From Anthropocentric to Ecocentric Ethics Issues in Ecophilosophy

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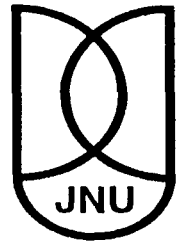

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CERTIFICATE

Certified that the dissertation titled *"From Anthropocentric to Ecocentric Ethics: Issues in Ecophilosophy"* submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy has not been previously submitted for any degree in this or any other university.

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners, for evaluation.

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I declare that the dissertation titled *"From Anthropocentric to Ecocentric Ethics: Issues in Ecophilosophy"* is my own work and has not been submitted either in part or in full for the degree in this or other university.

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To

My Maa And Papa

Contents

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During the last few decades, an awareness has been growing that the dangers to human survival are posed not only by the arms race, regional conflicts and continued injustice among peoples and nations, but also by a lack of due concern and respect for nature. As a consequence of industrial growth, massive urban concentrations and vastly increased energy needs our atmosphere is overloaded with the threatening large-scale disruptions in climate. The gradual depletion of the ozone layer and the related "greenhouse effect" has now reached crisis proportions. The unchecked industrial practices, such as, the toxic waste release, the burning of fossil fuels, commercial activities resulting in unrestricted deforestation, the use of certain types of herbicides, coolants, propellants and disposables etc. are major sources of contemporary ecological crisis. Faced with unpredictable climatic situations, desertification and the spread of new epidemics, we have started looking for the sources and causes of our contemporary environmental crisis.

There is an urgent need to address questions such as: what are the causes of the environmental degradation? What are its probable implications in the future? What should be the agenda and action plan to overcome the environmental crisis? Which kinds of changes are required in social values and policies to face the challenges and threats? By now it is emerging as a common consensus among ecophiloshophers that we cannot continue with the exploitation of nature in an unbridled manner. Nature has been exploited during the entire course of human history which ranges from subsistence food demand to mindless consumerist culture, nomadic life to high-rise apartment

culture, use of fire to nuclear energy; animal- carts to aeroplans, primitive stone-tools to chemical weapons and so on.

Prima facie these natural destructions can be seen as a result of an unthought use of the developments in science and technology. Nevertheless, the application of advances in science and technology has contributed significantly to unprecedented changes in styles and patters of every day life. Many recent medical discoveries have brought undeniable health benefits which can be seen in the rise of life expectancy and fall in infant mortality. These benefits have resulted in rapid population growth which demands production of more goods and services to meet the additional needs of increasing population. Unfortunately, the application of these discoveries in the fields of industry and agriculture has produced many harmful long-term effects. This has led to the painful realization that we cannot afford to interfere in one area of the ecosystem while keeping our eyes closed to the consequences of such interference in other areas.

There is a growing view that causes of existing ecological crisis are rooted in different anthropocentric (human-centered) philosophical traditions, for instance, in Greek philosophy and Semitic religious traditions. The origin of anthropocentrism is traced to Protagoras' statement "Man is the measure of all things"[1], Post- Socratic Greek philosophy and to Semitic religious traditions. Proponents of the new approaches to living an environment have questioned anthropocentric perspective and proposed a new ecocentric ethics. They argue that anthropocentric ethics is not adequate for dealing with moral issues that have arisen as a result of excessive exploitation and degradation of nature. Adopting an ecocentric ethics as a new way of leading our lives is recommended as to preserve and restore the ecological equilibrium. They argue that the

[1] *Plato II: Laches, Protagoras, Meno, Euthydemus.* Trans. W. R. M. Lamb. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1967. pp.45-46

(1) Nature must be valued as an inherent worth.

(2) Human superiority over non-human species must be abolished.

(3) The preservation of natural beauty and integrity must be ensured.

(4) Ethical egalitarianism and ethical holism must be established in order to offer equal rights ad values to the whole biotic-community.

For eccentric ethics, human interests do not trump that of all other life forms and the well being of biosphere as whole. Thus, an ecosystem, rather than its constitutive parts, is the axial point of moral concern.

Another, ecocentric argument, for the conservation and restoration of the ecological crisis is related to the demand of ecological wisdom, which can be achieved through deep experience, deep questioning and deep commitment. It claims that the ecosystem is an interconnected whole in which all species are connected with each other and each gives rise and supports to other. For this reason it holds the view that for the betterment of the ecosystem as a whole enhancement of its each and every member is inevitable and it can be realized through self realization.

Recently some philosophers have attempted to broaden the scope of environmental problems with the social, political and economic structure of society. Tracing the causes of ecological problems in these dimensions, they argue that rise of entrepreneurial capitalism has posed a crucial threat to environment. They suggest that money valorization tendency has been the basic feature of this capitalism which has been pursued without caring for the resulting damages to the environment. In the course of these developments Green political theorists have criticized the emergence of an increasingly

and abandoning of traditional forms and patterns of agriculture. Green theorists, therefore, generally counsel in favor of a more cautious, more modest and more critical approach to assessment of new development proposals, new technologies and practices of risk assessment in general.

In the first chapter we shall trace the legacy of anthropocentrism by studying its origin and development. We will be dealing with the different anthropocentric views found in the Greek philosophy, Semitic religious traditions and in modern science. The critics and limits of anthropocentrism will also be a dwelt in the course of the discussion. In the second chapter we shall focus on many issues related to ecocentric perspectives such as emergence and development of ecocentric concern, and deep ecology movement. We shall also discuss the different directions and explore the possibilities of ecocentric ethics and its viability. In the third chapter of the study we shall deal with the socio-political contexts of Eco philosophy through different schools of thoughts. For example, Eco-Marxism, green politics, debates between Eco-Marxists and Greens, and finally, the Eco-feminists' perspective on environmental issues.

Chapter one

Legacy of Anthropocentrism

"God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over fish of the sea, and over fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

The Bible (*Genesis* 1:27-8)

An awareness of rapidly growing environmmental degradation has made it vital to investigate the sources of contemporary ecological crisis. The emergence of new ecological thought is a result of an increasing concern for the protection of environment and restoration of disturbed balance. Over the course of three decades, modern organizations have been the target of an escalating criticism from environmentalists. Industry continues to face a media backlash that has heightened public concern over toxic wastes, exposures to environmental disasters and pollution, loss of biodiversity, ozone layer depletion, and greenhouse warming.

Environmental ethicists have claimed that one of the important sources of the present environmental crisis is the anthropocentric ethical mind-set that has guided the man - nature relationship over the centuries. They claim that this

anthropocentrism has made the natural phenomena vulnerable due to human exploitation and traced back its history to Greek Philosophical tradition and Semitic religious traditions. In this chapter, we shall make an attempt to trace and understand the legacy of anthropocentrism.

Anthropocentrism (Greek, *anthropos*, human being, *kentron*, "center") is the idea that alone humans are of central concern for humans, that humanity must judge all things accordingly: *Anthropos* (the term, like "human", refers to both men and women) must be considered, looked after and cared for, above all other real or imaginary beings. Anthropocentrism is a perspective that is closely related to humanism.

The evolution of anthropocentrism is usually traced to the famous statement of Protagoras "Man is the measure of all things"[2]. With this statement humans became the central focus of philosophical concerns. The Pre-Socratic philosophy prior to Protagoras was concerned with nature and the constitution of the world was seen in terms of natural objects like water and air. It is well known that Philosophers like Thales, Anaximander and others brought natural objects into their consideration in order to understand the wonders of the world.

Protagoras' view that "Man is the measure of all things" situated human in prime position from where he may give the meaning to rest of the things as per his needs, goals and a vision of human well being. After Protagoras, Aristotle is regarded as another important philosopher who contributed to the further reinforcement of the anthropocentric outlook.

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[2] "Of all things the measure is man, of the things that are, that [or "how"] they are, and of things that are not, that [or "how"] they are not."; *Plato II: Laches, Protagoras, Meno, Euthydemus.* Trans. W. R. M. Lamb. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1967. pp.45-46.

Aristotle's approach towards natural world was teleological in the sense that he believed that everything in nature had a purpose, and this purpose was for the benefit of mankind. He writes;

"plants are created for the sake of animals, and all other animals for the sake of man, the tame for our use and provision; the wild at least the greater part, for our provision also, or for some other advantage, as in order to furnish us with clothes, and the like purposes. Since, therefore, nature makes nothing either imperfect or in vain, it necessarily follows that she had made all these things for the sake of man". [3]

Aristotle's above statement can be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, if nature has made all things especially for the sake of man then it should not be exploited in order to keep its sustainability intact. Secondly, if nature has made all things for the sake of man, it can be used or exploited to satisfy human needs without any restriction. But present period of furious natural degradation shows that the second view has prevailed in the history of man-nature relationship. This is not to suggest that contemporary consumerists are ardent followers of Aristotle or they are aware of Aristotle's views. But they are undoubtedly inspired by the value system which advocates the priveleging of human goals and suordinating nature to serve these goals.

In his writings Aristotle emphasized that 'man is a rational animal'. This emphasis results in seeing rationality as an exclusive attribute of humans and no other animal possesses rationality. The specific difference which sets man apart from all other animals is his rationality, his capacity for intellectual activity. This conviction that man alone is a rational animal has been an accepted commonplace in Western culture. This belief has been a major source of anthropocentric ethics as it encourages a belief in the superiority of human beings over all other living creatures.

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[3] The Politics and Economics of Aristotle; trans. with notes (original and selected) by Edward Walford, Henry G. Bohn York street, Landon, 1853, p. 19

The legacy of Plato to European thinking about the natural world has been expressed as the Principle of Plenitude (Lovejoy, 1936; Rolfe, 1985). This was the belief that all possible kinds of things exist in the world already and neither more can be created nor anything can be exterminated. This attitude created a belief that nothing is going to be extinct so we can use these things as much as we want. But today the principle of plenitude seems doubtful because we are noticing the limits of nature which is in danger due to mindless consumption of natural resources.

Anthropocentrism can be regarded as based on two principles i.e. *'the principle of human superiority'* and *'the principle of nature as a resource'*. In former the primacy is given to human needs in our dealings with nature whereas in later, nature is seen merely as a resource for which we as human beings possess right to use for our own well being.[4] The prime notion in anthropocentrism is that the human beings alone have an intrinsic value and nature is only of instrumental value for realising human goals and satisfaction of human needs. Bryan Norton writes that 'the thesis of anthropocentrism...only humans are the locus of intrinsic value, and the value of all other objects derives from their contribution to human values' (Norton, 1987, p. 135). Callicott describes an anthropocentric environmental ethics in a similar way when he maintains that such an ethic 'grants moral standing exclusively to human beings and considers nonhuman natural entities and nature as a whole to be only the means to human ends' (Callicott, 1995a, p. 76).[5]

Another major source of anthropocentric ethics is traced in the Semitic (Judeao- Christian Islamic) religious traditions. It is clearly stated in the Gen. 1:28:

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[4] Mikael Stenmark, Environmental Ethics and Policy Making; Ashgate Publications Limited, Britain; 2002. p.27.

[5] Ibid. p. 28.

"...and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over fish of the sea, and over fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth".

The Semitic tradition accepts the view that 'God created man in His own image' and blessed him the position from where he has dominion over all other entities which move on earth. It advocates the view that all other things are for the well being of humans and they have an absolute right to use them as per their interest. This anthropocentric way of thinking encourages an unhindered exploitation of nature which has resulted in natural degradation. Since, God has given humans the power to subdue nature, they really subdued it, exploited and now find himselves in a crisis.

Lynn White Jr., A historian, has claimed that in "the orthodox Christian arrogance toward nature" can be regarded as the ideological source of our contemporary environmental woes. The Christian doctrine of Creation sets the human being apart from nature, advocates human control of nature, and implies that the natural world was created solely for human use. According to White, we already encounter evidence of attempts at the technological mastery of nature during the Christian Middle Age, and of those incipient exploitative tendencies that come to full flower in scientific and technological revolutions of later eras. White concludes these outlooks and approaches "bears a huge burden of guilt for environmental deterioration".[6]

White's views have attracted considerable criticism. In the in *Man's Responsibility for Nature* (1974), John Passmore suggests that the counterproductive attempt to dominate nature-"man as despot"-owes more to

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[6]. Lynn, White, jr. (1967).***'The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis'***, *Science*, 55:1203-1207 ; reprinted in Schmidtz and Willott 2002.

the exploitation of the nature has proved tenacious. White saw no reason to resile from his original observations, and his views, continue to attract adherents. The presumed historical link between the Christian doctrine of Creation and the Western attitude toward nature has been endlessly rehearsed in the burgeoning literature on environmental degradation and its causes. Many thinkers within the Christian tradition have endorsed some aspects of the White's thesis, calling for a radical revision of such traditional Christian doctrines that are supposed to have inspired ecological irresponsibility and chauvinism toward the natural world.[8]

Some of the most vocal attacks on White's thesis have come from the sphere of biblical criticism. A number of biblical scholars have patiently tried to explain the meaning of the text used in Genesis. But, White's thesis is not concerned with the meaning of the text as such, but with how it was understood by the community in which it first appeared and how it encouraged a particular outlook on man- nature relationship, how it motivated specific activities, and how it came to sanction a particular attitude toward the natural world. White's thesis does not therefore lie within the ambit of biblical criticism or hermeneutics but in the sphere of history.[9]

Following the legacy of anthropocentrism from biblical tradition, St. Thomas Aquinas is regarded as a typical votary of anthropocentric thinking in the Middle Ages since he claimed that human dominion over things is intimately

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[7]. John Passmore, *Man's Responsibility for, Nature* , London Duckworth, 1974, See also
Clarence Glacken, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore Nature and Culture in Western Thought from Ancient Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century*, Berkeley University of California Press, 1973

[8] Michelle Wokomir et al., "Substantive Religious Belief and Environmentalism," *Social Science Quarterly* 78, 1997, pp. 96-108; Douglas Eckberg and T. Jean Blocker, "Varieties of Religious Involvement and Environmental Concerns: Testing the Lynn White Thesis," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 28, 1989, pp.509-517.

[9] Opcit. Michelle Wokomir, 1997, pp. 98-101

related to the fact that the human individual "contains all things."[10] Human individual has control over all the things and can use them since he contains them. Therefore only he has right to decide the manner of using them so that they could be beneficial for him.

White has also pointed out examples of medieval attempts to master nature that occur quite independent of religious motivation. The introduction of the heavy technological equipments into agricultural practices made possible the large-scale cultivation of land and lifted agricultural production above the level of subsistence farming. This technological innovation thus revolutionized the relationship between human beings and the land that they inhabited, yielding up food surpluses and facilitating the development of towns. According to White, this advancement in agriculture changed the human attitude towards nature. The man who had been a part nature now became her exploiter to till it blindly and to gain as much as possible."[11] In addition, the medieval deployment of an impressive array of machines-water wheels, windmills, cranks and con-rods, fly-wheels, and treadles-are for White symptomatic of "the emergence of a conscious and generalized lust for natural energy and its application to human purposes."[12]

Here one may suggest that in the above instance we do not encounter an explicit articulation of an attitude of indifference or hostility toward, nature. Indeed, there seems to be no compelling reason to view these developments as anything more than particular expressions of the universal tendency of all cultures to seek efficient means to provide for basic human needs. Such activities

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[10] Thornas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* 1a.96.2, Blackfriars edition (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1964-76).

[11] Lynn White, Jr., *Medieval Technology and Social Change*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964, p. 56.

[12] Ibid., p. 129. We also witness in the later Middle Ages the widespread practice of forest clearing *by* fire or *by* axe. Glacken (n. 2 above) refers to the period of the eleventh to the thirteenth century as "the great age of forest clearance" (p. 330). For medieval modifications of nature generally, see pp. 318-351.

require no religious ideology to motivate them, nor do they need any justification other than the fact that human beings require food and shelter for survival, and when these are met, they look for further creature comforts as well.

Before the eighteenth century, writers about animals such as the Swiss naturalist, Conrad Gesner, and Edward Topsell, who published his *Historie of Foure-Footed Beasts* in 1607, viewed the world from an essentially human point of view. They had three categories of animals: edible and inedible; wild and tame; useful and useless (Thomas, 1983, p. 20). This belief in Man's supremacy over everything else in the world continued in the writings about Nature by philosophers and naturalists in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as well. Most of the scholars posited humans in the centre of universe and advocated the veiw that nature has to be subordinated to serve human needs and interests. The early stage of human life was not favorable to humans. Natural adversities and disasters created havoc in their life. Therefore, knowledge and control of nature bacame a primary human concern so as to make human life less miserable. Anthropocentric outlook was the consequence of that particular mind-set which encouraged the tendency to acquire a mastery over nature. Many of the religious scriptures also supported this aspiration. This finally culminated in an intense exploitation of nature and consequential degradation of natural environment.

From the above account, it can be concluded that anthropocentrism has both a religious and a secular foundation. It would not be fair to say that roots of anthropocentrism lie exclusively in the Semitic religious traditions. The modern scientific world- view has encouraged the thinking that nature does not have any intrinsic value. Nature has value, has significance, only if it is amenable to human manipulation and control. From this perspective, nature is of value only if it can be harnessed in the service of human values. Thus, the modern scientific-technological view of nature almost converges with theological

anthropocentrism: nature exists for mankind's advantage and use. What counts exclusively is humanity - its aspirations, its desires, and its interests - with possibly the minor qualification that, as moral agents, human beings should not be wantonly cruel to animals that have the capacity to suffer.[13]

The anthropocentric position is supported by the interest theory of rights proposed by a contemporary philosopher, Joel Feinberg, who writes, "without awareness, expectation, belief, desire, aim and purpose, a being can have no interests; without interests, he can not be benefited."[14]Since only human beings can evaluate nature, they alone are entitled to treat nature strictly according to the perceived needs and purposes of their species. A more promising answer to anthropocentrism might be to attempt to dissolve the hard conceptual line that is customarily drawn between human beings and nature, and to challenge the implicit assumption that we can somehow physically, organically, and even psychologically, detach the fate of mankind from the fate of nature. One might even challenge the notion that such a view of the man-nature relationship is an outcome of a rethinking about the misplaced confidence in the absoluteness of scientific rationality as the only rationality.

Questioning and rejecting the human domination of nonhuman nature is fundamental not only to dealing with environmental issues, but also for examining and challenging oppressive social arrangements. The exploitation of nature is not separate from the social, political and economic exploitation of marginalized human groups by more privileged and vested classes and groups. Ecofeminists and activists for environmental justice have shown that various forms of domination are often intimately inter-connected and mutually reinforcing.[15] Thus, as Carlson suggests, if critical scholars wish to resist various

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[13] William Baxter's (1982), *People or Penguins*, (Columbia University Press).

[14] "The Rights of Animals and Unborn Generations," in William Blackstone (ed), *Philosophy and Environmental Crisis*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1974).

[15] R. D. Bullard, Anatomy of environmental racism and the environmental

oppressions, part of their project must entail calling into question, among other things, the instrumental exploitive gaze through which we humans distance ourselves from the rest of nature and our fellow human beings.

According to Haraway (1986), the aesthetic of realism that underlies the truth claims of the natural sciences means many practitioners tend to see themselves not as interpreters but "as discoverers moving from description to causal explanation" (p. 89). Humans alone are understood to have histories open to interpretation. Everything else is merely a matter for measurement and prediction, physical stuff that can be described and classified once and for all. To move beyond such taken-for-granted notions of human and nature, Evernden and Haraway suggest, we must admit into the conversation some "non-common-sensical insights" and some "unsettling possibilities".

It is clear that anthropocentrism holds the view that the nonhuman world has value only insofar as it directly or indirectly serves human interests. The ecological crisis what we are facing presently is due the ambiguity lies in the phrase "human interest" i.e. between what is in our interest and what we take an interest in. In this context anthropocentrists claim that insofar as environmental problems are due to ethical wrong-headedness, the mistake we've made isn't in thinking that only human interests matter directly, but rather in being ill-informed and short-sighted about what our interests really are. If we take seriously the interests of future generations of humans and get clear about all of the ways in which the health of the natural environment improves the quality of human lives, we will have all the arguments we'd ever need for caring about the health of the environment, behaving in ways that are environmentally responsible, and adopting policies that are environmentally sustainable.

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justice movement. In R.D. Bullard (Ed.), *Confronting environmental racism: Voices from the grassroots*, Boston: South End Press, 1993, pp. 15-39

Chapter Two

Ecocentrism

In the previous chapter we discussed the origins evolution, and limits of anthropocentrism. We made an attempt to trace the diverse sources of anthropocentric views, and identified their limits in dealing with ecological concerns. Scholars (Baird Callicott, Paul Taylor etc.) argue that an anthropocentric ethics is not adequate for dealing with the moral issues that arise as a result of exploitation and degradation of nature. Ecocentric ethics has emerged to shape a large section of green movement thinking and has come to influence a new "ecophilosophy". Baird Callicott asserts that the two key ideas in this type of non-anthropocentric ethic are 'the shift in emphasis from parts to whole - from individual to community- and second, the shift in emphasis from human beings to nature, from anthropocentrism to ecocentrism.[16]

The present chapter is concerned with three different aspects of ecocentric ethics. These aspects are; emergence of ecocentric concerns, a debate between ecocentrism and anthropocentrism, and finally, directions and possibilities of eccentric ethics.

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[16] Callicott, J. Baird, 'Introduction: the real work', In Defence of the land Ethic; Albany: SUNY Press, 1989, p. 8.

The rapid technological and economic growth and resulting prosperity has affected nearly all aspects of human life i.e. social, psychological and environmental. New inventions have facilitated the creation of luxuries of life in the form of good medical facilities, electronic goods, fast transportation, instant communication etc. Advances in medical facilities have improved the health services. Consequently life-expectancy has increased and infant- mortality decreased. This has resulted in a rapid population growth. These developments have generated new needs and increasing demand for more goods. In order to fulfill requirements raised by these expectations, more new industries have been established. These industrial set-ups vitiated their surroundings in the forms of deforestation, carbon emission, ozone layer depletion, global warming, desertification, species extinction and health insecurity. These developments have affected the future of human life and have become serious threats to human survival in the long run.

Human activities have always had an impact on the surrounding physical environment, of course, but the scale and rate of this impact have expanded enormously during the last century. Transformational activities have ranged from diverting rivers, clearing forests, and depleting soils to magnifying the natural chemical flows of the biosphere and introducing new synthetic substances. Such changes have caused widespread alarm as they threaten to damage valued environments, deplete essential resources, or reduce the productivity of agriculture and other human activities. The perception of severe problems of these sorts may prompt the judgment that a state of environmental criticality has been reached and the human use of the environment put in jeopardy. As we use the term, "criticality" denotes a state of both environmental degradation and associated socio-economic deterioration, however measured or identified. "Critical region" denotes an area that has reached such a state of interactive degradation. Such meanings are broadly consistent with various

recent studies, ranging from global to local assessments (e.g. Turner et al. 1990a, 1990b).

Ecological problems created by human beings have affected entire course of human life. Before the Green Revolution, in order to combat with the food demands of increasing human population, the rapid agricultural growth was one of the crucial necessities of human survival. Rigorous use of pesticides in agricultural lands grew the agricultural outcomes significantly. But this practice has transformed the fertile lands into infertile and useless for any agricultural activities. Another significant impact of ecological degradation on human life can be seen in deforestation. Urbanization is one of the important features of technological advancement. Increasing density of working population around the industrial centers has created the problem of residence. The construction of new residential places has been done through the rapid deforestation of virgin rainforests in different areas of the world. The deforestation of rainforests has been culminated in ecological imbalance, climatic uncertainty and species extinction. These ecological problems along with many other examples of environmental degradation have affected the human life, which is very much evident in present period. Intense effect of ecological problems on human life has attracted the attention of intellectuals. It was a deep concern among ecological thinkers (philosophers) to investigate the causes of these ecological crises. To resolve these problems, an environment-centered, or ecocentric, view of our relationship with nature to emphasize the value of conserving her integrity and beauty became evident. In which they advocate that humans are not apart from nature but they are also a part of an ecological whole.

2.1 Development of Ecocentric concerns

A thinker who has played a significant role in the emergence of an ecocentric ethic in the western world is Aldo Leopold (1887-1948). Aldo Leopold in his essay, *A Sand County Almanac*, "The Land Ethic," which was published just one year after his death, explicitly claimed that the 'roots of the ecological crisis were philosophical'[17].

Among environmental ethicists in the West, at least, there has been an agreement that the forester and ecologist Aldo Leopold provided a benchmark against which subsequent environmental ethics can be measured. His short essay "The Land Ethic" in *A Sand County Almanac* (1949) provided an evocative and profound effort to articulate ethical guidelines for human interactions with nature. His land ethic laid the foundation for ecocentric movement particularly in United States. He writes, *"The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, water, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land."* [18] If we analyze the statement, we can easily find that it was an attempt done by Leopold to expand the horizon of ethics which was conventionally and primarily concerned with human's well being. Through his writings he urged human beings to think beyond their anthropocentric belief so that the rights of other nonhuman species and natural objects can be protected. Leopold defined ethics as guidelines for social or ecological situations, based on individual membership in "a community of interdependent parts." This enlargement of humans' moral community transformed their place in relation to the natural environment, "from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it" (240).

In his essay *'Land Ethic'* Leopold writes, ". . . Ethics rest upon a single premise: that the individual is a member of a community of independent parts.

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[17] Leopold, Aldo, *A Sand County Almanac*; Oxford: Oxford University Press; New York, 1949, pp. 59-60
[18] Ibid. p. 239

His instincts prompt him to compete for his place in that community, but his ethics prompt him also to co-operate. The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include...the land".[19] Leopold's writings have inspired environmentalists and conservationists throughout America since their publication.

He urged humans to choose right action while dealing with natural discourse in order to ensure its integrity and sustainability. With this approach he writes, *"A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic (living) community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."* [20] So we can say that Leopold was not interested only in human's well-being but his concern was even broader, which includes the well being of whole biotic (living) community. Basically it was an effort to change the course of action from individual to community. As we know that community is not merely an aggregation of individuals but what it has the most crucial characteristic is the 'we-feeling' among members of the community. In this community each member primarily maintains the well being of the community as whole before considering his/her own person interests. Leopold's action-plan suggests such kind of action for individual while interacting with natural discourse.

Leopold's land ethic provided a model of and foundation for a type of environmental ethics now known as "ecocentrism" (ecosystem-centered ethics), or alternatively, "biocentrism" (life-centered ethics). Such ethics assert that the well-being of entire ecological communities, not just individual species (like *Homo sapiens*) or individual organisms, should be the axial moral concern. Ecocentrism therefore challenges most Western philosophical ethics, which tend to be "anthropocentric," namely, focused on human welfare. For such ethics,

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[19] Leopold, Aldo. *A Sand County Almanac: with Essays on Conservation.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2001. p. 89-90.

[20] Leopold, Aldo, *A Sand County Almanac;* Oxford: Oxford University Press; New York, 1949, pp. 59-60

nonhuman life is valuable at most indirectly; to the extent it satisfies some human need or preference. For ecocentric ethics, human interests do not trump that of all other life forms and the well being of the biosphere as a whole. An ecosystem, rather than its constitutive parts, is the axial point of moral concern.

After 1949, the next intellectual landmark in the development of environmental ethics was the work of ecologist Rachel Carson. The work of Rachel Carson (Silent Spring, 1963) and the first Earth Day in 1970 have the crucial importance to grow the academic field of environmental ethics. It was the time when environmentalists started urging philosophers to consider the philosophical aspects of environmental problems. In the late 1950s Carson began publishing magazine articles exposing the dangers of radioactive materials, pesticides and herbicides, the creation and use of which had boomed in America after World War II. In her now-famous *Silent Spring* (1962), Carson argued that industrial society was decimating avian populations and threatening the health of many other organisms, including humans. For Carson, our ecological thoughtlessness is only due to our lack of philosophical maturity. In the last paragraph *Silent Spring*, she concluded that, "the 'control of nature' is a phrase conceived in arrogance, born of the Neanderthal age of biology and philosophy, when it was supposed that nature exists for the convenience of man."

Less well known are two of Carson's books on oceans, published in 1951 and 1955, in which her own nature spirituality is more obvious than in her exposes of chemical culture. These books, published after the World War-II, highlighted the disastrous impact of war on various aspects of nature. Heavy sea-transportation and release of chemical waste created havoc for sea-life. Being a marine engineer she paid her attention towards the species that were affected by these disastrous trends. These books illustrate the most powerful themes in Carson's work: a religious reverence for the sea, which she considered the womb of life, and a belief in the connectedness of all living things. The sea, she believed,

was the generator and the grave for all: the alpha and omega of the planet. The life of the sea controls the life of the land and thus human life, an axiom that Carson believed should humble human beings.

Carson's plea for humility coheres with Leopold's sentiment that humans should act as plain members of the land community, and it subtly conveys her own ecocentric spirituality. It also reflects how important such humility has been in much of the subsequent evolution of environmental philosophy, religious or otherwise. Carson not only helped set the stage for explicitly ecocentric environmental ethics, she also criticized the reductive and instrumental methodology. Two articles in particular had an immediate impact because they were published in the widely read journal *Science*.

As already discussed in the previous chapter, Lynn White blamed much of the environmental crisis on ideas that he believed had incubated for centuries within Christianity. White was hardly the first to suggest such a connection, of course. The historians Perry Miller and Roderick Nash in *Errand into the Wilderness* (1956) and *Wilderness and the American Mind* (1967) had argued that Christianity fostered anti-environmental attitudes and behaviors. In a subsequent work, *The Rights of Nature* (1989), Nash showed that a number of Christians, including Walter Lowdermilk, Joseph Sittler, and Richard Baer, had earlier criticized their tradition's complicity in environmental decline before White had.

A year later the biologist Garrett Hardin argued in *Science* that there is a "tragedy of the commons" wherein, given an ecosystem open to all, individuals pursuing their own interests degrade that ecosystem's resources and their own life-prospects if there are no mutually agreed-upon constraints to limit self-interested behavior and prevent overexploitation. Combined with apocalyptic environmental predictions such as in the ecologist Paul Ehrlich's *The Population*

Bomb (1968), Hardin's much debated 1974 article "Living in a Lifeboat" - which infamously argued that aiding the poor intensifies population growth, environmental degradation and human suffering - generated additional controversy. It forced many to consider, for the first time, the environmental dimensions of public policies and ethical decision making.

Two other works published in the 1960s, one by Ernest Friedrich Schumacher, the other by Gary Snyder, merit special attention when considering the antecedents to the discipline of environmental ethics and its religious dimensions. In 1966, first as an article in a book, then republished two years later in the first volume of *Resurgence*, which would become a leading venue for the discussion of religion, mysticism and nature, Schumacher published "Buddhist Economics." In it he argued that "The teaching of the Buddha . . . enjoins a reverent and nonviolent attitude not only to all sentient beings but also, with great emphasis, to trees" (1966: 699). Such reverence, he asserted, offers a Buddhist approach to economics that rejects economic growth and material acquisition and strives instead for "highly self-sufficient local communities [which] are less likely to get involved in large-scale violence than people whose existence depends on world-wide systems of trade" (1966: 698). Another Schumacher's book 'Small Is Beautiful' published in 1973. In the first chapter of 'Small Is Beautiful', "The Problem of Production", Schumacher points out that our economy is unsustainable. The natural resources (especially fossil fuels), are treated as expendable income, when in fact they should be treated as capital, since they are not renewable and thus subject to eventual depletion. He further points out that similarly, the capacity of nature to resist pollution is limited as well. He concludes that government effort must be concentrated on reaching sustainable development, because relatively minor improvements like education for leisure or technology transfer to the Third World countries will not solve the underlying problem of unsustainable economy. Schumacher's philosophy is a

philosophy of enoughness, appreciating both human needs and limitations, and appropriate use of technology.

While much of the religion-and-nature-related intellectual work during the 1960s was critical of occidental religions and/or proffered supposedly greener alternative spiritualities, an important dissent was published by the geographer Yi Fu Tuan in "Discrepancies Between Environmental Attitude and Behavior: Examples From Europe and China" (1968). Tuan rejected as facile the assumption of a close connection between nature-related beliefs and ideals and actual practices. Specifically, he rejected the claim that occidental cultures before Christianity were relatively benign by pointing to the environmental devastation caused by the Greeks and Romans, and he argued that the Chinese devastated their environment long before Western civilization could have exercised any influence in this regard. The ferment created by the writings of Leopold, Carson, Schumacher etc. contributed to the social forces that precipitated the world's first "Earth Day" in 1970, which further focused attention on environmental values. Soon the term environmental ethics became into common usage and related scholarly field developed rapidly.

2.1.1 Deep Ecology

Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess has made a significant contribution to the field of ecocentric ethics. He coined the phrase 'Deep Ecology' in 1972, and helped to give it a theoretical foundation. With this approach in the early 1970s Arne Naess primarily (though not exclusively) began classifying ecophilosophers as either "shallow" or "deep." This typology was one of many then used to describe the difference between an anthropocentric (man-centered) and ecocentric (environment-centered) approach to ecology.

The word 'ecology' originates from the science of biology, where it is used to refer to the ways in which living things interact with each other and with their surroundings. For Arne Naess, ecological science, concerned with facts and logic alone, cannot answer ethical questions about how we should live. For this we need ecological wisdom. Deep ecology seeks to develop this by focusing on deep experience, deep questioning and deep commitment. These constitute an interconnected system. Each gives rise to and supports the other, whilst the entire system is, what Naess would call, an ecosophy: an evolving but consistent philosophy of being, thinking and acting in the world that embodies ecological wisdom and harmony.

'Shallow ecology' is concerned with environmental protection, which does not bring a new way of thinking about man's relation to the environment. Basically shallow ecologists were interested in environmental reforms within existing philosophical and ideological settings. Deep ecologists cite the philosophy of humanism and the animal liberation movement as examples of shallow ecology on the contrary 'deep ecology' challenges the prevailing philosophical and ideological practices which were prominent in our relation to the natural discourse. In other words it rejects the anthropocentric view which was prominent in our dealing with natural discourse. This philosophical movement challenged the value system which was primarily concerned with human's well being. It rejected the view that only humans are intrinsically valuable and the other nonhuman objects have merely instrumental existence in order to satisfy their needs. They suggest that all the entities including human beings are equally valuable, thus they challenge the anthropocentric view.

In order to make the ethics ecocentric he devoted himself to outlining his views on deep ecology and on movement building. Deep ecology as a sentiment within society existed even before Naess, but he gave it a name and a philosophical framework. Naess defines the "deep movement" by putting

forward seven main points. The overall perspective over the years, ended up eventually as an eight-tier 'deep ecology platform' (DEP)[21];

1. The well-being and flourishing of human and nonhuman life on Earth have value in themselves (synonyms: intrinsic value, inherent value). These values are independent of the usefulness of the nonhuman world for human purposes.

2. Richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realization of these values and are also values in themselves.

3. Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital human needs.

4. The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantial decrease of the human population. The flourishing of nonhuman life requires such a decrease.

5. Present human interference with the nonhuman world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening.

6. Policies must therefore be changed. These policies affect basic economic, technological, and ideological structures. The resulting state of affairs will be deeply different from the present.

7. The ideological change is mainly that of appreciating life quality (dwelling in situations of inherent value) rather than adhering to an increasingly higher standard of living. There will be a profound awareness of the difference between big and great.

8. Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to try to implement the necessary changes.

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[21] See Naess (1986: pp. 196-199).

Naess outrightly rejected the idea that beings can be ranked according to their relative value. In other words he questioned the justifiability of human's dominion over other nonhuman entities which was primarily based on an eternal soul, reason and consciousness. Naess states that "the right of all forms [of life] to live is a universal right which cannot be quantified. No single species of living being has more of this particular right to live and unfold than any other species." Further this metaphysical idea has been elucidated in Warwick Fox's claim that we and all other beings are "aspects of a single unfolding reality".[22] Deep ecology offers a philosophical basis for environmental advocacy which may, in turn, guide human activity against perceived self-destruction.

These two (Shallow and Deep) movements differ in their approaches to main environmental issues, such as pollution, population, technology, etc. (Naess, 1986: 200-202). Nature has only *instrumental value* (or use value), as a resource to be exploited for human ends. It is a dominant approach in governmental departments and companies (which is to say, it is dominant overall), represented by resource management and conservation, human welfare ecology, and much environmentalism. It doesn't preclude precautionary arguments, but their concern is still human wellbeing, based on what Sylvan and Bennett call the Sole Value Assumption (SVA). However, Naess finds the decisive difference as "the willingness to question, and an appreciation of the importance of questioning, every economic and political policy in public" (1986: 203). According to Naess, it is this 'depth of questioning' that distinguishes deep ecology. Deep ecology has often suffered from either vague representation on the part of its adherents or misrepresentation on the part of its critics.[23] These vague

[22] Fox, cited in Callicott (1995b, p.29)

[23] Glasser claims that 'methodological vagueness' of Naess is a semantic device for encouraging widespread acceptance of 'deep ecology approach to ecophilosophy' (DEA), while the misrepresentations by its critics result from some misconceptions and fallacies (1996a: p. 217). However this vagueness gives rise to many problems in ecophilosophical debates; for such problems, see Clark (1995: pp. 191-192).

representations or misrepresentations partly stem from the fact that the referent of 'deep ecology' is elusive.[24]

The 'deep ecology platform' offers a wide approach towards natural/environmental discourse. It suggests that the whole biotic community should be included into the premise of intrinsic value (the value in itself). Basically it seems that it was an attempt to abolish the dichotomy between humans and nonhuman world. It has been believed by deep ecologists that the main ecological problem lies in the separation of humans from other nonhuman world. In this dichotomy they found that only humans were intrinsically valuable and other nonhuman species have been considered merely means to satisfy the human's end. Therefore, for the well-being of entire biotic community they argue that the dichotomy must be abolished. They claim that the aesthetic of natural discourse in the forms of 'richness and diversity of life' plays a crucial role in the realization of these values. Hence, their existence cannot be restricted merely as an instrumental existence; rather they too are intrinsically valuable.

According to Naess, "deep ecology is not a philosophy in any proper academic sense, nor is it institutionalized as a religion or an ideology" (1986: 199). However, Naess's flexible and cautious stance contrasts sharply with another tendency toward theoretical reification.[25] Richard Sylvan, one of the first critics of deep ecology, pointed at the "conceptual murkiness" and "instability" surrounding the notion of 'deep ecology' and how this notion was extracted from Naess's suggestions of deep ecology movement or platform by West-Coast

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[24] This poses many problems. It certainly is not an exclusive problem of 'deep ecology' but stems from the practical need for abstractions and generalizations in social theory. The problem with the ambiguity surrounding 'deep ecology' is due to an uncritical use of a generalization. Chase recommends to "find the referent" in every discussion, because once it is found it is probable that *emotional* factors might dissolve in mutual understanding (Alfred Korzybski's , 1947: pp. 66-71).

[25] Two leading proponents of deep ecology, George Sessions and Warwick Fox, exemplify this latter tendency; see Clark (1995: pp. 193-196), Glasser (1997: p. 82), and Sylvan (1985: p. 3).

intellectuals in different ways (1985: 1-3). Proponents of deep ecology believe that the world does not exist as a resource to be freely exploited by humans. The ethics of deep ecology holds that a whole system is superior to any of its parts

Apart from the value discussion other deep ecology theorists like James Lovelock, Richard Sylvan and Murray Bookchin are concerned with other aspects of life too. For example: tremendous increase in human population, excessive interference of humans with nonhuman world, revival and reinterpretation of policies, ideological change and human's obligations and responsibilities. In a way deep ecology includes nearly the entire aspects of life i.e. economical, social, political and moral. The well-being and flourishing of whole biotic community can only be ensured, they claim through; substantial decrease in human population, limited interference[26] of humans with nonhumans world, change in policies, so does in ideology and the realization of responsibility towards the natural discourse.

Many of its theoreticians and critics uncritically presume that there is a monolithic theoretical corpus behind the notion of 'deep ecology'. Glasser distinguishes 'deep ecology approach to ecophilosophy' (DEA)[27] from 'deep ecology movement' (DEM)[28], which endorses 'deep ecology platform' (DEP)[29]

[26] By saying it limited is mean to say that the deep ecology theorists favor human's interference in nonhuman world for the satisfaction of human's vital needs. But, here it is very difficult to define the vital human needs. They may differ place to place and situation to situation. On one hand, it could be described as a loaf of bread for a person who is suffering starvation and on the other it could be a luxury private owned car for a millionaire.

[27] DEA is a four-level methodological scheme proposed by Naess to function as a systematic framework to derive ecologically inspired views from fundamental premises such as Buddhist, Christian, Philosophical etc., see Naess (1986: p. 205).

[28] According to Naess, DEM consists of those who apply 'deep questioning' to ecological problems.

[29] See Naess (1986: pp. 196-199).

and from 'Ecosophy T'[30] (1996a: 218-222). Here in brief, we shall try to discuss 'Ecosophy T' in order to make it understandable. According to Naess, it is his ultimate philosophy. It is deeply influenced by Gandhian nonviolence, Mahayana Buddhism and Spinoza's pantheism. T refers to Tvergastein, Naess's mountain hut in Norway, where much of Ecosophy T was worked out. A basic norm in Ecosophy T is Self realization- for all beings. Here the meaning of Self for Naess is different from the ego self, it is the larger ecological Self which he suggests to be realized by humans. Though there are number of ways to realize our ecological selves, but the way he talks most about is extension of identification. Through the process of Self realization he advocates expansion of realization to whole biotic community, which is beyond the realization of ego self. In other words it is "Self- realization for all beings!" According to Alan Drengson, the exclamation point is used to mark that this is not a mere description, but that it says something that ought to be. Naess suggests that humans naturally have the capacity of Self realization cross-culturally. That is to say that we have the capacity to connect with a much larger sense of self, by extending our sense of identification beyond the usual narrow focus on ego to a wider sphere of relationships. It is not difficult for us to identify with other nonhuman species. We can actually practice or cultivate this capacity. One way is to practice extending our care and affection.

Sometimes people confuse the "deep ecology movement" as described above, with Naess' own ultimate ecocentric philosophy, Ecosophy T. It is on the basis of Ecosophy T that he personally supports the platform principles of the deep ecology movement. Some semantic inquiry into the notion of 'deep ecology' has already been made by Warwick Fox (1990) who even suggested

[30] Ecosophy T is Naess's personal worldview that he derived from DEA. Naess has developed Ecosophy T from the fundamental norm of 'Self-realization!', inspired by Spinoza and Gandhi. For a brief summary of Ecosophy T, see Naess (1986: pp. 207-210).

replacing 'deep ecology' with 'transpersonal ecology'. Fox has spotted three senses of deep ecology in Naess, i.e. formal, philosophical, and popular.[31] These senses correspond to DEA, Ecosophy T, and DEP, respectively (1990, 91-118). However, according to Fox, neither DEA (the formal sense) nor DEP (the popular sense) can distinguish 'deep ecology' from other non-anthropocentric or anthropocentric perspectives (1990, 131-141). Only Naess's philosophical sense (Ecosophy T), according to Fox, satisfies the conditions of being 'distinctive' (which can distinguish deep ecology from other ecophilosophical perspectives) and 'tenable' (i.e. neither demonstrably false nor logically inconsistent) to stand as a 'deep ecology' perspective (1990, 145).

Fox distinguishes two features in Ecosophy T which are shared by the main theoreticians of 'deep ecology': (1) rejection of a formal intrinsic value theory, (2) transpersonal realization (1990, 224). Thus, Fox proposes the name 'transpersonal ecology' for the perspective sharing these common features because 'deep ecology' which refers to 'asking deeper questions' fails to cover them.[32] It seems that the valid referent of a distinctive 'deep ecology', for Fox, is Naess's Ecosophy T. But here it can be suggested that we have DEA, DEP, DEM, Ecosophy T and transpersonal ecology as possible referents of 'deep ecology'. Here it cannot be suggested that any of them separately or combined with each other can stand for the referent of 'deep ecology'.

Firstly, DEA is only an approach to derive ecological views or systems of views, not the theory of 'deep ecology' as whole. For example, if we say 'hello' to someone then this is only a method for greeting that fellow, it cannot be understood in terms of greeting as whole. We may follow some other ways of doing the same thing. Secondly, contrary to Fox's attempt, Naess is very careful to distinguish his Ecosophy T from 'deep ecology' (Naess 1986, 207). Thirdly, Fox

[31] See Glasser (1997, pp. 82-85)
[32] For an account of transpersonal ecology, see Fox (1995, pp. 215-247).

suggests the label 'ecocentric ecology' for the deep ecology movement (DEM) inspired and motivated by DEP (1990, 144). For Naess, the acceptance of DEP is adequate to be considered a supporter of 'deep ecology'. If any of its eight principles are rejected by those, who still adhere to other principles with equal depth of questioning, Naess considers them as supporters of 'deep ecology *movement*'.[33] As an example to a supporter of deep ecology movement, Naess gives ecophilosopher Henryk Skolimowski who does not accept DEP. The distinction that Naess makes between 'deep ecology' and 'deep ecology movement' with respect to DEP might be a clue to find the referent of 'deep ecology'. DEP, according to Naess, is the common denominator of those affiliated to 'deep ecology'.[34]

So far we have discussed that how ecocentric concerns formally emerged and culminated in 'deep ecology movement'. Glasser suggests that ecocentrism is a subset of nonanthropocentrism. As a corollary of ecocentrism, the notion of anthropocentrism is fundamental to understand the ecocentrism.[35] So now we shall take-up the debate between ecocentrism and anthropocentrism.

2. 2 Ecocentrism vs. Anthropocentrism

Broadly speaking, the basic element, which laid the foundation of debate in terms of ecocentrism vs. anthropocentrism, was the belief in conventional value-system. In the conventional value-system it is assumed that human beings are the only beings on the earth which demand our moral consideration: in other words, only human beings can be included in the purview of intrinsic value. The other nonhuman species as well as natural objects only possess a value to the

[33] See Naess, 1986, p. 196.
[34] According to Rothenberg, what Naess means by 'deep ecology' is 'ecocentrism' in the sense of centering on ecosphere (in Naess 1989, p. 15).
[35] See Glasser, 1997: p. 73.

extent that they in some sense benefit human beings i.e. they have only instrumental value. And at the same time it is also concerned with the ontological dichotomy, which separates human beings from other natural species and objects. Now, it can be asked that what it mean to assign either instrumental or intrinsic value to any object.

Let us take-up the term 'instrumental value' first. It can be said that an object has an instrumental value, if it has a value as a means for attaining something else which is worthy of aim and realization. Therefore, the value of such objects depends only on the person who is making use of it. Wealth is an example of instrumental value because people use it for attaining some other value like health, status, happiness etc. Even more radically we can say that once the utility of such an object is exhausted or finished, it ceases to be of any value from an instrumentalist perspective.

On the other hand, when we claim that something has an intrinsic value, we claim that the object is worthy of our consideration and preservation for its own sake. It is valuable in itself even if it does not serve as a means for any other goals or ends. In this sense we can consider it synonymous to non-instrumental value. We can say that an object has an intrinsic value if it is valuable in itself irrespective of whether it has a value in attaining something else of value. In anthropocentrism merely human beings possess such kind of value. However, it has not always been the case that all human beings have been recognized to possess an intrinsic value. In history we have many examples of slavery, where slaves only possessed an instrumental value. Slave-masters used slaves as property and they have been considered only instruments for master's well beings.

Sometimes, however, the sense of intrinsic value goes beyond the value that an object has in itself, independently of its value as resource or its utility to

something else. The object assumed to have a value independent of human valuations. According to this view, we do not assign to an object an intrinsic value: we discover its value. Intrinsic value exists irrespective of whether there is any evaluator who can value it or not. 'Intrinsic value' then can be understood as 'objective value'. Here it is not synonymous with 'non-instrumental value'.

According to anthropocentrism, humans are the only beings on the earth, capable of making value judgments. Thus, if someone considers that non-human species also possess the intrinsic value then it would be equivalent to asserting that, even if no human present on the earth, these species would be valuable and have a value in themselves. In such a situation, given that only humans are capable of making value judgments, it would be the case that no one had the capacity to discover and respect the intrinsic value of these species. Though, it was present in natural objects even before the human origin in the forms of its beauty and diversity. We cannot argue that any thing valuable only when someone is there to evaluate that. Rather than, it may be valuable even prior to existence of any evaluator. Rolston argue that nature has value in self and its value possessing character is independent of any human existence. He writes;

"Do not humans value Earth because it is valuable, and not the other way around? Is the value in this life-support system really just a matter of late-coming human interests, or is the Earth not historically a remarkable, valuable place prior to the human arrival and even now valuable antecedently to human uses of it? The part in the drama is perhaps the most valuable event of all. But it seems parochial, as well as uninformed ecologically, to say that our part alone in the drama establishes all its worth."[36]

Now, there are two ways of assigning intrinsic value, firstly, things are intrinsically valuable irrespective of any evaluator and secondly, they valuable

[36] Rolston, III, Holmes, Environmental Ethics, Philadelphia: Temple University Press. 1988, p. 4.

only with respect to human's existence as an evaluator. These two ways must, however, be carefully distinguished because we can grant that non-human species have an intrinsic value in the first sense but not in the second sense. It can be maintained that there are no values independent of people making value judgment and that; as a result, other living organisms cannot have any value if human beings did not exist while at the same holding that we ought to assign to them a non-instrumental value. To say that human beings have intrinsic value then means that we as people making value judgments assign to every human beings a value which is independent of the utility which other people or society can derive from them, while at the same time it is denied that such a human value exists independently of us as arbiters of value.

Fox defines 'anthropocentrism' as "intended to refer to approaches that promote unwarranted differential treatment of other entities on the basis of the extent to which they are considered to be humanlike."[37] According to Fox, unwarranted differential treatment of non-human nature is an entirely avoidable possibility, which includes two versions: an aggressive and a passive. 'In aggressive sense it refers to acts of commission- that is, to overt acts of discrimination- whereas in passive sense it refers to acts of omission- that is, to actions and decisions that "incorrectly" overlook certain beings or entities by virtue of the fact these beings or entities simply do not figure in one's awareness.'[38]

Fox describes three instrumental value theory approaches: (1) unrestrained exploitation and expansionism; (2) resource conservation and development; and (3) resource preservation.[39] Now we shall discuss them separately. For the first, it emphasizes the value to humans that can be acquired

[37] See Fox, 1990, p. 19
[38] see Fox, 1995, p. 21
[39] Ibid, p. 151

by physical transformation of nonhuman world (e.g., by farming, damming, pulping, mining, slaughtering, and so on). In order to legitimate the continuous expansion of physical transformation activity, this approach relies on the idea that there is "always more where that came from". In a way it is an attempt to legitimize one's act of expansion with the help of other worldly abstraction. It is characterized by short-term thinking, that is, this approach does not even extend to consideration of the interests of future generations of humans. For the second, it can be discussed that though, this approach is also concerned with the physical transformation, economic growth, but it at least recognizes that there are limits to material growth- that "there is not always more where that came from"[40]. It is also an anthropocentric approach but has a longer-term focus than unrestricted exploitation on sustainability of natural objects for future generations of humans. The third type emphasizes the approach to preserve them because they enrich our live and help us to maximize our chances of growing and maturing. In order to make it more clear now we shall discuss Session's view on resource preservation arguments by saying that whereas the life support from other nonhuman species emphasizes on their importance for the development of healthy bodies and healthy minds.

Fox then details some intrinsic value theory approaches: (1) ethical sentientism; (2) biological ethics; (3) ecosystem ethics and ecosphere ethics; and (4) cosmic purpose ethics.[41]. The ethical sentientism proposes that intrinsic value belongs to any creature possessing sentience: the capacity for sense perception, that is, only those species are intrinsically valuable that have capacity to sense perception. These perceptions may be in the forms of experiencing pleasure/ pain, cold/ heat, long/ short and so on. Biological ethics holds that because all living entities (sentient or not) are continually engaged in self-regeneration, protection and some specific characteristics to make their habitats. So at least for

[40] Ibid, p. 153
[41] Ibid, p. 162

these specialties they should be considered ends in themselves and not mere means to ends. Ecosystem ethics and ecosphere ethics; maintain that local ecosystems and the planetary ecosphere (sometimes called "Gaia") are in a sense living systems and thus have intrinsic value. Cosmic purpose ethics finds value in nonhuman entities by virtue of their being expressive of some cosmic interest (e.g., evolution or the nature or purposes of God). It emphasizes the view that each and every species have their specific importance in the maintenance of entire cosmic whole. In order to fulfill the cosmic purpose they ought to be considered as intrinsically valuable.

Fox hinges his argument for a psychological, rather than value theory-based, approach to ecophilosophy on an acceptance of the tripartite model of the human self. Fox himself prefers the terms desiring-impulsive self, normative-judgmental self and rationalizing-deciding self.

According to the tripartite model of human self, the will of each individual is represented by the rationalizing-deciding self, who must continually arbitrate between the competing demands of the self-centered, irresponsible, unrealistic desiring-impulsive self and the idealistic, self-judging, at times also unrealistic normative-judgmental self. He argues that each of these selves fits one or more of the value theories described above: the desiring-impulsive self corresponds to the unrestrained exploitation and expansionism approach. The rationalizing-deciding self is expressed in the resource conservation and development and resource preservation approaches (i.e., they are seeking to find a compromise between ideals and desires). And the normative-judgmental self is found in all intrinsic value approaches.

Another dimension of this debate can be seen in the ideas of Gifford Pinchot and John Muir. Gifford Pinchot's ideas represented the anthropocentric, or human-centered, view, which holds that unlimited human progress is possible

through the proper use and optimal utilization of nature's infinite resources. Keeping with Francis Bacon's assertion that we must "torture nature's secrets from her," this view considers man separate from and superior to nature, and it considers nature as an inert machine, infinitely divisible and moved by external rather than internal forces (Gladwin, Kennelly, & Krause, 1995; Merchant, 1980). Of this view, C. S. Lewis (1953) observed, "We reduce things to mere *Nature* in order that we may 'conquer' them. We are always conquering *Nature*, because '*Nature*' is the name for what we have, to some extent, conquered" (p. 44).

John Muir's ideas represented the ecocentric, or nature-centered, view that nonhuman nature has intrinsic value apart from its contributions to human development. Human is not separate or superior to nature but takes his place in nature's system. Further he suggests that human's development should be sought only insofar as it does not infringe on the integrity of natural ecosystems.

2.3 Ecocentric Ethics: Directions and possibilities

During the last three decades, there has been a running debate among environmental ethicists about whether anthropocentrism can serve as an adequate foundation for environmental ethics. In this section we shall try to explore the issues related with the boundaries of current ecophilosophical debate: anthropocentrism vs. ecocentrism. As we have noticed that an ecocentric ethic highlights two fundamental difficulties in anthropocentric ethics. These two are: anthropocentric value theory, which believes that only humans are intrinsically valuable and the ontological separation of humans from other nonhuman species. They strongly reject these assumptions and advocate the equal ground for valuation of both humans and other nonhuman natural objects and species. With this approach, they try to make natural discourse sustainable and free from any human exploitation.

2.3.1 An Anthropocentric Response to Ecocentrism

An anthropocentric response to ecocentric criticism begins by noting that valuing other species and safeguarding ecological sustainability need not rely on an ecocentric perspective that invests other species with any intrinsic rights or worth. There are a number of reasons why a human-centered worldview might wish to protect an ecosystem or avoid wiping out a species, none of which rely on ascribing inherent worth.

One key reason that humanity should care for its natural environment is that humanity itself is part of and relies on the surrounding ecosystem for its own continued existence. Desertified and depleted soils, shrinking ozone, air pollution and a vast array of other ecological problems all react on humanity adversely. This is sometimes referred to as the 'life support' argument, as human life is based on access to healthy food, clean water and clean air. Degrade those and humanity degrades itself. This flows over into what is sometimes called the 'early warning' argument. Just as humans need certain ecological conditions to maintain themselves biologically, so do other species. Preserving different ecosystems maintains a set of warning signals for changes in the environment that may negatively affect humanity. Fox explains this argument:

"The species and areas that fall within the ambit of this early warning system and argument can therefore be thought of as serving a similar function to that of the canaries that coal miners used to take down into the mines.... If the canary stopped singing, it was prudent for miners to proceed with caution, if the canary started to fall off its perch, it was clearly time for the miners to seek a change of

environment."[42] This clearly restates the thrust of the 'life support' argument from another angle.

Furthermore, anthropocentrists claim, anthropocentric approaches have a number of advantages over nonanthropocentric approaches. First, most traditional ethical theories are roughly anthropocentric in nature, so adopting anthropocentrism makes available a wide variety of theoretical resources that have been developed to explain, defend, and apply these theories. This is not true for nonanthropocentrism. Second, as Bryan Norton has pointed out, most policy-makers and social scientists are anthropocentrists, and anthropocentric assumptions underlie most of the work that they do. By granting their assumption of anthropocentrism, environmental ethicists open the door for more productive collaborative relationships with people who have a significant impact on shaping actual environmental policies. Nonanthropocentrism, Norton claims, makes such relationships more difficult to develop.[43] And finally, anthropocentrism might offer hope as a strategy for rejecting the "people vs. nature" formulation that makes so many environmentalists roll their eyes. If what's good for nature is ultimately a matter of what's good for people, then, we might think, there can't really be any deep conflict here. Nonanthropocentrism does not offer us this way of escaping the problem.

Another argument concerns the scientific use of the ecosystem. Godfrey-Smith divides this argument into two: the 'laboratory' argument and the 'silo' argument. The former essentially refers to preserving the environment to help humanity learn about the place it lives in. Using an analogy with the 'Spaceship Earth' metaphor, Fox writes that the 'laboratory' argument is:

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[42] Fox, W., Towards a Transpersonal Ecology: Developing New Foundations for Environmentalism. Shambala Press, Boston. 1990, p. 158

[43] Norton, B. 1991. Toward Unity Among Environmentalists, New York; Oxford university press, pp. 239-40

"An argument for preserving ... the spaceship for what it might be able to tell us about how we came to be in the spaceship, how long the spaceship has been in orbit, what the nature of our relationship to the other passengers might be ... how we might repair the spaceship and so on."[44]

In short, the more humanity knows about the ecosystem it lives in, the more that humanity understands how it fits in ecologically. We cannot learn about different parts of the ecosystem that we live in if we keep trashing them. But, trashing the ecosystem humans create hurdles in flourishing and growing of species. In normal situation every species have their natural tendency to flourish. Human's interference created problem of sustainability for humanity itself.

The 'silo' argument bases itself on the utility of the environment as a stockpile of genetic diversity for agricultural, medical and other purposes. More diverse the natural environment, greater the variety of animal, mineral and plant life that can be used in scientific study and medical reaserch. For example, many contemporary medicines are based on properties found in plants, so reducing the bio-diversity of plant life reduces our ability to combat disease. In fact, destruction of plant species has already led to setbacks in medical science. In 1991, for example, a compound based on twigs from a Malaysian gum tree was discovered to block the spread of the HIV virus in human immune cells with a 100 percent success rate. While the scientists responsible acknowledged that it would have been 'jumping ahead of the game' to claim this could definitely have led to a cure, it was nevertheless a major breakthrough in AIDS research. Further research was commissioned, but the area of the Sarawak from which the sample was taken had been deforested, and no similar trees could be found in the surrounding areas.[45]

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[44] Godfrey-Smith, W., 'The Value of Wilderness', Environmental Ethics, 1979, Vol.1, pp.309-319

[45] Earth First!, 'Has the Deforestation of Sarawak Destroyed a Cure for AIDS?' Earth First!, 1993, June 21, p.28

Godfrey-Smith (1979) outlines another anthropocentric reason for not trashing the planet that he calls the 'gymnasium' argument. This refers to the manner in which nature can be a useful and enjoyable playground for human recreation. The preservation of unblemished nature trails for hiking, diverse marine areas for diving, clean beaches for swimming, and unpolluted rivers for fishing contribute to richer, more diverse and more enjoyable lives for humanity. Humanity loses a great deal if it loses the contributions of the natural environment to its cultural pastimes. These arguments that favor bio-diversity and wider preservation of ecosystems on the basis, that our natural environment often brings us aesthetic pleasure. Just as humans may gain aesthetic enjoyment (or have their 'spirits' - in a secular sense of the term - enlivened) from music, painting and other arts created by the human hand, they can also derive such pleasure from natural phenomena. Fox's (1990) variation on this theme refers to it as the 'art gallery' argument. Obviously the lines between this and the 'gymnasium' argument are not sharply drawn - embarking on picturesque bush walks and scuba-diving through colourful fish may come under both headings, whereas swimming at the beach may only come under the 'gymnasium' argument, and enjoying quality nature documentaries may come under the 'art gallery' argument.

Another reason for not trashing the planet given by some anthropocentric authors is that if we can protect a species from extinction, or treat a farm animal without cruelty, then doing so may simply make us better human beings, or as Grundmann puts it, *'one might believe that humans who protect rather than destroy other living things are less likely to be violent in their dealings with other humans'*.[46] If we analyze the Grundmann's statement, it suggests that one should try to protect nonhuman species and not be cruel while dealing with them. Here it is being

[46] Grundmann, R, 'The Ecological Challenge to Marxism', in New Left Review, 1991a, No.187, pp.103-120

suggested that if we treat other nonhuman species nonviolently, this characteristic affects our dealing with other humans as well.

But if anthropocentrism and nonanthropocentrism both tell us to do the same thing, and the right thing, how much is left for us to worry about? How different are anthropocentrism and nonanthropocentrism at this point? To see what differences still remain, let's consider how the anthropocentrists can make their case for convergence when it comes to norms for action. Anthropocentrism tells us that the nonhuman world has value only insofar as it serves human interests. On this view, if someone claims that some part of nonhuman nature has value in its own right, independently of human interests, he/ she would be incorrect. Likewise, if someone claims that some part of nonhuman nature has value because it serves the interests of another part of nonhuman nature, though these two parts don't serve human interests in any way, he/ she would also be mistaken. But to say this isn't to say that anthropocentrism can't tell us to *act as if* parts of the nonhuman world had value in their own right. It might serve human interests, for example, to treat some part of the natural world as though it had a kind of value - sacredness, say - that doesn't depend at all on its furthering our interests. Perhaps if we treat some parts of our world as though they were sacred, we'll all be better off for it.

Each of the above anthropocentric arguments against ecological degradation, while valuing other species in many different respects, ultimately locates humanity at the center of its analysis. This is in contrast to the ecocentric critique, which requires regarding other species as possessing *inherent* worth. The ecocentric arguments that anthropocentrism provides no defense against ecological degradation seems to be incorrect. But, if we try to interpret the ecocentrists' argument correctly, that will go against the antrhopocetric position. Ecocentrists argue that things are valuable in themselves irrespective of any use for humans. Though the anthropocentrism values other species but that is only

for the sake of humans. They seem to be concerned merely for those species that are beneficial for them, whether they are beneficial for medical research, or any other human interests. Probably, we can argue that an anthropocentric argument for rejecting the ecocentrism is due to the lack of proper understanding of ecocentrists' demands.

2.3.2 Is Ecocentrism Viable?

A central critique advanced against ecocentrism is that all human views of nature, or of anything else for that matter, must be anthropocentric, for humans can think only in human terms. As O'Riordan argues:

"Man's conscious actions are anthropocentric by definition. Whether he seeks to establish a system of biotic rights or to transform a forest into a residential suburb, the act is conceived by man in the context of his social and political culture."[47]

In this sense, it can be argued that all commentators on the question of humanity's place in nature are anthropocentric, but that ecocentrics are simply not aware of it. But, Greens object to this sort of argument. They say that they do not disagree with O'Riordan's comments but suggest that his argument is simply tautological. Just because we are humans, Greens reply, does not mean that we cannot respect other life forms on this planet. They argue that ecocentric thought is not based on a denial that we are human but rather it argues that being human does not ultimately give us any more rights than any other species. Here it is being suggested that being a human does not advocate that we cannot be ecocentric. In order to clarify it we can discuss what Fox has suggested, that the question is similar to that of whether whites can have a progressive opinion on

[47] O'Riordan, T, Environmentalism, Pion, London. . 1981, p. 11

black oppression or whether males can be anti-sexist. This implies that if males are capable of being nonsexist and whites of being non-racist, then it is perfectly possible for a human to be ecocentric.[48] Yet anthropocentrics might retort that, although this argument does apply to attempts at understanding across gender or cultural lines, where there is a common conception of the existence of the 'other meanings' that Noske refers to, it is less applicable to attempts at understanding between different species. It is unlikely that a *reciprocal* understanding can be reached between humans and other species. Anthropocentrics note that it seems doubtful whether other species respect the 'other'-ness of humanity or any other species. As Pepper points out, *'we have no evidence that non-human species might perceive each other unselfishly'*.[49]

It is evident that Noske and Pepper are suggesting the legitimacy of anthropocentrism on the basis of reciprocity. They argue that nonhuman species are not intrinsically valuable because they do not reciprocate with humans properly. But, can we consider these arguments capable of rejecting ecocentrism? To answer this question let us take up an example of mentally retarded children. We often notice that children suffering from such kind of disorder are not very much capable of reciprocate with their parents, but it is not the case that such children are deprived from their parent's love and affection. Rather parents are more caring for them than the other children who are not suffering from such disorder. Thus, it can be suggested that Noske's and pepper's arguments for the rejection of ecocentric value demand is a little superficial and partial, and on that basis we can not reject the viability of ecocentrism.

In addition to portraying nature as inherently balanced, many Greens argue that the inherent beauty of nature is another source of intrinsic value. Nature's inherent aesthetic worth strikes awe in the hearts of humans;

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[48] See. Fox, 1990, pp. 132-135

[49] Pepper, D., Eco-Socialism: From Deep Ecology to Social Justice, Routledge, London. 1993b, p. 246

supposedly, this is not merely a result of human perception but reflects certain 'given'-ness. Rolston, for example, writes that *'we can be thrilled by a hawk in a windswept sky, by the rings of Saturn, the falls of Yosemite'* and that *'we have sometimes found values so intensely delivered that we have saved them wild, as in the Yellowstones, the Sierras and the Smokies'*.[50] For Rolston, the aesthetic intensity clearly lies in the delivery, rather than in his perception. For him, the beauty he sees in nature possesses 'hi¿,h elements of giveness, of finding something thrown at us, of successful observation'[51].

As Lovelock (1989:33) writes, 'organisms are adapting in a world whose material state is determined by the activities of their neighbours [and] this means that changing the environment is part of the game' 'nature knows best'. Here, Lovelock's statement seems to be a little supportive to anthropocentrism. But greens acknowledge that inter-species competition; extinction, change and so on are a part of natural cycles. Yet they argue that this should not be a blank cheque for humans to act towards the environment in any manner that they please.

Eckersley, for example, writes that *'from a long term ecological and evolutionary perspective, adaptation, change, innovation, destruction and extinction are recognized as features of natural systems'*.[52] Yet she insists that an ecocentric perspective on such changes would argue that 'rather than being fostered or accelerated, they are allowed to unfold in accordance with natural successional and evolutionary time'.

Overall we can conclude that ecocentrism is possible. Though it is true that we are humans and bound to think like humans, yet we can preserve natural discourse in order to make it more sustainable. What needed is to develop a

[50] Rolston, H., 'Are Values in Nature Subjective or Objective', in Elliot, R., and A. Gare, Environmental Philosophy, Open University Press, Milton Keynes; 1983, pp. 144 & 156.

[51] Ibid. p. 49

[52] Eckersley. 1992: p. 156.

foresight for sustainability and at the same time to create awareness among people for the preservation of their surroundings.

Chapter Three

Socio- political context of Ecophilosophy

Like other philosophical enquiries, the 'Ecophilosophy' also has its impact on socio-political arena of human discourse. The aim of present chapter is to investigate the linkages of ecological philosophy with socio-political conditions, i.e. how they affect each other. In these contexts we shall try to discuss three ecologically concerned schools of thoughts in detail, to make our discussion relevant. These are 'Green-politics', 'Eco-Marxism', and 'Eco-feminism'.

3.1 Green Politics

Green politics or Green political theory or Green ideology is a political ideology which places a high value on achieving ecological goals- preservation of natural resouces for the sustainability of environment- through broad-based, grassroots, participatory democracy and a consensus decision-making. It is considered by its advocates to be an alternative to both left and right views and parties, although adherents to both views tend to view Greens as "on the other side", which is neither left nor right. Certainly it is true that Green parties advocate measures that appear to conventional politicians different from those grouped into labour and capital by economic interests.

Green movement, which has been very active in many nations since the late 1970s and early 1980s conbtributed to the emergence of green politics. They

claim to be the representaves of a fundamentally new ideological school to deal with societal, political and philosophical problems evolved due to the interference of humans in environmental discourse. In addition to environmental issues, green politics also concerned with the issues related with social-justice, nonviolence and civil-rights.

3.1.1 The emergence of green political theory

Environmental degradation caused by human activity has a long and complex history. However, until the period of European global expansion and the industrial revolution, environmental degradation generally remained uneven and relatively localized. The 'modern ecological crisis' - marked by an exponential increase in the range, scale, and seriousness of environmental problems around the world - is generally understood to have emerged only in the latter half of the twentieth century. Likewise, the 1960s is typically taken to mark the birth of the 'modern' environment movement as a widespread and persistent social movement that has publicized and criticized the environmental 'side-effects' of the rapid economic boom following the Second World War. Rapid economic growth, the proliferation of new technologies, and rising population in this period generated increasing energy and resource consumption, new sources (and rising levels) of pollution and waste production, and the rapid erosion of the Earth's biodiversity. While some environmental indicators had improved in some countries by the closing decades of the twentieth century, the overall global environmental assessment for the twenty-first century remains bleak. The United Nations Environment Program's Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, completed in March 2005, found that approximately 60 per cent of the ecosystem services that support life on Earth are being degraded or used unsustainably (UNEP 2005).

The 'ecological crisis' is clearly an apt characterization of these developments although the phrase 'ecological predicament' probably best captures the peculiar conundrum facing policy-makers at all levels of governance, namely, that environmental problems remain persistent and ubiquitous even though nobody intended to create them. Unlike military threats, which are deliberate, discrete, specific, and require an immediate response, environmental problems are typically unintended, diffuse, transboundary, operate over long time-scales, implicate a wide range of actors, and require painstaking negotiation and cooperation among a wide range of stakeholders for its eradication. Indeed, environmental problems are sometimes described by policy analysts as 'wicked problems' because of their complexity, variability, irreducibility, intractability, and incidental character. Most environmental risks have crept up, as it were, on a rapidly modernizing world as the unforeseen side-effects of otherwise acceptable practices. As Ulrich Beck has put it, 'they are "piggy-back products" which are inhaled or ingested with other things. They are *'the stowaways of normal consumption'*.[53]

These ecological problems became so evident that they attracted attention of thinkers and policy makers. However, it did not take long for radical voices within the environment movement, and critical voices in the social sciences and humanities, to question not just the side-effects of economic growth but also the phenomenon of economic growth itself and the broader processes of modernization. This debate became highly politicized with the 'limits to growth' debate of the early 1970s. Publications such as the Club of Rome's *The Limits to Growth* report (Meadows *et al.* 1972) and *The* Ecologist magazine's *Blueprint for Survival* (*Ecologist* 1972), offered dire predictions of impending ecological catastrophe unless exponential economic growth was replaced with 'steady-state' economic development. These debates coincided with the first United

[53] Beck, U., Ecological Politics in an Age of Risk, Polity: London, 1995, p. 42

Nations Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment (1972), which formalized the emergence of the environment, as a 'global issue'.

3.1.2 Development of green political theories

Environmental concerns have left their mark on most branches of the social sciences and humanities. However, it was not until the late 1980s that a distinctly 'green' social and political theory emerged to give voice to the interrelated concerns of the new social movements (environment, peace, anti-nuclear, women's) that have shaped green politics. The political term *Green*, was coined by die Grunen, a German and the first successful Green party was founded in Germany in the 1970s. The first Green Party to achieve national prominence was the German Green Party, famous for their opposition to nuclear power, as an expression of anti-centralist and pacifist values traditional to greens. They were founded in 1980. These movements also spearheaded the formation of a wave of new green parties in the 1980s at the local, national, and regional level (most prominently in Europe), based on the 'four pillars' of green politics: ecological responsibility, social justice, nonviolence, and grass-roots democracy. These pillars have provided a common platform for new green party formations around the world, including in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. Indeed, green politics is the only new global political discourse and practice to emerge in opposition to neo-liberal globalization.

While the term 'green' is often used to refer simply to environmental concerns, by the early 1990s green political theory had gained recognition as a new political tradition of inquiry that has emerged as an ambitious challenger to the two political traditions that have had the most decisive influence on twentieth-century politics - liberalism and socialism.

Like liberalism and socialism, green political theory has a normative branch (concerned with questions of justice, rights, democracy, citizenship, the state, and the environment), and a political economy branch (concerned with understanding the relationship between the state, the economy, and the environment).

In broad outline, green political theory mounted a critique of both Western capitalism and Soviet-style communism, both of which were regarded as essentially two different versions of the same overarching ideology of industrialism, despite their differences concerning the respective roles of the market and the state. The green critique of industrialism formed part of a broader re-examination of taken-for-granted ideas about the idea of progress and the virtues of modernization inherited from the Enlightenment. For greens, the economic agendas of liberalism and orthodox Marxism had been developed on the basis of the same premises, which assumed that the Earth's natural resource base could support unbridled economic growth, and that increasing growth and technological advancement were both highly desirable and inevitable. Both political traditions were shown to share the same optimism about the benefits of science and technology, and either explicitly or implicitly, accepted the idea that the human manipulation and domination of nature through the further refinement of instrumental reason were necessary for human advancement. Green political theorists have taken issue with these Enlightenment legacies and highlighted the ecological, social, and psychological costs of the modernization process. They have criticized humanity's increasingly instrumental relationship with non-human nature, along with the subjugation of indigenous peoples and many traditional forms of agriculture. Drawing on the kindred disciplines of environmental ethics and environmental philosophy, which emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s, green political theorists have called into question anthropocentrism as the source of human chauvinism. Rejecting such a posture

as arrogant, self-serving, and foolhardy, these theorists have embraced a new ecology-centered or 'ecocentric' philosophy.

From a green ideological perspective, environmental governance should be about protecting not only the health and wellbeing of existing human communities and future generation but also the larger web of life, made up of nested bio diversity at multiple levels of aggregation (such as gene pools, populations, species, ecosystems). This perspective also draws attention to the limits to humanity's knowledge of the natural world, arguing that nature is not only more complex than we know, but possibly more complex than we shall ever know. Major technological interventions in nature are seen invariably producing major social and ecological costs. Green theorists, therefore, generally counsel in favor of a more cautious, more modest and critical approach to the assessment of new development proposals, new technologies, and practices of risk assessment in general.

There remains disagreement among green political theorists as to whether green politics should be understood as anti-modern, postmodern, or simply seeking more 'reflexive modernization', although the latter appears to have emerged as the most favored approach. Indeed, the second wave of green political theory of the mid-1990s and beyond has been less preoccupied with critical philosophical reflection on humanity's posture toward the non-human world and more concerned to explore the conditions that might improve the 'reflexive learning capacity' of citizens, societies, and states in a world of mounting yet unevenly distributed ecological risks. The green critique of industrialism and modernization has not eclipsed the politics of 'left versus right', but it has certainly placed the traditional distributive struggles between labour and capital, and between rich world and poor world, in a broader and more challenging context. Indeed, improving distributive justice while simultaneously curbing ecologically destructive economic growth has emerged

as the central political challenge of green theory and practice, both domestically and internationally.

Green political theory claims to transcend all previous paradigms of social thought. However, it is socialist thought in particular that possibly has the most to 'lose' as a result of the rise of the Greens. The Greens' emergence might significantly contribute to socialism being displaced as the source of the theoretical pillars of radical social analysis. Certainly that is what many Greens themselves assert. As a key text provocatively put it, 'the Green movement lays claim to being the most radical and important political and cultural force since the birth of socialism'[54].

3.2 Eco-Marxism

A social ecology depends on how all people, phenomena or available raw materials 'sit' with each other, how they interrelate and how they are perceived to interrelate in social contexts. Eco-Marxists continue the Marxist tradition of arguing that all social problems result from capitalism. The aim of eco-Marxist's thought is to investigate the influence of capitalism on environment. Their primary concern is to draw a causal relation between capitalism and ecological degradation, i.e. how capitalism is responsible for ecological/environmental degradation. We shall take-up for a brief discussion, the main thesis of 'Eco-Socialism" or 'Green-Socialism' which is solely inspired by a Marxist idea of socialism. For this reason among the protagonists of Green Politics (it will be discussed in next section of this chapter) Eco-socialists are often described as 'Red Greens'.

[54] Porritt, J., Seeing Green, Blackwell, Oxford, 1984, p. 132.

Eco- Marxism is an ideology which advocates the values and agenda of the Green movement from a socialist perspective. They believe that capitalism as a system of political-economy is inherently harmful to society as it contributes to degradation of environment through wasteful overconsumption and pollution of natural resourses.

One of the foremost Marxist social scientists in the United States, James O'Connor has produced many original insights into the political economy of the United States, and global capitalism and its impact on environment. In 1988, he co-founded the "eco-Marxist" quarterly *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*, with Barbara Laurence, and expanded his analysis of capitalist crisis and socialist movements in order to incorporate them in natural conditions more appropriately.

O'Connor's Eco-Marxism centers on "what is arguably *the* basic contradiction of world capitalism at the end of the 20th century,"[55] that between the multiplication of "environmental and social problems" on the one hand, and the breakdown of "older forms of political, economic, and social regulation of capital"[56] on the other. Capitalism has often had a tendency to plunder and vitiate the human, social, and natural conditions of production by treating these conditions as commodities, even though they are not produced as commodities. However, in mercantile capitalism, money was merely a medium of exchange for goods and services, in order to make basic needs satisfied. Artisans were engaged in making their goods as per demand of people, which was primarily based on small scale. For this reason it can be suggested that the environmental degradation was not so much evident in mercantile capitalism. Further, with emergence of entrepreneurial capitalism there generated a tendency for valorization of money on the basis of risk bearing capacity. As the system developed it facilitated the pure profit oriented capitalism, which was primarily

[55] Burkett, paul, Fusing Red and Green, Monthaly Review, 1999, Vol. 50, No. 9, pp. 1-2
[56] Ibid, p. 2

interested in profit-making. The early existing market systems have been displaced by neoliberal "free market" regimes, which place fewer social restraints on profit-driven production, trade, and finance. Worker and community struggles have been stimulated by, and in some cases contributed to, the breakdown of the old regulatory systems; but these struggles have remained mostly "populist" and "localist," and thus incapable of countering capital's increasingly broad and deep exploitation of natural and social wealth.

O'Connor's aim is to assist the development of a broader, but still richly diverse "radical green and green radical politics." According to O'Connor, such politics would be able to deal with ecological, social, and labour concerns, in order to provide a viable alternative to "*both* global capital/neo-liberalism *and* many forms of styles of localism" current among the "new social movements—especially environmental and ecological movements."[57] He believes that both of them are inadequate to provide sustainable and viable environmental movements. It can be suggested that most of decision-making processes are primarily profit-driven. At local level they try to solve the environmental problems by placing the industrial units out of the populated zone, but they create it globally. Since, we share the common globe, therefore, if there is any vitiation process in environment, it will vitiate entire ecological set-up.

O'Connor believes that, in order to resolve the environmental problems, the capitalist system innovates new technologies to overcome existing problems but creates new ones. For example nulear power- a form of producing energy that is touted as an alternative to carbon-intensive, non-renewable fossil fuels, but creates long-term radioactive wastes and other dangers to health and security. While O'Connor notes that capitalism is capable of spreading out its economic potential so widely that it can afford to destroy one eco-system before

[57] O'Connor, J. *Natural Causes: Essays in Ecological Marxism*, New York: Guilford, 1998, pp. 245-269.

moving onto another, he now fear that, with the onset of globalisation, the system is running out of new ecosystems.[58]

It is difficult to inform an anticapitalist ecological perspective using a framework in which natural conditions are "external" to capital accumulation. It is true that any capital is valuable to the extent it can be exchanged with other benefits. For this reason, in order to accumulate as exchange value, capital must take the form of marketable use values combining social labor and nature. Profitability has been the basic character of the capitalism, to accumulate more marketable use values more appropriation of nature was needed and it became easier due to technological advancement and affected natural discourse adversely. Since, current natural and social situations are largely a product of the capitalistic appropriation of nature therefore, any Red-Green movement must be based on conditions growing out of capital's exploitation of labor and nature, and the problems engendered by this exploitation. In this sense, contemporary ecological thinking is, to a significant degree, a product of capitalist development.[59] The large-scale capitalist developments became evident as separation of working people from necessary conditions of production. This claim can better be understood by the discussion of Marxian theory of 'alienation'.

Alienation is a socio-psychological condition which denotes a state of 'Estrangement' of individuals from themselves or from others. This concept gained currency in the writings of Hegal and was developed by Fuerback before Marx adopted it in his early writings. In his later writings, he showed a preference for the term 'exploitation' instead of alienation. According to Hegal, the world is a result of human creation but it acquires its objective existence only

[58] Ibid, pp. 139-141

[59] Parsons. Howard L. *Marx and Engels on Ecology*; Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1977, pp. 88-89; Wallis, Victor. "Socialism, Ecology, and Democracy," in *Socialism: Crisis and Renewal*, C. Polychroniu, editor; Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993, pp. 147-148.

as a result its alienation from the spirit and stands opposed to it. For Hegal, alienation was a meta-physical concept. Marx transformed it into a sociological domain. Marx saw human estrangement as rooted in the nature of the society which destroys the essential human nature.

Man in early stage of his development was alienated from nature because he finds himself helpless before nature. In order to snatch his livelihood from nature man develops the forces of production. As forces of production developed, there raised a need to increase in division of labour. This enables humans to control nature and overcome their alienation from natural discourse. However, with the increase of division of labour, alienation transferred to the social sphere. In the capitalist society division of labour and the institution of private property develop to their highest level and relation became contractual, consequently alienation also reaches the highest level.

According to Marx, man is essentially a creative being who realizes his essence and affirms himself in labour or production, a creative activity carried out in cooperation with others and by which the external world is transformed. The process of production involves transformation of human creative power into material objects or 'objectification' of human creative power. This process of objectification under the specific historical circumstances of capitalism, leads to alienation, because in capitalism means of production are owned and controlled by a few capitalists, while workers have no control over these means of production. Alienation manifests itself in four ways;

First, during the process of large-scale production, products are not used by the worker who produces them. Their produced are only targeted to the profit of entrepreneur, so in a way workers have no control over their produce. In this process the worker alienated from the product of his labour.

Second, the worker is alienated from the act of production, because all the decisions as to how production is to be organized are taken by the capitalist. For the worker, labour ceases to offer an intrinsic satisfaction and instead becomes only a means for survival. It becomes a compulsion forced from the situation and is no more an end in itself. In fact, labour becomes a commodity to be sold and its only value to the worker is its saleability.

Third, the worker in a capitalist system is also socially alienated, because social relations became market relations in whom each man is judged by his position in the market, rather than his human qualities. Capital accumulation generates its own norms which reduce people to level of commodities. Workers become merely factors in the operation of capital and their activities are dominated by the requirements of profitability. In order to earn more money for their survival the worker becomes alienated from his fellow workers. At the same time he gets alienated from his surroundings.

Finally, in the process of routine work for survival, the worker loses his creativity. It is the creativity which distinguished humans from other nonhuman animals. Since, we humans are creative beings, therefore we feel ourselves different from other nonhuman species. As he lost his creativity, gets alienated from his own self.

Human's alienation from natural discourse places them apart from natural objects. In capitalist society, societal values advocate the accumulation of wealth irrespective of any moral obligation. In the process of following the prevailing social values and norms people do not care natural objects anything more than means to their well being. The human action in this sense became evident in terms of natural degradation in capitalist society.

Eco-Marxists are opposed to capitalist growth on the ground that, they consider that the basic element underlie the environmental problems is the rise of

capitalism. Capitalist technology helped in producing surplus and development of the towns, which further associated with consumerism. The rapid growth of industrialization resulted in heavy toxic waste release and contaminated the entire surroundings. These all phenomena resulted in the present environmental degradation in terms of global-warming, ozone layer depletion, acid rain and many other factors. Now these problems are so furious that there need to discuss them on a global platform. There is a need for revival of policies and change in anti-environmental political ideologies.

3.3 Greens and Eco-Marxists debate

The debate between Marxists and Greens explored here covers two subject areas. First, there are *philosophical* issues that arise in the debate regarding questions such as humanity's place in nature, the rights of other species and natural limits to development. Second, there are *theoretical* issues revolving around the core concepts to be used to analyze societies and that form the basis of constructing a social theory of ecological problems.

Marxism has been characterized as an anti-ecological ideology by the adherents of green political theory. The criticism that Marxism is an anthropocentric philosophy is one of the key charges made by Greens. Greens insist that Marxism's adherence to Enlightenment ideas of mastering and dominating nature can only contribute to humanity acting in a way that brings society into conflict with the natural environment. Greens counter pose anthropocentrism to their own perspective of 'ecocentrism', which advocates the natural limitations on human society.

Greens hold that the conceptual underpinnings of modern industrial society, with all its ecological desecration, are essentially the same across all key

'modernist' political ideologies, including Marxism. This criticism was shared by early Green sociologists, who argued that those anthropocentric notions dominated all major schools of sociological thought. In an early article, Catton and Dunlap labeled all previous key western theories of social development, including Marxism, as being subsumed in the 'Human Exceptionalist Paradigm' (HEP), to which they counter-posed the 'New Environmental Paradigm' (NEP). In dividing social thought into two distinct paradigms in this manner, they believed they were spearheading a colossal shift in social theory. Catton and Dunlap summarized the thrust of their proposed paradigm shift in the following terms:

"The numerous competing theoretical perspectives in contemporary sociology - e.g. functionalism, symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, conflict theory, Marxism and so forth - are prone to exaggerate their differences from each other. They purport to be paradigms in their own right, and are often taken as such.... We maintain that their apparent diversity is not as important as the fundamental anthropocentrism underlying all of them."[60]

Greens argue that the anthropocentric HEP superideology ('super' in that it covers all modernist schools of thought) 'excepts' humanity from the rest of nature, and thereby rationalizes humanity's desecration of the natural environment. While each particular 'modernist' approach to organizing society has its unique characteristics in the way in which it interacts with nature, Greens maintain that the anthropocentric thinking common to all of them discourages people from seeing themselves as part of the natural environment, for valuing other species, and from having any conception of natural limitations on humanity's social development.

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[60] Catton, W. and Dunlap, R., 'Environmental Sociology: A New Paradigm', The American Sociologist, 1978, Vol. 13, p. 42.

Greens trace the root cause of diverse environmental problems - from ozone depletion to unsustainable farming to air pollution - back to what they describe as the selfish and dualistic belief that humanity is separate from, and therefore free to dominate and exploit, nature. According to Greens, this separation is based in part on the view that other species do not have intrinsic worth. In order for society to become sustainable, humanity must abandon this dualism and replace it with a monistic viewpoint that acknowledges the rights of other species and humanity's part in the natural world. As Porritt has put it:

"The belief that we are 'apart from' the rest of creation is an intrinsic feature of the dominant world-order, a mancentred or anthropocentric philosophy. Ecologists argue that this ultimately destructive belief must be rooted out and replaced with a life-centred or biocentric philosophy."[61]

While Greens differ over the complexity of the relationship between ecological damage and anthropocentric viewpoints, most will agree that this viewpoint must be transcended before there can be any fundamental change in the way humanity relates to nature. Hence rather than emphasizing human distinctiveness and superiority over nature, ecocentrics tend to abide by Commoner's (1971) law of ecology, that 'nature knows best'.

Furthermore, Greens criticize the 'Human Exceptionalist Paradigm' for failing to have any conception of natural limits, which therefore implies that an infinite quantity of resources can be extracted to feed an ever-growing number of people. By contrast, a central thrust of the NEP is that 'The world is finite, so there are potent physical and biological limits constraining economic growth, social progress, and other societal phenomena'[62].

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[61] Porritt, J., Seeing Green, Blackwell, Oxford, 1984, p. 206.

[62] Catton, W. and Dunlap, R., 'Environmental Sociology: A New Paradigm', The American Sociologist, 1978, Vol. 13, p. 45.

Greens maintain that Marxism is incapable of leading to an ecologically sustainable politics, as it is rooted in an anthropocentric worldview. For example, Routley argues:

"It would be unfortunate if the attempt to work out an alternative nature ethic ... for a non-capitalist society had to take the form of revamping Marx and of merely reinterpreting the radically unsatisfactory material he provides ... for Marx's views on nature, and associated central parts of his theory, belong to the past, and are far too close to those which lie at the root of many of our troubles."[63]

In other words, the philosophical premises of Marxism are based on many of the same Enlightenment attitudes towards nature as the capitalist schools of thought that Marx criticized. Balbus suggests that these aspects of Marxism show its age, and that ecologically oriented theorists need to approach Marxism in the same way in which Marx approaches the bourgeois schools of thought in his time: that is, to explain their origins in order to reveal their historical limits. Hence Marxism cannot simply be revamped, or have an ecological dimension added to it, for it is fundamentally based on an exploitative and dominating approach to nature.

Another Green critique focuses on Marxian theories of the productive forces and the relations of production. According to Greens, the Marxian emphasis on the relations of production leads to under-privileging the productive forces themselves as a key cause of eco-degradation. The technology of modern society can have a serious detrimental impact on the ecological balance regardless of which class wields state power, who controls the means of production or how evenly wealth is distributed. Greens argue, moreover, that

[63] Routley, V., 'On Karl Marx as an Environmental Hero', in Environmental Ethics, 1981, No.3, p. 244

Marxism's emphasis on the further development of the productive forces is more a problem than a solution. Therefore Marxist theory no longer has much to offer as a radical critique of modern society. This chapter outlines these Green critiques and a Marxist response.

Dobson has elaborated on this:

"Ecologists argue that discussion about the respective merits of communism and capitalism is rather like rearranging the deckchairs on the Titanic: they point out that industrialism suffers from the contradiction of undermining the very context in which it is possible, by unsustainably consuming a finite stock of resources in a world that does not have a limitless capacity to absorb the waste produced by the industrial process."[64]

Here it can be argued that locating the environmental impacts of the productive forces within an idealized and generalized 'social context' is insufficient. Rather, a theoretical understanding of eco-degradation in modern society necessitates locating the productive forces in a *specific* social context, namely that of class relations. If such an argument is to be more than mere assertion, it requires a broad outline of a Marxist account of the functioning of technology under capitalism.

The beginnings of an eco-friendly Marxist analysis of environmental damage must centre on the notion that technological development is determined by society's development in general, and that the impact of technological change on the environment can only be understood within a framework that acknowledges the importance of the way in which society organizes the production of its material life. Put another way, humans do not act directly on nature with their productive forces; rather, the relationship between nature and

[64] Dobson, A., Green Political Thought, Routledge, London, 1995, p.30

human action is mediated by the *interaction* that humans have with each other through social relations. Production is therefore inherently social. Any attempts to analyze eco-degradation in terms of abstractions such as 'modern technology' or 'industrialism' are unsatisfactory because they marginalize analysis of the social structures within which technology operates.

Marxism situates technological developments within a social context, principally through the concept of the mode of production. The emphasis on the relations of production means that Marxist social analysis is above all a *class* analysis. Issues of technological development are treated as conditioned by ownership and control of the productive forces. Marxism regards classes as the central actors in society, and issues such as technological development and ecological degradation need to be addressed by being placed in a context of class relations. Within this framework, the issue of technological development in the modern era is largely a problem of analyzing the logic of class action in a *capitalist* society (that is, one characterized by private ownership of the means of production), and thus of understanding the interests of the class that owns the means of production as private property, the capitalist class. Capitalists, in their constant efforts to compete with one another, are forced to upgrade technology to gain the competitive edge. As Marx and Engels (1992:6) put it, 'The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production'. Marx (1977:492) noted that under capitalism technological improvement mainly benefited the capitalist class, as it is primarily utilized to extract greater profits, regardless of the consequences to either workers or the environment.

Further it can be argued that, what greens claim about Marxism shows only the superficial understanding of Marx by greens. There are many instances even in the writings of Marx and Engles which defend their position against these greens' criticism. To support this claim both of them argue:

"Nature is man's inorganic body - nature, that is, insofar as it is not itself the human body. Man lives on nature - means that nature is his body, with which he must remain in continuous interchange if he is not to die. That man's physical and spiritual life is linked to nature means simply that nature is linked to itself, for man is a part of nature."[65]

"Thus at every step we are reminded that we by no means rule over nature like a conqueror over a foreign people, like someone standing outside nature - but that we, with flesh, blood and brain, belong to nature, and exist in its midst, and that all our mastery of it consists in the fact that we have the advantage over all other creatures of being able to know and correctly apply its laws."[66]

With the help of above said statement given by both the thinkers it can be understood that Marxist ideology is not anti-ecological.

3.4 Ecofeminism

Ecofeminism is an ideology which primarily concerned with the historical, symbolic, theoretical, experiential and political relationship between the oppression of women and attitudes towards nature.[67] The term ecofeminism was coined by Françoise d'Eaubonne in 1974.[68]This theory extends the fight against sexism to include the fight against the oppression of nature (*biocide, ecocide*). The uniting factor stems from the fact that masculine values have structured human societies for several millennia, i.e. aggressive behavior against anything

[65] Marx cited in Parsons, H., Marx and Engels on Ecology, Greenwood, Westport, 1978, p. 133
[66] Engels, F., 'Dialectics of Nature' in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Collected works, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1987a, Vol.25, p. 461
[67] Spretnak, C., Ecofeminism: Our roots and our flowering. In I. Diamond & G. F. Orenstein (Eds.) Reweaving the world: The emergence of ecofeminism, 1990. p. 3
[68] Merchant, C., Ecofeminism and feminist theory. In I. Diamond & G. F. Orenstein (Eds.) *Reweaving the world: The emergence of ecofeminism.* San Francisco: Sierra Club Books. 1990, p. 100

considered to be inferior, rational judgment to the detriment of affectivity and emotivity, competitiveness and a fighting spirit, etc. According to Plumwood patriarchal system (*androcentrism*), which appeared after the Bronze Age, encourages the oppression of women, (racial and sexual, etc.) minorities and nature.[69]

The relationship between feminism and ecologism developed rapidly towards the mid-1970s. By the mid 1970s, feminist writers had raised the issue of whether patriarchal modes of thinking encouraged not only widespread inferiorizing and colonizing of women, but also of coloured people, animals and nature. Sheila Collins, for instance, argued that male-dominated culture or patriarchy is supported by four interlocking pillars: sexism, racism, class exploitation, and ecological destruction.[70] Ecofeminists interpret the transformation that occurred several millennia ago (when the worship of nature as a nurturing mother was replaced by the worship of a masculine god who lived far away in heaven) as being the reason for the rift between European societies and nature. Throughout history, undefined, chaotic nature has been compared to women and this notion has prevailed through the works of Aristotle, Descartes and the modern era (these have been widely discussed in chapter two), culminating in the emergence of the environmental problem.

Emphasizing the importance of feminism to the environmental movement and various other liberation movements, some writers, such as Ynestra King, argue that the domination of women by men is the original form of domination in human society, from which all other hierarchies - of rank, class, and political power - flow. For instance, human domination of nature, it has been argued, is a manifestation and extension of the oppression of women, in that it is the result of

[69] Plumwood, V., Ecosocial feminism as a general theory of oppression. In C. Merchant (Ed.), *Key concepts in critical theory: Ecology*. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press. 1994, p. 208
[70] Sheila Collins, cited in Spretnak, C. 1990, p. 5

associating nature with the female, which had been already inferiorized and oppressed by the male-dominating human culture.[71]

But within the plurality of feminist positions, other writers, such as Val Plumwood, understand the oppression of women as only one of the many parallel forms of oppressions sharing and supported by a common structure, in which one party (the colonizer) uses a number of conceptual and rhetorical devices to privilege its interests over that of the other party (the colonized). It is argued that male-centered (androcentric) and human-centered (anthropocentric) thinking have some common characteristics, such as 'dualism' and the 'logic of domination', which are also manifested in the oppressions of many other social groups, and that in being facilitated by a common ideological structure, diverse forms of oppression often mutually-reinforce each other.[72]

Ecofeminists claim that the masculine/feminine duality, which attributes moral superiority of masculine properties (reason, independence, self-determination, conscience, etc.) over feminine properties (emotivity, compassion, etc.), is a reductionism. To sweep it away, environmental ethics must abandon the notion of *rights*, and focus on breaking down barriers between the two genders through dialogue and by integrating qualities considered to be feminine (such as responsibility, friendship and cooperation, etc.). Ecofeminism is similar to deep ecology in its rejection of anthropocentrism. As Radford-Ruether suggests that the changes demanded by ecofeminists are enlightening:[73]

- from the idea of an omnipotent God in Heaven to the idea that God is in everything and everywhere (pantheism),

- from the mechanistic to the organicist paradigm,

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[71] King, Y., The ecology of feminism and feminism of ecology. In J. Plant (Ed.), *Healing the wounds: The promise of ecofeminism*. Santa Cruz, CA: New Society Publishers, 1989. pp. 18-20

[72] See Plumwood, V. 1993, pp. 20-27 and Warren, K. J., 1994, pp. 45-47

[73] Ruether, R. R., *Third world women on ecology, feminism, and religion*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books. (Ed.), 1996, pp. 46-47

- attribution of an intrinsic value to animals, plants, rocks etc.,
- elimination of the schizoid disorder between the body and mind,
- stop considering western culture and lifestyle to be the best and stop imposing them on "uncivilized" populations,
- move from an economy which seeks to maximize profits to a sustainable economy.

Ecofeminism had a profound influence on politics in the 1970s and 1980s. With western societies recording substantial progress in the change of status for women (and also for minorities and animals) and in environmental policies, ecofeminist attention turned towards Third World policies, the protection of nature and the emancipation of women in these countries.

The importance of ecofeminism resides in the fact that this movement has given rise to, and stimulated, much research and reflection on the part of psychologists, theologians and philosophers in explaining western culture's different abuses of domination as *-isms* (sexism, racism, ageism, etc.). "Green feminism" is often included as part of the vast New Age movement. The convergence of the Gaia theory (and its consequences) with ecofeminism is obvious. The need to establish closer relationships between our environment's different components is an appeal for friendship with the universe: "Ecology is to the Earth what friendship is to people"[74].

3.4.1 Evaluation of Ecofeminism

Ecofeminist ontological view rejects nature-culture dualism and its concomitant dualisms between reason and emotion, transcendence and immanence. According to ecofeminists, not only women's identification with nature is

[74] Dumais cited in Ruether, R. R., 1996, p.92

mistaken, but the very opposition of culture to nature is problematic. However, when some ecofeminists embrace emotion against the cold reason and celebrate immanence against the life-denying transcendence they reproduce the same dualism by sticking to an 'either/or' logic. Bridging the gap between nature and culture seems to be an irresolvable concern for ecofeminism since there are different views on this issue. There are also ambivalent attitudes toward 'linking/de-linking' women and nature.

Susan Griffin [one of the forerunners of ecofeminism] maintained that she was not an 'essentialist' who believed in biological connections between women and nature, but her writings nonetheless imply deep, even ontological connections between women and nature.[75]

Some ecofeminists valorize "feminine" traits like 'relational socialization' and criticize "masculine" ones like 'detachment', despite being a legacy of patriarchy. However, when they maintain that these "feminine" traits, even though unwarrantedly attributed to women, can only come out of the feminine psyche fostered by their physiology, socialization, reproductive and productive labour, things might become problematic.[76] Such a strategy, apart from whether invites more oppression or not, depends on a notion of fixed female nature. Not all women manifest these traits and they might not even want to be forced to do so.

Ecofeminist critique of 'transcendence' is also a controversial issue. Transcendence versus immanence is a false dichotomization and an over-emphasis on immanence might be problematic as well. Transcendence does not only mean scorning body and nature but also is a requirement to overcome the constraints of the socio-cultural context. Nearly all liberation movements of the oppressed demand transcending the imposed and given socio-cultural

[75] Tong, R.P. *Feminist Thought*, Oxford: Westview Press, Second Edition, 1998, p. 257
[76] See Plumwood, V., 1993, pp. 86-88

constraints. When ecofeminists criticize transcendence wholesale, they can unwillingly reinforce social conservatism.

Salleh, quoting Ynestra King, states that "men must stop trying to control nature and join women in identifying with nature" [77]. According to Salleh, there is not only a quantitative difference between men and women's productive contribution, but also a profoundly important qualitative difference. Qualitatively, women's mediation of nature in all its labour forms, is organized around a logic of reciprocity rather than mastery and control.[78]

Salleh sees the qualitative difference not only as a consequence of women's socialization but also of the very practical nature of the women's labour that gives them a different orientation to the world and different insights into its problems.[79] But it seems a little inappropriate that being subject to the constraints of public and private spheres would be enough to create a global 'class consciousness' among women. Such an expectation would eventually label anti-feminism among women as 'false consciousness'.

Critique of 'patriarchy' by ecofeminists is problematic from a few aspects. Excluding the romantic view of history among cultural ecofeminists, some ecofeminists commit anachronism while they criticize a (male) philosopher, and commit reductionism and mechanism when they explain 'patriarchy'.[80] It is indisputable that women have been systematically marginalised in meaning-giving processes like science, history, philosophy and law. However, as Lerner warns, conceptualizing women primarily as historical victims acted upon by violent men and social institutions is erroneous since such a conceptualization overlooks women's central role and agency in the creation of society and

[77] Salleh, A. "Working with Nature: Reciprocity or Control?" 1993b; in Zimmerman, M. et al. eds. 1998: p. 323
[78] Ibid. p. 321
[79] Ibid. p. 227
[80] See. Plumwood, V., 1993, pp. 67-102

civilization. Problematic inferences are based on the fact of women's subordination. The facts of socio-economic gender inequality and psycho-sexual inferiorisation of women are indisputable.

However, reductionist explanations are presented on the assumption that these undisputable facts can automatically substantiate their explanations. Salleh who sees women's subordination as connected to men's life-denying practices and ideologies, poses the question, "why have men chosen to alienate themselves from the rest of life in this way", following her presentation of facts on women's subordination.[81] Her answer is that "it may have begun with a painful sense of exclusion from the life process and the realization by men that, while they may 'appropriate' life, they cannot 'produce' it".

Huey Li has pointed at problems of reductionism in ecofeminism that tend to attribute the interrelated factors involved in the human exploitation of nature to the polarization of sex/gender differences.[82] Such a view, according to Li, is based on a linear, cause and effect paradigm that cannot elucidate the complexity of worldwide environmental problems. According to Li, there are parallels between the operation of sexual oppression and the human exploitation of nature, yet, woman-nature affinity as a self-evident explanation for the connections between the oppression of nature and oppression of women is problematic for the fact that the association of women and nature is not a trans-historical and trans-cultural phenomenon. Plumwood recognizes the danger in using 'patriarchy' cross-culturally to account for the oppression of nature.[83] But her restriction of dualism and oppression into 'west' is a kind of essentializing what constitutes the 'West'.

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[81] See. Salleh, A., 1993b, pp. 315-321
[82] Li, H. "A Cross-Cultural Critique of Ecofeminism", in Greta Gaard (ed.) 1993, pp. 286-288
[83] See. Plumwood, V. 1993, p. 11

Though the ecofeminists' approach is misleading in some contexts (on the issues like dichotomization and patriarchy) yet they provide an approach to deal with environmental crisis with a feminist perspective.

In short we can conclude that the socio-political contexts of ecophilosophy developed through three above said philosophical ideologies. Though they are different in their approach in dealing with the ecological problems but the idea which is common among all of them is their advocacy to save natural discourse. In order to achieve the environmental goals where Eco-Marxism advocates the anti-capitalist mode of production and eco-socialism, Green Political theory is concerned with change in policies and decision-makings. Ecofeminism takes entirely different approach to achieve the environmental goals. Since they claim that the present environmental problems are rooted in patriarchal mind set therefore they propose feminist perspective in order to achieve environmental goals.

Conclusion

Respect for nature and protection of natural resources have been the core concerns of environmental ethics. Our discussions have revolved around many issues such as human interference in nature, its consequences on humans and nonhuman species, shortcomings of traditional anthropocentric ethics, possibility of an ecocentric ethics and possible solutions for saving nature further degradation. During this study, we came across two main extreme perspectives in context of environmental ethics: anthropocentrism and ecocentrism. Their extremity can be seen in their respective approach in dealing with environmental concerns. Anthropocentrism posits human beings in the centre of reality and advocates the taming of nature for human well being. On the contrary ecocentrism places equal value on the whole biotic community and criticizes human dominion over other living species and nature. It can be suggested that both of them adopting absolute stances in their approach in dealing with natural phenomena. The goal of saving the natural environment and the survival of human life can neither be achieved through anthropocentric way nor ecocentric way. Perhaps, solutions lie somewhere else beyond the dichotomies posed by these perspectives. For example, at the level of basic amenities for leading a good quality life, we cannot afford to ignore many aspects of anthropocentric approach. For a questioning of mindless consumption of natural resources simply for the sake of fun and pleasure, and ecocentric position can provide us valuable insights.

We have noticed that many ecologists have criticized different philosophical traditions as anthropocentric traditions and these have been branded as advocates of natural exploitation. But, a lack of commitment among people for their habitat and future generations contributed even more in these devastations. It is true that humanity is trapped in a vicious circle because of its own deeds and aspirations. Human survival is threatened due to uncontrolled interferences in natural environment resulting in deforestation, release of industrial waste, ozone depletion, climate change etc. If advancement in science and technology has contributed to human health and to the other spheres of life, such as education, communication, transport and so on. It has also created an ecological crisis. The idea of scientific and technological "miracles" creates a distorted image of human powers that we mistakenly view ourselves as all powerful beings who possess ability to transform and model nature according to our designs. We believe that it will be possible for us to deal successfully with the ecological crisis. Such an attitude is totally wrong because it considers human beings at a particular position outside nature, imposing their decisions and actions upon it. By putting ourselves at a position of dominance over nature, we disenfranchise ourselves completely by forgetting that we are also a part of this nature.

The magnitude of the environmental crisis demands major changes in decision- making policies for better solutions in coming future. Decisions and policies of eco-friendly character and their proper implementations may be contributive to the sustainability of environment and its contents. The basic element which contributes perhaps the most in environmental disruptions is lack of awareness among individuals and communities. People must come out of their taken far granted attitudes toward environmental concerns. They should realize their collective responsibility and must participate in the making of a sustainable and healthy environment. Finally, it can be suggested that, unless we

modify our behavior as a human race, billions and billions of us are going to die, we simply can't sustain our path using up diminishing supplies of food and water in an increasingly intolerable climate.

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