant remarkably appreciates natural beauty,

Even a bird's song, which we can reduce to no musical rule, seems to have more freedom in it, and thus to be richer for taste, than the human voice singing in accordance with all the rules that the art of music prescribes; for we grow tired much sooner of frequent and lengthy repetitions of the latter.³⁹⁹

But natural beauty is not just for pleasure, we have a duty to preserve and protect it. Kant's aesthetic argument for natural appreciation grounds a pure notion of duty. He shows that our *immediate*, rather than the cosmological, relation to the environment is the source of distinctive pleasure and delight. He defines beauty as "morally good" and argues that we have a duty to protect our neighborhood environmental beauty. He states, "Now, I say, the beautiful is the symbol of the morally good, and only in this light (a point of view natural to every one, and one which every one exacts from others as a duty) does it give us pleasure..."⁴⁰⁰. Kant makes it clear to us that our sensations of neighborhood beauty would create a kind of moral consciousness which leads to the duty of protection.

The powers of nature invoke spirituality. We feel nature sometimes ferocious, mysterious, mighty and destructive. But we also see people around us love nature, enjoy it and care for it. On the one hand, people fear nature.

³⁹⁹ Ibid., 89.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., 223-224.

Very often they are harmed by natural disasters, and regard them as some of their biggest enemies. On the other hand, they are surprised to see natural beauty, to enjoy the intimacy with nature. They find that worshipping natural entities cannot stop natural disasters. But there are many other ways to respect nature for their own blessings. Some cultures therefore offer singing, dancing, even food in their festivals. Others think that managing nature through spiritual communication is more important than just surrendering to its mighty powers. This consciousness may be impossible to define. We could simply call it “spiritual consciousness”.

Through spiritual consciousness, a sense of responsibility and reverence for nature can arise. Neighborhood spirituality is a kind of spiritual consciousness when people spiritually accept natural entities as neighbors and become conscious about their duties and responsibilities toward them. However, neighborhood spirituality is not an outcome of some kind of religious experience or baseless intuition. People’s participation and transformation of their consciousness reinforce the idea of neighborhood spirituality.

Neighborhood spirituality maintains three common core values in a practical manner, and invites human beings to an ethics of caring through emotional attachment. It is hard to find a culture where natural fertility has not been recognized with spirituality. Natural fertility is a sense which suggests that nature has a great potentiality to grow corns, fruits, vegetables and other kinds of food necessary for human survival. But this is merely a potentiality, and human beings can contribute to make it actual by connecting with nature spiritually. That is, by making nature pleased to produce these resources for

them. During a certain period in every year some kind of rituals are performed to reconnect with nature. However, most of these rituals highlight ecological meditation, healing and worshipping natural deities. Neighborhood spirituality opens up a desirable alternative for all people, believer and non-believer. It is just an appreciation of natural entities as neighbors through imagination and understanding.

Becoming selfless appears as an inconceivable view for many environmental thinkers. The idea of selflessness can be found in traditional nature spirituality and deep ecology as a means to show respect and reverence for nature. Neighborhood spirituality does not require becoming selfless. The neighboring self could correct the limitations of “selflessness” just by understanding natural spirituality in a different direction. Through identification as neighbors, the neighboring self does not become selfless. In other words, the self does not disappear. In spite of the widening self, the neighboring self deepens and expands its *awareness* through empathy, compassion, and sympathy for other entities. Since deep intimacy plays the main role in neighborhood spirituality, the neighboring self would ensure the least alienation. The neighboring self affirms three common core values in a different direction: identification-as-neighborhood, neighborhood self-realization and neighborhood spirituality.

The neighboring self recognizes that “everything is interrelated” and everything has their own value beyond human being’s use. It acknowledges that all entities have intrinsic value because everything is contributing in its own way, visibly or invisibly. This is a sense that Holmes Rolston III attempts

to capture, “No one is free-living in these woods; the root fungi...the pine-drops rising from the roots... *Bios* is intrinsically symbiosis.”⁴⁰¹

In contrast to the ecological self, the neighboring self would take into consideration the diversity and differences among natural entities and also their various needs. Human beings and other entities can preserve their autonomy in the sense that two neighbors preserve their autonomies. They are separate, but at the same time united. Like me and my garden can stay together in a residential area.

The notion of neighboring self would maintain an emotional but responsible attitude toward nature. It is neither an ecologically dominating self nor an abstract ecological self. The neighboring self thus does not subscribe to an ecological master, or an ecological slave mentality. It admits that human beings are unique creatures on Earth in the sense that they are the only beings who acknowledge an empathic duty to their fellow creatures. They have the power of imagination and understanding to view their surroundings as neighbors. They admit their ecological neighbors as intrinsically valuable since some basic relationships are incomplete without considering them as neighbors.

We should distinguish further the neighboring self from the relational self and ecological self to understand it more clearly. Neighboring self is primarily concerned with the surroundings than the forests, lands, rivers, mountains, and other natural elements far away. For example, if a bird species lives in one’s surroundings, its extinction is more painful than the extinction of a bird species in the Amazon. In the same way, the extinction of the Amazon’s

⁴⁰¹ Holmes Rolston, III, “Lake Solitude: The Individual in Wildness”, *Main Currents* 31, no. 4 (1975): 122.

bird species will be more painful to the Amazonians than to others living elsewhere. This is because they are more identified with the bird species than any one else. Clearly then, natural elements and human beings are distinct, but maintain an ecological neighboring relation. To a relational self, nature is also distinct from the self. A relational self recognizes both continuity and difference. In contrast, to an ecological self, nature is merely a bigger Self. It acknowledges continuity but rejects the difference.

The neighboring self protects the environment by a guiding moral principle, that is, the Protection Principle. Although the relational self does not prescribe any specific principle for the protection of nature, 'respecting' nature might serve as a basic principle to it. Thus, individuals might be uncertain about how much respect natural elements can deserve from them. Is it equal to other human beings or less? Will animals get equal respect as stones? For an ecological self, the same is true. There is no action-guiding moral principle outlined so far. However, one could assume that the principle is 'equality', that is, an equal treatment of nature and human beings. We have already discussed the problems which can arise when nature and human beings are seen as equal to an ecological self.

Human beings cannot ignore their surroundings. A neighboring self maintains that human beings are *neighborhood* conscious individuals. To a relational self, human beings are *socially* conscious individuals. As a social being an individual must show love, empathy, sympathy, care and respect to others. He or she is also entitled to show respect to the other natural life-forms. But to an ecological self, human beings are ecologically bounded creatures. Social human beings are egoistic because current society respects human

beings more than any other animals or natural entities. Social beings are isolated from the bigger community.

To a neighboring self, the Earth is a neighboring track. The bonding between human and other natural elements is neighborliness. The relational self views this Earth through the lens of various relations. Viewing everything from the “relational” point of view seems problematic and complex. Perhaps, a scale of weighing various relations is necessary. The ecological self views this Earth from a total viewpoint. Everything that belongs to the biosphere is interrelated, whether we value them or not. Any destruction of a particular life-form will be treated negatively.

A relational self respects natural elements because it is an *expression* of a social human being. However, the expression varies in relation to persons, their wisdom, feelings and emotions. To an ecological self, *feelings* for natural elements increase in proportion to the maximization of diversity. When an individual becomes selfless through identification with nature, responsible behavior develops in him or her. Perhaps, everyone might not be inspired by such intense identification. In contrast to them, the neighboring self exhibits *awareness* toward its neighborhood entities and shows dutiful empathy for the protection of nature.

Identification with a *particular* place is very important for both the neighboring self and the relational self. They both value emotional bonding with the particular place for a respectful and caring attitude regarding nature. By contrast, the ecological self does *not* require any emotional attachment with a particular place. The whole biosphere is identified with the self.

However, then it is hard to realize how an individual can develop an intimate community bonding.

The goal of the neighboring self is not only to show awareness of ecological neighbors, but rather also to perform duties to them without discrimination at a certain level. Realizing ecological neighborhood is an advantage for human beings over destroying them. The neighboring self limits human imagination within locality, but conceive the potentiality of extending further. The neighboring self considers environmental protection not as an additional duty, but rather as a habitual commitment to a noble neighborhood relation.

Is the neighboring relation necessarily a relation of co-operation and harmony? There are bad neighbors who actually want to do harm to others. I agree with these factual claims. However, it is hard to find any relation universally peaceful and co-operative. Friends, brothers, sisters, relatives, and parents — all these kinds of relation are based on some noble values such as, love, intimacy, co-operation, sympathy, empathy, care and admiration. However, they all can go wrong. We have an image of good friends as well as experience of bad friends. But we do not blame the friendship as a whole. We do not also give up friendship. We hope that our neighbors will be good, co-operative, sympathetic, loving and intimate.

Natural hazards can be seen as actions from a bad neighbor. We may not eliminate such actions. But we could reduce them by improving our ecological bond with nature. One real life example might be useful here. Currently, the relation of two neighboring Korea is hopeless. A similar situation existed between West Germany and East Germany. But the two

Germans came together, inspiring co-operation and harmony. We may not reach the ideal always. However, we should have an ideal to guide our decisions and policies. People may hate their human neighbors for reasonable cause, but they will not hate the *neighborliness* of the seas, mountains, flower gardens, and waterfalls.

Nevertheless, there might be a situation in which we have no option but to destroy the neighbors. For example, suppose that we need some wood for building a house where we, our pets and other domestic animals may live. Birds, other mammals and organisms have their own living place. But the living place for humans and some other animals are quite different from them. A house with minimum facility (e.g. water supply) is necessary for human beings and some other domestic animals. In that case we have to cut some trees since we don't have any option. Similarly, if there is plague we have to kill some rats. If we were affected by dreadful virus and bacteria we have to kill them.

A comprehensive environmental ethics, contrary to what deep ecologists are suggesting, should acknowledge that we have to preserve all organisms and natural entities until the lives of human beings are at threat. This is not because human lives are more valuable than others, but because only human beings can perform an empathetic duty toward their ecological neighbors. Shouldn't we allow some trees to be destroyed for the comfort of human beings? The case is emotional from the neighborhood perspective and depends on several conditions (such as our basic needs, significant interests, and ecological benefits). Of course, if there are available trees of the same

species, or a tree is going to die, or it is already dead naturally, I will use it for better living.

However, we cannot let those rats live which are causing death to humans and nonhumans just because their lives are also intrinsically valuable as those of human beings. The same should be applicable to human beings. If they are evidently a threat to other human beings, animals and nature as a whole, they should be either controlled, or even destroyed if there is no other alternative.

A neighboring self, therefore, would follow a basic moral principle. It is the moral principle which is fundamental for any reasonable version of comprehensive environmental ethics. I will call my moral principle “The Protection Principle”. I believe that community members who share the same goal (harmonious co-existence through interdependence), actually share the values of identification, self-realization, and spirituality, which ultimately manifest the value of protection, i.e. “protect” each other from destruction. For example, we protect trees by producing carbon dioxide, and trees protect us by producing oxygen. The Protection Principle has roots in the Asian as well as Western traditions, and also in indigenous people’s kinship lifestyles. The simple version of my principle is stated as follows.

II. THE ‘PROTECTION PRINCIPLE’

The Protection Principle: Neighbors have an obligation to protect their neighborhood *until* destruction is the *only* option to fulfill their basic needs, significant interests, and ecological benefits.

Here, basic needs refer to those needs without which existence is impossible. But for human beings mere existence is *not* sufficient. They also need to respond to various problems (e.g. common and rare health diseases for humans, animals, trees and plants, damage of an ecological health, natural biodiversity loss, and extreme weather) and some of the significant interests to be fulfilled. Ecological benefits include those benefits which are to be considered for saving and caring of other creatures.

Nature itself is interwoven by several sophisticated systems and these systems work in a perfect way. Destruction and creation as a system suggests that human beings could make use of some elements of what they get in nature. All species survive and benefit in a natural manner. However, human beings cannot survive in the same way. If we do not use the objects that are produced in nature, they may sometimes become harmful to the ecosystem. Human beings therefore have to use these to consume, preserve, and maintain the balance of the ecosystem.

Interestingly, the Protection Principle is followed in the whole animal and living kingdoms consciously or unconsciously. A lion will not attack any other animal in a forest until he is hungry enough. A tiger will not attack a deer when he is full. A snake will not bite humans until she is hurt by them. An eagle will not catch fish until it is required for its own survival. Plants cannot consume excess water. They do not take Nitrogen from soil and Carbon dioxide from air beyond their needs and necessities. However, only human beings do not follow this universal principle consistently. But we could change our viewpoints and feelings to our ecological neighbors and can apply this principle for a better Earth.

One example will clarify my point. Suppose that there are many ducks of the same species in our neighborhood. Each duck is contributing to the ecosystem for preserving neighborhood balance. But we could use some of them for food and medical research to fulfill our basic needs. However, we may not finish all of them and make the species extinct even in a case when that is required for our survival and satisfaction of taste. In that case, we should consider another means to survive. We must sacrifice some personal interests for ecological benefit. The issue is not a particular duck versus a particular human being, or a duck species versus human species. But rather, sacrifice of some personal interests for the good (or interest) of the greater neighborhood community.

Nevertheless, we have heart-mind, and thus, we love, create, enjoy, and sacrifice. So, we also need mental satisfaction. Arts and culture are two main ways to share our emotions, happiness, joys, sorrows, and creativity. Arts make a bridge between our emotions and experience of life. Natural objects generate our emotions and play a key role in our feelings. We should promote them in a persuasive way. Therefore, scientific experiments, innovation, and enjoyment, which are consistent with ecological benefits and harmonious living, might be justified.

For example, if one of our neighbors is an architect and wants to build a wooden museum with amazing architectural design we should allow him or her to do so provided that it will satisfy two conditions, first, there are enough trees of the same species available, and second, the museum does not create ecological burdens for other neighbors, both human and nonhumans. We should permit museum building for two reasons. The first is that it will satisfy

the creative interest of human beings, others may inspire and learn from it. The second is that the museum may showcase and preserve other creative works, such as paintings, arts and crafts, and theater. It will also serve as a meeting place of community members to enjoy themselves and the aesthetic beauty of nature.

How does the Protection Principle relate with mainstream environmental approaches? Can it be found in any current environmental approach? Can the neighbor-centric approach be regarded as a synthesis of mainstream environmental thoughts? Should we be “wilderness purists” or wise “nature managers”?

Let us start with the two opposing approaches for the protection of nature, conservation and preservation. Gifford Pinchot, a leading forester and founder of modern forest conservation, proposes the former, while the latter was proposed by John Muir, founder of “Sierra Club” and preservation movement worldwide. The conservation approach advocates the “wise use” of nature. The basis of this approach is ecology, biology, geology and soil science. It suggests considering restoring or recreating ecological habitats, if necessary. The ecological health of a habitat is more important than its aesthetic beauty or spiritual value according to the conservationists. So, this approach would allow any kind of human “intervention” or “interference” as long as it is consistent with scientific theories (i.e. botanical and zoological theories). Three main principles of the conservation approach are: development, prevention of waste, and human’s benefit. In Pinchot’s words,

“Conservation means the greatest good to the greatest number for the longest time”⁴⁰².

By contrast, the preservation approach suggests leaving nature as we got it because we have already made substantive development and only a few wildernesses have been kept in the Earth. We should leave them alone for priceless joy, beauty and sources of spirituality. Even though in the natural process some species may get extinct, in all circumstances nature should be preserved. The damage naturally caused will be less than that caused by human intervention. So, the preservation approach will not allow any human intervention or interference. Muir notes, “Landscape gardens, places of recreation and worship, are never made beautiful by destroying and burying them”⁴⁰³.

Apart from aesthetic beauty and spiritual importance, preservationists think that keeping wilderness uninterrupted is respecting its dignity. Recent environmental scholars label the conservationist approach as “nature managers”, and the preservationist approach as “wilderness purists”⁴⁰⁴. The debate between nature managers and wilderness purists is still on-going. In our context, Passmore belongs to the former group, whereas Naess belongs to the latter.

It might be good to recall that Passmore interprets Conservationists as farm-managers who are “co-operating with nature in an attempt to perfect

⁴⁰² Gifford Pinchot, “Principles of Conservation”, in *The Palgrave Environmental Reader*, ed. Daniel G. Payne and Richard S. Newman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 136.

⁴⁰³ John Muir, “Hetch Hetchy Valley”, in *The Palgrave Environmental Reader*, ed. Daniel G. Payne and Richard S. Newman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 110.

⁴⁰⁴ Glenn Deliege, “The Cinquefoil Controversy: Restoring Relics Between Managers and Purists”, *Environmental Ethics* 32, no. 1 (2010): 17.

it”⁴⁰⁵. Naess, on the other hand, wants to preserve wilderness for richness and diversity. Valuing wilderness is for him the key to achieve ecological consciousness. Asian traditions are likely to adapt the preservationist approach. However, neither the conservationist nor preservationist worldview could claim comprehensiveness.

The proposed neighbor-centric worldview is a third approach to environmental philosophy. Nature management should not mean perfecting nature by enormous alternation, or redesigning the wilderness for the satisfaction of human beings. The interests of human beings are diverse and unlimited and as such mere reorganization cannot ensure that all the needs and purposes of human beings will be fulfilled by a single alternation. Alternation as a tool of management is not viable. Indeed, the traditional concept of management is gradually changing and the consideration for other species has slowly been acknowledged. But nature management is still extremely dependent on scientific invention. Chemical fertilizer, DDT, for example, previously was seen as good for land based on scientific research, but we have already noticed their adverse impact on the environment.

Conservationists, therefore, need to look at more than scientific investigation and invention. They need to be more cautious than before because recent chemical inventions are even more powerful and toxic. So, generally their adverse impacts might be long and serious. The conservationists need to gain and nurture a *self* inside their heart-mind. The self should not only be caring, but it should also be sympathetic, emphatic, and more importantly, dutiful to other natural elements. The self should consider

⁴⁰⁵ John Passmore, *Man's Responsibility for Nature: Ecological Problems and Western Traditions* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1980), 28.

its local surroundings through the values of identification, self-realization, and spirituality, and also should be able to balance between duty and interconnectedness. The self should give priority to the protection of its ecological neighbors. In short, conservationists need to achieve a neighboring self by observing the above mentioned values.

Similarly, preservation should not just mean “non-interference”. Leaving the environment without enjoying its enormous wealth for health, mind, arts, and beauty would be unjustified. If we leave our neighboring yard as it is, then in due course virus and bacteria could form. The yard then becomes a problem for other members living in the same surroundings. We should plant some nice flowers or vegetables where some other insects and organism could have their habitats. But in the case of a large area like the Amazon rain forest, there might not be a simple solution. The management procedure then is necessarily complex.

However, the philosophy behind me and my yard, managers and the Amazon rain forest, should be the same. Like any other forests, the Amazon rain forest is one of the great creations on Earth, a source of our ecological and botanical knowledge, aesthetic beauty, spirituality and excellence of art. There are uncountable herbs, plants, animals, birds and organisms in the Amazon which are precious sources of medicine, food and learning. There is no point in ignoring this benefit in the name of preservation. In fact, whether we enjoy these benefits or not, the Amazon rain forest will continue to produce them. These will also be destroyed in their own ways. So, some kind of management is a must for any forest, including the Amazon.

However, the degree of management depends on our attitudes, morality and intimate sense of belongingness. I have proposed the decision and management policy in a simple manner, “protect your neighbors”. What is valued here is the intrinsic value of the forest through intimate belongingness. A preservationist could be a prudent manager too.

One might argue that we cannot manage and preserve the Amazon rain forest in this way because the demand for its valuable resources (e.g. medicinal herbs, rare animals, birds and woods) is extremely high. The population of the Earth is ever growing and there is only one Amazon for them. So, we have to collect as much as we can get from it. Of course, destroying the Amazon is not the solution to meet the unlimited demands of the world’s population. What we need is a practice of prudent lifestyle. A lifestyle that is simple but rich for us as well as our ecological neighbors.

We should attempt to search for these kinds of lifestyles throughout the globe. We should find how people in some cultures and place enable them to build the bridge between “purists” and “managers”. Examples are rare but not absent. Let us consider the example of an indigenous Amazonian society.

There is a herbal treatment procedure in the Amazon rain forest called *vegetalismo* in the Shamanic society, where the physical and mental is hardly distinguished. The treatment procedure is simply a re-interaction between human beings and the forest. Shamanic treatment must be given in a forest environment by two practitioners, one who knows and brings the specific plants for the treatment, and the other performs several activities in visions or dreams. Each time different kinds of plants should be used for complete cure.

The treatment is rather interesting because it is mainly the dissolution of human-human relational boundary and a replacement of the forest-human relation. Barbira-Freedman notes,

Psychoactive plants dissolve boundaries between self and outside world in the shaman's ecstasy. They enable the constant redefinition of cosmic landscapes in which social relations with kin and neighbours are re-negotiated on patients' behalf in terms of relations between humans and the forest.⁴⁰⁶

In this example, it is clearly shown that one tribe preserves the medicinal plants and the other knows how to use them in human-forest healing procedure. The message is not only interdependence of the forest and human beings, but rather, the interaction of purists and managers for effective outcome. With their collective effort nature can be preserved and enjoyed.

Similar kinds of practice can be found in Asian indigenous societies. One common example from the Himalayan farmers involves the practice of multiple farming, crop rotation and intra-species cultivation. It is noticed in the following comments,

The *barahnaja*, an inter-cropping pattern practiced by farmers of the Tehri Garhwal region of the Uttar Pradesh Himalayan foothills, involves the use of about 12 types of crops grown in a single field, each with a different growing cycle and nutrient requirement, and all combining into a highly productive, sustainable system.⁴⁰⁷

In this way, the indigenous people throughout the Earth fulfill all their needs, such as for food, treatment, agriculture, recreation by local attachment,

⁴⁰⁶ Francoise Barbira-Freedman, " 'Vegetalismo' and the Perception of Biodiversity: Shamanic Values in the Peruvian Upper Amazon", in *Cultural and Spiritual Values of Biodiversity*, com. and ed. Darrell Addison Posey and Oxford Centre for the Environment, Ethics and Society, UK (Nairobi: United Nations Environment Programme, 1999), 277.

⁴⁰⁷ Ashish Kothari and Priya Das, "Local Community Knowledge and Practices in India", in *Cultural and Spiritual Values of Biodiversity*, com. and ed. Darrell Addison Posey and Oxford Centre for the Environment, Ethics and Society, UK (Nairobi: United Nations Environment Programme, 1999), 190.

wise management and nature protection. The Australian aboriginal people, New Zealand's Maori people, Canadian Cree people, Native American-Indians, numerous Indian tribes, Nepalese Sherpa people are some of these people. All of these indigenous people do not maintain a mere ecological self, or just a sense of interconnectedness with nature. But rather, they hold a neighboring self which enable them to know well their land, weather, local plants, mountains, animals, birds, insects, organisms and the whole ecosystem of their surroundings. They know very well the aesthetic and spiritual value of their neighborhood. So, I strongly differ from Naess and other deep ecologists who claimed that indigenous people's lifestyles reflect an ecological self.

In my view, Naess's main concern of cosmological identification is rare in the indigenous people's worldview. They are evidently more inclined to their own territory, their own land, their specific relations with some of the plants, trees, animals and mountains in their neighborhood. Posey makes the same observational notes in the rich and voluminous collections of UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) where almost all indigenous cultures and their ecophilosophies have been compiled,

Local knowledge embraces information about location, movements and other factors explaining spatial patterns and timing in the ecosystem, including sequences of events, cycles and trends. Direct links with the land are fundamental, and obligations to maintain those connections form the core of individual and group identity.⁴⁰⁸

Therefore, the sense of interconnectedness cannot supply the appropriate ethical principle for protection of nature. In addition to it, a sense of inner connectedness which is absolutely local has always been part of the

⁴⁰⁸ Darrell Addison Posey, "Introduction: Culture and Nature-The Inextricable Link", in *Cultural and Spiritual Values of Biodiversity*, com. and ed. Darrell Addison Posey and Oxford Centre for the Environment, Ethics and Society, UK (Nairobi: United Nations Environment Programme, 1999), 5.

protection principle of indigenous people. Perhaps, the local people never protect their neighborhood as a part of preserving “wilderness”. They even do not have a sense of wilderness. They maintain a very different ethics to view and protect their surroundings as reflected here,

...there is usually no concept of ‘wilderness’. The only exception would be sacred landscapes/habitats/species which are off limits for use. In all other cases, including agricultural fields, forests, wetlands and pastures, both conservation and usage are integrated.⁴⁰⁹

Indigenous people’s lifestyles and practices set an example for us. Their view of surroundingness is neighbor-centric rather than ecocentric. However, viewing natural elements as neighbors is not potentially beyond criticism. Perhaps, it qualifies to gain critical attention as a viable option to a few major environmental philosophers. But these environmental philosophers did not provide new arguments, they just loosely commented on it. For example, Rolston dismisses the neighbor-centric view for two old reasons,

Earth, too, is a big rockpile, only one that happens to support life. It is no doubt precious as a means of life support, but it is not precious in itself. To add a new imperative, loving Earth, to the classical one of loving neighbor (and God), is to make a category mistake. Neighbors (and God) are persons, ends in themselves, who respond to love. But Earth is just earth, dirt. Earth is not some proper-named person who can respond.⁴¹⁰

These two reasons according to Rolston’s statement are, first, considering natural elements as neighbors is a category mistake, Earth, like a rockpile, is non-sentient, nonliving and so it cannot belong to the higher category of persons who are rational, sentient and living beings. Second, we

⁴⁰⁹ Ashish Kothari and Priya Das, “Local Community Knowledge and Practices in India”, in *Cultural and Spiritual Values of Biodiversity*, com. and ed. Darrell Addison Posey and Oxford Centre for the Environment, Ethics and Society, UK (Nairobi: United Nations Environment Programme, 1999), 186.

⁴¹⁰ Holmes Rolston, III, *Conserving Natural Value* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 208-209.

should not love Earthly elements as neighbors because they are not able to respond with our love. One can only love persons, such as human neighbors and God, who are qualified enough for love as being a proper-named person. However, loving Earthly elements as life support means is morally sensible in Rolston's view.

The first argument is purely Kantian which we have already discussed. We have claimed that Kantian ethics has several elements (e.g. aesthetic) to consider nature beyond his categorical distinction. Moreover, the argument itself is extremely anthropocentric.

The second argument has little or no support from historical perspectives. Loving someone or something does not require personhood. Love cannot be based on the hope of return, or receiving a response. Perhaps, the reverse has taken place in the heart of great saints, philosophers, philanthropists, social workers, and humanitarians. If there is anything unique in human beings, it is their imagination, understanding and most importantly, the boundless capability of feelings of love for everything. Viewing natural elements as neighbors and loving them is just a part of our unique capability of intimate feeling. Very often we have this intimate feeling for neighborhood trees, rivers, mountains, gardens, green fields, forests, roads, bus stops, and buildings. Our unique capability of having such feelings therefore does not require natural elements to have their individual names. Environmental philosopher E. Foss, who regards human beings as the "nervous system" of planet Earth, notes, "We need to be the eyes and ears and brain of the planet. We need to develop our power to act on behalf of us all...We need to focus our

competitive feelings on the largest and most worthy adversary we have ever faced: the uncaring physical universe”.⁴¹¹

Nonetheless, the neighbor-centric approach has a few drawbacks. The important drawbacks of neighborhood environmental philosophy must be addressed. Firstly, we cannot expect nature to reciprocate. Secondly, in principle, diversity and neighborhood are conflicting, i.e. neighbors are fixed but diversity is an unlimited flow of elements. One might be stuck with his or her unattractive natural neighbors. He or she then can be frustrated in caring for them. Thirdly, the main worries of global environmental problems (such as climate change) may not be solved by a neighbor-centric approach. Finally, the emerging idea of NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) and people’s mobility for globalization are clearly conflicting with the neighbor-centric view.

In response to these drawbacks, I believe that there are some opportunities that enable us to find a possible solution. Let me review the idea of reciprocity first, and then consider its application in the environmental context. The ethics of reciprocity was developed in the writings of Greek philosophers as a “mutual covenant” or “contract”. In order to avoid injustice in the earlier societies people agreed that they will not torture or punish each other. Since all want to avoid sufferings or punishment the contract was maintained. The idea was that both the stronger and the weaker were treated equally or were able to give equally. The stronger realizes that showing force is bad, while the weaker has the capacity of disliking or avoiding oppression. Based on this reciprocal ethics, Nel Noddings, a founder of feminist care ethics, suggested that to receive caring “reciprocity” is a must. In other words,

⁴¹¹ Jeffrey E. Foss, *Beyond Environmentalism: A Philosophy of Nature* (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2009), 294.

those who are consciously capable of appreciating our caring are qualified to receive it. According to her, "...there is no true ethical relation between humans and plants because the relation is logically one-sided".⁴¹²

However, not all philosophers think that reciprocity is a good ethical norm at all. Perhaps, they think that we do not need to take reciprocity as a norm for moral considerability of animals, plants, and other nonhumans, or for taking care of them. For instance, Peter Singer argues that we should not base our morality on reciprocity. Singer comments, "Because no account of the origin of morality compels us to base our morality on reciprocity, and no other arguments in favour of this conclusion have been offered, we should reject this view of ethics"⁴¹³.

In environmental consideration, reciprocity is *not* an effective idea because human beings have to think far from reciprocity for harmonious living. If our ethics is based on reciprocal behavior then the emerging effort to include other parts of nature in a moral circle will be at risk. Environmental ethics suggests some guidelines of behavior beyond a concern for the human species, including a concern for animals, biotic and abiotic entities, and others who cannot reciprocate.

Reciprocity might be appropriate for some human relationships. For example, taking care of neighbors, visiting friends especially in their ceremonies and illness, helping relatives when they are in need, and extending charity to children and the aged. In this context, the value of reciprocity can be seen as a universal consideration for greater bonding and sharing.

⁴¹² Nel Noddings, *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (California: University of California Press, 1984), 170.

⁴¹³ Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 63.

But reciprocity can also be negatively interpreted. If a person helps his friend by lending a mobile phone or a computer, in return when the friend does the same thing, they are maintaining a trading relationship, instead of sharing relationship (or friendship). Eventually, their friendship will discontinue. Friendship would require *not* engaging persistently in the expectation of a formal return. Instead of that, a friend would act with kindness, sympathy, compassion, generosity, and love.

Reciprocity promotes a few obligations. However, in order to be treated morally, something need *not* be reciprocal. Most environmental philosophers and applied ethicists, such as John Passmore, Arne Naess, Holmes Rolston III, and Peter Singer, think that we have obligations toward our future generations even though they are not reciprocal. We should take sustainable initiative so that our children and their generations can live in a pollution free, clean, and fresh environment. They may not exist now. But our focus toward our environment should be kindness, empathy, sympathy, compassion, and love, not reciprocity. This is because we are able to extend all of these dispositions and good deeds irrespective of considering paybacks. That is why we take care of disabled infants or palliative patients without any return. Their smiles encourage us, their words, even eye contacts, give us motivation, peace and happiness.

Likewise, we care for the river flowing near our village, old home, birth place, wilderness, mountains, trees, and green lands. When we are so exhausted with so many complexities in life, bored with most human relations, we may go there and sit for few moments. We rediscover ourselves at the bank

of the river. Nature does not react to our violence, in the way that some humans would.

Secondly, the conflict between diversity and neighbor-centric philosophy is also possible to resolve. One of our concerns with the neighborcentric philosophy is emphasizing locality and avoiding abstractness. Neighborcentrism does not close the option of new adaptation, new association, and new communities. In fact, preserving old livelihood as well as facilitating new initiatives is an important feature of neighborcentrism. We should allow as much diversities and associations with our natural communities that we could afford. Surely, we will preserve a mango tree in our back yard. At the same time, we can plant a guava tree, an orange tree, a jackfruit tree, and an apple tree. We should not stick only with our mango tree.

We could have just an orchid garden in our neighborhood, but we could also have a garden with lilies, roses, tulips, jasmines, and camellias in the same piece of land. So, if we are bored with orchids we should simply take the initiatives for an increase of other varieties of flower. Once we have multiple varieties of flower, we could expect various insects to come and stay with them. Beautiful butterflies will obviously come. Despite them, some of the other insects could be more enjoyable, nice and colorful for us. Gradually, when the number of insects increase, the number of some animals will also be increased. Thus, if we were bored with squirrels in our old set-up, in the new set-up we could expect some amazing birds, ducks, monkeys, and even some snakes (most snakes are *not* poisonous). So, the neighbor-centric view is open to initiatives for increasing diversity. We just need to think how we can

accommodate or adapt diversities without destroying the present natural neighborhood.

Viewing natural elements as neighbors and loving them is an ability, not a necessity in order to become a human being. As Foss puts it in his philosophy of integrated nature, “This is an *ability of Homo sapiens*. It is by no means a necessity, but it can be done”⁴¹⁴. Yes, it can be done for a better Earth. An Earth, where human beings are caring for their natural neighbors, just as they are caring for human neighbors.

Thirdly, how could a neighbor-centric view respond to climate change? Climate change has threatened all lives seriously, including the people who are living now and future generations to come. This is a large scale problem. Sufferings as a result of climate change have already taken place in the Artic zone, lowland states, island states and even the developed world. The solution to climate change is much more ethical and political rather than scientific. How can a large scale problem, such as climate change, be solved by taking local initiative, such as protecting one’s neighborhood?⁴¹⁵ How can it help if an individual cares for his or her neighborhood? It might appear that a neighboring self would have *negligible* or *insignificant* effects. But in fact this is not the case.

While the United Nations is taking global initiatives, a collective effort from local people and local governments is also required for environmental

⁴¹⁴ Jeffrey E. Foss, *Beyond Environmentalism: A Philosophy of Nature* (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2009), 295.

⁴¹⁵ See Robin Attfield, *The Ethics of the Global Environment* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 13 and Andrew Belsey, “Chaos and Order, Environment and Anarchy”, in *Philosophy and the Natural Environment*, ed. Robin Attfield and Andrew Belsey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 163.

problems. Each and every individual has a moral responsibility. As Garvey notes,

However, you are lumped with the problem of climate change. It's a moral problem for you, right now. You have some decisions to make about how to live, some choices which concern your everyday life. There is some moral pressure on everyone of us to come to some conclusions.⁴¹⁶

Responsible individuals can push the government to make responsible decisions and participate in the international treaties and policies to protect the environment. Governments might not always give priority to the environment, focusing too much on the greater economic benefit and technological development of the nation.

A combination of private morality and public morality is important here. When individuals are conscious and responsible, governments cannot be irresponsible. Recently, John Broome, in his book *Climate Matters*, concludes that "Climate change makes moral demands on our behavior as individuals in our private lives, and it also makes moral demands on governments"⁴¹⁷. Scruton argues that environmental policies should focus on "local affections". As he notes in this statement, "In my view this is the most poisonous aspect of the campaign to put global warming at the top of the environmental agenda. For it removes attention from the fact that good stewardship begins at home, and can never be guaranteed by treaty"⁴¹⁸.

Whether *an* individual's decision to use fossil fuel to generate electricity would have *ignorable* or massive impact on climate change or

⁴¹⁶ James Garvey, *The Ethics of Climate Change: Right and Wrong in a Warming World* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2008), 4.

⁴¹⁷ John Broome, *Climate Matters: Ethics in a Warming World* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2012), 187.

⁴¹⁸ Roger Scruton, *Green Philosophy: How to Think Seriously About the Planet* (London: Atlantic Books, 2012), 374.

global warming is not the issue. The real issue is that the more we identified with our neighborhood, the more responsible we will be to our environment. The motivation to protect the neighborhood could deter the government from making environmentally harmful policies. It gradually may also be extended to the global level.

Finally, the idea of NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) throws another challenge to the neighboring attitude toward nature. There are very few people who really care beyond their immediate environment, or own home. Moreover, people are too mobile in this globalized world. Only very few mobile people can have neighboring bonding with the place. Most of them are unconcerned about environmental issues or intimate relation with their neighborhood.

Nimbys are concerned about their locality. Local affection and their love for neighborhood inspire them to resist a harmful establishment in their place. Most environmental problems arise from our lack of concern. We usually never think beyond our home or yard. However, the situation has now been changed. Climate change and global warming can threaten us and our future generations too. So, we cannot ignore environmental issues any more. We need to adapt a different attitude. We should look beyond our home, our yard, our neighborhood, and even our country. Consider, for example, the current haze problem in Southeast Asia. The origin of haze is in Indonesia, but it affects Singapore, Brunei, Malaysia and Thailand. As a good neighbor, Singapore extends her hand to solve this problem by offering advanced scientific and technical support to Indonesia. This is not just because Singaporeans are affected, but also because it ensures a sustainable and clean environment for the whole region.

Mobility is not an entirely new phenomenon. Perhaps, people are more mobile than before. As people are mobile, they have greater opportunities of facing environmental challenges, such as harsh weather, drought, floods, cyclones, and earthquakes. Mobile people have more options to share the environmental information, and modify their behavior. They need to think and start acting toward their present neighborhood wherever they live.

Undoubtedly, we produce CFCs at home, in our regions, and in our countries which cause global problems. So, if we really want to solve these problems we must switch off our refrigerators, our electric lights, our air conditioning systems when we do not need to use them. Or we can do it for a whole day in a week at our local community. Thus, one of the influential slogans to solve the ecological crisis is “Think globally, act locally”. If we are able to achieve the neighboring self we could think of any place as a neighborhood (let’s assume we are wayfarers). But one must start with his or her own neighborhoods. If all of us are able to protect our neighborhoods the whole Earth will be protected from CFCs.

Home should be our key motivational force, the *Oikophilia*, in Scruton’s term, for environmental protection. He impressively reminds us, “Home is not just any place. It is the place that contains the ones you love and need; it is the place that you share, the place that you defend, the place for which you might still be commanded to fight and die”⁴¹⁹. Granting Scruton’s suggestion, why not think about our own neighborhood first to keep it environmentally clean and fresh, start doing our part with little sacrifice and minimum effort.

⁴¹⁹ Roger Scruton, *Green Philosophy: How to Think Seriously About the Planet* (London: Atlantic Books, 2012), 239.

The suggestion of globalization or global responsibility has already faced severe challenges throughout the globe. One of the reasons for this challenge is the huge difference between the contribution to Carbon emission and imposing equal responsibility for all. The contribution to the Earth's pollution, and responsibility of taking care of the Earth (or paying compensation) should be proportionally distributed. Moreover, globalization has many side-effects on the developing and poor people, and notable environmentalists throughout the globe have raised their voices against it.

To sum up, I have proposed a version of the neighboring self as a viable solution to the ecological crisis. This neighboring self admits that there are diversities as well as unities in the neighborly ordering of our Earth. There is no restriction to enjoying natural resources as long as it is done in line with neighborhood principles. Neighbors are not God or goddesses. They are neither slaves of human beings nor their partners in a true sense. Neighbors are locally bounded and might be considered as ecological. Perhaps, neighbor from an ecological point of view is more meaningful than any other interpretations. For example, a social interpretation of neighbor does not go far because it may only consider social human beings living in the same compound.

The neighboring self neither subscribes to a dominating worldview nor a cosmological worldview. Instead of these, the neighboring self holds identification-as-neighborhood, neighborhood self-realization and neighborhood spirituality as the most appropriate dimensions of common core values. In other words, the neighboring sense of three common core values would constitute a totally new version of self, namely, the neighboring self. In

lieu of protecting the whole biosphere, the neighboring self protects its neighborhood by a guiding moral principle, the Protection Principle. The neighbor-centric worldview does not foster abstractness in human-nature relationship. Rather, it is a transformed view of the indigenous people's lifestyles and their neighborliness ecophilosophy. The neighbor-centric view includes mainstream environmental approaches, such as conservation and preservation. However, the neighboring self, when guided by the Protection Principle, maintains a balance between conservation and preservation which explores the foundation of a comprehensive environmental ethics.

CONCLUSION

Comparative environmental philosophy is an important development for viewing the environment from cross-cultural perspectives and for suggesting a solution to the environmental problems by analyzing traditions, values, and different attitudes. This thesis has identified some common core values in the Western and Asian traditions by comparing their environmental philosophies. Common core values may underpin a framework for a comprehensive environmental ethics. Suggesting the right attitudes toward nature in the context of the self-nature relationship is another basic aim of the study.

In Western traditions, human beings are given the highest priority. Other environmental elements are seen as serving human interests. Since human beings alone are intrinsically valuable, the promotion of human interests or well-being is considered the chief value axioms in the West. Anthropocentrism, the view that *only* human beings are intrinsically valuable, or that human interests are overriding, has been justified by the Western classical philosophers.

However, there are other earlier Western philosophers (e.g. the ancient Greeks) who view nature from an integrated perspective, rather than a separation based on the anthropocentric value axioms. After surveying the historical roots of Western traditions, Lynn White Jr. has challenged the anthropocentric view and recommended a radical change in Western values

and human-nature metaphysics. He argues that there is a strong link between Christianity, Western traditions, and the Western view of nature.

One might yet question whether White's perception regarding Western traditions is correct. Are anthropocentrism and Christianity really responsible for the global ecological crisis? This thesis does not discuss such questions in detail. Rather, it indicates that White's analysis raises the issue that there is a deeper metaphysics rooted in the human-nature relation. White insists that for overcoming the ecological crisis we need a new set of values and an attitude that we are part of nature rather than the masters of nature.

Arne Naess and John Passmore, are the two notable Western environmental philosophers who were considered here in more detail. They critically reflected on the Western traditions and values. Both of them discussed the nature of ecological crisis, reasons for the ecological crisis, and how to overcome them within the Western context. Nonetheless, they suggested different approaches in environmental philosophy. Their comparison shows that we should recognize some core values which are ignored in Western traditions. While I am aware that these two environmental philosophies may not be the complete representation of Western traditions, they reasonably contained certain core Western values and have profound influence on other environmental philosophers.

Naess introduced the term "ecosophy" in the Western context. He supported White's observation that the West needs a set of values and a radical change in human-nature metaphysics. His deep ecology is an environmental movement against shallow ecology which basically aims at the protection of human beings, their lives and health. He views nature as a single

community to which human beings belong. Apparently, Naess's deep ecology identifies several values, such as diversity, wilderness, respect for life forms, interrelatedness, and interconnectedness. However, by analyzing Naess's own distinction between "norms" and "values" and his ecosophy, this thesis has shown that Naess advocates three fundamental values, identification, self-realization and spirituality.

Naess claims that his own ecosophy T has "only one ultimate norm: Self-realization". It is argued that Naess's norm internalizes the fundamental value of identification. Naess's suggestion of expanding our "egoistic self" to a "comprehensive Self" is also articulated by a process of identification. So, in sketching his ecosophy Naess clearly admits identification.

For a deep ecologist, Self-realization is the feeling that a smaller self is a part of a bigger Self, that is, "self-in-Self". The small self here is the individual self, while the big self is the comprehensive Self. Self-realization refers to a type of development. More clearly, a special type of development that Naess conceptualizes as a development in personhood or the "maturity of self".

I have tried to show that by introducing "maturity of self" Naess recognizes the value of self-realization. In other words, one can gain ecological consciousness through continuous self-examination, self-mastery or self-controlling. That is to say, Naess is not rejecting the value of traditional self-realization, but he suggests expanding it to a maximum level. The consciousness originates from intra-personal communication and then finally ends at trans-personal consciousness.

Naess's ecosophy promotes "totality" or "unity". Nature is a "total-field image" which is indivisible in Naess's view. Generally, people are not ready to embrace such a worldview. But when they acquire some kind of spiritual consciousness they would be motivated to see themselves in relation to other natural elements. So, Naess's ecosophy is a development of "spiritual personhood". This spiritual personhood will consider nature as integrated with a strong feeling to nonhuman elements, or intimate spiritual belongingness with them.

In this way, I have drawn some main values from Naess's ecosophy. One important point is that Naess is somehow reluctant to apply ethics or ethical principles to solve the ecological crisis. He differs from others who think that moral principles can guide our behavior toward nature. Although I do not think that Naess completely ignores ethical principles, his view is largely based on ontology.

In contrast to the ontological solution, Passmore suggests that Western ethical values are sufficient to solve the ecological crisis. He praised Western traditions as innovative, rich, and rational rather than mystical. He relies on science and technology and argued that, like other social problems, the ecological problems can be solved by survey, data analysis, the testing of hypotheses, and formulating appropriate policies. The philosophy of wholeness or ecosophy makes environmental decision-making process complex, and is inappropriate in solving the ecological crisis.

Despite a highly positive attitude toward Western traditions, science and technology, Passmore thinks that the Western perception of nature is incorrect. He argues that we must realize that nature is not just a resource to

use. Human beings have to adopt a different attitude rather than the masters of the universe. Christianity does support dominion over nature, but it also recommends a stewardship attitude toward nature.

Passmore supports the view that human beings are unique. Being unique they have responsibility toward other natural elements. Their uniqueness may not detach themselves from nature. Instead, uniqueness should make human beings more caring and prudent managers of natural resources. This thesis shows that Passmore maintains both the higher status of human beings and a scientific-utilitarian approach to solve the ecological crisis.

Self-realization appears in Passmore's environmental philosophy in the sense of realizing rationally. It is a realization that rational human beings have an enormous capacity to make rational decisions. They cannot surrender themselves to nature whether in the form of worship or blindly taking nature as sacred. Human beings can tackle the ecological crisis through scientific research. They can make rational decisions in a systematic way and formulate effective moral principles to be followed.

Passmore's worldview has two aspects. First, he accepts the scientific-utilitarian method to use nature. But secondly, he views nature as "God's handiwork". Those who love God should care for nature, since as stewards they are entitled to preserve it in the perfect condition. Passmore made a deeper claim for spirituality without considering nature as sacred.

The emphasis on some core values is evident from Western classical philosophers to notable modern environmental thinkers, like Naess and Passmore. In particular, this thesis highlights three values namely, identification, self-realization, and spirituality, in Naess's and Passmore's

environmental philosophy. However, they have maintained different senses of these values. Apart from personal and cosmological senses, a neighboring sense of identification can be constructed. We can perceive the environment from a neighboring viewpoint, referring to the Earth's evolutionary history. The Earth's evolutionary history shows a high probability that our ancestors maintained a neighboring relation with the natural elements.

Appeal to nature in various aspects of human life produces a more intimate relation in Asian traditions. Nature is mysterious, powerful, a source of knowledge, balanced and harmonious to the Asian people. In most Asian cultures, respecting nature was historically evident. We have concentrated here on three major traditions in Asia, that is, Chinese, Indian, and Japanese, by reflecting on their accounts of the human-nature relation in more detail. It seems that Asian traditions generally adopt a nonanthropocentric environmental value, a value system which rejects the view of human beings as the centre of the universe. Alternatively, nature is *intrinsically* valuable according to this value system. But anthropocentrism in a few traditions has also been exposed.

The Chinese perceive nature in relation to cosmic harmony and ecological balance. Human being's role and their responsibility in the family, society and government was the focus of Chinese thinkers. They encouraged self-cultivation. The goal of self-cultivation is harmony. This thesis argues that the worldview Chinese scholars portrayed is not entirely anthropocentric. Most of them, including Confucius, have suggested that human beings are required to live in relation to Heaven and Earth. So, human's personal, social and political responsibilities are not limited to other human beings alone. They

are the main elements but there are other elements in nature which they need to consider. Human beings cannot isolate themselves from these natural elements.

Daoist philosophers developed a more nature-centric view where an organic continuum between human beings and natural elements is emphasized. Nature is seen through an interaction of *Dao* (the Way), *De* (integrity), and the ten thousand things. The principle recommended for preservation of the naturalness of ten thousand things is *Wu-wei*. Interestingly, this principle could provide a complete guide for human-human and human-nature relations. By introducing the principle of *Wu-wei* the Chinese philosophers have removed the ontological hierarchy found in the Western traditions. The Chinese through the interaction of microcosm and macrocosm view nature as a “seamless whole”.

Identification with nature makes Indian philosophy, theology and cultures unique. Viewing nature as a single community, where both organic and inorganic elements are members, is the basic foundation of Indian traditions. Human lives are celebrated with the sacredness of nature and spiritual association with trees, rivers, and animals. The emotional aspects of human-nature relation inspired people to environmental protections. For a good human being realization of *Atman* (Self) and being selfless is important. *Bhakti* or spirituality encourages human beings to maintain a principle of *Karma*. *Ashimsa* or nonviolence is the key to Indian perception of preserving harmony in nature.

Like the Indian, the Japanese view of nature is also deep rooted in their religious and cultural traditions. Mountains occupied a special place in

Japanese traditions. They also believe in spirituality or *kami* in nature. Heaven and Earth are significantly important in Japanese traditions, but they received a considerable modification from Chinese discourse. They were blended into Shintoism and Buddhism. The Japanese traditions emphasized correctness and uprightness of heart. A bright heart (or mind) is a heart which establishes spiritual bonding with all natural elements. The Japanese philosopher Kinji Imanishi calls it “self-completeness”. Buddhist traditions in Japan developed a conception of “Buddhahood”, or “Buddha-nature”. The Buddhist monk Kukai views nature as a total interdependence. The term “buddha-nature” is synonymous with sympathy, nonviolence, wisdom and compassion. It motivates human beings to act compassionately to all sentient and non-sentient elements. An aesthetic appreciation of nature made Japanese traditions unique.

So, in Asian traditions, there is a diversity of thoughts. These diversities are mainly in religious beliefs which helped to shape people’s perceptions of their lives and of nature. I have argued that despite these differences, there are some common values in Asian perceptions of the human-nature relation. Overall, Asian traditions exhibited that there is an ontological “continuity” between the Creator, human beings, and natural elements.

Both Asian and Western traditions ultimately recognize a few basic issues which are vital for environmental philosophy and ethics. I have focused on three main areas, the uniqueness of human beings, the distinction between living and nonliving elements, and nature’s sacredness. In Western traditions, two prominent theories, the dominion theory and the mechanistic theory, provided the bases for human uniqueness.

Darwinism, as a notable example of the mechanistic theory, holds that everything in nature is sustained by an evolutionary process. The nonliving elements in nature are simply material forces. They are like machines which keep the continuation of natural selection process. Western traditions developed the ideas of autonomy, moral responsibility and human dignity. Human beings as persons are responsible and have duties toward others.

However, the motivation and inspiration for dutiful, responsible human beings is differently based in Asian traditions. In the Chinese traditions, by maintaining the great cosmic balance, human beings can achieve moral excellence. Indian traditions, on the other hand, invite submission to nature and required human beings to realize themselves as parts of a bigger Self. The Japanese view is that compassionate behavior toward all elements in nature can develop an enlightened self, dutiful and responsible human beings. I have noted that while Western traditions view uniqueness of human beings in relation to liberty, equality, rights and autonomy, the Asian traditions suggest gaining it by becoming a human being who perceives nature through a lens of interrelations.

Western traditions divide sharply living and nonliving elements in nature. Among human beings, they refer to some criteria of personhood. Duties toward nonhuman elements are derived from the distinction of sentient and nonsentient beings, or whether they have interest. So, in Western traditions consciousness was somehow given priority.

Asian traditions, rather than focusing on the distinction between living and nonliving elements, encourage constructing a normative system which is mainly virtue-based. But there are also right-based and care-based approaches.

Asian traditions exhibit that some ideas, such as feeling, intimacy, kindness and sympathy, are morally important. I have argued that Asian normative systems rarely encourage a distinction between living and nonliving elements.

Nature need not necessarily be sacred in the religious sense in Western traditions. Nature can be sacred in a sense of God's art or in a sense of aesthetic beauty. Most Asian traditions, believe in sacredness in nature. Indian and Japanese traditions associate the sacredness of nature with love, sympathy, compassion, devotion and spirituality. The Chinese do not believe in sacred nature, but they believe in a cosmic balance of material force and spontaneity of nature. After comparing Western and Asian traditions in different perspectives, I located their differences in the different senses of identification, self-realization and spirituality on which they relied.

Finding some common core values was one of the main goals of this thesis. The common core values are important for formulating local and global environmental policies and to overcome the environmental crisis. The first three chapters of this thesis showed that the three values, identification, self-realization and spirituality, are predominant in both Western and Asian traditions. These values are to be found in Naess's ecosophy and Passmore's environmental philosophy. They are also vivid in Chinese, Indian and Japanese traditions. These values are therefore common.

Are they core values? What would justify them as core values? I have offered some criteria based on the basic components shared widely in both traditions. These are influential in the traditional value systems, beliefs, and thoughts. The standard criteria I proposed for core values include motivational

force, non-separation, ecologically imaginative, and preservation of balance and harmony.

The main task of environmental philosophy and ethics is to rethink our existing human-nature relation and recommend the environmental values which should be protected and promoted. There are two main aspects of common core values: policy and theory. This thesis has analyzed two influential policy recommendations on the environment, The Earth Charter and the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights. Although the importance of identification, self-realization and spirituality were recognized here these values should be widely accepted and incorporated in the local and global environmental policies.

From the theoretical point of view, I argued that the common core values are important in developing a comprehensive environmental ethics. Some basic features of a comprehensive environmental ethics outlined in this thesis are, firstly, a comprehensive environmental ethics that values nature beyond its instrumental use. Secondly, a comprehensive environmental ethics considers the whole cosmos and natural system as the objects of moral consideration. Thirdly, a comprehensive environmental ethics does not focus on mere human interests, but rather considers the interconnectedness, sacredness, beauty and sustainability of nature. Fourthly, a comprehensive environmental ethics should consider identification, self-realization and spirituality as common core values. Fifthly, human's interests must be modified in accordance with the balance and harmony of nature. Finally, providing an action-guiding moral principle for a harmonious human-nature relation is one of the key features of a comprehensive environmental ethics.

An ongoing debate on the nature of a comprehensive environmental ethics focuses on whether such an ethics should be an articulation of ethical norms and principles, or a collection of traditional environmental wisdom found in different cultures. After discussing the advantages and disadvantages of both sides, I suggested that none of them separately is plausible for overcoming the ecological crisis. A modification of both sides is necessary. The former lacks proper wisdom, whereas the latter lacks action-guidingness. So, a complete theoretical reconstruction has been proposed.

Our emotional attachments with the surroundings should be taken into consideration for a viable theoretical guidance. Local affection motivates human beings to develop a powerful ecological consciousness. A place-based responsibility, rather than a humanistic responsibility, seems to be more appropriate to preserve the environment. This kind of responsibility demonstrates that some moral norms can spring from identification with nature. We must therefore value ecological relationships, our home, our neighborhood, and our locality. “Sustainable biosphere” and “the love of a place or home” are two recent developments in the idea of a place-based responsibility.

Naess thinks that maturity of self or developing an ecological self is more important than our emotional attachment with nature. His ecological self and nature are identified. That is, the ecological self cannot destroy nature because a destruction of nature will be considered its own destruction. What is most important to Naess is ecological consciousness. But I have argued that just focusing on the ecological consciousness without the emotional attachment to nature is a mistake. Indeed, Naess’s standard example of

identification and his example of Norwegian settlers initially admitted the emotional attachment with place but he ignores this belongingness in his formulation of the ecological self.

Another model of ecological self was proposed by deep ecologist Freya Mathews. She invokes a “self-maintenance” system, equally applicable to both living and nonliving elements. Fox’s reformulation of the ecological self into “the transpersonal self” has also been discussed. After examining various notions of the ecological self, I argued that we should abandon the idea for some basic reasons. The most important reason is that the idea of the ecological self can hardly *motivate* people who do not support the deep ecological platform. Secondly, the notion of the ecological self is unhelpful in making practical decisions, or in formulating effective environmental policies.

A feminist approach to nature is popular in both Western and Asian traditions. This approach argues that a personal relation to nature may generate love and devotion to other natural entities. Gaia, a Greek mother goddess, is identical with Earth. Similarly, in Indian traditions, viewing nature as a mother is prominent. Is there any advantage in seeing the Earth as “Mother Nature” or “Mother Earth”? If this perception is associated with some religious background, then it could contribute to the protection of the environment. But in the absence of some religious support, the motivation might not be sufficiently strong.

It seems that a plausible option could be to view nature as a mother who carries our future generations. Then a further issue is that the mother-child relation may not be absolutely positive. There are bad mothers in our societies too. One answer is that if we are inspired by love, respect and

devotion we should be caring even for a bad mother. Analyzing this complex issues of surroundings, emotion and ecological consciousness, I have noted that an emotional attachment with our surroundings is required.

I have attempted to develop a distinctive sense of common core values, that is, the neighboring sense. We have seen that the evolutionary history of the Earth indicates a high possibility of a neighboring relation at the primitive time. Concern for the neighbors has a social as well as a religious appeal. However, these neighbors are usually seen as human neighbors. I have endorsed a neighboring relation to the natural elements. These neighbors are therefore the *ecological* neighbors. Our communities are not limited to social communities. The idea of neighbor can be expanded further to accommodate our surroundings. I suggest that our community should be a “natural community” instead of a “social community”.

In a natural community, humans and nonhumans are conceived in terms of members rather than elements. They engage one another in a locality as ecological neighbors. Neighboring relationship is intimate and responsible because of place. The key strength of identification-as-neighborhood is the *awareness* of the Earth’s *neighborly ordering*. Neighborhood self-realization promotes a *duty* to other ecological neighbors.

Neighborhood spirituality enables our *consciousness* to view natural elements as our ecological neighbors. It helps us to conceptualize the remarkable unity of nature. A reverence for life is spiritual. Similarly, feeling nature as ferocious, mysterious is spiritual. Loving and enjoying the beauty of nature may also be spiritual. Thus, the neighboring senses of the three common core values would entail a new version of self, namely, the

neighboring self and constitute a neighbor-centric approach in environmental philosophy. A neighboring self develops when individuals are motivated by the emotional belongingness to their local surroundings and become ecologically conscious, and adopt the three common core values, identification, self-realization and spirituality.

To a neighboring self expanding awareness, empathy, and compassion to other neighborhood members is primary. By contrast, for an ecological self growing ecological consciousness, and then expanding it unto the maximum level is primary. The neighboring self is no longer selfless whereas becoming selfless at a certain level is essential for the ecological self.

A neighbor-centric approach to the environment comprises the neighboring self and a guiding moral principle, “The Protection Principle”. The neighboring self neither subscribes to a dominating worldview nor a totally cosmological worldview. What is plausible in the account of neighboring self is protecting the neighborhood, not the whole biosphere, by maintaining the Protection Principle.

The Protection Principle is the moral guideline which states that neighbors have an obligation to protect their neighborhood. Destruction is only permissible for fulfilling their basic needs, significant interests and ecological benefits. The Protection Principle allows using nature to some extent and support a policy that benefits human beings.

Only fulfilling basic needs are not enough for human beings. As a creative and innovative species human beings need satisfaction of mind. For this reason, human beings share their emotions, joys and happiness through Arts and cultural activities. We should also promote medical and health

research, scientific experiments and innovations which are consistent with ecological benefits and harmonious living.

However, I do not support perfecting nature by enormous alternation, redesigning forests, natural reservoir and wilderness, for the satisfaction of human beings. Neither conservation nor preservation alone is accepted. Conservationists need a neighboring self while the preservationists need a neighborhood management policy. The management policy proposed here is, “protect your neighbors”.

Naess and most deep ecologists think that indigenous people’s worldview is cosmological. However, it is more plausible to say that the indigenous people through out the Earth adapted the neighbor-centric view. Indigenous people maintain an absolutely local bonding without having an idea of preserving wilderness.

Since the neighborcentric approach incorporates both ecosophy and ethics, conservation and preservation, it can provide a framework for a comprehensive environmental ethics. The right attitude to nature is neither being an ecological master, nor being an ecological slave.

Now, one could raise the question whether the neighbor-centric view is able to solve the main worries regarding the environment, such as climate change and global warming. These problems may not be created by a neighboring country, society or group. For the same reason, neighbor’s decisions or activities for protecting the environment may be useless. Environmental decisions and hazardous activities may come from far away. Moreover, it may be argued that the idea of neighboring self is conceptually

narrow because neighbor requires a place and a social relation between the inhabitants.

In response to these objections, we need to look back carefully to the origin of environmental problems. Environmental problems are created by human beings, consciously or unconsciously. Every human being lives in a place, country, and region. People must be thoughtful if they want to save their future generations, reduce natural disasters, and keep this Earth livable for all. The most sensible way to show one's ecological consciousness and ensure his or her participation in a global responsibility is to engage in responsible behavior toward his or her own surroundings.

A collective effort should start from one's neighborhood with which one identifies most. When people are concerned about their neighborhood, they can put pressure on the government to make plausible environmental policies and to co-operate with global environmental organizations. A neighboring self is essential to be motivated for protecting one's neighborhood.

Let us look at our neighborhood once again in a beautiful morning, with caring eyes and an open heart-mind. Protect the Earth—our neighboring vicinity—by protecting the neighbors.

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